Symbolic Competition

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RÉSUMÉ

Dans beaucoup d'états contemporains, on trouve une contradiction entre une égalité idéologique des ethnies composant la population de l'état et une hiérarchie réelle, économique ainsi que politique, établie sur le principe des écarts ethniques. L'article explore comment cette contradiction s'exprime dans les idéologies minoritaires — en particulier, les idéologies courantes des Indiens canadiens. On distinguera entre deux types d'idéologie. La première établit une disjonction faible entre les Indiens et les Blancs pour favoriser une concurrence réelle mais amicale entre les deux groupes. La deuxième, qui se produit à défaut des conditions nécessaires pour la concurrence réelle, établit une disjonction forte entre les ethnies. Elle proclame un séparatisme spirituel, repousse comme débilitant tout contact avec les Blancs, et dresse une image de l'identité collective indienne où celle-ci représente la pureté primordiale et les Blancs représentent la pollution. L'article présente des données ethnographiques obtenues pendant la danse du soleil des Indiens Blood. L'idéologie indienne établirait une correspondance parfaite entre les oppositions pur/impur et Rouges/Blancs. Cette correspondance s'expliquerait par "la concurrence symbolique", c'est-à-dire l'inversion de la hiérarchie des Blancs où les Rouges seraient à une échelle inférieure. Une tel'e inversion serait le signe qu'un groupe social ne peut entrevoir une solution pour une injustice sociale insupportable que sur le plan de l'imagination. Quand les relations entre les Blancs et les Rouges s'améliorent, la concurrence symbolique se remplace vite par la concurrence réelle.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

This essay[1] is an attempt to interpret a set of social phenomena which have emerged in widely separate societies. We

[1] This paper is based on two months' fieldwork in Mount Currie Reserve, British Columbia, Blood Reserve, Alberta and The Pas, Manitoba. The fieldwork was done in 1964-65, and the first version of this paper was presented to a seminar at the University of British Columbia conducted by Professor

find these phenomena especially where the society includes indigenous groups which are peripheral to the basic political and economic decision-making institutions in the society. Such indigenous groups often maintain quite distinctive boundary maintenance processes of their own. Such processes are ideologically justified by the minority with the argument that it is "maintaining its own culture". Among the minorities of this kind that the author has personally studied in some detail are the New Zealand Maori and the Canadian Indians.

In the case of the Maori, the author has examined in some detail the genesis and development of concepts of "Maori people", "Maori culture" or "Maoritanga" from the millennial movements of the 19th century when they were first formulated to the present time when they have become embedded in a number of nationally recognised institutions (Schwimmer 1966, 1968). Such concepts are currently used to validate some militant minority ideologies, such as "Black Power", "Red Power", and have been a feature of anti-colonialist movements such as "Négritude".

So widespread are these movements that it is idle to attempt explaining them solely in terms of the specific cultural traditions in which they arose. They resemble each other far more than the various classical cultures from which they developed. How can we explain this?

The argument of the present essay does not imply a rejection of various other types of explanation that have already been offered. For instance, Metge's meticulous analysis of the migration process amongst the Moari (1964) does give us an explanatory model of organisational change in a continuing culture that may well be generalised to show similarities between various minority groups in industrially advanced societies.[2] Hallowell's (1955) and Ritchie's (1963) analysis of basic value conflicts between the indigenous and immigrant cultures likewise leads to

H.B. Hawthorn in 1965-66. I thank Professors Hawthorn and Dunning, and Professor Vallee from Carleton University, Ottawa, for useful criticisms on the original. I am also grateful for the useful comments of Mr. Douglas Daniels, of the University of Toronto, who read the manuscript when it was revised in 1970.

[2] When Indians write about their own cultural situation, it is usually from this same viewpoint, e.g. Pelletier, n.d.

a viable explanation of basic similarities between widely separated contemporary life-ways such as those of Indian and Moari.

In a different way, similarities in ideological boundary-maintenance processes have been analysed by Oscar Lewis and others, who postulated the existence of a 'subculture of poverty' (Lewis 1969) in minority groups with a low 'degree of effective participation' in the society. Analyses on the basis of this concept have been made of both Maori (Forster 1968) and Canadian Indian (Dunning 1959, Kew 1962) cultures. Theoretical objections to this concept have often been made, e.g. by Valentine (1968) who postulated a dichotomy between inherent ingrained subcultural values or habits and traits which are mere responses to experience of the socio-economic environment. Valentine would not agree with, for instance, Forster, who suggested that "the peculiarities which can be isolated in the psyche of the Maori are not a function of their being Maori, but are, instead, the result of being poor". Valentine would probably replace the words *not ... but instead,* by *both ... and.*

Certain aspects of such subcultures have not been considered in much detail in any of these analyses, such as: Do the subcultures set up their own boundary maintenance systems? If so, why do they do so? What is the symbolic content of these boundary maintenance systems? What does an analysis of these systems tell us about the basic source of conflict between minority and majority?

In discussing these questions, I have followed certain theoretical formulations which I should briefly acknowledge. The empirical data I have examined, especially the Blood Sun Dance, have to some extent been subjected to a Lévi-Straussian style of structural analysis. In making my analysis diachronic as well as synchronic, my approach has been consistent with much of Lévi-Strauss' later writing about history, e.g. his dialogue with Vogt (1962). Undoubtedly, cultures such as the Maori and Canadian Indian went through a structural transformation between the time of first contact with Europeans and the present. If we wish to trace the process of this transformation, a "generative model" such as that of Barth (1966) is very useful. Thus, we must assume that at any time a choice between several basic strategies was

open and that one can explain, even predict, such choices if we can calculate, on the basis of existing structural and ecological constraints, which choice will be regarded as the most beneficial.

Such calculations, claiming to predict what is regarded by the folk system as the most advantageous strategy, are always hazardous as the anthropologist must translate his apperceptions of these strategies into the theoretical terminology current in his discipline. The language into which I have chosen to translate them derives from two fields: the social psychology of Blau (1964) and the literature on millennial movements. Two of Blau's concepts have proved to be especially useful: the first one is his concept of power, which arises, according to Blau, when Self and Other are in an exchange relationship where Self cannot offer to Other benefits as valuable to Other as the benefits derived from Other are to Self. The relationship will then become worthless to Other unless Self is willing to place himself in a position of subordination. The position of Self is especially weak if he cannot get the desired benefits from any other source, cannot compel Other to give them by the use of physical or other force, and cannot do without the benefits.

The other concept of Blau's to which I shall often make reference is that of "opposition ideology". An opposition ideology presupposes a relation of negative reciprocity holding between a dominant and a subordinated group. The subordinated group is under strong pressure to accept the value system of the dominant one. This becomes distressing under conditions where the subordinated group considers they are not getting a fair deal in terms of their own system of values. It is the perceived unfairness that causes conflict, not the difference in "value system". Blau argues, however, that the difference in value system is more likely to lead to unfair treatment, as the stronger partner "identifies" less with the weaker one if a difference in values is present.

If this argument is correct, it would in general seem to be the best strategy for the minority to become sufficiently assimilated to enable the majority to "identify" with them. In practice, however, many minorities do not aspire to assimilation and we must assume they act in their own interests. What are these interests? Arguments that they desire to "maintain their identity" and "preserve their values and traditions" do not suffice, because such

boundary maintenance is not invariably adopted by minorities; the assimilation strategy if often more advantageous and is often adopted. This fact is demonstrated in detail in Barth's "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries" (1969).

The cases analysed by Barth and confined, quite justifiably, to types where the advantages of not assimilating are immediately evident on the economic and socio-political level. One could not say the same for the types of minority I am discussing in this paper; Maoritanga or the maintaining of Indianness cannot easily be fully explained by socio-economic advantage.

Opposition ideologies, such as developed by Maori and Canadian Indians, do not necessarily yield measurable socio-economic advantage, but may even penalise those who hold them, especially if they acquire an organisation and become opposition movements. The ruling majority tends to resent groups which do not accept its value system and tends to withhold from them benefits granted to conformists. One must agree with Blau that one of the distinguishing features of a genuine opposition movement is that its members are willing to make sacrifices for their ideals: they are willing to forego benefits the power-bearers would otherwise be able to offer.

It must be emphasised at once that neither the Indian nor the Maori situation can be analysed wholly or even largely by reference to opposition ideologies in this sense. Refusal to accept benefits when they are offered by the dominant society occurs only in circumstances where there is a sense of grave injustice. In New Zealand one may instance the attitude of the "King Movement" until certain land claims were settled in the 1930's; in Canada we shall be able to consider, in this essay, some more recent instances. We should, in fact, make two types of distinction in the analysis of the empirical facts, namely first, between assimilation and boundary maintenance processes; secondly, between boundary maintenance processes which are advantageous in competition with dominant groups (such as those described in Barth's 'Ethnic Groups and Boundaries') and those which do not appear to be concerned with direct competition in this sense.

It is on this last-mentioned type that I shall concentrate in this essay. Here, the ethnic minority is barred in a greater or

smaller extent from inclusion in the societal community; it has a lower economic and social status; its opportunities for political participation are limited; its standard of education is lower. Being placed in this disadvantaged position, somewhat separate from the dominant group, it forms symbols of in-group solidarity and claims to have a "separate culture". This "separate culture" is distinctive in ideological areas such as religion and the creative arts and the symbolic aspects of social and political organisation. (Schwimmer 1968, Chapter 1). Essential to the ideologies of such separate cultures appears to be a proposition that they incorporate the "immemorial traditions of their race". As such they have little logic or cohesion, but they become extremely cogent and even profound if we recognise that the ideologies have sprung up in opposition to a dominant White culture with incongruent values.

One feature of Anglo-Saxon value systems is an elaborate scaling of accomplishments in accordance with the class structure. Now the qualities that are valued most highly on this scale are precisely those that are not attributed to minorities such as Maoris, Indians, etc. What the opposition ideology does is to reverse the scaling criteria which it determines on the basis of two principles: (1) the minority should deserve a high score; (2) the dominant group should deserve a low score. The criteria would not be a haphazard collection, but would be justifiable in terms of a logically consistent world-view.

In suggesting that ideologies such as Indianness and Maoritanga have this kind of structure, I am not expressing a derogatory judgment. On the contrary, I believe that all systems of thought were generated in human societies by this type of dialectic. By implication, such ideologies contain two types of statements: (a) about the dominant culture, or system of thought, as perceived by the minority; (b) about the system that is being generated in opposition to the former.

Now, in any specific feature, the two systems thus included in the universe of discourse may either be similar or opposed. The opposition ideology may say that the dominant culture gives a correct prescription, but it is then likely to add that the minority is superior in its observance of the prescription (honesty, piety, democracy, etc.). In such cases one may say that the minority

ideology is practising direct competition with the majority. Alternatively, the opposition ideology may pronounce the dominant value system to be wrong and pernicious; or mean and second-rate. In that case it asserts the superiority of the minority, although by worldly standards it may be categorized as an oppressed and exploited minority. We may then speak of symbolic competition, as was the conviction of early Christians that only the poor but not the rich can enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

How can one explain that opposition ideologies and movements develop if their members cannot expect to gain any visible benefits, and often — if the majority is intolerant — risk to lose their property, their means of earning a living or even their lives? This is a difficult question to answer for a social theory which, like Blau's, rests on the assumption of some form of rationality of human choice. Blau explains that the oppressed may decide to adopt an opposition ideology because they feel they are so badly treated they have little to lose, whereas the association with the opposition movement is for them a definite gain.

How then would Blau explain the cases where men are willing to risk their lives for an opposition movement as often happens? It has to be recognised that the stakes in an opposition movement may be very high: not only the losses but also the expected gains may be infinitely great. In this respect, the best anthropological example of an opposition movement is a millennial or cargo cult. A normal characteristic of such cults is a willingness to forego the putatively paltry benefits derived from the existing situation. Cult members may destroy their crops, or pigs. The benefits promised to cult followers are correspondingly extravagant. The question is: can we apply a theory of social exchange in situations where both the costs and the benefits are indefinite and may be of the order of infinity?[3]

[3] The risks of opposition movements may be instanced by the practice of messiahs of millennial cults to bestow upon their followers the magical protection of invulnerability in the face of enemy bullets. We find this theme not only in Oceanic movements but also in North America (see Hœbel [1941] on the Comanche Sun Dance and Messianic Outbreak of 1873). In return for each indefinite risk followers expect benefits passing every conceivable limit. The *time* when they will receive them may be infinitely far removed. Though movements often set definite dates for the onset of the millennium, Festinger (1956) i.a. has shown that even if a definite date is set, movements may continue long after it is past.

One might perhaps argue that opposition ideologies tend to have a normative system which places a constraint on the legitimacy of certain types of exchanges just as the dominant ideology has such a normative system. According to opposition norms, withdrawal from the dominant system becomes obligatory. I would agree with Burridge (1969) that such a normative system may develop anywhere "provided that oppression and exploitation are experienced in a collective situation"; and that the process of its development is revelation, channeled through a mediator. To the social scientist, this genesis of opposition and millennial movements[4] is inaccessible ground, or, as Burridge puts it, "an operational power which may be provisionally identified and explored from the viewpoint of the known". (1969:139)

In the present essay, I attempt to document the way revelation actually occurs in social situations and its place in social behaviour. Revelation may, of course, be a charter for either direct or symbolic competition. In neither case would I regard the significance of these minority movements to be divorced from the sphere in which they arose, namely the critical relationship between minority and majority. However profound and aethetically satisfying these systems of thought may be, it is not expedient, in anthropological analysis, to divorce them from the conflict out of which they arose, or at least, which moulded their contemporary form.

The plan of this essay will be, first, to consider in one concrete instance, the Indians of the Blood Reserve, the environmental limitations placed upon Indians' direct competition with the Whites; and the forms taken by symbolic competition. Secondly, I shall take one specific set of events, the sun dance, and show how the symbols of symbolic competition are generated. I shall also indicate that the symbols of competition actually do make up the essence of what is commonly understood to be contemporary Indian

[4] Though millennial movements have been widely studied, anthropologists long continued to treat them as special phenomena, confined to specific times and places. Cohn, Lanternari, Muehlmann *et al.* compiled lists of diagnostic features to distinguish millennial movements from other types of movement, but without reaching agreement. In spite of this some scholars (e.g. Guiart 1962) tried to explain why the movements sprang up at one time and place rather than another. I would agree with Burridge that it is wiser at this stage to deepen our understanding of opposition movements than to induce *ad hoc* boundaries of the concept from comparative surveys.

culture. Next, I shall inquire into the conditions under which direct as opposed to symbolic competition is found to occur. This will be followed by a short discussion which belongs perhaps to applied rather than "pure" anthropology, and which inquires what circumstances will tend to increase the incidence of direct rather than symbolic competition, and hence the adjustment of Indians in Canadian society.

PART II:

SYMBOLIC COMPETITION ON BLOOD INDIAN RESERVE

(a) *Obstacles to direct competition*

The Blood Reserve was established in 1877 under Treaty No. 7 and comprises 354,000 acres of mostly excellent land, the majority of which is suitable for wheatfarming while the balance is good ranching country. A very detailed report compiled by the Indian Affairs Branch (1965) sets out the natural resources, which yield a substantial income to the Reserve, while considerable land resources remain in Indian hands.

Though there are 82,900 acres of improved land on the reserve, only 5,495 of these acres are occupied by Indians for wheatfarming, while the rest is leased to Whites. The Indian held unimproved land is used for ranching. Indian ranchers have been assisted by investments from band and government funds. In 1965, it was officially believed that Indians would benefit if most of the unimproved land were put into wheat (Pittman, Campbell, Garland and Elgaard, 1965). The Indians however showed, in word and deed, that they preferred to continue ranching. Considering what happened to the wheat market since 1965, this was probably a blessing but the historical fact is that the present Indian pattern of land utilisation is based on a massive failure in wheat farming. The leased lands include 35,000 acres which used to be occupied by Indian wheat farmers who were financed by the band and removed for non-payment of their debts. The failure rate on these Indian wheat farms must have been 85% of the area planted. Therefore, if Indian and White patterns of land utilisation differ in this district, the reason lies in

the failure of the Indians (due to a lack of either resources or capacities) to compete with Whites in wheatfarming.

There was until recently no opportunity for Indians to compete directly with Whites in education, as they went to schools inside the reserve. At the time of my study (1965), school integration was actively pursued. Indian parents showed a decided preference for integrated schools, though some schools on the reserve were still operating. This preference existed in spite of the very long distances students must travel by bus and in spite of their reports about discrimination. In this field of competition, the Indian children are at a clear disadvantage, through differences in home background, the inordinate length of the school day and even more, because of the difficulty — even for the best students — of finding suitable jobs after graduation, so that there is relatively less motivation for study.

Competition on the labour market is very difficult for the Indian. One reason for this is undoubtedly the lack of educational qualifications but the difficulty persists even for graduates who, in many instances, have returned to the reserve disheartened by the lack of opportunities. The Indians appear to be cast for a rigidly limited number of occupational roles where jobs are not only low paid but also seasonal. Associated with non-competitive income levels are correspondingly low standards of housing and health.

Indian Affairs Branch statistics do not readily lend themselves to an estimate of underemployment on the reserve, but it is safe to say that the average able-bodied male does not work for more — and probably for rather less — than half the year. In spite of this only 30 band members have established households outside the reserve which has a population of 3,600.

All my informants made vigorous and spontaneous statements about discrimination and about the impossibility of getting away from the reserve. Thus, the low migration figures do not reflect an unwillingness to move but a perceived barrier to movement. One man, a responsible Blood leader, drew a picture for me to explain the situation. It consisted of a number of circles which were reserves, filled with crosses which represented Indians. There was a boot in the middle and the tail of a mouse underneath

it. The mouse attached to the tail represented the Indian people, who could never move further away than the boot permitted. These statements are confirmed by research into stereotypes held by Whites with regard to Indians of the Blood Reserve (Zentner 1962) and by Spindler's field observations (1965:28).

In the administrative and political sphere, Indians and Whites again do not compete on the same level. This cannot be blamed on the local services of the Indian Affairs Branch which (at the time of my visit) showed the most enlightened understanding of community development techniques. Nor can it be blamed on the quality of Indian community organisation which is complex, active and which involves a large part of the community in well-conceived projects, both traditionally-oriented and modern. There is, however, hardly any linkage between these organisations and organisations of similar scope outside the reserve, so that Indians do not, in any real sense, participate in decision-making in their part of Southern Alberta. I may add in parentheses that linkages of this sort have, over the last 25 years, become rather important in the community life of the New Zealand Maori.

Finally, in the sphere of religion communication and emulation between Indian and White is rather restricted because the Blood are mostly Catholic, with an Anglican minority, whereas the Whites in most frequent contact with the Blood tend to be Latter-Day Saints and Protestants. Religion therefore acts, in the main, as a barrier between the groups. The evidence shows that direct competition and emulation between the Blood and the surrounding Whites is insignificant at any of the principal levels of culture. Yet one cannot call the two groups truly separate. It is more correct to say that they are normatively separated by taboos on commensality and intermarriage, and that they are politically and economically interdependent, with a strict differentiation of functions between the two groups. There are exclusively White and exclusively Indian political and economic roles, which are activated whenever representatives of the two groups encounter one another.

This pattern almost looks like what authors such as Berreman have called a "caste" system, i.e. the society is made up of "birth ascribed groups which are hierarchically ordered

and culturally distinct. The hierarchy entails differential evaluation, rewards and association".[5] Now a sense of oppression or exploitation does not naturally or necessarily arise in a hierarchically ordered society. It will only do so if the transactions between the orders are perceived by the subordinate partner as not conforming to standards of distributive justice.

The post-contact history of peoples such as the Canadian Indians or the New Zealand Maoris is not consistent with a "caste"-like system in the sense suggested above, because Canadian, as well as New Zealand society depended for its success on rapid mobility within and between immigrant groups. Very few Whites, in either of these countries, have ever *believed* in a "caste"-like society. Nor did this type of concept exist in traditional Canadian Indian or Maori culture. The erection of rigid boundaries of social stratification may have been expedient for White rural populations in dealing with Indian or Maori casual labour pools (cf. Daniels 1970), but this occurred in contradiction of the basic social objectives of the total society. Hence, criticism of these rigid boundaries has frequently arisen among those who were not direct beneficiaries, i.e. among urban educated elites committed to basic national social objectives and among the indigenous communities whose knowledge of the White value system derived mainly from ecclesiastical sources, and who were aware of the contradiction between White moral principles and practice.

b) *Some instances of symbolic competition*

Fundamentally, the Indian response to this perceived injustice has been to develop opposition ideologies. These can be understood only if we enter upon some analysis of myth, religious belief and ritual. But we must first settle a preliminary question: how important is the element of "opposition" in these ideologies?

[5] This definition, due to Berreman, is quoted by Pitt-Rivers (1971:255) who comments: "one wonders what stratified society it can be taken to exclude" (ibid. 247) Pitt-Rivers has suggested that the term "caste" is useless for cross-cultural comparisons. In the present essay, it is employed merely for ethnographic description of a system of social differentiation not inspired by the ideology of the modern West.

We shall therefore consider some specific challenges by Indians of the dominant values in Canadian culture.

It appears that Whites have selected the criteria for the social status scale in such a way that Indians must always be at the bottom. But the selection of such scaling criteria must always, in the last resort, be arbitrary. If Indians had the power to select the scaling criteria, undoubtedly they would be at the top and the Whites at the bottom.

Almost any element of "Indianness" can be used in this way as evidence for the superiority of the Indian. Unfortunately my collection of examples of this device is rather limited, but I noticed that Indians use it as freely as Maoris. They claim that the vernacular language is superior to English as deeper truths can be stated in it. Especially, it is aesthetically superior as English songs and stories cannot stir the heart. Similarly, the White man is devoid of the art of choreography; only the Indian knows really about dancing. The same kind of view is expressed about almost any arts and crafts.

In this symbolic sphere, we find mentioned as characteristic of "Indianness" qualities the Indians demonstrably cultivate to a high degree, qualities attributed to them on dubious grounds and qualities which they are thought to have lost today, but which are still seen as part of the essence of Indianness. Among these qualities are several no scientist would classify as distinctively Indian, though they may be distinctive to the rural working class, distinctive to ranchers, etc. Such scaling criteria must be regarded as part of the ideology of Indianness if informants relate the criteria to a putatively "Indian" system of thought.

Now some examples. First, there is the criterion of Indian strength, endurance, good health and dexterity, in other words: physical superiority. To some extent this Indian superiority is demonstrable, to some extent it is attributed, to some extent it is a past glory. Proficiency in heavy labour is definitely part of the Indian's own profile of "Indianness", while a belief in urban White inferiority in this respect is also part of that profile. Dexterity in handling horses at rodeos and proficiency in the practical aspect of ranching is another element of Indianness where the inferiority of the urban White is freely posited.

Another opposition built into the ideology of Indianness is the belief that the life of a rancher is inherently superior to that of the wheatfarmer. The latter is looked upon as a menial while the rancher has a more lordly style. The Indians claim this criterion of scaling to be part of their immemorial tradition. But we know from historical sources (Dempsey 1965:13; Goldfrank 1945) that at the beginning of the century attitudes were quite different: chiefs made determined efforts to introduce grain and vegetable growing among their people. Low status was not attributed to those activities at that time. But today wheatfarming is, to the Indians, a low-status occupation. Thus the Whites (in as far as they are wheatfarmers) are placed at the bottom of the scale and Indian ranchers at the top.

I have already suggested that such scaling criteria are not developed except in the framework of a cognitive system. Why does the ideology of Indianness lay so much stress on physical proficiency? The short answer is that physical proficiency is regarded as a sacred resource transmitted in special degree to the Indians by their ancestors. Not only prowess was so transmitted but also health. Spindler (1965:29) quotes, a Blood Indian's claim that Indians in the past did not have diseases like the White man. In particular, they had perfect teeth: "Your people have dentists to fix your teeth. You need them because you eat dead food. Before you came over here, the Indians all had good teeth. My grandfather had a full set of good teeth in his head when he died, and he was almost ninety years old." Here again, the White man's claim to superiority (only White culture has professional dentists) is turned into evidence for White inferiority by Indian criteria (Indians do not need dentists because their teeth are perfect).

One may ask: do the Blood Indians really attach any importance to their notion that they are superior to White men in physical prowess? This question needs more careful empirical study than I was able to give it. I can, however, quote on illustration in support of my contention. The sole practical experiment known to me which was aimed at improving "racial" relations on Blood Reserve was an Indian-organised "Trail Riders Club" which holds a camp for one week yearly for a mixed group

of Indian and White boys as well as a four-day camp for girls. The White children mostly come from town areas. The programme contains plenty of strenuous outdoor activities and also educational talks on horse-riding, ranching and Indian legends.

The urban White children are thus introduced to "Indian culture", and appropriate emphasis is placed on the criterion of physical prowess — not rated very high on the children's White middle-class urban scale, but extremely high on the scale in the camp. What interested me about this camp was the emphasis placed on a "competitive spirit", "points" being given for all events. Needless to say, the Indian children always won. To this extent, the Indians had reversed the more usual situation where Indian school children come near the bottom of the class. On the other hand, the organisation made quite sure in all other respects that the White children would enjoy themselves. This Indian emphasis on reversing the status scale seemed to me the more significant as I had never seen it in the many similar fraternisation efforts organised by New Zealand Maori. I wonder whether the Indians would have set up this "points" system if the schooling problem was less acute and if intermarriage between Indian and White was more frequent.

Physical prowess, however, is only one of many elements of Indianness which are selected as scaling criteria. Good memory is another. Spindler (1965:29) reports the following statement from a Blood informant: "You people made writing, so you do not have to remember anything. I guess that's why you White people have such bad memories. I notice I can tell you something one day, and if you don't write it down, you don't remember it the next. We Indians can remember everything that happens, even when we were little kids. It's all clear. "Here the informant is reversing a White status scale which contrasts the literate White man with the illiterate Indian. The superiority of the Indian is asserted by invoking a different criterion, namely the strength of the memory. This criterion, again, is valid within the Indian ideology which views memory, like physical prowess, as a gift of the spirit.

A similar pattern emerges from interesting data provided by Braroe in an essay entitled "Reciprocal Exploitation in an

Indian-White Community" (1965). He gives numerous instances where the White exploiter finds that the Indians turn the tables on him and he becomes the victim, the exploited. It would appear that the Indians set up some kind of social status scale for which "smartness' is the criterion. Reversing the ranking generally accepted in this mixed community, the Indians are able to place themselves at the top of their scale and the Whites at the bottom. Again, such a criterion would be merely trivial if there was not strong ideological justification for adopting a status scale based on "smartness". Indians believe that a man will succeed in a daring feat of trickery only if he enjoys the special favour of the Sun. Among the Blood Indians, tricksters made vows which they discharged by torturing themselves at the Sun Dance (Ewers 1948).

An interesting feature of symbolic competition is the emphasising of oppositions between White and Indian values by suppressing such similarities as exist. For instance, the Blood Indians had a gift exchange system whereby a young man who borrowed horses from an older relative to perform some feat of prowess was expected to pay compensation. Nowadays, however, there is a strong ideological emphasis that an Indian should unstintingly give what he owns to any other Indian who asks for it, without expecting a return gift. (Spindler 1965:28-29) Anyone who jibs at this is accused of "acting just like a whiteman". It would seem that at one time wealth was a status symbol among the Blood Indians, but that today strong emphasis is placed on a different criterion of status, namely: generosity and readiness to share. The wealthy man will have low status on this scale unless he is willing to share out all he has, i.e. give up his wealth. The whiteman, who would be at the top of the scale if the "wealth" criterion was accepted, is placed at the bottom of the scale by the "generosity" criterion.

The evidence of these last few pages is concerned with some of the most painful problems of the contemporary Indian: economic exploitation, suppression of spiritual and intellectual capacities, helotisation of the elite. I have shown that the Indian response took the form of setting up a scale of values contradicting the White scale. We now have to try to understand the Indian ideology in its totality and show how the fragments we have

considered fit together. Do they make sense as a timeless variety of the *philosophia perennis* or are they better regarded as an opposition ideology emerging out of the dialectics of inter-ethnic conflict?

c) *Sun Dance on Blood Reserve*

My apperception of the Blood Indian system of thought is based largely on my observations at the Sun Dance in 1965. I should therefore concede at the start that my presentation is bound to be incomplete. Nonetheless, enough material was obtained to show how Indians build up their ideology. The Sun Dance today is the supreme occasion of the Blood annual cycle when members from all parts of the tribe live together for twelve days under conditions evoking the ancient social and spiritual order. I estimated attendance in the evenings at an average of 700, but rather fewer during the daytime when many were haying or doing other work. Most of the evening visitors stayed in the tipis overnight.

The camp site was measured out well before the event by the Horn Society, the sacerdotal college which now controls the Sun Dance. They planned the layout of the main circle of tipis, leaving gaps at the East and West compass points where the ceremonial entrances should be. Every tribal segment was given its proper position on the circle, on which to erect its tipis. As the tipis must be set up by traditional methods which are time consuming, most lineages contented themselves with one tipi, supplemented with some modern tents. The camping amenities were otherwise very contemporary. The camp was very clean. A row of new privies had been built. Inside the circle no cars were permitted, but outside it, they were lined up everywhere and included some stylish models. For most of the time, visitors were chatting or sleeping in their tents, playing hand games or tripping about in their cars. They were neatly dressed and groomed. Liquor was strictly banned.

The Sun Dance is an extremely complex ceremony. Most visitors expect from it some form of magical efficacy which may have to do with good health, with economic abundance, with

support in hazardous enterprises, with fertility, with harmonious social relations. The ceremony includes appeals to every kind of spiritual power and its symbolism is mirrored in most of the great myths of the Plains Indians. Celebrants are organised in a complex array of cross-cutting social organisations: Horn Society, Women's Society, the keepers of the medicine pipes, the various age societies. As the ceremony is so highly composite, its religious significance is clearly diffuse.[6] It is the great occasion when the Indian collectively confronts unseen powers. Even the most fugitive event acquires, in this setting, a heavy weight of ominous significance. The celebrant does not merely act; above all, he elicits and receives signs. Over the last century, the form of ritual has been greatly modified and the content of the signs revealed to the Indian during the Sun Dance has changed. Comparing my observations with those of Goldfrank in 1939, I find that the number of celebrants is smaller than before, there are fewer tipis, the membership of the Horn Society has dropped

[6] The literature of the Blackfoot Sun Dance consists of a comparatively small number of primary sources, the more important of which do not deal with the Blood. While these sources are very detailed on ritual and paraphernalia, they do little to elucidate the system of belief underlying the Sun Dance. (See esp. E.S. Curtis 1911; Goldfrank 1945; Wilson 1909; Wissler 1911, 1912, 1913, 1918; McLean 1889; McClintock 1910.) On these not very adequate data a vast theoretical literature has been superimposed, beginning with Spier's diffusion study of 1921. While Spier's study led to much theorising it did not inspire much collecting of new data in the areas previously neglected. Bennett (1944) in summing up all this literature, expressed the feeling that Spier regarded the "Sun Dance as a patchwork of essentially discrete elements thrown together by a series of historical accidents". Later writers such as Opler (1941) Hœbel (1941) and Bennett himself stressed the functional interdependence of the different parts of the ceremony and preferred to regard it as a single unit.

This does not entirely solve the problem. Bennett himself recognised that Spier was not altogether uninterested in functional interdependences. We must therefore take Spier seriously when he writes: "The Blackfoot ceremony is unique in that it is organised in two unrelated parts, a bundle transfer ceremony and a dance." (1921:483). The Blackfoot have two sets of principal actors, which Spier calls a "fundamental divergence" from the typical Plains Indian Sun Dance (ibid., 479).

Outside this culture area, it is very common for the great festivals to be organised in several unrelated parts. It is the general practice in New Guinea. Explanations of functional interdependence ring somewhat hollow here, except in as far as it is useful to kill several birds with one stone. The structuralist explanation would be that a certain period of the year is set aside as sacred time, when contact with the spirit world is thought to be propitious and appropriate. The choice of mid-summer on the Plains may be accounted for by meteorological symbolism (as well as ecological factors). The blessing of the sun is needed, according to Blackfoot philosophy, to make the other rituals efficacious.

(from 130 to 40). More dances used to be given. People probably received more signs.

One of the key myths forming the "charter" of the Sun Dance is that of Scarface, recorded by Wilson in 1909. Scarface spent a year at the house of the Sun, his wife the Moon and his son the Morning Star. He was there taught how to perform the ritual of the Sun Dance. I saw a simplified form of this ritual performed by the Medicine Pipe dancers at Blood Reserve in 1965. It occupied only a single day, and had two main objectives: to ensure perfect weather, i.e. uninterrupted sunshine, during the period of the dance, and to pray for individuals who sought blessings.

For those who believe in the myth, meteorological phenomena occurring during the period of the Sun Dance are interpreted as signs sent by the Sun. The slightest sign of rain stops any plans for ceremonial dancing. It indicates that the Sun will not bless the proceedings which will therefore be magically ineffectual and even dangerous. But bad weather at any time of the year similarly indicates the anger of the Sun. Not only may the bad weather be harmful or unpleasant in itself, but the ill will it signifies also forebodes every kind of bad luck. The anger of the Moon and the Morning Star is as much to be feared as the anger of the Sun.

During the year of my visit, the Indians saw a great many unfavourable signs. There was no actual rain for the duration of the camp, but there was some wind and the sky became overcast a few times. Furthermore, deaths and other mishaps seemed to pursue the various age societies so that all their dances, with the exception of one, had to be cancelled. The medicine pipe dancers, however, performed, as did the Woman's Society and the Horn Society.

This belief in the mystical relationship between the heavenly bodies and the fortunes of man might be described as an unchanging element in the Indian world view. As we were all loitering in the camp, commenting on the minutest change in the weather, and speculating about its implications for the ceremony, and for our own destiny, we seemed to be far removed from ideologies and politics. Sitting in the fierce heat, we seemed to be solely involved in a dialogue with natural forces which were slightly unpropitious, slightly threatening, though not wholly so.

We could always hope, if we waited resignedly and respectfully, for an unambiguous blessing to come eventually. Certainly this waiting, this respectful surrender, seemed like a timeless, an unmeasurably ancient rite. Certainly, this relationship with heavenly bodies was not marred by recent modifications in ritual, interesting though these might be to students of culture history.[7]

Before we join forces with those of our anthropological ancestors who reduced all "primitive" religion to nature-worship, we should inquire what determines the behaviour of the celestial bodies we are watching so carefully. Do Indians believe Sun, Moon and Morning Star to be arbitrary in their blessings and punishments? If not, then why did they show such unease and discontent in 1965? This was the question on which I concentrated my interviews during my short stay among the Blood.

[7] Krœber and Driver (1932) have estimated that the composite set of rituals now known as the Sun Dance cannot have developed before the eighteenth century. No attempt has so far been made to relate this development to the coming of the White man, even though clearly identified millennial movements arose in North America around the same time. The Blackfoot are one of the four tribes where Krœber and Driver believe the institution was first and most fully developed. (The others are Cheyenne, Arapho and Gros Ventre). At the time Wissler wrote, the most important functionary in the Blackfoot Sun Dance was the Medicine Woman who sponsored the dance. She was the centre of the ceremony of the tongues, the transfer of the medicine bundle, the fast, the rituals in the sweathouse, the vast distribution of presents, the blessing of the sun pole. Wissler treated the weather dancers, the society dances and the torture ceremony as subsidiary features. It may well be that this emphasis is pecularly Piegan, as the only detailed account of the Blood ceremony (Wilson 1909) gives more emphasis to the weather dancers, i.e. the ceremony of the medicine pipes. Wissler does mention very briefly that the age societies were involved in the Sun Dance, but in his descriptions of the Women's Society and the Horn Society (Wissler 1913) he does not discuss their connection with the Sun Dance in any detail.

Goldfrank, reporting the dance among the Blood in 1939, mentions the participation of the two last-named societies more specifically, stating that the Women's Society had raised their lodge, and giving details of that ceremony. She also commented on the popularity of the performance of the Horn Society. Though she describes that society fully, she does not assign it any particular importance in the Sun Dance organisation, except as performers. She also mentions that the sun pole was still raised but that this ceremony aroused very little interest. By 1939, it had become very difficult to find a Medicine Woman, as the office was considered too expensive. (Goldfrank 1945).

In 1965, both sun pole and Medicine Woman had been eliminated from the ceremony, but the importance of the Women's Society and the Horn Society had greatly increased. The president of the former had taken over most of the tasks of the Medicine Woman, though she was no longer acting alone, with her father, mother and husband, but was helped throughout by the society. The Horn Society had become the ceremonial masters. For the modern role of the age societies, see Dempsey 1956.

It soon appeared that the cause of the cosmic unease we were witnessing lay in human perversities which offended the heavenly bodies. Also, in many specific instances quoted to me it was the White man, not the Indian who was causing offence. The moon, one informant told me, is offended by man's attempt to reach her. Hence, the bad weather we were having, the long cold spell in winter (the 1964/5 winter was unusually cold) and the rainstorms in summer (which occurred in Blood Reserve in 1965).

As we were speaking it was extremely hot but a very slight and to me welcome breeze had just started to blow like a gentle fan. My informant continued: "This breeze which has started blowing is *bad*. It should be dead still and scorching hot, Instead, winds blow *from all directions*".

When the Indian was quoted as having caused cosmic discontent, it was because he had lost some of his ancient traditions. For instance, when I was looking at the animals painted on the tipis, I was told that the pictures (many of which were symbolic rather than representational) had been inspired by dreams in earlier times. Thus each lineage obtained its own animal, knowledge of which was handed down over the generations. "Indians could communicate with all animals in the old days", but this communication is lost today.

These two themes, the degeneration of the Indian and the threatened collapse of the world as a result of White transgression, occurred time and again. Because the age societies no longer exercised social control, adultery had spread among the Indian people. This discontinuing of ritual torture had deprived the Sun of the sacrifice needed to maintain Indian wellbeing. Spindler was given the same kind of statements: "We had a paradise before you white people came over here. We had plenty to eat. There was buffalo in every *coulee*. We were all healthy. Then you people came here and we got your diseases. Now look at us. We're a sorry bunch." (1965:31) "God put us on this earth and gave us this land to live on. Now you people dig up what's in the earth and use it to kill men with. That's not what God put it there for. In the Bible it says someday this earth is going to burn up. That's what this atomic is." (ibid.: 30)

As statements of this type accumulated during my Sun Dance interviews, it became clear that we were never straying far from one dominant theme: the conflict between White and Indian. The heavenly bodies had two principal reasons for discontent: White incursion upon their universe, and Indian neglect of their own religion — which in turn was a response to White persuasion. In all these explanations there was a strong ideological implication: the Indian should turn away from the White man who was represented as the cause of all the present evil. The list of evils attributed to the White man is long, and not infrequently based on sound observation. But the prescription: a policy of Indian withdrawal, is not based merely on these evils. It is based, even more, on the flaws of the Indian-White relationship to which I have already referred. One informant actually told me, when explaining the unfavourable signs at the Sun Dance, that he believed they were due to a world crisis brought on by the Whites, who are behaving in a superior and unjust manner, not only to Indians, but also to Asians and Africans. The world could be saved only, he thought, if the Whites "solve the problem of discrimination".

Let us now consider more closely the current Indian beliefs about the nature of cosmic powers. Clearly, in some form the belief in Sun, Moon and Morning Star persists even though the Blood Indians are all nominally Christian. The question arises how they relate these cosmic powers to the Christian system of belief. One informant told me that God and the Sun are One, the Virgin Mary and the Moon are One, and Jesus was identified with the Morning Star. Indians were in reality worshipping the Trinity even before the Whites arrived. It was natural that they should do so, for the Indians are Children of Israel, descendents of Moses.

When I asked how this could be, I was told that the Indians are Lamanites and I was given, in broad terms, a Mormon version of sacred history. My informant, however, was not a Mormon. Hardly any Blood Indians are members of the Church of Latter-day Saints, in spite of the great strength of that church in the district. This does not prevent the Blood, however, from using Mormon ideas in their own sacred history. In discussions with several informants I learned that the Indians settled in America after receiving a prophesy that Jesus was later to be born as the

Son of God. They have been unjustly treated by the Whites for at first they owned all the land but today they are low down and the Whites high up. Justice will sooner or later be restored as long as the Indians continue to worship God in their own way. Specialists in Indian ethnography may consider data of this kind to be highly unrepresentative of the general pattern of Canadian Indian thought, but I was fascinated by the resemblance between these statements and New Zealand Maori beliefs that were very prevalent in 1880-1920 and are still held by a significant minority of Maoris today. (Cf. Schwimmer 1965)

I noted two interesting variants on the same theme. A Roman Catholic informant told me that in the past her church had taught that in the Sun Dance people were praying to the devil. More recently, the priests had dropped this approach because the people had been able to convince them that the prayers were really offered to a deity identical with the Christian God and that nothing un-Christian occurred during the Sun Dance.

Another informant argued that the Blood do not really worship more than one God, because Sun, Moon and Morning Stars are not really gods; they are men. It was only recently, since the coming of Christianity, so the argument went, that people began to call them "gods". A similar point was made to me by an informant who told me of a man, living North of Calgary, who *knows* (from a dream or revelation) that the sun is a man and the moon a woman.

These views resemble each other in that they all set up a system incorporating both Indian and Christian beliefs. They all contain, in addition, two protocols of religious behaviour, one of which applies to Whites, the other to Indians. Furthermore, it is made clear that Whites are excluded from the Indian protocol while the White protocol is of no concern to Indians, or may even be injurious to Indians. It is clear that those who define the Indians as "Children of Israel", or who ask a Catholic priest whether they are allowed to go on believing in Sun, Moon and Morning Star, do not have a system of belief that can be comprehended except in relation to Christianity.

The case of the prophet who proclaims that the sun is a man (and not a god) is a little more difficult. He is at least stating

an Indian belief of some antiquity (cf. Wilson 1909). Yet it is reasonable to ask why he considered the differentiation *man / god* to be important. I have to leave the answer to a scholar familiar with the Blackfoot language, where no doubt the relationship between these two terms is not the same as in English. Pending further study I would suggest that this cognitive system contains a double opposition, along these lines:

Whites	*Indians*
have class society	have egalitarian society
God controls universe	men control universe
do not worship men	do worship men (= equals)
(= equals)	

Let us now see how Indians make use of this scheme in symbolic competition. First, they posit that Whites believe their authoritarian society to be superior to the Indian society where all men are regarded as equals. This suggestion is made in considerable detail in Pelletier, n.d., and is sincerely believed in the Red Power movement. The Indians put forward as evidence that Whites always criticise Indian society as being "unorganised", because they do not recognise that any society can have organisation if it is non-hierarchical. Indians resent having their own community life criticised on these grounds, and being made to feel inferior because they have no formal hierarchies.

Secondly, Indians posit that Whites rank a monotheistic religion higher than a religion which makes no conceptual distinction between natural / supernatural. They are on sound ground in this respect, and resent that missionaries have so frequently compared Christianity to Indian religion to show the superiority of the former. In particular, missionaries have argued that it is idolatrous and sinful to worship *men* instead of God.

The various systems I have summarised in the last few pages may be regarded as strategically designed (no doubt unconsciously) so as to provide different and more advantageous scaling criteria. Certainly they go to a great deal of trouble to demonstrate that the organisation of the Sun Dance is equal to that of any White gathering. They maintain the highest decorum by White standards such as sobriety, cleanliness, tidiness and neat-

ness of dress and grooming, orderliness of the ceremonial and ritual, probity of financial management. Furthermore, they argue that a society where all men are free and equal is better than an hierarchically ordered society where men are the servants of other men. As this is indeed an ideal of the dominant society, they can easily convince themselves of the superiority of their form of organisation.

On the level of religious belief, one of several strategies is followed. The claim to be Children of Israel at once places the Indian on a higher level of sacredness than the White man. The Indian will advance several arguments in favour of this notion. He may argue from sacred history, borrowed from the Mormons and other sources. He may also argue that the Indian leads a life closer to the spirit of the New Testament, e.g. by being poor, by sharing his possessions, by loving his brethren, whereas the White man fails by these criteria. He may quote pollution, atomic wars, racism at home and abroad, as being contrary to Christian ideals, whereas the Indian slate, in these respects, is clean.

If the Indian claims the *identity* of the Christian and Indian Trinity, he is not directly claiming superiority for the latter. He is merely claiming that a Sun Dance is *as good as* a church. Yet such a statement contains far more of a challenge than Blood Indian Catholics appear to recognise. A comparison with the New Zealand Maori practice will make this clear. There the ceremonies are certainly still being performed, but they are always accompanied by Christian prayer conducted communally several times a day. Thus the ceremony is defined as secular and the sacredness of the occasion is supposedly derived from the Christian prayers. At the Blood Sun Dance, the latter are absent. This makes the Indian ceremonies far more significant from a religious point of view: their sacredness is placed on the same level as that of the Christian Church. Furthermore, it is claimed that *for Indians* the Sun Dance has a superior efficacy, just as Church has superior efficacy for Whites. This follows from the assumption that there are numerous blessings Indians can obtain from a Sun Dance but not from a Church.

This belief in superior efficacy may also be inferred from the millennialism present in Blood Indian thought. Indian millennialism assumes that God will invert the present world order

and restore to the Indians their rightful inheritance, *only if* they maintain institutions such as the Sun Dance. Withdrawal from the dominant White society, on these terms, must always be regarded as in some sense competitive. I do not question that withdrawal may at times be the best strategy for a minority, nor that the system of thought governing a withdrawing group may be profound and vital. I am arguing, however, that an anthropologist should not try to explain such boundary maintenance as the preservation of an heritage. Rather he should see it as the product of an attempt, by the withdrawing group, to resolve internal contradictions arising out of external impact.

d) *Structure and process in Blood ideology*

At this point let us briefly survey the method we have followed. Our concern was to analyse the contemporary Blood system of thought. We were not content, however, to present merely the folk model of this system, nor did we wish to reduce it to the model of a "culture of poverty". Noticing that informants, when asked about their system, almost invariably resorted to comments and criticisms of the system of thought of the Canadian dominant majority, we decided to include such comments and criticisms in our presentation of their system of thought. The data so obtained, when analysed, fell into two parts: expositions of "Indianness", and expositions of the dominant system as informants perceived it. The next step in analysis was to find relationships between the two parts. Setting the same elements, as occurring in the two sub-systems, side by side,[8] we found that in some cases the value assigned to them was congruent, in other cases there was an opposition between a high value given to the element in one sub-system and a low one in the other.

[8] I have assumed throughout that the social division symbolised here is an ethnic one, opposing Indians and Whites. This point, however, is sometimes questioned, e.g. by Kew (1962), writing about Cumberland House where the division is more explicitly described as a class division (upper/lower, ibid. 94-99). In order to settle this question we would need to study communities where some Indians make a larger income than some Whites. We could then see whether Whiteness is, or is not, a condition for admission to the upper class. My data from The Pas, Manitoba, suggest the principle of division is racial, at least in that locality.

For an example of a study based on a two-system model of the kind proposed here, see Schwimmer 1965, where the cognitive system of a community of Maori Mormons is described.

Where the two value systems are congruent, there is direct competition between the two social groups. Several instances of this were noted: the decorum reigning in the camp with regard to amenities, hygiene, dress, social behaviour was a modern feature evolved in direct competition with Whites. The postulating of the identity of the Indian and Roman Catholic Trinity was another instance where two religious systems were put in direct competition with one another.

Where the two value systems are opposed, this opposition results from symbolic competition set up by the Indians. Again, many instances have been noted, many of which oppose Indian identification with nature to White technology. Others oppose Indian brotherhood with White individualism and intolerance. Symbolic competition is used as a charter for an ideology of withdrawal. We have even noted supernatural sanctions that are said to threaten the Indian people if they give up their separate institutions and become polluted by White evil.

Two questions arise: why does an opposition ideology, such as that developed by the Blood Indians, engage in direct as well as symbolic competition? What determines whether, in respect of a specific element of culture, a policy of direct or symbolic competition will be followed? The answer to the first question is simple: as symbolic competition arises out of conditions of oppression and exploitation, and therefore in fairly desperate situations, people will always prefer to engage in direct competition whenever they are able. Wherever we find sympathetic mediators between White and Indian, and a degree of mutual understanding, we are likely to find institutions engaging in direct competition. This leads directly to an answer to the second question: an analysis of transactions between the Indians and White mediators will usually indicate why in a specific instance direct or symbolic competition was chosen. I shall illustrate this by a few examples.[9]

[9] Perhaps the most striking example of symbolic competition is the development of egalitarianism in Blood ritual. I have shown (see footnote 4) that the Blood Sun Dance was at one time a decidedly aristocratic institution, as the central figure was a woman whose family had to be very wealthy if she was to fulfill her duties. From an economic viewpoint, the Sun Dance was a redistribution of wealth by the chiefs or aristocrats to the people. Today, control has passed to one male and one female society, with com-

The decorum reigning in the camp with regard to amenities, hygiene, dress, and social behaviour contains some rather recent elements, and conforms to standards set by the Indian Agent and the Band Council. There are many opposition movements where these features, or some of them, might have become an object of symbolic opposition. Why isn't a Sun Dance conducted like a hippie love-in? Again, even if Indians were to conform out of fear of reactions from the Indian Affairs Branch, such conformity need not be more than desultory and grudging. I found, however, that these amenities and rules were so firmly accepted that they were represented to me as immemorial Indian traditions. Here, the reasons are several. The Indian Agent exercised no control directly, but only through the Band Council. The Band Council, again, did nothing that could have been interpreted as interference with the established sacerdotal control of the Horn Society. It made grants to the Horn Society and the Women's Society. These grants were applied, in part, to wages for a camp police (a head and three subordinates) which was to enforce the rulings of the Horn Society. The police was placed under the charge of a councillor, but this councillor was also, as it happened, president of the Women's Society, and as such had rightful authority in terms of traditional organisation of the camp.

In this instance, a sympathetic Indian Agent and a wise' Band Council had induced the Sun Dance authorities to adopt a policy of direct competition. The objective was to demonstrate to the sceptics of White Southern Alberta that the Indians can run a large public function at least as well as they can, even if White criteria are applied.

In postulating the identity of the Indian and the Roman Catholic Trinity, the Indians again followed the principles of direct competition, and again the explanation appears to lie in successful mediation. In this case a conflict of long standing undoubtedly existed, as the church traditionally forbade Cath-

paratively modest fixed entrance fees, and open to any member of the commun'ty who wants to buy his way in. The strongly egalitarian ideology of the Blood cannot be explained by economic causes alone. as elsewhere groups have long maintained an impoverished aristocracy. The Blood simply will not compete on a scale (wealth, social status) on which the White man occupies the highest position.

olics to attend Sun Dances. The priest stationed in the district in 1965 had changed this policy. Not only did he allow his parishioners to attend, but he even agreed to be made an Honorary Chieftain of the Blood Tribe, an honour which required him to be initiated at a Sun Dance.

We may thus explain the existence of two patterns in the interpretation of the Indian cosmic powers. As soon as the priest gave legitimacy to the Indian institution, a pattern of direct competition developed. If we compare the Roman Catholic position to the Mormon one in Southern Alberta, we notice a totally different pattern of mediation. As Cardston is an important centre of the Church of Latterday Saints, this church is perceived by Blood Indians as an integral part of the dominant White Establishment. The social relationships between Indians and Mormons are by no means better than is usual in the district; they may indeed be even less cordial. If Indians entered the church, they could not be expected to be accepted on equal terms. Certainly, the Mormons would acknowledge Indians to be Children of Israel, but they consider themselves to be also Children of Israel, and superior because they are White. In this instance, the response took the form of symbolic competition, viz. an Indian claim that *only* the Indians are Children of Israel and thus superior to the Whites in holiness.

PART III

DIRECT AND SYMBOLIC COMPETITION: TWO STRATEGIES

In describing the data from Blood Reserve, I presented them as disconnected scraps of ideology. This was not because I would be unable to present them as a "system". On the contrary, I think that such systematization would be among the easier anthropological pastimes. It would also falsify the facts, because it is a very relevant fact that Blood Reserve, at the time of my visit, had no messianic leader, nor was any millenarian or other programme being put forward in a systematic way. There was

an implication of withdrawal in the various statements, but nothing was very explicit. Before my encounter with the community, centuries of contact with White power bearers had elapsed and one century of White rule. During much of that time, millennial movements of various types had spread throughout North America, especially South and West of the Blood hunting grounds. All these messages had been heard in one form or another, though we have no specific record of the Blood having joined any movement. Certainly we should not assume an ideological vacuum.

Some of the thoughts communicated to me appeared to be derived from some previous millennial movements, or from local attempts at Indian-Christian religious syncretism which had probably been long forgotten.[10] Some of the rhetoric of contemporary Indian political brotherhood movements had also left its mark, as might be expected seeing that such movements are frequently having meetings drawing Indian leaders from several provinces together. But, above all, the Sun Dance was a place where new revelations were being experienced.

One might think that the twelve days we spent watching the sun had little connection with the actual development of an opposition ideology. This activity seemed to stand outside the socio-economic conflicts which generated the ideology. Yet no opposition ideology whether religious or political can be generated in the absence of such signs and revelations, as they provide supporters with the only sound justification for committing themselves to the ideology and for making sacrifices in its service. Signs and revelations, whether or not they are mediated by a messianic leader, generate the symbols through which an ideology is communicated. The symbols which make up Indianness all flow from received or experienced revelation.

It is this symbolic content that, if incompletely understood, fosters the illusion of timelessness and the autonomous existence of an Indian (or Maori) cultural system. The one autonomous (or largely autonomous) element in these cultural systems is language, hence also semantics and semiotics. I have confined

[10] It is in this broad sense that the emergence of the Sun Dance in North America in the 18th century might prove to be millennial. (See footnote 4).

myself, in the present essay, to only one aspect of Blackfoot semiotics, namely the meteorological one. I was concerned with Sun, Moon, Morning Star as symbols. Obviously, there are a great many other symbols among the Blackfoot which have entered into the formation of the Indianness ideology within the Blackfoot-speaking tribes. These remain to be studied, and it is important that they should be. The statements made with the aid of these symbols were modern, but the symbols themselves are of some antiquity. There is, obviously, a tradition in revelations. Revelations are semiotically determined. A person's ability to understand signs is limited by his previous experience with signs. This limitation is not as severe as some have imagined: depending on a person's intelligence and insight, he may be an innovator in the reading of signs. Yet there are limits to effective innovation beyond which messages become incomprehensible.

Anthropologists may not, however, be content to confine themselves within this phenomenological type of enquiry. While the symbolic content of opposition ideologies is infinitely various, symbolic competition has constant features. A constant feature of symbolic competition is the development of a symbol system within which transactions with the dominant society are given, in general, a very low valuation.

Indians at the Sun Dance connected the disharmony that exists in the world today with the White man's failure to implement the Treaty. They regarded the Treaty as a kind of religious covenant. It was made by "full men" and not circumscribed by technicalities of law. It had "secret provisions" which were "never written down". The Indians ceded their land and put away their weapons, but the White man did not fulfil his promise to help the Indians to participate in the community on equal terms. Hence the low value the Indians place on transactions with the White man today.

At Mount Currie, I was roundly told that the best way of coping with the White world was not to collaborate in any change that was being proposed. This was a kind of consensus between a dozen informants interviewed separately. Their argument was that they were regarded as second class citizens. There-

fore they had to live on a poor reserve, with insufficient education, unable to find jobs. Having been made into second class citizens they might as well behave as such. It was up to the government to redefine the status of Indians and fulfil its obligations; then the Indians would accept, in return, the changes that were being advocated.

The crucial point is that inactivity in itself became a way of paying back the dominant society. There seems to be a cult of helplessness. Many in Mount Currie consider it un-Indian to pay for improvements to sanitation or watersupply for one's own house. One person who did this was refused a Band grant when he wanted his water pipes replaced later. The argument was that if the pipes were installed *privately* their replacement was not a Band concern. But the Band gave such assistance to those who had remained inactive.

This is a clear case of symbolic competition, where people are scaled according to their success in exploiting the government and other public institutions. By this criterion, the Whites rate low in their ability to exploit, and the man who put in his own water pipes also has a dangerously low rating.

For the applied anthropologist, the question must be how symbolic competition can be replaced by real competition. Here, the most hopeful fact is that in my own studies I found no community where real competition was actually absent. Actually, the "dominant society" is not perceived by Indians as a monolithic whole. Distinctions tended to be made between the principal power foci, such as: government, church, commercial community. Symbolic competition did not occur, in any case known to me, with all of these power foci, though it mostly occurred with one or more of them. The existence of alliances between Indians and White power foci is not only hopeful for those concerned with the future of the Indian, but also a valuable area of research for applied anthropologists. We need descriptions of these alliances, their genesis and their collapse in specific areas.

On Blood Reserve, such alliances existed with the Indian Agent, the employment officer in Lethbridge, and the Roman Catholic priest. Symbolic competition concentrated more speci-

fically on the commercial community. On Mount Currie, at the time of my visit (1964), the main alliances were with the Roman Catholic priest and certain sympathetic townspeople whose main contribution was to provide an enlightened integrated secondary school system. Symbolic competition concentrated on the Indian Affairs Branch. On a third reserve I visited, at The Pas, Manitoba, symbolic competition existed to a far lesser extent than in the others. Most of the population had been trappers until rather recent times. They had lived under very arduous conditions and were strongly convinced that life on the reserve was better than anything they had known previously. Nobody spoke of a lost golden age. These Northern Cree had plenty of reason for dissatisfaction in their social relationships with Whites, but they tended to meet their problems head-on, through direct competition. They would have been annoyed if anyone had suggested they were second class citizens.[11].

I do not know of much research that determines the relationships between Indians and the various White power foci. The relationships can be rather complex, if the Indian group is large and segmented so that each segment may set up its own distinctive alliances. Nicholas' study on factionism among the Iroquois (1965) comes closest to providing the type of data I have in mind. He distinguishes four factions (progressive, longhouse, Lower Layuga longhouse, Mohawk workers) each of which maintains a different pattern of alliances. The progressives, who had an alliance with the Christian church and with important governmental institutions, carried on direct competition with these allies. The longhouse faction lacked both the alliances and carried on symbolic competition with religious, educational etc. institutions, much as the non-Catholics in the Blood reserve were doing. The Mohawk workers are allied with the church but opposed to government-sponsored institutions, including the Band council.

[11] Though my data on The Pas would have fitted the argument I have developed here, I have omitted them to save space. The data are complex because we have to consider the position of the Metis as well as the Indians, and because the White power structure was complicated by the rival activities of the Indian Affairs Branch and the Community Development branch of the Provincial Government. See also: Dallyn and Earle 1962, Langmuir 1964, Skinner 1911.

While symbolic competition among the longhouse faction concentrates on the church, among the Mohawk faction it concentrates on the government, just like at Mount Currie.

If our analysis is correct, the Indians are by no means frozen in an attitude of symbolic competition. On the contrary, they are actively laying bridges, wherever possible, in the direction of White institutions and individuals with whom they can establish acceptable forms of social exchange. Relationships with such exchange partners are usually competitive, in the sense that a friendly rivalry is being conducted, as the Indians are keen to demonstrate their usefulness as partners. It is only where such exchange relationships fail — where the social cost of the partnership to the Indians far outweighs the social benefits — that negative reciprocity arises and the way is open to revelations leading to the discovery of the symbol system of an opposition ideology.

As such an ideology is, by now, traditional among Indians, it is extremely easy for Indians to fall back on symbolic competition. Yet symbolic competition, is only one of a set of open alternatives, and persists only in the absence of viable alliances. One may expect its incidence to be reduced with every alliance that arises. On the other hand, humiliations, abuses of power, and neglect set in motion the strategies of negative reciprocity, including symbolic competition. Opposition ideologies thus resemble another sanction which follows the breakdown of an exchange relationship, namely witchcraft or sorcery. The method of sanctioning, in both cases, is the reduction of the status and potency of the wrong-doer by symbolic and magical means.

The Sun Dance data show how the magic works. Certain meteorological data are interpreted by the group as meaning that the White man has polluted the universe. This is taken as justification for placing an avoidance taboo on the White man. Whether or not this brings about any social change is irrelevant. The hope is that eventually the magic will work and "justice", i.e. a relation of positive reciprocity, will prevail. The meteorological data, or some other set of symbols of magical potency, are essential mediating links in this process. For this reason Indians, Maoris and similarly placed groups are anxious to hold on to

their store of symbols, without which the generating of opposition movements would be harder.[12]

Opposition ideologies held by ethnic minorities are useful in several ways: they often widen the range of alliances available to a group, as the ideology may be shared with other groups who have not hitherto been allies. These new allies may be Indian or White. They may thus break down the isolation which is one of the main reasons why they can be exploited and oppressed. Taking a longer view, opposition ideologies make an important contribution to civilisations by the potency of the symbol systems they perpetuate. Such diverse repositories of human wisdom would be lost, were the world ever to develop towards a "monoculture". It is more likely that mankind will keep these sources of revelation open as failures of justice will continue to occur. The question for anthropologists is whether they regard it as their professional duty to fill up the wells or to act as their guardians.

[12] The best way of elucidating my point is to quote a paragraph I wrote some time ago, before I had reached the position I am taking in this paper: "The expressive aspect of Maori culture — the language, literature, arts and crafts, music and dance — should hardly be given the privileged position which many people, Maori as well as Pakeha, have given it. They are not the culture. The basis of Maori culture, as much as any other, lies in its web of human relationships and in man's relation to the land in which his culture is rooted. In order to give these relationships meaning, structure and morally binding force, man creates symbol systems which are perpetuated in idioms of language, art and religion." (1968:46).

I would now call this paragraph naive. If so much emphasis is being placed upon the expressive aspect of "Maori culture" by *everybody*, I was certainly brash in trying to correct *everybody* on the basis of what I took to be an appropriate inventory for a "culture". I now recognise that the term "Maori culture" was deceptive in the first place; I was actually describing an ideology. As soon as this is recognised, the emphasis given to expressive aspects becomes comprehensible and reasonable, for we are concerned with the symbolic language in which people state their ideals.

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