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ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA

Volume 3 Number 1

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Photograph from The Smithsonian Institution

EDWARD WILLIAM NELSON

1855-1934

EDWARD WILLIAM NELSON

MARGARET LANTIS

This is an appropriate time to honor E. W. Nelson. This year is the twentieth anniversary of his death and next year will be the one-hundredth anniversary of his birth.

Edward Nelson was born at Amoskeag, New Hampshire, May 8, 1855, eldest son of William and Nancy Martha (nee Wells) Nelson. He had one brother and at his death was survived only by his brother's two sons. He never married but in middle life made his home with his mother in Washington, D. C.

Nelson's family lived in Manchester, New Hampshire, until his father joined the Union Army and his mother went as a nurse to a hospital in Baltimore. Edward and his brother then went to live with their maternal grandparents in the northern Adirondack Mountains in Franklin County, New York. Here he attended a one-room rural school, learned to live a hard frontier life and to enjoy newly discovered, uncultivated land, with its wealth of wildlife.

Near the end of the Civil War his father was killed. His mother established in Chicago a successful dressmaking business, and in 1868 young Nelson entered school there. Chicago then had the aspect of a big country town and it was easy for the boy to roam the shore of Lake Michigan, collecting biological specimens. Several people with natural history interests encouraged him to collect a variety of material and taught him a little of the necessary techniques of skinning and mounting. In the confusion and looting following the Chicago fire of 1871, young Nelson lost his collection of insects. Otherwise, he might have become an entomologist. Although his family lost business and home in the fire, they managed to re-establish themselves.

For disconnected periods, 1872-75, Nelson attended Cook County Normal School and with its principal's help was able to make his first field collecting trip, at the age of seventeen. In the summer and fall of 1872, Samuel Garman, ichthyologist and herpetologist, took him and the principal's son on an expedition to Utah, Nevada, and California. At this time he met Henry W. Henshaw, who later edited Nelson's big publication on the Alaskan Eskimos. They were joined for a while by E. D. Cope, who interested Nelson also in paleontology. His attention, however, was already well fixed on ornithology, his dominant interest through the first twenty years of his career.

After normal school, while teaching at Dalton, Illinois (1875-76), Nelson continued his natural history studies. His first papers, on birds of Illinois, were published in 1876 and 1877. Deciding that he preferred field work to teaching and having got acquainted, by correspondence, with several important naturalists, he went to Washington to try to get employment in the Smithsonian Institution. He did not obtain that but, through efforts of Henshaw, Spencer F. Baird, and Robert Ridgway,

was accepted as a weather observer in the Signal Corps for assignment to Alaska. In April 1877, he sailed from San Francisco.

While waiting at Unalaska for another ship to take him to Norton Sound, Nelson visited Sanak Island with a party of Aleut sea-otter hunters. From June 1877 to June 1881, he headquartered at St. Michael, which then had two or three agents of the Alaska Commercial Company, a Russian workman, and a settlement of Eskimos. In his "Narrative," pp. 11-17 of Henshaw's report on Nelson's natural history collections made in Alaska, Nelson told of his travels there. His description of the weather on his voyage from Unalaska to St. Michael (made without stops en route) and of other trips is vivid, showing one of his strong qualities: he liked to write, and wrote well.

Later, he said regarding the Alaska sojourn, "The first object of the trip was to secure an unbroken series of meteorologic observations, and, in addition, to obtain all the information possible concerning the geography, ethnology, and zoology of the surrounding region" ("Narrative," 1877b, p. 11). Being a careful, thorough, and tenacious worker (sometimes to the point of stubbornness), Nelson proceeded to do all those things.

Caucasian fur traders from 1500 miles of Yukon Valley and from several coast stations came to St. Michael annually in June and July, bringing local crews. Nelson thus had opportunity to hear various dialects, observe sports and other elements of Eskimo and Indian life, and make ethnological collections. More important, he trained others to tend his weather station so that he himself could travel. In 1877, he explored the district immediately around St. Michael.

In 1878, starting December 1st with a fur trader, he went by dog-sled along the coast to the Yukon mouth, up the Yukon to Andreavski, then southwest across the upper Yukon Delta, by the eastern base of the Kuslevak (Kusilvak) Mountains. Reaching the coast just south of Cape Romanzof at a bay previously unnamed, Nelson named it for Captain C. L. Hooper, U .S. Revenue Marine. They went south along the coast to Cape Vancouver. He named Hazen Bay in honor of General W. B. Hazen, Chief Signal Officer, and Baird Inlet in honor of Professor S. F. Baird, who probably did more than anyone else to make possible Nelson's professional career. The large lake near the head of Baird Inlet he named Dall Lake in honor of W. H. Dall, Coast Survey, another famous naturalist. The highest mountain of the range that ends at Cape Vancouver he named Mt. Robert Lincoln. Later the island on which Cape Vancouver is located was named Nelson Island in his own honor by the Chief of the Geographical Division, U. S. Census Bureau. Nelson Lagoon on the Alaska Peninsula also was named for him.

Encountering severe winter storms south of Cape Vancouver, the trader turned back while Nelson proceeded with an Eskimo. They were nearly caught by ice driven far onshore, a type of natural occurrence that has occasionally swept away villages in this area. After some delay,

they went on to the mouth of the Kuskokwim and about ninety miles upriver. They crossed over to the Yukon, reaching it about a hundred miles above Andreavski. After a trip upriver to Paimiut, they went back down the river to the coast and along it to St. Michael. Nelson estimated that in two months he had traveled about 1200 miles, most of the distance in very bad weather, the entire trip with the same dog-team. The last two days of his journey and after his return, he had a serious case of pneumonia, to which he attributed the beginning of the bad health that characterized a long period of his life.

Nelson's map of the area traversed was the first published map of the coastal region between Hooper Bay and the Kuskokwim River, and he wrote the first text description of the area from personal observation (1882). (Zagoskin had traveled the country farther inland). Ivan Petrof credited Nelson wtih the information for this area on his own map, published in the report of the 10th Census at nearly the same time as Nelson's own report. Map accuracy cannot be determined, as the area still is unsurveyed, but probably Nelson's map is more accurate. He also recorded observations of winter fauna. However, because Eskimo life has changed more since his time than have fauna and geography, he made his greatest contribution to knowledge by securing, besides several vocabularies, ethnological specimens from Eskimos over the entire route, many of which could not have been obtained by any later explorer. Many of the small tundra settlements visited by him between Hooper Bay and the Kuskokwim River still are seldom visited by Caucasians. There is no published account of them other than Nelson's. Besides several trading stations on the Yukon, Nelson visited thirty Eskimo villages and obtained sufficient information on at least sixteen others, which he passed near, so that he could include them on the map. As the Eskimos of most of these villages by 1878 had acquired little more of white man's culture than guns, tobacco, and a few trinkets, Nelson visited them at an excellent time, not only to obtain artifacts but to observe aboriginal ceremonies and festivals.

On May 9, 1879, with an Eskimo workman he started over the ice by dog-sled to the Yukon Delta to study water-fowl. After a few days at Kotlik, while the team and a driver returned to St. Michael, Nelson and his Eskimo companion went in a three-man kayak to an islet midway on the seaward face of the delta. A storm came, the ice broke up, and the men were imprisoned on the islet, very wet and cold. After the storm, Nelson made his ornithology collections and observations. On their way back to St. Michael, they had a narrow escape from drowning in a heavy sea. Nelson came through many such episodes by strong determination, by close attention to his problem, and by not being panicked. In some cases perhaps he was foolhardy, having undertaken journeys for which he had not adequately prepared; but because he often worked in unexplored country at a time when scientific and outdoor equipment was scarce and undeveloped, his difficulties could not always be foreseen.

On February 9, 1880, with a fur trader and two Eskimos, Nelson left St. Michael with two sleds. They traveled up the coast of Norton Sound in very cold weather for that area. Following the coast past Golovin Bay to Sledge Island, they found starvation along their whole route. Because no dog feed was available, they did not go beyond Sledge Island. The first white man to visit it in winter, they witnessed a dance and collected ethnographic specimens, then returned laboriously by the same route. Because of bad weather and scarcity of food, they wore out three dog teams but reached St. Michael by April 13. Nelson obtained geographic observations and vocabularies for four dialects, besides many specimens.

On November 16, 1880, with a fur trader, Nelson started on a trip across the mountains to the head of Anvik River, and traveled down it to the Yukon. They arrived at Anvik January 19, 1881. After a few days, Nelson went up the Yukon, crossed Shagaluk Island, and explored the country at the head of the Innoko River. He returned to St. Michael via the trading station of Anvik and the Yukon River. Although he did not mention the date of return, he must have spent several weeks in his river explorations. On this trip, as on the others, he studied ethnology, zoology, and geography. He estimated that he covered "in the three expeditions together" more than 3000 miles, besides the 1200 miles of his first expedition, to the Kuskokwim.

In June 1881, the Revenue Cutter "Corwin" (C. L. Hooper in command) picked him up on its northward voyage in search of the missing ship "Jeannette." He became the naturalist of the expedition, recording meteorological as well as other data (1833a). John Muir also was aboard . They visited the Diomede Islands, Plover Bay and the Siberian coast to North Cape, also St. Lawrence Island where Nelson had been instructed to investigate reports of starvation. Although he mentioned "accompanying disease" in his graphic description of the nearly complete depopulation of the Island (1899, pp. 20, 269-70), he seemed to conclude that the deaths were due to drunkenness, consequent failure to go hunting, and starvation solely. (It appears now that there was an epidemic.) On St. Lawrence Island, he collected Eskimo crania in addition to the usual ethnographic material. After a return to St. Michael, again on the "Corwin" he visited all of the Arctic coast from Bering Strait to Barrow, including Kotzebue Sound. The ship then sailed west. He stated that he and others from the "Corwin" were the first to scale Herald Island and the first to reach Wrangel Island. The landing on the latter island in the name of the United States after repeated failures, as described by Capt. Hooper (1884, pp. 54-66), was only one of the many excitements of discovery experienced by Nelson on his field trips.

He returned to San Francisco via St. Paul Island and Unalaska, arriving October 1881. Although his ethnographic collection contains specimens from Nunivak Island, there is no statement that he ever visited it. The "Corwin" with Nelson aboard must have sailed close to

Nunivak but Capt. Hooper's account of the voyage does not mention a landing. We do not know exactly how Nelson obtained his Nunivak artifacts and ethnographic notes.

The excellent basic collection of ethnographic specimens is in the U .S. National Museum, with duplicates in other museums. Nelson collected also birds, mammals, fish, and Lepidoptera. In one paper (1883a), he published notes on 192 species of birds. As a result of his field studies and collections, several species of animals were reported scientifically for the first time. The most notable discovery was the mountain sheep, Ovis dalli. Since his Alaskan period, his work has been equaled or surpassed by specialists in particular fields, but in his time he was unique among Alaska field workers in the fullness and accuracy of his observation, and probably has not yet been surpassed in effective range of interest. W. H. Dall, for example, had many interests but in his early days in Alaska was not so careful and sound a worker as Nelson, especially in ethnography. The latter also was outstanding among early field workers in not moralizing regarding aboriginal custom. He recorded what he saw and was told without passing moral judgment on the people any more than he passed judgment on the birds.

At the conclusion of his "Narrative," Nelson stated his indebtedness to L. Stejneger and W. H. Dall, besides the naturalists mentioned previously, for the success of his work in and pertaining to Aalska. Many years later (1920), when a Government official, he returned to Alaska on an inspection trip, accompanied by Olaus Murie, now head of the Wilderness Society, but never did further field work there. His interest and writing on Aalskan subjects, however, continued long after his travels.

On his return to Washington, Nelson worked too hard (as a contributing member of the Smithsonian Institution), preparing his Alaskan materials for publication, and developed pulmonary tuberculosis. This period was not unhappy, however. He and Henshaw, who was an ethnologist in the Bureau of American Ethnology from its formation in 1880, one of the early editors of the AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST and after 1905 Chief of the Biological Survey, used to enjoy riding out around Washington with horse and buggy to study the birds. In 1883 they camped together and hunted birds around Colorado Springs and on the headwaters of the Pecos River in New Mexico. Nelson's account of his bird-identification contest with Henshaw sounds to us in the 1950's gay, child-like, and wonderfully remote from the troubles of the world (1932). But the late 1880's (six years) Nelson had to spend in Arizona where his mother nursed him slowly back to health. He and his brother staked homesteads and established a cattle ranch. He also was County Clerk of Apache County. His brother remained in the Southwest, becoming a successful banker. Edward Nelson recovered from tuberculosis but was considered

by his colleagues to be a "one-lunger" henceforward and had a heart ailment for the remainder of his long life.

In 1890-91, as Special Field Agent he went on the Death Valley Expedition organized by C. Hart Merriam, Chief, Division of Ornithology and Mammalogy, Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Thus began the service that lasted nearly forty years. From Death Valley, Nelson pioneered one of the trails into Yosemite Valley and is said to have been the first to take a pack train down the Yosemite and Merced Rivers. On one of his Southwestern trips, he was accompanied by Clarence Birdseye, whose family later became famous for frozen food products.

After his work in California, Nelson was sent on to Mexico. From 1892 to 1906, accompanied by Edward A. Goldman, he spent much of his time in field studies in Mexico, with some work also in Guatemala. (On his field travels in the Southwest, Nelson had found Goldman, a youth interested in natural history, and trained him). Despite physical disabilities and against advice of friends and physicians, he ascended the twelve highest peaks in Mexico and lived almost constantly under difficult circumstances in remote areas. He worked in every state in Mexico and on all its coastal islands. He traveled the entire length of Lower California and crossed it eight times. Although he lived among the Indians and learned much about them, he did not write about them. Primarily an ornithologist early in his career, he later worked more in mammalogy, writing many papers on the small mammals of Mexico and Central America.

After being Chief Field Naturalist, he became head of the Division of Biological Investigations, most important division of the Biological Survey, and then Assistant Chief of the Bureau. From 1916 to 1927, Nelson was Chief of the Bureau. He made virtually no field studies from 1908—except administrative ones—to 1930 when he did some work on the Florida Keys, at the age of 75. After 1929, although he had retired from all active work with the Bureau, he continued biological studies by himself.

"As Chief of the Biological Survey he initiated and fostered the development of new lines of activity and many measures bearing upon the conservation and general administration of wild-life from a national standpoint" (Goldman, p. 147). He was most instrumental in negotiation of the Migratory Bird Treaty with Great Britain (affecting Canada), Migratory Bird Conservation Act, Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, and Alaska Game Law of 1925. He promoted bird-banding and other public measures for study and conservation of birds and other wildlife. While Chief of the Bureau, he wrote increasingly on conservation and wrote articles and books for the general public, such as "Wild Animals of North America." He especially encouraged others' study of birds. In the 1920's, with C. Hart Merriam, Nelson edited Charles Sheldon's journals that were published in 1930 under the title, "The Wilderness of Denali."

He was interested in both the domestic reindeer and the wild caribou in Alaska, for example in the problem of keeping the caribou free from cross-breeding with the smaller reindeer. In 1920, he established at Fairbanks the U. S. Reindeer Experiment Station, where Lawrence J. Palmer conducted basic experiments in the feeding of reindeer and other semi-domesticated or wild game animals. It was while Nelson was Chief of the Bureau, which then was in the Department of Agriculture, that Palmer began his well known long-term study of lichen growth, that is, "reindeer moss" forage. Nelson's regime cannot be blamed for the confusion and decline of the Alaska reindeer industry. Its administration was centered in the U. S. Bureau of Education, with special assistance from other agencies.

A 1925 publication on the status of prong-horned antelope was his last long paper, although in the seven years after his retirement in 1927 as Chief of the Biological Survey (he continued two more years in another capacity) Nelson wrote at least twenty-eight shorter papers. He published altogether more than two hundred books, articles, addresses to organizations, etc. In the last year or two of his life, he gathered material for a paper on quail, unfortunately not sufficiently advanced to be published posthumously. He died May 19, 1934.

Nelson received an honorary M. A. degree from Yale and an honorary D. Sc. degree from The George Washington University, both in 1920. He belonged to numerous scientific and conservation organizations. He was a Fellow and Past President of the American Ornithologists' Union, President of the Biological Society of Washington and of the American Society of Mammalogists, honorary life member of the National Geographic Society and of Alaska Pioneers.

Besides the geographic features in Alaska that were named for him, a short mountain range in southern California was named the Nelson Range. The following also were named for Nelson: 1 genus and 19 species and sub-species of mammals, 18 species and sub-species of birds, 2 species of reptiles, 1 amphibian, 5 species of fish, 4 species of land shells, 1 butterfly, 1 genus and 55 species and sub-species of plants (Goldman, 1935, p. 148).

Nelson apparently never was trained in modern laboratory techniques (probably his best work was done before 1920) and he was not an experimentalist. He was the kind of scientist who is rare today: a good all-round naturalist. As a wildlife administrator, he had sound judgment as to what could be expected or believed regarding number and behavior of most North American animals. His abilities in museum work, administration, and publication were good, but he was primarily and most successfully a field observer and collector. He was a keen observer of anything he undertook to study, whether animal tracks, bird habits, or Eskimo ceremonies, and is noted for the accuracy of his publications. To mammalogists—at least to those who have tried to evaluate his work—Nelson's best single contribution to science was "The Rabbits of North America." To ornithologists, he was most noted

for his sponsorship of treaties and national legislation protecting birds. To ethnologists, his greatest accomplishment was "The Eskimo about Bering Strait."

Nelson's colleagues in the Biological Survey report that he was a determined, intense worker, with great restless energy. He apparently had no interests outside his work. He was optimistic, enthusiastic, forceful, unafraid. Since his greatest satisfaction was in achievement and he valued attainment of his goal above present self-consideration, he drove himself to the verge of exhaustion. Because of his strong convictions, brusque manner and tendency to make decisions without consulting others, he was no favorite of politicians and was sometimes disconcerting and irritating to co-workers, in fact quite often hard to work with. Nevertheless, he made life-long friends; and his courage and tenacity, which helped him overcome many difficulties, are still winning for him the appreciation of anthropoligsts who did not know him but who know his work.

"THE ESKIMO ABOUT BERING STRAIT"

Knowing that Dr. Nelson soon after his return from Alaska became seriously ill and that immediately upon his recovery he started out on arduous field work again, we feel charitable regarding any deficiencies that his great monograph may have. That he, Henshaw, and others at the Smithsonian Institution ever managed at all to publish "The Eskimo about Bering Strait" is impressive. Nelson apologetically justified the publication eighteen years after his return by explaining that even though John Murdoch had meanwhile published a monograph on the Barrow region, still almost nothing had been written by others about the area that Nelson knew best: Norton Sound and the Lower Yukon. Because of Murdoch's report, Nelson said little about the Arctic Coast, perhaps a regrettable outcome since he was a better observer than Murdoch of some non-material aspects of culture. Another ironic aspect of Nelson's explanation is that he need not have worried about his tardiness because, even to the present, on one else has done any comprehensive work in his core area. (Of course someone might have if the Nelson book had not been available, but the writer doubts it.) Both the Rasmussen and Curtis expeditions missed the little tundra villages that Nelson had known. Now with Wendell Oswalt excavating the past and a Walt Disney company filming the present ("The Alaskan Eskimo") of a village that Nelson visited in the winter of 1878-79, we are getting at last our second look at his territory.

His 518-page report on Eskimo life in a much bigger area than Bering Strait is lavishly illustrated, in comparison with necessarily parsimonious illustration in present ethnographies. At least forty-five villages are represented by the many specimens pictured, in addition to such generally designated areas as "Lower Yukon" and "Koyukon River." A recently prepared mimeographed list of all the artifacts shown in the plates, giving their page (text) references, requires

thirty-three pages. Probably everyone will agree that this presentation of the museum collection is the best part of the report. Nelson's ethnographic collection of about 10,000 specimens still is unequaled among Alaskan Eskimo ones in variety of material, geographic coverage, and specificity of notation regarding provenience, use, and construction.

Captain Hooper has described the collecting technique of "Mr. Nelson, who was always ready to catch up anything of ethnological interest, whether a specimen or a dry fact . . . " (1884, p. 75).

> At Cape Hope, "We went on shore to examine their houses and learn something of their mode of living. Mr. Nelson, who was ever on the alert for anything of etymological (sic) interest, took his camera and a small package of trade goods. Upon reaching the settlement Nelson established himself under the lee of a turned-up oomiac near the shore, and signified through the interpreter his desire to buy any old worthless things they might possess. A general raid was made on the old collections or rather accumulations of the settlement. Carved images, drill bows (for making fires), and implements of various kinds, made of ivory and stone, were brought out and offered for sale by the natives, each trying to be the first to trade, as if afraid the supply of beads, calico, tobacco, etc., would not hold out, or that the market for articles of native manufacture might be overstocked. Each article offered was taken by Nelson and examined, and if of any value as a specimen the interpreter was told to ask what was wanted in return, and upon being told what the native most wanted a fair quantity was given" (Hooper, 1884, p. 107).

Hooper described also Nelson's persistent attempts to photograph people in nearly every village, not infrequently thwarted by their fear and suspicion or by bad weather. From Nelson's own narratives and those of his colleagues, we have a picture of a man self-motivating almost to the point of inner compulsion. According to our present knowledge of personality, we probably can call him a compulsive collector—although not an undiscriminating one—whose personal qualities happened to be exactly suited to the needs of his period.

Just what does the monograph contain besides the many text figures and 107 plates? About 250 pages of the text are essentially an annotated museum catalogue. The sections of this catalogue that describe the use of artifacts, for example techniques of trapping, are better than those that merely describe the artifacts themselves. An example of the latter is the section on masks. Instead of a 200-word description of a mask, listing the features that one can see anyway in the illustration, one would like to have more information regarding meaning and use of the mask. Of course in the conditions of collecting described above, it is remarkable that any notes were obtained and correctly related to specific artifacts. Most masks, however, came from Nelson's home territory, his core area, where he usually had more leisure to talk to people, and we must regret in this instance his tendency simply to obtain the thing without the explanation or accompanying story.

On physical anthropology, Nelson has given only a traveler's general observations. On tribal relations and dialect boundaries, the traveler's information is more useful. We still are using his data, as

the boundaries still are undefined by good linguistic research except for L. L. Hammerich's 1953 field work in the southern part of Nelson's area.

His little description of each village is quite good (although the diagrams of house construction are inadequate), giving an interesting anecdotal account of the reputation of villages and the relations between them, including some information on warfare. From this part of the report, one can extract the proto-historic moral code of family and community. The type of occurrence that was most meticulously described and is most valuable for us today, now that the information is unobtainable except from failing and distorting memory and hearsay, is the village festival, the big public ceremonial. Here we see not only the paraphernalia of ritual and hear not only anecdotes of feast-givers and guests, but are given a witness's description of the ceremonial program. Here Mr. Nelson's "dry fact" has the heat and moisture of life.

His discussion of "totemism," which Nelson took for granted, not knowing that Eskimos were then supposed to have no such thing, is tantalizing. We learn from it something about ownership and inheritance, but the basic structure of kinship and community was missed—not surprising in the work of an untrained ethnographer in 1880. The only item that he might have been expected to include, even then, is the system of kinship terms. Also, except the temporary trading partnership, he missed the elaborate partnership system of the area.

As with family and "clan," the west Alaskan status system is glimpsed only in stories of noticeable village leaders and in general statements on such things as the old men's place of honor in the men's house. Even though there are many paragraphs on clothing, there is almost nothing on status and wealth differences in dress. Most cultural anthropologists today are not so much interested in knowing whether a fancy fur bonnet was decorated with marmot or with ermine as in knowing who wore it. On this aspect of culture, much information should and probably can be obtained yet in Nelson's area.

Another aspect that Nelson, the bachelor, did not or could not study adequately was the clothing of young children and in fact all aspects of childhood and child training except games and toys—quite well described although he illustrated no string figures—and the custom of infanticide.

His description of mortuary customs is good, also of beliefs regarding supernatural beings, and of shamanism fairly good. Not much of the emotion of shamanism and witchcraft comes through his tight-meshed writing; in fact probably not much emotion could come through his self-controlled personality. Whether Nelson's personality affected the selection of myths that he remembered and recorded, we can only guess. In comparing his collection of stories with three other Eskimo collections from west Alaska, the writer discovered recently that Nelson's was more sombre, with more violence and unhappy

endings. As his was also the earliest of the collections, it is possible that he obtained a truer projection of the proto-historic life, which was full of violence and fear.

Turning to the intellectual knowledge recorded, we find the Eskimo system of numeration and local units of barter but, surprisingly, almost nothing of the Eskimos' considerable knowledge of natural history, Nelson's own specialty. On his trips with them, he must have learned something of their knowledge of the stars, weather signs, anatomy, animal behavior, but perhaps, just because he was the young specialist on such subjects, he undervalued what may have seemed to him only meagre folk knowledge. Again, we can only guess at his attitudes and the selecting function of his own interests.

What must be our final evaluation of the report apart from the ethnographic collection, on this fifthy-fifth anniversary of its publication? Aside from the weakness in specific topics, such as Eskimo knowledge of animals and plants, the greatest weakness is absence of detailed description of processes, for example any one hunt witnessed from preliminary preparations to disposal of the carcass or the preparation of a garment from skinning the animal to sewing on the final decoration. The report presents almost always the finished article, including the finished attitude of the village. One wonders whether to Nelson, in his early days if not later, life was a set of museum pieces.

Regarding good qualities of the report, the lack of moralizing has been mentioned already. Nelson's honesty and fairness, his sensible unhysterical behavior, his attitude of the rational scientist helped him avoid the biases of many of his contemporaries in foreign travel and exploration. Another good quality, to this reader, is the absence of theory regarding Eskimo culture. Nothing so dates a work and makes it suspect to future generations as a disproved theory, especially a grand one. Although Nelson had a few theories, small in scope, to account for specific circumstances that he observed, theory is so small a part of his ethnology that it does not deaden or obscure the narrative and description. The monograph is still fresh, still useful, and will continue to be, after E. W. Nelson's hundredth anniversary has passed.

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HUMAN HAIR AS A DECORATIVE FEATURE IN TLINGIT CEREMONIAL PARAPHERNALIA

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The incentive for writing a paper on the use of human hair as a decorative feature in Tlingit ceremonial paraphernalia is due to the presence of thirty-three objects so embellished in the Alaska Historical Museum collections and, secondly, from the discovery that they are all of Tlingit origin. This, in itself, would not be unusual since the museum possesses considerably more Tlingit material than Tsimshian or Haida and contains nothing of the Kwakiutl or Nootka . However, examination of the plates and figures in a number of studies dealing with Northwest Coast decorative art reveals additional evidence that such a use of human hair on the Northwest Coast is a Tlingit trait, almost exclusively.

Davis (1949) figures thirteen objects decorated with hair, presumably human. Of these, ten are Tlingit, two are Kaigani Haida, and one is labeled simply Haida. The Kaigani are known to have adopted many Tlingit traits.

Niblack (1888) figures nine objects decorated with hair, six of which are Tlingit, three being Haida.

Inverarity (1950) figures seventeen hair-decorated objects, six of which are Tlingit, one listed as probably Tlingit, seven are unknown, one is Nootka and two are Haida. Of the unknown, three, having been collected by Emmons are likely Tlingit, being of the typical Tlingit killer-whale motif.

Several other authors writing on Northwest Coast decorative art have figured hair-decorated objects but none have given this style of decoration more than casual mention, if it was mentioned at all.

In decorating wooden objects with hair the usual procedure was to drill rows of small holes at uniform distances varying from one quarter inch to two inches or more apart depending on the size of the object being decorated. The tuft of hair to be inserted was then bent in the middle across the end of a short wooden peg which, when driven flush, held the tuft upright securely. When thus properly set, all were clipped to a uniform length. These clipped tufts appear so coarse and bristly they have sometimes been described as "horse tail." In fact, two of the hair-decorated objects in the Alaska Historical Museum, a baton in the form of a Winchester rifle and a very large rattle, are actually decorated with horse tail hair.

In decorating ceremonial batons in the typical killer whale fin and paddle designs, the hair embellishment appears only on the back edge. In this instance the hair is not clipped but drapes gracefully, the locks being six inches or more in length.

A few specimens examined revealed the hair tufts had been stitched down the middle as though the hair were parted, and then glued to the wood. In decorating cloth or felt hats and caps the hair was sewed on with cotton thread.

Laboratory[1] examination of hair specimens taken from thirty examples in the Museum showed that human hair had been employed in twenty-four instances, horse tail in two, cow's tail attached to hide in one, blue-pelt[2] bear hair in another, and ordinary black bear fur in two. In each instance where hair other than human was employed, the object had been manufactured within the last fifty years.

That the practice of using human hair to decorate ceremonial paraphernalia is old on the Northwest Coast is demonstrated by two hair-decorated objects collected by Captain James Cook, one at Nootka and one from an unnamed place in 1778, figured by Inverarity (1950, plates, 139, 140). These probably antedate by a hundred years most of the specimens now in the Alaska Historical Museum yet the technique employed in applying the hair remains essentially the same.

In speculating on the origin of this use of human hair for decoration or to represent hair on masks or carvings it is significant that the near neighbors of the Tlingit used other materials and techniques. To the south, the Haida and Tsimshian represented hair in wood and argillite figurines and maskoids by carving a representation of it in great detail, portraying coiffures, knots, braids and ornaments. Farther south the Kwakiutl made great use of dyed and shredded red cedar bark to portray hair and to otherwise embellish ceremonial paraphernalia.

North and east of the Tlingit the Tahltan made use of hide fringes and porcupine quills for decorative purposes and to the northwest the Eskimos found tufts of caribou hair and feathers to suit their taste for ornament where the Tlingit chose human hair.

The Aleut in historic times seem to have favored the use of sea lion whiskers for decorative purposes and the use of them is reported by the earliest European navigators who visited the Aleutian Islands. However, Martin Sauer, secretary to the Billings Expedition (1785-94) figures six masks used by "Oonalashkans in their Dance" each decorated with hair, presumably human. Some of the tufts appear to be pegged in after the manner of the Tlingit, others being glued on (Billings, 1802, p. 272).

Lisiansky, describing a Kodiak shaman says in part, "He then disguises himself by a wig of human hair, to which two feathers are attached, one on each side, to resemble horns" (Lisiansky, 1814, p. 208).

In the Alaska Historical Museum is a Tlingit shaman's cap made of a human scalp to be worn as a wig. The similarity of the Aleut masks and Kodiak wig to Tlingit workmanship and usage suggests borrowing in that quarter, one way or another. Eight very early Aleut (?) masks, also in the Museum, which come from a cave at old Savonofski, also support the view that this practice was borrowed from the Tlingit, for none of them show any evidence of having been decorated with

[1]Hair was determined through the courtesy of the Federal Wildlife Research Laboratory, Denver, Colorado by Charles C. Sperry, Biologist.

[2]Blue pelt is a term used by the trade to indicate a black bear pelt of unusual quality.

hair. Since Eskimos living adjacent to the Aleuts do not follow the practice either, it seems reasonable to assume that the Aleuts borrowed the idea from the Tlingit.

The use of human hair to embellish the heads of human figurines, or masks portraying men, seems so natural a course it is remarkable it is not a universal practice. A deterrent could be the fear that the hair might fall into the possession of a sorcerer who might use it to work evil against the owner if alive, or his people if dead. Swan quotes Haidas as saying that they practiced cremation in enemy country to prevent enemies from digging up the body to make charms with which to destroy the Haida tribe (Swan, 1874, p. 9). Ordinarily Northwest Coast "witches" worked their hexes only on the person from whom they had obtained intimate objects such as parings, hair, perspiration, or sputum. Oberg states: "Sometimes the hair of dead slaves was fastened to the end of the batons" (n. d.). Slaves, dead or alive, are often given as the source of hair used in such decorations by Tlingit today, yet, upon close questioning they admit exceptions. In fact, in no case examined, where the source of the hair was known, had it come from the heads of slaves. It is a well-known fact that the Tlingit required their slaves to be shorn at all times. This was necessary, that free men would know how to address them. Because their hair was short the first white men who visited this coast were believed to be slaves.

Oberg further states: "At betrothal women of the *anyeti* (noble) class sometimes cut their hair and present it to the bridegroom's family; this hair is later displayed at the wedding ceremony and finally becomes an emblem of the bridegroom's clan . . . "(n. d.).

In speaking of the Tlingit dead, Oberg says in part, "through the sacred emblems and names he is still part of the community, and food is put into the fire at each potlatch so that the dead ancestors can enjoy it, for they are taking part in the proceedings going on in the sacred house—the center of the Tlingit world . . . " (n. d.).

It is the concept of hair as a sacred emblem or magical tie with deceased relatives in the spirit world that probably accounts for its use in most instances. A common belief is that the dead relative whose hair is used to ornament ceremonial batons is thereby enabled to share in the joy and happiness of the occasions on which these objects are used or displayed. And since these objects never were allowed to get out of posssion of the clan there was little danger that witches could obtain them to work their evil will.

In describing some Tsimshian portrait busts or images of men who died on the trails and had been cremated, between Kitwankool and Nass River, and between Hazelton and Kigagass, Emmons says in part, "These figures are called *Kitumghun,* 'Man of wood,' and were rare on account of their expense . . . In some instances the hair of the deceased was cut off and locks thereof inserted and pegged into small holes in the head of wood . . . " (Emmons, 1914, p. 64).

Niblack quotes a description of a Tlingit funeral by an anonymous writer as saying, "on one side of the room a young brave was busily

engaged with a pair of scissors cutting off the long, black hair of all the near relatives, male and female . . . " (Niblack, 1888, p. 358). He does not state to what use the hair was put, if any. There is considerable evidence that scalps were taken in war as trophies but nothing to show that the hair was ever used to embellish ceremonial objects.

The hair used to ornament the heads of two canoe figures now in the Alaska Historical Museum was taken from the heads of two slain chiefs "to give to the canoe spirit," according to an heir who had inherited the objects. The shaman rode in this specially-built war canoe on the expedition organized for the purpose of avenging the killing of the chiefs several years earlier. Thus, a magical power was ascribed to the hair employed in this instance.

Recently, according to an informant, an old Tlingit woman who had exceptionally long and beautiful hair died in a village near Juneau. Upon her death her hair was carefully cut off and put away by relatives as a keepsake.

Another informant (from Kake village) recalls a baton in Kake decorated with reddish-brown hair. It was his understanding that this particular shade of hair was considered proof of a line of Tsimshian ancestry from which this Tlingit clan was proud to have descended. The hair was preserved in the baton and displayed on auspicious occasions with the view to advertising this distinguished lineage.

From the information at hand it now appears that the history of each object decorated with hair must be sought out individually since there seems to be too many special reasons for its employment to generalize beyond Oberg's statement that the dead are still a part of the Tlingit community.

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A COMPARATIVE SURVEY OF ESKIMO-ALEUT RELIGION

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This is to be a study of the basic beliefs and their systematization; a study of the religion rather than its techniques.

The religion of the Eskimos and Aleuts is essentially a pure animism, i.e. all the powers of the universe are conceived as animistic beings essentially anthropomorphic. Its only non-animistic features are the powers connected with certain amulets, magic spells and chants, and the practice of sorcery.

Eskimo-Aleut religion comprises a set of beliefs about the supernatural plus a body of public rituals and a body of private rituals for dealing therewith. It provides its practitioner with an essentially pragmatic system for treating with the forces of nature so as to control the weather and the food supply, to ensure protection against harm and disease, to provide a means of curing sickness and disorders, and to prognosticate coming events. It arises from an acute introspective analysis of human life and projects a psychic structure into the universe. Its basic assumptions are that the psychic structure of the universe is naturally harmonious and is neutrally or even well-disposed toward men unless irritated and angered by thoughtless negligence or willful disobedience on the part of humans. Thus, men through their own sins are responsible for bringing upon themselves their discomforts, either hunger, harm, or unhappiness. The powers of the universe, in the words of an Iglulik Eskimo quoted by Rasmussen, are seen to keep a right balance between mankind and the rest of the world.

The basic beliefs, structure and mechanisms are the same from the western tip of the Aleutians clear to the eastern shores of Greenland. However, there are two elements found throughout the whole of Alaska but lacking in the Central and Eastern areas, viz. personal guardian spirits and the "persons" of animals, and two elements found in the Central and Eastern Arctic that are largely absent in Alaska, viz. the predominance of female divinities and *tupilait*. One other feature that distinguishes Alaska from the regions to the east is the public ceremonials.

The basic structure of Eskimo-Aleut religion comprises five categories of powers, which are: 1) charms, amulets, talismans and magic formulas; 2) the immortal and perpetually reincarnated souls of men and animals; 3) the "persons" of creatures; 4) the demonic spirits of the earth and air; and 5) the "persons" or spirit-powers directing the universe and forces of nature. All these five categories of powers interact on each other and their system of interaction is the *modus operandi* of the universe or the means whereby humans may exert control over the operation of the universe.

First, to discuss these categories separately.

1. Charms

In most of the Eskimo-Aleut groups the power of charms, talismans, magic formulas and songs seems to be conceived as simply inherent in these objects themselves without the operation of an associated spirit-being. Thus in a technical sense they belong rather to a system of mana and magic than to the animism of the rest of the religious structure. These may represent survivals of an earlier stage of development, since especially the magic spells are thought by the Eskimos to descend from the ancient ancestors who inhabited the world in its primeval epochs when men and animals were all the same and words alone had power. Nevertheless, in western Alaska at least, the charm system has become integrated into the animistic portion of the religion since charm powers are regarded as derived from the "persons" of objects, places or creatures. Likewise with magic songs and to a certain extent also with magic spells. The tendency in Eskimo-Aleut religion to align the magic portions of the system with the animistic is doubtless the logical conclusion of what may be a long prior development.

Charms, consisting of talismans and amulets, magic formulas and songs, are used to provide hunting luck and other desired boons, and to ensure protection from all harms and ills. Practically every Eskimo and Aleut from earliest infancy to his demise possesses a collection of charms, which he has obtained through gift, legacy or personal acquisition. The details of their material content need not concern us here. The practice of sorcery likewise involves almost entirely magic, chiefly incantation or spell-casting, the most potent spells being those that have been passed on through several generations of sorcerers. Sorcery does not seem to have been extensive except in certain areas, and the details do not shed much light on our present discussion. More consideration of *tupilait*, on the other hand, will appear below.

2. Souls

Souls belong only to men and animals and are imortal and imperishable. Humans and dogs possess two kinds of souls, a breath-soul and a name-soul. All other animals have only the breath-soul. The various terms designating the breath-soul contain the notion of either breath, life, image, shadow or appearance. This soul is what gives life and what makes a man a man, a bear a bear, and so on. And yet though souls determine the species to which the body belongs, in subsequent reincarnations they are at will or through the action of other powers interchangeable between animals and people. These souls are variously envisaged by the different Eskimo-Aleut peoples as either a small image of the creature, residing in a certain organ or area of the body, or simply as a life-sized image or a general principle suffusing the whole body. They are invisible except to certain shamans, and have the power to come and go from the body while the latter is still alive. This occurs during sleep, trance, or coma, though usually the prolonged absence of the soul occasions sickness or death. Departed or unincarnated souls of both men and animals have the power to influence other souls, specifically those currently incorporated

in live bodies, and hence they can affect the game supply and also the health of humans. They can likewise to a limited extent influence the weather and nature. Souls can also turn into demonic spirits.

For our present discussion we are leaving out the eschatological beliefs.

The personal names of people and dogs constitute for the Eskimos and Aleuts another class of spiritual essences. The name carries with it bodily and mental characteristics—strength, skill, endurance, intelligence, and magic power. All these characteristics are transferred through a name from all previous forebears to the current holder. As a Netsilik Eskimo shaman explained it to Rasmussen, there is behind each person a long line of namesakes guarding him as long as he observes the rules of life. Hence a man often has as many names as possible to protect him, and a woman possesses several names to protect her future sons. Throughout the Eskimo-Aleut region the name is of prime importance in providing a child with the strength to survive the rigors of infancy. In Central and Eastern Arctic it also provides a person with a guardian during his whole life. However, in Alaska, generally the name is only important in adult life for the set of living associates that it provides to an individual through certain fixed types of mutual relationships which accompany names. It is doubtless significant that the words for name are cognate throughout the entire Eskimo and Aleut regions even in Aleut which shares only about a third of its lexicon with the Eskimo languages.

The name-soul actually belongs to a different order from the breath-soul. It seems to function through the breath-soul, primarily for protective purposes. Theoretically it is not immortal, as the disuse of a name would cause the disappearance of that name-soul, and it does not go after death to any special abode of souls nor does it become a demonic spirit. In fundamental nature and function it belongs to the "person" category of spirit-beings that we are about to examine.

3. "Persons"

The class of spirit-beings referred to in the Eskimo tongues as "persons" (*inua, yua, sua, tayaruu*—a word often translated as 'its owner') is particularly significant for comparisons between Alaska on the one hand and the Central and Eastern Arctic on the other. The basic class of "persons" of objects and places is a fundamental element in all Eskimo-Aleut areas. All objects, things, or places have, at least in theory, their respective "persons." In practice it is only such objects as obtrude themselves on people's notice for some reason, whose "persons" actually become functional. The "person" of an object is nothing more, from our point of view, than a psychic projection of the object's existence. When the object disappears or is destroyed, its "person" ceases to exist. Thus, the "person' 'of a fire vanishes when the fire goes out. Or, since in the Eskimo view the "person" of any object is a being, if the "person" can be destroyed, the object itself will thus be eliminated. This portion of their system of belief has applications, in certain regions, in medical practices and sorcery, since every organ or member of the body has it "person" (a concept

often misinterpreted by Western commentators as a "soul"), which may depart, thereby causing the associated member to ail or atrophy. "Persons" are not in their nature immortal beings, but it is obvious that the "person" of a cliff, lake, or island, will have from a practical standpoint a permanent existence. Likewise the "person" of something such as grass is not in reality the "person" of a given patch of grass or of a given year's growth of grass, but is in fact what we could describe as the "person" of the idea of grass, and this likewise from a practical standpoint has a perpetual existence.

"Persons' 'are thus a distinct order of spirit-beings from the immortal souls of men and animals and also from the corps of immortal demonic spirits that we shall discuss presently. This category of spirit-beings represents in the Eskimo-Aleut religious system an animistic and not a manaistic explanation of the operation of the universe in that (a) they are designated by the word meaning 'human being,' (b) they are envisaged as looking and behaving like humans, and (c) although they act directly upon the material universe, they can also act upon the rest of the spirit-structure of the universe in the same manner as souls and daimons. Their function in the system is largely explicatory, i.e. accidental deaths, disappearances and the like are thereby given a cause. Nevertheless we shall see that especially in Alaska they have a further function.

The significance of this portion of Eskimo-Aleut cosmology lies in the presence of an additional feature of it in Alaska which is absent to the east. In the beliefs of the entire Eskimo-Aleut region of Alaska there are, besides the "persons" of places and objects, also the "persons" of animals and all other non-human creatures. These "persons" of animals are spirit-beings distinct and apart from the souls of animals. The "persons" of animals are envisaged (and also depicted) as humans, while the souls take the form of their respective species. And whereas the souls of animals are the spiritual counterparts of individual creatures, the "persons" of animals are as a matter of fact the spiritual projection of the idea of each type. Thus they are the "persons" of groups or species. The "person" of the walrus, for example, is not the "person" of one specific walrus, but the "person" of the type walrus; in fact, of the ideal walrus. Hence the "persons" of animals have a perpetual existence. Furthermore, since the "person" of any given species of animal is in actuality the "person" of the ideal animal of that species, this animal "person" stands in relation to all the individuals of that species or band as a headman of a human household or community to his fellow members. Therefore this animal "person" is thought to control the activities of all the members of his band or species.

Intimately allied with the Alaskan belief in the "persons" of animals are two other aspects of the religion also lacking in the Central and Eastern Eskimo regions. These are (1) the concept of personal guardian spirits belonging to each and every member of the community, with the rituals and customs attendant on this concept; and (2) public communal ceremonies aimed at establishing cordial relations between

the people and the "persons" of animals, and also between the "persons" of animals, the hunting paraphernalia, and the souls of animals. The great bulk, if not the totality of personal guardian spirits, are drawn from the category of "person"-spirits, chiefly from the "persons" of animals (mammals, birds, fish, and invertebrates), with a rare one from the "persons" of plants or of inanimate objects like qayaqs. Personal guardian spirits, not to be confused with shamans' tutelary spirits, provide their owners with hunting luck, protection against harm and danger, and power in combat. The methods of securing guardian spirits are varied and often multiple, involving both individual acquisition and legacy. The public religious ceremonials centered around the "persons" of animals (and including the "persons" of the universe as well) are the bladder-festivals of western Alaska, similar festivals of the Aleutians and south coast, the sitting-ceremony of Point Hope, and certain portions of the memorial feasts for the dead.

From the mouth of the Mackenzie east to Greenland we find nothing of the "persons" of animals in the religious system. Instead we find that individual guardian powers—those that supply each human prowess and luck in obtaining game and protection from evil—are centered in charms and the name-soul. The mechanism of charms exists throughout Eskimo-Aleut society and is simply put into more extensive practice in the Central and Eastern areas. Because life in these regions is so much more precarious than in Alaska, these Eskimos have had to utilize to the extreme certain means of protection and assurance and methods of manipulating the universe which are supplied by their religious traditions. Hence the traditional prescriptions and injunctions are more strictly observed, and the number and variety of amulets and charms is more extensive. These Eskimos thus have greater recourse to the magical portions of their religion for the individual's protective powers. The Alaskan Eskimos and Aleuts on the other hand have derived the bulk of their guardian powers from the animistic portions of their religion. Even the charms and amulets have been largely integrated into the "person" category in much of Alaska. The majority of the talismans in Nunivak Island, for example, are simply effigies of the tutelary animal "persons" with which each individual is in relation, and power songs are likewise acquired from and obtain their effectiveness from the "person" guardian spirits.

The name-soul, which is of such importance among the Central and Eastern Eskimos, must from a functional point of view be regarded as more closely allied to the "person" category than to the categories of immortal spirit-beings. The name is really the "person" of humans (and dogs). Like the "persons" of animals it is not the "person" of an individual creature but that of a band or species. In the case of humans (and also dogs) this band is actually an arbitrary lineage established through the transmission of the name, a sort of "nominal" rather than a genealogical clan.

There are two other features from the Central and Eastern Eskimos that it seems to me we must juxtapose with the Alaskan concept of the "persons" of animals. The first of these is the *tupilak*. A *tupilak* is

always a grotesque animal figure fabricated out of parts of several creatures by a sorcerer for the purpose of working harm on someone at a distance. By magic incantations the sorcerer induces life into his *tupilak* and then subsequently nourishes it to make it grow, usually putting it into the sea where it can feed itself and whence it returns to prey upon its intended victim. If this were all, one would ask wherein lies the relation to the Alaskan concept of the "persons" of animals. But it happens that the Central and Eastern Eskimo word *tupilak* is directly cognate with the word used for the personal guardian spirit in the Inyupik-speaking regions of Alaska about Bering Strait. This word is *tupitkaq*. There must therefore be an historical connection between the *tupilak* mechanism of the east and the guardian-spirit complex of the west. I am prepared to suggest that this historical connection lies in the loss of the guardian-spirit complex among the Eskimos that peopled the Central and Eastern Arctic with the consequent remodeling or assimilation of the concept of "persons" of animals into the *tupilak* mechanism. The *tupilak* mechanism is doubtless also ancient in the prehistory of the Eskimo-Aleut stock as it shared by several Eskimo, northwest coast Indian and Paleo-Siberian groups, but it belongs to the magical stratum of their religious history along with the charm system and the tabu system. At Point Hope, for instance, the making of grotesque effigies for sorcery is practised, where the guardian-spirit complex also exists. Such an effigy is called *kikituk*. What I am suggesting here is that the guardian-spirit system, or something basic to it, is likewise old in Eskimo-Aleut prehistory, though this belongs to the animistic stratum of the religion. The eastern *tupilak* is an animal effigy associated with specific power. The western *tupitkaq* is also an effigy of the guardian spirit or a mask or costume which the owner dons to transform himself into his guardian to acquire its powers. The common element is the fabricated representation of an animal spirit-power. In Siberia the grotesque animals sent by a sorcerer to wreak vengeance do not require the concoction of an effigy since the magic incantations will of themselves bring the monster into being.

The personal guardian-spirit complex is of course well exemplified among the northwest coast Indian groups, in a system very comparable to that of the Alaskan Eskimos and Aleuts. Among Paleo-Siberian peoples, the feature most closely resembling the personal guardian spirit derived from the "persons" of animals is the *pejul* of the Yukaghir. Although the Yukaghir *pejul* is actually the spirit-protector of a band or species of animals and not a human being, it is by an intimate association with a given *pejul* that a given Yukaghir hunter obtains his hunting luck and his proper relation to his animal food supply. The other Paleo-Siberian peoples—Chukchi, Koryak, and Kamchadal—possess a system similar to that of the Central and Eastern Eskimos, in which each individual's personal fortune and protection come largely from his ancestors and from powers derived from fetishes, talismans, and incantations. It is therefore extremely noteworthy, in

comparisons with the Paleo-Siberians, that the Alaskan system has its closest parallels among the Yukaghir, whereas the Central and Eastern Eskimo system seems most allied to that of the Luorawedlan-speaking group.

The second item of comparison between the Eastern and the Alaskan Eskimos is contained in an incidental bit of information from the Polar Eskimos of northwest Greenland, which points toward another remnant of the guardian-spirit system in an area where this latter seems to be lacking. We read in Kroeber's account that each Eskimo possesses, in addition to a breath-soul and a name-soul, another which is described as an "evil soul," the *angiyang*. The "evil soul" is envisaged as a bird and is said to cause sickness by pecking its host. Also the "evil soul" dies when the person dies. Thus the *angiyang* appears to be a negative guardian spirit, or at least one more likely to work harm than good. This may give us a clue to the disappearance of the guardian-spirit complex in the Central and Eastern areas. With the extreme rigor of life in the Central Arctic, the harmful effects of nature are more vivid than the beneficial. This is apparent in the attitude of the Central Eskimos toward the universe, whose powers are easily angered so that human life becomes a constant vigil against antagonizing and toward appeasing such readily irritable beings. Under such an attitude, the guardian spirit could easily have become the obverse of what it originally was, now becoming a being needing constantly to be humored and propitiated like the other spirit-beings of the universe, and more liable to turn upon its host for failure to behave properly than to assist him when he does follow the straight and narrow path. Another factor in the religion of the Central and Eastern Eskimos which must also have operated toward the displacement of the guardian-spirit complex is the emphasis on dealing with the sources of food and the forces of nature through the controlling deities of the universe, rather than the guardian-spirit mechanism of treating directly with the game animals. This shift in emphasis accompanied the rise of the shaman in the Central and Eastern culture to the position of chief specialized manipulator of the powers of the world. The rest of the members of the community were thus relegated to the use solely of the magical mechanisms of their religious system. We also see the replacement of almost all public ceremonials in which the whole community actively participates in favor of the shaman seance at which the public become largely passive participants. There may originally even have been active proselytizing by shamans against the guardian-spirit complex.

4. Demonic Spirits

The fourth set of spirit-powers in the Eskimo-Aleut cosmology are the demonic spirits or daimons. These inhabit all parts of the world away from human habitations, and, although entirely non-corporeal, are mobile and live in bands like humans, hunting, marrying and reproducing. They are conceived as monstrous and grotesque people and animals. Their closest link in the rest of the cosmological system is with the souls of men and animals. Many of them, if not all,

are actually thought to have arisen from human and animal souls mistreated by people, and they tend to be inimically inclined toward humans. Though of a nebulous substance they can make themselves visible to men, most commonly to shamans. From their ranks are derived the shamans' tutelaries. Most of them come in colonies of all one kind with specific habitats. In a number of the Eskimo areas their association with the forces of nature and their ubiquity have produced their designation as a category as "persons of the weather or world," *silap inui,* although they work primarily on people and animals. A number of types have widespread extension througout Eskimo-Aleut regions. Dwarfs and giants seem to be universal, though the latter are relatively unimportant. The former are often described with pointed heads, great strength and agility, and remarkable hunting powers. Half-people and -animals are common, and cannibal women are not rare. Beings with pinchers on their heads constitute a motif reported from both Alaska and Greenland. Nonetheless their forms are legion, limited only by the shamans' powers of imagination.

The Eskimo name for demonic spirit from Greenland clear to the mouth of the Kuskokwim is some variation of the word *tunraq*. From Nunivak Island and the Chugach of the south coast of Alaska we find the terms *kalla* and *kalhaaq/kalhagaq*, a word perhaps to be compared to Chukchi *kele* and Koryak *kala*. The Kanyagh word is *iggaq* and the Aleut is *qugax*. The term for shaman in southern and southwestern Alaska, including the Aleutians, means "the one who has a daimon." The more widespread Eskimo term, that ranges from the Kuskokwim River to Greenland, is *angatlkuq/angatkuq/angakkuq*. The daimon-complex within the Eskimo-Aleut religious struction is, like the concepts concerning the immortal souls of men and animals, one of the components of the system that shows the least variability from one end of the range to the other.

5. "Persons" of the Universe

The last category in the Eskimo-Aleut hierarchy of powers are the spirit-powers controlling the forces of nature. There is quite some diversity in this part of their religious structure. One common basic element seems to be the conception of the chief powers of the sky and upper atmosphere as masculine and those of the land and sea as feminine, also the tendency for each primary power to have a secondary associate or consort of the opposite sex. There is in this portion of the religion, as in the portion comprising the lesser "person" powers, a difference between the Alaskan area on the one hand and the Central and Eastern on the other. The essence of this difference is the fact that in Alaska the principal world power is masculine, whereas in the Central area it is feminine, while in Labrador and Greenland we again encounter a chief male power or a division of jurisdiction between a male and a female power.

Throughout the Alaskan area male divinities are paramount. The 'person of the world, sky or atmosphere,' *Ilam sua,* and the Moon-man are the prime powers in this category. In the various areas it is not possible to determine from the information whether these are two

separate divinities or two aspects of the same divinity. On Nunivak, for instance, *lham cua*, 'the person of the world' seems to control the forces of nature, the game supply and the souls of men and animals, while *lham inga* 'the eye of the world' (? a name for the Moon-man) watches over the observance of the traditional prescriptions and injunctions. Among the Chugach Eskimos the 'person of the sky,' *lham sua,* is associated with the sun, though the conception of him is vague and connected chiefly with control of the weather. In the Aleutians the paramount divinity was called *agudax* or *agurur,* a name meaning 'creator' (now used for the Christian God), and he also appears to have been related to the sun. His functions, as indicated in the fragmentary evidence still available, were concerned with hunting luck, protection from harm, and the reincarnation of souls. At Point Hope the first and chief sacred image hung up at the sitting-ceremony was the "daylight," and the Moon was prayed to for new life and hunting luck, but the concepts of a primary divinity are otherwise extremely vague in the modern evidence. In Alaska it is clear that, except as a regulator of the general forces of nature and of the reincarnation of souls and as a vague source of sanction for the traditional rules of life, the functions of a central deity were relatively unimportant. This is because of the fact that the people dealt more immediately and directly with the powers controlling their food supply through the personal guardian spirits, through the system of private rituals (i.e. the traditional prescriptions and injunctions), through the performance of public ceremonies, and to a lesser extent through the operations of shamans and the use of charms. And of course for the Alaskan Eskimos and Aleuts, as for all other Eskimos, the divinities had no special relation to the mechanisms for treating maladies and injuries nor for divination.

From widely separated areas in Alaska we encounter the concept of certain female powers of the world in addition to the male ones. Among the Chugach the 'person of the sea,' *imam sua,* and the 'person of the land,' *nunam sua,* are both women. The latter influences the land animals, the former those of the sea and also gales. These two powers are, however, in their scope and function more like the "persons" of animals and objects, and individuals can acquire their services as personal guardian spirits. The Aleuts also have a 'person of the sea,' *alarum tayaruu* or *alarum isuu,* whose sex, however, is not indicated. This being does not seem to be important in their cosmology and is, rather, a grotesque creature with long hair, which if seen by people portends danger at sea. From Point Hope on the other hand, we possess the account of a ceremony connected with the spring whale hunt, in which a shaman goes down through the shore crack in the ice to the undersea whale-hunting camp of a tribe of spirit beings termed *itiviyai.* At this camp is a man with long ears who hears everything said in Tigara village. There is also a man (it is not specified whether he is the same as the other man) with a tail like a dog, who lives with his wife. This man is said to go up into the air to the source of the weather to change the wind to the north. His wife,

whose name is *nirivik* 'the food-place or -dish' (the same name used in Greenland for the Old Woman of the Sea), goes out to make the sea calm. It is obvious that here these two beings, the man and his wife, are only subsidiary powers in the cosmology of the Tikirarmiut. Nevertheless their association with the male power of the atmosphere and the female power of the sea so important in the Central and Eastern cosmology should not be overlooked.

The Eskimos of the Central Arctic, from the mouth of the Mackenzie River to Baffin Island, are unique among all Eskimo-Aleut peoples in conceiving one dominant power of the universe which is feminine. For the coastal groups this is the Old Woman of the Sea, variously designated as Nuliayuk 'little wife' by the Mackenzie and Netsilik Eskimos, as 'That terrible one or woman down there below' by the Copper and Iglulik Eskimos, as Siitna by the Baffin Islanders, and with one or two other names also known from these regions. She is the mother of the sea-mammals (though whales are seldom included) in that they originated from her cut-off finger joints. She therefore controls all the sea animals, and to a certain extent also the land animals. She likewise dominates the male powers of the universe who exist along with her, namely the Moon-man and the Weather (*Sila* or *Naarsuk*). Furthermore she is the enforcer, if not the originator, of the traditional prescriptions and injunctions—those traditional private rituals described by the Eskimos as "the rules of life." Actually the rules with which she is concerned are those pertaining to unclean women, those associated with game and the various products of sea and land, and those connected with ritual cleanliness, dietary restrictions and the like. It seems that the rituals for the dead, on the other hand, are not part of the province of the Old Woman of the Sea. She is thus paramount over that portion of the religious system that is directed toward ensurance of the food supply and protection against danger while obtaining food. It is in this capacity that she also directs the weather by getting the "person of the weather," *Sila* or *Silap inua*, to do her bidding.

Among several of the Central Eskimo groups there is in addition to the Old Woman of the Sea a "mother of the caribou," who is, interestingly enough, also associated with the walrus. Except for the account of her fashioning the caribou she is a very indistinct personage in the traditions as actually preserved and has pretty well been assimiliated to the Old Woman of the Sea. Notwithstanding the vague characterization of the "mother of the caribou," what appears to me most noteworthy is that there exists the tradition of a separate female spirit-power of the land obviously originally distinct from the female power of the sea. Among the Caribou Eskimos the setup is even more unique than that of the other Central Eskimo peoples. They being practically entirely an inland-dwelling population, we find, needless to say, that the chief female divinity is the "mother of the caribou," called *Pinga* or *Pivzuma*. Actually Pinga is not conceived as the mother of the caribou as such, nor is there any legend of the origin of animals. She is simply the guardian of all life both man and animal.

She has in fact taken over the position of *Hila* 'the atmosphere' and is thus associated with the upper regions as well as the earth. She reincarnates the souls of men and animals into new bodies, and is the executor of the sanctions on the rules of life in the same manner as the Old Woman of the Sea for the coastal Eskimos. However, unlike her coastal counterpart she never interferes with the animals. Although *Pinga* has largely usurped the realm of *Hila* 'the atmosphere,' and is often confused with him, the latter male deity retains a few of his ancient characteristics. He is still in some way chief of the demonic spirits, since it is to his pity that the shamans exhibit themselves through exposure when seeking their tutelary spirits, though even in this function he has been supplanted by *Pinga* in the conception of some of the Caribou Eskimos. The Moon-man occupies also a small place in Caribou Eskimo cosmology as a servant of *Pinga*. He it is who during the dark of the moon brings human souls down to *Pinga* to be reincarnated either as men or animals. Thus we see that although the Caribou Eskimos are unique among the Central Eskimos in the importance of their female deity, they do not diverge significantly from the basic cosmology of that area. They have simply carried to a greater extreme the development characteristic of the Central Arctic in relegating practically all powers to a single chief female divinity.

When we turn to the Eastern Eskimo areas—Labrador and Greenland—we encounter again important male powers of the universe. For most of Labrador we learn of a female deity, *Superguksoak*, who rules the land animals, and a male deity, her husband, *Turngarsoak* 'the chief daimon,' who rules the sea animals and also the spirit world. In the northern and northwestern parts of the Labrador Peninsula *Turngarsoak* (or *Tungarsuk*) likewise controls the caribou and lives in the mountains or in caves as a huge white bear. Around Cape Chidley the Old Woman of the Sea reappears in the cosmology, but as a subsidiary power who rules the sea beasts and receives offerings thrown into the water. Thus everywhere throughout Labrador, as far as our somewhat scanty information goes, the paramount power of the world is a male divinity, with a subsidiary female divinity in control of only one province, either the land or the sea.

In Greenland the Old Woman of the Sea recurs under the name *Nirivik* or *Nirrivik* meaning 'the food-place or food-dish,' a name we also encountered at Point Hope which may thus be the old Thule Culture designation of this female deity. She occupies in Greenland the same position in the cosmology as in the Central Arctic, i.e. she governs the food supply and all the traditional rules of life connected with its ensurance. She shares control of the spirit-powers of the universe with *Turngarsuk* who rules the realm of the demonic spirits and with the Moon who plays a minor role as chief of the skyland in a vague way associated with the souls of men and with hunting luck. Greenland thus falls closer than Labrador to the cosmological pattern of the Central Eskimos.

We may conclude these observations on the Eskimo-Aleut spirit powers of the universe by hazarding a reconstruction of the basic

pattern from which the features of the various areas seem to have diverged. The following elements are common to all the areas and may thus be taken to be aboriginal. 1) The controlling powers of the universe are divided into male powers for the atmosphere and sky and female powers for the sea and land. In this concept the ancestors of the Eskimos and Aleuts resembled the Chinese, not to mention many other peoples. 2) Perhaps originally each of these spirit-powers also had a consort or counterpart of the opposite sex, though these are seldom represented in Alaskan mythology. In the Central and Eastern Eskimo areas these counterparts perform a merely complementary or counterbalancing function. The Moon has his sister the Sun, and also his wife or female relative the Disemboweler. The Atmosphere *(Sila* or *Naarsuk)* has a vague associate in the female "person of the blizzard or sharp ice." *Turngarsoak* in Labrador has his wife *Supergуksoak.* The Old Woman of the Sea has her husband the Dog and her father the Punisher. The Caribou Eskimo *Pinga* shares certain of her functions with the male power of the weather *Hila.* This concept of an element of the opposite sex accompanying the dominant powers of the universe is paralleled in China, not to mention India also. 3) The spirit-powers of the universe are "persons" controlling specific realms of the cosmos. The functional elements of the system appear to be these: a) The Moon was the ruler of the skyland and of the souls of men and animals, in which capacity he could influence abundance of game and fertility in women; b) the Person of the Atmosphere/World controlled the meteoric elements and was chief of the demonic spirits, who are often lumped together as *silap inui* 'the persons of the atmosphere/world'; c) the Person of the Sea was a female who had dominion over the sea and its creatures both in their bodily and spirit forms; d) the Person of the Land was a female whose sway comprehended the elements and creatures of the Land. From this point of view the most archaic situation is preserved among the Chugach Eskimos of Alaska's south coast. We need not assume a priori, however, that the Moon and the Atmosphere were separate distinct powers in the era of the common ancestors of the Eskimos and Aleuts. Nor need we assume that the "persons" of both sea and land were aboriginally distinguished. This division on the basis of specialty may have taken place subsequent to the separation of some of the Eskimo and Aleut groups, which would account for the diversity. It is just as possible that one male power of the upper regions originally controlled the sky, the atmosphere, souls, and daimons, while one female power of the earth ruled the land, the sea, and the underworld. The greatest degree of specialization actually occurs in the Central Arctic where the above four basic functions are relegated to four more or less separate spirit beings. In Alaska the distinction between the Moon and the Atmosphere is never very clear. In the Central Arctic the distinction between the Persons of Sea and Land is vague. Among the Caribou Eskimos, in Labrador and in Greenland the people distinguish in essence only two

world powers ,whereas in the Aleutians these all appear to have been reduced to one.

Whether the aboriginal ancestors of the Eskimo-Aleut stock started with four world powers or with two (or even with three like the Yukaghir), we see two divergent strains of realignment. In Alaska with the emphasis on the personal guardian-spirit complex whereby the people dealt with their sources of food and protection directly with the more immediate spirit-powers that controlled these, the universal spirit-powers play a secondary role. In the Central and Eastern Arctic, on the other hand, where the shaman-seance complex was emphasied, the governing powers of the world occupy the chief position, and the shamans become the sole specialist operators who may treat with these. These two divergent developments, with their associated features, constitute the essential difference in the religious systems of the Alaskan Eskimo-Aleuts on the one hand and the Central and Eastern Eskimos on the other.

RULES OF LIFE

A word about the private rituals, the so-called rules of life, in relation to the spirit-powers of the world. These prescriptions and injunctions in reality receive their fundamental sanction through being traditional. They are stated to be the rules discovered to be effective by the ancestors and hence they are followed. Yet this sanction from tradition has been reinforced by a sanction from the cosmological structure as well. This is particularly notable in the Central and Eastern Arctic, where these injunctions are more strict, where they derive their rationale from the preferences of the chief female deity, and where their enforcement not to say elaboration depends on the supervision of the shamans. Since the greatest onus of these observances falls upon the women, we may admire the psychological tour de force of these Eskimos in specifying the obligation as coming from a female divine power. It is probable that the Moon as the guardian of souls of men and animals was more anciently the supervisor of these rules since their infringement affects first and foremost these souls, and is in fact the main cause for the latter's becoming demonic spirits. This function the Moon (or sometimes the Person of the Atmosphere) still performs, both in Alaska and in the Central Arctic. However, the Moon is now not the source of sanction but simply an admonisher in the latter region. In Alaska the sanction usually comes from the tradition which has established not only the prescriptions themselves but also the harm to both the individual and to the community that will result from infraction of each custom. Where the sanctions for the traditional rules of life have been incorporated into the cosmological system, we are justified in surmising, I believe, that this is an element of the complex that goes with the development of the shaman into the

specialized religious practitioner for the community, a complex that I would venture to suggest may have entered Alaska from Siberia long subsequent to the arrival of the first proto Eskimo-Aleut immigrants, probably at the period just prior to the eastward spread of the ancestors of the Thule culture.

SUMMARY

We have seen that the religion of the various populations of the Eskimo-Aleut stock comprises an essential common basic structure with several significant divergencies between the Alaskan area and the Central-Eastern area. Those elements that are shared by all groups are the various categories of powers and their interrelations. The common religion is basically an animistic system in which the controlling powers are spirit-beings of an essentially anthropomorphic character. There are four categories of such powers, each specific in nature and function but all capable of interacting upon each other. The first of these categories is that of the individual souls of men and animals which are immortal and perpetually reincarnated. The second category is that of the demonic spirits who are also essentially immortal and in theory originate from unincarnate souls. The third category is that of the "persons" of objects and places, with the additional class found only in Alaska of "persons" of animals. The so-called name-soul of humans and dogs likewise belongs most closely to this category in its characteristic function. The fourth category comprises the "persons" of the universe, a set of male and female divinities who control the forces of nature and act as regulators of the other spirit-powers and of the interrelations between men and the rest of the world. In this last category we noted a significant difference between Alaska and the Central-East in the importance of male and female divinities.

All the Eskimo and Aleut groups likewise have a segment of manaistic or magical powers associated with talismans and incantations, divination and sorcery. Although this represents on the whole a non-animistic conception, there appears to be a tendency to view these powers as originating from spirit-beings rather than simply those inherent in the objects or magic formulas. Thus the manaistic portion of Eskimo-Aleut religion was becoming integrated into the animistic.

Two spheres of difference were found between the Alaskan area on the one side and the Central-Eastern on the other. The one is the personal guardian-spirit complex in Alaska, comprising its unique feature in the cosmological structure, to wit the "persons" of animals. This complex is lacking throughout the rest of the North American Arctic, but the correlation between the Central and Eastern *tupilak* and the northwest Alaskan *tupitkaq*, as well as the "evil guardian-spirit" of the Polar Eskimos, suggest that the basic elements which went into the formation of this complex in Alaska must have existed in the antecedents of the neo-Eskimo culture of Canada and Greenland.

The second difference lies in the varying emphasis on the importance of the male and female deities. In the Central Arctic and Greenland the paramountcy of female divinities is the chief feature, a development which the Caribou Eskimos share with such extreme importance to the female divinity that the aboriginal male powers have been practically supplanted. Labrador shares with the rest of the Central-Eastern region the complex of dealing with the forces of nature primarily through the directing divinities, but agrees with Alaska in emphasizing the predominance of a male power. This special development of the female controlling deities in the cosmological system of the Central and Eastern Eskimos accompanies a specialization in the manipulative techniques of the religion, viz. the concentration on the function of the shamans to handle the powers necessary to ensure the food supply and protection of the whole community. This parallels the specialization in Alaska which emphasizes the cosmological feature of animal "persons" and concentrates on the manipulative technique of the guardian-spirit system of control over food supply and sources of protection.

We pointed out at the outset that the Eskimo-Aleut religion is primarily a pragmatic system for treating with the forces of nature and only secondarily a system for explaining causes and origins. Although I have decided for the present discussion to omit consideration of their eschatology and of their techniques for putting their beliefs into practice, it might be well to stress that in both these fields also there is a considerable measure of agreement among these widely separated populations. The basic common mechanisms are: 1) means of individual control through the power of amulets and incantations; 2) individual control through private rituals, i.e. the observance of traditional prescriptions and injunctions; 3) communal control through public rituals. It is only in this last class that we observe any striking difference between Alaska and the regions to the east. In the former area we encounter two types of public rituals: communal ceremonies in which all members actively participate, and shaman seances. In the latter area we see only shaman seances, at which the other members of the community are only passive participants, until we reach the region of Baffin Island and Labrador where communal ceremonies again crop up—viz. the *Siitna* festival, the masquerade with promiscuous mating, the whale feast, the relighting of the lamps, and the sculping dance. This latter situation makes us wonder if the exclusive predominance of the shaman seance in the Central Arctic is not actually a contribution of the Thule culture with only Alaska, Labrador and Baffin Island preserving a paleo-Eskimo tradition of communal public ceremonials.

The great strictness of the traditional injunctions and the great reliance on amulets in the Central Eskimo area does not constitute a substantial divergence from other areas, but simply a more rigorous application of basic mechanisms provided by the common religious

system—a rigor necessitated by their logic in order to deal with their more precarious conditions of existence.

I have been led to this study by a feeling of the need for more thoroughgoing comparisons than most that exist of the similarities and differences between the various populations of the Eskimo-Aleut stock. It is only by such comparisons that we may seek to sort out paleo- from neo-Eskimo features, and to determine what might have been borrowed from Indian neighbors or from Siberian neighbors, so as to attempt to reconstruct the proto Eskimo-Aleut foundation for the traits that have been recorded only since the contact with Europeans.

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METAPHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE FOLKTALES OF THE ESKIMOS OF ALASKA

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In probing the philosophical depths of a primitive people, folktales present a definitive means of ascertaining the articulation within the group consciousness of mind and matter, and of mind and self. This continuity between philosophy and folktales has been underlined by Boas:

> Mythology, theology, and philosophy are different terms for the same influences which shape the current of human thought, and which determine the character of the attempts of man to explain the phenomena of nature (Boats, 1901, p. 7).

The patterning of the mind and its content as evidenced in folktales become reciprocals of man's attempt to comprehend the nature of reality. These concepts of reality must be resolved within the social and cultural contexts of a particular society. An approach to the folktales of the Alaskan Eskimos, therefore, must relate the philosophical analysis of its content to the cultural and ideological framework of the Eskimo people.

The impact of the folktale traditions upon the Eskimos in Alaska was most extensive. Because the folktales and mythology interwove the individual with his universe in so many facets of activity, there was a profound effect upon the religious, social, economic, and educational aspects of the society. Folktales to the Eskimo were more than a symbolistic compendium, or etiological conjecture. They were an integral part of the experiences of the individuals and of the socializing force of the community. They represented both machine and master, carrying forward traditional content of the society and at the same time aligning thought and activity in their pattern.

Thus, for philosophic inquiry, the folktales of the Eskimos are a valuable tool. The inclusive nature of folktales in the intellectual activity has been indicated:

> When we define as folk-lore the total mass of traditional matter present in the mind of a given people at any given time, we recognize that this matter must influence the opinions and activities of the people more or less according to its quantitative and qualitative value, and also, that the actions of each individual must be influenced to a greater extent by the mass of traditional material present in his mind (Boas, 1901, pp. 2-3).

In understanding the philosophy of the Eskimos, the mind content may be viewed as it evolves within the folktales and myths as molded by cultural values and influences. This concept has been validated: " . . . that the thinkers among primitive peoples envisage life in philosophical terms, that human experience and the world around them have become subjects for reflection, that these ponderings and searchings have become embodied in literature and ritual . . . " (Radin, 1927, p. 386).

Metaphysical considerations are most obvious in the folktales of the Eskimos of Alaska, as it is this aspect of philosophy that received the most complex development and definition. Theories of the nature of the cosmos have entertained the minds of mankind primarily because of the existence of a physical world that was in many of its faces, inexplicable and unknowable. To the Eskimos it was a logical position to see the sun and the moon held together by a pattern of permeating force, settled on an eternal race, male pursuing female. For philosophical satisfaction the scientific interpretation accepted by western civilization has no more reality for comprehension than the position taken by the Eskimos.

In the same manner, the Eskimos evaluated the nature of man and his relation to reality throughout their folktales. Man did have a spiritual counterpart or parts, that transcended the finiteness of present existence. But it was a spiritual affinity, without the connotation of sacredness in many cases, and it was real and not ethereal in others. With western civilization and its religious backgrounds in Christianity, man transcends reality only at death or incidentally in gobblinism, spirit divination, etc. In western civilization mankind has also created other philosophical positions such as realism, pragmatism, both derived from naturalism. These conceptions have discarded any transcendentalism (with exceptions) as a hoax, and have relied on the physical forces of man and nature as the knowables of existence and hence the only acceptable evaluation of reality. The folktales of the Eskimo also interpret in various manners the nature of the unifying force of the universe, ranging from deism to pantheism, and postulate the meaning of existence itself.

In considering the metaphysics of the Eskimos of Alaska, then, the folktale presents a valuable source of material. The nature of ultimate reality provides question-marks that essay the attention of the primitive in his folktales, and provides the subject-matter for the analysis of the metaphysical concepts of these people. Regarding primitive man, John Dewey, the philosopher stated:

> . . . that effects, emotional and practical, were the material of the thought of real objects, and that thinkers in their doctrine of inner "force" stated in rational terms a notion which was expressed mythically by the mass, a notion which has marked affiliations with a persistent strain in the philosophical tradition (Radin, 1927, p. xviii).

RESEARCH AND SOURCES

Analyzing the folktales of the Eskimos of Alaska was limited by the scarcity of adequate and well-defined collections in the folkloristic tradition amenable to philosophic interpretation. Abstractions of folktales were made in "depth," so-to-speak, from the relatively early compilations of Murdoch (1886), Nelson (1899), and Barnum (1901), to the more recent collections of Garber (1940), and Lantis (1946). Even in the more developed anthropological treatises, the collections of folklore tended to be appendages to, say, the study of artifacts or linguistics. Thus, it was deemed desirable to obtain at

least a sampling of as many translated editions as possible, to permit a determination of the philosophical insights of this people. Although a background and understanding of Eskimo culture were brought to this paper (however limited), it was believed that a pre-eminence should be attached to the folklore in any interpretation. Individual interpretations of metaphysical points contained in the various anthropological and novelistic editions while not discarded, were given second-place to the analysis of the composite traditions. Folkloristic interpretations were derived from study with Dr. Viola E. Garfield, University of Washington.

FOLKTALES AND MYTHOLOGY OF THE ESKIMOS OF ALASKA

From Greenland to the northeast segment of Siberia, the Eskimo peoples have a similarity of culture and environment, that facilitates a study of the facets of their cultural traits and patterns. A cultural classification including this area has been established for folktales common to the Eskimos:

> 1. **Eskimo.** Extending from East Greenland to the northeast corner of Siberia are the Eskimos. They are scattered over large distances, but they have a remarkably uniform culture, dependent upon their living in an arctic climate and on the shores of frozen seas (Thompson, 1951, p. 300).

Within this cultural area from Bristol Bay on the south to the Beaufort Sea in the arctic north live the Eskimos of Alaska. If a delineation of folktales characteristic of the Alaskan Eskimos were possible, they would be patterned around a curve centering in the Norton Sound area of western Alaska. At the extremities of this curve on the south, one would find the influx of folktales from the Aleuts and the Indian peoples of the north Pacific coast. In the north, the homogeneity would be modified by the impress of folktales from the Eskimos of the Arctic and Greenland. Pressing in on the center of this curve from the west would be the tales of the Eskimos and Chukchee of Siberia and on the east from the mainland of North America would be those of the Athapascan Indians.

DISTRIBUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF FOLKTALES AND COLLECTIONS

Into this cultural area of the Eskimos of Alaska, came the exponents of western civilization in the eighteenth century to explore and lay claim to this territory. Following the transfer of Alaska to the rule of the United States in 1867, missions began to be sent into the isolated northern and western areas where the Eskimos were located, and government outposts began to be established.

In the year 1885, the *Report of The International Polar Expedition to Point Barrow, Alaska,* was made available and a creation myth of the Eskimo people was recorded (Ray, 1885, p. 47). From this same expedition, a few, brief abstractions of the folktales were reported by Murdoch in 1886 (pp. 593-599). A much larger collection of folktales and mythology became available with Nelson's work in 1899, dealing with the Eskimos of Bering Strait (p. 462). Many of these folktales

came from both Norton Sound and Yukon delta peoples. Along with a linguistic analysis, Barnum included a few folktales of the Eskimos of Nelson Island in 1901. Borgoras mentions folktales of this area in a comparison of the folklore of Northeastern Asia with that of Northern and Western America in 1902 (pp. 577-683).

At the beginning of the twentieth century adequate surveys of the folktales of the Eskimos of Alaska had yet to be performed. Boas writing in 1904, sums up the situation:

> Unfortunately the folklore of the tribes west of the Mackenzie River is only imperfectly known, so that we cannot form a very clear idea of its character. Judging however, from the fact that quite a number of Eskimo tales which are known east of Hudson Bay are known to the Chukchee of northeastern Siberia (Borgoras), we are justified in assuming that these tales must also be known—or have been known—to the Alaskan Eskimo (Boas, 1904, p. 1).

Published materials during the fifty years since the observation of Boas, especially those of a professional character are few in number, and these are limited in folktales reported and analyzed. A comprehensive philosophically-oriented study of the folktales and mythology of the Eskimos of Alaska remains for the future.

Materials from both the early reports and from recordings since the turn of the century will be utilized throughout the discussion. Publications during the latter era covered the following areas: delta of the Kuskokwim and Yukon Rivers, Nelson Island, Nunivak Island, Norton Sound, Bering Strait, and Point Barrow. As to the acculturation of the folktales of the Eskimos during this period, we have the assurance of one writer that it remains relatively undefiled;

> It is most interesting and valuable to learn that mere contact of the Eskimos with more civilized philosophies has in no way spoiled, or even altered, their folktales (Garber, 1940, p. 20).

This same source, however, notes a discouraging trend:

> Unfortunately, there is an effort on the part of some selfish and unseeing missionaries and teachers to obliterate the Eskimo's indulgences in his own folklore . . . (it) is unchristian (Garber, 1940, p. 22).

EVOLVEMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF FOLKTALES

Because of the homogeneity of the cultural area of the Eskimos, a diffusion of folktale types throughout the immense distances of the habitat of these peoples has been assumed. Boas noted quite early that the folktales of the Greenland Eskimos were similar to those of Siberia with the inference of diffusion throughout Alaska (Boas, 1904, p. 1). However, the lack of research in the Alaskan area, which is situated between these two areas, made definite conclusions hazardous. In another report, Boas interviewed some Eskimos at the Columbian Exposition from Port Clarence, Alaska, (Seward Peninsula). He mentions that the tale of the mistress of the sea animals from Greenland was known in the traditions of this group, as well as the sun myth and the discovery of light (Boas, 1894, p. 205).

In the comparison made by Borgoras of Siberian and Alaskan

Eskimo folktales the same scarcity of adequate sources for Alaska, as mentioned by Boas, was reported (Borgaras, 1902, pp. 577-683). Borgoras notes the use of Nelson's study for Alaskan Eskimo folktales in his comparison. With a more extensive background of folktales on hand, Jenness indicates some disagreement with the earlier discussions of similarity between the folktales of the Alaskan peoples and those in Siberia. As a member of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, he compiled folktales from Pont Hope, Alaska to Coronation Gulf in Canada. He believed that both the style of the narratives and the cultural adaptation of them differed, and that independent development occurred more frequently in Alaska (Jenness, 1924, p. 1).

A more recent report in the literature overstates, perhaps, the validity of independent development suggested by Jenness:

> Each outstanding colony has developed its own legends and stories. Few of them are common to all Eskimo settlements (Garber, 1940, p. 23).

Again, this special characterization of the folktales of the Eskimos of Alaska was upheld by Rasmussen by pointing out the personal tradition in the transmission of them:

> Before the first kagasse was built, all story-telling was more or less confined to implanting in the children's minds certain religious concepts.

He believed that this process, provided mostly by old women, caused a breakdown and degeneration of the myths. Continuing:

> But in the Feast house, where the listeners were . . . often friends who had come from a few districts, more was required, and the old myths and legends took a new form founded on and interpreted with personal experiences. So was developed through generations the art of story-telling I found in Alaska and it was fully on a level with the best I knew from . . . Greenland (Rasmussen, 1932, pp. 36-37).

Thompson notes similarity throughout the cultural area of the Eskimos for a few major tales, but allows for indigenous development, "There are . . . independent tales, rather incoherent, telling of the origin of man, of thunder, lightning, and rain, and of "day and night" (Thompson, 1951, p. 306).

As to influences from outside the Eskimo area on folktales, Boas noted that the Indian tribes and the Eskimos had a common pattern of animal stories. He reported the Swan Maiden as appearing among the Chuckchee, as well as among the Haida of Queen Charlotte Islands, and concluded that such stories would appear among the Athapascan. Boas referred to both Nelson's and Barnum's records that many of the animal tales of the Indians of the North Pacific coast and of the Athapascans had been introduced among them. Hero tales which were considered to be most prevalent folktales of the Eskimos, on the contrary were considered to be influenced slighty by the Indians and at the same time were diffusing from the Eskimos to the Chukchee and Koryak of Siberia (Boas, 1904). Recognition of the relation of the Raven tales to the North Pacific coast Indians would indicate some influence in the hero tales, "The part played by the Raven in the mythology . . . of the Kuskwogamiut finds its parallel among the Tlingit of the Southeastern Coast" (Gordon, 1917, p. 234).

TYPES AND STYLE OF FOLKTALES

Of all the creation myths, one has achieved in the literature a first role among the folktales of the Eskimos, including the peoples of Alaska. This myth concerns a diety supposedly residing under the waters of the sea, female in nature, who controls the sea-mammals and their use by the Eskimos. The folktale tells of a woman who in escaping from her bird-husband is pursued out to sea by him. Her father throws her overboard, but she clings to the gunwale of the boat. The father then chops off her fingers which are transformed into seals, salmon, walrus, and whales. Following this experience, she descends to the bottom of the sea to become ruler of the sea's denizens. Boas believed that this was a tale common to the Eskimos from Greenland westward to Alaska (Boas, 1904. p. 3), and Thompson calls this, "the basic myth of the Eskimo" (Thompson, 1951, p. 105).

From the many collections that have accrued on creation myths, the sea mistress is not frequently mentioned, particularly for the Eskimos of Alaska. Boas mentions one version received during his interview of Port Clarence Eskimos at the Columbian Exposition (Boas, 1894, p. 205). There is no mention of this underwater deity in the collections of Jenness (1924), Nelson (1899), Murdoch (1886), or Curtis (1930), dealing with the Eskimos of Alaska. For example, Lantis in regard to her collection of tales from Nunivak Island, states, "There is no Sedna, a female deity under the sea who controls the sea animals . . . (they) have the Northwest Coast belief in villages of the various species of sea-mammals." (Lantis, 1946, p. 314). This may indicate that the distribution of the Sedna myth may not be as extensive as heretofore believed. It must be noted, however, that one of the early reports from Nelson Island states that frequent mention of a "sea serpent" occurred in the folktales of these people (Barnum, 1901, p. 271). As Nelson Island is adjacent to Nunivak, this report may indicate that the Sedna myth was of more importance in Eskimo folktales in western Alaska in the past.

Raven appears in many of the collections as a creator of man and animal life. Nelson's folktales of the Raven are rather extensive and form a series of culture myths which account for the existence of all things (1899, p. 450). Regarding the Kuskwogamiut, Gordon states, "There is a long cycle of myths about Raven as the creator and teacher that forms an epic of extraordinary interest . . . " (1917, p. 234). As noted previously, Gordon links this development to the Tlingit peoples of Southeastern Alaska. On Nunivak Island, Lantis noted a sterility of Raven tales, which if correct seems unique for the Eskimos of Alaska. There is apparently no myths of Raven as creator, but rather as a trickster, "an amusing and tricky glutton who humbles along, managing to win out most of the time, but occasionally being tricked himself" (1946, p. 313). However, the tales of Raven as trickster are so few as to consider any cycle or pattern, rather dubious. For Northern Alaska, Raven as both creator and trickster appears to have

disappeared with only one passing mention by Jenness in his study (1924, p. 47).

A myth which is discernible among the folktales of most of the Eskimos of Alaska is that concerning the Sun and Moon. This deals with a brother who has incestuous relations with his sister. To escape, the sister goes to the sky and becomes the sun. Her brother pursued her and became the Moon and still remains chasing the Sun across the heavens. One version mentions the characters as being aunt and nephew, actually referring to what would be considered mother and son in the kinship relationships (Lantis, 1946, p. 314). Boas and Thompson both note the widespread distribution of this particular folktale (Boas, 1894, p. 205; Thompson, 1951, p. 306). Another tale which is consistently discovered in the folktales is that of the Dog Husband. Children from the union of the Dog Husband and a woman become the progenitors of a group of people or of the races of mankind, spreading out from the center where the tale originates (Boas, 1894; Lantis, 1946).

Other creation myths which are of more independent origin concern animals such as the walrus, caribou, fish, reindeer, and others of the origin of stars, winds, lightning, thunder, snow, daylight and darkness.

Animal folktales have not been developed to any extent by the Eskimos of Alaska, although the peoples of this area have shown more interest in them than the Eskimos of Canada and Greenland. Undoubtedly, the Indians of the North Pacific coast and the Athapascans in interior Alaska may have introduced animal folktales among the Eskimos. This has led one source to contend that the animal folktale was originally foreign to Eskimo folklore (Boas, 1904, p. 7). Although environmental factors may have had some weight in the interpretation of animals as characters in the folktales, an even sounder base is the adaptation of animals for protection and for magical purposes. It is difficult to believe that propitiation of animal spirits, which is ingrained in the religious ceremonies would not have had an effect on the folktales of the people.

The relative scarcity of animals and of the characterization of animals in the folktales has meant a greater use of humans in the tales than the Indian peoples did. Boas states, "The most striking feature of Eskimo folklore is its thoroughly human character" (1904, p. 2), and Lantis concurs almost identically, "A striking characteristic of this body of folklore (Nunivak Island) is its humanness. Most often even the animal characters are portrayed as human" (1946, p. 315). The lack of a mythical age in the folktales has had repercussion most likely upon the use of animals. Existence remains unchanged from the moment of creation.

Hero-tales with a strong dash of the supernatural seem to have been the most appealing element of folklore for the Eskimos of Alaska. Nelson suggests the development of these tales:

> The tales of these people seem to have originated largely from certain distinct sources; there are tales of hunting and adventure including voyages and incidents of the ordinary life of the people which may start from someone who recounts an episode in his life in a pleasing manner ,so that it is taken up and repeated, with various additions mainly of a supernatural character, and finally become fixed in the tribal folklore (1899, p. 451).

The number of tales precludes an analysis of the various tests or obstacles to be overcome. Many of them presuppose a knowledge of the supernatural concepts of the Eskimos. Tales of Shamans, with supernatural helpers, relate of visits to other worlds and heavenly bodies. They demonstrate their tremendous power to move spirits in animals and humans. Boas contends that the hero-tale is the most characteristic part of Eskimo folktales (1904, p. 13).

In an early report, Barnum records that for the Eskimos of Nelson Island, very little notice is paid either to a description of nature or of historical events (Barnum, 1901, p. 271). Of course, here again, environment may have created a stylization, and also, while a written report of a folktale may seem rather barren, an oral rendition would give it emotional cement. Folktales on Nelson Island contained:

> . . . accounts of sorcerers, orgees, giants, dwarfs, and mermaids. There is frequent mention made of the sea serpent, and of a mysterious monster like a half-man . References to cannibalism are continually mentioned and also the ghoulish trait of eating dead bodies . . . how the fox became red through shame at being overturned in strategy by a ptarmigan (Barnum, 1901, p. 271).

From Nunivak Island the main characterizations were of Grandmother and Grandchild, Two Brothers, Haughty Girl, Poor Boy, Raven, and Little Bird. The powers of amulets and songs are stressed in the folktales. Among the supernaturals on Nunivak, worms appear frequently, both men-worms and worms in a pool controlled by an evil person (Lantis, 1946, p. 315). These characterizations reported by Barnum and Lantis are representative of the variey of folktales available in the literature.

Boas mentions the conservatism of the Eskimos as regards retention of facts withim the folktales (1904, p. 9). This stability was retained during repetition by the story-tellers, according to Lantis (1946, p. 264). The teller was not allowed to add incidents or to mix up in the story in any manner. All the listeners were acquainted with the minute details of their folktales and would make corrections if deviations occurred. Although the plots remain stable, Garber notes for the Bering Strait Eskimos:

> One at times gets the impression that the narrator is making up his story as he goes along, though in reality his basis may be centuries old. The nararion often runs smoothly, not choppy, yet aimlessly, is the impression (1940, p. 13).

Barnum notes that particular story-tellers made great use of abbreviations and were fond of expressing themselves in a very condensed style (1901, p. 272). The conservatism and rigidity of reinterpretation gave the Eskimo folktale teller a style and pattern

for presentation. The good story-tellers would follow this form and begin with an introduction explaining who were the main characters, where they lived, how big their village was, etc. As the plot itself unfolded the narrator would elaborate on every aspect of the tale, and answer constant queries as to the nature of some point with patience and thoroughness. The result would be a complete rendition of all parts, and the solving of all problems (Lantis, 1946, p. 315).

FOLKTALE NARRATION AND SETTING

The narration of folktales by the Eskimo story-tellers has special implications outside of the style of the folktale itself. The stories are learned by the young men of the village from the elders, exactingly memorized and practiced, and rendered with detail. The narrator attempts to use the same intonations and gestures learned by arduous practice. This becomes a complex art when it is realized that some of the tales took hours in telling. This pattern has been well defined by Nelson:

> Young men who have an aptitude for learning tales become narrators and repeat them verbatim, even with the accompanying inflections of voice and gestures. On the lower Kuskokwim river and the adjacent district toward the Yukon mouth, some of the important tales are given by two men, who sit cross-legged near together and facing each other; one is the narrator and the other holds a bundle of small sticks in one hand. The tale proceeds and at certain points one of these sticks is placed on the floor between them, forming a sort of chapter mark. If the narrator is at fault he is prompted by his companion. Some of the tales are long, occupying several successive evenings in their recital. The narrators are very careful to repeat them in a set phraseology with repetitions in definitely determined places. When an error is made it is common for the narrator to go back and repeat from some prominent incident. The voice is intoned to imitate the different characters in a more or less dramatic manner, and with the gestures made a very effective recital. The listeners are quiet and attentive, and at certain incidents express by a word or two their feelings of surprise or satisfaction. These tales are heard over and over again, forming the unwritten lore upon which they draw for entertainment during the long winter evenings . . . (1899, p. 451).

The kashim (khashkii, kagasse, etc.) is the showplace of the Eskimo folktale. Used for community meetings, dances, work shop, religious center, it also serves as a folktale transmission and rendition center. The kashim would be crowded with the elders of the village, usually, reclining or sitting around the circular wall on grass mats or caribou skins. As "living libraries of Eskimo lore," these men would be sought out by the youths of the community to learn of the experiences and adventures of their ancestors. Story-telling went on at all times, but received more of a social emphasis during ceremonials or festivals when the villagers would come from neighboring villages. Folktales had a real meaning for these people; as Gordon puts it, " . . . these stories may be said to constitute a body of epical literature that is rich, expedient, and striking in form" (Gordon, 1917, p. 233).

COSMOLOGICAL CONCEPTS IN FOLKTALES OF THE ALASKAN ESKIMOS

The nature of the world man lives in has been evaluated and questioned by both primitive and civilized man to determine the content and meaning of reality. Throughout the centuries of written history, the recording of these thoughts created a background of interpretations that today represent the major wold-frames of philosophy. Primitive man recorded abstractions of reality in the folklores and mythology of the people to be transmitted, and idealized through the spoken word of successive generations. Boas indicates quite succinctly the approach of primitive man to problems of reality:

> To primitive man—who has been taught to consider the heavenly orbs as animate beings, who sees in every animal a being more powerful than man, to whom the mountains, trees, and stones are endowed with life—explanations of phenomena will suggest themselves entirely different from those to which we are accustomed . . . (Boas, 1901, p. 7).

Of metaphysical theories, cosmology attempts to understand the nature of the cosmos and explanations of its origins and development. The folktales of the Eskimos of Alaska abound with references of a cosmological nature, in the creation myths, and in tales that note the presence of forces underlying the fabric of existence:

> The Alaskan Eskimos possess an almost endless number of tales and legends, which express in many details their religious beliefs and convey in an interesting form an idea of their ancient customs and modes of thought (Nelson, 1899, p. 450).

The absence of present relativity reinforces tendencies for cosmological explanations:

> The stories . . . do not deal with living individuals or even with people who have lived in the past two generations . . . Most of them can be classed as myths . . . There is a pretentious quality, a supernatural aura about them . . . (Lantis, 1946, p. 313).

ORIGIN OF THE COSMOS

Two distinct views may be discerned in the cosmology of the Eskimos, as to the origin of the cosmos. The universe and its occupants in some folktales are beings that merely evolve. "The world just is," and there reality begins. From this point, the world is continuing in evolution, adding and subtracting forces without care. Throughout this evolution, the reality of nature proves to be the guidepost to order and whatever patterning of the universe there is. Lantis mentions this position as being evident in the folktales of the people of Nunivak Island (1946, p. 314). Boas believes that the evolving cosmos is characteristic of the Eskimos:

> It will be noticed that in . . . (no legend) . . . is there any inner connection between the whole trend of the story and the incident of creation. It is not clearly stated, and in many of these stories it is not even necessarily implied, that the animals created did not exist before the creation recorded in the story (Boas, 1904, pp. 4-5).

Creation in this sense becomes incidental to the universe which is evolving and shaping the destiny of mankind. Boas did not feel that creations within this pattern were made primarily for the benefit of

man, or that they were necessarily connected with a mythological world.

From the Bering Strait collection, Nelson records a folktale that relates the origin of the land and the people. This folktale which follows the evolutionary pattern was taken from the Eskimos of the lower Yukon. It tells of a beginning in which there was water all over the earth, and it was extremely cold. Underlying the water there was nothing but ice, and there were no people. Then the ice ground together and created long ridges and hummocks that may be surmised to be land. A man came at this time and stopped at the ice hills near the Yukon people, taking a wolf as a wife. Children were born in pairs to this couple, always a boy and a girl that spoke a tongue different from the parents and their brothers and sisters. These pairs spread out over the ice hills which finally became snow-covered mountains. Their children speaking the different tongues of the world, represent the existent population of the world today (Nelson, 1899, pp. 482-83).

In this abstraction, it is possible to see that the basic matter of the universe as to its structure is not a force or energy but rather a universe of water and ice. The lack of inner force bears out the contention of Boas that creation is incidental to the main process of evolution. Yet, this tale does give a clue to the causality of existence for the Eskimos of this area. Certainly the basic structure of the metaphysics that appears is a naive naturalism bedded in a materialistic understanding of reality. The substance of the universe in its very beginning was water and reality was nature itself. It is interesting to note that Thales, an early naturalistic philosopher, sixth century, B.C., took almost the same position. The creation of the earth from this substance was purely one of evolution, the ice merely grinding together. This is the cause apparently, there being no pre-existing element to make the ice act. The nature of the land is recorded as changing from ice hills to snowy mountains. Evolution is indicated clearly here, as well as the nature of time for the Eskimos. Time does not appear as being objective and is not particularly relative. Beyond its externality to man, it has no effect on the processes presented.

The First Man is a being when the world begins possibly. The story relates that the First Man came from across the great water. He is not formed by any force, he merely appears and is. This indicates an evolutionary flavor in man's development. The joining of First Man with a wolf, harks of Roman mythology. It points to the validity of the contention that nature is reality in the folktales of these people. It indicates the close relation that the Eskimos considered applicable to man and nature, and man and animal. Also, the animal in nature especially during this period was given human characteristics, i.e. bearing children, that apparently were normal physiologically. The birth of twins was a necessity, not actually, but for the purposes of this tale. The mating of the twins, while possibly containing relational implications, presented no problems of incestuous actions, and provided for the great variety of people on the earth.

Radin, although dealing with a more complex pattern of evolutionism in the cosmos, postulates the characteristic of the consistency and inevitableness of primitive cosmology (Radin, 1927, p. 194). He makes the vital point that primitive man in his evolutionism skillfully dodged the question of prime origin with no more ability than the evolutionists in western culture.

The second cosmological view which may be added to the forces of evolutionism, or put in a position of complete opposition to it, is creationism. In this theory, there is force behind the materialism of the universe that molds and creates, and destroys the content of existence. Origins become tied to a particular Being in this concept, and order and stability emenate from it. The mechanizing view developed by evolutionism disappears with creationism which relies on a source of power transcending reality.

Creationism in Eskimo folktales is illustrated in the creation myth of the people on the Noatak River near Kotzebue Sound. Told by a native, Apakag, to Rasmussen, the tale concerns the beginning of all life (Rasmussen, 1932, p. 57). The sky appears before the earth, when the crusts of the earth are beginning to form. The first living creature was Tulugersak or Father Raven who was the creator of all human life, and other life forms. He was no common bird, but "a sacred and life-giving spirit, the origin of all the world as we know it now." Despite his spirit-power, Raven begins life in the shape of a man, achieving progress only by chance until his destiny was revealed to him:

> He was squatting in darkness upon the ground, when suddenly he came to consciousness and discovered himself. He knew neither where he was, nor how he came there. But he breathed the breath of life. He was alone.

In this darkness, he crawled about on the spongy clay, which he forms into the figure of a man and casts it into an abyss. This being becomes the essence of a Tormak, the evil spirit of the Eskimos. Finally, Raven flies down into an abyss to the earth where he creates man from pod plants. In the beginning, there was little difference between man and animal and they could change forms at will. Raven creates light and darkness from pieces of mica, and land from the pieces of a serpent he slays. He admonishes the people before he flies to the sky: "I am your father. To me you owe your land and your lives and you must never forget me" (Rasmussen, 1932, p. 64).

In Raven, we have an indication of a "cosmological argument," i.e. the creation of existence originating from an all-powerful Being, resulting in an ordered universe. Raven presents quite adequately those aspects of transcendental activity that would be connected with supreme Being; creation of land and life and the desire to be recognized by the humans of his creation. Raven, does not, according to this myth, begin of himself, or have any beginning, but rather begins in the shape of man digging in primeval clay, the same clay from which he creates man. Here, we find the finite deity of the realist who tampers with only selected portions of existence. Raven is not infinite, but that does not detract from his overwhelming importance. The realist would ask

for order in his metaphysics, and Raven supplies that with a pattern of creation and propitiation. The emergence of Raven from man to the form of a deity from clay is coincidental but his mental transformation is revealing, "he came to consciousness and discovered himself." Indicative of the nature of man, an analysis will be deferred until later in the discussion. It is an almost direct intonation of the concept, "I think, therefore, I am," from Descartes. This symbolization is representative of the scope of understanding to be derived from the folktales of the Eskimo. The creation of an evil spirit by Raven is an unusual development, but an interpretation cannot follow the moralistic scheme of analysis of western civilization. Evil in the connotation familiar to the Eskimos of Alaska is a force which attacks the order of nature not the morals of mankind. The creation of this spirit which would be a force to alter the workings of order desired by Raven might be considered paradoxical. One assumption from this concept might be that the evil spirit performs the function of the harsh and unpredictable side of nature, the devasting furies of the environment. It may also be hazarded that Raven, who admonishes man to remember him, knows that he will do just that and provides a force to sustain their interest in him.

From the text, one observes that Raven speaks of two levels of existence. He obviously leaves for a different world after the creational period, following a stay on earth, perhaps the same from which he dropped originally to earth. It is in this fragmentary spot of existence, that Raven discovered himself, and, clearly it transcends reality. Darkness and primeval clay are the characteristics that exist prior to Raven's awareness, and must therefore be portions of Ultimate Reality. From the text, we find sky existing before earth, yet it appears without apparent origin, or perhaps the inference is that Raven created it from his arena of Ultimate Reality.

Undoubtedly, from this creation myth, the paths of evolutionism may be seen wandering through the text, from sky to earth to man and plants, daylight and darkness. However, it falls within the cosmological pattern of creationism by virtue of Raven and his power.

A longer genesis myth, similar to the one above is reported by Nelson from Kigiktauik (Nelson, 1899, pp. 452-462). It relates the creation of man from pod to plants, the transformation of Raven, creation of foods and plants, animals, women, evolution of mankind, etc. To provide for man's finite nature he makes it permissible for man to enter his sky-world, thus completing his evolution from creation to death. The major points that differ from the creation myth just analyzed (Rasmussen), will be elaborated. Man having been created out of a pod-plant on the beach is viewed by Raven quizzically, as if man had been an accident. He creates foods (as well as a companion for man) by waving his wings four times. It was interesting to note that this existence is mythical in nature, "In those days there were no mountains far or near, and the sun never ceased shining brightly, no rain fell and no winds blew." First Man is clearly differentiated from

those that follow, existing in a different area. An instance of man being defeated by nature for the first time brings forth a reaction:

> . . . his breast seemed full of a strange feeling, and the water began to run in drops from his eyes and down his face. He put up his hand and caught some of these drops to look at them and found that they were really water (Nelson, 1899, p. 456-57).

Man is taken on visits to the sky-world and to the bottom of the sea. Although the people asked him to remain, First Man who had become aged wished to see the sky-land again and in the company of Raven returns there, thus completing the cycle of life and death for the Eskimo. The people on earth work against order in nature by over-killing animals, so Raven takes away the light. Finally he relents and makes the sky revolve around earth carrying the sun with it, providing for daylight and darkness.

Raven in this myth does a more thorough job of creating and provides a sound basis for order and stability in the universe. In this myth, the "cosmological argument" becomes more rational for Raven creates and provides the essentials for man's existence in the universe. Yet, Raven appears not an infinite power, in this myth, as in the one examined previously. The upper sky-world has a supreme being, whose equation with Raven goes unmentioned. Parents are noted for Raven, so other deities must be assumed. A polytheism may be inferred for the supernatural from these other forces existing in the sky-world, but there is no obvious limitation of the power of Raven.

The separation of the creation period from the ordinary existence of the present is an important feature of this myth. This stamps it clearly as a mythical period, with the sun standing still, and absence of wind or rain. The creation of an awareness in the first men of these myths is rather unique. Man becomes aware of himself, of his ability to cry—truely excellent characterizations of primeval man. The desire of man to see the sky-world indicates the transcendentalism that flows through these tales.

SEPARATE ORIGIN MYTHS

Important in the origin and development of the cosmos are several myths in the folktales of the Eskimos of Alaska that describe the separate origin of one of the heavenly bodies, particular areas of land, animals, etc. These, of course, do not maintain the homogeneity that is characteristic of the creation myths mentioned above, that attempt a more or less complete rendition of the origin of the cosmos. Evolutionism and creationism run through these myths depending upon their point of origin. For example, Nunivak Island folktales show little evidences of creationism in the beginning; the world and the heavens merely are existent. Raven, also, contributes characterizations only as a minor trickster without spirit-power.

The obtaining of light for mankind reported by Curtis for western Alaska begins without a particular causality, as many of the shorter origin tales do (Curtis, 1930, p. 79). Two brothers who live in darkness, accidentally see light, and when they attempt to secure it are held

back by a spirit-power wielded by a young woman. The woman secures light for them and turns out to be wolf-spirit. Here, the spirit entices man with light, permits him to fail, and then presents it to him. There is no act of creationsim in this myth, but rather an ordering of the elements of nature. The nature of time and space are both rather vague in this account. The power of the transcendental forces is proclaimed over the weakness of man.

From Paimut on the lower Yukon, Nelson relates the bringing of the light by Raven (1899, pp. 483-85). A despised orphan boy who is Raven seeks the sun and moon and is told by his aunt to go "to the place you will know when you get there." The boy discovers a man shoveling snow and obscuring the light; he steals both the sun and the shovel. He discards pieces of the sun intermittantly on his journey home, thus causing daylight and darkness. In this myth, Raven contributes the sun to the cosmos and orders both daylight and darkness for mankind.

Raven bringing daylight to the Eskimos is a myth told by the chief of the village of Wales (Garber, 1940, pp. 29-32). In the beginning, all work was done by moonlight. The people heard that a man not an Eskimo, had a small and a large ball of light. Through kindness by the people to a raven, Raven appears and goes after the light for them. He tricks the little girl of the owner of the balls of light, into kicking the large ball of light out the door of the hut they were contained in, and Raven steals the ball. Raven then drops the ball of light from a great height on the sea-ice, shattering it, and the world has daylight. This is a more complete tale, than the one from the Yukon, mentioning the beginning and giving a cause for the creation of light. It becomes evident that the absence of light coincides with the period of creation and the pre-creation period. It must be noted that the ball of light is shattered and light becomes an all-pervading substance, characteristic of particular seasons in Eskimo latitudes. This represents a disassociation of light with the circular concept.

A similar tale of Raven bringing light, comes from the Kobuk area (Curtis, 1930, pp. 216-17). Here, there was darkness in the world of long ago. Raven changes to a feather to be swallowed by the daughter of the keeper of the light. She bears a son, as a result of impregnation from the feather, who steals the ball of light, flys to the sky and bursts it. This is actually Raven, of course, and as an anti-climax, Raven marries and is thrown out of the parents home because he is so filthy. This indicates that even all-powerful Raven is humbled, as man was in the beginning.

Lantis reports a myth regarding the sun and the moon (1946, pp. 268-69). A foster son loves his foster mother and sleeps with her. Desiring to escape, the woman flies up into the sky and becomes the sun, while the son chasing her is the moon. This myth gives the sun and moon an animistic definition, which is apparently unrelated to the ideas of the creation or bringing of the light.

The origin of thunder and lightening is recorded in a myth by

Murdoch in 1886 (p. 595), and appears in a tale by Lantis in 1946 (p. 269) with much similarity, despite the time-span. Although Lantis mentioned the factor of isolation at Nunivak from the rest of Alaska, this myth appeared at Point Barrow far from the Kuskokwim Bay area. Murdoch noted that an adult and a child went up into the sky where they happened upon a sealskin and a torch. With the sealskin, which was rattled they made thunder and with the torch, made lightening. Lantis reports a myth in which two menstruating girls out in a storm were taken to the sky by thunder things. The girls were given a mukluk skin which they dragged while running and thus made the thunder and through urination the rain.

Interesting in the origin concepts, is the myth of the Giant (Nelson, 1899, pp. 471-73). Incidental to the basic theme of martial difficulties, the Giant represents the snow and wind of the north. With his breath he causes the gales and winter storms. The Giant concept is not often mentioned in the folktales of the Eskimos and possibly was a borrowing from Indian peoples.

The Origin of the Winds myth from the lower Yukon contains important cosmological concepts (Nelson, 1899, pp. 497-98). A Doll ascends a path of light to the edge of the sky, "where the sky comes down to earth and walls in the light." Doll finds a gut-skin cover over a hole in the sky wall, which he cuts open and lets in the wind. Looking through the opening, Doll perceives another world similar to the earth. Coming to the middle of the earth plain, Doll looks up and sees the sky arching overhead, supported by long, slender poles made of some beautiful material unknown to him. He permits all the winds to enter and then returns home. In this myth, the sky is conceived of being shell-shaped, with openings to other places like the earth. Light is retained for earth by this covering shell. The role of Doll has no apparent causality other than that it is given some transcendent power, but no source of power is mentioned. Nature as reality seems to be the undergirding structure of this tale.

The origin of land is related by Curtis from two areas which are rather widely separated. In the Kobuk myth, the land was originally covered by a great flood of water so that only the mountain peaks remained above water (Curtis, 1930, p. 79). With only two villages in existence, which were becoming rapidly overcrowded, Raven decided to make more land. He speared Sod, which was an animate piece of earth floating on the water, and Sod expanded into a mainland. Water is the all-enveloping substance in this creation period. Sod is an unusual concept primarily because it lacks the "qualities" for animation, such as the sun or the moon. It contains great spirit-power which Raven releases for the benefit of humanity. The "Origin of Nunivak Island" concerns two brothers stranded on an ice-floe (Curtis, 1930, p. 74). The crying of the younger brother attracts the Spirit of the Universe, who is the encompassing and all-powerful spirit of Nunivak. She stands with one foot on each kayak and scatters exrement which becomes Nunivak Island. The younger brother is changed into a

woman, and from this pair come the descendants living on Nunivak. This represents a pure act of creationism, the work of a Being who is responsible for existence itself. The creation is limited in scope, i.e. other areas of the world are unmentioned. Also, the existence of the two brothers appears prior to the creation of Nunivak and its people.

CONSIDERATIONS OF THE NATURE OF MAN IN ALASKAN ESKIMO FOLKTALES

The examination of reality, following an analysis of the cosmological ideations of the Eskimos, proceeds to the nature of man. To the casual observer, nature would appear to be the direction of focus, the embodiment of reality for the Eskimos. As noted in the previous chapter, there are powerful forces in and about nature that preclude a purely materialistic or naturalistic metaphysics. These powers that control or constitute portions of ultimate reality in nature, deal with mankind throughout the folktales of the Eskimos. Man, however, is not a sentient body, a figure of static qualities, but a dynamic individual able to modify and even alter the forces about him.

Aspects of the nature of man that are of importance to metaphysical thinking concern the essential nature of the self, the relation of mind and body and the relation of man to the external universe (Butler, 1951, p. 17). Interpretation of the folktales of the Eskimo with these factors in mind results in a pattern that is unfamiliar in western culture. According to Radin, speaking of primitive man:

> The nature of the impingement of individual upon individual and of the individual upon the external world is thus utterly different from anything that a western European can imagine. The medley of combinations and permutations it would permit is quite bewildering (1927, p. 264).

The Eskimos maintain a variety of components of self which are synthesized logically into a configuration, which is more or less unique.

ESSENTIAL NATURE OF THE SELF IN FOLKTALES

In the folktales of the Eskimo, a cursory investigation will show that the Self is not conceived as being body alone, in the naturalistic tradition. A closer approximation of Self is comprehended as being a spiritual essence, an *inua* or shade. These portions of self are sometimes three in number, representing the shade of a particular level of existence. There is a shade destined for future existence upon death which resembles the life form of the body, having no effect, however, upon the life activities of the individual. Another shade is the life of the body, which assumes the life form and leaves the body upon death. A third shade that is difficult to establish appears to linger with the body after death, and may be utilized for evil purposes. Consciousness and an awareness of self that goes beyond the function of the life-giving shade is also characteristic of Self in the Eskimo concept. Many of the folktales and myths of the Eskimos relate of shades that are able to divert the stream of reality. The shades stand out as the permanent element of Self, while the physical

structure is a fleeting thing, evolving towards the common end. There appears to be certain infiniteness in the shades as possessing a fragment of spirit-power or of Ultimate Reality.

The sentient shade that exists after death is well-explained in the folktale from Andreivsky on the lower Yukon called, "The Land of the Dead" (Nelson, 1899, p. 488). A young woman dies and is awakened by her grandfather shade. She is guided past the village of the dog shades, in order that, "you can see how the living dogs feel when beaten by people." She observes a shade being punished after having pulled up and chewed a grass root. Next, she crosses the river created by the tears of people who weep for the dead, when her namesake was to be confirmed, but as this girl dies ,she takes the place of her namesake on earth again for many years. This particular tale covers many of the conceptions of the Eskimos applied to the shade world. The significance of the grandfather is that the person when dying thinks of the person who he or she desires to lead them through the journey to the abode of the shades. The shade of a violent death goes to an abode in the sky, where Raven and other supernaturals reside. The shade of a natural death goes underground with the shades of animals. The incident of the village of the dog shades emphasizes the high level assigned to the spirits of animals, which were considered almost human in existence. A definite spirit-power, perhaps evil, is believed to be contained in grass roots. A beautiful literary device is the crossing of the river of tears; here, in the land of infinite existence is a memorial to those who have sorrowed and lost those residing there. It divides the areas of being and non-being dramatically. The partaking of food left by the living was a feature of all feasts to the dead which were really great celebrations for the Eskimos. These feasts were held infrequently over a long number of years and the first child born after a person had died would be confirmed at this feast and thus become a namesake of the deceased person.

The close relationship held to exist between the shades of man and animals is brought out in a folktale reported by Jenness, "The Caribou Man," that was told by an Eskimo woman of Cape Prince of Wales (1924, pp. 58-59). A hunter approaches a herd of deer, and as he raises his bow, one of the deer pushes back the hood from his head and changes into a man. He is asked if he would like to join the herd, and as he assents the deer gives him his clothes and the hunter becomes one of them. True to the nature of the tale, the hunter is unable to adapt as a reindeer, and asks to be taken home, where he again becomes a man. This change in being is on the shade level of existence, the body form seeming to have no relation to reality.

A creation myth that has special implications for the essential nature of self and that demonstrates the concepts of the Eskimos regarding the relation of mind and body is the myth reported by Curtis,

"How People Came to Cape Etolin" (1930, pp. 75-77). It tells of a man who all at once became conscious of himself. He discovered that he was a man standing naked in a men's house which was devoid of all furnishings, even the usual grass mats. He saw light which hurt his eyes, coming through the smoke-hole and flooding the entrance-way. He had to become accustomed to the sun's glare upon going outside. "Then, glancing about, he saw many strange things: calm, smooth water, grass and plants, and animals. Closer observation showed that these animals, moving in herds, were unlike him, because they had four legs, tails, and horns on their heads." Thinking about this, man realizes that the animals are clothed, while he is naked. He finds clothing, learns how to put it on, and goes through the learning process with a bow and arrows, killing a caribou, eating, making a fire, cooking food, and using a boat. Returning home one day he finds food ready for him, and "He wondered now about the house, cache, weapons, and kayak—who had made them; where all had come from . . . " A person with long hair in the house tells him that his grandfather had made the things for him. After marrying this person and having a son, man goes to meet his grandfather. He is told by grandfather to follow the sun's path and that he will meet someone who will, "tell you all you want to know." He meets an old woman and has to defend her against evil spirits. The two evil spirits become one to fight man but he overcomes them in a test of strength.

In the beginning of this myth, the man finding consciousness is a vital metaphysical concept related to reality. It establishes the existence of a mind, and separates it from the body. From this point of consciousness, the myth takes man through the evolution of life but from manhood not childhood. He becomes aware of his physique, that it differs from animals and requires special treatment. In the Eskimo mind, this idea indicates that the physical structure did enter into their consciousness. The symbolism that is represented in this story is Self as an important part of existence. A question in symbolism in the myth, is man's first idea that someone was responsible for the cultural tools he was using. The answer is grandfather, who in actuality, represents the wisdom that comes with age. The test man undergoes with the evil spirits tends to be unique and individual. The joining of the two evil spirits is a refinement of spirit-power as the evil in a spirit usually has the necessary power for the particular role. The ability to overcome the evil represents the desire of mankind to overcome the problems of living.

FREEDOM AND DETERMINATION IN FOLKTALES

The propitiation of the spirit-powers by the Eskimos was tied in many cases to the practicalities of ordinary existence. Tabus in the folktales and myth were set up to maintain the order of man's existence here on earth. Boas gives an example:

> When an Eskimo community is on the point of starvation and their religious proscriptions forbid them to make use of the seals that are basking on the ice, the amount of self-control of the whole community, which restrains them from killing these seals, is certainly very great. Cases of this kind are very numerous, and prove that primitive man has the ability to control his impulses, but that this control is exerted on occasions which depend upon the character of the social life of the people . . . (1901, p. 5).

In this case ,reality for the Eskimos is determined by a desire to appease a transcendent force.

A folktale from Little Diomede relates a well-known plot among the Eskimos. It concerns the "Story of Manina," a hunter who visits King Island (Curtis, 1930, p. 124). During the festivities, the hunter and a King Island medicine man decide to go to the spirits below. They journey to this spirit-world underneath the earth, and by good singing receive the pleasure of the spirits in the form of power to bring food to their people. The locus of power in existence is clearly defined in this tale. Spirits, not man, are the final arbitrers of the availability of the animal resources.

A direct appeal for supernatural assistance is recounted in the folktale, "The Tree Man," from the Kotzebue area (Curtis, 1930, p. 183). An old man was treated cruelly by his master and he asks the spirits for help. At this time a tree was washed up on the shore. "The tree gained consciousness; it remembered that it had once lived and stood on a large stream. It recalled memories of drifting hither and thither on the water. Driven by a sudden impulse, the tree decided to become a man . . . " The tree knew nothing of land, or people, and a seabird who also changed into a man, assisted him in learning the ways of men. Then, tree-man slays the wicked master of the old man. Here, man is driven to despair by the problems of existence and seeks a solution by appealing to a higher power than himself. The drift-log as an instrument of supernatural assistance becomes man. There is no allusion here to a particular spirit-power as flexing its supernatural forces, but only to the spirit-force inherent in nature. Reality is again determined for man.

Although determinism was the powerful ideation in Eskimo folktales and mythology, to be properly appeased, often it came as sheer evil against which there was no recourse. Such an account is "The Spirit Marks on the Mens House" (Curtis, 1930, pp. 155-156). In this tale, the young men are in the kashagii at midnight, when a frightful face makes an entrance. The thing "walked on elbows and knees about the room while the youths gazed, hardly daring to draw a breath. It bumped against each bench as it passed, and the young man, unable to resist it, followed in single-file behind the thing, the evil spirit, walking as it did on elbows and knees." In the morning, the people of the village discovered the young men frozen to death on the tundra.

Freedom within this pattern of determinism was quite possible for the Eskimos based on rationalism or plain everyday avoidance of religious proscriptions. However, an open violation of a religious law

when it concerned the society as an entity had to be measured against the possible consequences. For every activity that the supernatural ordered, there was a variety of responses possible, due to the extreme pluralism of the universe. Reality was not contained in one single, all-abiding power but was diffused throughout a spirit-world.

Raven Father, for example, may overstep the bounds of reason for man. In the folktale, "The Men on Earth Get Into Trouble" (Snell, 1925, pp. 54-61), First Man was taken to the Moon with Raven Father. They see the earth people killing too many reindeer, so they send down to earth reindeer that have sharp teeth. "It will teach men a lesson." The men on earth become frightened and could not hunt these reindeer. The old men overcome the reindeer by mixing sour berries with tallow and cause the reindeer to shake their teeth loose. Man did not waste food again, but reindeer never bothered with teeth again. Earth men, it is indicated, did not call on Raven Father for assistance, but met the threat to existence and survived.

IMPRESSIONS OF SPIRITUALISM IN ALASKA ESKIMO FOLKTALES

Coordinate with a discussion of the nature of man, and of the cosmos, is an examination of the nature of the spirits and powers that were part of the universe, as contained in the folktales of the Eskimos of Alaska. Central to many of the conceptions of spiritualism is Raven F[illegible] ies are usually associated with creationism, having at some time on impulse created the earth and its people. Beyond this first act of omnipotence, however, these deities are usually sentient in nature, with man dealing with the cosmos by means of other spirits. Radin classifies such a deity:

> The supreme being thus develops into what has been admirably described as an otiose deity, one resting on his laurels after the creation of the world and leaving it entirely to its own devices (1927, p. 354).

In addition to the genesis myth about Raven Father, there are myths that mention other deities and spirits, such as the Great Chief in the Moon, the supernatural Dwarf People, Sun Man, the Big Eagle, Thunderbirds, Sedna, etc. There thus becomes a polytheistic approach to the supernatural world, with great spirits in nature and throughout the cosmos.

As was mentioned in the discussion on cosmogony, Raven Father created the earth and everyone on it. Raven came from the sky and made the earth, when there was nothing but water and gave potentiality to existence and an evolving world, "I am your father. To me you owe your land and your lives and you must never forget me" (Rasmussen, 1932). The sky-world of Raven is like the earth as shamans obtain animal life from there for the earth. First Man lives there, along with Raven Father and the shades of those suffering a violent death. When Raven Father took First Man on a tour of the Sky-world, we discover that it is "a beautiful country with a very much better climate than that on earth, but the people who lived there

were very small." There were poisonous lakes to humans, in which the grass did not bend under weight, and monsters such as one with a long head and six legs. When the first people killed too many of the animals on earth Raven took the sun away for awhile, and then put Bear on earth to scare man (Nelson, 1899, pp. 452-462). As a supernatural, Raven must be associated with creationism, not with evolution in mind, but with setting up the possibilities for life and existence. The other supernaturals maintain order in the cosmos, but Raven is revered and above the ordinary pattern of spirits. He is one of the many forces comprising the ultimate reality of the Eskimos.

SUPERNATURAL ABODES IN FOLKTALES

In the "Origin of the Yu-gi-Yhik," recorded at Ikogmut on the lower Yukon, is told the story of a shaman's visit to the upper world (Nelson, 1899, pp. 494-496). He sees the stars falling and the sky sinking to him, finally resting on a hill top. The stars are in reality round holes in the sky through which the light from above was shining. Going through one of the star holes, he observes another sky, which sinks down, and then another. Looking through the third sky he sees a kashim. Here, there are wooden images of the animal kingdom, sticks in a "V" shape representing Raven Father, and two large hoops representing the heavens arching over the earth. These hoops were attached to the top of the kashim and could be pulled up and down, symbolical of the apparent approach and retreat of the heavens according to conditions of the atmosphere. The shaman takes these ideas of heaven back to earth for the Doll Festival.

Another shamanistic visit is described in "The Big Diomede Medicine Man" (Curtis, 1930, pp. 129-131). Going to the sky, the shaman saw a house with a bird perched on each corner of the roof—crane, loon, eider-duck, and ptarmigan. They are to give warning of the approach of strangers to Sky Man, but shaman's power overcomes them and they tell Sky Man that only a mouse has come. An interesting feature of Sky Man's house is that it is a two-story structure. Sky Man had four spirit powers to assist him, but the power of the shaman overcame them all and he returned to earth.

LESSER CELESTIAL ABSOLUTES IN FOLKTALES

In addition to Raven Father, Sky Man, and similar supernatural conceptions, there are other important deities residing in the cosmos. "The Shaman in the Moon" from Kotzebue Sound tells of a great chief who lives in the moon (Nelson, 1899, pp. 515). From this chief, shaman may obtain animals for their people on earth. The land in the sky is like earth only that the grass grew hanging downward and was filled with snow which fell when the wind blew. Here also, were small round lakes in the grass that shone at night to form the stars. A different view is presented in "The Man Who Lived on the Moon," collected by Garber (1940, pp. 67-76). In this folktale, a beautiful girl finds a finger-sized baby on the tundra, that grows rapidly. One night on the tundra, the girl hears a sound coming from the moon, and there appears

a huge dog pulling a sled, and an individual with magnificent fur clothing. The girl is married to this individual, whose child she has, and is taken back to the moon.

Another version of this moon deity, "A Visit to the Moon," concerns a shaman's visit (Snell, 1925, pp. 136-145). He finds a great igloo guarded by two huge walrus, and uses bear spirits to get by them. He sees the great dog of the Man-In-The-Moon, and meets the deity who warns him not to laugh or Ermine will come out and eat him. Both the Man-In-The-Moon and his wife, who is a beautiful woman, try to make the shaman laugh, but not succeeding he is given a reindeer and a seal to take back to earth. The power of the Man-In-The-Moon is also demonstrated in the folktale "Azaruk and Man-In-The-Moon" (Snell, 1925, pp. 158-171). An orphan boy is mistreated, and Man-In-The-Moon hears his pleas for help. The orphan boy is whipped to make him strong, and finally overcomes three huge bears that threaten the village and thus becomes successful.

From Noatak comes an account of "Sun Man" who has many of the attributes of Man-In-The-Moon (Curtis, 1930, p. 199). Sun Man comes to earth when a girl picks up his son on the tundra and cares for it. He takes the girl and his son back to the sun with him.

"Spider Comes to Earth," tells of a spirit-power visit to earth (Curtis, 1930, pp. 85-86). Spider lived in the sky and liked to watch the people on earth. She saw an industrious man that filled her with desire. This man was transparent to her because of her power. She kills his wife and child and takes him to her sky home. The husband assumes the spirit-powers of a hawk and seagull and lives happily with Spider.

SPIRIT ACTIVITIES AND ABODES IN FOLKTALES

Indicative of the helpful spirit concept in Eskimo folktales is the folktale of "Akchikchuguk" from Sledge Island (Nelson, 1899, pp. 499-505). The plot concerns brothers in search of their beautiful sister. Akchikchuguk has tremendous powers because of the aid of a great spirit. He resuscitates his brothers, draws his arm inside his body, closes his eyes and compels the entire village to do the same, turned his head around on his shoulders, etc. But when he fails to heed an admonition, he loses his power, and turns to stone.

"The Land of Darkness," is visited by a mistreated wife (Nelson, 1899, pp. 511-514). She discovers here a man whose face and hands were coal black, and whose chest was white. All of the animals in the country were coal black also. A powerful spirit provided food for the man and the disgruntled wife. Finally, the woman returns home with many riches.

Spirit assistance is given to the "Strange Boy" in a folktale from Andreivsky on the lower Yukon (Nelson, 1899, p. 490). Making a visit to the far north, the boy visits with a series of clairvoyant individuals who tell him he is hunting for a wife. On his trip he consumes special spirit objects that give him power. He hears a terrible roaring noise

coming from a huge basket floating in the air. Boy invokes thunder and lightening to scare this basket-shaman away. Next, a shaman in the form of an eagle attacks him and he strikes his breast and a gerfalcon darted out of his mouth and through the eagle. Striking his breast a second time, an ermine leaps from his mouth and kills the eagle. He marries a beautiful girl in the kashim of the shaman whom he killed. Fearing that the girl will kill him, Boy slays his wife and returns home.

In the folktale, "How Akokock Became a Medicine-Man," both human and animal spirits assist man (Garber, 1940, pp. 109-114). As an infant, Akokock survives a starvation that kills his parents. Their shades bring him food to eat. Then a whale appears at the entrance to the hut and says, "One is not here to hurt little Akokock. One comes so that Akokock may eat of one's meat." Then the wale came to the entrance four times and the infant ate whale food. As a youth, Akokock again receives help from the animal spirits. Held in a kashim against his will, a small fish on the floor offers to take him home, which he does by increasing in size greatly and swimming across a body of water.

Inanimate objects held power to alter reality. An example is the folktale of the "Symplegades," in which two men are looking for wives (Lantis, 1946, pp. 281-82). They hear a tremendous sound like thunder as they are traveling, and come to a mountain that splits in half and comes together with a great clapping noise. Inside the mountain were round-mouthed people and many crushed kayaks. By paddling swiftly, only the ends of their kayaks were bitten off and they escaped.

The spirits of animals, fishes, and humans had abodes usually in some region under the earth or sea. "The Chief's Wife," describes the visit of a childless wife to the spirit land below the earth (Lantis, 1946, pp. 270-271). While she was traveling below the earth her clothes became old and they were completely blackened. She sees light which is a hole in the ground and through this she returns to earth.

'The Land of the Whale People," tells of the spirit abode of the whales (Curtis, 1930, pp. 151-152). Here the whale spirits gather and determine whether they will go to a particular village of man to be killed. The villages must be clean, as the whales avoid those that are not, and the dead must be buried properly.

In some instances, the underwater world, may be ruled by Sedna, mistress of the sea-mammals, who was their creator. In the folktales and myths, rulers of the spirits of animals and humans is rarely mentioned, as they seem to exist without interference or assistance from spirit-powers. The deities of the polytheistic world of the Eskimos reside apart and have their particular spheres of influence on man.

SUMMARY

The folktales and mythology of the Eskimos of Alaska were examined in the first portion of this discussion to determine the character of the folktale in Eskimo traditions, and their development

as brought out in the folktale collections. The inadequacy of materials available was noted at the turn of the century and at the present time for philosophical interpretation. The widespread homogeneity of Eskimo folktales that was upheld in the early literature was modified by more recent collectors such such as Garber and Lantis. Influence on Eskimo folklore for the pattern of animal tales was ascribed to the Athapascans of the Alaskan mainland and the Indians of the Northwest Coast. Hero tales were considered to be characteristic of Eskimo folktales. Both Sedna and Raven appear in the folktales, with Raven being of more importance. Raven is essentially connected with creationism, rather than as a trickster. The folktale of the Sun and the Moon appears to be widely distributed throughout the Alaskan culture area. It was suggested that Eskimo folktales especially in Alaska, have remained conservative because of their rigidity of presentation and interpretation. The folktale setting in the kashim was described and the mannerisms used in story-telling.

The first of three important concepts in metaphysics is discussed, the cosmological implications discernable in the folktale of the Eskimos of Alaska. Evolutionism and creationism were analyzed for particular application to the folktales. Evolutionary creation myths were mentioned as having no prime instrument of creation. Water becomes the basic substance of the universe in the approach to reality. Creationism is illustrated by creation myths concerning Raven Father, who creates heaven and earth, and humanity. Raven proves the "cosmological argument" for the Eskimos, as he presents those aspects of transcendental activity that would be connected with a supreme being. Evolutionism and creationism, however, are suggested as being itnerwoven in many of the creation myths. Then ,several origin myths were discussed concerning the origin of light, of thunder and lightening, of the winds, and of the land.

Considerations of the nature of man in reality were next discussed, being the second important concept of metaphysical thought dealt with in the paper. The essential nature of self was examined and shades or spirits, sometimes three in number, a consciousness of mind, and body, all were related to the essential self-concept of the Eskimos. It was indicated that spirits of both man and animal were similar or identical and that both resided in the spirit-world below the earth. Freedom and determinism were related to Eskimo thought in the folktales and it was noted that spiritualism to a large extent postulated an aura of determinism in the cosmos.

Finally, the third component of an analysis of the metaphysics of the Eskimos, spiritualism was examined. Central of the conceptions of creationism was a particular deity who was limited in power Beyond the acts of creationism, this deity was usually sentient in nature, with man dealing with the cosmos through other spirits. Chief in the Moon, Sun Man, Big Eagle, Thunderbirds, Sky Man, were some of the deities operating in the cosmos. The abodes of the supernaturals

and of spirits were noted in the folktales. It was indicated that the deities of the polytheistic world of the Eskimos maintained their own spheres of spiritual influence in the cosmos.

CONCLUSIONS

Metaphysically, the folktales of the Eskimos of Alaska suggest that the universe of the Eskimos is an organized one, with a particular pattern and design being evident in proof of the "cosmological argument"

From the folktale collections available, it would seem that in this ordered cosmos self would comprise spirits, two or three in number, a consciousness or mind, and a physical structure. Eskimo man related his reality to the supernatural or natural world about him, and tended toward determinism.

The supernatural world seems comprised of a deity of creation, and other deities that deal with man within their spheres of influence, thus, indicating a polytheistic tendency in the folktales

As to the folktale collections, it is believed that an analytical examination of folktales of the Eskimos of Alaska, other than as to literary style, would fill a decided gap in the literature. Many of the available studies tend to define the Eskimo peoples culturally, as one pure homogeneity, in particular their folktales, and thus, tend to omit vital portions of the folktales for interpretation. Gaps in the spread of the Raven Father myths were noted as well as for that of Sedna, mistress of the seas, for the Eskimos of Alaska. It is believed that a standardization of collections could be achieved through the establishment of some central agency to secure folktales of these people.

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