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THE EVOLUTIONARY ANTHROPOLOGISTS: THE PROGRESS OF MANKIND

The Concepts of Progress and Culture in the Thought of John Lubbock,
Edward B. Tylor, and Lewis H. Morgan

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Whether the naturalist believes in the views given by Lamarck, by Geoffroy St. Hilaire, by the author of the "Vestiges," by Mr. Wallace and myself, or in any other such view, signifies extremely little in comparison with the admission that species have descended from other species, and have not been created immutable; for he who admits this as a great truth has a wide field opened to him for further inquiry.

—Charles Darwin, in the *Athenaeum*.

IN the French town of Abbeville there stands a statue in memory of a local crank, Jacques Boucher de Crèvecœur de Perthes. This nineteenth-century eccentric insisted that he had found stone tools which were shaped by human hands before the time of the Biblical flood. No one believed him despite the fact that his claims were in the orthodox tradition that man existed before the Deluge. Perhaps it was the crudeness of the technology and the image of the men who used such tools that was so unsettling to nineteenth-century eyes. No one doubted the sincerity of de Perthes, only his sanity and geology. Like an old refrain when the wise always know best was the dismissal of his so-called "haches antédiluviennes."

The picture became more clouded with the unearthing of human artifacts together with fossils of extinct animals, but the prevailing view was not to be challenged by evidence which could be interpreted away. If de Perthes publicized his findings and spelled out his preposterous inferences in book after book (six by 1847), these were the ravings of a man possessed. The first sympathetic treatment which de Perthes received came from a man who set out to silence him, Dr. Rigollot of Amiens. By the time that Rigollot had finished digging in the gravel pits of Saint Acheul, he was on de Perthes' side. Rigollot kept finding flint axes along with strange fossils too.

In 1908, seventy years after de Perthes claimed that man had kept company with extinct mammals, the local professional society which had scoffed and turned deaf ears to de Perthes' fantasies erected his memorial statue in Abbeville.

Things stood in a different light. In the intervening years, enthusiasm for science had become almost a middle-class fad in England, and "mechanics' institutes" attracted crowded audiences to hear distinguished speakers, even when their subject was geology. Huxley found a ready audience in Edinburgh for his popular lectures on man's kinship with other animals. Lyell was elected to the faculty of King's College by a board stacked with bishops. There he instructed gentlemen as well as ladies in the ways of uniformitarianism, of course with consummate tact. Queen Victoria knew his *Antiquity of Man* and cross-examined Lyell at Balmoral about caves, rivers, and fossils the year that his book was published.

Perhaps it is true that even the clerics no longer believed the Genesis account of creation; at least Archbishop Usher's chronology, dating the year of the creation as 4004 B.C., had become an antiquarian curiosity. The Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages of the Scandinavian archaeologists, postulated before de Perthes' heresy, had fixed a scheme of successive technological stages which had become a model of evolution. The "Celtic" tools which de Perthes had once claimed to be pre-Roman turned out to be Neolithic. And Darwin had found a hypothesis to account for "the origin of species" and "the descent of man" by natural selection with a mass of evidence to support his claims. Darwin and de Perthes were contemporaries, and British colleagues of Darwin did not find the Frenchman a mad man. In fact, in the year of *The Origin*, two of Britain's foremost geologists vouched for de Perthes to the high courts of British science, Joseph Prestwich

to the Royal Society and Lyell to the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

Before he was done, Lyell went over the ground around Abbeville and examined de Perthes' discoveries three separate times. Lyell was cautious and circumspect, a professional barrister as well as one trained in the pitfalls of assessing geological data; if he tried Darwin's patience by hanging back in confirming the new biological theory, when Lyell spoke, people listened. Without noticeable enthusiasm but compelled by the evidence, Lyell finally joined the chorus of Darwin's supporters—but not before he had prepared the way for Darwin in his own *Principles of Geology* and had become a convert of de Perthes' strange faith.

The coincidence of the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) and Boucher de Perthes' *De l'Homme Antédiluvienne et de ses Œuvres* (1860) presages the inauguration of modern anthropology. By 1871, almost within a decade, the principal works of Sir Henry Maine, E. B. Tylor, J. F. McLennan, and Sir John Lubbock had appeared in England; and Lewis H. Morgan's *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*, an evolutionary landmark based on kinship systems, had been published by the Smithsonian Institution in the United States. This was the beginning of the evolutionary era in anthropology, the period in which the "development hypothesis" became the guiding principle in social analysis, for the men who gave that era its characteristic bias and working ideas were committed to the evolutionary idea.

Theirs was the same task which Huxley set himself in *Man's Place in Nature* (1863) except, of course, the anthropologists studied human institutions, practices, and technology. In their hands, man the social animal was to find his place in the same scheme of nature where Huxley's and Darwin's researches had located him zoologically. Huxley's bout over Neanderthal man, when the status of this apelike creature was much disputed, had not put Huxley on the side of the angels. Neanderthal man—whose flat head, low forehead, and large brow-ridges stamped him as primitive and human—was not merely compatible with ancient flint workers who practiced their technological skills in the time of European mammoth and rhinoceros; he was one of those Pleistocene craftsman. Here was the "man" whom Huxley refused to dismiss as either a pathological idiot or a degenerated Adam; he was a kinsman of that gregarious primate of the

anthropologists (suborder Anthropeida and family Hominidae) who lumbered his unsteady way through the evolutionary maze from savagery to civilization.

1. DARWIN'S RELATION TO THE NEW ANTHROPOLOGY

Two figures stand out among the cultural anthropologists, Edward B. Tylor (1832–1917) and Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881), and on all sides they are acclaimed the giants of the period. John Lubbock (1834–1913), although a lesser figure, deserves attention on another score, for his life reflected many evolutionary currents in a particularly vivid way. He is a personal reminder of how closely aligned were the new science of anthropology and those influences which figured sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly in its coming of age. To call these men "Darwinians" is suggestive and at the same time not wholly accurate. They were caught up in a movement of which biological Darwinism was the most publicized center; and while "Darwinian" is a convenient label, more apt than most such labels usually are, it is not without some awkwardness. The anthropologists were not outright and literal Darwinians, and they were even less disciples of the evolutionary philosopher Herbert Spencer. Progress was not identical with evolution and could not, as Spencer insisted, be equated with it.

When the romanticized "typical" Victorian is recalled, he is sure to be endowed with a complacent, provincial optimism and an almost religious faith in progress. He may not know exactly what he means by "progress," but he is certain that there is such a thing and that its beneficent wonders are self-evident to all right-thinking men. The ethnologists do not fit this stereotype. To be sure, they were all unashamedly on the side of progress, but they were less giddy and more discriminating than they are usually given credit for. They suffered the excesses of enthusiasm for things close to home and for the familiar articles of nineteenth-century life, including monogamous marriage. Morgan thought of the Eskimos as downright "peculiar," and he voiced a widespread myth when he claimed a certain moral and intellectual superiority for "Aryan" ways. But even Lubbock, whose revulsion at the "perversity" of savages is more notorious than Morgan's, was not so blinded by progress and so smug that he supposed his

world would not be surpassed. He was too convinced of the reality of progress and the need of improvement. However high the pinnacle of development, this peak was sure to be topped by the process that had carried the world this far.

Progress, whatever else it was, was a future promise. Progress opened new prospects and did not merely represent the solid achievements of the present. Tylor looked down the corridor in an opposite direction and shrewdly saw that "taking something away" was as true a mark of progress as adding something new. Men advanced by dropping certain customs, kinds of conduct heinous enough to make their mere disappearance a triumph. Tylor could also chide the fanatical optimist by remarking that the world may not have been constructed "for the purpose of providing for the human mind just what it is pleased to ask for."

In judging the Victorian ethnologists, we should not forget that they were embattled men straining to take the curse of Adam from their primeval ancestors. They recognized that progress was a human creation due to man's natural capacity as a social animal. As much as anything else, their contention of human progress was a vote of confidence for the species against those who insisted that if evolutionary man was a wayward ape, he would have been doomed to brutishness. In all the loose talk about progress, the evolutionary anthropologists worked their way toward the view that a sequence of development imposed its own logic on the ordering of events, and that later stages presupposed earlier ones without which the later were impossible. If they misconstrued the logic, they held soundly to the evolutionary principle that the chain of events ushered the new from the old.

The relation of biological to cultural evolution in the history of ideas is complex. In Germany, Adolf Bastian (1826-1905) could repudiate biological Darwinism and at the same time be a cultural evolutionist. The Swiss J. J. Bachofen (1815-1887), author of *Das Mutterrecht*, could use the principle of "survivals" and write of progressive cultural stages without any indication of Darwin's influence. Conceivably, Darwin's impact might never have been felt, and Tylor, Morgan, Lubbock, and the rest could have gone about their work with similar results. The stubborn fact remains that most of them did not; and so many ethnological studies, clearly to be counted evolutionary, appear in the years right after 1859 that Darwin's book appears to have loosed an

avalanche. It may be instructive to recall that biological transformism was a particular expression of the evolutionary ferment, neither leading the way nor standing alone; and when it took the authoritative form of *The Origin*, it filled out one side of the evolutionary program. Biological transformism was a part of that program in its own right at the same time that it confirmed a larger set of ideas, but Darwinism alone did not cause the outpouring of cultural anthropology in the evolutionary mode.

Neither Tylor, Morgan, nor Lubbock had necessary recourse to "nature red in tooth and claw." Theirs was the evolution of development and continuity, not that of the newer vogue of evolution through ordeal. Without negating Darwinism, Tylor explicitly divorced the thesis of *Primitive Culture* from the Darwinian-Spencerian phrasing of the evolutionary process, but he saw the necessity of clarifying the relation when he affirmed the gradual growth of culture. Morgan, embracing the idea, was leery of the word "evolution." Tylor preferred the term "development." Only Lubbock pointedly drew Darwin and Spencer into his discussion of cultural evolution. He knew them both as friends and was an early partisan of Darwin's views; nonetheless, their names were primarily useful to Lubbock in a concluding chapter when he marshalled the witnesses for progress. Although the principle of continuous development, as the cultural anthropologists used it, presupposed Darwin's primeval man and opposed creationism, it was no rigid doctrine and depended upon no special and formal theory of evolution. Still, the ethnologists profited by the Darwinian climate of opinion, which was congenial to their work. And the biologist's findings, carrying the imperative stamp of scientific authenticity, supplied a strategic support to the whole enterprise of an evolutionary ethnology.

The anthropology of Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan represents a convergence of ideas which had successively enveloped geology, biology, and archaeology. The interchange among these sciences was like a cross-fertilization, and discoveries and theories in one field were not easily contained within narrow limits. By the time the evolutionary idea in its nineteenth-century dress was firmly entrenched in them all, geologists and biologists presented a common front with paleontologists, archaeologists, and students of culture. A composite of intertwining effects, their formalized views had almost the status of a scientific "ideology" to which they were all committed.

If the ethnologists were not eager Darwinians, their intellectual debts to the community of science is not thereby lessened. The dependence of Darwin's and Wallace's work on Lyell's geology is clear. Thereby nature's new chronology outran the five thousand years allotted to history by the theologians. With the realization of man's ancient age, the antiquarian's interest in pre-Roman curiosities was converted into the archaeological study of pre-history. But early man's antiquity and even his humanity are guaranteed by the fossil record assessed by geologists and paleontologists. Although the evolutionary ethnologists neither explicitly adopted nor rejected Darwin's biology, a theory which pointed to the descent of *Homo sapiens* from an earlier progenitor and to the common animal ancestry of the various sub-species of man was the premise which most suited their ethnological systems. But this statement is sketchy even for a summary, and a more detailed account of the background that produced the evolutionary movement in anthropology is in order.

2. THE EMERGENCE OF THE EVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY

It was difficult to accept the thesis of *The Origin of Species* without denying the Mosaic chronology and without recognizing that the gradual changes assumed in the mutability of species were also assumed in Lyell's geology. It was just as difficult to reject biological evolution without also rejecting both civilization as it was conceived by the evolutionary anthropologists and the antiquity of man. When the uniformitarianism of the *Principles of Geology* is admitted, that species evolve, that man is a primate, and that culture is a gradual, communal accumulation cease to be absurd propositions.¹ Those

¹ Huxley writes in the chapter he contributed to Darwin's *Life and letters*: "I have recently read afresh the first edition of the 'Principles of Geology'; and when I consider that this remarkable book had been nearly thirty years in everybody's hands, and that it brings home to any reader of ordinary intelligence a great principle and a great fact—the principle, that the past must be explained by the present, unless good cause be shown to the contrary; and the fact, that, so far as our knowledge of the past history of life on our globe goes, no such cause can be shown—I cannot but believe that Lyell, for others, as for myself, was the chief agent for smoothing the road for Darwin. For consistent uniformitarianism postulates evolution as much in the organic as in the inorganic world. The origin of a new species by other than ordinary agents would be a vastly greater 'catastrophe' than any of those which Lyell successfully eliminated from sober geological speculation." Darwin, Francis, *The life*

who opposed these views were aware of this cluster of mutually supporting ideas and combated it with another. In *The Recent Origin of Man* (1875), for instance, James C. Southall held that man is a recent creation (denying Darwin) who began life in a civilized state (denying Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan) surrounded by a world of deluge and cataclysm (denying Lyell). Southall reminds us that the common allegiance of the men who were identified with the biology, geology, paleontology, and ethnology of the period bears out a specific scientific ideology. He grouped Lyell, Lubbock, Darwin, Huxley, Falconer, Prestwich, Geikie, Evans, Busk, and others together as those who "believe in 'natural selection' or 'evolution,' and all of them laugh to scorn the idea that Man is not more than seven or eight thousand years old."² Wallace and Agassiz broke the common front, both of them maintaining the diversity of origin of species, but almost everyone recognizes the anomaly of their position. Certainly Darwin did. Writing to Wallace in his own mild way, Darwin argued that, having gone so far, Wallace had abruptly stopped short and made a special case for human creation, completely distinct from the evolution of other species: "As you expected, I differ grievously from you, and I am very sorry for it. I can see no necessity for calling in an additional and proximate cause in regard to man."³ And in a letter to Lyell, Darwin quoted a letter from Asa Gray about Agassiz and added, "Is not this marvelous?"

... [Agassiz] coming near to deny that we are genetically descended from our great-great-grandfathers; and insisting that evidently affiliated languages, e.g. Latin, Greek, Sanscrit, owe none of their similarities to a community of origin, are all autochthonal; Agassiz admits that the derivation of languages, and that of species or forms, stand on the same foundation, and that he must allow the latter if he allows the former, which I tell him is perfectly logical.⁴

and *letters of Charles Darwin* 1: 543-544, New York, D. Appleton, 1887. Huxley did not need *The origin of species* to reveal the connection between the principles of geology and biology. Several months before its publication, in a lecture titled "Time and Life" before the Royal Institution of Great Britain, Huxley had maintained species development from parent stocks on a geological analogy, stating: "The doctrine of uniformity and the doctrine of progression are, therefore, perfectly consistent; perhaps, indeed, they might be shown to be necessarily connected with one another."

² Southall, James C., *The recent origin of man*, 45, Philadelphia, J. P. Lippincott, 1875.

³ Darwin, *Life and letters* 2: 297.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 152-153.

When Darwin went aboard the *Beagle* as naturalist, he carried with him the first volume of Lyell's *Principles of Geology*. His old botany teacher at Cambridge, J. S. Henslow, pressed the book on him and then warned that he was not to believe what Lyell had written. Darwin found there an exposition of Lamarck's evolutionary biology as well as a method of interpreting geological data that made successive modifications according to regular and uninterrupted laws sufficient to account for geological phenomena.⁵ The fluvialist and catastrophist geology of Cuvier was not only dispensable as a scientific principle; it was an unnecessary myth. With enough time and Lyell's idea of change as gradual modification, no mountainous waves of water or upheavals of rock were needed to explain the formation of valleys and rock deposits, and it was just this concept of change and an immense time span that Darwin needed for *The Origin of Species*. Darwin wrote in his *Autobiography*:

After my return to England [from the voyage of the *Beagle*] it appeared to me that by following the example of Lyell in Geology, and by collecting all facts which bore in any way on the variation of animals and plants under domestication and nature, some light might perhaps be thrown on the whole subject.⁶

Darwin was the first to recognize that his theory depended on geological time. In 1856 he wrote to Hooker, "This power of [natural] selection stands in the most direct relation to time, and in the state of nature can be only excessively slow,"⁷ and later, in *The Descent of Man*, Darwin made the antiquity of man "the indispensable basis for understanding his origin."⁸

Darwin dedicated his *Journal of Researches* to Lyell in 1845, and said thirty years later, "I never forget that almost everything which I have done in science I owe to the study of his great works."⁹ Darwin's indebtedness to Lyell, however, is nowhere more apparent than in *The Origin of Species* itself:

I am well aware that this doctrine of natural selection . . . is open to the same objections which were at first urged against Sir Charles Lyell's noble views on 'the modern changes of the earth, as illustrative of geology'; but we now seldom hear the agencies, still

at work, spoken of as trifling and insignificant, when applied to the excavation of the deepest valleys or to the formation of long lines of inland cliffs. Natural selection acts only by the preservation and accumulation of small inherited modifications, each profitable to the preserved being; and as modern geology has almost banished such views as the excavation of a great valley by a single diluvial wave, so will natural selection, if it be a true principle, banish the belief of the continued creation of new organic beings, or of any great and sudden modification of their structure.¹⁰

There can be no doubt that the only explanation-of-species change that Darwin allowed was the kind that even cattle breeders and pigeon fanciers knew about. Uniformitarianism, geological time, and evolution were transposed intact to Darwinian biology. The ethnology of Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan was based on the same principles and ran counter to the same opposition, for evolutionary anthropology was an outgrowth of and part of this development in geology and biology.

However much Darwin was making evolution basic to the derivation of all other species, he was reluctant in *The Origin of Species* to go beyond saying that "by this work light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history." A great deal has been made of the fact that this is the only explicit reference to man in *The Origin* and that it is almost an aside. Darwin included the remark, he said, in order not to conceal his own views on the origin of human species. For the great majority of readers Darwin, postulating the gradual development of animal species, need have said nothing to have implicated *Homo sapiens* in the evolutionary process too. Darwin's reasoning must have been close to the thinking of all those who considered the question of species derivation. "As soon as I had become . . . convinced that species were mutable productions, I could not avoid the belief that man must come under the same law."¹¹ Lyell saw this at once. His uncertainty and wavering, illustrated by his remark that Agassiz's theory of progressive development was "'so delightful, that he could not help all the time wishing that it was true,'"¹² came precisely from

⁵ The principle of uniformitarianism, usually associated with the English geologists Hutton and Lyell, is clearly enunciated in Lamarck's *Philosophie zoologique*, 1809.

⁶ Darwin, *Life and letters* 1: 67-68.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 445.

⁸ Darwin, Charles, *The descent of man*, 2, New York, D. Appleton, 1886.

⁹ Darwin, *Life and letters* 2: 374.

¹⁰ Darwin, Charles, *The origin of species*, 98, New York, D. Appleton, 1872.

¹¹ Darwin, *Life and letters* 1: 75-76. Specifically and more prosaically, in Darwin's words: "Our ancestor was an animal which breathed water, had a swim bladder, a great swimming tail, an imperfect skull, and undoubtedly was a hermaphrodite!" *Ibid.*, 2: 60.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1: 403.

realizing the implication of *The Origin of Species* for man:

It is this which has made me so long hesitate, always feeling that the case of Man and his races, and of other animals, and that of plants is one and the same, and that if a "vera causa" be admitted for one, instead of a purely unknown and imaginary one, such as the word "Creation," all the consequences must follow.¹³

The coming of *The Origin* was so dramatic and its impact created such a stir that "evolution" is now inseparable from Darwin's name. For many they are one and the same word. Certainly, Darwin's prominence dwarfs that of his predecessors, and college undergraduates are convinced, despite what their instructors tell them, "No Darwin, no evolution." Darwin did not foster this extravagant claim. He made a great point of coupling his own with Wallace's name when referring to the originators of "our theory." To insure that the scientific world should not miss what he had to say Darwin put gift copies of his book in the hands of prominent professionals at home and abroad. An aroused public, fearing the worst and whetted by the intervention of Hooker and Lyell in the stir over authorship with Wallace, exhausted a first printing of 1,250 copies in a day.

For a scientific text, the book found a surprising sale among clerics; and it would be hard to say whether biologists or bishops felt more was at stake. Darwin was to have friends in both ranks, but not in equal numbers. The clash of notables in public debate, with no less than Huxley and Wilberforce as *dramatis personae*, gave the whole event a genuine element of theater. The two camps met head on in the British Association meeting of 1860. The principals themselves caricature the great antagonism—Bishop Wilberforce confident, popular, and proud, dressed in the garb of high office, with a keen mind slick with rhetoric and stubborn with dogmatism, so bound to be right that he said more than he knew; and Huxley from a younger generation, technically trained in anatomy and physiology, smarting at the bishop's presumptuousness and stung by this spokesman for the vested interests of science and the church, retorting that it would have been better if Wilberforce had read Darwin's book.

Overshadowing his predecessors, Darwin generously and rightfully added "An Historical Sketch" to the sixth edition of *The Origin*, re-

calling such names as Lamarck, Saint-Hilaire, Goethe, and his grandfather Erasmus. Darwin's list grew until he named thirty-four men who believed "in the modification of species, or at least disbelieved in separate acts of creation." Many, with far less claim than Wallace, were willing to be counted the originators of "natural selection," including the anatomist Richard Owen, who was on public record against it. One cantankerous gentleman, Patrick Matthew, had name cards printed bearing the additional identification "Discoverer of the Principle of Natural Selection." Herbert Spencer never did quite forgive his contemporaries for overlooking his paternity of the new evolutionary movement. He was particularly chagrined because, having made the discovery, he felt that he had done so much more with it than Darwin.

Perhaps the point is that it took Darwin's whole interlocked theory displayed by a world of facts, all patiently interwoven like a massive exercise in inductive and deductive logic, to make those claims to fame worth making. Although the evolutionary idea was not a new one, its pedigree became significant in the light of Darwin's achievement. Huxley said it as well as anyone in the preface to *Darwiniana* when he wrote of "the ancient doctrine of Evolution, rehabilitated and placed upon a sound scientific foundation, since and in consequence of, the publication of the '*Origin of Species*'. . . ." Darwin canonized, St. Darwin the Major, reflected glory on many a minor evolutionary saint.

In the same way, after de Perthes' vindication, half-forgotten or ignored archaeological discoveries assumed new importance. They had been nothing but oddities under the old dispensation of Cuvier and signified little or nothing about primitive man and his technology. They attracted little attention, for they were considered trivial or at most interesting; and the record of their discovery comes to light only slowly and piecemeal. It turns out that chipped tools were being discovered around Rome in 1846; and in 1850 river-drift implements were found in the lower Apennines near Imola. Similar findings were made in Toulouse in 1851. In addition there is the history of cave researches in England, Belgium, and Germany going back as far as 1800. Still earlier, in 1797, John Frere gave his "Account of Flint Weapons Discovered at Hoxne in Suffolk" to the Society of Antiquaries of London and described stone weapons that were unearthed twelve feet below the surface in stratified

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2: 2.

deposits. But the oldest find of them all was the flint tool which was turned up at Gray's Inn Lane in London, about 1690, near the remains of an elephant-like beast. After de Perthes' claims were verified these discoveries ceased to be idle and miscellaneous facts.

What prevented the evaluation of these findings as the revolutionary facts that they were? Time and again a bold antiquarian did so, only to be ridiculed by the savants who spoke in the name of authority. The climate of opinion was on their side, and that was enough. A ready-made interpretation consistent with the regnant geology was close at hand. Everything was accountable in one way or another—as a freak of nature, as the result of violent upheaval and flood, as the work of elves, or even as tests to try men's faith. Facts took their place under the accepted premises, and the prevailing beliefs were maintained. In 1690 nobody paid much attention when a crudely shaped tool was uncovered near the skeleton of an "elephant" in London, but there was little reason to. When the same discovery is reported in the vocabulary of modern science, however, a new import emerges: "The first paleolithic flint implement ever recognized and preserved as a relic of ancient man was a Chellean tool of the cleaver type discovered in Pleistocene gravels at Gray's Inn Lane, London." Expressed in this way, the "facts" are radically different.

They are startling facts only when they are interpreted with the insight appropriate to modern times. As recent a geologist as Dean Buckland, Lyell's teacher at Oxford, steadfastly refused to grant that human bones and chipped flint tools were older than the "flood," even when they were found in England next to rhinoceros remains. Buckland himself had explored Goat's Hole Cave in 1823 and had found the "Red Lady of Paviland," but even that field work did not move him to think in temporal terms before the Romano-British period. Archaeological and paleontological discoveries waited upon the new geology to locate their place in time. Primitive human remains, even if the evidence was scanty, found a precise place in the mutable primate order prepared by Darwin. It did not take Boucher de Perthes' roughly hewn tools to give early man a mutable culture, but they did give a glimpse of how far man had come in the technical arts. A whole new set of ideas thus accumulated to put the meaning of antiquarian discoveries in a radically different perspective.

Heretofore, belief could rest comfortably in the old, familiar terms; but now there was not any choice, and belief was compelled to accommodate de Perthes, Darwin, and Lyell.

3. THE EVOLUTION OF CULTURE IN THE CONTINUOUS COMMUNITY

Coupled with the discoveries of Boucher de Perthes in the Somme Valley, the consequences of *The Origin of Species* bore directly on the new anthropology. The flint tools in the river gravels, authenticated at the same time that *The Origin* was published, dramatically posed the specific issue of a naturalistic derivation of culture while the biology of Darwin symbolized the animal origin of man and the rejection of creationist theories of his appearance in the world. Although the flint axes of man's primitive industry were more immediately germane to the ethnology of Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan than to Darwin's biology, both the nature of man and the method by which his animal pedigree was established were logically central to their ethnology. The "zero point," as Morgan called it, from which cultural evolution began was delineated by the crude industrial remains found by Boucher de Perthes. But this zero point gained clarity and significance when correlated with the existence of Tertiary mammoth and when Huxley's analysis of the Neanderthal skull disclosed a cranium with pithecoïd traits and anthropoid brain capacity.¹⁴ The age of Neanderthal man was undetermined, and Huxley did not argue that the primordial ancestor of modern man had been found; but the close resemblance between the "ancient skulls and their modern Australian analogues" immediately suggested to him that between the culture of modern and ancient savages there was possibly another analogy. Primeval man, whoever he was, was a lineal descendent with the pithecoïds from a common primate stock, and a primitive flint technology seemed a more appropriate handiwork for early man than the civilization claimed for him by Archbishop Whately. Whately reasoned that the early condition of man was such that progress was impossible without divine assistance;

¹⁴ Fittingly enough, material which Huxley used to locate man's place in nature found a place in Lyell's geological treatise on human antiquity and Darwin's biological treatment of the origin of man. Darwin quotes in full Huxley's "Note on the Resemblances and Differences in the Structure and the Development of the Brain in Man and Apes" in *The descent of man*, and Huxley's analysis of the Engis and Neanderthal skulls is appended to a chapter of Lyell's *Evidences of the antiquity of man*.

and although uncivilized man had the capacity to learn from a community which had already advanced beyond a state of savagery, there was still the necessity of launching this special group on the path to civilization. Whately wrote:

According to the present course of nature, the first introducer of cultivation among savages, is, and must be, Man, in a more improved state: in the beginning therefore of the human race, this, since there was no *man* to effect it, must have been the work of *another Being*. There must have been, in short, a *Revelation* made, to the first, or to some subsequent generation, of our species. And this miracle (for such it is, as being an impossibility according to the present course of nature) is attested, independently of the authority of the Scripture-accounts, by the fact, that civilized Man exists at the present day.¹⁵

One miracle called for another, and Archbishop Whately's pre-Darwinian frame of mind made him look for distinct breaks and origins where there was only continuity. It was man created, distinct and entire, whose culture was necessarily created also. On the other hand, it was primate man, who shared a common lineage with Neanderthal kin, whose cultural "zero point" was fixed in the first rude fashioning of stone implements.

It is the contribution of the ethnologists of this period that, by using the evolutionary method, they divorced culture or civilization from the predestined order of a divine provision and, by making culture the works of man, they found its origin in the continuous community. Although they insisted that cultural evolution was on the whole progressive, their problem was not, assuming a natural order of progress, to investigate the interferences and unnatural obstacles which prevented perpetual advancement.¹⁶ They were fundamentally insisting that culture had evolved and had not been "created" and, further, that it was reasonable to assume that man might have reached nineteenth-century civilization by slowly adding on to "what lies at hand," particularly if social evolution extended to the remote time of Neanderthal man's ancestors. Without exception, Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan thought well of the

culture in which they lived and measured progress in terms of monogamous marriage and the industrial revolution, so that steps in the direction of life as they lived it were termed "progressive." Nevertheless, the theme which engrossed them was the development of culture, and as much as anything else, it was the theme of evolution that committed them to a belief in progress. According to Tylor, the

... standard of reckoning progress and decline is not that of ideal good and evil, but of movement along a measured line from grade to grade of actual savagery, barbarism, and civilization. The thesis which I venture to sustain, within limits, is simply this, that the savage state in some measure represents an early condition of mankind, out of which the higher culture has gradually been developed or evolved, by processes still in regular operation as of old, the result showing that, on the whole, progress has far prevailed over relapse.¹⁷

Asserted in the face of degeneration, the cultural evolutionists' theory of progress was a re-statement of their essential naturalism, that human advancement was a "process still in operation as of old." Progress, in the words of the subtitle of Morgan's *Ancient Society*, was "from savagery through barbarism to civilization," and tampering with this order of development made it a completely unintelligible sequence. The idea of a primeval Golden Age, appearing in savagery, followed by savagery, wrecked the natural continuity of events and destroyed the foundation of a science of culture. Such an age of primeval glory, unattached and isolated, with savage culture before and after it, was inexplicable by evidence which the evolutionists recognized as valid, and not to deny its existence would have been fatal to cultural evolution.

The urgency of combating this myth was undoubtedly responsible for Lubbock's insistence that civilization is largely an indigenous development. Lubbock stressed this view more than Tylor and Morgan did and held to it in its most extreme form; it was he who challenged Archbishop Whately's statement that "... we have no reason to believe that any community ever did, or ever can, emerge, unassisted by external helps, from a state of utter barbarism into any thing that can be called civilization. . . ." ¹⁸ Lubbock carried on the controversy with the Duke of Argyll, who shared Whately's point of view,

¹⁵ Whately, Richard, *Political economy*, 120, London, B. Fellowes, 1832.

¹⁶ This is precisely Malthus' problem in *An essay on the principle of population* (1803), illustrated by his beginning, "... the mode of conducting the subject which naturally presents itself, is: 1. To investigate the causes that have hitherto impeded the progress of mankind toward happiness; and 2. To examine the probability of the total or partial removal of these causes in the future." Malthus, T. R., *An essay on the principle of population*, 1, London, n. p., 1803.

¹⁷ Tylor, Edward B., *Primitive culture* 1: 2, New York, Henry Holt, 1883.

¹⁸ Whately, *Political economy*, 106-107.

and reprinted his attacks on the degeneration theory of Whately and the Duke in an appendix to *The Origin of Civilisation*. In the last chapter of this book Lubbock concluded: "That existing savages are not the descendants of civilised ancestors. That the primitive condition of man was one of utter barbarism. That from this condition various races have independently raised themselves."¹⁹ To deny Whately's contention that savages could not raise themselves without outside help, either from a divine source or from a civilized race which had itself received divine assistance, Lubbock maintained that savages even as savages could independently evolve a civilized culture. He thereby underestimated the importance of cultural diffusion as a factor in cultural change, an oversight which has embarrassed ever since those sympathetic to the cultural evolutionists' position. In the absence of diffusion to account for the similarity of cultural development, Lubbock fell back on the psychic unity of mankind.

4. JOHN LUBBOCK: THE REVOLUTION AS A SYNTHESIS

The figure of John Lubbock is particularly instructive as an ideal type illustrating the new movements of thought in England in the crucial period from 1830 to 1870. More than either Tylor or Morgan, he personified the way in which Lyell's geology, Darwin's biology, and the discoveries of Boucher de Perthes converged to generate the new anthropology. In the preface to *The Origin of Civilisation* (1870), Lubbock dated the beginning of his ethnological studies from 1860, and Tylor said in the preface to *Primitive Culture* (1871) that his researches covered a "course of ten years," putting the beginning of their systematic interest in anthropology within a year or two after Darwin had published *The Origin of Species* and Boucher de Perthes had been vindicated. For Lubbock the connection was direct and specific because he was personally identified with the new biology and the recognition of the genuineness of Boucher de Perthes' findings, and Lubbock's career as geologist, zoologist, botanist, and archaeologist brought together the material and method out of which modern anthropology emerged. When Lubbock was raised to the peerage after thirty years in the House of Commons and after a

distinguished and many-sided career in science, he was given the title of Lord Avebury. The name came from the megalithic temple of Avebury, which he and Tyndall had investigated while determining the relative antiquity of Silbury Hill and the Roman road which passed by it. When Lubbock later bought the stone circle at Avebury in order to save it from use as a building site, the ethnologist claimed his primitive heritage, and Sir John Lubbock gained a property right to the title of Avebury.

One of the earliest and most enthusiastic converts to Darwinian biology, Lubbock based his subsequent archaeological and ethnological researches on the conception of "man's place in nature" with which the new biology was associated. Along with Tylor, he inaugurated in 1865 the evolutionary period in anthropology in England, for in that year appeared Lubbock's *Pre-Historic Times* as well as Tylor's *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*. In both these ethnological classics culture was treated historically. The development of civilization from its barbaric origins was their central theme, and this was the theme which dominated anthropology for almost half a century. The struggle over biological evolution paralleled the period in which evolutionary anthropology and sociology dominated the study of social man, and the full tide of cultural evolution seemed almost to wait on *The Origin of Species* as its catalyst. Although historians of anthropology have never agreed on the precise role of Darwin in the development of social thought in the nineteenth century, all of them recognize the common temper of *The Origin of Species* and such anthropological works as Lubbock's *The Origin of Civilisation* and Tylor's *Researches*, subtitled *The Development of Civilization*.

John Lubbock was one of the men whom Darwin grouped with Lyell, Hooker, and Huxley as competent critics of *The Origin of Species*. Darwin sent Lubbock a copy of his book before it was released to the public and wrote him, "I care not for Reviews; but for the opinion of men like you. . . ." ²⁰ At the meeting of the British Association in 1860, Lubbock stood with Hooker and Huxley and "spoke up for Natural Selection in the great Oxford debate" ²¹ by contributing a paper on the embryological evidence for evolution. Lubbock was then twenty-six, and his re-

¹⁹ Lubbock, John, *The origin of civilisation*, 479-480, New York, D. Appleton, 1882.

²⁰ Darwin, *Life and letters* 2: 15.

²¹ Lubbock, John, *Essays and addresses*, 1-2, London, Macmillan, 1903.

lation to Darwin went back to his boyhood. The Darwins moved to Down when John Lubbock was eight, and three miles east of Down was High Elms, the Lubbock residence. Darwin and Lubbock's father—an astronomer, banker, and mathematician—were friends, and both were members of the Royal Society. As John Lubbock grew older he saw more and more of Darwin, assisting him with experiments and writing his first published scientific paper on some of Darwin's collections. When the local Vicar sermonized on "the infidel and naturalist in our midst" with Darwin and Lubbock both present, Lubbock immediately identified the naturalist as Darwin and "hoped that he might share the partnership by representing the other."²²

Already an ardent Darwinian, in 1860 Lubbock joined the trek of English scientists across the channel to see firsthand the Somme quarries in which de Perthes had been finding flint implements since 1838. The *Natural History Review*, edited by Lubbock and Huxley, published, in the July, 1862, issue, Lubbock's estimate of the authenticity of de Perthes' claim to the discovery of what he called *haches antediluviennees* in the river gravels around Abbeville. The weight of Lubbock's evidence was geological, as is evident from the title, "On the Evidence of the Antiquity of Man, Afforded by the Structure of the Somme Valley," and Lubbock pressed home his argument of the antiquity of man by postulating the equal antiquity of the Somme Valley. This essay anticipated Lyell's comprehensive treatment in *Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man* of the next year and became part of the text of Lubbock's ethnological study *Pre-Historic Times*. The eons which Lyell's *Principles of Geology* had allowed Darwin to assume in the evolution of species became a necessary premise for ethnologists in the evolution of culture.²³ The basic problem of the anthropologists of this period had taken shape. Man was not only a primate, he was a tool-making primate, and his technology was evolved no less than his anatomy from a remote anterior origin. Archaeological discoveries graded chronologically by geological techniques

were making it increasingly difficult to ignore the long history of man, especially when *The Origin of Species* pointed to the same antiquity. Lubbock closed his essay:

From the tombs at St. Acheul, from the Roman remains found in the superficial layers of the peat, at about the present level of the river, we know that fifteen hundred years have produced scarcely any change in the configuration of the valley. In the peat, and at a depth of about fifteen feet in the alluvium of Abbeville, are the remains of the neolithic period, which we have ample reason for believing, from the researches in Denmark, Switzerland, and other countries, to be of no slight antiquity. Yet all these are subsequent to the excavation of the valley. What date then are we to assign to the men who lived when the Somme was just beginning its great task?²⁴

What Lubbock saw in the Amiens and Abbeville deposits and in the collections of Boucher de Perthes did not shock him. Before going to France Lubbock had served on a committee of the British Association with Lyell, Busk, Evans, Pengelly, and others, under whose supervision Kent's Hole, near Torquay, had been examined, and the evidence there pointed to the simultaneity of man and mammoth. The excavation in Kent's Hole went back to 1825, and between 1825 and 1859 two competent investigators had sent memoirs to the Geological Society attesting the antiquity of man. The first report, by Godwin-Austin, was ignored; the second, by Edward Vivian, was considered so incredible that it was never published at all. Before either of these reports was made, MacEnery, a Catholic priest in the neighborhood of Torquay, had found flint tools with the bones of the mammoth and rhinoceros in loam covered with stalagmite. But Buckland, the first Reader of Geology at Oxford and later Dean of Westminster, had already declared in *Reliquiae Diluvianae* (1823) "that none of the human bones or stone implements met with . . . in any of the caverns [that he had seen] could be considered to be as old as the mammoth and other extinct quadrupeds," and, when he and MacEnery corresponded about the evidence of Kent's Cavern, Buckland reached the same conclusion.²⁵ He accounted for the implements found

²² Duff, Adrian Grant, *The life-work of Lord Avebury*, 15, London, Watts, 1934.

²³ Tylor explicitly recognizes this when he says that the "... chronological demand [of the development theory of culture] must be no small one, and the more so when it is admitted that in the lower ranges of culture progress would be extremely slow in comparison with that which experience shows among nations already far advanced." Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 55.

²⁴ Lubbock, John, *Pre-historic times*, 359, New York, D. Appleton, 1908.

²⁵ Lyell, Charles, *The antiquity of man*, 97, Philadelphia, George W. Childs, 1863. The subtitle of *Reliquiae diluvianae* was *Observations on the organic remains contained in caves, fissures, and diluvial gravel and on other geological phenomena attesting the action of an universal deluge*. In 1836 Buckland published *Geology and mineralogy considered in relation to natural theology*.

by MacEnery by supposing that "Ancient Britons" had dug holes in the stalagmite for ovens and that the tools had passed through these holes, thus intermingling with the bones of extinct animals. Out of deference to the authority of Buckland, MacEnery did not publish his conclusions, and they remained in manuscript until 1859, when an abstract was published by Vivian.

On the continent Cuvier, declaring categorically that "l'homme fossile n'existe pas," performed a similar service for de Christol, Tournal, and Schmerling, who were discovering human bones and sometimes crude pottery intermixed with mammoth remains.²⁶ The general presupposition was that they were washed together by a diluvial catastrophe, of the kind that abounded in Cuvier's and Buckland's geology. Boucher de Perthes, meeting with the same incredulity, said in desperation, "It is the workmen who help me, not the geologists."²⁷ Lubbock was fully aware of the prejudice against admitting the Pleistocene age of man, and the bias which accounted for de Perthes' treatment "as an enthusiast, almost as a madman," Lubbock ironically called a tribute to the properly conservative temper of geological science.²⁸ The evidence of human antiquity, however, was piling up, and the geology of Cuvier and Buckland was already under attack.

Brixham Cave, also near Torquay, was opened in 1858, and the paleontologist Hugh Falconer wrote the Geological Society that it contained a stalagmite terrace in which bones were embedded and that he had seen them himself. Falconer suggested that "the principal deposit of fossil bones may be looked for under the stalagmite floor not yet touched" and that the cave was "deserving of a combined effort among Geologists to organize operations for having it satisfactorily explored, before mischief is done by untutored zeal and desultory work."²⁹ Falconer, Busk, Evans, Pengelly, Prestwich, and Ramsay were appointed to supervise the investigation, and Falconer prepared a preliminary report for the Royal Society in 1858, vouching for the contemporaneity of flint tools and *Rhinoceros tichorinus*. Because of his health Falconer had to leave England the

same year and go to Southern Europe. On his way he stopped in Abbeville in order to see Boucher de Perthes' collection. From there he wrote the geologist Prestwich:

... let me strongly recommend you to come to Abbeville. I am sure you would be richly rewarded. You are the only English geologist I know who would go into the subject *con amore*. I am satisfied that English geologists are much behind the indications of the materials now in existence relative to this walk of *Post-Glacial* geology, and you are the man to being up the lee-way.³⁰

The following year, 1859, John Evans, of the Society of Antiquaries, and Prestwich investigated the French quarries. In his presidential address to the Geological Section of the British Association in 1859, Lyell supported Falconer's report on the Brixham Cave and corroborated Prestwich's memoir to the Royal Society on the proof of man's antiquity. The stream of British scientists to the Somme Valley in order to see firsthand the excavations around Abbeville and Amiens began.

Lubbock interpreted the events of 1859-1860 as an intellectual revolution and predicted that the furor over the controversy would soon pass. In the first edition of *Pre-Historic Times*, he wrote:

The new views with reference to the Antiquity of Man, though still looked upon with distrust and misapprehension, will, I doubt not, in a few years be regarded with as little disquietude as are now those discoveries in astronomy and geology which at one time excited even greater opposition.³¹

Traditional usages and ideas, the relics of an earlier time persisting into the present were later to attract Lubbock's attention when he dealt with primitive social customs and technology. Under the impact of *The Origin of Species*, the geology of Lyell, and the work of the evolutionary anthropologists, the intellectual framework of the traditional concepts of man and history symbolized by Usher's chronology, Paley's *Natural Theology*, Buckland's *Reliquiae Diluvianae*, and the *Bridgewater Treatises* were themselves to become "survivals."

Lubbock's archaeological researches began in earnest. Sometimes alone—sometimes with Prestwich, Evans, and Busk—Lubbock scoured western Europe for ethnological materials. In three years he examined almost every gravel pit from Amiens to the sea, visited the principal

²⁶ de Mortillet, Gabriele et Adrian, *Le préhistorique origine et antiquité de l'homme*, 10, Paris, Schleicher Frères, 1900.

²⁷ Daniel, Glyn E., *A hundred years of archaeology*, 59, London, Gerald Duckworth, 1950.

²⁸ Lubbock, *Pre-historic times*, 320.

²⁹ Murchison, Charles, *Paleontological memoirs and notes of the late Hugh Falconer* 2: 486, London, Robert Hardwicke, 1868.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 597.

³¹ Lubbock, *Pre-historic times*, ix.

Kjökkenmöddings (shell-mounds) in Denmark, studied the Swiss Lake-dwellings, and haunted public museums and private archaeological collections. At the same time he learned enough Danish to read in the original the Danish archaeologists on Kjökkenmöddings. The *Natural History Review* contains the tangible products of these investigations in the issues of 1861 and 1862; these articles form the backbone of Lubbock's *Pre-Historic Times*. The gap between Kent's Hole and Lubbock's ethnology had been bridged.

Lubbock thought of archaeology as the link between geology and history, and what he meant by "history" was "ethnology." His career bears out this connection and adds another, the influence of biology, for as a young naturalist he was tutored by Darwin in botany and zoology. When Lubbock was twenty-one, Lyell sponsored his election to the Geological Society. Three years later he was elected to the Royal Society and had met the men of science responsible for the intellectual climate of mid-nineteenth-century England—Hooker, Kingsley, Prestwich, Evans, Tyndall, Busk, Huxley, and of course, Lyell and Darwin. Becoming the youngest member of the X Club, Lubbock joined a group of men which included so many famous personages of scientific England that gossips claimed that the club "ran science" and that presidents of the Royal Society were elected in its privy councils. It was a formidable group. In addition to Huxley, the members were "George Busk, secretary of the Linnean Society, Edward Frankland, President of the Chemical Society; T. A. Hirst, head of the Royal Naval College at Greenwich; Sir Joseph Hooker, and W. Spottiswoode, Presidents of the Royal Society; Herbert Spencer, and Tyndall."³² They ate together just before the meetings of the Royal Society and three successive presidents of the Royal Society came from their group, giving credence to the gossip. Lubbock later became president of the British Association, the Ethnological Society, the Anthropological Institute, and the Society of Antiquaries almost as a matter of course.

He stood for Parliament in the same year that his *Pre-Historic Times* appeared, and Darwin thought it cost him the election. After Darwin read *Pre-Historic Times*, he wrote Lubbock, "I do sincerely wish you all success in your election and in politics; but after reading this last chapter,

you must let me say: 'oh, dear! oh, dear! oh dear!'"³³

When Lubbock entered politics, his scientific friends felt that they were losing a capable colleague and that Lubbock was giving up a distinguished career in science. They may have been right. Already a prominent naturalist and ethnologist, he was also a banker (Lubbock inherited the family bank and was active in its management), and he was soon to gain a seat in the House of Commons and to hold it for thirty years. The diversity of his interests spread his energy thin; his family was under the impression that he had an "annual meeting" every day. Lubbock epitomizes a great Victorian, but after fifty years, he is almost unknown. His place in the launching of a science of culture remains unique, primarily for the reason that its background is Lubbock's own.

In brief, the evolutionary movement in anthropology may be resolved into the general context of nineteenth-century science, and something has already been said about the origin of the new ethnology and the various intellectual currents with which its growth was associated. The ethnologists not only shared a background but an urgency, almost a sense of mission, which was also characteristic of the militant scientists allied with Darwin. The motive which gave Lubbock, Tylor, and Morgan this mission and made the "development theory of culture" a necessity for them is part and parcel of the aggressive naturalism of the period. The decorous and grammatical pronouncements of these Victorian spokesmen for science should not obscure their deep partisanship. They were engaged in a serious business. Their commitment to the evolutionary method stems from their prepossessing task, the creation of what Tylor called, without embarrassment, "The Science of Culture." They looked to the secular, mundane, and ordinary to relieve human behavior of causeless spontaneity and supernatural influence. Their excesses in speculation and logic, finding connections where there weren't any, had a basis in the conviction that the connections must be there if they could be found. Tylor maintained that the only proper antidote to "arbitrary impulses, causeless freaks, chance and nonsense and indefinite accountability" was "to see the line of connexion in events."³⁴ There could be a science of culture if

³² Lubbock, *Essays and addresses*, 2.

³³ Darwin, *Life and letters* 2: 220–221.

³⁴ Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 19.

cultural facts were seen as following a rational order in evolutionary growth.

5. THE SCIENCE OF CULTURE: PROGRESS NATURALIZED

Contemporary climate of opinion in the social sciences makes it difficult to remember that the first who attempted to treat human behavior as the subject of a science had to contend with the argument that *fact* and *social* were incommensurable. At the same time that Comte was labeling "sociology" in the *Cours de philosophie positive* (1839-1842), he was making a monumental attempt to justify its inclusion among the sciences by denoting its position as the last member of a scientific series and by patterning it in the form of an empirical physics applied to social phenomena. John Stuart Mill, the most influential Comtist in England, followed the same tack in the sixth part of his *Logic* (1843). He was persuaded with Comte that a social science is possible if its methodology is molded on the techniques of the physical sciences. The first question with which Mill had to deal in considering "The Logic of the Moral [Social] Sciences" was "Are human actions subject to the laws of causality?" It will be recalled that in *The Study of Sociology* (1873) Spencer raised essentially the same question, and in 1871 Tylor prefaced his *Primitive Culture*:

Our modern investigators in the sciences of inorganic nature are foremost to recognize both within and without their special fields of work, the unity of nature, the fixity of its laws, the definite sequence of cause and effect through which every fact depends on what has gone before it, and acts upon what is to come after it. . . . To many educated minds there seems something presumptuous and repulsive in the view that the history of mankind is part and parcel of the history of nature, that our thoughts, wills, and actions accord with laws as definite as those which govern the motion of waves, the combination of acids and bases, and the growth of plants and animals.³⁵

The universal scope of physical laws was still a premise to be examined, at least if it was made truly universal and extended to social behavior. The science of sociology waited on the physical sciences to make *fact* and *social* congenial terms, and as the phrases "physical science" and "social science" show, the terminology we use still reflects the ancient belief that the social province lacks the concrete and substantial character of the physical world. The science of man was

gingerly broached in the phraseology of cause-and-effect relations, and from the physicists, Helmholtz, Mayer, and Joule came the confident authority that those relations were indeed universal. Spencer's putting *First Principles*, a volume which outlines his mechanistic approach, at the head of the "Synthetic Philosophy" is the supreme tribute to physics of a philosophy that would be social and scientific.

If there had hung about the animal kingdom the aura of miraculous creation until 1859 and if the no-less-miraculous geology of catastrophe and flood had been dispelled only thirty years before, it should be no surprise that the concept of "culture" as the works of man was a significant advance for anthropology and sociology. Clearly defined in Tylor's anthropology and later developed independently in Spencer's sociology, the idea that culture is both man-made and a natural social growth challenged the degeneracy theory of savages and the traditional belief that, in the beginning, there was a state of civilization. Now it may seem a remote and trifling point that early anthropologists had to combat the theory that primeval man began his social life with a rudimentary culture and that savages had seen better days; in reality, the conflict cloaked a far more significant issue. Franz Boas suggested that the first systematic comparative anthropology was the work of Christian fathers trying to understand the relation of paganism to Christianity and that they interpreted pagan heterodoxy as a falling away from an original orthodoxy. The notion of the degeneration of savages from an earlier state of comparative civilization, a position for which Archbishop Whately and the Duke of Argyll were outstanding spokesmen, retains the theological flavor of the Biblical fall of man and the origin of culture through divine revelation. Fully aware of the motivation behind the degeneracy theory and of its threat to a scientific cultural anthropology, Tylor pointed out that the grounds on which this position had been held "have generally been rather theological than ethnological."³⁶ The idea that culture is a human product and the idea that culture is a social heritage are supplementary, and a naturalistic concept of civilization hangs on the two together. That a man isolated from society might create civilization is fantastic. It would be a godlike act. Except on the assumption of continuity with a preceding community, it is equally fantastic

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

that even a community of men might create culture. Only if culture is a gradual development concurrent with the social history of the species, does civilization cease to be a miraculous creation. If culture is that which is "acquired by man as a member of society," as Tylor insisted, the antiquity of man and cultural evolution are necessary props to make this view of culture tenable.

For Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan the community's social heritage was fundamental to a theory of progress and indispensable to a scientific theory of culture. Tylor quoted Humboldt's statement that "Man ever connects on from what lies at hand" almost as a text for scientific anthropology and found the principle of cultural continuity implied by the universal sequence of cause and effect. Morgan justified his contention that human progress increased in a geometrical ratio on the same continuity: "Every item of absolute knowledge gained became a factor in further acquisitions, until the present complexity of knowledge was attained." If culture was gradually developed in a process governed by unchanging laws, then cultural facts were no different from geological and biological facts, and all of them were the consequences of a uniformly behaving nature. Furthermore, on the assumption of the unity of nature, civilization, geological formations, and animal species developed from earlier civilization, earlier geological formations, and earlier animal species. The concept of culture as a cumulative social legacy was the central idea upon which the new anthropology depended. The geology of Hutton and Lyell, the biology of Darwin and Wallace, and the ethnology of Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan formed a universe of discourse around evolution and the unity of nature. The principles and methodology which they came to share and the cross-checking and confirmation which each afforded the other is an instructive example of the common area of the sciences in the period 1830-1880.

It is often overlooked that in addition to their doctrine of progress it was the evolutionary method and the urgency of their using it against the creationists that landed Lubbock, Tylor, and Morgan in the "ethnocentric" predicament. They were persuaded that cultural evolution was not meaningless change and that a pattern, which gave "lines of development" significance, emerged in evolution. It was not so much that they failed to appreciate cultural context but rather that they were convinced that of primary importance

was the development in that context which led to another stage of civilization. The most judicious member of the evolutionary school, Tylor, instead of denying that his definition of progress was determined by the particular circumstances of time and place, wrote:

The educated world of Europe and America practically settles a standard by simply placing its own nations at one end of the social series and savage tribes at the other, arranging the rest of mankind between these limits according as they correspond more closely to savage or to cultured life.³⁷

It is instructive that, when Tylor challenged the degradation theory of civilization in an earlier work, he specified that by the forward direction of progress he meant "the appearance and growth of new arts and new knowledge, whether of a profitable or hurtful nature, developed at home or imported from abroad."³⁸ From where else but western civilization might Tylor have taken this standard for measuring progress, if what he meant by "progress" was "modern," the newest development in the long continuity of culture?

Later, when the trend was away from historical anthropology and toward functional cultural studies, the emphasis shifted. Concentration on evolutionary lines of development gave way to examination of integrated cultural patterns, and "progress," instead of furnishing the rule by which one cultural unit is graded relative to another, became merely a bias, a facet of social context. For the Boas school in anthropology, and for Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and others, the presumption of Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan in passing judgments on cultures, taking their own civilizations as a yardstick, appeared astonishingly naive and provincial.

The evolutionists assumed what was to them the obvious and necessary starting point for their inquiry into cultural origins, and if they were to measure cultural development and degeneration, they required a criterion of progress. The controversy in which the evolutionists were engaged virtually dictated both the point from which their study began and the criterion of progress. Although cultural evolution and cultural progress are two different concepts, the evolutionary school treated them together. The chapter in which Tylor laid down a measure of progress in *Primitive Culture* is the same chapter in which he considered the evolution *versus* the creation theory of cultural origin; progress and evolution

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁸ Tylor, *Researches*, 181.

were both brought under "The Development of Culture." When Morgan considered the "Ratio of Human Progress" in *Ancient Society*, he recapitulated the transition from savagery to civilization. "By re-ascending along the several lines of human progress toward the primitive ages of man's existence, and removing one by one his principal institutions, inventions, and discoveries, in the order in which they have appeared, the advance made in each period will be realized."³⁹ Facing two issues, Tylor and Morgan found their stand on one dictating their stand on the other. At the same time that they were asserting the development theory of culture, they felt obligated to deny that primitive culture was a degeneration, and the way that they said both at once was to say that modern culture was a progressive development from barbaric culture—not that savages had fallen from civilization, but rather that the culture of the nineteenth century had progressed from rude beginnings. "Fuegian" culture or the civilization of the Australian aborigines was not so much a mystery or challenge to the development theory as was the civilization of contemporary England and America. It was far more difficult to conceive of the latter's development than the former's, so that the crux of the issue they faced was: beginning with culture as we know it, can it be derived from the antecedent period and that in turn from the preceding period? The project of tracing cultural evolution coincided with progressive development, and it is important to see that the particular way in which the problem of the evolutionists was phrased was an important factor in their acceptance of the norms of western civilization as the measure of progress. Pointing out the coincidence of the evolutionists' task and the necessity of maintaining the theory of cultural progress in the undertaking of that task does not nullify their ethnocentrism; it does make the standard of progress which they used more intelligible and less arbitrary.

The common ground occupied by Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan is an adequate indication of the tenets of the evolutionary school of ethnology. Inaugurating a mode of thinking, they were its pioneers and, although not the only cultural evolutionists of the period, they were the principal representatives of the attitudes characteristic when evolution was joined to ethnology. Beginning with the theory of cultural development, the cul-

tural evolutionists were distinguished by their acceptance of the principle of uniformitarianism, the use of the comparative method, a belief in the unity of mankind (psychological and biological), the idea of a basic similarity in the course of social evolution, and an insistence that cultural change has, in general, been a progressive movement.

The qualifying phrase, "in general," needs to be emphasized because, for all their concern with progress, the evolutionists never subscribed to a theory of "guaranteed," "automatic," or "necessary" progress. They were prepared to recognize degeneration, although they thought it more likely to be true of individuals than of cultures and true of culture only under limited circumstances, neither occurrence invalidating the general tendency toward progress. A set of qualifying, environing circumstances was always accessory to cultural advancement, and the essential conviction of the evolutionary school was, not that progress was inevitable and uniform, but that the condition of progress was indissociable from the nature of cultural evolution.

In addition, it should be remembered that running through the works of Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan is a consciousness that the evolutionary method is the mainstay of naturalism in the social sciences. Spencer shared their conviction of the efficacy of evolution for science, although he ultimately based his historicism on a mechanistic physics, but the evolutionary anthropologists developed no such cosmic scheme as the "Synthetic Philosophy." Tylor justified his belief in universal law by citing the conclusions of the physical sciences, but neither he, Lubbock, nor Morgan made a formula of progress from a physical principle or identified progress with the "survival of the fittest." They were all acquainted with the theories of Darwin and Spencer, and each of them casually nodded in recognition of competitive civilizations and competitive cultural traits, but persistence was not enough to measure progress for the evolutionary ethnologists; they passed on to a close analysis of the process of cultural development.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ In concluding *Pre-historic times* Lubbock used a metaphor from biological Darwinism and a quotation from Spencer's *A theory of population* to support his optimistic projection of continuing progress in the future, and Tylor obviously had Darwin or Spencer in mind when he wrote: "History within its proper field, and ethnography over a wider range, combine to show that the institutions which can best hold their own in the world gradually supersede the less fit ones, and this in-

³⁹ Morgan, Lewis H., *Ancient society*, 29-30, New York, Henry Holt, 1877.

The origin of culture to which they traced man's social life was the ideal limit of their inquiry, and between that beginning point and modern civilization arbitrary causes and imaginary effects would be eliminated by the twin principles of evolution and uniformitarianism. Theirs was a theory by which man acquired culture as a member of society, a theory of culture by accumulation, sloughing, and descent, to which the persistence of what Tylor called "survivals" gave witness. Every culture or segment of culture, Assyrian or Polynesian, whether art, technology, religion, or law, was interpreted as fitting into an evolutionary scheme. That they found this scheme to be unilinear and general is no reason for including among the tenets of the evolutionary platform a theory of independent cultural development, as the diffusionist Elliot Smith tended to do. Rather, the biological and psychic similarity of mankind was associated with general patterns of cultural evolution, as the following excerpts from Morgan and Tylor indicate:

It may be remarked finally that the experience of mankind has run in nearly uniform channels; that human necessities in similar conditions have been substantially the same; and that the operations of the mental principle have been uniform in virtue of the specific identity of the brain of all the races of mankind.⁴¹

To general likeness in human nature on the one hand, and to general likeness in the circumstances of life on the other, this similarity and consistency may no doubt be traced, and they may be studied with especial fitness in comparing races near the same grade of civilization. Little respect need be had in such comparisons for date in history or for place on the map.⁴²

Lubbock was probably more responsible than either Tylor or Morgan for giving the evolutionists a reputation for ignoring diffusion in social growth, but this is primarily true of the Lubbock of *The Origin of Civilisation*, and it is distinctly not true of Lubbock's other major work, *Pre-Historic Times*. As suggested earlier Lubbock undoubtedly regarded the diffusionist

cessant conflict determines the general resultant course of culture." Morgan, too, in *Systems of consanguinity* referred to "that inexorable law which adjusts numbers to subsistence in given areas . . .," but to none of their work is the struggle for survival and the survival of the fittest anything more than incidental. It is the continuity of evolution which engrossed them. Lubbock, *Pre-historic times*, 567 and 576. Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 69. Morgan, Lewis H., *Systems of consanguinity*, 192, Washington, Smithsonian Institution, 1871.

⁴¹ Morgan, *Ancient society*, 8.

⁴² Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 6.

approach with suspicion because the attributing of cultural invention to a few select groups seemed to call into question the ability of any people to produce a civilization. Although the pioneer evolutionists were dragged into the diffusionist controversy, their divergent and varied statements on cultural borrowing put the evolutionary school neither squarely on one side or the other. A wholesale and dogmatic stand on so large a question was extremely vulnerable, and the evolutionists seemed to appreciate this.

The more essential consideration, whether culture developed according to Lubbock's theory of indigenous evolution or according to Tylor's statement that "Civilization is a plant much oftener propagated than developed,"⁴³ was that civilization evolved. And this view of civilization accommodated both the theory of independent cultural development and the theory of cultural diffusion from a few primary sources, for the derivative character of civilization would hold good for either approach. The diffusionists were not impressed with man's inventive powers and put a correspondingly large burden on man's ability to acquire from others what he had not created. The knack of picking up where others had left off, whether those others were remote or near in space or time, led directly to the continuity in cultural evolution. Just such continuity and cumulative growth was the primary theme of the evolutionists. They could develop it and take into account both cultural loans and cultural invention.

6. CULTURE AND THE UNITY OF MANKIND

Because, to the evolutionists, culture was a unity both in subject matter and in scheme of development, variations in customs, institutions, and beliefs did not contradict their doctrine "that different races in similar stages of development often present more features of resemblance to one another than the same race does to itself, in different stages of its history."⁴⁴ Nor did cultural diversity weaken the doctrine of progress when Morgan united progress with evolution: "Progress has been found to be substantially the same in kind in tribes and nations inhabiting different and even disconnected continents, while in the same status, with deviations from uniformity in particular instances produced by special causes."⁴⁵ Recogniz-

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁴⁴ Lubbock, *The origin of civilisation*, 7.

⁴⁵ Morgan, *Ancient society*, 18.

ing that customs varied among different peoples at different times, the evolutionists brought to the foreground the sequential pattern of cultural evolution.

Taylor's survey of religion and Morgan's analysis of government are striking illustrations of disparate practices harmonized by evolutionary trends. Taylor framed a minimum definition of religion wide enough to include religious beliefs so different from those of modern Christendom that his contemporaries, including Lubbock, claimed that they were not religions at all. Finding the common bond of all religion to be a "belief in Spiritual Beings,"⁴⁶ Taylor pieced together the rudimentary animism of primitive tribes and the theology of modern Christianity in a single development, saying, "Animism characterizes tribes very low in the scale of humanity, and thence ascends, deeply modified in its transmission, but from first to last preserving an unbroken continuity, into the midst of high modern culture."⁴⁷

Morgan, using the same evolutionary method, distinguished two fundamental types of political organization, the first based on personal relations (*societas*) and the second based on territory and property (*civitas*). These were his minimum definitions. Under the category of *societas* Morgan placed the gens, phratry, tribe, and league, and in the transition from one to another and in the evolution of *societas* from *civitas* he found a universal plan of political development. Discovering that the sequence of Iroquois political institutions constituted a veritable gamut which all governmental organization had traveled, Morgan re-echoed Taylor's observation that the "character and habit of mankind at once display that similarity and consistency of phenomena which led the Italian proverb-maker to declare that 'all the world is one country.'" ⁴⁸

The Grecian gens, phratry, and tribe, the Roman gens, *curia*, and tribe find their analogues in the gens, phratry, and tribe of the American aborigines. In like manner the Irish *sept*, the Scottish *clan*, the *phrara* of the Albanians, and the Sanskrit *ganas*, without extending the comparison further, are the same as the American Indian gens, which has usually been called a clan.⁴⁹

Rather than exhibiting a diversity of practices, all of which were self-contained, the cultural

evolutionists absorbed into one general scheme transient phases of what might otherwise have been independent units. A series of ethnic periods from savagery to civilization, "each the outcome of previous history, and about to do its proper part in shaping the history of the future,"⁵⁰ appeared vastly more important than a single or isolated culture. For this reason the idea of cultural relativism developed by the second generation of evolutionists is a disrupting intrusion on the twin themes of unity and progress characteristic of the older evolutionary ethnology.

Distinguishing the province of culture from that of physical anthropology, Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan agreed that the science of culture had its own legitimate subject matter and, with Spencer, included within its general domain mythology, religious beliefs and ceremonies, political institutions, marriage and kinship organizations, technology, art, language, and morality. Understanding culture as a generic term designating a coherent body of material, they grouped customs, artifacts, and beliefs under one comprehensive category of social life. In the unity of mankind they found a justification for the comparative method and for discourse on universal patterns of cultural evolution. Cultural traits remained cultural traits irrespective of the portion of the world or of the period of time from which they were drawn only on the condition that man remained basically the same. Darwin's hypothesis that species of the same genus are descended from a single, primitive stock was consistent with the prospects of universal progress and with the evolutionists' belief that the races of men were not so radically different that the homogeneity of culture was spoiled.

By the time that Darwin published *The Descent of Man* (1871) the controversy over the evolution or creation of species had become an issue equally vital to biologists and cultural anthropologists. The question of whether man was a single species or several had outgrown the pre-Darwinian disagreement between monogenists and polygenists, and after the events of 1858-1859 the dispute centered on the more fundamental problem of whether any species whatever had been created.⁵¹ Darwin, challenging the dogma

⁴⁶ Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 424.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 426.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁹ Morgan, Lewis H., *Houses and house life of the American aborigines*, 1-2, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1881.

⁵⁰ Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 1.

⁵¹ "The whole tendency of modern science is to thrust the origination of things further and further into the background; and the chief philosophical objection to Adam being, not his oneness, but the hypothesis of his special creation; the multiplication of that objection ten-

of either one or multiple creations, predicted "that when the principle of evolution is generally accepted, as it surely will be before long, the dispute between the monogenists and the polygenists will die a silent and unobserved death."⁵² Thereafter those who held the evolutionary theory were careful to specify that their belief in the basic similarity of man was "not necessarily the same thing as the descent from a single pair."⁵³

Huxley cautiously avoided overstating the evidence for the unity of man, partly on the ground that in the determination of traits the line between strictly physiological characteristics and social environment is thinly drawn. Nevertheless, on the evolutionary hypothesis he asserted that the specific physical differences between men were "so small, that the assumption of more than one primitive stock for all is altogether superfluous."⁵⁴ Darwin's conclusion in *The Descent of Man* was identical with Huxley's. Darwin noted the physiological similarity of the races of men and interpreted the difficulty of distinguishing species from varieties and the admittedly arbitrary character of such distinctions as evidence of descent from a common progenitor. But he did more. The alignment between the new biology and the new anthropology was such that Darwin cited *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and Pre-Historic Times* as cultural testimony to biological evolution. Without invoking the authority of Darwin and returning the compliment, Tylor concluded on ethnological grounds that "the wide differences in the civilization and mental state of the various races of mankind are rather differences of development than of origin, rather of degree than of kind."⁵⁵ Lubbock went ahead to recognize that "the preceding argument [*Pre-Historic Times*] assumed"⁵⁶ the unity of the human race and to authenticate that assumption on biological grounds. But the cultural evolutionists were timorous about entwining the specific details of Darwinism with a belief which they felt was independently warranted by ethnological data. The similarity of conclusions is nonetheless striking.

It is almost tautological to point out that it was

fold is, whatever it may look, an increase, instead of a diminution, of the difficulties of the case." Huxley, T. H., *Man's place in nature*, 247, New York, D. Appleton, 1894.

⁵² Darwin, *The descent of man*, 180.

⁵³ Lubbock, *The origin of civilisation*, 337.

⁵⁴ Huxley, *Man's place in nature*, 248.

⁵⁵ Tylor, *Researches*, 372.

⁵⁶ Lubbock, *Pre-historic times*, 563-567.

man and the "experience of mankind," not men and their experiences, which figured most prominently in studies disclosing unilinear cultural growth. The evolutionary ethnologists were aware of the social and biological differences among men, but with their attention on the implications of evolution and progress, they insisted that there was no reason to make those differences paramount. With a universal cultural history to support them, it was easy to suppose that the divergence of races from a primitive stock was less important than the common ancestry which those races shared. Repeatedly affirming their belief in the unity of the human species and the basic similarity of man, they could not accept the polygenetic views of men like Agassiz (whose theory Morgan's friend McIlvaine paraphrased as the theory that men "originated at different centres, in swarms like bees"⁵⁷), for they would have made a hodgepodge of a unilinear cultural development. To have treated races as separate species, as some proposed to do, would have introduced serious qualifications in an otherwise homogeneous subject matter and would have complicated ethnology with a whole group of physiological variables. The adequacy of the comparative method would have been called into question, and the whole structure of social evolution built on comparative techniques would have tottered. Neither racism nor relativism had a place in an ethnology based on the development theory of culture, for the unity of mankind and the unity of cultural evolution were geared too closely together in the panorama of progress for the evolutionists to be diverted by individual social contexts or by contrasts of blood fused in a basic continuity.

Racism was not only generally absent from the evolutionary school; it was tacitly forbidden, and this was a significant fact in a century in which brachycephalic and dolichcephalic indices were used to indicate a great deal more than cranial measurements. Tylor said quite distinctly:

These pages [*Primitive Culture*] will be so crowded with evidence of such correspondence among mankind, that there is no need to dwell upon its details here, but it may be used at once to override a problem which would complicate the argument, namely, the question of race. For the present purpose it appears both possible and desirable to eliminate considerations of hereditary varieties or races of man, and to treat mankind as homogeneous in nature,

⁵⁷ Foreman, Edward R. (ed.), *The Rochester historical society* 2: 54, Rochester, New York, Rochester Historical Society, 1923.

though placed in different grades of civilization. The details of the enquiry will, I think, prove that stages of culture may be compared without taking into account how far tribes who use the same implement, follow the same custom, or believe the same myth, may differ in their bodily configuration and the colour of their skin and hair.⁵⁸

Undoubtedly because of the tenets they accepted and the conclusions which followed from them, the authors of *Ancient Society*, *Primitive Culture*, and *The Origin of Civilisation* were predisposed against identifying social differences with innate bodily differences. On the presumption of the physiological affinity of races, the environments produced by specific cultures and the natural world were the only variables included in the evolutionary platform. It is therefore not surprising that the role and power of culture in determining human behavior was frequently implicit and always taken for granted. In Spencer's work, where sociology merged into anthropology, the idea was made clear and overt, and it came to underlay Sumner's *Folkways* and that part of Veblen's institutional economics which turns on the crucial "point of view."

The principle of the psychic unity of mankind was closely associated with the biological affinity of races, although it had a different source. The fundamental similarity of the human mind served essentially the same purpose in the evolutionary system as its Darwinian counterpart. Both stood behind the comparative method and both served to make intelligible the correspondence of social usages and tools widely dispersed in time and space, but one is unmistakably an offshoot of Darwinism and the other is a debt owed to the German anthropologist Bastian. Psychic unity need be distinguished only because the way in which it was phrased bore directly on the concept of culture, and, in turn, the concept of culture was integral to the idea of cultural progress. Bastian and two of his countrymen, Waitz and Klemm, were frequently quoted in the works of Tylor and Lubbock, and this idea which loomed so large in Bastian's theory of cultural development was particularly evident in the thinking of Morgan. Morgan's proclivity for interpreting social evolution as the growth of mental "germs" or "ideas" might well have stemmed from Bastian's "elementary ideas" (*Elementargedanken*), although neither Morgan nor Bastian made man's innate psychological equipment independ-

ently determine the course of cultural history.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, all men began with a common mental disposition, and this being granted, the differences among cultures could not be resolved into what was originally an undifferentiated unity. *Völkergedanken*, in Bastian's language, must then be a response to varying stimuli, geographical and social, and so by a quite different route the same conclusion was reached, that human nature or the human race, for ethnological purposes, was by and large a constant. Although Bastian was a vigorous opponent of Darwin's biological transformism and his view of man had another origin, the unity of man, in Bastian's as in the evolutionists' hands, was a way of making cultural growth a natural uniformity while emphasizing the extraorganic factors determining cultural content.

The evolutionary program as a group of interlocking and mutually supporting principles comprises, in modern parlance, a "universe of discourse," a consistent pattern of ideas, each of which conditions and defines the others. On this level of analysis it is almost impossible to distinguish cause and effect, for temporal sequence is irrelevant. And an argument in these terms is likely to move in a circle, so that there is always lurking about an exposition of this sort the suspicion that what is being said has been said before or said in only slightly different words.

The use of the comparative method was essential for the gradation of cultures in the pattern of progressive change, and the principle of the psychic and biological unity of mankind permitted such an analysis to move solely on a social level. It rationalized, of course, an excessively simple theory of the unilinear development of culture and predisposed Lubbock to emphasize a theory of independent social evolution. Not possessing the material and information requisite for tracing cultural development to its origin, the evolutionists found a useful analogy between contemporary and prehistoric "savages." The parallel which they saw between primitive man and his

⁵⁸ Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 7. See also *Researches into the early history of mankind*, 54.

⁵⁹ "The human mind, specifically the same in all individuals in all the tribes and nations of mankind, and limited in the range of its powers, works and must work, in the same uniform channels, and within narrow limits of variation. Its results in disconnected regions of space, and in widely separated ages of time, articulate in a logically connected chain of common experiences. In the grand aggregate may still be recognized the few primary germs of thought, working upon primary human necessities, which, through the natural process of development, have produced such vast results." Morgan, *Ancient society*, 255.

modern analogue depended upon Lyell's principle that past events be explained as the consequences of causes still acting in the present. The assumption of such an analogy was of paramount importance in reconstructing cultural history. In the absence of specific data, from the evolutionists' point of view, some variation or application of the principle of uniformitarianism offered the only way out, at least if the evolutionary project was to be carried through. It fitted the remainder of the evolutionary program ideally. A unilinear cultural theory made the analogy likely, and the analogy of course encouraged just such a theory of cultural development.

Morgan, accounting for the neat and simple order which he found in the social development of man, wrote:

Since mankind were one in origin, their career has been essentially one, running in different but uniform channels upon all continents, and very similarly in all the tribes and nations of mankind down to the same status of advancement. It follows that the history and experience of the American Indian tribes represent, more or less nearly, the history and experience of our own remote ancestors when in corresponding conditions. Forming a part of the human record, their institutions, arts, inventions and practical experience possess a high and special value reaching far beyond the Indian race itself.⁶⁰

Tylor and Lubbock adopted the same point of view. One notes that the full title of Lubbock's first major ethnological work was *Pre-Historic Times as Illustrated by Ancient Remains and the Manners and Customs of Modern Savages*. Almost as an echo Tylor said:

In the following chapter, on the Development of Culture, an attempt is made to sketch a theoretical course of civilization among mankind, such as appears on the whole most accordant with the evidence. By comparing the various stages of civilization among races known to history, with the aid of archaeological inference from the remains of pre-historic tribes, it seems possible to judge in a rough way of an early general condition of man, which from our point of view is to be regarded as a primitive condition, whatever yet earlier state may in reality have lain behind it. This hypothetical primitive condition corresponds in a considerable degree to that of modern savage tribes, who, in spite of their difference and distance, have in common certain elements of civilization, which seem remains of an early state of the human race at large.⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vii.

⁶¹ Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 21. ". . . The higher culture being clearly traced back to what may be called the middle culture, the question which remains is, whether this middle culture may be traced back to the lower culture, that is, to savagery." *Ibid.*, 32.

The evolutionary method worked both ways, and the evolutionists, reversing the dictum that "the past is continually needed to explain the present,"⁶² were just as confident that the cultures of modern primitives gave broad hints of the ways of primeval man. The unity of cultural development made working from the known to the unknown feasible, and the principle of uniformitarianism practically guaranteed it.

Since the crucial decades of 1860 and 1870, when the evolutionary program was initiated and developed, there has been a basic shift in the predominant perspective in cultural anthropology. An evolutionary ethnology which had as its maxim that "all the world is one country," with the tacit recognition that its vineyard was the culture of mankind, has largely given way to functionalist monographs and detailed ethnographical studies. The catholic scope of the ethnology which marked the beginning of "the science of culture" has been seriously circumscribed; the universe of culture has been dismembered into provinces and principalities more appropriate for specialized study and for the collection of empirical data. Since the advent of systematic field-research, the grand sweep fostered by the evolutionary point of view has fallen into disrepute as speculative philosophy. With the new currents that have enveloped this later anthropology there has developed a frame of mind that has gradually undermined the evolutionists' belief in social progress, a belief that is now labeled as peculiarly typical of the nineteenth century. This more modern frame of mind is best expressed as one centering around the concept of cultural relativity; its concurrent appearance with "functionalism" in anthropology and sociology speaks of more than a tenuous connection, for the notion of cultural context undergirds cultural relativity. The sources of human conduct, the legitimacy and authentication of values or norms, including the norm of progress, are read with increasing inconsistency in terms of social conditioning; human behavior is made a function of social context.

7. E. B. TYLOR: CULTURE AND THE CONCEPT OF "SURVIVALS"

Of the men who inaugurated the search for cultural origins and the evolutionary quest for progress, Tylor and Morgan seem more likely to survive than Lubbock, who is now remembered largely as the man who added "paleolithic" and

⁶² Tylor, *Researches*, 2.

"neolithic" to the archaeological vocabulary. The case with Morgan and Tylor is somewhat different. For their work not only illustrates the body of tenets shared by the evolutionists, but it contains certain features bearing directly on cultural progress and the growth of contextualism, which proved so inimical to their doctrine of progress and to the evolutionary point of view. In a consideration of the details of the systems of Tylor and Morgan, the former's concept of survivals and the latter's economic contextualism seem the most fruitful central ideas about which to organize a survey of their work.

"In the spring of 1856," Tylor wrote in *Anahuac*, "I met with Mr. Christy accidentally in an omnibus in Havana."⁶³ It was an auspicious meeting. The distinguished archaeologist Henry Christy was en route to Mexico intending to add to his pre-Columbian collections, and Tylor, then twenty-three, had left the family brass foundry to travel for his health. He had no immediate plans, and Christy asked Tylor to go on with him to Mexico.⁶⁴ Tylor's apprenticeship in anthropology began, and the first book that he wrote, *Anahuac* (1861) was compiled from the letters and memoranda written on their journey through central Mexico. *Anahuac* is an amiable and leisurely travel book, with an occasional ethnological turn, an amateur's speculations about Mayan art, the sources of Aztec civilization, and the "wonderful similarity of character among the stone weapons found in different parts of the world."⁶⁵ After four months with Christy seeing the temple-pyramids of Teotihuacan, obsidian mines, and the ruins of Xochicalo, Tylor began a career which ended at Oxford with his holding the first professorship of anthropology. The step from *Anahuac* to *The Early History of Mankind* (1865) was the first in that direction. With the publication of *Primitive Culture* (1871), Tylor's rank as the foremost British cultural anthropologist was established, and he rapidly gained the reputation which led Max Müller to call anthropology "Mr. Tylor's science." He became a Fellow of the Royal Society and was later the

first president of the Anthropological Section of the British Association.

The anthropologist R. R. Marrett, one of Tylor's students at Oxford, called Tylor an "orthodox Darwinian," and the first time that Tylor made a statement on physical anthropology, in his popular, and general, *Anthropology* (1881), he followed the line of orthodoxy in a chapter on "man's place in the animal world" called "Man and Other Animals." Huxley helped in its preparation. Certainly the evolutionary idea was decisive in his ethnology, but the sources on which Tylor drew for the development theory of culture are reminders that there were other, independent, phrasings of evolution than the Darwinian.⁶⁶ These sources are not difficult to discern; at least some may be credited to the English historian Buckle and the continental anthropologist Gustav Klemm, whose concept of culture anticipated Tylor's.⁶⁷

On the first page of *The Early History of Mankind* Tylor defined civilization and broached the concept with which his name has been associated ever since, "survivals," or what he first called "superstitions." The definition of civilization led to a consideration of cultural traits that were particularly marked off as "standing over" from an ancient heritage. Since culture was a legacy, all civilization or culture was in a broad sense a survival from the past, and a cultural deposit accumulated over an immensely long period would bear signs of its archaic origins. The evolution and progress of culture was a history of adding the new as well as losing the old "knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, and custom," that comprised the "complex whole" of culture, and "superstitions" were the remnants of earlier civilizations relegated to the ceremonial fringes around the hard core of the substantial culture.

His later work *Primitive Culture* also began with a definition of civilization, or of what he then preferred to call *culture*, and two chapters were devoted to the exposition of survivals and

⁶³ Tylor, Edward B., *Anahuac: or Mexico and the Mexicans, ancient and modern*, 1, London, Longmans, Green, 1861.

⁶⁴ Two years later Christy began the explorations, with Edouard Lartet, recorded in *Reliquiae aquitanicae* (1865-1870), of the Périgord caves, multiplying the evidence of the existence of Paleolithic man. See Tylor's *Researches*, 199-200.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁶⁶ In the preface to *Primitive culture* Tylor wrote: "It may have struck some readers as an omission, that in a work on civilization insisting so strenuously on a theory of development or evolution, mention should scarcely have been made of Mr. Darwin and Mr. Herbert Spencer, whose influence on the whole course of modern thought on such subjects should not be left without formal recognition. This absence of particular reference is accounted for by the present work, arranged on its own lines, coming scarcely into contact of detail with the previous works of these eminent philosophers."

⁶⁷ See Robert H. Lowie, *The history of ethnological theory*, 12, New York, Rinehart, 1937.

their place in evolutionary ethnology. And instead of as a "development," Tylor had begun to write of cultural changes as an "evolution." The definition of culture at which Tylor arrived, one that was modified and extended from *The Early History of Mankind*, contained a significant addition. Culture consisted of a "complex whole . . . acquired by man as a member of society."⁶⁸ At the same time that Tylor specified that culture was a community product, he assumed that it could be studied as a collective, societal phenomenon because, for all its complexity, it was a whole with characteristics general and predominant enough to make it the manageable subject of the science of culture. What accounted for that homogeneity Tylor was not sure, but that entire populations were somehow induced "to unite in the use of the same language, to follow the same religion and customary law, to settle down to the same general level of art and knowledge"⁶⁹ seemed evident. He thought of social norms figuratively as a "tacit consensus or agreement," and without further probing the consistencies that typify cultures, he simply recognized that man as a member of society tended to follow the pattern of the society in which he lived.

By specifying that culture or civilization was acquired by man as a member of society, Tylor did not mean that culture was developed independently of a real and existing group of individuals or that some specific group of individuals was not always the legatee of civilization. He did mean that culture was more appropriately considered from its communal rather than its individual aspect and that generalizations about it could be made without constant reference to variations from social norms. Men drew on the resources of a social heritage because they were members of a group; and because a cultural legacy was vested in the society, any addition to that legacy inevitably began from the cultural continuum and ended there, or counted for nothing in social history. Tylor recognized that the processes of social diffusion could convert individual inventions and novel beliefs into a communal possession and that social change always had a human agency. But it was the continuity of the social heritage that made any innovation finally "independent of the fate of its originators."

What is produced in some limited district is diffused over a wider and wider area, where the process of effectual "stamping out" becomes more and more

difficult. Thus it is even possible for the habits and inventions of races long extinct to remain as the common property of surviving nations; and the destructive actions which make such havoc with the civilizations of particular districts fail to destroy the civilization of the world.⁷⁰

The community which men share, Tylor naturally insisted, is not limited by contemporary society, for every society is continuous with a preceding one. This double sense of community, community as an evolving society and community as a group in which private and personal experience may become widespread and social, made culture intelligible and progress possible. From the broad perspective of the development theory, any single contribution seemed trifling in comparison with the vast accumulation of societies during previous innumerable ages. "It needs but a glance into the trivial details of our own daily life to set us thinking how far we are really its originators, and how far but the transmitters and modifiers of the results of long past ages."⁷¹ Spencer might have said this somewhere in his sociology, but none of the evolutionists would have found that the laws of the physical universe, codified in an evolutionary formula, prescribed the form of cultural development and reduced human agency to the movement of a marionette. Without confusing moral right with physical order, Tylor nevertheless suggested in his own systematic ethnology that cultures gravitate around dominant centers and that the complex whole of culture is brought into a general accord, with, of course, the loss of traits which do not fit.

As evidence of the evolution of culture and as an ethnographical key to the recovery of primitive tradition, survivals assumed a salient place in Tylor's ethnology. His theory of cultural development emphasized that civilization was a social inheritance; and the imprint of its primitive history was tangled in persistent myths, folklore, games, proverbs, superstitions, and ceremonies far removed from their original source. These relics of an earlier time lingered on in modern times as dim reminders of an antiquity and continuity of culture. They also indicated something important about progress: that progress was not only positive innovation, "but negative in taking away something belonging to an earlier state of things."⁷²

The terms "survivals" gained a general cur-

⁶⁸ Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷² Tylor, *Researches*, 2.

rency among the cultural evolutionists. Lubbock adopted it to cover "certain customs . . . which we find lingering on in civilized communities . . . , a page of history," telling "a tale of former barbarism. . . ." ⁷³ But before Tylor's *Primitive Culture* appeared, Morgan was independently exploring a new field of anthropology in *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*, and the evolutionary hypothesis was leading him just as certainly as it led Tylor to interpret traditional usages as archaic remnants of an earlier social condition. Morgan found that kinship terminologies grew out of systems of marriage and that long after the disappearance of the familial relations underlying them, obsolescent ways of naming kin held on, leaving a record of social conditions which no longer existed. This technique of tracing the continuity of social history might have come from a page of *The Descent of Man*. While Darwin was saying that vestigial organs point to the anatomical evolution of man, Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan were using rudimentary cultural traits as evidence of man's developing civilization. The same logic inheres in both, and Darwin's statement that "we can hardly suppose that they [rudimentary organs] were developed under the conditions which now exist" ⁷⁴ is paralleled by Tylor's reasoning that survivals exist in "a new culture which certainly would never have brought them in. . . ." ⁷⁵ Survivals were "landmarks in the course of culture" that hinted at previous and different customs and beliefs, clues to be followed for the revelation of primitive stages of cultural evolution.

In spite of the fact that in his theory of civilization all culture is virtually a heritage, a survival, Tylor distinguished only parts of a tradition as "survivals." What determined this selection? That a survival is inherited is not the key, since the body of culture itself is a legacy. It is true, nonetheless, that Tylor listed tenacious persistence, "the lasting on of fixed habits of mankind," as one of the qualities of a survival. Persistence alone was an insufficient differentia, but coupled with the preconceptions of the evolutionary school, the tenacity of the received tradition became more meaningful than it otherwise would and explained why Tylor considered survivals, at worst, a positive menace. ". . . Civilization has to contend . . . with sur-

vival from lower levels. . . ." ⁷⁶ This was a serious matter only because of Tylor's working generalization that remoteness in time is correlated with primitiveness of culture, a generalization having as its corollary that progress is assumed with evolution. Because evolution takes time and no tribe or nation occupies the level of culture from which it began, advanced civilizations are also later civilizations, and all cultures carry the burden of a tradition more or less remote in time and antiquated in orientation. Advancing civilization inevitably arrives at the stage where survivals are a part of its social legacy, and they are likely to be increasingly out of harmony with the prevailing scheme the longer they persist. The effect of thus bringing together "evolution," "progress," and "survivals" was to introduce the theme of contextualism, and what may be particularly important is that there is no way of framing Tylor's definition of survivals without finally resorting to contextualism, an interpretive technique based on appropriateness to a certain set of generating and sustaining conditions. ⁷⁷

The impression that survivals are merely old, skirts the full meaning of Tylor's use of the concept. Longevity is a genuine mark of survivals because it measures more than a simple lapse of time in the life-history of a cultural trait. For Tylor, survivals had lost their original meaning and vitality when they appeared in an uncongenial cultural scheme, and their antiquity was one indication of a shift from the core to the periphery of a civilization. From Tylor's optimistic point of view, ". . . the survival of opinions in the midst of conditions of society becoming gradually estranged from them, and tending at last to suppress them altogether . . ." ⁷⁸ had but one conclusion. Survivals were doomed. He, therefore, ordinarily identified them as dwindling and tenuous, sinking into a decayed remnant of another complex whole of culture, holding on in ceremonies, children's games, and proverbs. ". . . The special wonder about it is that the change and revolution of human affairs should have left so

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁷⁷ When Tylor discussed progress and degradation in his *Anthropology*, he explained the failure to adopt obvious improvements by noting that ". . . the highest arts and the most elaborate arrangements of society do not always prevail, in fact they may be too perfect to hold their ground, for people must have what fits with their circumstances." Tylor, Edward B., *Anthropology, an introduction to the study of man and civilization*, 18-19, New York, D. Appleton, 1891.

⁷⁸ Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 112.

⁷³ Lubbock, *The origin of civilisation*, 341.

⁷⁴ Darwin, *The descent of man*, 11-12.

⁷⁵ Tylor, *Primitive culture*, 1: 71.

many of its feeblest rivulets to have run so long." ⁷⁹

In the changed circumstances with which survivals are out of harmony, "a new culture . . . presses hard to thrust them out," ⁸⁰ but survivals nevertheless manage to hold on. It then follows that, by virtue of the evolution and continuity of civilization, communities fall heir to a tradition which is not a consistent piece; inconsistent because the indispensable prerequisite to any culture is a pre-existing culture and because conditions change, almost automatically insuring that in a cultural deposit there is awkward jarring of discordant segments. If what is transmitted is a "survival," then the circumstances in which it originally appeared no longer exist in full vigor to maintain the basic features of a cultural pattern intact, and the holdover, without the support of a sympathetic social environment, is the relic Tylor called "survival."

Tylor made here the standard of validity a contextualistic norm; in one culture certain habits and usages were integral features of the predominant order, while in a new set of conditions those same habits and usages were archaic remnants standing in the relation of what modern sociologists would call "dysfunctions" to the current drift of social organization. Tylor's theory of survivals contained more than a suggestion of cultural relativism and contextualism. He had called attention to the changing complexion of social situations with which norms of adequacy change, too, and, disavowing a biological explanation of cultural differences, he had pointed out that there was such "regularity in the composition of societies of men, that we can drop individual differences out of sight, and thus can generalize on the arts and opinions of whole nations. . . ." ⁸¹ Cultural grounds sustained the variety of human behavior. In Tylor's *Anthropology* (1881), his frequently overlooked contribution to the International Scientific Series, custom was made the lord of conduct and the pressure of public opinion the ally of custom, while custom gave "the rule as to what is to be done or not done in most affairs of life." ⁸² Without ever recanting his faith in progress, Tylor carries this theme to its relativistic conclusion:

Thus communities, however ancient and rude, always have their rules of right and wrong. But as to

what acts have been held right and wrong, the student of history must avoid that error which the proverb calls measuring other people's corn by one's own bushel. Not judging the customs of nations at other stages of culture by his own modern standard, he has to bring his knowledge to the help of his imagination, so as to see institutions where they belong and as they work. Only thus can it be made clear that the rules of good and bad, right and wrong, are not fixed alike for all men at all times. ⁸³

But, like the cultural relativism in Spencer's sociology, the contextualism of Tylor's anthropology is subordinate to an evolutionary sequence spelling not only development but progress.

The power of a cultural trait to persist in its original form could never have been the test of progress for Tylor. In the continuity of culture one scheme developed into another, effectively eliminating sheer persistence as the criterion of social advancement. It is correct to say that by and large Tylor attributed a beneficent trend to cultural development; it is equally correct, however, to say that he and the evolutionists recognized that a progressive movement was as likely to stop short in Iroquois barbarism or in a lower grade of savagery as not, but the recognition did not disturb their confidence in progress. In their view, primitive culture was not abnormal or a universal pattern gone astray to be explained as an exceptional case, for they assumed that even a state of savagery was less primitive than what had gone before. Potentiality for further development more accurately describes their measure of progress than persistence or permanence. Although, in tracing the meliorative course of cultural growth, all of the evolutionists approached the stages of social evolution as periods of transition from something lower to something higher, they did not underscore the capacity to evolve as the intrinsic mark of progress, perhaps because it finally depended on a future turn of events. But looking back over the whole cultural sequence, Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan repeatedly remarked the progressive course of cultural change.

Taking its cue from the theme of gradual change and paying scant attention to the Malthusian struggle for existence, Tylor's idea of progress has only a superficial resemblance to the competitive framework of Spencer's "survival of the fittest." What the future might hold was vaguely sketched, if at all, for none of the evolutionists felt it incumbent upon himself to include in his analysis a blueprint of the good society which he felt lay remotely ahead. The absence of

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁸² Tylor, *Anthropology*, 409.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 410.

such a prediction may simply be a sign of their tending to the ethnological business at hand, but it is significant that the end of social evolution was not the equilibrium of perfectly balanced, harmonious parts that William James called "the lady-like tea-table elysium represented in Mr. Spencer's *Data of Ethics*."⁸⁴ It is furthermore significant that the drama of evolution was not closed with an ending at all, and, lacking a pre-determined finis, the evolutionary view of progress is a serious departure from the romantic utopianism of an earlier period. Without the *a priori* finality of dialectical evolution, either Hegelian or Marxian, and without the mechanistic teleology of the Spencerian system, Tylor's evolutionary theory seems closer to the temper of the more recent Darwinism, a temper which another evolutionist, Thorstein Veblen, liked to typify as the scientific attitude of modern times.

Tylor's belief in progress and his sensitivity to the uncertain status of the fledgling science of anthropology discouraged his treatment of survivals beyond such commonplace examples as the ordeal of the Key and Bible, the Midsummer bonfire, and the Breton peasants' All Souls' supper. They would, after all, in time pass away, and why confuse the issue of a science of culture with a partisan anthropology? The gingerly way in which Tylor handled the implications of the survival concept suggests Darwin's timidity in implicating man in *The Origin of Species*—"... I thought that I should thus only add prejudice to my views." But in Tylor's mind there was no doubt that games, riddles, witchcraft, proverbs, and astrology did not exhaust the list of survivals.⁸⁵

Tylor first used "superstition" to denote "the 'standing over' of old habits into the midst of a new and changed state of things,"⁸⁶ and, although the literal etymology was completely accurate, "superstition" was an invidious term, unnecessarily harsh when applied to the games, sports, and rhymes of children. "For the ethnographer's purpose [purposes of science], at any rate, it is desirable to introduce such a term as 'survival,' simply to denote the historical fact which the word 'superstition' is now spoiled for

expressing."⁸⁷ "Survival" connoted none of the reproach of "superstition" and therefore seemed the preferable term in a scientific analysis, but Tylor closed his chapters on survivals by urging that an interest in "such dead old history" was no mere antiquarian curiosity.

... We have in such enquiries continual reason to be thankful for fools. It is quite wonderful, even if we hardly go below the surface of the subject, to see how large a share stupidity and unpractical conservatism and dogged superstition have had in preserving for us traces of the history of our race, which practical utilitarianism would have remorselessly swept away.⁸⁸

But the opinions drawn from old or worn-out culture are not to be left lying where they were shaped. It is no more reasonable to suppose the laws of mind differently constituted in Australia and in England, in the time of the cave-dwellers and in the time of the builders of sheet-iron houses, than to suppose that the laws of chemical combination were of one sort in the time of the coal-measures, and are of another now. The thing that has been will be; and we are to study savages and old nations to learn the laws that under new circumstances are working for good or ill in our own development.⁸⁹

In the American tradition, a more direct application of the survival concept to the contemporary scene awaited Veblen's analysis of business enterprise. Veblen turned the notion of institutional lag to substantial account in dissecting the economy of a civilization to which the industrial revolution is only the latest comer. He found evidences of an older barbarism and of a temperament more savage than modern in the folklore of pecuniary management. Taking the culture concept and the psychology of habit to his analysis of the leisure class, Veblen had a field day with the manners and rituals of the gaudy rich and those who aped them. Ancient usages had a way of holding on and serving as symbols of prestige, and Veblen delighted to point out that the archaic was not self-evidently meritorious. While Tylor had designated survivals as cultural backwash, tending to be remote and incidental, Veblen uncovered them at the center of contemporary life. But when Veblen labeled the canons which govern adequacy in the sphere of ceremony, he did so largely in the terms hinted at when Tylor noticed that survivals persisted in custom and rite where authority is counted by antiquity, "rather by being old than by being good."

⁸⁴ James, William, *Essays in faith and morals*, 168, New York, Longmans, Green, 1943.

⁸⁵ "The ethnographer's course, again, should be like that of the anatomist who carries on his studies if possible rather on dead than on living subjects; vivisection is nervous work, and the humane investigator hates inflicting needless pain." Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 158.

⁸⁶ Tylor, *Researches*, 221.

⁸⁷ Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 72.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 158-159.

Tylor, Morgan, and Spencer looked to the evolutionary process for a standard of progress. Conscious of the telltale anthropocentric bias in earlier conceptions of progress, Spencer identified the laws of mechanics with the laws of evolution and equated progress with evolution. Tylor and Morgan, frequently oblivious of their ethnocentrism, appealed to the enlightened standards of the western world as the pinnacle of social evolution. Tylor grouped together "the industrial arts, especially metalworking, manufacture of implements and vessels, agriculture, architecture, etc., the extent of scientific knowledge, the definiteness of moral principles, the condition of religious belief and ceremony, the degree of social and political organization,"⁹⁰ as criteria of progress. Although he felt more certain of maintaining the advance of civilization in the realm of material and intellectual culture,⁹¹ it is generally conceded that in measuring progress Tylor specifically assumed the standards of Victorian England and that what he meant, for instance, by "the conditions of religious belief and ceremony" was the condition of religious belief and ceremony in the cultivated circles of western Christianity in his time.

8. L. H. MORGAN: ECONOMIC CONTEXTUALISM

In the same wholesale fashion Morgan interpreted the evolution of the industrial arts, government, property, and the family, each in an ascending line of cultural progress. Civilization moved forward as each department of culture advanced beyond the previous stage, and for both Tylor and Morgan cumulative experience was the main vehicle of ubiquitous progress. Only Morgan began to discriminate further the basis of cultural progress in cultural terms. Spencer, of course, had found a rationale for the beneficent order of nature when he finally rested his general law of progress on physics, but Morgan's analysis kept to the social level; and however haltingly he hinged the complex whole of culture to an economic foundation, Morgan went a long way toward articulating a more specific doctrine of universal improvement. The evolution of the arts of subsistence with which Morgan began his *Ancient Society* forms a bridge to Veblen's *The Instinct of Workmanship and the State of the Industrial Arts*. Veblen distinguished a funda-

mental dichotomy running through cultural history that turns on science and the machine process and elaborated his "institutional economics" around that distinction. It is not too much to say that his economic theory was a by-product of his evolutionary analysis of social development, and Veblen himself wrote that "in the growth of culture . . . the facts of technological use and want are fundamental and definitive, in the sense that they underlie and condition the scope and method of civilization in other than the technological respect."⁹² To understand better the extent to which Morgan interpreted social evolution on an economic basis it is necessary to inspect his cultural studies and their materialistic foundation.

Lewis Henry Morgan's first major work, *The League of the Iroquois* (1851), contains hints of the theme which pervades the last book that he wrote, the book for which he remains most popularly known, *Ancient Society* (1877).⁹³ It would be false, however, to call Morgan's study of the Iroquois evolutionary or to claim that it proceeds on that basis which is broadly described as the materialistic (economic) conception of history. *The League of the Iroquois* is not concerned with the growth of customs and institutions, much less with their economic foundation. Limited in subject matter to the tribes which made up the Iroquois League, it lacks the universal scope and the universal scheme of cultural evolution characteristic of *Ancient Society*. Precisely it is ethnography, an intensive, sympathetic monograph on a people with whom Morgan had been acquainted since his boyhood in northern New York. But before Morgan had finished writing on the Iroquois, he had incidentally used the comparative method and had begun to see a general form in the evolution of political institutions, a method and a theme which grew increasingly important in his later work. He had noticed that there was a similarity between Iroquois and Greek, Roman, and Hebrew political institutions and that one form of government evolves from an earlier form in a specific sequence.⁹⁴ When Morgan claimed that Iroquois

⁹² Veblen, Thorstein, *The instinct of workmanship*, vii, New York, Viking, 1946.

⁹³ For a short and comprehensive account of Morgan's work, see Leslie A. White's *Lewis Henry Morgan: pioneer in the theory of social evolution in An introduction to the history of sociology* (ed. Harry Elmer Barnes), Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1948.

⁹⁴ In *The league of the Iroquois* Morgan read this sequence as the evolution from monarchical to democratic

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

institutions "contain the sum and substance of those of the whole Indian family,"⁹⁵ he erected features of a local organization into types having more than provincial significance. He broached the idea of inclusive cultural schemes by a grand inductive leap on limited evidence. Of course Morgan said more than he knew, but he was later to pin down his claim in the closely empirical study of Indian kinship systems.

Although Morgan came closer than either Lubbock or Tylor to making racial differences a mark of inherent superiority and inferiority, already in *The League of the Iroquois* his chief emphasis was sociological and broad enough to include the physical habitat: "The development of national intellect depends chiefly upon external, reciprocal influences, and is usually proportionate to the vitality and motive which the institutions of a people possess and furnish."⁹⁶ Although tainted with the myth of Aryan supremacy, Morgan joined the evolutionary school of ethnologists in holding the common origin and psychic unity of the human species. But all this, including Morgan's occasional references to the relation of property to social evolution and his association of Iroquois social organization with a "hunter state,"⁹⁷ is secondary to his main interest, and only the later material of *Systems of Consanguinity* and *Ancient Society* calls for these ideas being noticed at all.

Morgan's next work, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1871), requires closer and more serious attention, for it is here that the most characteristic features of his anthropology unmistakably appear. On a business trip to Marquette, Michigan, the prosperous lawyer and railroad investor made the discovery

government, taking a position substantially similar to Spencer's in *The principles of sociology*. By the time Morgan wrote *Ancient society* he regarded his earlier generalization of the trend of political institutions as a serious error and reversed the sequence.

⁹⁵ Morgan, Lewis Henry, *The league of the Iroquois*, 52, New York, Dodd, Mead, 1904.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁹⁷ "Without the influence of cities, which no people construct who live in the hunter state, and the important consequences which result from the aggregation of society into large communities, the government of the Iroquois would doubtless have retained its oligarchical form through many generations. It would have lasted until the people had abandoned the hunter state; until they had given up the chase for agriculture, the arts of war for those of industry, the hunting ground and the fishing encampment for the village and the city." *Ibid.*, 132. Morgan's economic contextualism in the analysis of culture had begun.

that led him to begin an intensive study of kinship distinctions. Morgan was already familiar with the Iroquois way of naming kin, and when he found that the Ojibwas on the southern shore of Lake Superior used the same elaborate and complex system of distinguishing kin, he was startled. The Iroquois and Ojibwa languages were strikingly different, making the similarity of kinship classification the more remarkable, too remarkable to be put down to coincidence or independent invention. Morgan's hypothesis immediately took shape: perhaps all the Indian tribes of North America used the system that he had found among the Iroquois and the Ojibwas.

He scoured the continent east of the Rockies in person, complaining that his correspondents didn't get the data right and that he had better gather it himself. Looking farther abroad, he enlisted the help of the State Department and the Smithsonian Institution in sending out questionnaires all over the world. His was to be a prodigious survey. General Lewis Cass and William H. Seward, Secretaries of State, were willing to have Morgan's inquiries go out under the official seal of their department to consular and diplomatic representatives. This was no political matter, but Morgan's political affiliation did no harm. In the very period of Morgan's work on kinship systems, he served terms in the New York Assembly and Senate under the Republican banner. American anthropology has seldom been so radical and respectable at the same time. When *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity* finally appeared, it came into print as a government document under the auspices of a board of regents which included the Vice-president of the United States and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

As one would expect, Morgan never heard from many of his questionnaires, and some had to be resubmitted when the kinship schedules were carelessly filled in. Latin America proved a difficult area from which to get information, and Morgan felt that Roman Catholic bishops showed little enthusiasm for ethnology. From Morgan's point of view, Protestant mission boards showed a more proper spirit. They were energetic in getting Morgan's inquiries to "the field," and the missionaries themselves were conscientious and painstaking, if not always prompt, in supplying the requested information.

As Morgan assembled the schedules of kinship classifications which came in from his question-

naires, he distinguished two fundamental types of relationship systems, which he called "descriptive" and "classificatory." Using these kinship relations as clues, Morgan then explained their diversity by reconstructing the family systems lying behind them and by arranging these family systems in an evolutionary sequence. The political evolution of society in a "regular progression" or in a "natural order," touched on in *The League of the Iroquois*, was extended to kinship, marriage, and the family in a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis in *Systems of Consanguinity*. It placed Morgan squarely among the social evolutionists; and when he raised his earlier, tentative suggestion of successive stages to a universal principle of cultural development (in familial evolution), Morgan joined Lubbock and Tylor in championing unilinear evolution. At the same time Morgan affirmed the unity of human origin, treating races as "a family of nations."

Mankind, if one in origin [which Morgan never seriously questioned], must have become subdivided at a very early period into individual nations. Unequal progress has been made by their descendants from that day to the present; some of them still remaining in a condition not far removed from the primitive, and now revealing many of the intervening stages of progress. It must be supposed, therefore, that these customs and institutions, taken as a complete series or sequence, must have been of slow growth, and of still slower diffusion amongst the nations, as they progressed in experience; and that they are but the great remaining landmarks of this experience, whilst the mass of minor influences which contributed to their adoption have fallen out of knowledge.⁹⁸

Kinship relationships became ethnological clues for the first time. Morgan's study revealed nomenclatures strangely out of harmony with existing marriage customs, and he tried to reconstruct the kind of family institution which would make those anachronisms intelligible. In short, Morgan used kinship systems as Tylor had used "survivals" and on the same evolutionary grounds.

When *Systems of Consanguinity* first appeared, Morgan was on a holiday in Europe, relaxing after the rigorous work of getting the book to press. While in England he saw Max Müller and Huxley and had several visits with McLennan and Lubbock, and talked with Darwin. As might have been expected, he also wanted to meet Spencer and "possibly Mr. Maine" (Sir Henry

Maine). He knew Tylor's reputation well enough to want to see Tylor, but he couldn't get the name straight. Morgan asked McLennan to introduce him to "Mr. Taylor." When Morgan went to Down, Darwin told Morgan that the relationships in *Systems of Consanguinity* were difficult to follow and that he had advised Lubbock against lecturing on Morgan's new book before a non-technical audience. Although it established his claim to rank among the pioneers of a scientific anthropology, Morgan was completely accurate when he predicted that "It will be a long time before it is much known."⁹⁹ Except among professional anthropologists, it has never been a well-known book.

The sheer size of *Systems of Consanguinity* is forbidding and its massive compilation of kinship terminologies discouraging. Even Morgan showed signs of fatiguing under the weight of all those kinship tables. At the end of one labyrinthian exposition, Morgan apologized, almost to complain to himself, for its "tedious minuteness." The patience of the Indians he found particularly touching, and he paid tribute to their "natural kindness of heart" in submitting to so many detailed questions about their relatives. Of course, the book's significance lies neither in its bulk nor its endless tables of kinship systems but in Morgan's interpretation of those nomenclatures as lexical reflections of social organization. In the absence of social conditions which might be supposed to account for the terminology of kinship relations, Morgan's problem was to infer the marriage systems with which the terms were originally associated. Kinship systems lagged. They were "great remaining landmarks" of previous systems of consanguinity and affinity. They were survivals, holding on with enough permanence to suggest obsolete marriage customs, and Morgan was so impressed with their persistence that he supposed that they were passed down from generation to generation in the blood stream. In Morgan's words the result of *Systems of Consanguinity* was:

A comparison of these systems [of consanguinity], and a careful study of the slight but clearly marked changes through which they have passed, have led, most unexpectedly, to the recovery, conjecturally at least, of the great series or sequence of customs and institutions which mark the pathway of man's progress through the ages of barbarism; and by means of

⁹⁸ Morgan, *Systems of consanguinity*, 479.

⁹⁹ White, Leslie A. (ed.), *Lewis H. Morgan's European journal*, Rochester historical society publication 16 (2), 370, Rochester, New York, Du Bois Press, 1937.

which he raised himself from a state of promiscuous intercourse to final civilization.¹⁰⁰

It [*Systems of Consanguinity*] embodies the first collection of facts which tend to show the successive stages of growth of the Family, indicating four of these stages with a good deal of certainty. This I regard as the most remarkable result by far of the investigation.¹⁰¹

When Morgan wrote *Ancient Society*, this "remarkable" finding became a theory of social evolution and progress which nominally stood, at least in the first pages of the book, on an equal footing with his theory of economic progress. In *Ancient Society* he wrote that social relations afford a second "line of investigation," analytically distinguishable from the evolution of arts of subsistence, the first line, and indicated that by either of these the progress of human history may be measured. The bifurcation of social evolution into two lines of development, social and economic, which complicates the procedure of *Ancient Society* began in Morgan's study of kinship systems.

Morgan's economic bias in anthropology was not an *a priori* dogma but a persuasion that he came to gradually. Without ever becoming prominent or intruding on the main line of argument in *Systems of Consanguinity*, the correlation between successive cultural levels and their appropriate economies is definitely broached. It was this theme, as it was later and emphatically developed in *Ancient Society*, that particularly attracted the attention of socialists and made *Ancient Society* the anthropological source book of Marxism. While insisting in *Systems of Consanguinity* that kinship systems are inherited with the blood, Morgan recognized the diffusion of cultural traits as well as the continuity of social development. But this cultural approach remains a minor theme beside the more prevalent one that systems of relationship "have been handed down as transmitted systems, through the channels of the blood, from the earliest ages of man's existence upon earth; but revealing certain definite and progressive changes with the growth of man's experience in the ages of barbarism."¹⁰² Therefore, Morgan had two theories of the rise and development of kinship systems which scarcely came into contact with each other. Deriving "systems of consanguinity" from marital relationships, Morgan on the one hand specifically rejected independent invention, spontaneous growth, and cultural diffusion to explain the universal schemes of counting kin. In-

stead he made them come down through the blood. Vaguely, and never conflicting with this biological vehicle of cultural transmission, Morgan recognized, on the other hand, the material conditioning of social development. He lacked the clear definition of culture developed by Tylor, a concept which hinged on man's status as "a member of society." With such a concept Morgan might have found both the source of institutions and the means of their perpetuation. In the absence of such a concept, Morgan fell back on biology when he needed an instrument of transmission which would account for the persistence of systems of relationships. Suggesting just such persistence and stability, "blood" would serve well enough.

As previously mentioned, Morgan was influenced by Bastian's concept of *Elementargedanken*, and the way Morgan used "primary ideas" in his study of the evolution of the family illustrates again his fluctuation between an analysis of culture in social and biological terms. Sometimes Morgan argued that social institutions developed from "primary ideas" and moved in a predetermined and logical direction according to their inherent tendencies. In his scheme social evolution was restricted by the inner capacity of germinal ideas to develop along fixed lines. Thus, a system of consanguinity was "under the absolute control, like other domestic institutions, of the primary ideas upon which it is founded. . . . It may be advanced by development from within, in which case it must move in logical accordance with the principles of the system."¹⁰³ Like systems of consanguinity, the primary ideas which are their psychological or biological roots were transmitted with the blood stream. Pursuing this line of thought, Morgan claimed that the mixing of diverse racial stocks gradually broadened the logical susceptibilities of primary ideas, permitting a new breadth of social development and the evolution of civilization itself.¹⁰⁴ Although this blending of biological and social categories continued to confuse Morgan when he wrote *Ancient Society*, it had reached its peak in *Systems of Consanguinity* and remained in the background of Morgan's last work as a foreign residue. For one of the great pioneers of the theory of social evolution such a shift in emphasis was inevitable. Persistence in treating social usages and institutions as the predetermined consequences of self-enclosed systems of elementary ideas would have vitiated the main theme of his later work, that the evolution of cul-

¹⁰⁰ Morgan, *Systems of consanguinity*, vi.

¹⁰¹ White, *Morgan's European journal*, 371.

¹⁰² Morgan, *Systems of consanguinity*, vii.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 180. See also pp. 51 and 212.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

ture was neither a psychological nor biological, but a cultural process fundamentally conditioned by economic modes of subsistence.

The "logical" development of primary ideas, to which Morgan repeatedly turned in *Systems of Consanguinity*, was a by-product of his evolutionary approach, a fiction of his evolutionary method. The line of evolution of the family once reconstructed, it was easy to interpret its direction as inherently and inevitably moving where, in fact, it did move for some cultures. What made social evolution "logical" was Morgan's retrospective view. What clinched it was his scarcely concealed hypothesis that, given two stages of the evolution of the family, a third and still earlier stage may be supposed to continue the trend evident from a comparison of the latter two stages. This, indeed, would have made cultural development a rational process. Asserting that "It is impossible to develop from the primary ideas . . . a series of institutions which do not spring logically from them"¹⁰⁵ was then only making explicit a fundamental premise of his anthropology. Although Morgan never freed himself from his preconceptions about "primary ideas" and the "blood stream," he could have dispensed with them both. At the same time he could have maintained substantially intact his theory of the evolution of the family by further developing the socio-economic side of his analysis. For paralleling Morgan's interpretation of domestic institutions on the basis of the psychological apparatus of Bastian's *Elementargedanken* is Morgan's theory of the material conditions of society, that a whole organization of society is implied by the dominant economy. Morgan wrote:

Primitive peoples, having the range of a continent, must of necessity have commenced their career as fishermen, in dependence upon this great primary source of human subsistence, and with but incidental support from the proceeds of the hunt. In the course of time they would learn to domesticate young animals captured in the chase, out of which would come a discovery of the uses of flocks and herds, as a more abundant and a more invigorating means of subsistence. This again, in the lapse of time and through migrations, would be followed by the discovery of cereals, and of the art of cultivation, which would lead inevitably to village life, out of which would spring the first germs of civilization. In addition to this known sequence of the means of progress, the stages of which were doubtless separated from each other by centuries and decades of centuries of time, every nation upon a continent had one or more contiguous nations between whom and itself there was

more or less of intercourse. Amongst contiguous nations there would be a free propagation of arts and inventions, which would tend to the general advancement of society throughout the entire area in which these influences were felt. Nations are apt to share in the more important elements of each other's progress.¹⁰⁶

Although Morgan never realized it, the very development theory of culture with which his name is most closely associated made the dependence of social evolution on biologically transmitted mental germs superfluous and obsolete.

It is obvious that as early as *Systems of Consanguinity* there was a germinal economic determinism in Morgan's thought. He used terms descriptive of economic life for the progressive stages in an evolving culture. He explicitly suggested that the rise of property-holding and the settlement of lineal succession to estates "might be expected to lead to a more precise discrimination of the several degrees of consanguinity if they were confounded by the previous system."¹⁰⁷ He went further by holding that the growth of the idea of property was synonymous with the rise of civilization.

It is impossible to overestimate the influence of property upon the civilization of mankind. It was the germ, and is still the evidence, of his progress from barbarism, and the ground of his claim to civilization. In fact governments, institutions, and laws resolve themselves into so many agencies designed for the creation and protection of property.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, Morgan's main emphasis in *Systems of Consanguinity* is upon the "great epochs in the ages of barbarism, and the customs and institutions which move society forward,"¹⁰⁹ not on the economic conditions of social development. What Morgan had established to his own satisfaction was that "civilization must be regarded as the fruit, the final reward, of the vast and varied experience of mankind in the barbarous ages"¹¹⁰ and that there is a natural order of domestic institutions. *Ancient Society (Researches into the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization)* is the detailed elaboration of these themes, evolution, progress, and economics. In the interval Morgan contributed two papers to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, significantly titled "Arts of Subsistence" and "Ethnical Periods."

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 448.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 492.

¹⁰⁹ White, *Morgan's European journal*, 370.

¹¹⁰ Morgan, *Systems of consanguinity*, vii.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Morgan began *Ancient Society* with a statement of the principle that Lubbock and Tylor accepted as a necessary postulate of the development theory of culture. "The great antiquity of mankind upon the earth has been conclusively established."¹¹¹ Repudiating the Mosaic cosmogony and assuming geological time, Morgan treated culture as a natural and necessary evolution. "The latest investigations respecting the early condition of the human race, are tending to the conclusion that mankind commenced their career at the bottom of the scale and worked their way up from savagery to civilization through the slow accumulations of experimental knowledge."¹¹² Like all the evolutionary ethnologists, Morgan followed Lyell and Darwin in presuming change to be gradual and not cataclysmic. The accumulation of slow, continuous changes followed the order of observable processes in the present and was characteristic of the evolution of all natural phenomena. The continuity of social life, which the cultural evolutionists insisted upon, was a part of the same natural process which included geology and biology, only the sequence was cultural, from savagery to civilization. For the same reason that Lyell had to reject the extraordinary cataclysms of Cuvier, Morgan and the evolutionary anthropologists rejected the theory of cultural regression of Archbishop Whately and the Duke of Argyll. Geological cataclysms and cultural revelations were on a par in destroying the continuity and uniformity of a consistent naturalistic methodology. Darwin, too, of course, in *The Origin of Species* had maintained the mutability of species against special and cataclysmic creations which tore the continuity of the biological world into independent bits.

Insistence on the order and uniformity of nature was a persistent tenet of the geologists, biologists, and anthropologists of this period, and the conviction of the unity of nature reinforced the unity that the anthropologists saw in cultural evolution. The material with which they dealt, the comparative method, and the evolutionary view lent themselves to this interpretation. Morgan, Lubbock, and Tylor understood culture as the product of communities of men, men who, they all insisted, had begun in a stage of utter savagery. Following up their presumptions, the anthropologists drew cross-cultural comparisons from ethnographical data on different peoples at different

periods. This procedure concluded in the reconstruction of a sequence of progressive cultural stages which delineated the unity of cultural development. In Morgan's words:

As it is undeniable that portions of the human family have existed in a state of savagery, other portions in a state of barbarism, and still other portions in a state of civilization, it seems equally so that these three distinct conditions are connected with each other in a natural as well as necessary sequence of progress.¹¹³

Morgan's own evolutionary position is clear, and in *Ancient Society* the scope of his evolutionary method is extended far beyond kinship, marriage, and family systems. Thinking of government and techniques of subsistence as well as of domestic institutions, Morgan wrote, "It can now be asserted upon convincing evidence that savagery preceded barbarism in all the tribes of mankind, as barbarism is known to have preceded civilization. The history of the human race is one in source, one in experience, one in progress."¹¹⁴ A more succinct statement of cultural evolutionary principles could hardly be found, but Morgan did a great deal more than represent the general program of the cultural evolutionists.

On a bronze memorial tablet in Aurora, New York, Morgan is celebrated as the "Discoverer of the Law of Social Progress," and although this is an enthusiastic estimate of Morgan's work, it points to an important fact. It is Morgan's distinction that he made a serious attempt to carry the evolutionary analysis beyond the faith of progress by proposing a comprehensive series of stages to illustrate the sequence of cultural development. He did so tentatively and with reservations, but this presumptuous effort singled Morgan out as the whipping-boy of the critics of the evolutionary anthropologists. Tylor's verdict on grandiose cultural generalizations has been the general judgment of professional anthropologists on Morgan's *Ancient Society*. "In fact, much of the labour spent in investigating the progress and decline of civilization has been mis-spent, in premature attempts to treat them as a whole which is as yet only susceptible of divided study."¹¹⁵ The temerity with which Morgan organized the evolution of culture in a panoramic display of progress was to offend the judicious Tylor as it later offended the empiricists of the Boas school.

To implement the evolutionary program and

¹¹¹ Morgan, *Ancient society*, v.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, v-vi.

¹¹⁵ Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 32.

the theme of progress; Morgan specified the grades of cultural development and found the vehicle of progress in technological evolution. When Morgan did so, both Tylor and Lubbock were stunned at what they saw. Compressed into one volume, the industrial arts, the forms of government, family systems, and the idea of property were all brought into the evolutionary scheme. Ethnic periods, "each representing a distinct condition of society, and distinguishable by a mode of life peculiar to itself,"¹¹⁶ displayed the ladder of evolution and progress. Like Tylor, Morgan interpreted cultures as "wholes." But the peculiar mark of Morgan's evolutionary paradigm was that each ethnic period implied a way of life characterized by a dominant technology.

It is probable that the successive arts of subsistence which arose at long intervals will ultimately, from the great influence they must have exercised upon the condition of mankind, afford the most satisfactory bases for these divisions.¹¹⁷

The ages of Stone, Bronze, and Iron, which had been methodological devices for grading the tools of primitive man, in Morgan's scheme became seven levels of progress from barbarism to civilization, each level a "culture" and each level exhibiting "a mode of life more or less special and peculiar to itself."¹¹⁸ Specifically, of course, Morgan's ethnic periods were identified with arts of subsistence and not simply with a stone, bronze, or iron technology, although the Danish archaeologist's Age of Iron became literally an "age" for Morgan, not in the temporal sense so much as in the sociological. Each of the seven was a status in the hierarchy of progress—three of "Savagery," three of "Barbarism," and one, the last, indicating the beginning of "Civilization." "Savagery" and "Barbarism" were broken down into "Lower," "Middle," and "Upper" subdivisions. For instance, the "Status of Civilization" began with the invention of a phonetic alphabet; immediately preceding it was the "Upper Status of Barbarism," the period of the invention of the process of smelting iron ore. As such generalizations go, Morgan's characterization of civilization as the literate machine age is incisive enough.

Both Tylor and Lubbock reviewed Morgan's *Ancient Society* and saw it as an extension of the evolutionary theme of *Systems of Consanguinity* "worked up, with other materials, into

his present treatise." Tylor found it lacking in precision and consistency, "a structure of theory wider and heavier than his foundation of fact will bear," and he almost sneered at the scope of the material it covered. Morgan's "scheme aims at no less than to map out in a few bold lines of progress the whole evolution of the family and the nation—from when man was a gregarious mute to when he became a cultured republican."¹¹⁹ Lubbock called Morgan an Iroquois Indian, which he was by adoption, and treated his ethnic periods as an idle taxonomy, a subject for ridicule. He wrote:

To return to Mr. Morgan's "statuses." Man got into Upper Savagery with the bow, and left it with the "invention of the art of pottery." When he could make pottery, he was a lower barbarian; when he got as far as bronze, and could domesticate animals and grow cereals, he was a Middle Barbarian; with the manufacture of iron he became an Upper Barbarian, and the introduction of phonetic writing, or—for it is all one to Mr. Morgan—of hieroglyphical writing, saw him "in the status of civilization."¹²⁰

This parody on *Ancient Society* does not put Lubbock "on the side of the angels," but it is uncomfortably close to Lady Constance's remarks on evolution in Disraeli's novel *Tancred*.

You know, all is development—the principle is perpetually going on. First there was nothing; then there was something; then—I forget the next—I think there were shells; then fishes; then we came—let me see—did we come next? Never mind that; we came at last, and the next change will be something, very superior to us, something with wings.¹²¹

Morgan may have been given a bad time by his British critics, but he was quickly honored in his own country. He was elected to the presidency of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Adolf Bandelier, Morgan's close friend and disciple, also reviewed *Ancient Society*, and his comments are particularly instructive. When Bandelier found two theories of cultural evolution, two ways of tracing progress, in the book, he became the first of Morgan's readers to note a dichotomy in his scheme of progress. Morgan

¹¹⁹ Tylor, Edward B., *Ancient society, The academy* 14: 67, 1878.

¹²⁰ Lubbock, John, *Ancient society, The Saturday review of politics, literature, science, and art* 45: 20, January 5, 1878.

¹²¹ As quoted in Stow Persons' *Evolutionary thought in America*, 149, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1950.

¹¹⁶ Morgan, *Ancient society*, 8.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

was never completely clear about its interpretation himself and explained at the beginning of *Ancient Society*:

An attempt will be made in the following pages to bring forward additional evidence of the rudeness of the early condition of mankind, of the gradual evolution of their mental and moral powers through experience, and of their protracted struggle with opposing obstacles while winning their way to civilization. It will be drawn, in part, from the great sequence of inventions and discoveries which stretches along the entire pathway of human progress; but chiefly from domestic institutions, which express the growth of certain ideas and passions.

Two independent lines of investigation thus invite our attention. The one leads through inventions and discoveries, and the other through primary institutions.¹²²

To Bandelier these two ways of investigation appeared as mutually exclusive alternatives, and he indicated in his review a preference for the line of evolution leading through institutions and dismissed the other, the technological, without serious discussion. Marx and Engels took the opposite tack, and *Ancient Society* became the main anthropological support of Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*; for, in the words of Engels, Morgan had "in a manner, discovered anew the materialistic conception of history, originated by Marx forty years ago."¹²³ When Morgan used this line of evolution, which leads through inventions and discoveries or the arts of subsistence, he constructed a paradigm of progress in ethnic periods.

Despite all the disagreements which it provoked, no one has contested the fact that *Ancient Society* is an evolutionary book. Each of its four parts has a title introduced by the word "Growth," whether "The Growth of Intelligence Through Inventions and Discoveries" or "The Growth of the Idea of Government." Although Morgan divided his material into four evolutionary, "parallel lines along the pathways of human progress,"¹²⁴ he discovered that one of the four was so important that it might become the general denominator of progress and the basis for discriminating the ethnical periods from barbarism to civilization. This was the evolution of the arts of subsistence, and the remaining three are best understood as comprising what Morgan thought of as "primary institutions," since it is to the

family and government that the body of the rest of *Ancient Society* is devoted. The relation between these fundamental divisions defines the problem. For on the one hand Morgan himself insisted upon the distinction between the evolution of arts of subsistence and the evolution of institutions; yet on the other hand he went a long way toward making technology the dynamic force in the evolution of institutions. In good part the issue is to keep straight what Morgan said and what Morgan did, for if one follows the details of his treatment of institutional development, the hard-and-fast distinction with which he began *Ancient Society* becomes blurred.

As Morgan's earlier work indicates, his preparation for handling the evolution of government (*The League of the Iroquois*) and the evolution of the family (*Systems of Consanguinity*) was far more adequate than for the writing of a systematic treatise on the economic determination of culture. Morgan's task was made more difficult by an archaic psychology in the midst of his cultural analysis, a psychology which *Ancient Society* itself finally challenges. For in the development of social organizations which Morgan minutely described, primary institutions were actually not made dependent upon primary ideas, but, like the industrial arts, evolved from what had gone before, dependent upon the material context. The "idea of government" and the "idea of the family" did not constrain social evolution; Morgan made them creatures of cultural evolution expressive of deep-seated human needs. As indicated earlier, the adjective "logical," which Morgan applied to the evolution of social institutions, was the term likely for one who saw that what had been will be and that evolution was progress. Beginning with monogamy and the liberal political institutions of modern England and America, Morgan traced the development of the family and the state through a series of stages increasingly remote from modern institutions. The welter of technological arts, inventions, and tools revealed something of the same progressive trend, accelerated by the tendency to multiply which Morgan formalized in the "ratio of human progress."

Of course, all of culture, whether technological or institutional, was an evolution for Morgan. But while Morgan traced the family and government from "a few primary germs of thought" evolving in a "logical" order, he simply made inventions and discoveries the secular outgrowth of the accumulated experience of mankind. The crass and tangible quality of artifacts and the skill

¹²² Morgan, *Ancient society*, 4.

¹²³ Engels, Frederick, *The origin of the family, private property, and the state*, 9, Chicago, Charles H. Kerr, 1902.

¹²⁴ Morgan, *Ancient society*, vii.

of artisans encouraged no such special handling as the "ideas," "passions," and "aspirations" with which Morgan associated institutions. Morgan identified institutions, as did Malinowski later, with the basic needs of the organism. He linked every permanent institution of mankind with a "perpetual want," and because the want derived from the organism, Morgan thought of it as primary and given. In the manner of the evolutionary anthropologists, he was looking for antecedents and tracing them to a source unimpeachably natural; but having found the ultimate origin of institutions in primary ideas, he was committed to a psychological as well as a cultural interpretation in describing non-technological evolution. It was not the growth of government or property or the family with which Morgan was exclusively concerned in *Ancient Society*. Rather his attention was turned to the "Idea of Government," the "Idea of the Family," and the "Idea of Property." Thus, because institutions, in contrast with tools and techniques, peculiarly lent themselves to a psychological interpretation in Morgan's system, the distinction between arts of subsistence and institutions became accentuated. Without ever making institutions independent of their social context, Morgan, therefore, paralleled his analysis in cultural terms with another approach and focused on the "logical" development of germs of thought. The institution of the family, for instance, was not only what Morgan would have called a "great power and passion of the mind" but a "creature of the social system, and will reflect its culture."¹²⁵

Then, by invoking the principle of the similarity of the human mind, "a common principle of intelligence . . . in the savage, in the barbarian, and in civilized man,"¹²⁶ Morgan found an additional reason for the universal pattern of cultural evolution and a new argument for the unity of man's origin. In the concluding pages of *Ancient Society* Morgan struck a final blow against the degeneracy theory of savages.

It is the hypothesis of human degradation to explain the existence of barbarians and of savages, who were found, physically and mentally, too far below the conceived standard of a supposed original man. It was never a scientific proposition supported by facts. It is refuted by the connected series of inventions and discoveries, by the progressive development of the social system, and by the successive forms of the family.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 491.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 553.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 506.

9. CONCLUSION

The comparative method, the concept of cumulative experience, the idea of progress, and the cosmopolitan range of nineteenth-century ethnology almost seem to duplicate the philosophical program of the Enlightenment. Were it not for the scientific discoveries and theories of an intervening century, the suggestion would immediately arise that Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan are direct intellectual descendants of Condorcet, Herder, Turgot, and D'Alembert. Although they shared a community of interests and ideas with social philosophers of the preceding period, the evolutionists' optimism concerning human advancement did not come to rest on reason as the vehicle of progress. Nor was their optimism expressed by a confident belief in the perfectability of man. Their estimate of human nature was a commonplace observation of the ways of man, and as the nature of their general enterprise dictated, man, more adequately described as a higher primate than a fallen angel, was neither exalted nor depraved.

The complexion of human nature was neutral; it was malleable enough to permit a wide liberality and diversity in the features of a social system. Man was not a rational but a utilitarian animal who knew an improved technique when he used one, and having used it, was unlikely to abandon it for a cruder prototype. ". . . No one would go back from letter-writing to the use of the quippu or hieroglyphics; no one would abandon the fire-drill and obtain fire by hand friction."¹²⁸ By this reasoning Lubbock and Tylor approached a definitive psychology only so far as to endow man with a little industry and to refuse to make him blind to his own advantage. The continuity of culture offered the means of modifying older tools and techniques into improved ones, and when such advances were made, they were likely to become permanent features of a cultural heritage. Degradation in such circumstances would be folly of a perverse sort; the common sense of utility, a

¹²⁸ Lubbock, *The origin of civilisation*, 341. Tylor takes the same position, writing, ". . . The adaptation of a cord to the fire-drill is obviously an improvement on the simpler instrument twirled by hand, and the use of the spindle for making thread is an improvement on the clumsier art of hand twisting; but to reverse this position, and suppose the hand-drill to have come into use by leaving off the use of the cord of the cord-drill, or that people who knew the use of the spindle left it off and painfully twisted their thread by hand, is absurd." *Primitive culture* 1: 63. See also Tylor, *Researches*, 185 and 193.

practical turn of mind, protected the race against it.

The evolutionists were content to leave progress to the process of building on "to what lies at hand," and, having assumed the immemorial stretch of time covered in cultural evolution, they found no reason to put a large burden on human reason and ingenuity. Both Tylor and Morgan contended that "in the lower ranges of culture progress would be extremely slow in comparison with that which experience shows among nations already far advanced."¹²⁹ Taking his clue from the rapidity of social change in modern times and noting the sluggishness of the first stages of social evolution, Morgan attempted to formulate a law of the ratio of human progress. Cultural accumulation, although at first necessarily slow, would in time become a significant growth. The locus of progress was cultural evolution itself, the evolution of the historical community, not the heroic and inventive genius of those men whom Tylor described as "transmitters and modifiers of the results of long past ages."¹³⁰

The animus that made the evolutionists, whether biologists or ethnologists, spokesman for a common point of view was a firm conviction about human history which was at the same time a scientific methodology. By their insistence on the genetic method, they intended to reject mythological explanations for tame ones. The evolutionary view was an analytical tool, and like any analytical tool, this one determined the kind of question asked and, in turn, the kind of answer pertinent to that question. Posing the question of origin, evolutionary studies furnished ready answers in terms bound to impress a generation self-consciously scientific: connecting episodes and transitional stages relieved the stark, dumb quality of the present. They gave civilization as modern man knew it a legitimate pedigree which even the British Association for the Advancement of Science would honor. After all, connections were causal, and the scheme of evolutionary development was not a random, lawless thing, but lent itself to generalization and orderly sequence.

The clue concept in the evolutionary approach was continuity, a continuity depressingly slow in displaying effects but unmistakably real. Piecemeal accumulation, the Darwinian theme, was dominant. But another theme with no Darwinian analogy emerged from the ethnologists' studies of

culture: the persistent holding on with all the force of ingrained habit, of practices hedged about with myth and taboo. The staying power of custom, preserving the established ways sanctified by the ancestors, was a new form of heredity just as real as the heredity of bodily structure. This cultural legacy fastened on a new generation a way of life not of its own making, and whether a product of independent development or a gift from further abroad, there was still its history or evolution to be traced.

Tylor's precise concept of the subject matter of ethnology was implicit in the drive to make the study of culture a naturalistic discipline. The idea that culture was a social, group product and not the labor of tongue-tied hermits, made the human creation of culture credible to minds attuned to matters of fact. Credulity might be strained at the thought that civilization was a free gift from on high, but there was nothing to balk the imagination in the view that civilization was the bounty of an historical community capable of cumulative development. If the social life of man was no exception to a universal order of nature, then culture was not a creation *de novo*. The works of man all had a past, and what now was had grown out of what had gone before. The genesis, growth, and diffusion of those works made up the compelling problems of cultural anthropologists; and, if there was to be a science of culture, the search for cultural origins in the continuity of social history became imperative.

On the presumptions drawn from current paleontology, archaeology, biology, and geology Tylor, Lubbock, and Morgan joined evolution and culture and made the development of culture a natural process embracing the whole family of man. They found hope for continuing advancement in a cultural evolutionary process in which racial distinctions might be dismissed as secondary and unimportant. The evolutionists tagged the simplicity and beauty of savage life as no less a myth than a primeval Golden Age. To them it seemed ridiculous to believe that the life of early man was relieved from squalor and brutishness by an unequaled and compensating freedom.

There are, indeed, many who doubt whether happiness is increased by civilization, and who talk of the free and noble savage. But the true savage is neither free nor noble; he is a slave to his own wants, his own passions; imperfectly protected from the weather, he suffers from the cold by night and the heat of the sun by day; ignorant of agriculture, living by the chase, and improvident in success, hunger always

¹²⁹ Tylor, *Primitive culture* 1: 55.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

stares him in the face, and often drives him to the dreadful alternative of cannibalism or death.¹³¹

The life of primitive man in a state of nature was all that Hobbes had said it was, except perhaps, never knowing a pre-social condition, man had never enjoyed that precarious freedom of being without law or master. It was not "dawn man," or the free and noble savage, or a Golden Age which stirred the imagination of the evolutionists and lured them to retrieve the past; it was progress and progress beckoned to the future.

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¹³¹ Lubbock, *Pre-historic times*, 569.