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RELIGION AND CULTURE

A CRITICAL SURVEY OF METHODS OF APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS PHENOMENA

BY

FREDERICK SCHLEITER, PH.D.

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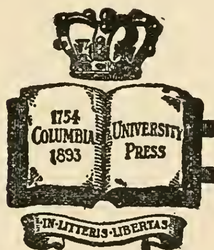

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TO

MY MOTHER

AND

MRS. FANNIE LAKE

PREFACE

I am indebted to Prof. Franz Boas for the suggestion that my use of the term 'emanation' in the original MS. was too narrow to comprehend the phenomena involved. In the revision I have therefore attempted to embody this point. I have profited by discussing several of the problems involved in this work with Prof. John Dewey and Dr. A. A. Goldenweiser. Dr. Goldenweiser has been particularly generous in the giving of his time in detailed conversations. In the sections dealing with causality, particularly in so far as it is related to the physical sciences, I have followed some constructive suggestions made by Prof. W. P. Montague. I am also indebted to Prof. F. J. E. Woodbridge for assistance in a thorough revision of the text. Due to his criticisms I have in some degree softened or modified the rather iconoclastic attitude which I took toward the comparative method in ethnology. I am lastly immeasurably obligated to my mother and Mrs. Fannie Lake for their painstaking labor which has involved a host of necessary details. All

problems involved in organization, methods of research and bibliography, which necessarily become very considerable in this type of work, have been handled by Mrs. Lake in a most able and effective manner, and her measure of contribution I am therefore unable to overestimate.

FREDERICK SCHLEITER.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,
February, 1919.

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CHAPTER 1

DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN THE ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE RELIGION AT LARGE OR APART FROM ITS CULTURAL SETTING

The observations of daily life, literature, travelers' accounts and ethnographic monographs, furnish a bewildering profusion of data which, it would seem, might be properly utilized as the basis of a *generalized* interpretation of the magico-religious thoughts, feelings and overt behavior of man. Various degrees of excellence characterize the raw data but, on the whole, there is a very considerable amount of a purely descriptive character which is both of a high order and readily available. There is a wide gap, however, between this abundant and diverse material and the theoretical treatise which purports to be based upon it. Sundry difficulties and pitfalls beset the attempt to arrive at valid universal conclusions by means of dealing in a general way with phenomena which exhibit enormous complexity and hence resist the demands of exact treatment and classification.

Notwithstanding these considerations, however, nearly all theoretical works attempt to build up and describe a type or pattern in which individual and particular phenomena are forthwith conceived to participate more or less fully. The statement of religion, as such and at large, free from the exigencies of time and place, is the end toward which they direct their efforts. It is sometimes necessary to employ considerable violence in order to correlate specific events, beliefs, rites and historical processes with the abstract type but nevertheless the purity and absolute character of the latter remain relatively undisturbed. Real phenomena appear only in its reflected light.

The philosophical treatment of religious data has sinned grievously in this respect; indeed, it is frequently difficult to state the precise facts on which its theories are founded. On the whole, however, it appears to refer largely to reflective mental processes appearing in both the lower and higher civilizations, but more frequently the latter. In so great degree is this true that there is oftentimes considerable danger of identifying religion with the philosophy of religion, *i. e.*, of disregarding completely the historic individuality of complicated rites, ceremonies and beliefs, and conceiving of it purely as a view of the world. An article by Ladd

illustrates strikingly this tendency to disregard ethnographic data and deal with an abstract formulation. "For religion is", he says, "as a matter of historical and psychological fact, *always metaphysical.* It is always a naive or a reasoned theory of reality. It is an attempt to *explain human experience* by relating it to invisible existences that belong, nevertheless, to the real world. Indeed, monotheism finds in its One and Alone God the Ultimate Reality, the Being from whom all finite beings proceed, on whom they all depend, and to whom they all owe the devotion of their lives in a faithful allegiance. This, however, is ontological doctrine—somehow postulated rationally, or reasoned out, or superstitiously and vainly imagined".[1]

The situation created by the abstraction of magico-religious phenomena from their cultural settings and their description and characterization *überhaupt,* is analogous to that which has frequently been referred to by Dewey and his students as obtaining within the field of logic, when the attempt has been made to abstract logical elements from concrete psychical processes and deal with them in their relationship

[1] Ladd, The religious consciousness as ontological, *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods,* 1904, v. 1, p. 9.

to reality as such and at large.[2] A peculiar problem has thus been created by the dichotomy of psychology and logic, the former dealing with mental existence,—the stream of experience incident to the life history of the individual,—the latter with meaning which goes beyond the particular mental state, is not embodied in the fragmentary image but refers to a reality beyond the act of judgment.

It is desirable, however, to investigate the processes of generalization, abstraction and reconstruction, as they are actually carried out in the science of religion, and attempt to bring clearly to light the types of presupposition involved. We may therefore proceed to consider a number of methods of treatment which have important ramifications and which continually recur in the vast literature of the subject.

[2] See for example, Dewey, Studies in logical theory, Ch. 1. See also Dewey and others, *Creative intelligence,* "The need for a recovery of philosophy", pp. 29, 32–33, 38, 55.

CHAPTER 2

UNIVERSAL LAWS BASED UPON THE INTENSIVE STUDY OF A LIMITED GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OR HISTORICAL PERIOD

The conception that the most fruitful method to be pursued in the interpretation of cultural phenomena consists in the intensive study of a limited geographical area which provides the habitat of an independent development, and by this means arrive at certain laws of evolution which are of universal or world-wide distribution, was perhaps first propounded by Buckle. He states that in his youth he cherished an ambitious dream of writing an universal history, but, upon undertaking the task, found the materials in a condition entirely too unsatisfactory for his purpose, which he thereupon abandoned, and proceeded to devote himself to a more modest and feasible work. He then cast about for a proper object of study,—a cultural development of great importance in the history of the world, which, at the same time, involved an individual and independent growth within a limited area,

free from foreign influences. As an Englishman, it was not ill-befitting that he made his native land the object of his investigations. In a very quaint and curious manner, he proceeds to justify his thesis that the cultural and institutional development of England has not been materially determined by foreign influences. Englishmen are wont to travel abroad, he tells us, but are not receptive of exotic elements. Europeans also, to a much lesser extent, occasionally sojourn in England but, in any event, leave no marked impress upon the culture of the country; indeed, the ordinary proletariat in the customary course of his life never sees a foreigner save when, by chance, he happens to stumble upon "some dull and pompous ambassador taking his airing on the bank of the Thames!" [1]

Buckle conceives that it is possible by means of studies of this type to formulate certain laws of history and of the correlation and succession of social phenomena which are as rigid and as valid as those of the natural sciences. "I select for especial study," he says, "the progress of English civilization, simply because, being less affected by agencies not arising from itself, *we can the more clearly discern in it the normal*

[1] Buckle, The history of civilization in England, pp. 168–169.

march of society, and the undisturbed operation of those great laws by which the fortunes of mankind are ultimately regulated".[2]

Buckle's method of intensive study of a limited geographical area or period of history and the concomitant determination of laws of universal validity based thereon, has been repeatedly applied in the interpretation of religious phenomena. According to Max Müller, India provides the most excellent material for the study of the genesis and growth of religion, and he tells us that he has framed his own theories of these subjects from a life long study of the sacred books of India. In a rather guarded way he proceeds to generalize the Hindu phenomena. "When we have learnt how the ancient inhabitants of India gained their religious ideas, how they elaborated them, changed them, corrupted them, we may be allowed to say that possibly other people also may have started from the same beginnings, and may have passed through the same vicissitudes."[3]

Nieuwenhuis considers the Bahau and Kenja of the Island of Borneo, and the Toradja of the Island of Celebes, as the basis of his investigations into the necessary rise and development of religious concepts and practices. He believes

[2] Ibid., p. 171. Italics mine.

[3] Müller, Origin and growth of religion, p. 132.

that these tribes are the most primitive in existence, that they are isolated from foreign influences, particularly Malay and Islam, and manifest, therefore, an ideal independent development.[4]

Frazer, who finds it possible to embody in his immensely voluminous works, several mutually irreconcilable types of research, has utilized this method in his interpretation of totemism. Australia, as a whole, he considers to be cut off from the rest of the world by reason of the fact that it is surrounded by water, and its central portion, in turn, to be isolated from the remainder of the continent by natural boundaries. "Here, then, in the secluded heart of the most secluded continent, the scientific inquirer might reasonably expect to find the savage in his very lowest depths, to detect humanity in the chrysalis stage, to mark the first blind gropings of our race after freedom and light. The reader who turns to the Native Tribes of Central Australia with such hopes and expectations, will not, I venture to hope, be disappointed".[5] With this thought firmly fixed in his mind, he regards the *Intich-*

[4] Nieuwenhuis, Die Wurzeln des Animismus, *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, 1917, Sup. to band 24, pp. 8–9.

[5] Frazer, The origin of totemism, *Fortnightly Review*, 1899, n.s., v. 65.

iuma ceremonies as "the key to the original meaning and purpose of Totemism among the Central Australian tribes, perhaps even of Totemism in general".[6]

In a recent work, aiming at systematic comprehensiveness, Durkheim again makes the Australian phenomena the basis of a generalized interpretation of the nature, function, and development of religion. He alleges that the life of these peoples is the most primitive known to the ethnographer[7] and that their religious practices and ideas have developed through an inner immanent potentiality free from foreign sources.[8]

[6] Ibid., p. 664.

[7] Durkheim finds the criteria of primitiveness in certain features of material culture and social organization "Not only is their civilization most rudimentary—the house and even the hut are still unknown—but also their organization is the most primitive and simple which is actually known;—it is that which we have elsewhere called *organiza'ion on a basis of clans.*" The elementary forms of the religious life, p. 96. Goldenweiser has frequently pointed out that this latter point does not rest upon a single shred of definite evidence and is, indeed, violently at variance with the most acceptable ethnographic opinion of the present day. Religion and society: A critique of Emile Durkheim's theory of the origin and nature of religion, *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 1917, v. 14, pp. 113–124.

[8] Durkheim, The elementary forms of the religious life, p. 1.

The intensive study of the Australian data, therefore, is "better adapted than any other to lead to an understanding of the religious nature of man, that is to say, to show us an essential and permanent aspect of humanity".[9] While he admits that it is of some interest to examine into the nature of any particular religion in and for itself, this procedure is to be understood as only incidental in serving to bring out the ultimate nature of the type. "If it is useful", he says, "to know what a certain particular religion consists in, *it is still more important to know what religion in general is.* This is the problem which has aroused the interest of philosophers in all times; and not without reason, for it is of interest to all humanity." [10]

The entire attempt to formulate universal laws upon the basis of the intensive study of a very limited group of cultural facts literally bristles with fallacies and insupportable presuppositions, the most obvious and far reaching of which embodies the idea that the ethnographic phenomena found in some specially selected area, are the result of an independent development, and constitute, as it were, an indigenous entity possessing complete historic individuality. In the last analysis there is

[9] Ibid., p. 2, see also p. 95.

[10] Ibid., p. 4. Italics mine.

always involved an artificial and wholly imaginary separation of a mere fragment, with widely ramified irradiations, from the vast period of history. A large number of very recent studies have shown the enormous importance of the transmission and intermixture of cultural elements from one area to another. While this consideration has become something of a commonplace among many ethnologists, its importance, however, is still far from being universally recognized, and it is therefore desirable, for purposes of illustration, to refer briefly to a few instances.

It is possible that a number of widespread and fundamental ideas and inventions find their ultimate source in a prehistoric culture which existed prior to the dispersion of the human race.[11] Whatever attitude be taken with reference to these exceedingly ancient cultural achievements, diffusion is now known to have occurred over vast areas and in a multiplicity of ways even within the sharp limitations of that relatively short chronological period to which our knowledge refers. Speaking in the most general terms, detailed and careful studies have invariably revealed the fact that the empirical possibilities of transmission are much greater than would seem *a priori* plausible. Cultural

[11] Boas, Anthropology, p. 22.

features may be disseminated over enormous distances with incredible rapidity. Tobacco was introduced into Africa after the discovery of America and quickly spread over the entire continent, indeed, soon became so completely integrated in the indigenous cultures, that to-day no one would suspect its foreign origin. In a similar way the banana has spread over almost the whole of South America, and Indian corn over the entire world. The horse, cattle, European grains, and the use of milk, were widely disseminated in prehistoric times.[12] Boas gives abundant testimony to the very widespread transmission of tales among the natives of the northern portion of North America.[13] Kalish calls attention to the immense significance of the serpent in the religious systems of the world, particularly those of the East.[14] Elworthy cites the widespread use of the serpent as an amulet together with its so-called worship and prevalence in the mythologies of Babylonia, Persia, India, Ceylon, China, Japan, Burmah, Java, Arabia, Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, Ethio-

[12] Boas, Anthropology, p. 21.

[13] Boas, Dissemination of tales among the natives of North America, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 1891, v. 4, pp. 16–17.

[14] Kalish, A historical and critical commentary on the Old Testament, Genesis III.

pia, Greece, Italy, and North America.[15] The distribution of magico-religious ideas regarding serpents obviously suggests processes of diffusion, although in specific cases it would not be possible to prove them.[16]

Having become convinced, through the study of the historical growth of various culture complexes, that they are really the result of diffusion and intermixture, Rivers considers that the necessary preparation for the interpretation or formulation of evolutionary laws, consists in cultural analysis, by means of which the elements composing the assemblage of features may be disentangled and traced, so far as possible, to their respective points of origin.[17] In an indefinite number of citations throughout his works, Boas has recommended the employment of the same principle as the one best calculated to yield valid scientific results, and the entire American school which has been directly under his influence, has attempted to carry it out in greater or lesser degree in the course of different investigations.[18]

[15] Elworthy, The evil eye, p. 311.

[16] In view of the fact that these ideas are relatively simple, they may, in many cases, have had an independent origin.

[17] Rivers, The ethnological analysis of culture, *British Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1911, p. 494.

[18] For the application of this method of research in the interpretation of a group of religious phenomena, see

The widespread tendency to regard Australia as the cradle of religion and the basis of more generalized evolutionary speculations, has been vigorously attacked by Rivers. By a comparative study of Australia and Melanesia, he has become convinced that the former contains a mixture of cultures having the same or similar components as those of the latter. More specifically, he believes that the form of social organization clearly indicates the historical contact "of a people possessing the dual organization and matrilineal descent with one organized in totemic clans, possessing either patrilineal descent, or at any rate clear recognition of the relation between father and child."[19] Parenthetically we may call attention to a somewhat

Goldenweiser, Totemism, an analytical study, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 1910, v. 23. Wissler has referred to the views of the American School "as the psychic accident theory of culture origin as opposed to the developmental or evolutionary theory." This would imply, according to Wissler, that the aggregation of elements found in a cultural complex, has not been assembled according to fixed laws of development, but is to be explained only as the result of an adventitious association,—a "psychic accident." The psychological aspects of the culture environment relation, *American Anthropologist*, 1912, p. 222.

[19] Rivers, The ethnological analysis of culture, *British Association for the Advancement of Science, Report*, 1911, p. 495.

specialized magical procedure which suggests an ancient transmission between the Malay peninsula and Australia. In the former area the attempt is made to bring infliction upon an enemy by holding in the hand a sharpened splinter of bamboo, performing an incantation over it, whereupon it is presumed to enter the body of the designated person: in the latter, a similar custom exists which is called "pointing the bone," a piece, generally of the tibia, being "sung over", and then despatched on its malevolent mission.[20]

Attempts have been made to utilize the Melanesian data, on the basis of its alleged primitiveness, in support of the doctrine as to the ultimate origin and development of religious concepts, particularly that of *mana*.[21] According to Rivers, however, this procedure is entirely unjustifiable, in so far as Melanesian society exhibits great complexity and heterogeneity, by reason of the

[20] Skeat and Blagden, Pagan races of the Malay peninsula, v. 2, p. 199. Spencer and Gillen, The native tribes of Central Australia, p. 534. The Northern tribes of Central Australia, pp. 25, 455, 458, 459, 463, 480. Howitt, The native tribes of South-East Australia, p. 326.

[21] See, for example, Codrington, The Melanesians. Compare also the entire group of *mana* theorists, who commonly fall back upon the Melanesian data, in connection with that taken from many other ethnographic areas.

fact that it is the resultant of the mixture of three or four main cultures through historical contact.[22]

A number of remarks of Wundt involve an implied attack upon the entire attempt to formulate laws upon the basis of the study of a limited area, indeed, he points out, in particular, that a culture could only be conceived of as absolutely primitive if no antecedent mental development whatsoever could be pre-supposed,—a situation which is obviously not realized in experience.[23] Smith, in dealing with the rites and beliefs of the ancient Semites, points out that no religion begins *de novo* with a *tabula rasa*, but is to be understood only with reference to older ideas and practices which have become integrated with it.[24] Ratzel has suggested that the idea of independent development in the social sciences is comparable to the theory of spontaneous generation of biology, and is, therefore, to be regarded as essentially anachronistic,

[22] Rivers, The ethnological analysis of culture, *British Association for the Advancement of Science, Report*, 1911, p. 494: The history of Melanesian Society.

[23] Wundt, Elements of folk psychology, 1916, p. 20. It is curious, however, that this consideration does not prevent Wundt from framing a generalized evolutionary schematism of the cultural development of mankind somewhat according to traditional prescriptions.

[24] Smith, The religion of the Semites, p. 2.

—a suggestion which has been abundantly elaborated by Graebner, Foy, Ankermann, Schmidt, Elliot Smith and others.

There can be no doubt, however, that the development of this point of view on the part of the German school has led to the most extreme results, the preferential use of the concept of diffusion having become a methodological fetish. Graebner, indeed, goes so far as to contend that the independent development of similar ethnic features in two or more areas cannot be demonstrated by objective criteria, but are to be explained by transmission, regardless of how far apart be the areas, or improbable the historical contact.[25] The German school, however, has subserved the very useful function of calling

[25] Graebner, Methode der Ethnologie, p. 107. The morphological similarity of widespread simple inventions such as the bow and arrow, the throwing stick, the dart, the cross, and the *swastika*, cannot be regarded as proof of historical relationships of the cultures in which they occur, but may have (at least in many instances) an independent origin. McGee, Anthropology and its larger problems, *Congress of Arts and Science, St. Louis*, 1904, v. 5. Dixon also points out that a simple invention like the dugout canoe may have had an independent origin in two or more areas. Dixon, The independence of the culture of the American Indian, *Science*, 1912, n.s., v. 35, p. 48, 55. Compare also Boas, Review of Graebner's Methode der Ethnologie, *Science*, 1911, n.s., v. 34, p. 48.

attention to the enormous empirical possibilities of transmission and, in this manner, has contrived to stimulate the most vital and important historical investigations.

One of the characteristic features of intensive studies, based upon a delimited area and the concomitant determination of laws of universal validity, is an appalling lack of historical perspective. Robinson's illuminating illustration of the relative length of chronological periods may be introduced as a healthy criticism of uncontrolled speculations of this type. He imagines the whole history of mankind as divided up into twelve hours, of which the present may be considered as noon. A very conservative estimate would consider man to have been an upright creature for two hundred and forty thousand years. Each hour on the clock represents twenty thousand, each minute, three hundred and thirty three and one third years. For more than eleven and a half hours there is no record. At twenty minutes before twelve vestiges of Egyptian and Babylonian civilization begin to appear. Looking upon these vast stretches of time from this point of view, according to Robinson, the whole perspective of history is completely changed, and those whom we have been wont to call the ancients—Thales, Pytha-

goras, Socrates and Plato—are really our contemporaries.[26]

Kohlbruges points out the essentially sentimental attitude which various ethnographers have taken with reference to the particular people with whom they have dealt,—each feeling it incumbent upon himself to prove that his particular group is the most primitive known and hence of the greatest importance for genetic study. In this connection he cites the work of the Sarasin brothers on the Veddhas of Ceylon, Klastch on the Australians, Schmidt on the Pygmies, etc.[27]

A suppressed element of irrefragable absurdity lies behind the attempt to frame evolutionary hypotheses on the basis of tribes alleged to be most primitive and, therefore, to constitute the elementary stage in the process of development. In any particular case, it is perfectly possible that the specific people involved has not wilfully contrived to remain in *statu quo*, in a chrysalis stage, for untold ages, and so provide the con-

[26] Robinson, The new history, pp. 239–240, 251.

[27] Kohlbruges, Review of Schmidt's Die Stellung der Pygmäenvölker in der Entwickelungsgeschichte des Menschen, *Anthropos*, v. 5, p. 1186. For other discussions of the criteria of primitiveness see Wundt, Elements of folk-psychology, pp. 77–78, and Schmidt, Die Stellung der Pygmäenvölker in der Entwickelungsgeschichte des Menschen, pp. 268–269, 270.

venient basis for speculative reconstructions of the order of development, but on the other hand, may represent a process of degeneration from a higher level of culture. History furnishes abundant cases of the degradation of high civilizations to a much lower level, indeed, we may regard this change, in the reverse order, as one of the inevitable vicissitudes attendant upon man's sojourn upon the surface of the earth. As cases in point, Lankester mentions the Indians of Central America, the modern Egyptians, Fuegians, Bushmen, and Australians.[28]

[28] Lankester, Advancement of science, p. 47.

CHAPTER 3

THE COMPARATIVE METHOD AND THE CLASSICAL, UNILINEAR, EVOLUTIONARY SERIES

In contradistinction to the attempt to formulate generalizations upon the basis of a cultural fragment torn out of the total universe of human affairs, the comparative method undertakes to deal with an agglomeration of data gathered from the four corners of the earth and the ends of time. It proceeds to classify these facts under the very ill-defined and loose principle of morphological similarity,—taboo, totemism, contagious and imitative magic, etc., being illustrations of the type of rubrics employed.

Dewey characterizes the procedure of the comparative method as consisting in the bunching of static facts to indicate the common properties of the primitive mind. That which determines the grouping of a number of elements under a common heading, is the fact that "they have impressed the observer as alike in some respect".[1]

[1] Dewey, Interpretation of savage mind. Thomas, *Source book for social origins*, p. 174.

On a single page of Spencer are cited Kamschadales, Kirghiz, Bedouins, East Africans, Bechuanas, Damaras, Hottentots, Malays, Papuans, Fijians, Andamanese. The data thus brought together are not organically interrelated, and do not embody that dynamism which is so necessary to genetic considerations. As a result, no coherent scheme of mind is presented, but the various divisions of cultural facts grouped together loosely on the basis of alleged similarity are, indeed, somewhat comparable to the disparate entities of the faculty psychology, each of which stands upon its own legs.[2]

In a work of vast proportions[3] Frazer classifies all magical rites, beliefs and practices into two grand divisions, homoeopathic or imitative and contagious. He regards all magic as a pseudoscience whose ultimate explanation is to be sought in the misapplication of the association of ideas,—the principle lying at the basis of the first type being that 'like produces like', and that at the basis of the second that things which have once been in contact may continue to

[2] Ibid., p. 173 and fol. Instead of raking together facts under the principle of similarity, Dewey proposes to study types of mind in so far as they are embodied in occupations which determine the formation and use of habits. Ibid., p. 176.

[3] Frazer, The golden bough, vols. 1 and 2.

exert an influence over one another at a distance after the actual connection has been severed. Drawing his material from the entire world, and describing facts totally without reference to their cultural settings and the penumbrae of thoughts and feelings which cluster round them, he brings together, under the common heading of 'imitative magic', rites and practices which are of an exceedingly heterogeneous character, to wit, the abuse of an image under the theory that an enemy will suffer corresponding injury, the *Intichiuma* ceremonies of the Australian aborigines for the multiplication of the totemic animal, the ghastly initiation ceremonies, including those concerned with certain bodily mutilations, the knocking out of teeth, etc.[4] Under the title of 'contagious magic' he assembles a vast amount of other material exhibiting no less diversity.[5]

A similar state of affairs obtains in the uncontrolled use of the term 'fetishism' as employed by De Brosses, Comte, Schultze and many others,—the single term being used to designate phenomena of the most heterogeneous character and, at the same time, an alleged stage in the development of the mental life of man, viewed both from the standpoint of individual

[4] Frazer, The golden bough, v. 1, chapter 3, sec. 2

[5] Ibid., v. 1, ch. 4.

and racial or cultural development. De Brosses, who characterizes fetishism as 'le culte de certains objets terrestres et matériels', appears to have used the term in a very wide sense to include practices and beliefs regarding the virtues of amulets, talismans, prophylactics against the evil eye, etc., indicating that the objects to which the term is applied are neither necessarily gods nor the habitats of divine beings or spirits. Comte, on the other hand, used the term as loosely coextensive with the worship of natural objects or phenomena, implying in all cases that the thing itself is a spirit, or that a spirit abides in it, controls it, or works through it. In the so-called 'fetishistic stage' of development Comte alleges that primitive man believes all phenomena to be controlled by the agency of spiritual beings. Tylor, with his strong bias in favor of animism, considers fetishism to imply the presence of spiritual beings and he characterizes it as "the doctrine of spirits embodied in, or attached to, or conveying influence through, certain material objects, vessels or vehicles or instruments of spiritual beings."[5]

[5] Primitive culture, 1903, v. 2, p. 144. Borchert also states: "Der Fetischdiener verehrt nicht diesen von einem Geiste bewohnten Gegenstand als solchen, sondern er verehrt den Geist, der in ihm wohnt und wirkt." Borchert, Der Animismus, *Studien aus dem Collegium Sapientiae zu Freiburg im Breisgau*, Band 5, p. 171.

Speaking with due fairness, therefore, it is perhaps patent that the term 'fetishism,' in the profuse literature of the subject, has been used with great poetic license and bewildering ambiguity and has been applied in a loose way to a body of phenomena whose character and extent are not limited or well defined. The central or nuclear symptom of fetishism commonly connoted is a magico-religious attitude toward an inanimate object. The psychological processes, however, in a number of different cases may be so diverse and non-comparable as to render the use of a single term to comprehend them exceedingly unjustifiable and positively misleading. An object may be worshipped because it provides the habitat of a spirit or a god; it may attain to profound magical significance because it provides the source of supposedly therapeutic emanations or because it is believed to possess specific, mysterious virtues or properties;[6] it may be used as a prophylactic for the purpose of warding off the malevolent and destructive radiations from the evil eye[7] or it may be used in connection with the doctrine of signatures,

[6] See especially Karutz, Der Emanismus, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1913.

[7] Elworthy, The evil eye, and Westermarck, The magic origin of Moorish designs, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1904, v. 34.

according to which nature is believed to have set upon various things, a sign, symbol, color or whatnot, which indicates that they are efficacious for the securing of certain definite magical results, generally, the cure of diseases.

In his great classic dealing with religion, Tylor uses the term 'animism' or the 'animistic view of nature', to designate a large number of psychic processes in primitive culture, in the mind of the child and in the higher civilizations, which are in many respects profoundly non-homogeneous and should not be grouped under one category. In another place we have given a detailed analysis of Tylor's position which should be considered in this connection, but it may suffice here to indicate merely a number of the diverse mental operations referred to by him as illustrations of the general theory of world animation. He reduces to a common denominator and considers upon the same level, mythological stories in which the heavenly bodies are personified, the play of children in which objects take on a dramatic role, a man's anger as expressed in his retaliation upon an object which has injured him, Xerxes flogging the Hellespont, legal proceedings instituted for the purpose of trying an object which has killed a man, etc.

A word of caution should be appended to the foregoing somewhat drastic critique of the com-

parative method and the fact made clear that we do not mean to imply that it is intrinsically vicious wherever it appears and in whatever sense employed. It has, indeed, yielded valid results in such disciplines as anatomy, linguistics, etc., and the process of comparison is frequently utilized very advantageously by way of illuminating a theme or making clear a point by parallel cases and analogous conditions. There is, perhaps, also considerable to be said in favor of the comparative method even in ethnology. It has served to bring together similar customs, rites and ideas the world over, to stimulate investigation of them and has, perhaps, in many cases, laid the basis for their elucidation. In the hands of a great master like Tylor immense masses of material are classified and our knowledge of a specific case seems to be enriched by citation of other instances of a like character.

If we wish to do full justice to the comparative method, therefore, we should compare it to the great classificatory period of the natural sciences, represented by such writers as Cuvier, Buffon and Linnaeus, in which great quantities of data were brought together under certain specific rubrics. This scientific procedure, however, represented only a stage,—a precondition of evolutionary generalizations which were implicitly involved. These classifications finally became

so top-heavy and unwieldly that they demanded working over from a new and critical point of view not based purely upon classificatory and morphological principles. This new point of view was reflected in evolutionary speculations which, whatever their shortcomings, involved a complete reorganization of the material collected in the classificatory period. In a similar manner the data assembled by the comparative method in ethnology which is based largely upon morphological considerations cannot be regarded as final, but requires to be supplemented and worked over from entirely different points of view. More adequate sifting, testing and re-analysing in accordance with more critical principles; the abandonment of the exclusive use of the form criterion as the basis of the classification of similarities; the abnegation of the rash desire to frame vast generalizations of world wide significance and validity, and fixed evolutionary series upon the basis of heterogeneous and non-comparable material; are indicated. Our criticisms, therefore, are directed, not against the desirability and the usefulness of instituting world-wide comparisons, but rather against the loose implications and presuppositions involved. It is well to recognize, therefore, that the comparative method furnishes a valuable preparation to more detailed and critical studies leading

inevitably to certain important supplementary principles. At the present time, however, it is only fair to add that there is no agreement as to the tools to be employed,—ethnologists being divided into various schools each of which distrusts the work of the others.

The previous discussion will serve to bring clearly to our attention the fact that the literature dealing with religion is loaded down with catchwords which are used to designate groups of phenomena which are ill-defined and each of which may indeed be of almost indefinite extent. With a certain degree of poetic license we may use such terms as 'imitative magic', 'fetishism', 'animism', 'totemism', 'taboo', 'nature worship', 'monotheism', 'henotheism', 'polytheism', etc., but the moment that we attempt to attach a clear and reasonably delimited connotation to any of them we immediately plunge into the most serious difficulties.

Classificatory rubrics of the types referred to seem to arise as the inevitable product of the peculiar logic of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, particularly in so far as the comparative method is followed: they are, moreover, almost inextricably bound up with various *a priori* theories of social or cultural evolution,—the novelistic influence of these developmental theories prescribing their dramatic roles and setting them

in motion: indeed, although the elements of which they are composed lose their dynamism by being violently torn from the context of reality in which they have been embedded, they receive a vicarious infusion of vitality when placed upon a new stage. Thus the comparative and the evolutionary methods in the social sciences are intrinsically bound up together and mutually supplement one another, indeed, but for the benevolent ministrations of the latter, the creations of the former would remain truly Platonic ideas, set in the empty heavens of intellectual abstractions and uncontaminated by participation in the moving reality of the empirical world. It is perhaps not possible to emphasize too strongly the fact that schemes of development do not arise as the result of inductive studies based upon the raw material to which they refer, but are essentially the products of the cloister which are dragged out upon appropriate occasion and correlated with the facts in accordance with certain artistic demands,—in other words, an order of development having been postulated, material is assembled according to its prescriptions in such a manner that the case seems to be adequately demonstrated and 'proved.'

In 1760 De Brosses set the fashion for a long line of evolutionary theorists by his celebrated

book[8] in which he set forth the theory that fetishism is the fundamental form of religion, followed later by polytheism, and, lastly, by monotheism. As the basis of his study, De Brosses considered the Negroes of the West coast of Africa as described by Portuguese sailors and regarded them as the most primitive people known. De Brosses, however, was not thoroughly consistent in his evolutionary schematism, indeed, his general doctrine was somewhat pervaded and corrupted by the theological ideas prevalent at the time. Accordingly he believed that there was one race, the Jewish, which had never passed through the fetishistic stage. All other peoples, however, were originally the recipients of a primordial Divine Revelation which they, in some manner, contrived to lose, whereupon they promptly began at the beginning of the evolutionary series, namely, with fetishism, then progressed to polytheism, and lastly to monotheism.

The theories of De Brosses obtained wide currency in the latter part of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries. The doctrine of fetishism as the elementary religion was widely disseminated and popularized and,

[8] De Brosses, Du culte des deux fetishes, ou parallèle de l'ancienne religion de l'Egypte avec la religion actuelle de Nigritie.

indeed, attained new influence through the writings of Comte who makes it the initial stage in the process of evolution.

Comte assumed that the mental development of man,—both from an ontogenetic and a phylogenetic point of view,—passes through three necessary phases of development. In the primary, or "theological," state, man seeks the essential nature of things, the first and final causes, or absolute knowledge, and believes that all phenomena arise through the action of supernatural beings; in the "metaphysical" state,—which Comte regards as one of a purely transitional character,—he projects abstract entities such as forces, etc., instead of supernatural beings, and considers them as the explanation of all phenomena; in the final or positivistic state, he abandons "the vain search after absolute notions, the origin and destination of the universe, and the causes of phenomena, and applies himself to the study of their laws,—that is, their invariable relations of succession and resemblance".[9]

The process of individual development represents a parallel series, and, if one looks back upon his own history, says Comte, he will discover "that he was a theologian in his childhood,

[9] Comte, The positive philosophy, v. 1, p. 2.

a metaphysician in his youth, and a natural philosopher in his manhood".[10]

In the presentation of facts supporting the validity of his thesis Comte selects only those which contribute to its plausibility: specifically, he calls attention to the fact that astronomy and chemistry have arisen historically out of the chimerical notions of astrology and alchemy.[11]

A certain pleasing plausibility attaches to these evolutionary generalizations of Comte. His position has been frequently attacked and defended, and perhaps rarely justly evaluated. By reason of the fact that the stages are exceedingly general, wide-sweeping and comprehensive, they do not yield themselves readily to specific tests and criticisms, moreover, one cannot altogether rid himself of the haunting thought that there is much more to Comte's position than seems *a priori* obvious, and that it perhaps furnishes a convenient, and rough and ready, characterization of a genuine historical sequence. If the attempt be made, however, to test or apply this evolutionary hypothesis in the interpretation of specific cases, it frequently breaks down entirely. (1) There is abundant testimony to show that primitive man, in the 'theological state', frequently makes use of positivistic knowledge.

[10] Ibid., p. 3.

[11] Comte, The positive philosophy, v. 1, p. 5.

Concrete investigations have invariably shown that the definite scientific information possessed and utilized by primitive man, is enormously greater than is immediately evident, or than that which is ordinarily ascribed to him by that variegated horde of evolutionary hypotheses which are wont to attribute to him a more or less benign innocence.[12] (2) In the positivistic state, at the present day, 'theological' and 'metaphysical' interpretations frequently maintain themselves, side by side, with those of rationalistic science. Moreover the individual, considered as a disparate entity, may partake of both of these cycles of participation: he may hold esoteric communion with gods and spirits, and, at the same time, carry out concrete physical experiments which make use of the mathematical method, and which do not provide a loop-hole for the machinations of anthropomorphic entities possessing independent will power and the potentiality of capricious depredations. The statement that every science arises as a direct lineal descendant of pre-existent metaphysical or theological views of the world, cannot be regarded as a generalization based upon his-

[12] See for example Roth, Superstition, magic, and medicine, *North Queensland Ethnography Bulletin*, no. 5. Goldenweiser, The knowledge of primitive man, *American Anthropologist*, 1915, n.s., v. 17.

torical facts. Frequently a science has an independent development from a positivistic or rationalistic origin, and never passes through these previous states. Undoubtedly a considerable part of our pharmacopoeia has developed from administrations utilized by primitive man, without antecedent adventitious genuflections or ideas regarding spiritual beings. An indefinite amount of technological procedure, such as is involved in the constructions of houses, boats, canoes, etc., has arisen, in a similar manner, from purely matter of fact motives.

One of the dogmas which has been very popular with evolutionary writers from time immemorial, is that the idea of God is a relatively late development in history and represents a mature flowering, as it were, of the religious spirit which is immanent in man. Investigation, however, entirely fails to support this view, —there being considerable evidence that the concept of an omnipotent being *may* arise spontaneously among the most primitive tribes. Schmidt, for example, considers the pygmies as constituting the lowest race of men but finds, on the other hand, that they possess a lofty conception of a single God.[13] Lang in numerous

[13] Schmidt, *Die Stellung der Pygmäenvölker in der Entwickelungsgeschichte des Menschen*, p. 244.

places[14] calls attention to the distribution of the All-father belief among the Australian aborigines, who are considered by a whole group of theorists as the most primitive races and the fitting subject of far-reaching evolutionary speculations. Borchert, writing from a theological point of view, assumes that the idea of God is, as it were, immanent in the religious or mental life of man and that such phenomena as are represented by the worship of spirits and the cult of ancestors, are of secondary derivation. He alleges that the idea of an All-father is prevalent among the most backward races and is also revealed in the oldest historical records, particularly the earliest collections of the Rig-Veda.[15]

Numberless attempts have been made to show that the notion of *mana*, or magical power, constitutes the magico-religious primordium and that, only later in history, ideas of spiritual beings and gods have been elaborated. If we look at the evidence, however, on a plain surface, and without preconception, it is perfectly evident

[14] See, for example, Lang, The making of religion, pp. 91–92: Australian gods, *Folklore,* March, 1899. Compare also Spencer and Gillen, The native tribes of Central Australia, pp. 222–246.

[15] Borchert, Der Animismus, *Studien aus dem Collegium Sapientiae zu Freiburg im Breisgau,* Band 5, pp. vii, 31, 34, 45, 52, 55, 161, 163, 172.

that the idea of force is of universal distribution, and develops with iron necessity, as Bastian might say, wherever man lives, in civilized, as well as in primitive, society. In making this statement, which may, perhaps, to many, seem somewhat extreme, we do not mean to suggest that the scientific concept of force is identical in all respects with the idea of *mana*, but rather that they may be regarded as similar or comparable with respect to one or more morphological features, even though the concomitant psychological penumbrae of the two ideas, when set in different stages, may exhibit considerable variation.

In the last analysis, all evolutionary theories go back to an hypothetical primordium which furnishes the starting point of their serial arrangement of data. If, however, in the selection of the primary stage, the writer contrives to seize the wrong pig by the ear, his further periods of development will not exhibit progressive improvement,—the words of von Moltke, applied to things military being equally relevant here: "An initial strategical blunder never can be retrieved".

It is very instructive to note that the great difficulty involved in the satisfactory determination of the primordium, is not confined to interpretations of religion and other phases of the

psychic life of man, but has also been keenly felt in the biological sciences. Referring to botany, Goebel says:

"It seeks, then, with diligence after 'primitive' forms. But in this search we meet with great difficulties. In the first place, we are inclined to regard those forms as primitive which have simple form-relations, and unmarked division of labor. But such forms may also have arisen by reversion, and if one looks over botanical literature, he sees, at least so far as the relationships between the larger groups are concerned, there exists no agreement as to which forms are to be regarded as primitive and which derived; opinion on this point often changes with the fashion. Thus the thallose liverworts have up till now been regarded as more primitive than the foliose, because the vegetative body of the former is much more simple in construction than that of the latter, and between them there are found gentle gradations. Recently, however, the attempt has been made to derive the thallose from the foliose forms. This is not the place to examine the evidence for or against such derivations. How vacillating is the point of view from which it is judged what form is primitive is shown by the various positions which have from time to time been given to the apetalons dicotyledons (p. 87). . . . I do not wish to deny the value of phylogenetic investigation, but the results which it has brought forth often resemble more the product of creative poetic imagination than that of exact study, *i. e.*, study capable of proof." (p. 97).[16]

[16] Goebel, The fundamental problems of present-day plant morphology, *Congress of Arts and Sciences, St. Louis*, 1904, v. 5.

All evolutionary schemes of religion, without exception, in the determination of the primordium and the serial stages of alleged development, proceed upon a purely arbitrary and uncontrolled basis. The empirical possibilities of arrangement of the data, starting, in this manner, from a primary point of orientation, are indefinitely numerous, and, if we spread before ourselves dispassionately a number of classical evolutionary schemes, there is little reason to accord preferential respectability to any one of them on the ground of a relatively greater degree of plausibility.[17]

Among all the attempts which have been made to set forth the genealogical relations alleged to exist among religious practices and ideas, few, indeed, have involved a serious test of the hypothetical scheme by means of concrete historical studies, in this respect differing materially from the biological sciences which have been able to check up their developmental theories by consulting the archaeological and palaeonto-

[17] For a statement of objections to world wide unilinear evolution, see for example, Crooke, Method of investigation and folklore origins, *Folklore,* 1913, v. 24, p. 19. Wissler suggests that the various so-called epochs are merely types of culture, of uneven distribution, some of which have been contemporaneous. The doctrine of evolution and anthropology, *Journal of Religious Psychology,* 1913, v. 6, p. 231.

logical records. Taking Robinson's view of historical perspective, according to which the life of man as an upright creature must be regarded as having consumed at least two hundred and forty thousand years, it is obvious that the whole discussion is somewhat vitiated by being confined to a relatively insignificant period of history. Speaking in the most general terms, therefore, we may safely say that all these genealogical hypotheses lack objective confirmation and that their relative merit is to be judged largely on the ground of obvious plausibility and ingenuity, and the inner logical consistency and symmetry involved in the process of their own unfolding.

The principles determining these evolutionary arrangements being thus capricious and uncontrolled, may therefore justly be said to involve a strong admixture of artistic and novelistic elements, together with that all-pervading logical principle characteristic of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, namely, the extrusion of negative evidence. The writer, indeed, fares best and swims most easily in a sea of generalities when, and in so far as, he can get rid of some of his facts. This procedure serves to give the freest rein to his imagination and to provide the indispensable basis of a quasi-dramatic narrative. The facts to which reference is made are so enormously

complex and diversified, that, by means of a rigid selection carried out in the service of a special point of view, almost any specific theoretical point can be "proved".

If, however, we spread the material out on a plain surface and take for a moment the view of Bastian that there are a limited number of fundamental ideas[18] which characterize the life

[18] Bastian and Dilthey have claimed that there are a limited number of metaphysical ideas which occur with appalling monotony both in the writings of philosophers and the mind of primitive man. For example, the presence of Platonic ideas among the American Indians, cited by Tylor and Alexander, is a case in point. Referring to the tendency of a name toward hypostatization, Alexander says: "This is curiously illustrated by the Indian notion of an archetypal chief (a veritable Platonic Idea) of every animal species, from which each individual of the species draws its life. The myth of such universals—*universalia ante res*, in the true Scholastic sense—is a plain consequence of the primitive inability to think an abstraction other than concretely; every idea corresponds to a reality because every idea is a present vision of its object." Alexander, Communion with Deity, *Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, p. 744. Boas calls attention to the limited number of categories which can be discovered through an analytical study of primitive languages and the fact that these coincide with the categories of thought dealt with by philosophers. Anthropology, p. 20. See also, The limitations of the comparative method of anthropology, *Science*, n.s., v. 4, pp. 901–902. Psychological problems in anthropology, *Clark University, Lectures and*

of man, both primitive and civilized, we are at once freed from the constricting and artificial domination of evolutionary schemes, and are at liberty to investigate their occurrence and distribution, without reference to any alleged point for point correspondence with certain hypothetical levels of cultural achievement or with any fixed principles. With strict regard to the actual data, we are justified in considering the fundamental religious ideas of man as lying on the same chronological and logical level, and involving, as it were, so many empirical possibilities which are liable to occur and recur, sporadically. Ideas of magical power, spirits, emanations, deities, an All-Father, etc., are irregularly and willy-nilly distributed among various cultural stages and historical periods and cannot be stated in terms of a necessary genealogical series.

Addresses, 1909, pp. 127–128. Compare Goldenweiser, The principle of limited possibilities in the development of culture, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 1913, v. 26, p. 259.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROBLEM OF THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF ETHNOGRAPHICAL ANALOGA

The comparative method involves the assumption that ethnological features in various areas are identical or similar, and hence constitute homogeneous data. Taboo, totemism, the forms of art, of religion, of social organization, and so on, are illustrations of the cultural products in question. The classification and organization of material under such specific rubrics are based upon characteristics of outer form. Some type of arrangement in a series is then usually predicated and the early methods of biological evolutionism carried over directly into ethnology,—it being supposed that various aspects of the spiritual life of man exhibit genealogical relations involving a change from the simple to the complex in a manner similar to those obtaining among plants and animals. It is furthermore assumed that a classical and uniform method of development has taken place between the various forms or stages of the process, considered as a

whole, and also that each separate ethnological feature has arisen in a certain typical manner,—Frazer, for example, regarding taboo as having developed everywhere by reason of magical prohibition.[1] Similarity in the outer form of ethnic units in two or more areas or periods of time is held to involve a concomitant resemblance in their historical genesis. The cultural objects or constructs set up in this manner are not completely embodied in actual situations, but only participate in them more or less fully. An entire system of artefacts is thus presupposed whose relationship to the individual instance is very far from being clearly set forth.

The ramifications of the comparative method are enormously more widespread than those which are revealed in the systematic attempts to build up evolutionary series or to generalize diverse processes of development, in various parts of the world, in the form of an archetypal narrative. Frequently it is utilized for purposes of illustration or as a powerful literary device, ancillary to the more lucid and appealing exposition of a point which the writer desires to convey with irrefragable logic. Some striking features possessing morphological resemblance are selected out of two or more wider complexes and

[1] See Marett's criticism of Frazer, The threshold of religion, chapter entitled, "Is taboo a negative magic?"

made the bases of comparison. It is always assumed, however, that the concomitant elements associated with these central features are also similar,—that is to say, if a complex, *A*, possess a feature, *a*, similar to a feature, *b*, in the complex, *B*, *A* and *B* are therefore similar and may be spoken of in the same breath. The empirical possibilities of instituting comparisons according to this prescription are almost limitless,—magic may be compared with science, religion with paranoia, the vault of the heavens with a man's skull, and what not. Excerpts from the writings of Tanzi furnish an excellent illustration of the literary (and perhaps quasi-scientific) employment of this device for the purpose of embellishing a theme.

One of the morphological features of resemblance between religion and paranoia is the fact that both make use of spirits,—the zealot beseeching them to bestow upon him all the benefits of life and adopting various prophylactic measures against their malevolent depredations, the insane man waging deadly battle upon those in league against him. This consideration Tanzi proceeds to amplify in a very picturesque manner.

In mellifluous cadence, balanced metaphor, and with brilliant rhetorical artifice, he sets forth the parallelism,—deep, fundamental and abiding,—

between primitive religion and paranoia. The artistry of the writer is so manifest, his command of the resources of language so striking, his illustrations so well chosen, that one is quite carried away upon the virile wings of his thought and fancies that, forsooth, he may see within the sombre walls of the asylum, the concepts, rites and practices of primitive religion vicariously unfolded in the mental life and overt behavior of the patient. "Thus", says Tanzi, "the abandoned mythology of primitive man is mobilized like an army ready to assail the paranoiac, who, without having ever read one word of Spencer, Lubbock, Tylor, or Bastian, ends by creating for himself a sort of personal religion which is not very different from the religions of primitive man, and which also passes through its own phases of indistinct animism to monotheism—that is to say, to belief in a single, invisible, and omnipotent being, either persecutor or protector".[2] "Since paranoia is a developmental anomaly that embraces the entire life of a man, these clinical histories are complete biographies, from which it would almost seem as if paranoiacs possessed an accurate knowledge of the psychology of primitive peoples, and deliberately set themselves to imitate them. To them, also, the world seems to be swarming with invisible

[2] Tanzi, A text-book of mental diseases, p. 720.

powers and persons, malignant and proteiform, leagued in that villainy sometimes horrible, sometimes even comic, which afflicts or excites, but at least disturbs the simple mind of the savage. With them, also, the *something* becomes the *someone*, and good and evil, but especially evil, are the constant objects of symbolical personifications".[3]

However, those who, either through temperamental predisposition, or more rationalistic argumentation, are disposed to find some measure of justification and dignity in the religion of primitive man, will perhaps derive some measure of consolation in the fact that Tanzi rejects the parallelism between the mental processes of primitive man and those of dementia praecox.[4]

[3] Ibid., p. 719.

[4] "Other authorities compare the degeneration that takes place in dementia praecox to those processes of atavistic reversion by which certain cultivated plants return to their wild form, but it is unjust to savages to liken them to cases of dementia praecox". Ibid., p. 665. Freud has also compared paranoia and primitive religion and considers that in the latter spirits are ejected as an aspect of a compensatory process which serves to ameliorate the conflicts which arise within experience. "Der Krankheitsprozess der Paranoia bedient sich tatsächlich des Mechanismus der Projektion, um solche im Seelenleben entstandene Konflikte zu erledigen." Freud, S. Über einige Übereinstimmungen in Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker, *Imago*, 1913, v. 2, p. 15.

The form criterion in the interpretation of similarities has held undisputed sway in ethnology until very recent years. In this respect the science remained anachronistic and fallow,—having quite failed to take up into itself, or to draw appropriate morals from, the significant and fruitful discussion of this subject in the field of biology. It is entirely impossible to convey any adequate idea of the immense significance of the form criterion in the general literature of the subject.

Attempts aimed at a satisfactory interpretation of similarities constitute an irradiating centre round which a group of ethnological problems gravitate. The difficulties attendant upon the statement of the respect in which things resemble and in which they differ from one another, was early appreciated in speculative thought. Plato sets forth the pitfalls to be encountered in a quaint fashion.

"Well," he said, "I admit that justice bears a resemblance to holiness, for there is always some point of view in which everything is like every other thing: white is in a certain way like black, and hard is like soft, and the most extreme opposites have some qualities in common; even the parts ot the face which, as we were saying before, are distinct and have different functions, are still in a certain point of view similar, and one of them is like another of them. And you may prove that they are like one another on the same principle that all things are like one another;

and yet things which are alike in some particular ought not to be called alike, nor things which are unlike in some particular, however slight, unlike." [5]

We may refer firstly to the biological phases of this question in a very guarded way, with an explicit recognition of the fact that biological considerations cannot be applied haphazardly in the interpretation of ethnological phenomena, and that we must not, in any sense, look for a point for point correlation between the heuristic principles utilized by the two disciplines. Bearing these highly important reservations in mind, it is, nevertheless, instructive to consider the manner in which attempts have been made to interpret similarities in this field of research. Speaking with a considerable degree of laxity, we may say that, in place of morphological similarity, utilized so widely in ethnology and general literature, a comparable fetish has been made of the attempt to interpret similarity upon the basis of descent.[6]

In 1870 Ray Lankester published an important article involving an able critique of the treatment of homologa and analoga prevalent in biology at that time. Homology, according to

[5] Plato, Protagoras, Jowett, 1892, p. 153.

[6] We shall see, however, that this characterization is rough and subserves at best only the function of a preliminary statement.

Lankester, is ordinarily interpreted by evolutionary writers upon the basis of descent. If an organ, *a*, in an animal, *A*, is asserted to be homologous with an organ, *b*, in an animal, *B*, it is meant that in some common ancestor, *K*, the organs, *a* and *b*, were represented by an organ, *c*, and that *A* and *B* have inherited their organs, *a* and *b*, from *K*.[7]

However, it is quite obvious that similarity of structure cannot be interpreted entirely in terms of descent. Parts which are both structurally dissimilar and cannot be traced back to a common ancestral type, may, nevertheless, take on similarity of structure and function due to the influence of a similar environment. To express the former type of resemblance due to descent he invented the term "homogeny", for the latter type "homoplasy". He proposed that this latter term be applied to "all cases of close resemblance of form which are not traceable to homogeny, all *details* of agreement not homogenous, in structures which are broadly homogeneous, as well as in structures having no genetic affinity".[8] He suggests, however, that the term homoplasy may be susceptible of further

[7] Lankester, On the use of the term homology in modern zoology, *Annals and Magazine of Natural History*, 1870, ser. 4, v. 6, p. 34.

[8] Ibid., p. 41.

analysis, and that other contributary causes may be involved in the production of similar structures.[9]

In a critique of the position of Lankester, Mivart states that if the word homology be abandoned, the two terms 'homogeny' and 'homoplasy' will not be sufficient to replace it, in other words, similarities in structure may be looked upon from more than two points of view.[10] He proceeds to the enumeration of no less than twenty-five different principles of classification each of which is valid for the subject matter to which it applies, from whence it follows that we may get an indefinitely large number of different types of similarity in accordance with purely subjective principles. "We can", he says, "detect a certain number of relations of function, of origin, and of conformity of relative position of different kinds according to the different ways in which we regard the subject matter, *i. e.*, as we follow up different lines of thought. It is well to have distinct names for at least the more obviously different conceptions of this kind, about a quarter of a hundred of which may be readily distinguished".[11]

[9] Ibid., p. 42.

[10] Mivart, On the use of the term "homology", *Annals and Magazine of Natural History*, 1870, ser. 4, v. 6, p. 115.

[11] Ibid., p. 118.

In a general way, it has long been recognized that similarity of structure does not always indicate a corresponding genetic resemblance. Specifically, Goebel has shown that the leaves of bryophytes in a number of series have arisen in quite different ways.[12]

The ideal biological classification, according to Bower, should be made on the basis of descent, but great difficulties are involved in the attempt to carry out this desideratum in the general practice of plant morphology. The practical upshot of the matter, indeed, is that traditional categories of parts, such as leaves, break down when genetic and comparative considerations are introduced. He does not offer a practical formula by means of which purely morphological or structural similarities may be harmonized with similarities conceived from the point of view of descent.[13]

Bower points out the difficulties attendant upon the attempt to introduce too great precision into biological nomenclature. He states that there has been a tendency to regard the "leaf" as an abstract entity, distinct from the stem. From a purely morphological point of view, such precision indeed seems to constitute a

[12] Goebel, Organography, v. 1, p. 261.

[13] Bower, Plant morphology, *Congress of Arts and Sciences, St. Louis*, 1904, v. 5, p. 65.

consummation to be devoutly wished. From the standpoint of both ontogenetic and phylogenetic development, however, this structural homogeneity cannot be maintained, and consideration of the actual form does not suggest its sharp delimitation from the axis as a general feature in the shoots of ordinary vascular plants.[14] He appears to speak of the term "leaf" as a catchword having reference to essentially heterogeneous phenomena. He points out further that the term has been borrowed from colloquial language and is used in a roughly descriptive, rather than a strictly, scientific sense. In this connection he says: "It designates collectively objects which have, it is true, formal and functional, and even topographical features in common, but have not had the same phyletic history. There is every probability that the word 'leaf' will continue to be used in this merely popular sense".[15]

Delage points out with irrefragable logic that similarity in the functions of organs is of equal importance with genetic considerations, or similarity interpreted from the point of view of descent. Thus both the gill of the fish and the lung of the mammal subserve the purpose of

[14] Ibid., p. 76.
[15] Ibid., p. 71.

respiration, although, structurally and genetically, they are quite distinct.[16]

The wing of an insect and that of a bird subserve the purpose of flight and are hence comparable organs or parts. From the point of view of structure, however, the wing of the bird resembles the arm of man, in so far as there is involved in each, a similar arrangement of bones and muscles.[17]

If we look at biological phenomena from an embryological and palaeontological point of view, a still different classification of resemblances is suggested. The foot of the horse and the foot of the ox are functionally and structurally similar with respect to their general outlines. Despite this consideration, however, these parts exhibit a noteworthy difference, namely, the foot of the horse has one digit whereas that of the ox has two. From an embryological point of view, the five digits of the unguiculates appear in the horse and the ox. This consideration leads to the supposition of a five-toed ancestor whose digits have undergone this progressive reduction. The palaeontological record confirms this supposition, and the foot of the horse and the foot

[16] Delage, Comparative anatomy and the foundations of morphology, *Congress of Arts and Sciences, St. Louis*, 1904, v. 5, p. 51.

[17] Ibid., p. 342.

of the ox are therefore regarded as descendants of the parts of a common five-toed ancestor.[18]

Delage recognizes quite clearly that there are no absolute ear marks or stigmata by means of which similarities may be classified. He states that the biologist ordinarily boldly announces that his criteria are taken from genetic considerations or phylogeny: as a matter of actual practice, however, they are borrowed from a number of diverse points of view. "The foundations of homology are a mixture in varying proportions of comparative anatomy studied profoundly, of palaeontological data too often incomplete, and a hypothetical phylogeny, together with a dose, not to be overlooked, of that mysticism with which natural philosophers constructed their archetype. This formula may appear a little irreverent to the devotees of morphology; it is just, nevertheless." [19]

In ethnology, however, the form criterion maintained itself with almost undisturbed placidity until 1896, when Boas made an assault upon the whole group of principles presupposed by the comparative method. In a critical article he showed that ethnic units which exhibit morphological similarity or identity may have developed from diverse psychic processes. He

[18] Ibid., p. 343.
[19] Ibid., p. 350.

called attention to a number of cases in point,—totemism, geometrical designs, the use of masks, the paternal family, and concepts of a future life.[20]

In 1903, Ehrenreich, probably as the result of entirely independent investigations, arrived at an interpretation strikingly similar to that of Boas, and applied the term "convergence" to the phenomena involved.

He finds of special interest, certain similarities among religious phenomena in regions far apart, of which he enumerates the following: (*a*) shamanistic secret societies with similar rites; (*b*) the semblant death of the novitiate immediately preceding his entrance into a religious society,—a phenomenon encountered in the Greek mysteries and in the indigenous cultures of North America, Africa and Australia; (*c*) the supposition that a masked dancer must not fall in his performance lest he thereby engender the anger of spirits;[21] (*d*) the prescription that women and children must not, upon penalty of

[20] Boas, The limitations of the comparative method of anthropology, *Science*, 1896, n.s., v. 4, p. 903–905. Compare also Boas, The mind of primitive man, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, v. 14. Boas, Review of Graebner, Methode der Ethnologie, *Science*, n.s., v. 34.

[21] Boas, The social organization and the secret societies of the Kwakiutl Indians, *U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, Annual Report*, 1895.

death, look upon masks and other magico-religious paraphernalia; (*e*) when the higher religions have become differentiated from a more primitive animism and a priestly caste has appeared, certain striking similarities are to be found in the shape of offerings, prayers, exorcisms, etc.; (*f*) purification, self-castigation, confession, etc.,—resemblances so striking as to lead the old missionaries to assume that primitive races must have come under Jewish or Christian influences at some remote period; (*g*) the presence of a custom similar to the Lord's Supper among the Aztecs.[22]

In 1910 Goldenweiser subjected the phenomena of totemism to a searching critical analysis from this point of view. Previous theoretical writers had commonly defined and described it in terms of one or more fundamental,

[22] Ehrenreich, Zur Frage der Beurtheilung und Bewerthung ethnographischer Analogien, *Correspondenzblatt der deutschen Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte*, 1903, p. 178. Ehrenreich utilizes the concept of convergence, not only in the interpretation of specific features of culture which have arisen from different historical antecedents, but also to cultures as such. From this point of view he considers, (1) the Brazilians and Papuans, (2) the Veddahs, Bushmen and Pygmies and, lastly, (3) the Babylonians, Egyptians and Chinese (Ibid., p. 178). This extension of the concept of convergence to cultural complexes überhaupt is, however, rather unhappy.

essential features. Goldenweiser finds, however, that these alleged typical symptoms exhibit considerable diversity from area to area and that, for this reason, totemism cannot be dealt with as such and at large, nor can its various features be regarded as organically interrelated.[23]

The phenomena of taboo have been widely quoted as a simple and obvious case in which a multitude of diverse processes may lead to the same result. Goldenweiser has cited a large number of the sources from which this ethnic feature may arise.

"The animal, as such is sacred, as for instance, snakes in India, and cats in Egypt; the animals are believed to be incarnations of ancestors, as in Egypt, or among the South African Bantu; the animal is a totem, as in innumerable instances; the animal is a guardian spirit, as commonly among North American Indians, in the Banks Islands, etc.; the animal is associated with evil spirits, as among the Aranda in the case of some few animals that are not totems; certain animals must not be killed or eaten during a particular season, as among the Eskimo, where caribou must not be killed, eaten, handled, during the season when sea-animals are hunted, and *vice versa.* The animal is regarded as an ancestor, as in many totemic communities where the taboo applies to a clan or a family, as well as in some non-totemic groups where the idea of descent refers to the entire tribe; the animal is unclean, as the pig among the Jews; the animal is too closely akin to man, as in

[23] Goldenweiser, Totemism, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 1910, pp. 182–183.

modern ethical vegetarianism; the animal is too closely associated with man, as the dog or other pets; pregnant women, boys before initiation, women after first child-birth, etc.; must not eat certain animals for various reasons; the animal is a sacred symbol, as the dove in Christianity; and so on."[24]

Boas has emphasized the frequent non-comparability of genetic processes which lead to the same result. Murder, wherever it occurs, regarded from the standpoint of outer form, might be thought to involve a violation of the fundamental ethical and social sentiments of man. From this point of view it would seem quite appropriate to group together, under one rubric, all cases of deliberate homicide. The simplest investigation, however, brings to light the fact that the mental processes leading to the killing of a man are frequently very diverse and strictly non-comparable. Infanticide, frequently practiced by reason of the shortage of food supply or because a child is deformed; the killing of a parent about to become decrepit so that he may enjoy the full use of his faculties in the spirit-world; the slaying of an enemy for revenge; involve mental processes so diverse that they ought not to be considered in the same category. Again a machine-made art product cannot be

[24] Goldenweiser, The principle of limited possibilities in the development of culture, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 1913, v. 26, p. 274.

compared with one which is the creation of the individual artist involving his innermost thoughts and feelings, though they be identical in outer form.[25] If, however, despite the state of affairs here so clearly indicated, we persist in conjoining heterogeneous elements under a single principle of classification, the situation resembles that of the small boy who, after having added together cows, horses and sheep, wonders what sort of an animal has arisen as the result of his arithmetical calculations.

One of the fundamental difficulties which confront us is that which arises when we take cognizance of the Wundtian concept of psychic actuality, which involves an appreciation of the dynamic and functional aspect of a culture over and above its constituent parts.[26] Accordingly, if two elements which resemble one another are present in two separate cultures, one of the criteria of similarity can be stated only in terms of their relationship to their respective cultures, or to some more narrow cycle of participation

[25] Boas, Psychological problems in anthropology, *Clark University, Lectures and Addresses delivered 1909*, p. 128.

[26] See, for example, Wundt, Logik, v. 3, p. 260. Haeberlin, The theoretical foundations of Wundt's folk-psychology, *Psychological Review*, 1916, v. 23, pp. 281–285. Haeberlin, The idea of fertilization in the culture of the Pueblo Indians, p. 5.

within them (a socio-ceremonial unit, a religious society, etc.[27]).

It is obvious that we cannot consider as similar, in a significant sense, elements which have been introduced from without in a fortuitous manner, and have not become integral or functioning parts within the respective cultures involved. If, for example, in an autochthonous culture complex (if we can for purposes of exposition speak of such a non-existent entity) a mask is used for a profound religious purpose, such as to personify a spirit, to scare away, or to deceive, a hostile spirit as to the identity of the wearer, etc., and the same mask is borrowed by another people and used merely for the purposes of theatrical or ceremonial pantomine, we would not be justified in classifying the two groups of phenomena as similar. Oftentimes a cultural feature may be borrowed and yet remain, as Goldenweiser expresses it, "a foreign body in its new cultural environment."[28] As instances of this non-assimilation he cites the *art nouveau* of western Europe which toward the end of the nineteenth century was introduced into the United States but, "after languishing for a

[27] Compare Boas, Review of Graebner's Methode der Ethnologie, *Science*, 1911, v. 34, p. 808.

[28] Goldenweiser, The principle of limited possibilities in the development of culture, p. 283.

number of years in the show-windows of fashionable stationary and art stores, it vanished without leaving any apparent trace on any form of American art".[29] Classical education recently foisted upon the Russian school curriculum quite failed to be psychologically assimilated to the system as a whole. The institution of maternal descent was only imperfectly assimilated by the Kwakiutl, the resulting social organization embodying both features of maternal and paternal descent.[30] Elements of Christianity frequently appear in the ghost dance religions of the American Indians, and Biblical incidents in their cosmologies.[31]

With due respect to the concept of psychic actuality, however, and the integral assimilation of elements within a functioning totality, it is exceedingly difficult to apply these considerations seriously in the shape of an heuristic principle, or one of the criteria, for the correct interpretation of similarities. It is almost impossible to determine, with any degree of assurance, whether or not a particular element has

[29] Ibid., p. 283.

[30] Ibid., p. 284: See also Boas, The social organization and the secret societies of the Kwakiutl Indians, *U. S. Bureau of Ethnology, Annual Report*, 1895, p. 334.

[31] Goldenweiser, The principle of limited possibilities in the development of culture, pp. 284–285.

been thoroughly digested by the new culture, indeed, it may frequently be introduced, juxtaposed, or intermingled, in the mechanical sense assumed by Graebner, or it may not have reference to the culture as a whole, but only to a certain sharply deliminated portion of it, as for example, a religious, socio-ceremonial or scientific, body, within which it lives and moves and has its being. This latter consideration applies with particular force in the case of modern cultures, all of which embody separable and disparate parts within the body politic or a limited geographical area.

It has been suggested that a number of fundamental similarities in cultural features, ideas and inventions, are due to their common origin in a prehistoric period prior to the dispersion of the human race,—a consideration which Boas considers to have "some points in its favor, though it cannot be proved".[32] This state of affairs, however, can hardly be seriously considered in the actual development of ethnological studies, but it serves to introduce an element of uncertainty into the situation in so far as we are bound to take cognizance of an indeterminable variable.

When we speak of morphological resemblance we are using an inevitably loose term which

[32] Boas, Anthropology, p. 22.

cannot with equal validity be indifferently referred to all cultural features. At best it seems to apply most cogently and legitimately to those objects of material, industrial, and scientific culture, which have a definite external shape. In the case of the products of spiritual culture however,—the gods, spirits, magic powers, emanations, taboos, concepts of a future life, rites, ceremonies, etc.,—which are not precipitated in the form of definite geometrical objects, we cannot speak of morphological resemblance with the same degree of assurance. In the last analysis, probably all that is implied here is that some one constant feature is set within a shifting complex of variable elements. The significant consideration, however, may frequently be the fact that this central nucleus is of no great importance when compared with the profound differences which characterize the concomitant elements which cluster round it. In the case of taboo, the constant feature is that a thing is forbidden, but the reasons for the inhibitory prescription, together with its genetic history and psychological setting, are frequently so exceedingly dissimilar, that we are bound to admit that taboo in two or more areas may be non-comparable.

In various parts of this work sufficient references have been made to constitute a drastic

criticism against the uncontrolled use of the form criterion. It is, therefore, unnecessary to refer to these arguments again. Suffice it to say that classifications based on morphological considerations will clash hopelessly with those based upon genetic processes which lead to the same result.

In the absence of satisfactory objective criteria for the determination and interpretation of analoga, the methodological bias of the investigator occupies the leading role in the resulting classification. Oftentimes, therefore, a very considerable degree of artistic and novelistic effects is produced by the application of the several respective points of view. Thus Graebner ascribes similarities in regions far apart, divided by geographical barriers, and in which historical contact is not known definitely to have occurred, to a process of dissemination. The great and influential school represented by such writers as Tylor, Spencer, Frazer, Andrée, Bastian, Waitz and many others, have sought to explain the same phenomena on the basis of parallel development and, in this manner, have ignored almost completely actual processes of historical transmission. In recent years there has been a tendency on the part of a few ethnologists to utilize convergence as a subsidiary or equally important method of interpretation. Comprehensive the-

oretical works, however, have not as yet been written from this point of view.[33]

The question at last arises as to what we can mean by real, as opposed to false, similarity, and as to the ultimate justifiability of the employment of the concept of comparability. In the last analysis, the difficulties attendant upon the attempt to harmonize, organize, and systematize, into an organic, mutually consistent whole, the multiplicity of views which are capable of providing a basis for a classification of similarities, are insuperable. It is perhaps fair to say that no serious attempt has been made to unify these various standpoints. Ethnographical literature, on the whole, presents to us little more than groups of classifications carried out from mutually irreconcilable points of view,—the advocates of the separate principles being gathered into schools which profoundly distrust each others results. What is implied, then, is really a group of subjective principles, each of which has a limited validity within a special point of view, but which cannot be organized into a single, coherent, logical system, whose

[33] For an ethnographic study based largely on this point of view, however, see for example, Goldenweiser, Totemism, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 1910, v. 23: Compare also Goldenweiser, The principle of limited possibilities in the development of culture.

various parts are satisfactorily adjusted. In the last analysis, therefore, the interpretation of similarities and the concomitant determination of objects (taboo, totemism, etc.) is a function of an indefinite number of more or less indeterminate and indeterminable variables, which are not mutually consistent with one another, and which cannot be organized into a comprehensive system. Different products arise accordingly as one or another, or various groups of these principles are followed out,—the resulting classification reflecting only the particular heuristic principles which determine it, and having no objective validity. The framing of ethnographical analoga, therefore, is a somewhat romantic procedure which is comparable in many respects to the building up of animal and plant archetypes characteristic of the pre-Darwinian natural sciences. Both procedures supplement their positivistic knowledge with a strong dose of mysticism and are wont to ascribe ontological existence to their subjective creations.

CHAPTER 5

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN MAGIC AND RELIGION

There is no unanimity of opinion at the present time regarding a precise characterization of magic,—the attitude toward the subject being largely dominated by that assumed toward religion. There is, however, no dearth of definitions of the latter. Applying to his day, Max Müller commented upon the bewildering varieties then in existence.[1] Since that time the number has unhappily not decreased. Durkheim enumerates and criticizes several current definitions after which he proceeds to formulate one of his own.[2] Leuba cites forty-eight which he attempts to classify under four rubrics, three following the conventional tripartite division of psychology,—volitional, intellectualistic, affectivistic,—and the fourth, valuational, which stands upon its own legs.[3]

[1] Müller, Lectures on the origin and growth of religion, p. 21.

[2] Durkheim, Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse, ch. I.

[3] Leuba, A psychological study of religion, Appendix.

Scholastic implications maintain a troubled existence under the guise of brief verbal formulae of this type. An utterly fictitious simplification is introduced into phenomena which involve enormous complexity, and the attempt is made to state the nature of the inner essence of that which gives rise to a complex of diversified irradiations. It is desirable, however, from a certain point of view, to avoid stereotyped formulations and to use the terms "magic" and "religion" in a common or garden sense, being guided either by the context or the exigencies of discourse.

Attempts have been made to distinguish between magic and religion on the basis of the presumption that each possesses mutually exclusive traits. Two considerations have especially contributed to this dichotomy.

Religion, it has been said, is inextricably interwoven with ethical concepts, certain practices after having obtained social approval, being forthwith organized into an established cult: magic, in contradistinction, is associated with disapproval, its rites being unjustified, its aims and purposes anti-social; indeed it leads a precarious career in the shape of disorganized rags and tags of practices within the body politic.

One of the most widely held views, for which King, Durkheim, and many others stand sponsor,

involves the supposition that magic is "relatively individualistic and secret in its methods and interests, and is thus opposed fundamentally to the methods and interests of religion, which are social and public. This individualistic and secret character of magic makes it easy for it to become the instrument of secret vengeance. . . . There is no primitive society, so far as our accounts have gone, which does not dread the sorcerer. Everywhere there is a clear-cut distinction between the sorcerer, who deals secretly with unfamiliar agencies, and the priest or medicine man, who works for the public good." [4] Durkheim compares the relationship existing between the magician and his client with that of the physician and his patient in view of the fact that both are more or less accidental and evanescent. While it is true, he admits, that shamans sometimes assemble for the performance of ceremonies, this is to be regarded as merely an incidental occurrence and does not express the essential or significant characteristic of the art. Religion, on the other hand, is indigenous only to a more or less closely knit group wherein is involved a certain degree of spiritual and moral

[4] King, The development of religion, p. 195. Smith regards the practice of magic as having been illicit in the ancient Semitic cultures. The religion of the Semites, p. 263.

homogeneity,—the beliefs being held, the emotions experienced, and the rites practiced, in common.[5]

A certain insidious plausibility attaches to the many opinions of this character which renders the fallacy involved not readily susceptible of discovery. Throughout the world magic is associated with evil practices, particularly in the form of killing or doing injury to an enemy by means of a secret technique and the securing of all sorts of benefits for a purely selfish motive. Religion, on the other hand, appears to be more frequently concerned with communistic welfare, with rites and practices which are ideally associated with socio-economic values,—good crops, benign states of the weather, plentitude of game animals, and so on.

In order to make good the point to which these writers refer, however, it is not sufficient to point to the adventitious association (however frequent it be) of magic with individual, evil purposes, and religion with those which possess social and ethical approval, but it is requisite that these adhesions be inevitable, necessary, and of universal distribution. The incorrectness of the distinction set up in this manner is made manifest not by means of an *a priori* examina-

[5] Durkheim, Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse, p. 63.

tion of the theory but by a simple reference to the ethnographic facts. There is an abundance of material which indicates that magic *may* be a social, communistic affair possessing the approval or ethical sanction of the group as a whole. The Australian *Intichiuma* ceremonies performed ostensibly by the totemic clans for the regulation of the various departments of nature, the magical rites of the wild tribes of the Malay peninsula carried on particularly in connection with agricultural processes, and the activities of the Eskimo *angakok*, furnish striking cases in point. Fossey also calls attention to the public and official character of the performances of the magicians attached to the ancient Babylonian kings.[6]

[6] Spencer and Gillen, The native tribes of Central Australia: The northern tribes of Central Australia. Howitt, The native tribes of South-East Australia. Roth, Superstition, magic, and medicine. Frazer, The origin of totemism, *Fortnightly Review*, 1899, n.s., v. 65. Skeat, Malay magic. Skeat and Blagden, Pagan races of the Malay Peninsula. Boas, The Central Eskimo, *U. S. Bureau of Ethnology, Annual Report*, 1884–85, v. 6. Boas, The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay, *American Museum of Natural History, Bulletin*, 1907, v. 15. Goldenweiser, Spirit, *mana*, and the religious thrill, *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 1915, v. 12, pp. 636–637. Fossey, La magie Assyrienne, *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Sciences Religieuses*, v. 15, pp. 4, 10, 136.

The presence of a belief in spirits has been widely held to be the most important of the specific differentiae of religion, whereas the vicarious idea of an impersonal power is characteristic of magic. This consideration is of great crucial significance, indeed, our mode of approach toward, and manner of treating, magico-religious phenomena will be largely determined by the attitude which we adopt regarding ideas of spirits and their performances, on the one hand, and those of *mana* and its manifestations, on the other. Several equally important methodological problems are concomitantly involved, but, in so far as the spirit-*mana* problem is immanent in any method of treatment which may be adopted, it is justifiable to select it for special and individual investigation.

CHAPTER 6

SPIRIT AS THE PRIMORDIUM

Tylor's classic treatise, embodying the celebrated "minimum definition of religion" as "a belief in spiritual beings", provided the basis for modern speculation on the subject. Previous to this time many persons had thought that they had discovered "savage" races who possessed no religion whatsoever, but this lack was found to exist only by reason of those formal definitions set up by them which served arbitrarily to extrude certain customs and beliefs from this domain. With the appearance of Tylor's definition, however, it became evident that no tribe was completely devoid of religion, since all peoples, who had ever been investigated, were found to possess more or less well defined ideas about spirits.

According to Tylor and his followers, these beliefs, on the one hand, furnish the motivation for all religious practices,—ceremonies, the cures of disease, sacrifices, prayers, incantations, witchcraft, etc.,—and, on the other, constitute the

basis of a primitive philosophy of nature or *Weltanschauung* which he calls "animism". Primitive man is "deeply impressed" by two groups of biological phenomena: (1) those concerning life and death, together with that peculiar thing which "causes waking, sleep, trance, disease and death;" (2) the nature of those "human shapes which appear in dreams and visions".[1] Observing such types of facts he draws the "obvious inference that every man has two things belonging to him, namely, a life and a phantom".[2] He then reasons further that they are related to one another or are combined in a *tertium quid, viz.*, the soul, *i. e.*, the apparitional- or ghost-soul. Having arrived at this all important concept, he applies it, in the processes of reasoning, to other phenomena, animals, plants, and lastly, to inanimate objects,—stocks, stones, canoes, rivers, etc.,—so that, in the end, he considers the entire world to be alive.

It is requisite, at the outset, that we should attempt to make as clear to ourselves as possible precisely what is connoted by this animistic world view. This desideratum will perhaps be best subserved by means of a few literal citations.

"First and foremost among the causes which transfigure into myths the facts of daily experience is the belief

[1] Tylor, Primitive culture, p. 428.

[2] Ibid., p. 428.

in the animation of all nature, rising at its highest pitch to personification. . . . To the lower tribes of man, sun and stars, trees and rivers, winds and clouds, become personal animate creatures, leading lives conformed to human or animal analogies, and performing their special functions in the universe with the aid of limbs like beasts, or of artificial instruments like men, or what men's eyes behold is but the instrument to be used or the material to be shaped, while behind it there stands some prodigious but yet half-human creature, who grasps it with his hands or blows it with his breath. *The basis on which such ideas as these are built is not to be narrowed down to poetic fancy and transformed metaphor. They rest upon a broad philosophy of nature, early and crude, indeed, but thoughtful, consistent, and quite really and seriously meant.*" [3]

In another passage he says:

"When the Aleutians thought that if any one gave offence to the moon, he would fling down stones on the offender and kill him, or when the moon came down to an Indian squaw, appearing in the form of a beautiful woman with a child in her arms, and demanding an offering of tobacco and fur robes, *what conceptions of personal life could be more distinct than these?* When the Apache Indian pointed to the sky and asked the white man, 'Do you not believe that God, this sun (que Dios, este Sol) sees what we do and punishes us when it is evil?' *it is impossible to say that this savage was talking in rhetorical simile*".[4]

In support of the reasonableness of his contention that primitive man holds a doctrine of

[3] Ibid., p. 285. Italics mine.

[4] Ibid., pp. 289–290. Italics mine.

animism in a literal sense, Tylor adduces evidence from more highly developed cultures in which such a belief is alleged to be held, the implication being that, if we can observe the mechanisms of the process of animation working here, we are thus enabled to understand more clearly their mode of operation in the lower cultures. In so far as these illustrations are drawn from modes of thought more closely allied to, and more congenial to our own than are those of primitive man, they serve to afford an interesting light on the Tylorian method of interpretation and serve at once to raise the question of its legitimacy.

His first example is drawn from the life of childhood.

> "Animism here makes its appearance as the child's early theory of the outer world. The first beings that children learn to understand something of are human beings, and especially their own selves; and the first explanation of all events will be the human explanation, as though chairs and sticks and wooden horses were actuated by the same sort of personal will as nurses and children and kittens".[5]

In other types of situation in which man, under the influence of strong emotion, reacts to objects in a special way, Tylor also considers a theory of animism to be involved. In this con-

[5] Ibid., p. 285.

nection he quotes an illustration from Grote and proceeds as follows:

"Even among full-grown civilized Europeans, as Mr. Grote appositely remarks, 'The force of momentary passion will often suffice to supersede the acquired habit, and even an intelligent man may be impelled in a moment of agonizing pain to kick or beat the lifeless object from which he has suffered'. In such matters the savage mind well represents the childish stage. The wild native of Brazil would bite the stone he stumbled over, or the arrow that had wounded him. Such a mental condition may be traced along the course of history, not merely in impulsive habit, but in formally enacted law".[6]

Other examples are chosen apparently at random to illustrate the presence of animistic beliefs. In this manner are cited the case of Xerxes flogging the Hellespont, of legal proceedings instituted for the purpose of trying an object,—an axe, a cartwheel, a tree that has killed a man,—the folkloristic custom of "telling the bees" and the domestic animals when the master has died. Oftentimes primitive man talks seriously with animals as though they were men; an Indian argues with his horse as though he were possessed of reason; and sometimes he greets animals reverentially and begs their pardon before killing them. All of these phenomena are described without reference to their cultural and historical settings so that we are not enabled

[6] Ibid., p. 286.

to penetrate understandingly into the penumbrae of thoughts and feelings which cluster round them.

In view of the foregoing citations, as well as an indefinite number of others scattered throughout Tylor's work, it is obvious that, consonant with the general procedure of the comparative method, he cites illustrations from various cultural areas, different levels of culture, and diverse mental processes, to prove that the animistic theory is of universal distribution, and, by this means believes that he has adequately demonstrated that primitive man, at all times and in all places, cherishes a reflective theory that the world as such and at large is alive, however difficult it may be for us to make clear to ourselves precisely what is implied by such a statement, and however bizarre may be the implications which are involved in it. It appears, therefore, that animism in the mind of Tylor connoted the literal aliveness of objects as well as men, animals and plants, and such has also been the common interpretation of his position. Thus a commentator, in dealing with this view, understands it in the following way:

"Animism therefore discovers human life in all moving things. To the savage and to primitive man there is no distinction between the animate and the inanimate. Nature is all alive. Every object is controlled by its

own independent spirit. Spirits are seen in the rivers, the lakes, the fountains, the woods, the mountains, the trees, the animals, the flowers, the grass, the birds. Spiritual existences, *e. g.*, elves, gnomes, ghosts, manes, demons, deities—inhabit almost everything, and consequently almost everything is an object of worship. The milky way is the 'path of the souls leading to the spirit land'; and the Northern Lights are the dances of the dead warriors and seers in the realms above. The Australians say that the sounds of the wind in the trees are the voices of the ghosts of the dead communing with one another or warning the living of what is to come".[7]

Tylor assumes that in each of the illustrations cited above,—namely, in myths, in childhood, in momentary passion, in legal procedure against the inanimate object, etc.,—a detailed analysis will reveal a theory of animism to be implied. A dispassionate examination of these situations, however, without preconception, will show that this is far from being literally true. In the case of mythology, the association of the heavenly bodies with the elements of a novelistic plot and their metamorphosed appearance in the shape of an anthropomorphic or theriomorphic hero, is one of the mooted points in ethnology. It would be interesting in this connection to know how far the people, who tell and believe in such tales, actually consider the heavenly bodies to be alive, and how far they regard their animation

[7] Driscoll, Animism, *Catholic Encyclopedia*, pp. 527–528.

as bound up exclusively with the exigencies of artistic creation. Owing to the fact that our own literature affords many analogous cases, we should be very hesitant in jumping to the conclusion that they necessarily and inevitably cherish the former view. We do not assume that a poem which embodies personification affords proof or even indication that the author believes the objects in question to be alive except in so far as they enter into the phantasmagoria of his fancy: we recognize quite clearly that to create and dally with the figments of imagination is quite different than to ascribe objective reality to them.

In accordance with a time honored tradition, as we have seen, Tylor draws an analogy between the life of primitive man and that of the child, considering the ontogenetic development as a recapitulation of the phylogenetic. Of course the comparability of the mental processes involved is open to the gravest question. Quite independent of this important objection, however, we are amply justified for other reasons in asking whether or not the child actually cherishes a reflective theory of the outer world as alive. The psychologist's fallacy here comes into play, —the confusing of the operations of a mind under observation with the processes of its interpretation by the commentator. The personifica-

tion of "chairs, sticks, and wooden horses" arises within a play situation. The objects which perform human and animal roles in sustaining the projected drama, whatever it be, are parts of a deliberately fanciful and imaginative complex which may be recognized as such. The particular function which an object sustains is due to the intent of the child and its individualization or dramatic role to the "semblant" situation as a whole. Thus a stick will serve as a horse to-day when he regards himself as Buffalo Bill chasing the Indians; tomorrow, when he plays at war, as one of a group of soldiers advancing against an enemy: to-day a little girl's doll will be regarded as a baby in a cradle; to-morrow, when she plays with other children, as a pupil in school. If, however, taken in another situation when he is completely freed from the dominion of play motives and interrogated as to the character of any of the above objects, the child would at once recognize that they are inanimate and stand upon a level other than that of the human beings and animals with which he is familiar in his daily experience. Oftentimes, indeed, the personification of objects may not be seriously meant and the illusion incomplete. Thus Aston points out that the child does not attempt to eat his own mud pies, the boy knows that his father's walking stick

is not a real horse and the girl that her doll is not a living being. A mother having remonstrated with her daughter for her rough treatment of a doll, received the reply: "Poor dolly! it is only a bag of sawdust." [8] There is, therefore, no inconsistency or incompatibility involved in supposing that a child may play with a thing, treat it as though it were alive, talk to it as such, and, at the same time, be well aware that it is really lifeless. In descriptive analyses of such phenomena, indeed, we are bound to recognize that whatsoever type of animation a thing exhibits is indigenous only to a particular situation and should be described solely in terms thereof.

In those cases in which, under the influence of momentary passion, a man kicks or abuses an object which has injured him, all that is involved, psychologically, is an uncritical emotional response to a stimulus which does not in any sense imply a philosophic theory of world animation. In this connection Read states that retaliation on a table, bramble or shirt-stud (not unknown to civilized men) does not imply a belief in the malignity or sensitiveness of those objects.[9]

While the greatest difficulties, as we have seen, are attendant upon the supposition that

[8] Aston, Fetishism, *Hastings Encyclopedia*, p. 896.

[9] Read, The psychology of animism, *British Journal of Psychology*, Oct., 1915, p. 3.

primitive man believes in the universal animism of all nature, it cannot be denied that, at various times and places, people have believed in the organic potentialities of inanimate matter. One of the most curious of these superstitions is that gems possess sex,—a view, still prevalent in the sixteenth century, of which Francisci Ruci (De gemmiss, f. 4) gives the following explanatory account:

> "It has recently been related to me by a lady worthy of credence, that a noblewoman, descended from the illustrious house of Luxemburg, had in her possession two diamonds which she had inherited, and which produced others in such miraculous wise, that whoever examined them at stated intervals judged that they had engendered progeny like themselves. The cause of this (if it be permissible to philosophize regarding such a strange matter) would seem to be that the celestial energy in the parent stones, qualified by someone as '*vis adamantifica*' first changes the surrounding air into water, or some similar substance, and then condenses and hardens this into the diamond gem." [10]

In this instance, however, it is worthy of note that the learned commentator, while sharing fully the view of the reproductive power of gems, nevertheless seeks to explain it by means of physical processes and changes.

In interpreting funeral customs, particularly the burying of objects such as bows, arrows, and

[10] Kunz, The curious lore of precious stones, p. 41.

personal possessions with the dead, burning of wives, servants, etc., Tylor ascribes their origin to the belief that, in the world to come, the souls of these things (both animate and inanimate) will be of service to the individual:—in other words, he considers that these practices arise secondarily from a more general theory of the world. Max Müller, in a criticism of this position, however, contends that the custom of placing objects on the funeral pile or on the grave may have sprung "from a mere desire to give up something to those whom one had loved and served during life." He argues furthermore that the idea that these things will prove useful in another world arises through a secondary interpretation of these practices themselves. He speaks of the latter as the result of a mere impulse, an unreasoning act which only subsequently was endowed with a definite purpose by reason of subsidiary reflection.[11]

Borchert calls attention to the fact that in a number of cases in which animism, according to Tylorian principles, would seem to be implied, it is not really and seriously meant. A sailor oftentimes speaks of his ship as though it were a living being; a vessel is launched and christened with the name of a person; a boat obeys, runs, and lies upon its side. We call books our friends

[11] Müller, Anthropological religion, p. 340.

and sticks our true companions. The soldier speaks of his weapons as though they were living objects. The poet Körner characterizes his sword at his left side as his bride. In all of these instances the consciously playful character of the personification does not lie open to question.[12]

An implication lies behind the several threads of Tylor's arguments which should be made explicit. It is tacitly assumed that the various ideas of primitive man on this subject which are represented in mythology, where the heavenly bodies are considered to be alive, in the beliefs concerning a future world, in those which attend the practice of magic, etc., are welded together into a single, coherent and systematic view of the world, or what he repeatedly refers to as a "philosophy of nature". All ethnological evidence tends to show, however, that no such universal systematization of experience has ever taken place; on the contrary we have abundant evidence to prove that very heterogeneous beliefs, arising from diverse sources, may exist side by side without ever coming into conflict.[13] Sunday a man may be a pious Christian who goes faithfully to church; Monday a hard-headed

[12] Borchert, Der Animismus, *Studien aus dem Collegium Sapeintiae zu Freiberg im Breisgau*, 1900, v. 5, p. 19.

[13] Boas, Review of Graebner, *Science*, n.s., 1911, p. 808.

business man who cheats his competitors unscrupulously; Tuesday a scientist interested in the advance of knowledge, despite the fact that it tends to cast into disrepute those religious concepts with which he has been familiar since childhood. In a similar manner the mythological beliefs of primitive man; those indigenous to, and arising out of, his magical procedure; those concerning the life in a future world; and those embodied in matter of fact procedure, may never be systematized into an architectural whole, the various parts of which are mutually consistent, but may, on the other hand, maintain themselves within their several spheres in more or less exclusion or mutual isolation.[14] Lastly a final point deserves passing consideration, namely, that if we accept animism in the literal Tylorian sense, we are compelled to assume that primitive man is quite incapable of distinguishing between the animate and inanimate and, consequently, that his behavior toward objects and living beings cannot be distinguished,—a state of affairs which of course would involve a *reductio ad absurdum.*

Max Müller attacks the classical Tylorian animism in so far as it involves the supposition

[14] Compare in this connection the doctrine of participation set forth by Levy-Bruhl, Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés infériures.

that primitive man regards the world as such and at large to be alive in the literal sense of the word and seeks to show that he is not necessarily committed "to the startling assertion that the sun and moon, the tree and river are, in the true sense of the word, anthropomorphous or man-like".[15] However, he recognizes that there are many peculiar beliefs and practices which might seem superficially to justify the attribution of this view of the world to primitive man and resorts to a very ingenious type of explanation quite different from that of Tylor. He assumes that the fundamental phonetic elements (roots) express types of action of extreme generality and that they constitute the elementary, linguistic, classificatory mechanism. When man attempts to name the inanimate objects of the outer world, he has no means of doing so other than by the utilization of these roots, to which he adds other phonetic elements which reveal, or symbolize more or less clearly, some quality or concrete particularity of the object. Thus, by reason of a purely linguistic exigency or device, words, which apply to things, also embody types of activity. In this manner language spreads a veil over the world and transforms things into active, anthropomorphic agents. The Siren voice of words, once constituted,

[15] Anthropological religion, p. 74.

exercises imperial dominion over and leads the mind of man astray,[16] not only in respect to religious and mythological concepts, but also in philosophical and scientific controversy: indeed, he goes so far as to interpret the whole history of philosophy from Thales to Hegel as "a constant protest of thought against language".[17]

In addition to this overwhelming linguistic influence, Müller has also attempted, by means of a purely psychological analysis of the noetical relationship of man to the outer world, to furnish a parallel or subsidiary explanation of the rise of ideas of spirits and deities.

From the point of view of organic evolution, the sense of touch is the most primitive and least differentiated. Scent and taste come next in order of development and are consequently more specialized. The three taken together constitute the so-called palaeoteric senses. Sight and hearing, arising latest in the process of development, comprise the neoteric senses. "The first three give us the greatest material certainty; the last two admit of doubt, and have frequently to be verified by the former".[18] In the psychic constitution of man, therefore, a hierarchy of reality is involved.

[16] Müller, Science of language, Second series, p. 545.
[17] Müller, Introduction to the science of religion, p. 355.
[18] Müller, Origin and growth of religion, p. 172.

There are three classes of things which engender as many distinct types of attitude toward the world. Tangible objects, such as stones, shells, bones, etc., are, to the mind of man, the most real because they can be touched, felt and manipulated by the hand.[19] When we wish to convey an idea of the irrefragable reality of a thing we say that it is manifest which means, etymologically, that it can be struck with the hands.[20] The most common objects "can be touched, as it were, all round" and therefore seem to present themselves as the most real.[21]

Semi-tangible objects, such as trees, mountains, rivers, the sea and the earth, constitute the basis for a less positive feeling of reality.[22]

Lastly, intangible objects, and the powers and processes of nature, such as the sky, stars, sun, dawn, moon, lightning and thunder, engender still less definite sense impressions and a concomitant feeling of infinity, hence supplying the raw material out of which ideas of deities arise.[23] Through the retroactive influence of language on thought[24] words, which were originally applied

[19] Müller, Origin and growth of religion, p. 180.

[20] Ibid., p. 173.

[21] Ibid , p. 175.

[22] Ibid., p. 180.

[23] Ibid., p. 180.

[24] "Names", he says, "have a tendency to become things, *nomina* grew into *numina*, *ideas* into *idols* and if

to these vast things, came gradually to assume a more substantial existence. Thus the Greek, Roman, Indian and other Gods were originally names which secondarily became definite entities or personalities: *Eos* was originally a name of the dawn, *Tithonos* the dying day, *Zeus*, in Sanskrit *Dyaus*, the bright heaven, *Luna*, the moon, *Pyrrha*, the red earth and so on.[25]

Borchert, writing from the theological point of view, and contriving to derive consolation and inspiration from some of the ingenious speculations of Max Müller, believes that the most primitive religious concept is that of a high God who is immanent, as it were, in all religious experience and furnishes the source from which an irradiating series of subsidiary or lesser beings are conceived to emanate. Accordingly he states that there is an universal belief,[26] among both primitive and civilized peoples, that spirits are creations of the one and highest God and act in

this happened with the name *Dyu* no wonder that many things which were intended for Him who is above the sky were mixed up with sayings relating to the sky". Müller, Science of language, Second series, p. 466.

[25] Müller, Science of language, First series, p. 21.

[26] "Diese Allgemeinheit des Glaubens an einen höchsten Gott und Schöpfer werden die Animisten durch ihre Theorie nie erklären." Borchert, Der Animismus, *Studien aus dem Collegium Sapientia zu Freiberg im Breisgau*, bd. 5, p. 157.

a subordinate capacity to him,—oftentimes as his servants.[27]

Proceeding after the general fashion of the comparative method, he cites illustrations from a large number of areas and historical periods, referring both to primitive and civilized peoples, in which the belief in the highest God is present, and, among the former, lays particular emphasis upon those cases in which he supposes the natives to be free from European influences.[28] He finds a crucial illustration of the priority of the belief in God in the oldest historical records,—particularly the earliest collections of the Rig-Veda.[29] Among many other cultivated peoples the idea of an All-Father has maintained itself for thousands of years.[30]

Borchert vigorously attacks the theory of the priority of animism both in the Tylorian sense, and in the modified version of Spencer and Lippert[31] according to which the souls of dead men constitute the origin of religion and undergo

[27] Ibid., p. 161.

[28] Ibid., p. 131.

[29] Ibid., pp. 31, 52.

[30] Ibid., p. 45.

[31] "Es giebt kein Volk, dessen Religion nur aus Seelen- Ahnen- und Geisterkult besteht, viel mehr glauben alle Völker an einen überweltlichen Gott-Schöpfer", Ibid., p. 236.

an historical transformation into deities.[32] He alleges that a concept of divinity must be immanent or primordial in order that man may bestow upon souls the predicates or attributes of deity or the supernatural, and by this means elevate them to the rank of gods.[33] Thus a sort of implied religion is primary which involves the knowledge and the worship of God, and the usual beliefs and practices attendant upon animism, particularly the cult of souls and ancestors, are of secondary derivation.[34]

Schmidt takes an iconoclastic attitude with reference to any classical or typical evolution of spirits into gods or of polytheism into monotheism. By reason of certain somatological characters, together with a low material and industrial culture, he considers the pygmies as the lowest race of man. Nevertheless, he alleges that they possess a pure monotheism, involving a lofty conception of God, which he does not believe to have arisen out of animistic beliefs and practices.[35]

In a quite different connection, basing his

[32] Ibid., p. 130.

[33] Ibid., p. 134.

[34] Ibid., pp. vii, 236.

[35] Schmidt, Die Stellung der Pygmäenvölker in der Entwickelungsgeschichte des Menschen, p. 244.

contention largely on psychological grounds,[36] Schmidt also argues against the *mana* theorists,—J. King, Preuss, Marett and others,—who, he claims, do not treat animism at all fairly, and he pleads for the recognition of a fundamental instinct of personification which must inevitably be considered duly in the treatment of the early religious life of man but which these writers entirely and unjustifiably neglect.[37]

Andrew Lang has pointed out in some detail the presence of the "God-idea" among many of the primitive Australian tribes and believes that it has neither been developed from animism or the "Ghost Theory" nor borrowed from the English.[38] He does not seem to utilize this evidence, however, for the support of a theory involving the priority of religion, but states in a guarded way that magic and religion "may have been concurrent from the first".[39]

In a recent work Radin vigorously attacks the *mana* theorists and makes the strong statement that "animism in the old Tylorian sense of the

[36] Schmidt, L'origine de l'idée de Dieu, *Anthropos*, v. 4, p. 514.

[37] Ibid., v. 5, p. 245.

[38] Lang, The making of religion, pp. 91–92; Australian gods, *Folklore*, March, 1899. Spencer and Gillen, The native tribes of Central Australia, pp. 222, 246.

[39] Lang, Mr. Frazer's theory of totemism, *Fortnightly Review*, n.s., v. 65, p. 1012.

term is the belief of the Indians".[40] Although his data are confined to North America, his theoretical interpretations are of universal application, and he leaves us with no uncertain impression that he considers the belief in spirits one of the fundamental phenomena in the religious life of man. According to his opinion, the Indians are very little interested in the specific form of spirits, but this fact must not be interpreted to mean that their spiritualistic beliefs are any the less definite.[41] However he believes that the *mana* theorists have made precisely this interpretation,—the lack of definiteness in the form of supernatural beings having led them to postulate a pre-animistic magical power. Against this view Radin directs the shafts of his polemic. He points out that spirits, particularly those which appear in the shape of deities, have been split by ethnological analysis into beings plus magical power, "and it has then been forgotten that they belonged together and cannot be treated as though they were independent of each other".[42] He regards this separation as quite illegitimate in so far as it does not represent a native distinction.

[40] Radin, Religion of the North American Indians, *International Congress of Americanists*, v. 19, p. 278.

[41] Ibid., pp. 270–271.

[42] Ibid., p. 274.

The *mana* theorists, according to Radin, do not give us either the facts or the Indian's interpretation of them, but, having approached their problem from a pre-conceived European metaphysical view-point, superimpose it upon the entire material with which they deal. In no case is there a clear presentation of data dissociated from a theory. In those rare instances when an attempt is made to present the facts, they are given in the shape of an appendix to, or illustrations of, an interpretation.

In Radin's investigations among the Winnebago and Ojibwa, he finds that the terms *wakanda* and *manito* are always referred by the Indians to definite spirits, though not necessarily definite in shape.[43] These conclusions, it is perhaps superfluous to state, are in violent contrast to those arrived at by other American ethnologists.[44]

In a recent work Nieuwenhuis takes for granted the priority of animism in the religious life of man, undertakes to analyze with rigor

[43] Ibid., p. 276.

[44] "We may say, then, that from an examination of the data customarily relied upon as proof, and from individual data obtained, there is nothing to justify the postulation of a belief in a universal force in North America. Magical power as an 'essence' existing apart and separate from a definite spirit, is, we believe, an unjustified assumption, an abstraction created by investigators." Ibid., p. 277.

the logical and epistemological principles from which it springs and, in an extraordinary fashion, attempts to show that its fundamental concepts arise with the same necessity which characterize the geometrical postulates of Euclid.

As the basis of his investigations, the writer examines the Bahau and Kenja of the Island of Borneo and the Toradja of the Island of Celebes.[45] He believes that these tribes are the most primitive in existence, that they are isolated from foreign influences, particularly Malay and Islam, and manifest, therefore, an ideal independent development.[46]

In Nieuwenhuis' opinion, the proper object of study is religion in and for itself, quite independent, not only of disruptive foreign influences, but also of other phases of culture, such as ethical beliefs and practices, social organization, art, etc. He draws a distinction for this reason between "central" and "peripheral" religious phenomena, regarding the former as animism or a philosophy of nature very much in the old Tylorian sense of a systematic *Weltanschauung.*

[45] Compare his treatment of mathematical and natural scientific thought among these peoples. Die Veranlagung der malaiischen Völker des Ost-Indischen Archipels II. *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, bd. 22–23.

[46] Nieuwenhuis, Die Wurzeln des Animismus, *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, Sup. bd., 24, pp. 8–9.

The ultimate logical basis of spiritistic concepts Nieuwenhuis takes to be the Hamiltonian principle of thought necessity according to which something cannot come out of nothing or cannot return again into nothing. In the process of death, primitive man observes the more or less rapid loss of spiritual qualities while the body remains intact. According to this thought necessity, imposed by the Hamiltonian principle, he concludes that something has passed away but has not vanished entirely. Therefore he conceives of a quasi-material entity which he identifies as the spiritual part of man which must have gone somewhere while the corporeal part remains. Hence arises the concept of the soul in opposition to that of the body. This distinction, however, is not clearly drawn, but the soul is thought of as a semi-substantial entity which can disappear from sight but which cannot pass into nothing.[47]

Concomitant with his observation of the phenomena of sleep and waking, he reasons in a similar fashion. During unconsciousness some of the mental processes of the man are suspended, but they have not passed into nothing. Hence among the Bahau there is the concept of a secondary sleep-soul which has the capacity of

[47] Ibid., p. 59.

wandering away and returning when the sleeper awakes.[48]

In the observation of natural phenomena such as lightning, thunder, sickness, etc., a comparable method of reasoning, according to the Hamiltonian principle, is pursued. The unknown causes are reified and personified in a manner similar to the reification of the soul. Thus, for example, illness is regarded as due to a material entity which can be removed from the body.[49]

The primary object of Nieuwenhuis' investigations is, as we have said, the logical basis of animism. The method of procedure followed by the author involves, of course, the complete extrusion of emotional or affectivistic elements as integral components of the religious life. In true Tylorian fashion he considers the *ensemble* of these ratiocinations as constituting a systematic view of the world. In this manner he makes possible for himself the correlation of these logical processes with those which lie behind the development of the natural sciences, not only in primitive but also in more developed cultures,—by this peculiar twist contriving to reduce both to the same logical level whose ultimate *point d'appui* is the Hamiltonian principle.[50] If, in these latter disciplines, we attempt

[48] Ibid., p. 60.
[49] Ibid., p. 62.
[50] Ibid., p. 64.

to investigate that which causes our sensations, we come upon something unknown: we postulate a mysterious factor as the power of nature.[51] In gravitation we also deal with an incomprehensible noumenon. We give a mathematical statement of the facts but this does not serve as a satisfactory explanation. In electrical and magnetic phenomena we glibly ascribe a name, "electricity", for the inscrutable entity. In the last analysis, the scientist hypostatizes the unknown powers of nature as the aetiological bases of phenomena in the same manner in which the animist reifies the soul which survives the body, that which wanders about during sleep, the supposed properties of matter, the causes of sickness, thunder, lightning, etc. Man's relationship to the outer world as revealed in science and religion is thus essentially and fundamentally the same and Nieuwenhuis characterizes as "naturism" the primordial or "central" religious phenomena, —the pure essence, as it were, uncorrupted by interpenetration with other phases of culture.[52]

[51] Ibid., p. 64; "Für dieses ganze weite Feld der unbekannten Ursachen führen wir die Naturkräfte ein. So besitzen wir jetzt Naturkräfte wie Elektrizität, Schwerkraft, Magnetismus, Lebenskraft u.s.w. Auf alle diese ist mit Recht Schopenhauer's Auffassung anzuwenden: 'Kraft ist Ursache, sofern sie unbekannt ist'." Ibid., p. 65.

[52] Ibid., pp. 66, 83, 86.

CHAPTER 7

MAGICAL POWER AS THE PRIMORDIUM

In recent years a decided speculative reaction has taken place in regard to questions relating to the existence and functions of spirits in the mind of primitive man, and a rival view, which, in its way, is equally extreme, has come to have very wide currency: instead of considering man's most fundamental magico-religious concept to be that of a soul or spirit, it ascribes to him the vicarious notion of an impersonal, unanthropomorphic power, thought to be immanent and all-pervasive throughout the whole of nature. It follows, therefore, that concomitant activities, instead of being directed exclusively toward supernatural beings, concern themselves with this force and there arises the attempt to control, direct and wheedle it in the service of human needs, desires, hopes and fears.

Codrington's work on the Melanesians has generally been considered as the starting point of this type of theory. Referring to *mana* he says:

"It is a power or influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural; but it shows itself in physical force,

or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses. This *mana* is not fixed in any thing and can be conveyed in almost any thing; but spirits, whether disembodied souls or supernatural beings, have and can impart it; and it essentially belongs to personal beings to originate it, though it may act through the medium of water, or a stone, or a bone. *All Melanesian religion consists in fact in getting this mana for ones self, or getting it used for ones benefit—all religion, that is, as far as religious practices go, prayers and sacrifices.*" [1]

In another passage he states:

"This power (*mana*), though impersonal *is always connected with some person who directs it*, all spirits have it, ghosts generally, some men. If a stone is found to have supernatural power, it is because a spirit has associated itself with it".[2]

Without considering the details of Codrington's work, it is sufficient to observe that his statements often reveal considerable inconsistency. Sometimes he describes this power as the abstract, impersonal capacity or virtue of a stone, a bone or any inanimate object; at other times he speaks of it as the peculiar prerogative of a living being, ghost or spirit. Our interpretation of Codrington's position, therefore, will depend largely upon whether we emphasize one or the other type of his statements on this matter. It would be perfectly feasible to select a group of

[1] Codrington, The Melanesians, p. 119. Italics mine.
[2] Ibid., p. 119. Italics mine.

passages tending to prove that *mana* is thought of by the people as an abstract virtue and equally possible to choose others showing that they regard it as an anthromorphic, psychic manifestation invariably bound up with a living being, ghost or spirit.

Whatever be the merits of the case, it is the former interpretation of Codrington which has attained wide currency and stimulated other investigators to look for a similar concept in other regions. In this attempt eminent success has been achieved and a mere compilation of the results obtained would be an exceedingly formidable task. William Jones ascribes to the Algonkin "an unsystematic belief in a cosmic, mysterious property, which is believed to exist everywhere in nature".[3] Aston says, *apropos* of the early Japanese religion:

> "Primitive man did not think of the world as pervaded by spiritual forces. His attitude was a piecemeal conception of the universe as alive, just as his fellow-man was regarded as alive without being analyzed into soul and body".[4]

Lovejoy, who appears to hold this view in a very literal way, is the author of the following bold pronouncement.

[3] Jones, The Algonkin *manitou*, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, v. 18, p. 190.

[4] Aston, The Shinto, p. 26.

"Among many undeveloped races the one great practical concern of the individual, the all-important business that chiefly engrosses his imagination, controls his activities and accounts for by far the greater part of his so-called religious customs and observances, is the endeavour to absorb into his person as much of this force, or get into his possession as many objects charged with it, as possible, while at the same time insulating himself against it at those moments when its excessive quantity or unstable equilibrium makes it dangerous. In a word, the dominant preoccupation, probably, of most savages, is, not to 'cultivate friendly relations with supernatural beings', but to get into such *well-adjusted, quasi-mechanical relations with the source of supernatural energy*, that they may control the greatest possible amount of it for the benefit of themselves, their family, clan, village or tribe".[5]

The writings of Hewitt on this subject reveal considerable obscurity in style and mode of expression. While he professes to be an ardent advocate of the *mana* doctrine, he speaks oftentimes of plural *orendas* which contend against one another rather than of a single universally diffused power.

"The possession of *orenda* . . . is the distinctive characteristic of all the gods, and these gods in earlier time were all the bodies and beings of nature in any manner affecting the weal or woe of man. So primitive man interpreted the activities of nature to be due to the struggle of one *orenda* against another, put forth by the beings or bodies of his environment, the former possessing *orenda*

[5] Primitive philosophy, *Monist*, v. 16, p. 361. Italics mine.

and the latter life, mind, and *orenda* only by virtue of his own imputation of these things to lifeless objects".[6]

If *orenda* is to be identified with the concept or principle of a magical power vaguely suffused throughout nature, it is not clear how it can also, at the same time, be individualized in the form of many *orendas* struggling against one another: but, if this latter view be accepted, it would seem that we are dealing with amorphous gods or spirits which possess vague anthropomorphic qualities such as will-power, and perhaps also the psychic disposition of yielding to prayers entreaties, and magical procedure, when properly instituted. In the following passage he comes perilously close to identifying outright plural *orendas* with the gods themselves.

"In the stress of life coming into contact with certain bodies of his environment more frequently than with the other environing bodies, and learning from these constraining relations to feel that these bodies, through the exercise of their *orenda*, controlled the conditions of his welfare and in like manner shaped his ill-fare, he came gradually to regard these bodies, as the masters, the gods, of his environment, whose aid, goodwill, and even existence were absolutely necessary to his well-being and his preservation of life itself. . . . And the story of the operations of *orenda* becomes the history of the gods".[7]

[6] Hewitt, *Orenda, U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin*, v. 30, pt. 2.

[7] Hewitt, *Orenda* and a definition of religion, *American Anthropologist*, n.s., v. 4, p. 41

McDougall understands the doctrine of pre-animism to involve the presumption that *mana* constituted the primary belief of magic and that, subsequently, ideas of spiritual beings have been differentiated from it.[8] Clodd characterizes the notion of magical power as "the germ of later anthropomorphic ideas";[9] King refers to it as a concept "of habit rather than of the intellect; that is to say, various automatic or reflex acts have gradually been elaborated into a somewhat definite biological attitude toward the world".[10] In discussing the *manitou* of the Algonkin, however, he manoeuvres into a difficulty similar to that of Hewitt and speaks of it as, in some sense, individualized.

"It is important to note that the *manitou* is primarily a mysterious quasi-mechanical essence, the active element in all that is strange, excellent, or powerful. It is equally important to note that this quality comes by insensible steps to be identified in many cases with the object or person of which it is the vehicle, *so that in the end it may be said to be in a measure personified*".[11]

[8] McDougall, Body and mind, p 4.

[9] Clodd, Magic and religion, *Quarterly Review*, 1907, v. 207, p. 183.

[10] King, The development of religion, p. 149.

[11] Ibid., pp. 137–138. Italics mine. In another connection King makes the somewhat astounding statement: "We should remember, however, that personal agencies can scarcely have been postulated of nature by people hardly conscious of any definite personality in themselves". Ibid., p. 157.

Marett has perhaps done more than any one else to popularize this dogma. According to his interpretation, Tylor's view of religion as a "belief in spiritual beings" is entirely too narrow in so far as a great many phenomena, which might properly be characterized as religious, are arbitrarily extruded by the definition,—various practices and ideas not involving reference to spirits. Tylor's animism, he believes, is entirely too intellectualistic and unduly neglects the processes of feeling and will. "My own view", he says, "is that savage religion is something not so much thought out as danced out; that, in other words, it develops under conditions, psychological and sociological, which favor emotional and motor processes, whereas ideation remains relatively in abeyance".[12]

In these lower levels of the mind there are involved religious experiences of an affective character which imply neither the belief in, nor reasoning about, spirits and their capacities,—a group of objective stimuli simply engendering peculiar emotions. Thunderstorms, eclipses, eruptions, and the like, awaken the feeling of awe or vague fear. In a general way, those processes of nature which are terrible, objects such as stones which have a curious or unusual shape, odd and uncanny animals, "white animals

[12] Marett, The threshold of religion, p. xxxi.

(for example, white elephants or white buffaloes), birds of night (notably the owl), monkeys, mice, frogs, crabs, snakes, and lizards, in fact a host of strange and grewsome beasts, are to the savage of their own right and on the face of them, instinct with dreadful divinity".[13] Human remains and blood, particularly that of woman, also tend to evoke these rudimentary religious feelings of man.

The subjective processes which are engendered by these diverse groups of objective stimuli drive man unconsciously to seek *rapport* with these mysterious, unusual and catastrophic events, objects and processes of nature. At this stage of development, as has been stated, spirits are not implied and consequently "something wider than animism is needed as a minimum definition of religion".[14]

A high degree of lucidity cannot be said to characterize the views of the *mana* theorists upon their favorite concept. Considering his writings as a whole, Marett appears to have expressed a

[13] Ibid., p. 21.

[14] Marett, Pre-animistic religion, *Folklore,* 1900, pp. 162–182: Conception of *mana, Transactions of the 3d International Congress for the History of Religions,* v. 2, p. 54: Pre-animistic stages in religion, *Transactions of the 3d International Congress for the History of Religions,* v. 1, p. 33: The threshold of religion: Articles, Magic, and *Mana, Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.*

bewildering varieties of opinion on this subject so that we sympathize thoroughly with Durkheim's statement that his thought on this point of the priority of pre-animism remains "hésitante et trés réservé".[15]

The views of Hubert and Mauss on this subject exhibit no less elusiveness. (1) They declare that *mana* is the fundamental notion from which both magic and religion are elaborated;[16] (2) that the relationship of logical subordination obtains between *mana* and the sacred,[17] the former being the genus of which the latter is the species;[18] (3) that the usual chronological sequence between magic and religion obtains, although, at the same time, curiously enough, they are genetically related and spring from a common source; (4) they conceive of magical

[15] Durkheim, Les formes élémentaires de la vie réligieuse, p. 287.

[16] Jevons understands Hubert and Mauss to intimate or imply that magic and religion have sprung from the concept of *mana* and have only become differentiated from one another in the course of their evolution. The definition of magic, *Sociological Review,* April, 1908, p. 108.

[17] The French school regard the idea of the sacred as the most important of the specific differentiae of religion. Compare Durkheim, Les formes élémentaires de la vie réligieuse, and Levy-Bruhl, Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures.

[18] Hubert and Mauss, Théorie générale de la magie, L'année sociologique, v. 7, p. 120.

power as comparable to our scientific notion of mechanical force;[19] (5) they also point out the extreme vagueness of the idea of *mana* and declare that it is composed of a series of unstable ideas which are mutually confounded, that it may be from time to time and at the same time, quality, substance and activity;[20] (6) not content with these characterizations, they speak of it as functioning after the fashion of a category which furnishes the *a priori* basis of magical ideas and rites in the same fashion that the postulate of Euclid is involved in our conception of space.[21]

Kruijt, in a somewhat fanciful way, attempts to correlate the transition between magic and religion with two stages in the evolution of primitive societies. In the first period *mana* is believed to animate all beings and objects,—to be all-pervasive in nature; concomitant there-

[19] Ibid., p. 107.

[20] L'idée de *mana* se compose d'une série d'idées instables qui se confondent les unes dans les autres. Il est tour à tour et à la fois qualité, substance et activité.—En premier lieu, il est une qualité. Il est quelque chose qu'a la chose *mana*; il n'est pas cette chose elle-même. Ibid., p. 109.

[21] Elle fonctionne à la façon d'une catégorie, elle rend possibles les idées humaines. . . . C'est qu'elle est inhérente à la magie comme le postulatum d'Euclide est inhérent à notre conception de l'espace. Ibid., p. 119.

with is the feeling of the individual that his personality is vaguely diffused throughout the social group: in the second period, however, he comes to consciousness of himself as something unique and singular, as it were, and, in connection with this heightened feeling of selfhood, there is involved also the individualization of spirits,—in other words, the *mana* concept is exchanged for that of personal, supernatural beings which are believed to inhabit every living form and object.[22] Levy-Bruhl also appears to follow this line of thought.[23]

Leuba holds that magic concerns itself with a "mechanical, coercitive force", religion, in contradistinction, with "offerings, prayers, penances," etc., having reference to supernatural beings. He contends that there is a profound distinction in the direct psychological attitudes involved in the two cases which is more important than the objective differences existing between the two groups of concomitant phenomena.[24]

[22] Kruijt, Het Animisme in den indischen Archipel, pp. 66–67.

[23] The basis of this exposition is taken from Levy-Bruhl, Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures, p. 429 and following.

[24] Leuba, How magic is to be differentiated from religion, *Journal of Religious Psychology*, 1913, p. 423.

Fossey holds that primitive man confuses the laws of nature with those of subjective connection and that bound up therewith is the feeling of his own omnipotence.[25] He subscribes to the conventional theory of the temporal sequence of magic and religion and raises the question as to whether or not it can be proved by direct historical evidence as revealed in the Assyrio-Babylonian cuneiform inscriptions. Despite his bias in favor of the usual view, he frankly admits that a study of these ancient documents fails to lend conclusive proof of it: indeed, the net result of his investigations is to show that magic and religion were inextricably interwoven, that magicians played an important part in socio-political ceremonies, Babylonian kings employing them officially, and that in the library of one of these rulers incantations have been preserved.[26]

Such complete absence of definite results of a concrete historical investigation applied to this question is precisely what we should expect on more general *a priori* grounds. This problem is not one which, in the nature of the case, lends itself to historical elucidation,—a fact which will come out more clearly in the sequel.

Magic and religion, according to Frazer, are

[25] Fossey, La magie Assyrienne, *Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes Études*; *Sciences Religieuses*, 1902, v. 15, p. 140.

[26] Ibid., pp. 4, 10, 136.

not contemporaneous phenomena, as the data of ethnology would seem to suggest, but make their appearance in temporal order, the former invariably preceding the latter and furnishing the motivation out of which it subsequently arises. Primitive man in the pre-historic period found himself confronted by an alien and hostile environment upon which he forthwith proceeded to operate for the purpose of securing sundry and varied benefits, emoluments and advantages for himself. "From the earliest times," says Frazer, "man has been engaged in a search for general rules whereby to turn the order of natural phenomena to his own advantage, and in the long search he has scraped together a great hoard of such maxims, some of them golden and some of them mere dross. The true or golden rules constitute the body of applied science which we call the arts; the false are magic."[27]

The fundamental postulate upon which primitive man proceeded was that of the uniformity of nature involving the necessary sequence of events in accordance with mechanical, impersonal determination,—a presumption identical, indeed, with that of modern science. Ancillary axioms which he forthwith evolved were that 'like produces like,' and 'that which has once been in contact with another thing continues,

[27] Frazer, The golden bough, v. 1, p. 222.

after being physically separated from it, to be connected with it in some very real way.'

After having equipped himself with these intellectual tools, primitive man set to work in an earnest fashion to bend the recalcitrant decrees of a harsh fate in accordance with the impulses and desires of his heart. The resultant of this enterprise, in all its infinite subjective elaboration and profusion of ritualistic expression, was magic.

At some time and place, however, neither of which are specified by Frazer, men of unusual talents and insight began to appreciate that the current mass of beliefs together with their concomitant modes of procedure or rites were wrong; that people had misinterpreted the world, that they had "taken for causes what were no causes," and that nature could not be coerced according to the traditional prescriptions. Out of this insight religion arose. People became humble, conciliatory and propitiatory, instead of proud, arrogant and coercitive. Sacrifice, prayer and cajolery took the place of abortive attempts at control, and, for the impersonal powers of nature with which magic was wont to concern itself, spirits and gods were substituted with whom people at once entered into human, or anthropopathic, relations.

In expressing himself on the great transition Frazer rises at times to poetic heights and intro-

duces a charming novelistic narrative into the bewildering facts. "Man," he says, "is still alone with nature, and fancies he can sway it at his will. Later on, when he discovers his mistake, he will bethink himself of gods and beg them to pull for him the strings that hang beyond his reach." [28]

Andrew Lang has attacked this Frazerian doctrine of transition in a rather caustic way, contending, indeed, that the fundamental proposition might with equal cogency be reversed, and that, instead of arguing that religion has arisen out of the despair of magic, one might say that magic has arisen out of the despair of religion, and that men, having discovered that the gods would neither do their bidding, nor yield to their entreaties, invented magic for the purpose of coercing them. As a matter of fact there is no flaw in Lang's facetious criticism, because so far as the productivity of results is concerned, both are, and always have been, equally sterile and inefficacious in the accomplishment of real changes in the outer world or in the achievement of the purposes for which they are supposed to exist.[29]

The large number of writers, and particularly

[28] Frazer, The origin of totemism, *Fortnightly Reveiw*, n.s., v. 65, p. 648.

[29] Lang, Magic and religion, ch. 3.

Frazer, who believe ardently in the priority of magic, have found a group of new champions for their views in the person of Freud and the psycho-analysts inspired by him. Reviving with great energy the time honored doctrine of the parallelism between ontogenetic and phylogenetic development, they have attempted to give a direct, immediate and absolute account of the course of historical development by means of an analysis of the atavistic tendencies of the individual which manifest themselves in certain psychopathic conditions. According to Freud the neurosis involves a retrogression to an infantile status which reproduces certain aspects of the primordial mental development of the race.

We are thus enabled to arrange stratigraphically the order of individual evolution and may utilize the resulting architectonic construction directly in historical interpretation.[30] By virtue of this astounding method Freud proceeds to

[30] Furtmüller calls attention to the non-comparability of some of the parallelisms between ontogenetic and phylogenetic development cited by Freud, among which he mentions: (1) the allegation that primitive man has remained at the stage of narcissism; (2) the exogamy of primitive man and the incest complex of the neurotic; (3) tabu and the ambivalence of feeling. Review of Freud's, Über einige Übereinstimmungen in Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker, *Zentralblatt für Psycho-analyse und Psychotherapie*, 3. *jahr.*, pp. 548–550.

justify the Frazerian view of the temporal order of development of magic and religion and the psychological attitudes invariably attendant upon the rites of each.[31] Frazer adopts the traditional principles of associationism,—contiguity in space and time, cause and effect, and similarity,—and considers that they constitute a satisfactory explanation of the juxtaposition of psychic content involved in magic. The support of this position by Freud is nothing short of a curious anachronism.[32]

In the neuroses, according to this view, the patient returns to an earlier mental condition. He departs from the adult world of reality with its multiplicity of difficult adjustments which he finds himself unable to encompass, and lives more or less in an atavistic land of phantasy in which his wishes and thoughts flow on and attain their satisfaction within a self-contained subjective system.[33] Day-dreaming and impotent

[31] It is of considerable incidental interest to note that Freud goes further and champions the Frazerian explanation of magic in terms of associational psychology as over against the trenchant criticism of Thomas. Magic, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th ed.

[32] Freud, Über einige Übereinstimmungen in Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker, *Imago*, v. 2, pp. 14, 15.

[33] Marett states that primitive man does not accept death as a fact. "It is almost an axiom with writers on

musings take the place of attempts at definite battles with reality and come, in the end, to constitute a sphere of existence in and for itself. Thus these mental processes do not refer beyond themselves, but attain to vicarious satisfaction in the process of their own unfolding.

Freud states that he was led to the use of the term "*Allmacht der Gedanken*" by means of the psycho-analysis of a man who seemed to possess it in a striking way.[34] He points out that the neurotic, believing in the almightiness of his thoughts, fears to give expression to bad wishes lest they come to immediate issue in the outer world.[35]

Frazer and many others have held that a consciousness or feeling that he is able to control the forces of nature is an invariable mental condition attendant upon the magician's practice. Freud accepts this Frazerian interpretation quite uncritically, and finds a parallel to it

this subject, that a sort of Solipsism or Berkleianism (as Professor Sully terms it as he finds it in the child) operates in the savage to make him refuse to recognize death as a fact." Pre-animistic religion, *Folklore*, v. 11, p. 178.

[34] Freud, Bemerkungen über einen Fall von Zwangsneurose, *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen*, bd. 1, 1909.

[35] This same "*Allmacht*" situation appears in daily life. We are afraid to paint the devil on the wall, or to wish evil lest it be realized.

in the infantile attitude of omnipotence. The child and the neurotic believe that by a mere wish they can bring anything to pass, (*Allmacht der Gedanken*) thus confusing the subjective flow of their thoughts with the objective course of events.

The magician, making a similar confusion, considers that by mere wishing and thinking, accompanied at times by some ancillary rite, he can determine and control the order of nature. With the development of experience, however, the infant learns by degrees that his wishes and thoughts are not all-sufficing, that he is confronted by a hard, bruising and recalcitrant reality which refuses to submit, and that he must adjust himself to it. This more mature attitude toward the world finds its parallel in religion. Primitive man, having learned gradually the necessary limitations of his powers, gives up the attempt to control the forces of nature and constitutes spirits and gods to whom he turns in a submissive, propitiatory and penitential mood for help in securing the objects of his desires. In the magical stage man ascribes "*Allmacht*" to himself. In religion, however, he abdicates this power in favor of the gods, but only in a somewhat imperfect way with a string tied to it, as it were, because he still considers himself able to wheedle or constrain them to

encompass his wishes by means of manifold influences.[36]

Rivers has recently given an exceedingly iconoclastic criticism of the *mana* theory,[37] particularly the attempt to found it on the Melanesian data to which attention was first drawn by the work of Bishop Codrington.[38] He holds that the fundamental task of ethnological endeavor is that of cultural analysis which involves the question of the diffusion of features from one

[36] "Wahrend die magie noch alle Allmacht den Gedanken vorbehält, hat der Animismus einen Teil dieser Allmacht den Geistern abgetreten und damit den Weg zur Bildung einer Religion eingeschlagen." . . . Freud, Über einige Übereinstimmungen in Seelenleben der Wilden und der Neurotiker, *Imago*, v. 2, pp. 12, 15.

[37] Radin also attacks the theory vigorously and proposes that we should abandon the use of the term universal force and consider it as "the unconscious expression of the religious emotion itself. It should be looked upon, in other words, as the non-individualized feeling of fear, awe, etc., which forms the subjective side of religion." The religion of the North American Indians, *International Congress of Americanists*, v. 19, p. 278. This idea, however, is not adequately developed by Radin and he has nothing further to say as to the specific manifestations of this pure, generalized, subjective feeling or its relationship to individualized spirits, on the one hand, or, to impersonal powers on the other. The writer is, however, by no means sure that he understands Radin's position on this particular point.

[38] Codrington, The Melanesians.

area to another and the statement, in so far as possible, of their concrete historical fates,—*wie es eigentlich geworden ist.*[39] Applying this method in the interpretation of Melanesian culture, he finds that it does not provide "a suitable basis for these [*mana*] speculations," that the word is not indigenous to Melanesia and may have been borrowed from a people having an advanced animistic religion.

"It is certain that the word *mana* belongs to the culture of the immigrants into Melanesia and not to that of the aborigines. . . . The analysis of culture, however, indicates that it is not legitimate to use the Melanesian evidence to support the primitiveness of the concept of *mana*. This evidence certainly does not support the view that the concept of *mana* is more primitive than animism, for the immigrants were already in a very advanced stage of animistic religion, a cult of the dead being certainly one of the most definite of their religious institutions." [40]

We have seen that Tylor considered that he had proved the existence of animism as a reflective philosophy of nature by means of the citation of a heterogeneous mass of diverse instances from various cultures and different spheres or aspects of experience in which he alleged it to

[39] Compare Schmidt, Die kulturhistorische Methode in der Ethnologie, *Anthropos*, v. 6.

[40] Rivers, Ethnological Analysis of Culture, *British Association for the Advancement of Science, Report,* 1911, p. 494.

exist. It would seem to be implied, according to this method, that a summation of instances serves to prove the validity of the theory. We saw, however, that at no time or place, either by a group of people or by a single individual, were these diverse phenomena organized into a single, coherent, systematized scheme, if we except the architectural rationalization of the ethnologist himself. The *mana* theorists appear to follow a very similar method of procedure, whether or not they are entirely conscious of the fact. They cite static facts from diverse cultures and carefully selected linguistic material, which extrudes evidence not favorable to their theory, to prove the existence and universal distribution of the *mana* concept or the pre-animistic stage in the development of religion.

In a manner similar to that in which Tylor deduced all religious beliefs from the concept of spirit, these theorists attempt to derive magic in some way, not very clearly set forth, from the *mana* concept and assume that rites concern themselves exclusively in carrying on various types of transactions with this mysterious, universally diffused essence. Oftentimes it is said, in a seemingly innocuous way, that *mana* is the "basis of magic,"—a type of statement of which the following from Irving King may be taken as representative: "We do not question but that

this unformulated hypothesis of the savage lies at the basis of his so-called magical practices." [41]

A great deal of work has been done on the distribution of a word for magical power among various peoples. A variety of native terms have frequently been introduced into the literature of the subject such as *mana*,[42] *manitou*,[43] *wakonda*,[44] *orenda*,[45] and *yek*.[46] It has been assumed in some peculiar way, which is not made explicit, that the presence of a native term for mysterious force is a guarantee of its primitive and fundamental character. Despite the mass of alleged linguistic evidence which has been piled up, no conclusive argument can be based directly upon it. Data of this type which have been collected by the *mana* theorists show equivocal and uncertain results. The accounts given are full of inconsistencies, obscurities, and ambiguities.

[41] King, The development of religion, p. 156.

[42] Codrington, The Melanesians, p. 119.

[43] Jones, The Algonkin *Manitou, Journal of American Folk-Lore*, v. 18.

[44] Miss Fletcher, *Wakonda, U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin*, v. 30, pt. 2. *Handbook of American Indians.*

[45] Hewitt, *Orenda* and a definition of religion, *American Anthropologist*, n.s., v. 4.

[46] Swanton, Social condition, beliefs and linguistic relationships of the Tlingit Indians, *U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, 26th Annual Report*, p. 451, footnote.

This state of affairs is, of course, precisely what we should expect, because a theory of this type does not lend itself to linguistic proof, or, indeed, to historical demonstration. The *mana* dogma is, *par excellence*, a psychological one and is to be adequately tested only by reference to the psychical constitution of man, considered in the widest sense: the question therefore arises as to whether or not it can be brought into harmonious relationship with more general principles and laws. If it be found repugnant in the light of these considerations, we are justified in looking upon it with profound distrust.

It is quite obvious that descriptive, ethnographic monographs afford no account of any people whose magico-religious activities do not concern themselves, at least in part, with spirits. If, therefore, a pre-animistic stage in the development of religion has existed, it must have been in a prehistoric period concerning which we have no direct evidence whatosever; consequently views with respect to it have necessarily arisen either as the result of an inference or a re-interpretation of data, rather than by virtue of an inductive study based upon available facts. There is, perhaps, no fatal objection to such an hypothetical reconstruction of a past era, provided there be exhaustive indications possessing a high degree of evidential value,

and that it be capable of assisting to explain or clarify the present status of the ethnographic phenomena. A soulless age, however, is a purely *a priori* construction which, rather than contributing to definite knowledge of the rise of magic and religion and the complex problems involved, performs the role of an obfuscating agency leading to a purely gratuitous mystification.

CHAPTER 8

THE ANOMALOUS POSITION OF EMANATION AND THE SPECIFIC POWERS AND PROPERTIES OF PHYSICAL BODIES

Hobhouse[1] does not attempt to distinguish between magic and religion on the usual conventional grounds, but considers that they are closely interwoven in the life of primitive man whose general cosmic outlook involves the belief in invisible powers and agencies, both spiritual and otherwise, which are capable of being influenced by him and used for his own purposes. The widely-held view, therefore, which regards spirit as of secondary derivation in the historical series, is not susceptible of proof or justification.[2]

Marett holds that the direct field observer should not concern himself with hypothetical distinctions, but should classify his phenomena indifferently under the general heading of the magico-religious, leaving the wider question of

[1] On the whole Hobhouse has treated this obscure and difficult question with remarkable, critical acumen and insight.

[2] Hobhouse, Morals in evolution, pt. 2, p. 23.

the criteria of differentiation open for theoretical interpretation.[3]

The great bulk of theoretical literature, however, is pervaded by either an explicit statement or a tacit implication that we are confronted by the inevitable alternative of supposing that either spirit or magical power is the fundamental factor in magico-religious experience and that a temporal sequence obtains between them. It is, nevertheless, in no sense true that these opposed alternatives exhaust the theoretical possibilities of the situation and that no other method of approach is feasible. Among others, the little discussed facts of emanation together with the specific powers and properties of physical bodies militate directly against the acceptance of either of these views and lie, as it were, in "no man's land."

Karutz takes an iconoclastic position with reference to the traditional distinction between magic and religion and argues with cogency that a large number of phenomena are recalcitrant to both these classificatory rubrics. He points out that the virtue presumed to abide in various objects, particularly amulets and talismans, is to be interpreted as due neither to the activity of a spirit abiding permanently or maintaining a temporary habitat therein or working through

[3] Marett, Magic, *Hastings Encyclopedia*, v. 8, p. 248.

the thing, nor to the action of a universally diffused *mana* which manifests itself in it, but rather to impersonal, physical properties and qualities which operate, or are conceived to operate, by means of emanation.[4] In this connection he argues vigorously against the concept of *mana* as a universal, vague, magical power working through things[5] and states that the primitive mind did not attain to or achieve this abstraction from the qualities, properties, emanations or virtues of objects, some of which are observed in immediate experience. Concrete activities and potentialities are believed to exist in things but not an universal force over and above them. He considers that the ethnographical evidence as usually presented, involves a profound misunderstanding of this whole question, and that, specifically, the African material shows that the people believe in and deal with the particularized qualities and virtues of things rather than with magical power as such and at large.[6]

[4] Karutz, Der Emanismus, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1913, pp. 559–560.

[5] "Keine Allegemeine vage Zauberkraft tritt in die Dinge—das *orenda* der Indianer und das *mana* der Melanesier sind wohl so aufgefasst vermutlich mit Unrecht,—sondern in den Dingen liegt spezifische Kraft, die ihnen entströmt und sich anderen überträgt." Ibid., p. 555.

[6] Ibid., p. 556. Meier has also stated that the coast inhabitants of the Gazelle peninsula neither believe in an

Kunz has recorded a large number of phenomena reflecting beliefs in the physical emanations and virtues of objects which are worthy of being considered as *sui generis.*

"The electric or magnetic gems, tourmaline, amber, and loadstone, possess not only great scientific interest, but demonstrate the fact that a certain energy really does proceed from some of these fair, ornamental objects, an energy that produces a positive action from without upon the human body. This may well serve to make us less resolutely skeptical as to the possible presence in gem-stones of some other forms of emanation not as yet susceptible of scientific determination." [7]

The belief in the therapeutic and prophylactic virtues of amber was widely prevalent in the ancient and medieval worlds, its electrical property being said to have been first discovered by Thales about 600 B.C. Buckland points out its enormous significance in prehistoric commerce and states that Boyd-Dawkins has traced three trade routes of the Etruscans, afterwards followed by the Romans, in search of it.[8] An interesting esoteric account of its efficacy as due to emanations is given by King:

universal force nor do they have a word for it. Meier, Die Zauberei bei dem Kustenbewohnern der Gazelle-Halbinsel, Neupommern, Südsee. *Anthropos*, v. 8, p. 8.

[7] Kunz, The magic of jewels and charms, p. 51.

[8] Buckland, Necklaces in relation to prehistoric commerce, *The Antiquary*, v. 32, p. 8.

"That the wearing of an amber necklace will keep off the attacks of erysipelas in a person subject to them has been proved by repeated experiments beyond the possibility of doubt. Its action here cannot be explained; but its efficacy in defence of the throat against chills is evidently due to its extreme warmth when in contact with the skin and the circle of electricity so maintained." [9]

Anselmus De Boot, court physician to Rudolph II. of Germany, in 1609 expressed an opinion which was characteristic of his time.

"That gems or stones, when applied to the body, exert an action upon it, is so well proven by many persons, that any one who doubts this must be called over-bold. We have proof of this power in the carnelian, the hematite, and the jasper, all of which when applied, check hemorrhage." [10]

Kunz asserts that at one time belief in the therapeutic properties of precious stones was universal among all those to whom gems were known.[11] Not only were they commonly worn or applied for the purpose of securing their benefits, virtues, and protection, but were frequently ingested. This was accomplished after the following fashion. A number of stones were ground up, mixed with honey or some other sweet substance, and administered to the patient in the shape of an electuary. Arnobios' "*Tesoro*

[9] King, Natural history of precious stones, p. 334.
[10] Cited by Kunz, Curious lore of precious stones, p. 6.
[11] Ibid., p. 369.

delle Gioie" contains a recipe for "the most noble electuary of jacinth," comprising jacinth, emerald, sapphire, topaz, garnet, pearl, ruby, white and red coral, amber, many animal and mineral substances, in all thirty-four ingredients.[12]

During the final illness of Pope Clement VII, in 1534, his physicians administered powders composed of precious stones. In fourteen days his Holiness ingested forty thousand ducats' worth of these gems including a diamond,—a procedure which, according to Kunz, was sufficient to cause the transportation of the Pope to another and better world without the ancillary intermediation of his disease.[13]

Nona Lebour states that among the Scottish Highlanders various cure-stones are considered as precious heirlooms and are kept carefully wrapped up in the choicest and most expensive cloths. In the event of illness in man or cattle, the stone is dipped in water which is given to the sufferer to drink.[14]

In medieval Europe the loadstone, among other stones, was widely famed for its therapeutic

[12] Cited by Kunz, Ibid., p. 372.

[13] Ibid., p. 379.

[14] Lebour, White quartz pebbles and their archæological significance, *Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, Transactions and Journal of Proceedings*, 1913–14, ser. 3, v. 2, p. 131.

virtues. Trotula, the first of the female physicians of the School of Salerno, wrote a treatise on female diseases in which she recommends its employment in child birth. She prescribes that the woman hold the stone in the right hand, but adds that its efficacy is increased by the wearing of a coral necklace. Francisco Piemontese, a teacher in Naples about 1340, also advises the use of the loadstone in these cases, but suggests, in addition, that it be strewn with the ashes obtained by burning the hoof of an ass or a horse.[15]

In Belgium during the seventeenth century, ruptures were treated as follows: a dose of iron filings was given to the patient, and a plaster, made of crushed loadstone, was applied to the affected part. By this means a cure was said to be accomplished in the space of eight days. It is probable that the plaster was believed to draw the iron filings or some emanation from them through the diseased tissues toward the surface.[16]

[15] Kunz, The magic of jewels and charms, p. 67.

[16] Ibid., p. 67. Kunz says: "In the ninth century Arabic treatise, translated from an earlier Syriac text and falsely attributed to Aristotle, a number of fabulous stones are noted. All of these were said to have attractive properties, and as the loadstone attracted iron, they attracted various substances, each having its special affinity." Ibid., p. 69.

Various stone implements found in the shell-heaps of Brazil are called, in the native languages, "lightning-stones," "stars fallen from heaven," "stones hurled by the thunder," and "axe-stones," and are believed to possess electrical properties. They are highly prized by gold-seekers who believe that, by attraction, they show the presence of gold beneath the surface.[17]

Among many peoples, at the present time, stone implements are believed to have fallen from the sky and are associated in their minds with the phenomena of lightning. Sven Nilsson states that, among the primitive inhabitants of Scandinavia, arrow-heads and stone-axes are supposed to afford protection against lightning. In certain eruptive diseases of children, the implement is struck with a piece of steel in such a manner that the sparks fall upon the child's head.[18]

It has been pointed out that quartz pebbles when struck together give out a bright spark.[19] The very widespread use of these stones for therapeutic, and other magico-religious, purposes

[17] Ibid., p. 109.

[18] Nilsson, The primitive inhabitants of Scandinavia, p. 199.

[19] Lebour, White quartz pebbles and their archæological significance, *Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, Transactions and Journal of Proceedings*, 1913–14, ser. 3, v. 2, p. 121.

is, at least in many cases, possibly bound up with the fact that they possess this property. Nona Lebour and Smith give testimony to this effect in their explorations of prehistoric cairns. When these chambers were excavated large numbers of quartz pebbles which had been buried with the dead were discovered. Nona Lebour points out that in burials in Argyleshire and elsewhere, flintflakes were often found associated with quartz pebbles.[20] Mitchell states that, upon opening a cairn at Achnacree, a row of large quartz pebbles was revealed in a dark chamber which shone as though illuminated. In 1865 Canon Greenwell excavated a large chambered cairn near Kilmarten and found a great number of broken quartz pebbles and several fragments of flint.[21] Facts of this type would seem to suggest that the magico-religious significance of these objects may also have been associated with the phenomena of luminescence.

Illustrations of the type previously cited might be multiplied indefinitely. It is sufficient, however, to call attention to their very widespread existence and importance. The phenomena of phosphorescence, fluorescence, triboluminescence

[20] Ibid., pp. 124, 126.

[21] Mitchell, On white pebbles in connection with Pagan and Christian burials, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquities of Scotland*, 1883–84, n.s., v. 6, pp. 286–287.

and thermoluminescence, together with the electrical, magnetic and physical properties of various objects have been, as we have suggested, greatly neglected in the literature of magic and religion,—indeed, the great bulk of theoretical works have failed to incorporate them at all. By calling attention in the preceding citations to these phenomena we do not mean to imply that they possess an extraordinary and distinctive significance in contradistinction to spirits and magical powers, nor to suggest that they are peculiarly fundamental, primordial or necessary in the Hegelian sense; however, it is perhaps unobjectionable to say that they constitute but one of the multiple sources from which magico-religious concepts may be elaborated.

CHAPTER 9

THE RELATIONS OF CAUSALITY TO MAGIC, RELIGION AND OTHER PHASES OF CULTURE

One of the characteristic features of the magico-religious belief is the presumption that two or more events, objects, processes or what-not, are connected together causally. It is a peculiar fact, however, (to which sufficient attention has not been given) *that the nature of the articulating mechanism may not rise into the consciousness of the person who holds the belief.*[1]

[1] The problems brought to light by means of a consideration of the articulating mechanism have a much wider bearing than that which is revealed in their relationship to the phenomena of magic and religion. While it is not incumbent upon us to develop adequately these more comprehensive questions which are involved in the interpretation of other phases of culture, reference to a number of implications is, nevertheless, essential. By reason of the inextricably tangled web of human affairs, it is never altogether possible to discuss a feature or segment of culture as an independent, self-existent entity; indeed, when, dominated by the fetish of scientific precision and exactitude, such an attempt is made, artificial results inevitably ensue,—demarcations and classifications of experience, several steps removed from the actual diversity of reality, maintaining their several outlines only with the greatest difficulty.

Hence an insidious difficulty is created for the investigator either in the field or study, who is constantly liable to commit the almost inevitable psychological fallacy of supposing that the believer is more or less thoroughly cognizant of the nature of the nexus, and hence he is prone to refer to it as a spirit or magical power, or to describe it frequently in terms which suggest a conscious process,—an awareness of its precise *modus operandi*.[2] Thus Tylor repeatedly refers to spirits as personified causes. Comte supposes that in the "theological" state primitive man believes in spiritual beings as the aetiological bases of all phenomena.[3] Nieuwenhuis asserts that unknown causes are reified and personified, —illness, for example, being regarded as a quasi-

[2] Although, in the general procedure of the *Geisteswissenschaften*, hypotheses are not subjected to tests comparable to those instituted in the physical sciences, but depend largely, for whatsoever measure of respectability they may possess, upon purely internal evidence and an inner consistency involved in the manner of their own statement, it may, however, in this case, be possible and desirable, to refer speculations regarding spirits and magical power to the intimate psychological attitude of the esoteric believer. The question then arises as to how far, and in what way, the mental activities of this much-neglected individual assume the form of a conscious process.

[3] Comte, The positive philosophy, v. 1, p. 2 and following.

material entity which can be removed from the body. Lightning, thunder, and other natural phenomena in a similar manner are considered as entities or as the result of their activities.[4] The great group of pre-animists, on the other hand, supposes that *mana* fills in the gap or constitutes the nexus amid the infinite variety of phenomena.

Among a large group of writers, a logical and epistemological influence has dominated interpretations of the complicated web of relations with which the world is permeated as it is swept within the domain of human experience. The fact that one thing is connected with another in the mind of man is usually explained as having been effected through a process of reasoning, inference or deliberative observation,—in other words, the attribution of dynamism is a purely noetical affair. It is quite impossible to trace out with the least hope of precision the enormous ramifications of this mode of interpretation.

Jevons, for example, assumes that primitive man, thrust into a confused environment which presents a vast number of potential causes, is more or less constantly engaged in the search for them. In the prosecution of this enterprise he very properly employs the methods of the induc-

[4] Nieuwenhuis, Die Wurzeln des Animismus, *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, Sup. to band 24, p. 62.

tive sciences, *viz.*, agreement, difference and concomitant variation, but in some manner, not very clearly set forth, is prone to hit upon those which are fictitious and illusory.[5] Frazer considers that from the outset primitive man is on the lookout for general principles, laws and maxims which will be serviceable in bending the decrees of nature to his individual purposes. In this manner he scrapes up a great hoard of maxims, some of them golden, which form the basis of science, and some of them mere dross, which constitute magic. Regarding the latter he comes gradually in the process of time to recognize that he has been fooling himself, that nature cannot be coerced according to the traditional prescriptions, that he has "taken for causes what were no causes" and that his entire procedure is a gigantic folly.[6]

The rationalization and intellectualization of the mental processes involved in causation is by no means confined to interpretations of the magico-religious experience of primitive peoples, but is quite characteristic of the philosophical treatment of the subject at large. Here again the psychological fallacy plays an exceedingly important role,—a point of view which arises

[5] Jevons, An introduction to the history of religion, ch. IV.

[6] Frazer, The golden bough, v. 1.

as the result of abstract, reflective thought frequently being read back into living empirical situations where it is really not present in any sense.

Closely allied to the logical and epistemological interest in causation is the metaphysical, which perhaps departs even further from consideration of the direct psychological processes involved, and concerns itself largely with the question as to whether or not predicated relations are real and can be objectively specified. In this manner the problem presents itself to Aristotle and an indefinite number of his successors. The metaphysical ground or the principle of sufficient reason accordingly becomes the basis upon which their speculations repose. Assuming a thing to be, the question arises as to what determinants are responsible for its present status, configuration, functions, capacities or whatnot. In answer Aristotle enumerates the four celebrated causes,—the final, formal, material and efficient.[7]

In the history of philosophy the catchword, "causality", has been very widely used. Bewildering ambiguity, however, attaches to the term, indeed, so scandalous has its reckless employment become, that, in recent years, an heroic attempt has been made by some writers on the methodology of science to get rid of it

[7] Aristotle, Metaphysics, Oxford edition, bk. 5, ch. 2.

entirely.[8] Ward, who does not entirely sympathize with this purpose, nevertheless refers to the fact that for all practical intents a certain type of science has eliminated it altogether.

"How completely the theory of mechanics has divested itself of the conceptions of substance and cause, in assuming its present strictly mathematical form, is brought home to us by one striking fact: the fact, I mean, that mass and force, in wh ch these categories are supposed to be implied, are but dependent variables in certain general equations. In $7 + 5 = 12$ or $\tan 45° = 1$, we cannot say that one side of these equations is more than the other effect or consequent, that other being the cause or essence whence it proceeds. It would be equally arbitrary to attempt any such distinction when we have the equations $my = ft$, or $ms = ft^2$ or $fs = my^2$. In these, the fundamental equations of dynamics, we have four quantities so connected, that if any three are known the fourth can be found. In this respect one term is no more real than another, and the dependence is not temporal or causal or teleological, but mathematical simply. The sole use of such equations, it is contended, is 'to *describe* in the exactest and simplest manner such motions as occur in nature'."[9]

Mach says:

[8] Lewes refers to attempts to abandon the use of the term as early as 1864. He seems to feel personally, however, that it is desirable to retain it, providing its fetishistic elements be extruded. Aristotle, ch. 4.

[9] Ward, Naturalism and agnosticism, v. 1. p. 62. Ward, however, argues for the usefulness of causality on general philosophic grounds.

"There is no cause nor effect in nature; nature has but an individual existence; nature simply *is*".[10]

In another passage he remarks:

"It is said description leaves the sense of causality unsatisfied. In fact, many imagine they understand motions better when they picture to themselves pulling forces, and yet the accelerations, the facts, accomplish more, without superfluous additions. I hope that the science of the future will discard the idea of cause and effect, as being formally obscure; and in my feeling that these ideas contain a strong tincture of fetishism, I am certainly not alone".[11]

In popular parlance it is sometimes said that "gravity" is the cause of the movements of the heavenly bodies. This anthropomorphic shove, however, is not incorporated in the scientific statement in which, indeed, gravitation appears merely as the formulation of an uniformity or, in mathematical terms, a functionality,—a constant relation which subsists among variables.

In a similar manner the "law of nature" or a "force" is often spoken of as a cause,—a sort of benevolent *vis a tergo* which contrives a specific denouement. From a more critical standpoint, however, a constant relation is all that is implied. It is true, of course, that a certain washed-out, anthropomorphic element survives in imagery,

[10] Mach, Science of mechanics, p. 483.

[11] Mach, Popular scientific lectures, Eng. trans., p. 253.

in feels of effort, and in symbolical and metaphorical language, all of which are involved in thought processes concerning themselves with cause, gravity, law, force, etc.; but these elements of transient mental existence,—these adventitious images,—are completely disregarded in the scientific formulation.[12]

The most sweeping condemnation of the time honored category, however, with which we are familiar is that of Russell. That something is radically wrong, whatever it be, may be deduced

[12] Pillsbury, however, attempts to approach the entire problem of causality through the door of introspective psychology. "In the writer's consciousness the sign of the causal relation takes on a distinctly anthropomorphic form. There is invariably a marked attribution of strain sensations to the object, which is represented as active, and just as distinct passivity to the object that is considered the effect. With the ascription of the effort to the causing event, there also go actual contractions of the muscles of the body that would be involved in accomplishing some purpose. The feeling of effort is not altogether a memory image, but is an actual sensation from real though vain contractions. . . . (p. 410).

In short, then, the anthropomorphic feeling of strain, which constitutes an essential element of the sign of causality, will be called up by the first of two succeeding events, when they have occurred together frequently, and when all other experiences serve to confirm the assumption that they cannot exist apart." . . . (p. 416). Pillsbury, The psychological nature of causality, *Philosophical Review*, 1904.

from his complaint against its use in any sense whatsoever. He contends, indeed, that the word "cause" is so inextricably bound up with misleading associations as to render desirable its complete extrusion from the philosophical vocabulary. "All philosophers, of every school", he says, "imagine that caustion is one of the fundamental axioms or postulates of science, yet, oddly enough, in advanced sciences such as gravitational astronomy, the word 'cause' never occurs".[13] Examining into the method of investigation pursued by the physical sciences, particularly in so far as they state their objects in mathematical terms, he finds that the concept is not employed at all nor does it find embodiment or asylum in the algebraic equation. In the illustration of his opinion, he refers to the modern scientific treatment of the phenomena of gravitation, typical of all the so-called "advanced sciences". "In the motions of mutually gravitating bodies, there is nothing that can be called a cause, and nothing that can be called an effect; there is merely a formula".[14]

Russell's quarrel with causality centres about the fact that he considers the essential heuristic principles of science to be concerned with, or

[13] Russell, On the notion of cause, *Aristotelian Society, Proceedings*, 1912–13, p. 1.

[14] Ibid., pp. 13–14.

tend toward, a mathematical statement of their objects. Tacitly he assumes that this form of presentation constitutes *the* type of science *par excellence*,—any other being a mere derogation from the ideal. Analysis of the algebraic equation fails to reveal a cause, hence it has no real existence. True it stalks abroad in many places as an imposter, but, at best, can maintain itself only by reason of the laxity of certain intellectual disciplines which have not attained to the dignity of true sciences because they do not use mathematics as their essential organon. Appropriate precision and exactitude, however, spell the doom of "cause".

Russell's ideal extrusion of this troublesome concept is far from concrete enactment in the world of human affairs. We have not yet attained to that stage of Olympian detachment in which we can formulate an equation for a political change, an eccentricity of fashion or a religious ceremony. Even were such a procedure achieved, other types of statement dealing with the same subject matter would still maintain themselves or unfold anew according to traditional prescriptions.

We are quite unjustifiably wont to think of anthropomorphic elements, including those bound up with causality, as applying exclusively to the religion of primitive peoples, indeed,

attempts have been made to show that the evolution of culture, particularly so far as it manifests itself in the sciences, involves a gradual historical diminution of them. In this spirit Fiske characterized the development of science as a progressive "de-anthropomorphization" and Comte supposed that the evolution of society involves the continuous elimination of "fetishistic" elements.

Comte set forth his views in the celebrated doctrine of three stages. In the first or theological state, man believes all phenomena to be produced by the action of supernatural beings; in the second or metaphysical, abstract forces, entities, or personified abstractions take the place of spirits as aetiological bases; in the final or positivistic, the mind directs itself to the study of laws which are but generalizations of the invariable relations of succession and resemblance among phenomena.[15]

This view of the final elimination of fetishistic elements cannot be regarded, however, as a satisfactory generalization based upon historical facts. Religious, theological, metaphysical, magical, superstitious, playful, and poetic interpretations, involving various aspects of anthropomorphism, maintain themselves at the present time in our own culture side by side with

[15] Comte, The positive philosophy, v. 1, p. 2.

those of a purely rationalistic or positivistic character. No theoretical argumentation is necessary to support this statement, confirmations of which lie on every hand. While it may be admitted that causes no longer play a part in the particular enterprises carried on by the mathematico-physical sciences, it is, nevertheless, equally patent that they are extensively used in many diverse types of mental operations, including those relating to commonplace problems growing out of the exigencies of daily life: indeed, many intellectual undertakings commonly concern themselves with explanation,—a process which, in its widest significance, connotes the setting forth of a series of determining conditions out of which a given phenomenon is conceived to have arisen. Thus certain factors antecedent to, and considered as relevant to, the event or fact which is the object of interest, are at the same time held to stand in the relation of dynamic agency to it,—in other words, to produce or bring it into being. This mode of envisagement is, indeed, very widespread and of a rough and ready practical utility. We do not concern ourselves with the question as to whether or not specific causal relations, predicated by the mind, possess objective reference or with the justifiability of the employment of the concept of causality as an appropriate tool in

the process of scientific investigation, but rather with the articulating mechanism considered purely in the light of an ethnographic fact. In this respect we shall consider its saturation with human values,—its emotional and orectic, as well as gnostic, character.

One of the essential difficulties involved, which is also the pregnant source of great confusion, is the fact that the use of the term "causality" ordinarily involves an implicit and thoroughly suppressed use of the comparative method,—a single term being surreptitiously used to designate groups of phenomena which are essentially different and, indeed, profoundly non-homogeneous. We have previously referred to the fact that this method commonly makes use of a single principle as a basis of comparison, namely, the similarity of outer form. In some detail we have passed criticism upon the uncontrolled employment of this criterion and it is, therefore, not necessary to refer to these arguments again.

Despite the fact, however, that purely morphological resemblance cannot be regarded as the *fundamentum comparationis* applicable at all times, it continues, nevertheless, to be widely used in this manner. The utilization of the form criterion still constitutes the essential feature of the comparative method and its employ-

ment in a surreptitious and implicit manner in other directions is enormously more widespread than is apparent. A large number of time honored concepts, for example, continue to be interpreted in this more or less anachronistic manner, indeed, it is still widely assumed that they are the same everywhere, comprising, as it were, a sort of screen through which the world is envisaged. Indeed the considerations here set forth might be regarded as an indictment against many types of philosophic method which are wont to deal with their objects as such and at large, free from the exigencies of historical individuality and from whatsoever measure of variation they may exhibit when set in different temporal periods and dramatic stages. Thus the ideas of the "sacred",[16] a future life, *mana*,

[16] Durkheim considers the idea of the sacred to constitute the specific differentia of religion. One of the essential difficulties involved here, however, is that the psychological content of the concept exhibits considerable variation when it appears in different settings,—in other words, the mental phenomena to which the catchword is applied, are essentially heterogeneous and non-comparable. This point is brought out clearly in Goldenweiser's critique. "If any religion is analyzed in its concrete cultural setting, one finds that the domain of the sacred does not represent a psychologically homogeneous phenomenon. In Australia, for instance, the sacredness of the magical act and of the magician is not that of the

causality and so on, are frequently discussed as morphological constants which, appearing in different times and places and under varying circumstances, are nevertheless homogeneous and analogous.

So far as we are aware, there has been no discussion of certain non-comparable elements of the "concept of causality" in various areas, different cultural levels, and diverse mental processes. It is perhaps safe to conjecture that, behind the bewildering confusion which commonly attends upon the philosophical and scientific treatment of the term, is the vague thought hovering in the background, that, however elusive it be, there still exists somehow a typical idea with a more or less definite structure or form. This is tantamount, in the last analysis, to an implicit leaning upon the comparative method.

totem; nor the sacredness of the menstrual taboos that of the unclean animals, not eaten because possessed by evil spirits. Similarly, in our own society, the sacredness of the national flag is not that of the law, nor the sacredness of the family name that of the college pin or banner, nor the sacredness of the Church to which one belongs that of one to which he does not belong. The sacred, then, is an aggregate as psychologically heterogeneous as is the profane." Goldenweiser, Religion and society: a critique of Émile Durkheim's theory of the origin and nature of religion, *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 1917, v. 14, p. 118.

In philosophy a further smothering of the diverse mental processes involved commonly takes place by means of giving the entire investigation an ontological twist,—that is, raising the question as to whether or not predicated relations have objective bases. This metaphysical morass performs the role of a common denominator, the numerators comprising causal relations of all types and, indeed, various complexes of elements whose only title to recognition consists in the fact that they hang together in clusters.

The universality and sameness, usually believed to attach to the concept of cause applies, however, only to a single morphological feature, namely, that between two or more elements, a dynamic relationship is predicated. Reference to this common property involves disregard of the historical processes which have led to a specific predication, the immediate psychological situation in which the connection has, as it were, a temporary habitat, and also the more general psychic setting or cultural *milieu*.

Exclusive interest in this morphological constant, which in different stages is really set within a complex of variable elements, may lead to peculiar results, among which may be mentioned particularly the attempt to draw an analogy between science and magic, which frequently finds issue in the statement that magic

is a primitive science.[17] Regarded from a structural point of view, both disciplines involve webs of causes, the elements comprising each being ideally articulated,—in other words, the *fundamentum comparationis* is the concept of causality. Independent of this alleged similarity, however, important differences exist,—the energetic genuflections of an Australian aborigine in the performance of an *Intichiuma* ceremony for the production of plants and animals being not altogether comparable to modern physical experiments,—indeed, the comparison of science with magic on the basis previously indicated, is perhaps no more happy than that of the vault of the heavens with a man's skull on the basis of the morphological feature of rotundity.

[17] See especially Frazer, The golden bough, pt. 1, v. 1, p. 220; The origin of totemism, *Fortnightly Review*, 1899, n.s., v. 65: Tylor, Primitive culture: Jevons, An introduction to the history of religion: Nieuwenhuis, Die Wurzeln des Animismus, 1917, *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie, Sup. to band 24*: Nieuwenhuis, Die Veranlagung der malaiischen Völker des Ost-Indischen Archipels II, *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, 1915–16, v. 22–23.

CHAPTER X

THE APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF CONVERGENCE IN THE INTERPRETATION OF CAUSALITY. UNCONSCIOUS MENTAL PROCESSES

We may now refer directly to the convergence of mental processes which lead to the attribution or predication of a dynamic relationship between two or more elements. We have previously called attention to the fact that a large number of theories regard logical processes as furnishing the exclusive medium in which causal relations are generated. The execution of this type of interpretation involves complete disregard of the agglutinative influence which emotional and affectivistic elements exercise in the architecture of many types of relations, and, at the same time, tends almost inevitably toward the presumption that the relevant mental states are more or less conscious and rational. We may, however, look at this entire question from a much more elastic point of view and consider first unconscious, and then other psychological conditions which may be involved.

The supposition that people are commonly wont to assume that two events (objects, processes or whatnot), *a* and *b*, are or may be connected dynamically and, at the same time, do not present to themselves the mode and manner of the conjunction, seems perhaps somewhat absurd. Nevertheless, that such a state of affairs can, and frequently does, exist, can be demonstrated beyond peradventure in the life of both primitive and civilized man. A few illustrations will perhaps serve to make this matter clear.

Dresslar,[1] of the University of California, collected a considerable number of present day superstitions from 875 persons between the ages of 16 and 28 years during the period of their professional training for the work of teaching. Slips of paper were passed out and the student requested to record one superstition on each, together with his attitude toward it expressed in terms of belief, partial belief or non-belief. The data were arranged in classified lists which serve to give a fairly accurate picture of a typical modern attitude toward these matters. The following type of results appears in the tables.

[1] Dresslar, Superstition and education, pp. 9–38.

	No Belief	Partial Belief	Full Belief	Totals
If you spill salt, you'll have bad luck	8	1	1	10
If you spill salt, you'll surely have bad luck unless you throw some over your shoulder	3	4	2	9
It is a sign of a quarrel to spill salt	15	7	3	25
To help yourself to bread or other food when you have some on your plate is a sign that some one is coming hungry	7	3	3	13
If you see the moon over your left shoulder for the first time, you will have bad luck.	29	24	3	56
If you see the new moon over your right shoulder, it is good luck	43	38	6	87
Potatoes planted in the dark of the moon will give a good crop	5	3	8	16
If you plant potatoes in the dark of the moon, they will all go to tops		1	2	3
If you plant your potatoes in the light of the moon, you will have a good crop	2	3	4	9
If a strange cat comes to your house, it will bring good luck	7	11	4	22
The howling of a dog is the sign of death	7	3	3	13

	No Belief	Partial Belief	Full Belief	Totals
To find a four-leaved clover will bring good luck........	23	21	7	51
If a dog howls at night, some one is dying..............	8	6	4	18
If a rooster crows before the front door, you will have company.................	46	27	6	79

In analyzing his results, Dresslar finds, on the whole, a surprisingly large percentage of beliefs.

"We have 7,176 separate confessions to reckon with. Of these 3,951 are frank expressions of disbelief, 2,132 of partial belief, and 1,093 of full belief. Combining those of partial belief, we have 3,225 confessions of belief as against the 3,951 of disbelief, or 55.1 per cent. of disbelief to 44.9 per cent. of belief. It must be steadily held in mind that these figures do not refer to persons, but to the combined confessions made on different groups of the whole of the superstitions listed. In other words, the attitude of this very select and uniform class of people toward their own superstitions can be very nearly represented by saying that 55.1 per cent. of the superstitions which they hold in mind are not believed in, while 44.9 per cent. are believed in. These figures seem so extraordinary that one would be inclined to doubt their correctness were it not for the fact that every suggested precaution has been taken to reduce the possibility of error. . . . 'If then,' one is impelled to inquire, 'this amount of superstitious faith exists amongst individuals of such a select class, what must be the mental condition in this regard

of those who have not equal opportunities for developing those reactions which tend toward arousing disbelief in the unreasonable?' "[2]

In cases of the type cited by Dresslar, neither the character of the connecting link nor the manner of the achievement of the result appears in the tables. The state of affairs here revealed is very common but is apt to be entirely neglected in descriptions of magical beliefs. The presentation of these data in a cold and formal manner, however, serves admirably to bring this consideration to light.

Among the native races of the Malay Peninsula there is a peculiar and characteristic association between various forms of geometrical art and diseases. Patterns are inscribed on the combs worn by the women and the quivers and blow-pipes carried by the men. The designs are highly elaborated and each of them is associated in the minds of the people with a certain disease, —the general notion being that a particular representation serves as an efficient prophylactic against a specific ailment. The development of this concept has proceeded to great lengths in this area, Skeat and Blagden recording one hundred and forty patterns.[3] When two or

[2] Ibid., pp. 146–147.

[3] Skeat and Blagden, Pagan races of the Malay Peninsula, v. 1, p. 406.

more women proceed on a journey, they carry a number of combs with them, the belief being that the entire party will be protected.[4]

Designs are also frequently utilized for the accomplishment of other purposes. A pattern on a bamboo which had remained in a family for three generations was regarded as capable of driving away demons seeking shelter on cold nights;[5] another was designed to facilitate the capture of fish and protect the angler;[6] another to protect the growing crops from injury by animals;[7] the object of a set of quiver patterns was to bring down various species of monkeys, apes, and other small mammals,—a particularly effective one being described as possessing much magical virtue, "*kom jasa*", (slayer of many victims).[8]

We are not prepared to hazard generalized speculations as to the interesting correlation of forms of artistic representation with magical and religious purposes, and particularly the extraordinary development which it has attained in this area. It is, however, extremely probable, in cases of this type, that the articulating

[4] Ibid., v. 1, p. 422.
[5] Ibid., v. 1, p. 484.
[6] Ibid., v. 1, p. 489.
[7] Ibid., v. 1, p. 490.
[8] Ibid., v. 1, pp. 417–418.

mechanism does not rise into the consciousness of the people. The pattern is employed for the purpose of achieving a definite result, but the native would probably be unable to tell in what manner it is encompassed.

The Eskimo about Behring Strait have borrowed the use of masks as well as a semi-totemic organization from their neighbors of the northwest coast. Nelson states that the object of these faces, utilized in their ceremonies, is to propitiate and honor animals or beings represented by them, to bring about plenty of game, and to ward off evil influences.[9] In view of the fact that the use of masks is a foreignly introduced element, it cannot be held that the people are conscious of the manner in which the representation serves to achieve its purpose, or that this custom has arisen as the result of a rationalistic search for an appropriate means to the accomplishment of desirable ends.

The delimitation of magical possibilities within the confines of restricted groups of individuals in Australia furnishes another striking case in point. The social organization has been projected into the cosmos, and animals, plants, heavenly bodies,

[9] Nelson, The Eskimo about Behring Strait, *U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, Annual Report,* v. 18, pt. 1, pp. 358–359, 394–395.

and inanimate objects are swept within its peculiar classifications. Howitt says:

> "The whole universe, including mankind, was apparently divided between the classes. Therefore the list of sub-totems might be extended indefinitely. It appears that a man speaks of some being 'nearer to him' than others. I am unable to ascertain the precise meaning of this expression. When pressed upon this question, a black would say, 'Oh, that is what our father told us'."[10]

Frazer in interpreting the Australian material, considers that the departments of nature are regulated by the various groups in the *Intichiuma* ceremonies, which are considered to be efficacious in promoting the multiplication of the totemic animal, the growth of plants, the supply of rain, etc. Whether or not this constitutes a complete explanation of these extraordinarily diversified ceremonies need not concern us. It is sufficient to observe that the juxtaposition of elements, among which a magical connection is predicated, is determined by the socio-cosmical classification or, in other words, by the association or adhesion of the forms of social organization with more general views of nature.

In a profusion of cases of the types previously cited it is, indeed, somewhat meaningless to entertain the supposition that the individual

[10] Howitt, The native tribes of South-East Australia, p. 454.

believes the articulating mechanism to be identified with, or encompassed by, either a spirit or an abstract magical power working indefinitely through the universe: as a matter of fact, at least in many cases, he does not know precisely how these events, objects or processes are connected,—in other words, the nexus does not rise into his consciousness, however anomalous and peculiar such a situation may seem when subjected to rigid analysis.

One of the deeply underlying reasons for this strange state of affairs is that the individual receives the juxtaposition of events, etc., in the shape of a mosaic, ready-made, as it were, from his cultural *milieu*, and that whatsoever measure or type of agglutination is possessed by the elements constituting the mass has not been applied by him. Some things are, others may be, stuck together, but *how* he does not know. Specific connections are the result of a cumulative historical series developing in an indigenous habitat, together with elements introduced by means of transmission through cultural contact, and the integrating mechanism which has made these agglomerations possible has been lost in the sands of time, in any event, it is neither reproduced nor in any fashion mirrored in the consciousness of the individual in such a manner that the particular historical process involved

may be analyzed out and clearly presented. The statements of the individual under the influence of questioning by the ethnologist or during the process of rationalistic reflection upon what he thinks, believes, and does, constitute what has been called secondary explanation, which is, indeed, in a literal sense, a *fait nouveau,* not related in any direct way to the actual processes in which diverse elements have been integrated into a cultural mosaic.

The articulating mechanism, indeed, is the prolific source of a variety of these secondary explanations. In this manner it may assume a vicarious guise, become transformed, as it were, and rise into consciousness in the shape of a spirit, magic power, emanation, reified abstraction or quality, the concrete virtue of an object or whatnot.

It is requisite at this point, however, to guard carefully against a serious misunderstanding. We do not mean to imply that spirits, magic powers, emanations, etc. are created or arise under the exigency of the attempt to make the nexus conscious by means of a process of secondary explanation. All that we mean to imply, indeed, is that they constitute the garbs which it may take on, as it were, in the process of rising into consciousness. A spirit does this; an emanation accomplishes that; the concrete vir-

tue of a stone stops the hemorrhage or cures a stomach ache,—such are examples of the manner in which this protean X ingratiates itself into the tangled thoughts of men.

According to the point of view suggested here, it follows that one of the fundamental problems involved in magico-religious phenomena is that which concerns itself, on the one hand, with the nexus among elements, and, on the other, concomitant psychological and historical processes. In a general way it may be said that the laws governing the juxtaposition of content are not known. Attempts have been made, it is true, to present them from the point of view of individual psychology, following the traditional Humeian principles of contiguity in space and time, cause and effect, and similarity.[11] The unhappiness of this manner of treating the subject, however, is perhaps so obvious as to require no special comment. At the present time associational psychology is anachronistic when applied to the mental processes of the individual, but doubly inacceptable when utilized in the interpretation of cultural phenomena.

[11] See, for example, Frazer, The golden bough, v. 1.

CHAPTER 11

THE APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF CONVERGENCE IN THE INTERPRETATION OF CAUSALITY (*Continued*). VARIOUS ADDITIONAL MENTAL PROCESSES

In some respects diametrically opposed to a certain peculiar unconsciousness of the articulating mechanism involving an immediate acceptance of the juxtaposition of elements, which we have been discussing, is a highly conscious and rationalistic enquiry in which the mind attempts to grasp, by acts of deliberate apprehension, the causes of an event and then launches out boldly upon a more or less boundless path. Frequently the type of investigation involved is wild and uncontrolled,—the mind proceeding capriciously from one cause to another in an indefinite series, contriving, in this manner, to encompass a sort of intellectual spree. Karl Pearson gives a good illustration in the case of the ash-tree in his garden.

. . . "The causes of its growth might be widened out into a description of the various past stages of the universe. One of the causes of its growth is the existence of my

garden, which is conditioned by the existence of the metropolis; another cause is the nature of the soil, gravel approaching the edge of the clay, which again is conditioned by the geological structure and past history of the earth. The causes of any *individual* thing thus widen out into the unmanageable history of the universe. The ash-tree is like Tennyson's 'flower in the crannied wall': to know all its causes would be to know the universe. To trace causes in this sense is like tracing back all the lines of ancestry which converge in one individual; we soon reach a point where we can go no further owing to the bulk of the material." [1]

Obviously the infinite regress does not represent the common or garden, the scientific or the religious denouement of a causal enquiry, but the mind is ordinarily wont to rest upon, and to seek consolation in, some particular cause to which it attributes responsibility. In religious mysticism, for example, the individual is prone to fall back upon God. A war, an earthquake, a calamity, is ascribed to the wrath of the Deity; the present shape and constitution of things are due to His activities and design, etc. In formal phrases and oratorical expressions a certain type of mind finds consolation and a benign surcease from vexatious enquiry. It is curious to see, for example, how readily St. Thomas Aquinas disposes of the infiinite regress. "We cannot," he says, "proceed to infinity in a series of causes:

[1] Pearson, Grammar of science, ch. 4, p. 131.

therefore we must posit something that necessarily is."[2] That something for St. Thomas of course is God. It is obvious that, having arrived at this point, no further activities are implicated: a worshipful or reverential attitude toward the Author of all being is the logical outcome.

Causes are sometimes determined by almost purely pragmatic considerations, which are not haunted either by the influence of the infinite regress or the mystical necessity of arbitrarily attributing exclusive responsibility to a first cause or deity. The first noteworthy fact in this connection is that the aetiological role of an event, object or process, frequently appears to depend upon the point of view of the observer. An illustration will serve to make this matter clear. Suppose that, following a murder in New York, several individuals of different mental equipment and varied walks of life come upon the scene and undertake to set forth, each in his own way, the causes of the event. The District Attorney examines the body and, by reason of certain clues left by the murderer, announces that a hardened and habitual criminal, whom he knows by reputation, is responsible for the crime. His interest in the history of the act stops here. Catch the man, try him, and elec-

[2] St. Thomas Aquinas, Of God and His creatures, bk. 1, ch. 15.

trocute him, are the sequelae suggested by him in his professional capacity. The neurologist immediately concerns himself with the mental status of the murderer. He finds that he is subject to periods of nervous depression involving wild sprees and violent fits of temper with homicidal mania,—that, in short, he has a pronounced neuropathic heredity, his father having been a chronic alcoholic, and his grandmother having died in an asylum. During a period of mental instability he committed this overt act, the ultimate responsibility of which is to be found in his family history. The social scientist sees in the event, the desperation of the murderer induced by poverty. The social scheme is illy constituted, he argues, and as long as capitalistic plutocrats exploit the working people and make slaves of them, an indefinite number of such crimes are to be expected. The statistician now appears upon the scene, armed with columns of figures and mathematical curves. There must be so many murders per 100,000 inhabitants in New York during a given space of time, he says, and this is one of them. The explanation is to be found in statistical laws.

The practical importance of these interpretations is that each of them tends to suggest lines of conduct. The District Attorney would seek to prosecute the man under the laws of the State

of New York, the neurologist to cure him, the social scientist to inaugurate new legislation designed to do away with such unhappy events, and so on. We are justified, on the whole, in supposing that, as each is called upon the scene, he will undertake to make use of the concepts and methods which have been historically built up in his special vocation and will behave approximately as indicated. What is implied, therefore, is that in the development and evolution of occupations, certain phenomena have been selected as causes and that, on the basis of them, various methods of procedure have been instituted. Hence each of these individuals, in seeking causes, is at the same time searching for that which shall furnish the ground of his professional conduct. Plural causes for the same event are to be correlated with multiple occupations,—in other words, the former have meaning and value only with reference to the systems or spheres of action to which they are related.

Boas argues that the causal interpretation of a given phenomenon projected by an individual, does not represent a complete logical process. He associates a fact to be explained with others, the explanation of which is regarded as satisfactory. In the process of amalgamation of the new element into the pre-existing apperceptive

system, the influence of traditional material manifests itself.

"When we recognize that, neither among civilized men, nor among primitive men, the average individual carries to completion the attempt at causal explanation of phenomena, but carries it only so far as to amalgamate it with other previously known facts, we recognize that the result of the whole process depends entirely upon the character of the traditional material: herein lies the immense importance of folk-lore in determining the mode of thought."[3]

Boas, however, does not undertake to analyse in detail the conditions which determine the selection of the cause.

Hume's classic treatment of the subject appears to concern itself largely with the influence of habit and immediate perception in the architecture of causal relations. He cites several illustrations, to wit, that water will suffocate one, that gunpowder will explode, that iron is attracted by a loadstone, that striking billiard balls fly off at a tangent rather than stop dead as one might be led to conjecture did he reason about the matter *a priori*, that a crystal is the result of heat, and that ice is produced by cold.[4] Phenomena of this type represent the recurrent be-

[3] Boas, Mind of primitive man, in Thomas, *Source book*, p. 150.

[4] Hume, Enquiry on the human understanding, p. 32.

haviour of nature. The mind, apprehending such conjunctions repeatedly, at length comes to believe, through the influence of habit or custom, that, when one of the elements appears, the other will necessarily follow. Whatever be said either in defence or derogation of Hume's brilliant analysis of the psychological mechanism involved, it must be admitted that his interpretation at best can account for only a limited number of causal relations with which we are familiar.

Two more specific criticisms have been urged against Hume's position. (1) Customary conjunction does not always lead to the attribution of a causal relation,—the alternation of night and day being the most striking and obvious case in point. (2) Frequently a causal relation is attributed to two or more events when they occur for the first time.

Perhaps a still more drastic objection is to be found in the fact that those connections which involve the conjoining of events, objects, or processes widely separated from one another in time and space, cannot be explained in terms of habit and direct perceptual processes. That a certain type of mosquito is the cause of malaria or that Jevon's sun spots produce financial panics are obviously not data of immediate experience. We must raise additional questions, therefore,

as to the nature of the diverse psychic processes which lead to the bringing together of such distant events and non-contiguous elements.

There is a considerable variety of rationalistic activities in which immense groups of past experiences are systematized and organized in accordance with certain architectural principles,—that is to say, leading concepts which, constituting a sort of glue, serve to stick together the events of the past in an harmonious and emotionally-satisfying whole. The writing of history neither embodies an exact replica of events, nor an approximation to a photographic reprint. On the contrary, various elements of the past are selected out of a limitless number and made the basis of a sort of novelistic narrative. The welding together of facts in terms of cause and effect relations, is accomplished by means of the presuppositions which the writer imports into his work. Certain obvious possibilities which are, in fact, frequently encountered, suggest themselves. Historical events may be represented as having been caused largely by the activities of various striking personalities who appear as leading figures in the drama,—the almost exclusive objects of interest and the foundation upon which the vast superstructure rests. In this fashion Carlyle sets forth the lives of such heroic figures as Frederick the Great and Napoleon. On the

other hand, it is possible to present history as the manifestation of quasi-impersonal, social forces which lie beneath the surface and assert themselves independently of specific historical figures, or, at best, merely employ them as more or less unconscious tools. It thus transpires that, in the modern world, we hear a great deal of movements,—the suffrage movement, the social democratic movement, the imperialistic movement, etc. Attempts have also been made to present history from the point of view of economic determinism and in terms of the influence of the geographical environment.

Whatever be the leading concept which permeates the mind of the historian, it soon rises from its legitimate position as a directing agency into an universal explanatory principle, more important than all others,—in fact a sort of beacon light which sheds a brilliant illumination over all the elements of the past. We are wont to say that such attempts at historical writing are one-sided, but we are not so prone to appreciate that they are really the result of the artistic activities of the writer and the product of his more or less unconscious weaving of materials into a novelistic narrative. Doubtless in many cases he is quite sincere in fooling his readers as well as himself. His carefully selected facts, indeed, have hidden powers and, when

marshalled in imposing array, develop an intrinsic momentum of their own which serves to sweep everything before them, like an army which assails a city and clears it of all opposing forces. The inspiring and seductive influence of a well organized story cannot be overestimated. We are carried along unconsciously with it and forthwith lose our power of self-determination and critical evaluation in the face of its subtle appeal.

The influence of impulsive, instinctive and affectivistic elements in contributing to the constitution of various connections, has been greatly neglected in the literature of the subject which, as we have suggested, is very largely dominated by logical and epistemological interests. From a certain point of view, however, it may be said that cause is as much orectic as gnostic, peculiar though this statement may seem at first sight.

Very frequently we can identify a powerful orectic element in some of the ordinary deliverances of daily life which involve either a causal interpretation or a web of specific relations. This consideration comes out, not only in the passion of heated controversy, but also in argumentations which, implying necessarily a shameless selection of data, are projected for the purpose of maintaining prejudices and precon-

ceptions. A man admits into his apperceptive system only those things which are emotionally congenial and which serve to facilitate the carrying out of his desires, either really or ideally in phantasy. He, who is born a democrat, will, for the balance of his life, find esoteric virtues in things democratic: to find an office-holding republican good enough to reveal himself unwittingly as a thief, affords him a certain degree of genuine satisfaction not entirely commensurate with the heinousness of the erring one's offense. The democrat is disposed to find the ultimate ground of moral, social, economic and general depravity in the republican administration, and the republican, in his turn, is wont to project a no less profound explanation of the ills which surround him, when he ascribes them to the evil machinations of democratic politicians. In a very general way, it is perhaps obvious that the flow of mental processes involves both a conscious and unconscious selection of data and that neutral things of the outer world are swept along with it and thus acquire part of its inherent dynamism.[5]

[5] Lay says: "We see only what is in our minds, was the old form of expression but a new one and a better one would be to say that we see, hear and feel only what is in our hearts, that is, our desires." Lay, Man's unconscious conflict, p. 56.

We may also say, with some degree of unavoidable inaccuracy, that frequently objects which come within the range of diverse mental operations may acquire, by reason of this contact, some of the qualities incident thereto: for example, they may assume the forward moving tendency, volition, aggressive desire, impulse or hope seeking satisfaction. The lover kisses the handkerchief or the glove of his absent mistress or, if he has been rejected by her, angrily casts it into the fire. The man, enraged at his enemy, abuses a piece of property belonging to him. Tylor cites the case of Xerxes flogging the Hellespont and that of the wild native of Brazil biting or kicking the object he has stumbled over, together with a number of others of like character.[6]

It is not unlikely that many types of exceedingly common and widespread magical procedure have developed from instinctive activities of this kind. The attribution of causal agency to objects or elements embedded in such behavioristic complexes is probably the result of subsidiary reflection,—the turning back of thought upon

[6] Tylor intellectualizes situations of this type and believes that they indicate a reflective theory of world animation. In contradistinction to this view, however, we have contended that objects merely take on a dramatic role within the limitations of a concrete situation.

processes already in existence. In many cases, activities have been preceded by mental processes characterized by a high degree of emotional tension,—the denouement which the individual or the group faces being critical with prospective weal or woe implicated: for example, the desire to kill or do injury to an enemy; vanquish a neighboring tribe in warfare; produce an increase of flocks or animals, particularly in areas where the food supply is precarious; control the weather for the purpose of insuring the production of crops; influence the growth of plants directly; facilitate childbirth for an expectant mother, and so on. In cases of this type, and an indefinite number of others comparable to them, in which emotional tension is acute, there may arise the tendency or, indeed, the necessity for it to drain off or express itself in overt behavior. The varieties of movement which this psychical surcharge initiates, may appear somewhat random, but there is frequently a mechanism at hand which serves to impart to them a certain degree of cohesion and organization. This co-ordinating agency consists in an ideal presentation of the end or situation which is the result ardently sought, in other words, an affective state may be sufficiently intense to initiate a series of adventitious movements which manifests the tendency of falling

under the influence of a future result vividly present in the mind. Thus, instead of merely kicking a tree or stone in impotent rage at his enemy, which is an immediate dramatized expression of what the primitive man would like to do to him, he proceeds to elaborate and amplify these haphazard acts,—he constructs an image and then performs a more or less extensive operation upon it. Frazer thus describes the method frequently pursued.

> "When an Ojibway Indian desires to work evil on any one, he makes a little wooden image of his enemy and runs a needle into its head or heart, or he shoots an arrow into it, believing that wherever the needle pierces or the arrow strikes the image, his foe will the same instant be seized with a sharp pain in the corresponding part of his body; but if he intends to kill the person outright, he burns or buries the puppet, uttering certain magic words as he does so. So when a Cora Indian of Mexico wishes to kill a man, he makes a figure of him out of burnt clay, strips of cloth, and so forth, and then, muttering incantations, runs thorns through the head or stomach of the figure to make his victim suffer accordingly".[7]

Other mimetic representations of an end or situation considered desirable, are procedures designed to multiply flocks, produce rain, the widespread practice of the couvade, ceremonial dances representing warfare and the hunt, and so on. These dramatic activities are contiguous

[7] Frazer, The golden bough, v. 1, pp. 55–56.

on the one side to very strong desires and, on the other, to real happenings, many of the latter of which seem to be the direct realization of the former. Thus primitive man hopes vividly for the death of his enemy, constructs and operates upon an image and, forsooth, his enemy dies; he needs rain, institutes a dance, and a downpour occurs; he wishes a fine crop in the spring, performs a ceremony, and unusual bounty follows; in short, many other of his concrete desires are apparently realized in a similar fashion.

In this manner the raw material for the ideal articulation is provided. Reflective thought follows closely upon these performances and their happy sequelae in the events of the outer world. A causal series is strung between various elements of the dramatic complex and the real events of nature,—the activities of man seem to be inextricably interwoven with the world process. The mind of man is so constituted that, when a striking juxtaposition of events has taken place, an undue importance is ascribed to this circumstance, one case of apparently brilliant success being sufficient to outweigh a thousand failures.

The unsatisfactory character of life is an eternal theme on which poets and sages of all times and places have dwelt. Wordsworth

epitomizes a mass of reflection on this subject in a single phrase:

> . . . "The good die young,
> While those whose hearts are dry as summer dust
> Burn to the socket." . . .

The human mind is so constituted, however, that, from time to time, it rises above the realm of fact and seeks consolation in phantasy. The cause and effect relations, which are involved in the domains of mythology and artistic creation in general, are therefore to be correlated, in their genesis and unfolding, with certain affective reactions and processes of imagination which effect a reorganization of the real world in accordance with demands and exigencies peculiar to themselves. Those numerous wishes and desires, which do not find fulfillment in everyday life, attain to a sort of vicarious satisfaction through the avenues of artistic expression. In a beautiful stanza Barry Cornwall expresses a a lingering regret that the age of story does not maintain itself against the sad disillusionments of science.

> "O ye delicious fables! where the wave
> And woods were peopled and the air, with things
> So lovely! why, ah! why has science grave
> Scattered afar your sweet imaginings?" [8]

[8] Cornwall. In title-page of Bullfinch's Age of fable.

There is also a classical passage by Sir Francis Bacon in which the attempt to transcend the limitations of the real world is expressed in a very striking manner.

> "Poesy is a part of learning in measure of words for the most part restrained, but in all other points extremely licensed, and doth truly refer to the imagination; which, being not tied to the laws of matter, may at pleasure join that which nature hath severed, and sever that which nature hath joined; and so make unlawful matches and divorces of things; '*Pictoribus atque poetis,*' etc. . . .
>
> The use of this feigned history hath been to give some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth deny it, the world being in proportion inferior to the soul; by reason whereof there is, agreeable to the spirit of man, a more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute variety, than can be found in the nature of things." [9]

Omar Khayyam expresses a melancholy discontent at the numberless vexations and vicissitudes of life.

> "Ah! Love, could thou and I with fate conspire
> To change this sorry scheme of things entire;
> Would we not shatter it to bits and then
> Remold it nearer to the heart's desire?" [10]

If we accept, in an imaginative way, the Persian poet's fond wish to refashion the world,

[9] Bacon, Of the proficience and advancement of learning, p. 126.

[10] Khayyam, Omar, The Rubaiyat.

but proceed further into an examination of the architectural principles involved in the attempt to piece together the scattered bits, we find that they persistently elude definite analysis and lose themselves in the limbo of shifting phantasmagoria. Moreover the laws, which are conceived to govern the mythological world, are more or less capricious, ill-defined and subject to derogation and numerous exceptions, in a manner similar to that in which they themselves involve a departure from, or an abnegation of, the laws of the real world.

It is well, therefore, that we do not attempt to push analysis of this question too far, lest we fall a prey to the danger of introducing artificial exactness where such is not to be found in the nature of the case. Bearing this reservation in mind, however, we may indicate in a loose way some of the fundamental determinants which enter, as architectural principles, into the constitution of the vicarious world. Among these may be enumerated, the deep and instinctive hope of man to see again his loved ones who are dead; to attain happiness, success and long life; to cure disease; to see the weary and heavy-laden attain consolation and surcease from their sufferings; the tendency to regard things as exactly opposite to what they are in reality; etc. It is entirely beyond the scope of our purposes

to enter into a consideration of the varied motives which may lead to the formation of myths. Interpretations of nature, particularly those concerned with the observation of the heavenly bodies, aetiological explanations of the present form of things, the re-statement of dreams and nightmares, purely artistic impulses, etc., may have entered into their composition: the one predominating here, the other there in an irregular fashion. Among a number of other motives, Kroeber enumerates the following in North American mythology, which are somewhat typical and serve to express, in some sense, the manner in which the real world undergoes transfiguration under the influence of mythological impulses and ideas. (1) Final escape from a pursuer, the means either of flight or pursuit, or both, being magical, frequently called "the magic flight." A person, pursued by someone, throws various objects behind him which become transformed into natural barriers, such as mountains, rivers, etc., and so bring about his final escape. (2) The visit of the dead. (3) The origin of death. The fundamental idea is that death might have been averted but for the trifling act or wish of an individual. The story of the Garden of Eden is of this type, Eve having contrived to bring desolation upon mankind by eating of the Tree of Knowledge. (4)

The opposite of the present. "At one time things cannot have been as they are now. Rivers now flow down. Therefore they formerly flowed up, or part up and part down. The imagined condition is analogous to the known, but reversed in certain particulars." It is also frequently held that at one time there was no sun. (5) Transformation. (6) Origin by creation or manufacture "with or without existing material to operate on, but always with the accompaniment of supernatural power." [11]

Were the vicarious world of mythology, once constituted, set off, held apart by itself and regarded in the light of an artistic or fanciful creation, the causal relations which are inextricably interwoven with its warp and woof would possess no great significance or importance: our attitude toward it would be comparable to that which we manifest in the idle perusal of a novel in which the hero, in the last chapter, succeeds in surmounting every conceivable obstacle, marries the girl and lives happily ever after. The world of mythological creation, however, does not in this manner maintain aloofness, but comes into frequent and organic relationship with the customs, ideas and purposes of everyday life: thus part of the con-

[11] Kroeber, Catchwords in American mythology, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 1908, v. 21, pp. 226–227.

tent of the former becomes more or less permanently embodied in the latter. The mechanisms by means of which this penetration is effected are far too complicated to be stated in any brief or dogmatic way, nevertheless, at least in two respects, they betray themselves in a somewhat obvious manner. (1) Myths are very frequently the prolific source of secondary beliefs, the incidents cited in them being thought to have taken place in reality. (2) Mythological incidents are frequently conceived of as capable of being transmuted into the real world under certain favorable circumstances,—oftentimes, indeed, the attempt is made to copy them, as it were, and to bring them to pass under the exigencies of practical desires and purposes.

Referring to the Koryak, Jochelson says:

"Like the heroes of the other raven myths, Big-Raven of the Koryak appears merely as the transformer of the world. Everything in the world had existed before he appeared. His creative activity consisted in revealing things heretofore concealed, and turning some things into others; and, since every thing in nature is regarded by the Koryak as animated, he only changed the form of the animated substance. Some things he brought down ready-made to our earth from the Supreme Being in heaven. Big-Raven appears as the first man, the father and protector of the Koryak; but at the same time he is a powerful shaman and a supernatural being. *His name figures in all incantations. These are either prayers addressed to him, or, in cases of treating the sick, dramatic representations of*

myths relating how Big-Raven treated his own children, the patient personifying one of Big-Raven's children. His presence is presupposed in pronouncing the incantation, and sick people are treated by means of his name. In the same manner he is supposed to be present at every shamanistic ceremony. When the shamans of the Maritime Koryak commence their incantations, they say, 'There, Big-Raven is coming!' The Reindeer Koryak told me that during shamanistic ceremonies a raven or a sea-gull comes flying into the house, and that the host will then say, 'Slaughter a reindeer, Big-Raven is coming!' I had no opportunity to witness personally any sacrificial offering to Big-Raven; but the fawn festival, which is now observed only by the Reindeer Koryak of the Palpal Mountains, the antlers piled up during the festival constitute a sacrifice to Big-Raven." [12]

Among many of the tribes of the North-West Coast of North America and those of Western Siberia there are great cycles of transformer myths, the fundamental notion being that in the fabled period Big-Raven or some other progenitor appeared upon the scene and transformed things in a great variety of ways. Among the Koryak and other Siberian tribes this transformer concept has undergone a peculiar secondary development in the actual practice of magic, the fundamental ideas being that the shaman is

[12] Jochelson, The Koryak religion and myths, *American Museum of Natural History, Memoir, Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Publication*, v. 6, pt. 1, p. 18. Italics mine.

most powerful when he has transformed himself into a woman and that a great variety of magical potentialities are contingent upon this circumstance. Jochelson says:

"It is interesting to note that traces of the change of a shaman's sex into that of a woman may be found among many Siberian tribes. During shamanistic exercises, Tungus and Yukaghir shamans put on, not a man's, but a woman's apron with tassels. In the absence of a shamanistic dress, or in case of the so-called "small" shamanism, the Yakut shaman will put on a woman's jacket of foal-skins and a woman's white ermine fur cap. I myself was once present at a shamanistic ceremony of this kind in the Kolyma district. Shamans part their hair in the middle and braid it like women, but wear it loose during the shamanistic performances. Some shamans have two iron circles representing breasts sewed to their aprons. The right side of horse-skin is considered to be tabooed for women, and shamans are not permitted to lie on it. During the first three days after confinement when Ayisi't, the deity of fecundity, is supposed to be near the lying-in woman, access to the house where she is confined is forbidden to men, but not to shamans. Trostchansky thinks that among the Yakut, who have categories of shamans,—the 'white' ones representing creative forces, and the 'black' ones representing destructive forces, the latter have a tendency to become like women, for the reason that they derive their origin from women shamans."[13]

The Eskimo about Behring Strait appear to have come under the influence of the transformer

[13] Ibid., p. 53.

cycle of myths indigenous to the North-West Coast and to have accepted them quite seriously. Nelson states that they attempted to prove one of their stories in an interesting manner. A mythical creature described as being similar in form to the killer-whale is credited with the power to change at will to a wolf. After roaming about over land it may return to the sea and become a whale. The Eskimo say they know that this change takes place as they have seen the wolf-tracks leading to the edge of the sea-ice and ending at the water, or beginning at the edge of the water leading to the shore.[14]

King states that among the Navaho Indians cures of diseases are effected in connection with the dramatic rehearsal of a complicated myth regarding the migrations of a family, the escape of a son from the hostile Ute, his protection and succor by various gods and animals until he reaches his kindred.[15] Kroeber says, referring to the aborigines of California:

"Women in labor spoke, or had spoken for them a myth regarding the culture-hero's first causing women to give birth. The plant thought to have been used on this occasion by the culture-hero was eaten by Wiyot

[14] Nelson, The Eskimo about Behring Strait, *U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, Annual Report*, 1896–97, v. 18, pt. 1, p. 444.

[15] King, The development of religion, p. 128.

women in order to make the child small and easy to bear." [16]

The penetration of mythological ideas into the practices and beliefs of everyday life is by no means confined exclusively to primitive cultures, but also manifests itself in an immense variety of ways in the higher civilizations. A recent religious sect of great importance provides an excellent example. Christian Science assumes that it is able to copy miraculous practices which were performed in the mythological period, ostensibly by Christ. In contradistinction to other types of Christianity, which attribute to Christ various peculiar powers which are conceived of as entirely unique and not capable of being reproduced, Christian Science assumes that, under appropriate conditions, they can again be brought to pass. Furthermore, however, it is only fair to say that it arrogates to itself a number of additional functions so that, speaking at large, its potentialities may be regarded as indefinitely extended. Everything from the return of a lost pocket-book to success in a business venture, the cure of all conceivable maladies with the possible exception of decapitation, lie within the proper province of its metaphysical demonstrations.

[16] Kroeber, Notes on California folk-lore, *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 1908, v. 21, p. 38.

One of the universal tendencies of the mind of man, both primitive and civilized, is that which consists in predicating activities within a purely ideal totality. An examination of certain classifications of experience made in different levels of culture serves to reveal the fact that, frequently, specific groupings are not regarded as purely static contents, arising through the processes of comparison, discrimination and abstraction, but rather, as the depositories of a mystical, anthropomorphic dynamism. The logical elements, as it were, take legs and begin to perform.

Perhaps one of the most striking examples of this kind is that of the delimitation of magical possibilities within the confines of a restricted social group in Australia. The socio-cosmical classification, in which men, animals, plants and objects are brought under common rubrics, is regarded as something more than a convenient intellectual construction,—the elements comprising it are conjoined by mystical links and are saturated with potential magical activities. We have thus a system of cause and effect relations implied, whose genesis seems to us somewhat exotic and difficult to understand if we bring to the study only the usual modes of interpretation. By way of illustration of this point we may adduce the following data.

Referring to the natives of South-East Australia Howitt says:

"I may add that the whole universe, including mankind, was apparently divided between the classes. Therefore the list of sub-totems might be extended indefinitely. It appears that a man speaks of some being 'nearer to him' than others. I am unable to ascertain the precise meaning of this expression. When pressed upon this question, a black would say, 'Oh, that s what our fathers told us.' [17]

In the great group of tribes, of which the *Wakelbura* is my example, it was also the practice to send a message for the initiation ceremonies through a totem; but in this case a message stick accompanied it, and this was made of the wood of some tree which was of the same class division as the sender, and also of the bearer of the message.[18]

There were men who professed to bring or send away rain. This was by magical practices, just as the same men professed to destroy their enemies by magic. In performing these functions the medicine-man must only use things of the same class as himself. As I have before stated, in that tribe everything is thought to belong to one or the other of the classes *Malera* and *Wuthera*.[19]

Certain animals are the especial game of each class. *Obu* claims as his game emu and wallaby, and if he wishes to invite his fellows of the same sub-class, in a neighboring tribe, to hunt the common game, he must do this by means of a message-stick, made from the wood of a tree which is like themselves, of the *Obu* sub-class. When a

[17] Howitt, The native tribes of South-East Australia, p. 454.

[18] Ibid., p. 516.

[19] Ibid., p. 399.

man desires to perform some magical act, he must use for it only objects which are of the same class as himself, and when he dies he is laid on a stage made of the branches and covered with the leafy boughs of a tree of his class. Among all the natural objects of his class, there is some one which is nearer to him than any other. He bears its name, and it is his totem.[20]

Instances have been made known to me which show that there is a magical influence to the persons of one class, which is injurious to those of the other. But this evil personal influence attaches not to men alone. There is the same between men on one side and women on the other. In the *Wurunjerri* tribe, when it happened that *Bunjil* and *Waang* men were camped at the same fire, each one had his own stick to stir it, and to cook his food on it with. A man would not touch any other man's stick, especially if he were of the other class name, lest his fingers should swell. If this happened, he had to go to the *Wirrarap*, who would draw out the piece of wood from his hand." [21]

The foregoing discussion has served to bring before us the enormous range and diversity of mental processes involved in causation. It may be justly said, therefore, that it is only by virtue of poetic license that we can apply the term 'causality' to the phenomena involved. The mental processes implied can scarcely be classified indiscriminately together except in so far as they converge toward a common end, namely, the attribution or predication of a dynamic rela-

[20] Ibid., p. 113.
[21] Ibid., p. 401.

tionship between two or more elements. There is, however, no advantage to be derived from the classification, under a common heading, of the more or less unconscious acceptance of the juxtaposition of elements which are presented to the individual from his folkloristic background; the deliberate, highly conscious and rationalistic search for causes; certain aspects of magic and science; history; etc., which we have discussed: indeed, positively misleading results may frequently ensue from this enterprise, such as the grossly improper comparison of magic and science. We are therefore justified in contending that the use of the concept of causality as a *fundamentum comparationis* between different phases of culture and diverse mental processes is greatly to be deplored. In the same way that ethnic entities, such as totemism, taboo, etc., are artificial units when divorced from their cultural settings, so causality at large, when separated from its embodiment in concrete mental operations, is an artificial unit which does not assist us in the understanding, the comparison, or the elucidation of the phenomena involved.

A final word of caution should perhaps be appended. We do not mean to attack, indiscriminately and at large, the processes of generalization and abstraction and to contend that

the proper study of all cultural phenomena consists in the return to concrete particularity in such a manner as to involve nothing more than descriptive characterizations and a gossipy interest which finds emotional consolation in mere *disjecta membra*, but rather to suggest that these logical processes, which lift facts out of their indigenous habitats and deal with them in their universalized aspects, should be applied with much more critical caution than is customary. Ordinarily we suffer from over-generalization and premature classification, and it is this consideration primarily, although not exclusively, which has contributed so largely to the bewildering ambiguity in which the entire problem of causality has been, and is still, enshrouded.

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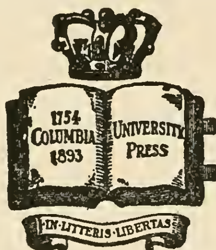

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