

Part One

Cultural Anthropology

Originally this booklet was no more than a record of the learning process I had to pursue before I was able to proceed with Part Two, an investigation into the ethnology of peoples - itself a preparation necessary to identify those aboriginal peoples least tainted by modern developments - and thereby to identify and compare their mythologies as a means of finding the fundamental elements of the Nature Faiths.

However, events directed me down a different path leading to a diversion to producing Books Three, Four and Five: It now seems more logical to combine the two parts of Booklet Ten into one Book – Probably Book Six in the series. In any case the number of pages involved in each part made them too large to make convenient booklets.

Thus when I have completed publication of Books Three, Four and Five I shall probably prepare these parts in E-book format to make them quickly available to those who may have an interest.

The complexity of this subject makes it difficult to take snippets of information and meld them into a continuous flow of integrated text. I apologise therefore for obvious breaks of continuity: anyone interested should read the full seventy-seven page text for which they will have to contact me.

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Originally I had intended the Stamford University, Genome Research to be the foundation of the investigation; but having selected the examples of those aboriginees seeming to be the most genetically diverse, the task of using the Internet to trace the sources of their folklores was impossible without first knowing the correct trace titles.

It was pure luck that I came upon a second-hand copy of the book Cultural Anthropology that gave me a clue to the trace titles required.

"It once could be said that anthropology was the study of primitive peoples. But they no longer work only, or even predominately, in such societies: they study peasant villagers, including those in Europe; they study cities, at home, as well as in the Third World; they study multinational corporations and law courts as well as tribal lineages. This makes it harder than it was 50 years ago to trace the anthropology of remote, exotic societies and to distinguish it from sociology and other social sciences. Moreover, anthropology is internally diverse, covering a spectrum from specialised studies of human biology and evolution to studies of the social life of contemporary peoples rural and urban."

"In a large anthropology department, it would not be strange to find a human biologist specialising in the fossil bones of early humans; an archaeologist excavating ancient communities in the Middle East; a linguist analysing the structure of West African languages; a folklorist studying Eskimo mythology; a specialist in kinship and marriage in New Guinea; and an expert on Mexican-American farm labourers in California. Each of them would probably have a Ph.D. in anthropology."

Clearly the work of the folklore specialists, for each of the various peoples that I shall select, is the most likely source of the information I seek.

There is some indication that the Inflationary Reductionism - as common in anthropology as in any other subject - has been bridged in some of the categories: for example the wide gulf between physical and cultural anthropology has been bridged in many places.

An important subsection of cultural anthropology is prehistoric archaeology or prehistory. This should therefore be a principal source of information for my particular quest.

The fields of folklore and ethno-history are likely to be equally as important; as will be the most recent subsection of medical anthropology; presumably based upon the growing information resulting from work carried out on the human genome.

It is to be hoped that the proliferation of subsections does not mean a loss of ability to generally oversee the subject. While this is the case in most scientific subjects, one would expect the 'scientific method' not to be rigidly applied in the field of anthropology: this does not preclude its use in appropriate circumstances.

For example in the field of social sciences the use of statistical 'proofs' is inevitable; the factors not seemingly appreciated are the importance of appropriate experimental design, and the distortions of conclusions based

solely upon 'averages': in both cases the 'one size fits all' approach rarely applies to other than a narrow spread within a limited number of communities.

The application of simplified solutions to complex situations are rarely, if ever, appropriate.

Such practises have been judged, "to show a lack of humility and wit"; it is perhaps most often an inevitable consequence of The Anthropoc Principle. If this is so it requires the Theory of Falsification to be applied at each step of the analysis.

In the field of classical anthropology the processes - of learning, understanding and communicating - are potentially prone to distortion imposed by cultural differences: particularly if educational standards are used as a measure of intellect.

"Trying to understand the symbolism and meaning of a myth or a ritual is not like predicting who will win an election or testing experimentally how a rat learns or how a psychology student can be tricked."

Fieldwork inevitably requires an intimate participation in the community under survey: the processes used to record and interpret must, of necessity, not only be appropriate to that community, but also be as free from cross-culture bias as may reasonably be achieved.

It is almost certain that the most careful of studies will never truly reflect the contemporary thinking in that community; yet this is the only way by which the elements of historical thought in that community may be **'guessed.'**

The observer cannot but help taint the atmosphere with their presence: all previous contacts will have resulted in a variable measure of taint: **the sum total of taint can never be 'measured'.**

"In the classic fieldwork situation in which one cannot learn the local language in advance, and little is known of society and culture, a fieldworker's place and tasks are in many ways more like those of an infant. As with an infant, the importance of sensory experiences cannot be appreciated until there is repeated exposure over time."

"The newcomer (is perceived to be) is insatiably curious about things (considered) private, sacred, and personal for reasons and motives that are incomprehensible".

Little wonder the community may perceive the observer as an idiot to be, at best, humoured. While the observer may feel at home with the community, it is by no means certain, or likely, the feeling is reciprocated.

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A measure of the inappropriateness of scientific method to such studies is the possibility that the intuition - gut reactions - of the observer may have greater importance than the recorded data.

The contributions made by members of the community who, for various reasons, are inappropriately 'qualified' to give information are another inevitable unknown.

Within our own society there are individuals who are evidently unsuitable to offer advice and information for a wide spectrum of activity and beliefs.

It would be possible to interview hundreds of individuals whose views would be widely diverse from the norm for that community: the unweighted analysis of such observations could result in conclusions distorted to the point of absurdity.

Anthropological studies must be subject to the same possibilities. While it must be accepted that well designed studies, carried out with open minds, will not reveal general absurdities; it has to be accepted there will always be a deviance from the truth.

An exception to the above is the inter-relationships within a community - based upon apparent rule and ritual - now capable of being confirmed by DNA testing. It is possible that any bias obtained by this means may be used to weight and adjust other results: but only in a most general way. In reality few, if any, communities have existed in isolation of others: in consequence there has always been a small immeasurable degree of cross-cultural contamination; there are always grey areas between both like-and-like, as well as like-and-unlike.

Finally, however cleverly we attempt to categorise, there will always be exceptions.

For the above reasons this booklet must be considered a precursor to my quest: I consider it is impossible to appreciate the possible comparisons between the different Faiths without a reasonable appreciation of the relevant basics of Cultural Anthropology. While it can be considered no more than a cursory insight into the subject: hopefully it will be sufficient to prevent me from making too many elementary errors when studying the mythology associated with the various Nature Faiths.

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The first lesson we must learn is that, as yet, the hypotheses concerning Human Evolution remain sufficiently varied to be subject to heated controversy. Whatever the fundamental truth may be, the strength of feeling felt by the various proponents should not be used as a measure of that truth. However, there is to date sufficiently strong evidence for us to be convinced there has been continuous evolution from the 'first' single cell entities through to the Primates, of which one Line - the hominid - includes African Apes and Humans; are alleged to have evolved from a common ancestor.

The timing of the various branching of the evolutionary tree is currently being unravelled by DNA research: in parallel the dating of more and more fossil finds constantly requires an adjustment to the previously accepted dating.

It is likely that other than at the cellular level - with the exception of the emergence of 'modern' man, possibly less than 100,000 years ago - the previous history of human development has little relevance.

This is however a subject that takes us into the future rather than the past, or present.

On the other hand the biological foundations of human nature, and social relationships, are of importance, but may yet prove to have been process driven by chance.

Whatever the reason the herd, troop, tribe, group etc. is an integral part of most life forms.

Within each such grouping all species have evolved 'rules' and 'rituals' that determine the behaviour and structure of the group, and thus the individuals therein. It is generally assumed that these all contribute **to the survival of the group**. The genetic contribution, if any, is to reduce the limits of diversity resulting in a higher probability of acceptance for restrictive covenants found to be beneficial. There is little doubt there are counter tendencies:

"within the repertoire of established human behaviour: there are the tendencies to dominate, compete, to be aggressive, possibly to be partially territorial; countered by the tendencies to share, to cooperate, and to be altruistic: these may be considered the Yang and Yin of human behaviour by which there will always be an underlying tendency to maintain relative harmony".

Statistical proof, because of its conditional weighting, should never be considered as being mathematically definitive.

This situation is covered generally by the misconception that perceptions always represent the truth.

Note: Advertising in general, and Politics in particular - complete with spin - are clear examples of the increasing divide between these two states.

It is evident that communication in other species depends upon the use of more than one sensory signal: a state also known to apply to humans, despite our dependence upon language and symbols.

There is no doubt that, if there is to be unrestricted communication, we are, also, unconsciously dependent upon gesture, body language, facial expression, touch and smell. Indeed there is growing evidence that each of these facets of communication contain the possibility for communication as complex and delicate as that achievable by speech alone.

Deficient vocal chords may rob the non-human primates of the power of speech; but as yet there is no definitive evidence their cerebral cortex is too deficient to allow concept-manipulation.

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The History of the Growth of Culture: There is an evident connection between the typical perception of archaeology and some basic aspects of cultural anthropology; namely the assumed context that seems most appropriate to the existence and use of the artefacts found at a site. Conversely cultural anthropologists seek the clues appropriate to the perceived 'knowledge' of the primitive religions or kinship systems.

Despite that the first is non-definitive, and the second likely to be biased; taken together there is a possibility the evident confirmations have a high probability of approaching the truth.

Perhaps if the archaeologists used the anthropologist's theoretical deductions as a guiding influence in the selection of their sites; their practical finds could be used to confirm, or, deny, the suppositions.

The ego of some may disqualify the adoption of what might be thought a secondary role; on the other hand it does have the potential to reduce the waste of valuable time and effort.

An exception is the branch of cultural anthropology called, Social Anthropology; this is - initially at least - most often timeless because the history of the society being studied is unknown or only partially known.

Although there is evidence of the use of tools as far back as 2,000,000 years the rate of development was so slow that, when we consider the cultural evolution of human society, for all practical purposes, it is probably necessary to confine ourselves to the last 50,000 years. This includes any contributions by the Neanderthals, their contemporaries, and the successors of both.

One significant factor is that tool design during this period started to reflect changes not seemingly directly connected to necessity: **one could suppose this reflects the naissance of the creative mind in parallel with the pre-existing created mind**. It may also reflect the beginning of the gestation period for 'language', culture and 'religion': the latter considered different to the aboriginal 'faiths' - based upon both fear and survival - that almost certainly existed before that time. The end of this gestation period was the birth of agriculture and written language/literacy.

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It is possible the existence of significant linguistic differences, between otherwise contiguous communities, could be the start point for investigations into earlier genetic and cultural drifts.

These will have undoubtedly resulted from migrations at different time scales, with the boundaries between inevitably fudged.

Note: Are we to suppose that vestiges of the earliest culture will always be retained; or are we to accept that the most potent culture will have controlled the vestiges we discover?

A fundamental question must be whether the birth of the Agricultural Revolution was due to the evolution of human intellectual awareness, or, to the arrival of appropriate environmental conditions that offered solutions to their then paramount problems.

Genetic and Linguistic studies tend to support a general migration theory; however, the assumed time scales may yet prove to be suspect: Some of the doubts may have arisen because the roots of anthropology were inevitably based in Western Culture with its inevitable bias.

In particular one has to accept a possibility of an earlier migration along some of the accepted routes.

It is certain that there was no uniformity of evolution in the various sites of habitation established along those routes: again due consideration must be given to the diversity of environmental factors that could have instigated changes based upon different priorities. Additionally the follow-up migrations along the different routes could have differed for each other in both numbers and cycles.

Note: In consequence the possibility for parallel development - compared with a gradual spread of change - differs for each route.

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The Basic Concepts of Culture and People

It should not be supposed that there are different anthropological methods applying to tribal and modern societies: there is a common 'method' but it seems likely that different mindsets are exercised when conclusions are drawn.

It is possible there is a scale of sophistication that is innately Anthropocentric; if this is so there are inevitable distortions that became the cause of philosophical divisions between some 'experts'.

Not the least source of disagreement is the basic perception of 'Culture': perceptions can be contained anywhere on a spectrum from General to Refined.

However, because it must be related - *'to the learned, accumulated experience and its impact upon the socially transmitted patterns of the behaviour characteristics of a particular social group'* - it is inevitable the gap between outlooks become progressively less as we approach modern times.

Probably, if we were to compare aboriginal groups only, the gap would be at its widest and should not lead to confusion.

In this context culture may be assumed to refer to the system of knowledge and belief as expressed in their particular Mythology and its impact upon the way they think and act.

"Culture is all those means whose forms are not genetic and which serve to adjust individuals and groups within their ecological communities." Binford 1968.

The position is probably not so diverse as to suggest the non-existence of some level of standardisation: linguistically, for example, most languages have the same underlying structure based, presumably, upon innate natural capabilities that have common genetic source and limitations.

These are the factors that explain the possibility for the expansion of cultural developments from community to community; albeit there are adaptations related to both distance and time: these are almost certainly related to the perceptual differences generated by both the different existing cultures and, also, the degree of advantage offered **within the different prevailing environmental factors.**

We have to accept that there will always be a spectrum of perceptions and related conceptions associated with any group or community: while this does not prevent the emergence of a 'formalised' culture, it does indicate that conclusions based upon different sections of the group may be widely contradictory; and the features of commonality may be few enough to generate a banality that does not reflect the true nature of that culture.

The acquired 'Sum of Meanings' has a minimum value that has to be surpassed before even a glimmer of true understanding can emerge: *to make the situation more difficult there is little guarantee that procedures apparently suitable for the study of one group will exhibit the same suitability for another.*

The means of communication

"The capacity humans have to build up local cultural traditions, to create symbolically constituted conceptions of reality, and to transmit them across generations, depends centrally on language. Language is the essence of humanity."

If this is so we must first of all differentiate between spoken language and written language.

The latter has seemingly existed for less than 3,000 years and any historical 'documentation' before the 16th Century is sparse. Even that which emerged after that date is constantly being rewritten so that the truth is no longer always apparent. Further the diversity of language is such that there is an inevitable loss of understanding attached to successive translations into languages less equipped to express abstractions.

On the other hand Spoken Language has probably developed throughout the history of mankind; it is to this form of language that the above quote primarily refers.

The diversity of spoken languages and its ability to adapt to physical and intellectual change remains outside the 'Will' of Man; **at best it can be said to be a partially unconscious process**, subject to conscious manipulation.

It is, therefore, not surprising that unconscious process, being by definition outside of conscious control, gives rise to misunderstanding: at least until there is conscious manipulation to reduce perceived misunderstanding.

Recent thinking has tended to recognise a 'genetic grammar' that underlies all the different languages.

However, it is likely this had a limited application when related to the factors for survival that were significant during the earliest period when spoken language evolved. These factors would have varied from region to region, making for differences of priority that have remained embedded in the evolved modern language. It is likely -out of a need for convenience, if not for survival -the factors were transferred, in some form, to the emerging abstract concepts.

One should not ignore the difference between 'Genetic Grammar' and 'Formal Grammar: the previously stated proposition that the process is largely unconscious has been verified by the failure of linguists - despite significant efforts - to establish the underlying 'rules'. This is compounded by the fact that sound-spectrographic analyses of speech indicate that the flow of sound is continuous, rather than intermittent, and **the interpretation is a mental exercise carried out unconsciously**.

It is to be noted that the speech of aboriginals is often capable of indicating differentials of meaning without the use of complex grammatical rules, using differences of tone, emphasis, gesture and body language none of which can be **directly** transferred into the grammatical rules of language.

In consequence we again have to recognise the importance of informal social communication when attempting to reach anthropological conclusions.

While there will always remain individual differences of perception - based upon inherent difference of an individual's internal model of reality - the potential for communication is strong within the 'narrow' bands of conditioning and experience: the wider the band, the weaker the potential for communication, and the greater the potential for misunderstanding and therefore conflict.

This remains the engine for diversity that tends to defy standardisation and disrupt 'orderly' society.

Linguistic studies, between European languages and those of any aboriginal people now occupying the same environment, have tended to indicate differences of grammatical emphasis related to the different perceptions of say, 'the model of the universe'.

*One such conclusion suggested that the remaining, 'Nature-based' cultures are better equipped to understand metaphysical concepts; **though not necessarily have the ability to pontificate about them.***

This helps each culture to interpret the 'value' to be placed upon the different elements of a verbal communication and thereby, allows us to frame the messages in such a way that it tells the listener how it is to be interpreted.

The paradoxes this introduces to an observer not able to interpret such framing are the source of inevitable misunderstanding.

The position is complicated by the existence of dialects and idiolects, i.e. regional and individual variations of a common language: this gives rise to variable elements at the margins that are invariably ignored; this may, or may not, distort the results of a study.

Culture and the Individual

Does the alleged uniqueness of an individual's DNA Structure as expressed by physical characteristics, such as fingerprints etc., extend to our psychological, emotional and intellectual make-up?

In the field of anthropology this is an important question: the application of some, if not all, standard testing and analysing techniques may not be as amenable to transposition, from culture to culture, as we may have believed.

"Is a culture of a people the cumulative creation of adults based upon their common experience in infancy and childhood?"

Or, is the process: fundamental to the evolution of cultural traditions: only remotely connected to the psychological conflicts and fantasies of the individuals growing up in a society? And how, once we pose these questions, are we to distinguish between the culture of the community and the psychology of the individual?

These are conceptual issues about the differences between public and private meanings and how they influence the process of formation and change of and within a culture."

Clearly a failure to recognise the potential for distortion, within such issues, is to risk injecting the effects of such distortion into the ways of life of different peoples.

Until the 1960's it was commonly assumed that adult behaviour was determined primarily by culture.

Thus a child would grow up reflecting the cultural experiences of their particular society; having a model of cultural reality characteristic of the general view of that society; the individual personality doing little more than personalising the general view.

This outlook denies the existence of the ranges of difference that apply to all aspects of human existence: thus while the general model may not truly reflect the view of any individual; it will represent closely the outlooks of perhaps 30 to 40% of the group; be aligned in different ways to a like number; and fail to acknowledge the outlook of the 10% at each of the two extremes of the group.

The differing emphasis of individual outlooks, upon specific aspects of the established myths and rituals, may be a guide to an individual's 'position' in the cultural scale.

It could also be of interest to correlate such differences with the position an individual is perceived to occupy on the social scale of that society. In particular the conflicts within a group are likely to reflect the degree to which different individuals are repressed by, or, attracted to the established norms.

Thus anthropologists have often categorised different peoples as 'gentle', aggressive, etc.: this does not mean the gentle are incapable of extreme violence, nor does it mean members of an aggressive people are incapable of love and compassion.

It is almost certain that every group, however classified, is capable of expressing the whole range of human emotions.

The integrity of any culture - and of the individual cognitions that contribute to it - must obviously reflect both the 'quality' of the input information, and the prioritisation demanded by the nature of the relevant environment.

The quality is possibly dependent upon its uniqueness, apparent usefulness, and its capacity for popular acceptance; the prioritisation will always have general application: it is the prioritisation specific to certain individuals that become the 'mutant factors' that may lead to long-term change: this is equally applicable to culture as to genetics.

In all human activity necessity and convenience will remain the driving forces for change.

It is evident that mass literacy is achieved at a price: this is seen generally by an erosion of common sense, but also, more specifically, in a dilution of memory, visual-perception, direction finding, problem solving, **all of the special, culturally-reinforced skills**: though it has to be recognised that not everyone within a cultural group are equally blessed with such skills.

Anthropology and Tribalism

It is understandable that many different Tribes have been subject to anthropological study: additionally within any categorisation of human society it is inevitable that the principle division is between those who are apparently 'civilised' and those who are supposedly 'primitive'.

Given there is, in different parts of the world, a preponderance of one category compared with the other; it was equally inevitable that pragmatic limits would be applied to the resources available for the studies: this has resulted in further categorisation.

At the genesis of anthropological studies the Tribal level offered convenient observable differences.

Other than at a relatively low level, absorption of different tribal groups into urban and city environments has not given rise to the removal of tribal diversity: *it may well be that studies of different tribal groups in commonly alien environments, such as the cities, would supplement the studies in conditions considered more 'natural'*.

Tribal structures are different throughout the world. Born out of necessity, at different historical times, they reflect the environment, their isolation - both geographical and cultural - and the different cultural traditions that have continued to evolve.

Allowing for the diversity within the ranges of 'individuality', it is evident that different tribal customs will reflect the compromises and the extremes that emerged in growing populations in different environments.

The **Ladder Method** of development is based upon the possibility that cultural traditions have evolved step by step through its developmental stages. While this seems logical, there is evidence that there may be either, significant evolutionary differences, or, similarities, between groups at similar developmental stages, located in different geographical region. Given these differences it is possible we may not be justified in assuming that modern examples, of a particular developmental stage, are truly representative of an earlier stage in a group now more developed.

Sub-Saharan Africa today presents almost all cultural traditions on the scale from Hunter-Gatherers to industrialised city environments. The political nationhood has been established over the last 200 years, **with little if any account taken of the tribal structure and traditions pertaining thereto**: much of the modern political unrest is probably due to inherent tribal differences within each country. Further, unlike most European, Middle-Eastern and Far-Eastern societies, the evolutionary-growth of society in Africa seems to be different in both timing and response.

Subsistence and Adaptation

Hunters and Gatherers: Out of necessity one must study the subsistence economies of modern hunter-gatherers, tropical horticulturists and pastoralists to give some clue as to how economic factors relate to the organisation of society: one has to be mindful that such studies are not a direct source of evidence concerning their Palaeolithic ancestors: their present technologies inevitably reflect the influence of some aspects of modern technology.

Nevertheless there are aspects of their current existence that may offer some reflections of their former existence; for example, the fact that roots, fruits, nuts, seeds, berries and other vegetable foods collected by women are still the staples needed for survival: *on the other hand the current relatively shared role of the sexes may not now be indicative of former tradition.*

Tropical Horticulturists:

Swidden Culture is common to Mesoamerica, Africa, and Southeast Asia. It is debatable whether this form of culture predated the 'Agricultural Revolution', but it seems likely that wherever the conditions were appropriate to do so there would have been earlier developments to promote the yields of natural crops such as wild vegetables, berries, fruits, and nuts, by the propagation of roots, shoots and cuttings.

There may be doubt that the development of seed products such as maize, millet, and rice predated the established dating for the development of wheat in the Middle East; **it seems more likely they were originally, independent developments**: unless of course there had previously been an unlikely, global civilisation of which we have no knowledge: it is unquestioned there were subsequent transfers of technologies arising from migrations.

Pastoral Adaptations.

Given that swidden-culture was applicable only where the conditions were appropriate, and that it enabled the possibility of the emergence of horticulture before the Agricultural Revolution, it is perceivable that alternative practises should have occurred in regions appropriate to them.

Thus it seems that the domestication of animals may have been established before agriculture, or at least contemporaneous with its earliest beginnings.

It is possible the nomadic existence inherent to pastoralism allowed the recognition of the different grasses - and hence, allowing the growth of high yielding varieties to be encouraged and developed - to give the cultivars on which the Agricultural Revolution was based.

Just as with swidden culture one would expect different groups of pastoralists to establish cycles of migration between territories to which they had tacit claim: additionally, one would expect these 'claims' to have been the result of harmonious existence, disturbed only when there were pressures of population greater than those allowed for by the social and cultural organisation that had previously evolved.

Thus families would cooperate to form groups that may later have cooperated to form tribes: this probably being the then limit of what we may now consider to be ethnic groupings; possibly determined by the animals available to be domesticated, and the suitability of the terrain for those animals.

At that time - in the genesis of society - the equality of the notional heads of the different groups would have been an important factor.

There is no reason to suppose that at that time - as it is today - perceptions were not more important than the truth.

Whatever the relative perceptions, those of the least vulnerable group would ultimately have taken precedence, aided by whatever compromises were seen to be the least demeaning to the 'inferior' group.

While 'wealth' may not have been a direct measure of the place in a society, it undoubtedly has always had influence on the structure of an established society.

Changing Cultures

The importance of cultural adaptation to ecological conditions has been long recognised: modern work has resulted in the development of models of a sophisticated systems theory. Of particular importance is the way in which other influences and beliefs may impose veneers over the complying fundamentals.

However so disguised, the basic motivating force for cultural change is the need to survive in the prevailing conditions: one supposes that immediate migration from areas of untenable conditions was restricted in some way: if so this would have given rise to a distinct possibility that the change - as reflected in ritual and custom - would outlive its necessity.

The nature of the evolving culture must therefore have been aligned to the development of the underlying society: nomads for instance are not sufficiently static to allow the potential for some aspects of culture to emerge. At the other end of the spectrum, agriculturalists may eventually effect changes for the sake of change - usually in order to satisfy the requirements of an emerged autocracy.

The earlier states of society - of whatever form - are more likely to be subject to natural divisions that determine group size, the stability of the groups, the division of labour, and the distribution of groups within a given territory.

It is possible the influences of these innate divisions remain secondary to the ecological factors in systems thought to be more ameliorative: thus agriculture inevitably leads to urbanisation and industrial technology to citification.

Mindful that the two extremes are ways for change that are likely to have promoted differences in cultural development; there is inevitable distortion introduced by whether the perception was the result of responses that were truly adaptive, or, can now be viewed to have been maladaptive. This would not be the case if an originally adaptive change were accompanied by the evolution of rituals etc. retained even though later biological pressures had the result to make them maladaptive. *In such cases it is easy to **incorrectly** accept the maladaptive state to have existed from the outset.*

In the case of cultural development one has also to question whether beliefs can - in the absence of quantitative support - be adaptive rather than inevitably maladaptive?

Cultural Materialism

The core of this concept is that similar technologies, applied to similar ecological conditions, result in similar practises: though initially concerned with the use and allocation of labour it supposes this leads to similar arrangements of groups, motivated similarly, and thus giving rise to similar ethical outlooks.

*In the case of cultural materialism such confirmation must be sought **outside ecological explanation.***

The net reactions will remain highly sceptical: it should be remembered that reappraisals of past models have continued to reveal they were often subject to sweeping approximations and extrapolations, subsequently seen to be unjustified. In consequence it seems that, in order to approach nearer and nearer to a perceived truth, we have to perform continued, consequential studies designed to expose the most probable errors.

Taken to logical conclusions we should expect there to be some relationship between the ecology and the customs irrespective of time and place: **we cannot assume the level of development will correlate with time in different places between which there is no contact.**

Regulation of Population

Whatever ambiguity may remain about the dietary needs of the various groups of population, there is little doubt there is a link between these needs and the size of the population.

From the time of the agricultural revolution this link has become ever more tenuous: *the result the world population is now increasing at a rate that is out of control.*

This despite the continuation of practises, established in pre-historical times, to counter the problems associated with limitations of space and resources: these practises are now reinforced by the application of misused technology on a global scale, compounded by increasing risk of pandemics.

That there are natural balances between predators, and pre-dated species, is evident throughout Nature.

Equally evident is that some of the mechanisms for regulation of the reproductive process are self-regulatory: these are often quite subtle, and some are yet to be discovered.

Whatever they may be, *they are likely to apply as equally to humans as to other species.*

Whatever the means were for any original population control and the fact they may have persisted - despite, or because of, outside influences - they will be reflected in the cultural rituals that evolved around them.

As observed now these rituals do not necessarily exemplify whether the process was, and remains, adaptive, or maladaptive: In consequence the ritual may reflect the needs existing millennia ago, or changes that have occurred at any time since.

Beyond Rationality

Until this point we have emphasised the positiveness of rationality. Yet if we consider modern humans we have to accept that the non-rational functions of the mind are as essential as the strictly rational functions.

Such functions include, dreams, expectations, fantasy, sense of form, pattern and rhythm, all these are responsible for important forms of adaptation other than ecological.

Psychological adaptations must be considered a strong candidate for second place: these are the motive force behind most cultural ritual; the more elaborate the ritual, the greater the motive force.

The Tribal World and Human Diversity

Economic Systems: There is strong reason to suppose that the earlier anthropological deliberations, concerning the historical systems used by aboriginals to conduct their economic affairs, were based upon comparisons with the free market i.e. the capitalist economy as 'preached' by the disciples of the American economy. It has become evident that such comparisons were egotistical and have proved to be inappropriate, if only because the earliest aboriginals established practises that were based upon a longer term than modern capitalists are prepared to consider.

It remains evident that aboriginal culture is based upon factors perceived too subjective for the minds of the observers.

There are obvious difficulties in attempting to make comparisons between the various structures of society that have emerged.

Though all may be a consequence of the various progressive changes from the original hunter-gatherers resulting in today's miscellany; most of the stages of development continue to retain a small presence: this applies equally to all the subsequent cultures that prevailed before the industrial and technological ages and the attendant cultures that now dominate global existence.

It is these vestiges of earlier cultures that may yet 'seed' a renaissance of Man within Nature.

Whatever academic conclusions we may seek and find, it is inevitable - whatever the culture and wherever sited - we find ourselves in the realms of politics, sexual attitudes, and religion/faith.

Production versus Distribution

Arguably one of the key reasons for the failure of practical Marxism in the USSR was giving the means of production too much relevance compared with the distribution of the products.

In contrast Capitalist economies are in danger of giving too much relevance to distribution; in that this situation tends to give distributors too much power compared with producers.

This is clearly exemplified by the apparently destructive control Supermarkets have over the growers of produce: and also the potential of the Haulage Industry to hold a country to ransom.

From the earliest times to the present there seems to be have been a relationship between **Self Sufficiency, Specialisation, Dominance, Ritual** and **Restraints on Freedom**: each one leading to the next, and eventually to self-destruction.

This cycle contains a problem of time scale, with surpluses initiating short-term policy changes that are seen to be inappropriate to the requirements in the longer term.

The Hawthorn Experiments carried out during the early part of the 20th century gave clear indications that conclusions made by studying the behaviour of a group were prone to misinterpretation. This was probably because the response of different groups to the same environment is not necessarily identical: there is no reason to suppose that this has not always been so, nor, that it remains so.

It thus seems probable that the nature of the group is important.

Group response, and differences in the eco-structure, must therefore be significant to the appropriateness of the cultures likely to emerge and evolve in different places

In any economic system, the relationship with contiguous areas may well over-ride the established culture: this is particularly so if survival pressures have significance. At best there will be some modification of one or more cultures; at worst some cultures may all but disappear: *in such circumstances the folklore may still retain elements of the absent culture.*

Clearly not all the factors for change could be considered rational; the personality traits of different members of every group would have resulted in social compromises and conflicts; all of which would have been input factors to the evolution of each and every social culture.

In particular from the earliest times, as they are to this day, ego and pride were likely factors: it is these that would give rise to the emergence of possessions as symbols of importance and superiority.

Economic systems have made a journey from their beginning; they too, like genetics, cultures and languages have progressed from stage to stage, with examples - despite the competition from replacements perceived to be superior - of most of the stages still continuing: again the appropriateness, in certain niche conditions, will have been the reason for things, and practises, to survive; while others become archaic, or even extinct.

Kinship and Social Structure

Since my quest is the folklore of the most genetically diverse aboriginal peoples, it is inevitable that kinship and the structure of supra-family groups are of the utmost importance. In respect of the former we are all

victims, or beneficiaries, of the position our parents held in their society: there are few societies in which social status has no place; sadly thus, democracy can never be other than relative.

Social Structure:

In most tribal societies - and some more modern groups where the tribe is represented by some religious connotation - there are established rules of kinship, almost all originally established to minimise genetic inbreeding; or, to anticipate the potential for the regular conflicts arising whenever individuals or groups are seen to not wish to meet their commitments to the community.

In other words concepts of cultural ritual should seek to harmonise social relationships.

Kinship:

The obvious recognition of the ties of close family members has endured from the earliest of human groups: arguably the multi-partner type relationships, now common in modern society, are leading to situations in which the concept of family relationships becomes less meaningful.

If we stay with the consideration of the original ties, it is evident that family ties were the models upon which relationships with non-relatives were based: assessed according to the potency of the relationship, undoubtedly based originally upon a desire for security.

Thus expressed in a more modern parlance, *'if you cannot keep it in the family, keep it in the street; if not in the street, keep it in the village'*.

Patently marriage and/or pair-couples are essential to the future of a society, requiring a structure that allows immediate families to become extended families. In all cases - subject to modification by incest taboos - the fundamental requirement was to facilitate the availability of food, and to increase security.

Thus the nuclear family invariably became a part of a collective group within which kinship obligations had relevance.

Kinship and Social Relations:

The evolution of pastoralism, then agriculture, followed by urbanisation, has had some affect upon kinship.

However, it should have eroded the original concepts far more than is seen to be the case. All modern society retains significant elements of the early kinship structures and strictures despite that they should now have less, even little, relevance. Instead they are the cause of unnecessary and undesirable social and religious discriminations: as well as the conflicts arising out of these discriminations.

The variability's within, and between, different societies and cultures could be thought to be the measure of the differing conditions to which the original groups and their ancestors had to adapt: while these factors must have been of importance, *"there is a wide gulf between the ideal conception models and ideologies central in people's thought world and the position met by real people competing, choosing, and manipulating"*.

At its extreme this may be considered the difference between Theory and Practise in a state where 50% of everything is regular, and 50% irregular.

Thus, "specialists who focus on the crystalline models of the thought-of worlds see neat systems, whereas specialists who focus on the messy realities of real life see the complexity and exceptions to supposed rules".

The Fundamentals of Community:

Given there is a need for revival the family household must be the root of any potential there may be for a revival of Community; its alliance with other such households must equally be the basic blocks of local community from which larger society is built.

The structure of such households does vary in different cultures, at different locations: The one thing almost always common is the mother-child relationship, at least for the period during which there is dependence upon the mother, usually associated with a regulated arrangement for this dependence with the child's father.

Power and Politics:

It is reasonable to suppose that Power and Politics have been a part of the whole process; tempered only by their scale and nature.

Has the whole process been Natural, and therefore, by definition, unavoidable?

- *If the answer is Yes: it is likely we do not have the potential to seek remedy.*
- *If the answer is No: it is possible the events of the last 12,000 years are essentially Anthropocentric, making the future subject to possible manipulation.*

In the latter case there is a consequent question: Are there sufficient optimists prepared to undertake the manipulation, even though we can never be certain it is not already too late to redress the balance?

Men and Women in Society

"All cultures have until recently been largely controlled and defined by men."

This statement is generally perceived to be true; yet it may be a myth resulting from the established norms of the upper 'classes' - whether based upon hereditary, or new money - from which the early anthropologists emerged.

It is evident that most anthropological studies have tended to focus upon the formalities of ritual and culture; with attempts made to consider the social aspects within the same framework. Such restriction often fails to recognise that the psyche of women differs sufficiently - both within its own limits, and from the comparable male range - to possibly invalidate many established conclusions.

It was Bertram Russell who thought - perhaps tongue in cheek - that the two sexes are sufficiently diverse to be considered separate species. *As ludicrous as that may seem, there are recent genetic discoveries indicating the statement to be at least partially true.*

It has to be recognised that there is no such animal as a standard male, or female, just as there is no standard individual.

Thus, as in the earlier discussion about 'Power', the role of the two sexes is both based upon relationships and the situations.

Patently the fundamental role of women as child-bearers - and the perception that maternal bonding is stronger than paternal bonding - suggests the possibility that the biological difference between the genders is fundamental to their perceived role in society: arguably this could be said to include emotional and intellectual differences.

This does not suggest that men are superior to women; **in fact it could suggest that the perceived persona of the ideal woman has to be superior to that of her male equivalent in order to ensure the future, for her family in particular, and for mankind in general.**

Arguably it is the demotion of the relevance of the domestic unit - synonymous with the **industrial** revolution - that is at the core of the perceived 'ills' of modern society. Equally arguably it may be the **technological** revolution that will allow some degree of re-establishment.

Law and Social Control:

A codified Jurisprudence is a part of all developed society: granted the detail of the code varies in different parts of the globe but there is a degree of commonality.

Societies not large enough to have developed a formal Jurisprudence invariably establish 'Rules' that determine the acceptable processes of Social Relations.

It is these that evolved and changed to meet the requirements of a developing society.

In doing so most has been codified into the Written Law in which the word of the law has acquired greater significance than the spirit that pertained before.

This should not suggest that established, unwritten, law need be less legal. Provided it carries the tacit approval of the majority, its legality should be respected.

It should be of significance that a society, and culture, is best measured by the activities viewed as they are, rather than, as they should be. From this standpoint we are able to assess the norms of behaviour as well as the degree to which there is deviance.

Hitherto, forces for control have been relatively unsuccessful; this is possibly due to the desire to control the competitive individualism, rather than to subdue it. **The process of control has invariably been by the introduction of ritual and rule; some of the latter later expressed as formal laws.**

It has to be said that this state is likely to have existed throughout recorded history: this suggests that the problems are not solely dependent upon the emergence of agriculture and industry; though, arguably, the introduction of formal control may be directly related to their progress.

It is perhaps wrongly perceived that social harmony depends upon the structure of legal control; it seems more likely it depends upon how much the control exercised meets expectations.

It may well be that humans need an implicit set of rules for acting, doing and deciding: they will maintain harmony only as long as they are seen, by the great majority, to be applied justly.

Religion and Mythology:

There are various possibilities to account for these two facets of human existence. First we have to decide whether there is any difference between the two and if so to determine what they are.

My own perception is that they are the two sides of the same coin: possibly the general, formalised nature of religion evolved from the mythology; with the latter representing the metaphorical explanations for, or reactions to, those characteristics of early human existence for which there were no objective definition.

It could be argued that the continued existence of both is a measure of how much we have yet to learn and/or discover.

An alternative possibility is that religion arose as a tool designed to convince the majority that they should submit to the control of an elite minority: In general they claimed they had the 'ear' of some supreme celestial 'being' and could thus be delegate to the desires of the majority.

That both the original Nature Faiths - as well as the Religions that have evolved from some of them - had, and still have, emotional power is relatively undisputed and would possibly justify all theist beliefs.

It is equally valid to suppose that 'democracy' and materialism have tended to weaken the control that Faith and Religion have upon the consciousness of the members of modern society: though arguably the same cannot be said about its unconsciousness.

Obviously the growth of education, philosophy and technology has widened not only the boundaries of knowledge, but also the availability of that knowledge to the individuals within society.

However, the wide spectrum of emotional and intellectual characteristics associated with the human race - compounded by the inequality that still persists - ensures that there is an unnecessary lack of definitiveness.

Beyond these boundaries there will always be that we do not know, as well as that we cannot know.

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Many Faiths and Religions have subdivisions based upon the schisms supposedly arising from differences of interpretation.

Despite these differences there is room for comparative studies based upon the relationships between, "*the thought-of worlds and the lived-in worlds*".

The two worlds stated in the last sentence are the probable root of the existence of Faith and, or, Religion in all cultural groups wherever they may be located.

This is probably the result of human intellect, of which awareness and curiosity are integral parts.

There is a thread through all the Faiths and Religions that includes spirits in various categories; ritual cycles that connect the activities of these spirits; a Personal Creator, or a Guardian 'Angel' - arguably metaphors for the 'Soul - a Great Creator of the cosmos: all these tend to have a relationship, status and capability, appropriate to the social structure of the group, community, or society: its roots were the foundation of the culture they have 'acquired'.

The Nature Faiths were of necessity organic, and evolved according to the feedback resulting from 'new' experiences: at any moment in time there was a desire to perceive and conceive all phenomena within the structure of their 'faith'.

It may be of particular relevance that some aspects of ritual were based upon the like-for-like thinking still associated with Homoeopathic Healing and also with certain methods associated with Social Engineering.

All such connections contain the desire to manipulate events perceived to be unrelated, through the use of methods perceived to rely upon cause-and-effect.

Like prayer these are elements that explain both success and failure.

Paradoxically it is said that, "**Western Science does not explain more things, but explains fewer things more systematically**".

One thing that seems eminently clear is that the philosophies associated with the mythologies of some aboriginals do not lack sophistication: the extremes of pragmatism and philosophy are to be found equally in both aboriginal and modern societies: **the greater the emphasis on achieving material expectations, the more naive the underlying philosophy of existence.**

Perhaps the sophistication of the philosophy is related to the nature of the relevant social structure to which we are exposed.

Religion and Social Structure

The last comment is seen to be particularly relevant to the importance given to religion, with the possibility that materialistic priorities result in a general dilution of respect for religious philosophies and practises.

In parallel we may have the possibility that those retaining respect are generally more likely to be aligned to the fundamental attitudes of their particular religion.

It seems to be unquestioned there is a link between the perceptions, of a supernatural order and human social relationships; with the religious beliefs of the fundamentalists used to validate and regulate the structure of their lives. The rites at death are presumably designed to clothe the individual with the protection needed, against unknown unethical forces, until such time as the dead person is reincarnated, or, becomes immortal; whichever is relevant to their cultural beliefs.

In almost all cases the role of an afterlife is to avoid perceiving death as final: ancestral beliefs are obviously designed to strengthen the belief they will be accepted by an ethereal community close in type to their earthly one.

Not so obvious are the roots of cultures in which women are considered 'impure'.

One possibility is that such perceptions - and the rituals they generate - are a means to perpetuate the dominant position of the males.

Certainly the women who have taken a principal part in the nurture and sustenance of earlier society tend to suggest a superior role, rather than an inferior one: that men should carry unconscious guilt for not only failing to acknowledge this superiority, but also exploiting the situation, is completely understandable.

Likewise other cultural meanings are a reflection of the prevailing social structure: it could not be otherwise.

All our experience, and therefore knowledge, is anchored in the world we live in.

The fact we have to consider is the extent to which these meanings are given relevance beyond their sell-by-date.

That this has happened, and continues to do so, gives credence to the need to celestialise such outlooks, in order to effect easier acceptance and enhanced respect.

It is almost certain that the transfer of responsibility, to the cosmos, has aided the establishment of institutionalised religion.

Rituals:

To date, in the inevitable absence of written history, emphasis had to be placed upon the objects, used in ritual practises.

The importance of the possibility of a syntax associated with these ritual objects has seemingly not been previously perceived; work in this area of the subject is now being undertaken, but has yet to prove conclusive.

That there is a common thread throughout the whole of history is to be expected: the relevance of this to modern society may be greater than we have been prepared to accept.

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