

PRIMARY REIFICATION
AND PRIMITIVE MYTHOLOGY

I

The expression of the nature and identity of mankind in the abstract, however clear it may be as a concept, is neither well thought out nor fully explored; hence it is at once the triumph and defeat of speculative and empirical anthropology. To be human is to participate in mankind in general, and to participate in a particular culture; it is the latter which is known best. Objectively, the individual achieves his human nature only through the channel of the particular culture, not through that of mankind in general; in this sense we speak of particular human nature. The unity and uniqueness of mankind as the culture-bearer, while having gained formal expression, has been given little substantial content. Moreover, the concept of the abstract concept, the totality as unity, has few consequences in relations between peoples and between social classes. The individual identity of man is engendered by the expression of his being of his

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own kind as opposed to the being of those other nations and classes, and as opposed eventually to the being of *the* other; this mode of achieving identity is counterposed to the concept of the unity of man, and the unity of the separate human group with mankind as a whole.

Further, civilized man has objectified man, but this objectification, in which man is conceived as an abstract, total and unitary object, is only made possible by a definite distancing between the observer-subject and the object, and has led to a further estrangement, from the object, then to alienation of the man-object as part of a process (in the civilized state) in which human production and labor are alienated. Men within this state and in this relationship treat other men with as little sympathy as they would a tool, an animal or any other product, even treating other men in the same society, but in other classes, as things. Moreover, in the state of civilization, cultures as unities become objectified, objectively symbolized, in their internal and external aspects; they become externalized as objects. Cultures become unitary and absolute in their formal identity and relations between cultures; become formal (absolute); hence we speak of the structure of society, culture contact, acculturation. Cultures as absolute unities are observed and measured relative to themselves and to each other, while each culture remains in absolute relationship to itself as an independent unity. Cultures, having become objectively externalized by civilized man, are mutually exclusive, and absolutely estranged, a relationship making possible, and at once made possible by, imperial and colonial relations. The conditions which have made possible the concept of mankind as an abstract, unitary, objective totality impede the realization of the concept.

In primitive society, on the other hand, the concept of man in general is frequently lacking, or incompletely conceived and expressed; man, the category of genuine man, will then refer to the members of the speaker's social group, to people of like language or culture, and the further extension of the notion is vague, even possibly including only some of the members of the group or culture or language community, excluding others, stopping short of its outer limits, which are therefore not considered to be an

absolute unity by its members. As a consequence, some members of the same people (conceived as an absolute ethnic unity by civilized men, the anthropologists) may be treated as outsiders, as others, albeit not as a thing or as something other than human, subhuman. In primitive circumstances, the expression of the identity of man is not conceived in the abstract as mankind, self-conscious social man, man as a member of human kind in general. On the contrary, the conscious awareness of the primitive society in question is barely developed, and therefore its identity is weakly expressed, while the identity of other men, man outside one's own social group, man in other societies, the *other* (man and society), and mankind as a whole, may not be given expression at all. Within primitive society, oppositions between own and other, between man and man, man and society, group and group (as whole society and part of a society), and next between man and nature, are poorly developed and expressed. There is no thought of contradictions within primitive society as these are conceived abstractly by civilized man; these may only be discovered *post hoc* by civilized man, who is in fully contradictory relations himself, and then traced back to their roots in primitive society, or by primitives who are so no longer, having come into contact with civilized societies.

The expression of the identity of the given primitive society, the name which man in that society gives to his society, and the identity which he takes from it, which is adopted by the social group, is not firm, but variable, and may not always be found. Thus, the name of the Chukchis is not one that these people traditionally applied to themselves; this name is a distorted form of the Chukchi word, *čauču*, meaning "rich in reindeer." But the Chukchis were and are divided into reindeer-breeders and coastal dwellers who live mainly by hunting of whales, seals, etc. Reindeer Chukchis are referred to by both divisions as *čauču*, excluding the coastal dwellers from the reference. Coastal Chukchis refer to themselves as *anqalit* ("sea folk") or *ramaglat* ("sea coast dwellers"). The reindeer Chukchis refer to the coastal tribesmen as *aiwan*; however, *aiwan* is also applied by Chukchis to Eskimos in the neighborhood of the Bering Strait. Moreover, Chauns, a people related to the Chukchis and similarly divided,

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refer to their own maritime tribesmen as *aiwan*. Chukchis of both divisions refer to themselves as a whole as *orawelat* ("men"), as *lyeorawelat* ("true men"), or as *lyiyililit* ("men of the true language"). Similarly, Eskimos on the Asian side of the Bering Strait refer to themselves as *yuit* or *yupiit* (*yuk* "man," *yupi* "true man"), and the Eskimos on the American shores refer to themselves as *inuit* (from *inuk* "man").

The traditional usage of *yuit* by Asian Eskimos to refer to themselves alone, some of the Asian Eskimos, or both Asian and American Eskimos is uncertain and variable; in the same manner, the traditional reference of *inuit* is not clear by the nature of the usage (the difficulty in explication is not due to faulty method by the anthropologist).

Chukchis refer to other tribes as *alveyelitit* ("those of foreign language"), while in the Chukchi language, an element *tannit* is found in combinations of words designating non-Chukchis of specific kinds: the neighboring Koryaks, who are close to the Chukchis in language and culture, are referred to as *lyetannit* ("true foreigners"); the Russians, who have been in contact with the Chukchis since the 17th century, are referred to as *melbittannit* ("firelock foreigners").¹

These are all terms of descriptive reference, but are also fixed, characterizing epithets; they are not names, modes of address, still less terms of identification of the other or others, nor terms of self-identification by the other peoples. The Chukchis and neighboring peoples, other than the Russians, are poor in terms of ethnic and social differentiation and identity. Thus, "Chukchi," "Koryak," "Eskimo," are not identifying symbols, nor are they cries, alarms, or appeals. Correspondingly, acts of mutual aid and cooperation among Chukchis as such, as between reindeer and coastal Chukchis, are virtually non-existent. At the same time institutions of mutual benefit are found to exist, both within the wandering bands and between members of different bands.

For the purpose of objectification, the oppositions of identity and difference, of self and other, and therefore of subject and object, must be clearly posited. In objectification, moreover, a

¹ W. Bogoraz, "The Chukchee". American Museum of Natural History. *Memoirs*, vol. XI. (Jesup North Pacific Expedition, vol. VII) 1904-1909, pp. 11-20.

distancing or removal between the paired opposites, as an action of the mind, must be accomplished, but this is not well and fully the case in regard to the names of peoples, tribes, and their denominations of identity and otherness, as the traditional usages of the Chukchis and their neighbors indicate. The only clear guide to the *process* of identity and differentiation in Chukchi culture which the Chukchis themselves provide is their reference to language: own, or true language versus language of others. This is not a self-conscious act of objectification in the form of symbolic reference; that is, a category "own or true genuine" (Chukchi *lye*) has not been symbolized by abstraction and its uniform application, indifferent to context and denomination. It is rather a reference to a point of departure, the known, just as to the Chukchis the best-known non-Chukchis are those known to the outside world, but not to themselves (traditionally), as Koryaks, and whom the Chukchis refer to as *lyetannit*, "true non-Chukchis." The Koryak language is not included in this Chukchian term of reference. The Chukchi tribe exists in the minds of Chukchis, but not as a clear reference to itself, nor in clear distinction from other tribes; for the term referring to the entire tribe is not clearly conceptualized and symbolized: this is to be inferred both from the process of denomination and differentiation, and from the content of that which is denominate and differentiated. The process is a set of references to identity and difference by means of language, but without symbolization of that which is referred to in these relationships. In the process, reference to language is made as the means to indicate self-identification and differentiation but in doing so does not raise these to an abstraction. No symbol has been raised by the Chukchis for the tribal denominative system as a whole. From this we infer that the corresponding processes of consciousness and self-consciousness in reference to society and the individual were not developed with sufficient plenitude and clarity by the Chukchis.

The insufficiently developed Chukchian consciousness of self and society and its objectification is demonstrated by their terms of reference* in identification and is bound up with their internal

* In the study of kinship, distinction is made between terms of address

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social relations, their relations to surrounding societies, and to nature. These may be shown by the study of their myths. In the myths of civilized society, objectification, the making of a thing or thought into the object, and objectivation, the perceiving and conceiving the object as object, are negated. In primitive myth, they are neither affirmed nor negated, they are not developed; but instead, reification, the representation of a relation or a human being as a thing, hence the representation of the thingness of both culture and nature, is expressed. But it is necessary to distinguish between reification in primitive myth—the primary meaning—and in civilized society—secondary reification as a social relation and as a secondary meaning. To establish these distinctions we must examine not myth, but the process of mythopoeia, and the society, not globally but analytically and critically.

If reification and hypostatization are counterposed to each other as opposite movements, respectively as movements from higher to lower and from lower to higher forms of thought, then each term must be made relevant to particular cultural developments, primitive and civilized. In the civilized state, man is in reified relationships as master-slave, lord-serf, landowner-peasant, king-subject, employer-employed, superordinate-subordinate. Reification in civilized society is a derivative second-order, reification: that of man himself by man, as social act and as concept.

In the primary reification of primitive society there can be no question of this transformation of a man, or a thought into a thing, for there are no inherent superior-inferior relations in these societies, just as there is no inherent distancing between man and man, man and nature, etc. By virtue of the process of transfor-

and of reference, which is here applied to the system of tribal denomination. The Chukchian terms referring to *their various divisions* are terms of reference only. The terms with which they refer to themselves as a whole are of a different kind: their common term of reference is a characterization; it is not a term of address. Chukchi ethnography was studied by W. Bogoraz while he and his colleague, W. Jochelson, were in political exile in Siberia as members of the *Narodnaya Volya*. Later, they returned to their subject as accredited ethnographers of official Tsarist and U.S. expeditions. Bogoraz attempted to gain consensus on the term *Luorovetlan*, a Russified form of *Iyerorawelat*, but the Chukchis and all other peoples have lately opted for *Chukchi* as the term of address and reference for Chukchis as a whole.

mation of categories in primitive thought, all relations of man, society, and nature may be reified; birds have the power of human speech, a spirit becomes a man; and these are both individuals and classes of phenomena which are transformed. But while categories are fluid, processes are arrested. Moreover, the formation of categories does not necessarily proceed from within, from the nature of the man, spirit, animal, etc.; it may do so, but not as a conscious end of the mythopoeia. The necessity of reification in primitive myth is posited by the fluidity of the categories, whereby that which is fluid is arrested and fixed, not as a thing-in-itself, as thing objectified and conceived as object in thought, but as a thing-in-thought, *res* directly transformed as thought, together with its direct expression and transformation in myth.

The relation between reification and objectivation is that of the material conditions of social life and the mental processes. Reification in civilized society is the act in which men are treated as actual things by other men, while the act of objectivation in thought is made possible conceptually by an increasing distancing of man from man in society as social relations of superiority-inferiority are developed, as subject is distanced from object, as primary reification is transformed into secondary reification. At the same time, the relation of objectivation is a parent of the concept of reification in civilized society, since the formation of classes in society alone makes possible the reified relation. Estrangement and alienation are concepts of the same order but are still further developed relations of society.

II

Myth has many meanings; and many who seek a category of human expression that intends many things have turned to the myth for this reason. The plurality of forms and meanings of the myth as a concept follows from the nature and purpose of its study from without. However, the plurality also proceeds from its inner substance and from its functions within the different social context in which it is found. The myth is at the same time a unitary concept to be studied as such.

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1. Anthropologists have written of myth as the medium of recording and exposition in the thought of primitive people, referring to the tale, a kind of myth in which a sequence of events is recounted, and as a technically related medium, the etiological tale, in which a material thing or a human state of being is accounted for. The etiological tale is subsumed under the folk-tale in general in its recounting aspect, but it also expounds in a different manner from chronological recounting, as an accounting for, and in this sense a philosophizing. Boas conceived of the mythological production of the Plains Indians as a recounting-accounting in this way.²

The tale accounts for a thing, or a state of affairs relating men and things, men and men, or things and men. Myth comprises other mental activities which have techniques in common with philosophizing: classification, including the establishment of hierarchies of classes; the reference of the classes and hierarchies of classes to an ideal, non-actual or real, milieu; the representation of the classes of the phenomena of the sensory world. Myth also comprises the transformation of the classes as categories, one into another; the representation of a category, not as a class with one member, but as the member of the class itself; and the opposite—the conception of a thing not as a thing but as a class of things. Durkheim and Mauss have proposed that Plato “had a lesser notion of this hierarchical organization (than did Aristotle) because, for Plato, the forms were in a sense homogeneous, and some could be reduced to others by the dialectic.” The process of transformation of one class into another without fixity of classification was to them a characteristic of primitive thought. They held that metamorphosis of qualities, personal substitutions, transsubstantiations, precede our, post-Aristotelian, method of rigorous classification and deduction; in this earlier stage the individual loses his personality in the group: consciousness is a stream of representations, and as an emotional activity is fluid and inconstant. Cognition and emotion are hence intermingled, the individual lacks an exclusively cognitive mental activity be-

² F. Boas, “Folk-Tales of the North American Indians,” *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, vol. 27, 1914, pp. 374-410. *Race, Language and Culture*, 1940, pp. 451-490.

cause he lacks a clear conception of the self. The center of the first systems of nature, according to Durkheim and Mauss, is not the individual but society.³ It is society which is objectified and objectivized and not man.

We find little objectification in primitive myth, for it is in the evolved society that the individual objectivizes. This society alone is the condition of self as subject, the self-conscious, thinking subject, in which is evolved the relation of self to society and of self and society to nature. We would therefore rephrase the view of Durkheim and Mauss: it is the society which must be evolved, the individual evolved from, in, and by the society; and thus alone can the distancing between subject and object (objectification) and of perceiving and conceiving of the object as object, separate from subject, take place. In primitive myth categories of representations of classes are loose and infirm; classes of the sensorium, of phenomena, classes of language and of things, are not clearly expressed, separated and distanced from each other and objectified.

2. Post-Homeric Greeks showed a sceptical attitude toward myth, but, as Bury has put it, their mythopoetic faculty did not slumber;⁴ their *Dichtung* was devised to express a *Wahrheit* which direct reporting could not attain; and their sphere of reference was human and moral rather than cosmogonic and natural-supernatural. Etiology is developed in both the primitive and the historical Greek myth. But in the former, the recountings and accountings retold events which actually took place and were so conceived, or were sequences of events which may or may not have taken place or may not have taken place in the sequence unfolded in the myth, or may have taken place with other characters or places than those appearing in the tale; or, again, in various combinations of the categories of actuality, sequence, transformation, attribution, location in time and space, and their negations. The historic Greek myth, on the other hand, is concerned with events of mythical content, but simultaneously with

³ E. Durkheim and M. Mauss, "De quelques formes primitives de la classification," *Année Sociologique*, 1901-1902, vol. 6, pp. 1-72.

⁴ J. B. Bury, *The Ancient Greek Historians*, 1958, p. 56.

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critical reference to the state of affairs of the mythopoetic. Mannheim counterposed the aristocratic mythopoeia to the critical world-view of the artisanate in post-Periclean Greece and has made each of these a mode of representation and self-expression of a social class.⁵ Their respective representations served to unify them internally and as such were agencies of self-identity and engagements in the opposition of the social classes. In this case, the myth is counterposed to the non-myth: the aristocratic myth as reacting, pointing backward in time, nostalgic in tone. Here the myth is a partitive and divisive representation in the civilized society, as well as holistic, unitary and identifying in the social class.

3. Myth is applied in the sense of an ideological overburden which is borne by an actual and real situation: the myth of the state or of the hero. Here the mental overburden corresponds only in part to the actuality and is in part a conscious invention. But the invention is not the mythical element; whole myth, including the actuality, the element of truth which corresponds to it, and the invented, together form the myth.

The myth in primitive as in civilized society is both a mental and a social construction, serving as a mode of expression and representation. The representation is undivided in primitive society, even though the society itself is not a unity, and is conceived as a unity (whether because the process of objectivation has not been realized in full, or because, objectively, the society is not a unity but has been arbitrarily conceived as a unity by outsiders—civilized man).

The myth serves as representation of the whole society, social class, corporate body—whichever is the myth-bearer, and any of these may serve as such. This is the representation of the social group to itself, defining its view of itself to itself and to its social environment, and representing its unitary being to itself as the group which bears the myth, uniting itself around the myth as belief and representative system. The myth is the *agency* of representation of the unity of the group to itself. The myth is the *mode* of group representation to itself and to the social environ-

⁵ K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (L. Wirth and E. Shils, tr.), 1959, pp. 9, 96.

ment which by its mythical content reveals itself, and the group bearing it, to be oriented to the past or future, critical or naive, aggressive or peaceable, and so forth. The myth as representation is therefore a declaration of the nature or modus of the group—its sense of its style and its representation to the world of what it is. Further, as a self-conscious act, if such it is, the myth is the representation to the world of what the myth-bearer group seeks to be known as. However, not all myths are self-conscious productions.

Globally considered, myth is a holistic representation in primitive society, the process and result of the fact of social unity, as its agency and modus of representation. This myth is the expression of the relations of the teller to the line of tellers, to the auditors as a moment in the line of participants, to the society, to nature and supernature. The primitive mythical product is all-embracing. Bogoraz approached the shamanistic myths of the Chukchis as a primitive cognitive system, a “system of primitive mentality, a complex of ideas and perceptions of external things, material and psychical... One may discuss the mathematics, physics, art and philosophy of shamanism.”⁶ As *Bogoraz* one may discuss these matters, not as a Chukchi.

This great ethnographer has described the manner in which the Chukchis arrange their myths, expressing the order of social history and of the cosmos thereby, at once a recounting and an accounting system in temporal (real time) sequence of three periods and types of myth: (1) Tales concerning the earliest times, before the world assumed its present form, are called *tet-temwagtagniken-pynylte*, “account of the time of the original creation.” These are cosmogonic tales and also miscellaneous information concerning the celestial and earthly beings, which are the content of these tales. (2) *lye lumnylte*, “genuine, proper tales.” These are tales of shamans, evil spirits (*kelet*), animals. Their time and place is the world with earth, sea, sky and their inhabitants in their present forms. (3) *a qäliletkin pynylte*, “hostile tales”—accounts of wars with Eskimos, maritime peoples generally,

⁶ W. Bogoraz, “Ideas of Space and Time,” *American Anthropologist*, n.s., vol. 27, 1925.

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Russians, etc. The history of the world is correspondingly divided into three periods, *tet-temwa-tagnepu*, "first creation time;" *lumnyl tagnepu*, "tale time;" and *a qäliet tagnepu*, "quarrelling time."⁷

The cosmogonic tales, *pynylte*, are relatively more circumstantial than the shaman, spirit, and animal tales, identifying figures of individuals and locations of events more fully. The genuine tales, *lumnylte*, are so called not because of the greater truth of their content—the truth-content is irrelevant—but because they are ordinary tales, tales as such, the great majority of the tales. The *lumnylte* recount, and only to a lesser degree, account for actions concerning shamans and spirits. The war-tales conform to this typology, but will not be discussed here. Shamans rarely appear as tale-tellers, and in the mythical tale, both *pynylte* and *lumnylte*, teller and shaman are differentiated in regard to tales and lore, and in regard to their social functions. For the tale-teller is an ordinary Chukchi, working and living in the world of everyday life, the structure and meaning of which is recounted and accounted for in the myth-tales. The shamans chant and sing in their shamanistic rites acting in relation to the spirits. The teller of tales and the shaman are side by side, in a primitive division of socio-mythopoetic labor.

If the shaman were subject and teller of the *lumnyl*, this would imply a distancing of self from self, a perceiving of self as subject and as object, self-objectivation and subjectivation, which is not the case. The distancing of subject from object occurs among peoples no longer primitive, under acculturation, when alienation by man makes man into an object by the agency of the subject, and into a subject by the agency of the object. Now the singer-shaman is an agent, man becoming an agent, who in performing his rite communicates by clairvoyancy with the spirits, divines the secrets which are hidden from ordinary men by speaking with the inner voice (ventriloquy—the most highly honored of the shaman's arts), and by exorcising the spirit of a disease, accomplishes acts of magical healing.⁸

⁷ W. Bogoraz, "The Folklore of Northeastern Siberia," *American Anthropologist*, n.s., vol. 4, 1902, pp. 581-583.

⁸ W. Bogoraz, "K psikhologii shamanstva u narodov severovostočnoj Azii," *Etnografičeskoe Obozrenie*, 1910, No. 1-2, p. 21.

(The primitive myth is a field in which consciousness and self-consciousness, objectification, objectivation, alienation, and reification will be analyzed as non-developed or not well-developed, and as such may be found in the mythopoeia of advanced, western civilization as well. But this is less important than the idea that all human thought is joined and divided in the way shown here; thus, reification is a common property of human thought, differing in its primitive and civilized aspects.)

TWO CHUKCHI TALES

1. *Lumnyl* of the Maritime Chukchis: A girl refused to marry at her father's order. "Whom do you want to marry? You do not heed our behest to marry. No doubt you will marry an evil spirit-*kele*." She paid no attention. Then every evening she sang outside (the tent): "From the lake, penis, come out." Then she would go in. Her father heard this, and said to his wife, "Oh, this daughter, when we try to get her to marry, she quarrels. But to whom is she married? To a lake-*kele*." But they said nothing further. Then evening came, she went to the lake, then she began to sing on the lakeshore, "From the lake, penis, come out." Then only a penis appeared. She sat down upon it there and she herself copulated (with it). At the dawn of the day she went home. Then her father told her, "Now fetch some wood." She obeyed. He and his wife went to the lake and tricked it: "From the lake, penis, come out." Then, from the lake a penis appeared suddenly again. They took it, they cut it, so they killed it. Then the wood-carrier returned, evening was coming on. The girl quickly cooked food. It was evening, she went to the lake, they watched. Then again she began to sing, "From the lake, penis, come out." Nothing. Again, "From the lake, penis, come out." Oh, after that, she began to cry. "How strange." Nothing. Then she cried. She sorrowed much for the penis. She was secretly watched by her housemates. Oh, but it was not, oh. Then, finishing crying, again, "From the lake, penis, come out." Even thus crying, as though for the dead (husband) she was mourning. Then she came home, she could not (do anything). The next day

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she went to the open country. She found a big skull. (Told by the Maritime Chukchi Qotirgin in 1901.)⁹

1a. A related *lumnyl* of the Chukchis: A girl found a skull, and hid it. Her mother came upon the skull (in the daughter's absence), and believed that her daughter had become a *kele*: "Our only daughter has become a *kele*! An abomination, to be feared!" The father calmed the mother. A daughter returned, spoke to the skull and amused herself with it. The father and mother then abandoned the daughter and the skull on an isolated, barren shore. The daughter scolded and punished the skull. The skull instructed her, remonstrating, "Find me a body. Make a fire and put me in it." The daughter complained that she would have no one to talk to. The skull reassured her that he would be made whole. But he made a condition, "Do not watch me." Thus she did, and then she was called. She looked up and saw a finely dressed husband with a great herd of reindeer. She was now well. Her father and mother visited; the couple feasted and then assassinated the elders. *Plägi yoočbyn tynmga n*, "Finished the wind, I have killed it." (Bogoraz added this note: on the shores inhabited by the Chukchis, wind and bad weather continue for weeks, preventing all hunting and travelling. During these periods, people stay in the inner room of the house and while away the time of enforced leisure by telling countless stories. The storytelling is considered to be a magical means of laying the wind.)⁹

2. A tale of creation, *tet-temwa pynyl*. Creator lived with his wife. There was nothing, no land, no mountains, only water, and above it, the sky. Also, a little piece of land, just large enough for them to sleep on at night. Creator said to his wife, "Certainly we feel downcast. We must create something to keep us company." "Yes." They each took a spade and started to dig the earth and throw it in all directions. They dug a ditch so large and deep that all water flowed down to it. Only the lakes remained in deep hollows, and the rivers in clefts and ravines. The large ditch became the sea. After that they created animals and men. Only they forgot to create Raven. They left on their camping

⁹ Bogoraz, "Chukchee Mythology," AMNH, *Memoirs*, vol. VIII, 1913. Tales no. 2-3.

place a large outergarment (*nyglon*). Raven came out of it in the night. He went to visit Creator. "Who are you?"

"I am Kúurkil (Raven), the self-created."

"How strange. Self-created! I thought I had created everything, and now it appears that you are of separate origin."

"Yes, I am Kúurkil, the self-created."

"Well, here, bring some pieces of *amanita muscaria*, the fly-agaric. Eat them and be full of their force."

Raven ate the fly-agaric (in a state of induced trance). "I am Kúurkil. I am the son of *nyglon*." (Repeated.)

"Indeed, and I thought you were self-created, and now it is apparent that you are the son of *nyglon*. You are one of mine, created by me, you liar." (The end.)¹⁰

The first tale, *lummyl*, recounts an everyday concern, of parents for the marriage of their marriageable daughter, wherein the relation between the sexes, the appearance of the penis and the copulation of the girl with it are extrapolated from their human context and reified. The cultural *relata* are transformed: the *kele* which the parents fear the penis to be is not a *kele*; it is transformed into the form desired by the daughter, a handsome, sexually potent husband, rich in reindeer. The skull, like the penis, is not transformed into its opposite; the husband emerges in either case from the transformation by extension from one of his *composita*. The human skull in these tales is accounted for in other, etiological tales as the divining stone of *kelet* and shamans. This is a tale of *embourgeoisement*. The daughter daydreams, she wants only a certain kind of husband, the parents want any kind for her. The girl is aware of the desirable attributes to be sought in a husband not as a human individual, but as a means to acquire property, establish a family, etc., which is to be encountered in bourgeois society in a more highly developed form, one which is different in degree from the form in the Chukchi myth, while the societies are different in kind. The bourgeois form is the actual realization of the daydream quality of this Chukchi myth, as objectification of man as a bundle of traits,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, "Creation Tales," no. 1, second version.

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hence as alienation. This is a tale of conflict of the points of view between generations; alienation within the family, between the generations, is recounted in this *lumnyl*, but not accounted for: the parents of the bride are first feted, then murdered.

In the Raven tale, natural and cultural processes are arrested and reified while Creator is the hypostatization of man and the anthropomorphized form of the spirit. After earth, animals, garments, men, sky, water, Creator and his wife, sleep, spades, families, directions, rivers, lakes, ditches are accounted for, all partaking in the tale, it is found that Raven, whose role is not explicit but *assumed*, has been overlooked. This reification which rests on the Chukchi Creation mythology in general, is different from the reification of copulation in the figure of the penis, for in the latter, the one implies the other: the relation between the sexes is intrinsic to the act of sexual congress, and to the tale itself.

The Raven is culturally given; as such he may break rules, arrest the process of creation, lie; but he is bound by rules (You are one of my own, says Creator), and is put into a trance by administration of the poison mushroom. In this trance he tells the truth compulsively, repeatedly, and does not joke, riddle, or lie. This is a shaman's action, for the shaman eats the fly-agaric to induce a state of trance in which he sees and necessarily repeats the truth. The cultural tradition regarding the structure and meaning of the shaman's rite is accounted for and transformed into another context, the Raven tale, in which the shaman is not present, for the events of these tales take place before the shaman's time. Raven is not a shaman, nor the inversion of the shaman in the time before the world came to be as it is. The Raven tale is the etiological accounting for the shaman's paraphernalia and rite: the mushroom, trance, and sooth-saying.¹¹ If Raven is ignored, he can obtrude his presence, for he is a proper part of the Chukchi tradition of the mythopoeia of creation. The tradition establishes the propriety of the theme in the Raven tale; conversely, it is established by the inner meaning of the *lumnyl*. It is mythopoeically (in Chukchi) proper that the sexual congress be reduced to a mature-enough female and a penis. It is also proper that

¹¹ Bogoraz, *K psikhologii shamanstva*, pp. 1, 19.

Raven not be forgotten in a Chukchi Creation myth. The first propriety is biologically suggested, just as a skull that speaks, etc., and takes its place in the myth. Raven's role in creation is the expression of the thingness of creation as a natural-cultural process, as a thing inherent in the primitive nature-culture ecology expressed in myth. The two tales are not balanced opposites to each other. The reification is in one case warranted by the tradition; in the other, the reification is warranted by the argument *pars pro toto*, male member for male as a whole, not as a trope but as a structure internal to this mythopoetic thought. The dialectical opposition between the mode of reification in the *lumnyl* and the mode of Raven's role in creation is incomplete and hence defective.

Primary reification has the common character of raising (razing, and in this sense also raising) the process of the myth, as a proper part of mythopoeia. The act of primary reification in primitive myth is the positing of the mythical tradition in relation to itself but without selfconsciousness, for if it were done selfconsciously, then the myth would be critical, objective, selfcritical. But the self as subject does not appear in primitive myth and is not distanced, removed from the object; thus, Raven is not a being contemplating its creation as self, but is the play, the unforeseen in creation, the being full of animal spirits. As such he is not an individual, a *persona*, but may enter the tale by virtue of his generality, traditionality, non-personality. His "personal" traits are those shared by animals, including man. But the Chukchi mythology also includes a tale of the girl who reifies and objectifies the husband, and thus we are told something about her as a person. The girl is not a girl in general at this point, but, by the force of her wish, seeks a husband with particular characteristics: she is a *persona*. The objectification of the husband is not primitive, it is rather a body of particularities of social value borne by a man, the beginning of social distancing.

III

The differentiation of the shaman and the tale-teller is an elementary distancing between men, but without any alienation of man

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from man, either in the economic or in the social-psychic meaning of the term. While the teller of the mythico-shamanistic tale is an ordinary man or woman, the shaman is an extraordinary one: unusually, even abnormally, tense, exaggerated in gestures and speech, excessively shy, malicious, unruly, often homosexual or alcoholic, and overreacting to pain or the anticipation of pain. Yet there is no cleft between these people and the rest of the society. Shamans are one element in the calculus of social and personal types in the Chukchi world; a necessary element, whose contact with good and evil spirits, spiritual power in general, is valued.¹² The shamans and the spirit world with which they are in communication are parts of the Chukchian cosmos. Shamans communicate with fellow Chukchis, but gaze askance, beyond, not into the eyes of the collocutor. Ordinary Chukchis practice seances on their own; but if they perform the rites with the intent to trick their neighbors, thus as shamans, who are tricksters and do trickery, as ordinary non-adept Chukchis, they are without success, either in their trickery or in their shamanizing.

The alienation of the labor product from the producer, the alienation of man in and from society and the alienation of aberrants are relationships of civilized economies and societies with great distance between social classes, between man and man in society, and between normal and abnormal. Man and thought are objectivized under these circumstances, and man can be conceived as a thing by other men only if the social distance between subject and object is great. But the social distances between Chukchis are not great; hence the various forms that alienation takes are not found in Chukchi society. But if alienation is not found or at any rate is not found in a socially developed mode, then reification is; however, this reification is not that of man made into thing. Where the difference between person and thing is not clear there can be no thought of man being reified, nor again of a distancing of subject and object, of opposition of subject and subject, and of subject and object. This is a secondary reification.

The primary reification is a non-distancing in thought between

¹² L. Krader, "Buryat Religion and Society," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 10, 1954, pp. 322-351.

man and man, man and society, man and nature, just as the social organization has no class divisions, class oppositions, and the economy has neither alienation of products from the producer nor commodity production. However, this reification, like any others, is performed by the arresting and raising to the attention of that which does not necessarily flow out of the process itself, either of creation of the world or of a human being. Reification in its primitive, and in this sense primary, meaning is not false objectification, nor again false objectivation, for false implies true or genuine. But in the mythical reference, objectification and objectivation do not take place or else are barely emergent and not fully developed; therefore they are not false, nor can they be falsified. Reification in primitive myth is not false consciousness, for in the context of myth the objectification by the subject-thinker of the self as object of thought and the objectivation of the content of myth do not take place.

The myth itself does not stop merely by the telling; its possibility is not exhausted by the participation of the group in the telling. The process of myth is not arrested, just as the processes of nature and culture are not satisfied and eliminated by myth. The technique of myth is oral, and hence ephemeral in its particular expression; but at the same time the myth transcends the moment of recounting, and participation forms part of and is *traditio*, told across cultural time. It is *religio*, the ligature of the culture. The oral is fleeting, but the myth has duration, and hence fixity in form and theme. The ligature, moreover, is a theme itself, a fixed point of reference in the social life: there is a season for the recounting of myth; the themes are fixed in their terms and relations; the themes have a specific location in the culture, relating man to man, and society to nature; by the force of these placements they are thus and not otherwise. The factors making for duration of the myth and the fixity of the themes and forms of the myth are both internal to the myth and external, neither internal nor external to the culture, not distanced from the teller and auditor-participant.

The season of Chukchi recounting of the myth is the season of blizzards, when social life is physically confined, bound, in small social groups, psychically intense. The social tensions are

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relieved by the tale-telling; the attention is arrested and engaged. Man is not clearly the ecologically dominant element in the Chukchi culture, which is barely above the plane of nature; control of nature by the hunting economy is weak, if it can be so conceived at all. Nevertheless, the Chukchis have survived, have maintained their society and culture in the face of the vicissitudes of the social and natural environment. Their numbers are maintained today as they were at the end of the 19th century; demographically they are in the strongest position of the native peoples of northeast Siberia.¹³ Moreover, the traditions of the Chukchis as recorded in their tales were firmer at the end of the last century than those of their neighbors: their tales were their

¹³ The demographic history of the peoples in question follows. The retention of the traditional language is here considered to be the index of the strength of the cultural tradition in general. The Chukchis of today are cognizant of the name Chukchi as that of their society and culture, Koryaks of Koryak, and so forth; the material culture has changed profoundly with the introduction of metal utensils and weapons; literacy programs have been introduced; hunting and reindeer breeding continue to be practiced as the mainstays of life; products of the economy are marketed in the Soviet Union.

Chukchis underwent a population decrease from 1926 to 1959 of 5 per cent, which is not severe compared to that of Koryak, Eskimo, Kamchadal. In 1959, they maintained a comparatively high proportion of the total population speaking the respective native language.

Name of People	Population Size			Speaking own Language	
	a)	b) 1926	c) 1959	b) 1926	c) 1959
Aleut	501 ¹⁾	353	421	337	94
Chukchi	12,000 ²⁾	12,332	11,727	12,248	11,014
Eskimo of Siberia	1,134 ³⁾	1,293	1,118	1,268	939
Kamchadal (Itelmen)	5,700 ⁴⁾	4,217	1,109	860	399
Koryak	6,702 ⁵⁾	7,439	6,287	7,091	5,692
Yukagir	1,003 ⁶⁾	443	442	353	232

¹⁾ 1909. ²⁾ 1900. ³⁾ 1925. ⁴⁾ 1924. ⁵⁾ 1924. ⁶⁾ 1901.

Sources: ^{a)} *Akademija Nauk SSSR. Trudy Momissii po izučeniju plemennogo sostava naselenija SSSR*, vol. 13. Spisok narodnostej SSSR. 1.1. Zarubin ed. Leningrad, 1927.

^{b)} *Tsentral'naja Statističeskaja Upravlenie SSSR. Vsesojuznaja Perepis' Naselenija 1926 g.* Moscow, vol. 17, table 6.

^{c)} *Tsentral'naja Statističeskaja Upravlenie SSSR. Itogi Vsesojuznoj perepisi Naselenija, 1959, g.* Moscow, 1962, table 53.

own and were recalled and recounted in full, in large number, and in words of the Chukchi vocabulary; whereas the Koryak and Yukagir tales were not well-remembered and the ethnographer was told that in the past they had been recounted in more complete form.¹⁴ Yukagir vocabulary was, moreover, heavily laden with Russian words; Chukchi tales are told in their own language.

Their language is a human speech, with their power of classification and of hierarchies of ever broader classification, therefore of logical thought, expressed therein. In its mythopoetic expression their language comprises the transformation of categories, the category of transformation, in a manner more primitive and primary than that which Durkheim and Mauss imputed to the Platonic dialectic; this category is the class of reification, of transformation of man and process into thing, and conversely of thing into man, process, idea (hypostatization). This transformation is achieved without selfconscious, critical objectification and objectivation, but as primary reification, without distancing of man from nature; man, in the absence of ecological dominance, is not superior to the surrounding forces of nature.

The principle of ecological dominance is the total intermediation of culture in the relations of mankind with nature such that nature is totally internalized and culture totally externalized. This is the dominance towards which culture in civilized society tends to move. But in all cases, culture is variable, not universal, and the natural relations which are made into culture are the culture's own, man's own, relations which vary from culture to culture. The dominance of civilized society is a variable, imperfect relation. On the other hand, the absolute dominance of the human biological composition and of external nature, that towards which culture tends, can have nothing irrelevant and meaningless in nature, while the almost-dominant measures its distance from absolute dominance by the degree to which nature is non-significant, irrelevant and meaningless. The Chukchian cultural ecology, which is at one extreme on this scale, comprises little that is naturally meaningful; the degree to which nature is internalized is small, the instrumentalities of culture barely touch

¹⁴ W. Jochelson, "The Yukagir," AMNH, *Memoirs*, vol. IX, 1926. Ch. XIV.

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nature. Nature is not distanced or removed from man, and hence it is not objectivized in Chukchian culture; their nature-lore is not the product of selfconscious thought, and hence it is not natural science.

Lore is knowledge of nature, culture, or any sort of knowledge except knowledge in general, knowledge as abstract principle, and as such is not objectified or internalized. Lore is the unself-conscious expression of natural and cultural relations, a reflection in the mental activity of man of these relations, without abstraction from its context. Lore, as nonabstract knowledge and knowledge which is nonabstracted from context, is knowledge as manipulation, that is, noninternalized knowledge, knowledge which lacks scientific controls gained through mastery of principles of the field of science. (Hence, the study of man in general is primarily lore, for it is only with difficulty, barely, if at all, abstracted from its human, cultural, and psychic context, which is man as object as distanced from the subject. For man appears as object in the study of man primarily, and in this sense primitively, as little other than a thing. The thingness of man as object of scientific study is a reification of a higher order than the primary reification in primitive myth and is related to alienation, the secondary reification of man in the economic, social, and psychological relations of civilized society.)

Lore, however, is not an alienation of the object, nature, for man is not distant from the natural environment. Hence, nature cannot be conceived as alienated from primitive man. Insofar as nature is not alienated, then the instrumentalities of culture are variable not by virtue of the character of the instrumentality, but by virtue of the system of (direct) relations with nature: the world as sensorium, encountered without or with little cultural intermediation. But culture is at once an organon of instrumentalities, a body of method and doctrine for the development of natural relations; but it is an organon only to the extent that it is objectivized; to this extent the cultural ecology of the Chukchis is weakly developed. For this reason, the instrumental universe of the Chukchi reindeer breeder or hunter and mythopoet is closed, while the area of its application, both nature and supernature, is unbounded, formless, and little known to or by the Chukchis;

and in this context, the application of the instrumentalities will be haphazard; and their ensemble is scarcely an organon, rather a patchwork.¹⁵ Chukchi ecology is the direct relation of culture and nature by human beings close to nature, of culture without or with little dominance, without distancing and objectivation, without selfconsciousness.

¹⁵ Lévi-Strauss, *La Pensée Sauvage*, 1962, pp. 26-32: *bricolage*.