Notes on Great Whale River Ethos *

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THEORY AND METHOD

In *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society*[1] ethos is defined to cover the "emotional aspects" abstracted from artifacts and behavior (i.e., from culture) together with the inferred motivational states in which those aspects are assumed to be rooted. In other words, an attempt is made to explain the emotional quality of an activity, thought, or artifact in terms of psychological drive theory, the drives themselves being regarded as acquired in childhood and through later learning.

Two considerations suggest the advisability of a slightly different as well as simpler conceptualization of ethos. First, there seems to be no great difference between the so-called emotional aspects of culture and the quality of culture which Kroeber would group under the heading of "style"[2] or what

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A paper similar to the present one was completed in 1954. It was accepted for publication by a social psychology journal, whose permises were destroyed by fire shortly thereafter. The manuscript was lost, a fact which we did not learn until the late summer of 1958. Instead of resubmitting the original version, of which we possessed a carbon copy, the first-named writer decided to make certain revisions incorporating his recent thinking concerning the ethos concept.

[1] HONIGMANN, John, J., *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (Yale University Publications in Anthropology, no. 40, 1949), pp. 13-14.

[2] KROEBER, Alfred L., *Style and Civilizations* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1957).

Weakland calls "form"[3]. That which an ethnographer observes when attending to the emotional aspects, style, or form of socially standardized cultural content is a *quality* attached to certain data. This quality, which recurs from one social situation to another, is apprehended in relatively direct fashion[4]. Expressing it verbally, therefore, is apt to be a difficult and, from the standpoint of subsequent verification, hazardous task.

As already indicated, the quality called style, form, or emotional tone may be referred to one or more underlying motivational states. Here the second of the two considerations referred to becomes relevant. In themselves motives, needs, or drives inferred as underlying the emotional aspect of culture possess slight explanatory value. To ascribe the non-aggressive, highly deferent character of Kaska social relationships to a dominant motivation of deference adds little or nothing to the original characterization unless the motive is in turn related, via a hypothesis, to some independant (or antecedent) condition[5]. Reflection indicates, however, that in many cases such hypothetical relationships can be traced even while ignoring the intervening motivational variable. One then deals directly with the quality or emotional aspect, not with the motive. That is to say, the form or quality of cultural content is related hypothetically to some independent factor. This procedure we propose to follow whenever possible in the present essay. Eliminating motivation from an analysis of ethos simplifies the problem of verification. A subsequent observer may still have difficulty in ascertaining that the particular quality previously designated is indeed present. But in order to complete the test of reliability he does not also have to make an inference to the same psychological drive that was specified earlier.

[3] WEAKLAND, John H., Family Imagery in a Passage by Mao Tse-Tung (*World Politics,* vol. X, 1958, pp. 387-407; pp. 389-390.) Margaret Mead early called attention to the importance of studying the highly implicit qualities associated with behavior. See her paper "More Comprehensive Field Methods" (*American Anthropologist,* n.s., vol. XXXV, 1933), pp. 1-15.

[4] SCHAPIRO, Meyer, "Style." In Kroeber, A.L., Ed., *Anthropology Today* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1953).

[5] BOLLES, Robert C., "The Usefulness of the Drive Concept." In Jones, Marshall R., Ed., *Nebraska Symposium of Motivation* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska, 1958).

What has been said should not be construed as a rejection of motivational theory or the concept of character structure. For certain problems in culture and personality research these have proven to be very valuable analytical tools. But we suggest that often characterization of cultural syle (we prefer to continue using the word "ethos") can be done without having direct recourse to motivational constructs.

Although we shall attempt to relate certain features of the ethos of the Great Whale Eskimo to particular aspects of child rearing in the community, obviously we did not study the early socialization of our adult subjects. Field work confined itself to paying attention to current socialization routines. It is assumed that similar routines obtained during the childhood of our adult subjects. On the basis of this assumption we relate, *in the form of hypotheses,* certain stylistic features of adult behavior to contemporaneous child rearing routines. Strict and unbiased testing of such hypotheses would seem to demand either (A) predicting adult response tendencies from early socialization sequences alone, or (B) studying adult personality and from these data retrospectively predicting the course of early socialization. To some extent, but in far from controlled fashion, both types of hypothesis-testing entered into the preparation of this paper. For example, nursing among the Great Whale River Eskimo means that the child is breast fed only in response to a brief persistent demand. The session of suckling lasts not for the 10 - 20 minutes recommended by American pediatricians[6] but one or two minutes at a time[7]. If the child still frets when removed, it usually receives another brief turn at the breast. This pattern suggests the prospective prediction that fretting and complaining will constitute established techniques of coping in adult Eskimo personality. Search of our data and memories produced no support for that hypothesis. Usually, however, we worked from two directions while inter-

[6] SPOCK, B., *The Pocket Book of Baby and Child Care* (New York, Pocket Books, 1946), p. 34-35.

[7] HONIGMANN, John J., and HONIGMANN, Irma, "Child Rearing Patterns among the Great Whale River Eskimo" (*Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska,* vol. II, 1953, pp. 31-50).

preting our data. That is, we tried to match certain qualitative patterns of adult behavior with certain known features of bringing up children. When this matching utilizes hypotheses which have previously been advanced in psychology or anthropology we venture to speak of contributing toward the confirmation of such propositions. Is there any need to point out that our psychogenetic formulations are tentative? That is, we offer hypotheses only and expect that all of them may not be supported. Experience in culture personality research has indicated very clearly that it is most difficult to formulate viable connections between adult culture patterns and learning situations in early and later childhood. When statistical techniques are employed in such endeavors, correlations tend to be small. Or else, the probability that the finding is not due to chance remains dissappointingly low. Apparently anthropology still lacks the key for dynamically relating later-life to early-life culture patterns. One solution that some students have adopted in the face of this difficulty requires paying attention to emotional or stylistic *congruence* between early parent-child and later adult-adult sequences of interaction. We have not chosen to follow this method. Instead, we propose to examine how the Great Whale Eskimo ethos is learned in the formative years of life and is later supported by other personality variables and cultural arrangements. Little attempt is made to describe systematically early socialization routines. The reader desiring a comprehensive description of childhood events among the Great Whale Eskimo is referred to another publication[8].

Six more or less overlapping stylistic features of Eskimo culture have been abstracted for analysis in this paper. The behavior of this community is characterized by:

A. A frank, friendly, genial, and rather spontaneous demeanor in interpersonal relations, to which is related, prior to marriage especially, an easy relationship with members of the opposite sex and a capacity to form deep emotional attachments.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

B. A confident and optimistic approach to at least the ordinary problems of existence.

C. A narcissistic idealization of the self along with a strong feeling of personal responsibility for one's actions.

D. A relatively quick vulnerability to hurt and to frustration that may be related to a capacity for empathy.

E. Rejection and avoidance of aggression.

F. Flexibility with regard to many procedures (but not to the point of disorderliness or undependability) accompanied by a relative absence of magicality.

ANALYSIS OF THE ETHOS

A. *Friendliness.* In contrast to Indians of the Northern Forest whom we have studied, the Great Whale Eskimo in interpersonal relations do not appear aloof and constricted, not even in their relationship with strangers. The smile, so often commented upon by visitors to the Eskimo, is well-nigh habitual. Games allow the release of some hostility, but in all but small boys it is a camouflaged by a smiling exterior. An easy risibility further symbolizes the quality we are seeking to express. Friendliness links the sexes. Men and women play ball together from childhood. Even mature adults continue occasionally to take part in the ball game. All this is in sharp contrast to the separation of the sexes customary among northern forest Indians, among whom considerable tension or confusion marks intersexual contact except, of course, in certain kin relationships. The Eskimo also readily and closely identify with partners in social interaction. An example of the deep attachments formed and also of the capacity to reveal feeling came when one of us bade farewell to an elderly informant who wept quietly as he shook hands. Some shyness toward strangers, particularly whites, certainly exists but in degree it is less inhibiting than among, say, the Cree-speaking Indians of Great Whale River. A young man introduced to a new role when asked to guide two white sportsmen to a fishing site exhibited, according to our

journal, "the utmost complacency, reminding one of Mary when she first took [her] job here. Whatever confusion he feels is not obvious and one is tempted to see him as the most poised of individuals." Summing up these and other data, the Eskimo in interpersonal relations are emotionally expressive with behavior marked by geniality, that is, friendly openness. They adapt smoothly to new people, maintaining considerable outward poise. (We do not imply that the Eskimo is never confused about what strangers expect of him.)

The Eskimo child is explicitly taught to wear the genial smile that identifies him to visitors of the Arctic. But, we hypothesize, his friendly interest in people extends back further than to the age of learning to smile. The relationship of Eskimo parents to children may be called "complementary," indicating that each partner in the relationship plays a different role "and the two roles are conceived as complementing each other[9]." The baby in the Eskimo household is a cynosure, a focus of pride and pleasure, but he is also considered to be helpless and dependent. Therefore, it is felt that he deserves nurturance and devotion. The parents' and relatives' adoration and pride become componets of this attention. The early demonstrative affection and devotion develop a confident, friendly approach to the world that never becomes wholly dislodged. Furthermore, in the day-to-day example of adults, older children witness an imitable frank and open demeanor. There is not the tense, suspicious reaction to strangers with which the Cree Indian child grows up and that is reinforced by frightening accounts of "white trappers," *Otcipweak* (strangers), and "bogeymen." The strong emphasis placed on sharing unequally distributed resources gives further encouragement to warmth in interpersonal relations. Widely ramifying kinship ties must also be counted on in seeking to understand the emotional quality we describe, together with the small size of the group. The latter allows opportunity for considerable personal knowledge of neighbors to develop on the basis of which behavior may accurately be predicted. Toilet training, while relatively firm, is gradual and

[9] MEAD, Margaret., *Male and Female* (New York, Morrow, 1949), p. 64.

gives no evidence of being traumatic. Education is not a process in which the young person learns demands that are beyond his tastes or capacities to perform. Discipline tends to be permissive rather than restrictive. All of these patterns we suggest, are part of a syndrome of child-rearing procedures capable of bringing out the quality of friendliness. Significantly, the illegitimate and orphaned suffer by comparison to their more normally reared peers. Not only are they reared differently but in two or three cases of which we have information their spontaneity seemed limited, although that was by no means invariably the case.

The popularity which the Eskimo enjoy among Euro-canadian and American traders and travelers can be related to their genial charm as well as to the compatibility of an easy and cheerful responsiveness with Euroamerican tastes. Administrators, missionaries, and traders in the James Bay district — an area including the southern shores of Hudson Bay and the coastal settlement of James Bay — nearly unanimously profess greater fondness for the Eskimo than for the Indians. It has been suggested that "when children are lumped together as all inferior in status or strength to adults of both sexes, then sex differences are minimized."[10] The Eskimo parents' complementary relationship to young children involves such a disregard of sex. The other term in the equation also characterizes Great Whale River Eskimo social relations. Around puberty, Eskimo parents mildly attempt to introduce some segregation of the sexes, but hardly to the strength and explicitness found among the Nunivak[11]. Sexual experience, however, is not condoned before marriage, an attitude that may owe more to the diffusion of Christianity than to the persistence of corresponding aboriginal values. However, in the almost nightly summer ball games, adolescent youngsters of both sexes wrestle, struggle, and tease with clear sexual overtones. It is, of course, also true that early experience rarely teaches the child that men are

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

[11] LANTIS, Margaret, "The Social Culture of the Nunivak Eskimo" (*Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. XXXV, 1946, pp. 152-323), p. 261.

fundamentally different from women, that women are dangerous, or that close contact with men is menacing. Literature indicates the Great Whale Rivers Eskimo girl's easy relationship with men is a pattern found elsewhere in the Arctic and one that has made the Eskimo vulnerable to sexual exploitation by white visitors. Eskimo young men are, presumably, trained to respond to the girl's friendly casual approach with reciprocial behavior that stops short of sex — unless the situation invites deeper intimacy. Males who have been reared to expect that refusal or avoidance will be clearly indicated by the girl[12] may find the Eskimo girl's behavior puzzling. It is clear that American men have found it easy to seduce Eskimo women even without use of gifts or liquor[13].

Part of the Eskimo's ability to manage easily with other people is related, perhaps, to his readiness to be appeased for a slight. Accepting a gift that is designed to erase hard feelings neither promotes shame nor signifies weakness but cements a disrupted relationship and gives pleasure. Possibly the utility of appeasement as a technique of interpersonal relations is related to an early environment in which parents (especially the mother) are deeply reluctant to allow the baby to manifest prolonged discomfort. Fretting quickly brings some response: a brief session at the breast, distraction by pointing out some interesting feature in the environment, or a ride upon the mother's or sister's back during a walk outdoors. Accustomed to being appeased the child becomes an adult who is able to appease and expects appeasement.

B. *Confidence.* Illustations of this quality include the confidence with which young men set out to hunt small game or to fish. An informant who had received a seriously incapacitating internal injury to his knee hopefully expected to be able to travel by kayak and to be able to hunt seal from that vessel.

[12] MEAD, Margaret, "The Application of Anthropological Techniques to Cross-National Communication," (*Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, ser. II, vol. IX, 133-152), p. 139.

[13] See, for example, MARSHALL, Robert, *Arctic Village* (New York, Literary Guild, 1933), pp. 265, 268-270.

Also in point here is the unprotesting manner in which the men in the community once accepted an administrative order denying them flour and sugar in family allowances in favor of ammunition[14]. About that incident one of us has written: "One generalization concerning Eskimo character thereby received some confirmation, namely, that the Eskimo accept their fate with little distress and without protest." We would now express that idea somewhat more positively. But attention must also be called to the uneasiness voiced by one man who said: "The ammunition is no good if there is nothing to shoot. You can always eat flour." Underneath apparent optimism ambivalent attitudes sometimes lurk. Serious illness provokes some helplessness that in turn is probably related to the slight development of therepeutic techniques in Eskimo culture. There is also a readiness confidently to solicit the help of somebody more capable — like the manager of the Hudson's Bay Company or his wife. Little tendency to postulate terrifying supernaturals exists. Formerly the *tungait* menaced man but now they are probably no longer evil; one informant thought that perhaps they too have learned the teaching of the missionaries. In fact, Christian teachings appear to have considerable confidence-promoting value. Optimism represents a covert behavior pattern which also reveals the quality we call confidence. Optimism is probably supported by the custom of communal sharing as well as by other cooperative relationships.

Genetically speaking, the Eskimo's confidence would seem to be traceable to the reassurance, devotion, and affection that go into the child's early experiences. Although the feeding pattern does not encourage long suckling, there is not the slightest danger that the baby's persistent demand for food will ever be ignored. Mother and young baby are rarely separated, hence the child is readily able to control his environment by simple vocal techniques. Mouth play is abundant, freely tolerated and may compensate the child for the brief sessions at the breast. Learning that he can get pleasure by his own efforts further

[14] HONIGMANN, John J., "An Episode in the Administration of the Great Whale River Eskimo" (*Human Organization,* vol. X, no. 2, 1951, pp. 5-14).

encourages the emergence of optimism. In the absence of traumata occasioned by abrupt weaning, emotional rejection, or conditional love, the individual rarely has his grounds for optimism shaken in the early formative years. The child learns of his parents' reluctance to hurt him and to leave his needs unattended. Psychological depressions occur among the Eskimo and sometimes lead to resignation (see E), but this behavior may be considered as reflecting a limitation of the security system rather than as being in contradiction of the stylistic feature we call confidence.

C. *Narcissim.* The brief cool summer and long winter make warmth an important requisite in clothing. Eskimo men appear to value clothing for little beyond its function of covering the body to insure warmth and other practical advantages. Less than women do they seem to desire cleanliness in clothing. Women not only value the cleanliness of their garments but also dress with the intention of augmenting their social selves. They use dress to idealize themselves. What may be called a narcissistic preoccupation appears further in girls' and women's use of simple ornaments, their careful hair braiding, and readiness to use make-up if it becomes available. Quite possibly, men more than women obtain narcissistic satisfaction through activity, including dancing. Hunting, especially when successful, helps a man to idealize himself in the eyes of the community. Through his own responsibility he has achieved a socially desirable act that also enhances his conception of himself. Women's traditional roles do not function in this way. The narcissistic tendency, as it appears in feminine dress and adornment and in the feeling of achievement stemming from successful performance of certain males roles, constitutes, like friendliness, another point at which the ethos of the Eskimo culture approaches values in Euro-american culture.

The genetic *anlage* of this stylistic feature of behavior may lie in the frequent approval and praise with which the child is remarked. Eskimo youngsters win praise in the family for achievements which they can control as well as for responding in expected fashion to stimuli imposed by adults. For example, the mother expresses pleasure when a young child contributes

assistance to the household. She also praises lavishly when she adorns him with a new garment. Approval and praise (like the encouragement given to learners in the Euroamerican middle class) probably function to encourage effort and optimism. They may also encourage reactions in which the self is used as an instrument possessing social-stimulus value.

For other sources of the responsibility which we subsume under narcissism, we look to other aspects of the early social environment. For example, the organized games of the people place a great deal of stress on achievement, or on getting something through, show of skill. Such play would seem to encourage the attitude to which we refer. It has been hypothesized that a sense of individual responsibility is a function of socialization in independent nuclear families[15]. Life in a self-standing nuclear family, in other words, may help the individual develop a heightened awareness of himself as a distinctive person, who possesses a predictable stimulus effect in interpersonal relations. The Great Whale River Eskimo, like many other Central Arctic Eskimo, possess this pattern of social structure. The correlation between nuclear family organization and the display of an individualized sense of personal responsibility, therefore, tends to be confirmed by our data.

D. *Touchiness.* The picture of the Eskimo as friendly, optimistic, and confident in his own resourcefulness, although manifested in speech and other acts, must be modified sufficiently in order to accommodate somewhat contrasting empirical data. Sibling jealousy early conflicts with a confident, friendly style of interpersonal relations. In later life, resentment and easy vulnerability to hurt are other behaviors which bear the same stamp.

The Eskimo quickly reacts to hurt and frustration. He has been trained to enter social relations with manifest friendliness showing in his person. Presumably he also expects to be accepted by persons with whom he comes into contact. Sym-

[15] MEAD, Margaret, "The Family in the Future." In Anshen, R.N., Ed., *Beyond Victory* (New York, Harper, 1942).

metrical role behavior in the community generally reinforces these expectations after the model of a regenerative circle. When, however, occasionally the expectations are not fulfilled, then equanimity quickly collapses. A child reacts to a sign interpreted as rejection with a ready flow of tears. Later, as an adult, he will withdraw from similar stimuli with shame. A widow accused of illicit sex relations with a married man in the comunity took to her tent not to make a public appearance all summer. She actually stayed in her dwelling most of the day for two months. Her alleged lover remained at his coastal camp, visiting the settlement only briefly. Sibling jealousy and aggression toward siblings are further indicators of what may be called low frustration tolerance in the Eskimo child. However, aggression is soon displaced as a reaction to frustration, a displacement easy to understand in view of the strong sanctions employed against any show of hostility. Perhaps related to his touchiness is the generally sensitive personality make-up. To this the Eskimo's ready empathy into *another* person's plight also belongs. People hearing or witnessing a predicament readily register their sympathy and appear to feel the other's emotion. Tact reveals something of the same quality and is employed in order to avoid hurting somebody's feelings. In our home Mary, the girl who worked for us, sought to sit in her accustomed place after serving our and her own dinner. Annie, a friend, occupied the position, however, We wondered how the situation would be handled, perceiving that the visitor was taking no move to leave. Mary touched Annie's arm, indicating a desire that Annie shift over. At the same time, however, she partly held Annie back, so that the latter would not take the gesture as a sign to leave the house. This showed considerable tact.

The Eskimo's early experience gives little preparation for, or training in, rejection and frustration. In his rearing he has been provided with few hard knocks, such as, apparently, are useful to build up some vulnerability to hurts. Our thinking parallels that of Kardiner[16], who points out that a child lacking

[16] KARDINER, Abram, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1945), pp. 345-348.

experience with restrictions and accustomed to nearly unmitigated gratification will not learn strength in the face of trial. The Great Whale River data tend to confirm his hypothesis. Ethnographic material from elsewhere also tends to corroborate the proposition. Arapesh indulgence probably exceeds that which is found among the Eskimo. In the Arapesh, too, we find that the loving trust developed in the early setting becomes "an attitude that can be shattered at a blow because no blows are received in childhood to habituate the growing child to ordinary competitive aggressiveness in other."[17]

E. *Deference.* Human relations at Great Whale River, at least after age 12 or 13, are marked by an even, deferent tone and are disturbed by no serious outbreaks of aggression (an exception being repeated wife-beating on the part of one young man). Our data suggest that in southeastern Hudson Bay, readiness for violence was once no less developed than among other Eskimo of the Central Arctic[18]. The tendency persisted until relatively recent times in the Belcher Islands, lying off the coast of Great Whale River. In the absence of ready aggressive responses, tension in interpersonal relations is sometimes revealed by a forced smile — the same gesture to which so many positive associations are conditioned. If overcome in a fight or tussle while playing ball, Eskimo children also readily burst into tears, probably revealing more a response to frustration than actual pain. Sulking constituted the response to aggressive acts initiated by Indian youths in the case of one, otherwise not especially shy, 10 year old Eskimo lad. At Great Whale River, boys openly vent hostility against Cree Indian lads, who reciprocate in kind. However, adults who catch sight of children fighting reprimand the activity heartily, using some of the sharpest scolding to be witnessed in adult-child relations. The expletive "It is horrid!" is hurled at the fighting child. The strength of the inhibition which is developed appears to be pro-

[17] MEAD, Margaret, *Sex and Temperament* (New York, Morrow, 1935), p. 137.

[18] BULIARD, Roger P., *Inuk* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Young, 1951); FREUCHEN, Peter, *Eskimo* (New York, Grosset and Dunlap, 1931), and RUESCH, Hans, *Top of the World* (New York, Harper, 1950).

portionate to the intensity with which aggression is put down by adults in children. We do not, of course, suggest that the Eskimo feel no hostility. Evidence to the contrary cannot be ignored. The point, however, is that the overt expression of the hostility does not appear readily and sometimes is strenuously inhibited. A man was seen literally to turn his back and flee from a situation that raised his hostility to what he may have perceived to be a dangerous level.

In a community with so little tolerance for aggression it is not surprising to find the quality of deference expressed in the care taken not to generate aggression in interpersonal relations. One consequence of this wariness or tact is a social atomism characteristic, too, of other food-gathering people[19]. For example, in the case of a young wife-beater, considerable criticism of his conduct circulated behind the husband's back but little if any reached the man directly. The same deference appears in parent-child relations. While parents said they sometimes hit children, we only rarely observed any such manifest pattern. As a result the child cannot inconsistently learn the use of violence by being himself the target of such emotionally toned behavior.

F. *Fexibility.* By this term we refer to a relaxed mode of procedure and tolerant attitudes toward demands of living. Such a quality turns out to be apparent in many cultures that lie outside of the Euroamerican area. While not as at extreme as the disorderliness of the Aymara of Chucuito described by Tschopik[20], the Eskimo of Great Whale River reveal basically the same lack of perfectionism, compulsiveness, or rigidity. Compared to the Kaska Indians[21], however, the Eskimo might

[19] HONIGMANN, John J., *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (op. cit.), p. 266; also see HALLOWELL, A.I., "Some Psychological Characteristics of the Northeastern Indians. In Johnson, Frederick, Ed., Man in Northeastern North America (*Papers of the Robert S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology,* no. 3, 1946), p. 207.

[20] TSCHOPIK, Harry Jr., "The Aymara of Chucuito, Peru" *(Anthrological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History,* 1946, vol. XLIV, pp. 137-308), p. 184.

[21] HONIGMANN, John J., *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (op. cit.), p. 271.

be classified as relatively orderly, particularly with regard to the value they set on the cleanliness of clothing or dwelling.

We were impressed with the Eskimo's flexibility as manifested in a display of passive resignation toward disasters; for example, toward food shortages brought on by several days of bad weather that prevent hunting. In his vague theories of causation, also, the Eskimo reveals a lack of systematic, orderly thought. Misfortune or illness is often ascribed neither to sorcery, fate, nor God's will. Events just happen — a theory compatible with the proclivity for resignation since as an explanation it does not constitute a premise from which a coping technique — either threat or prayer nor anticipatory hope for a change of luck — might follow. With regard to questions of motivation, the reply, "Don't know," is characteriscally used by informants. People do not pursue hypothetical explanations. Casualness is also manifested in that the people seem to posit few absolutes and adhere to few necessary connections between phenomena. In other words, they are relatively non-magical[22]. The emphasis on Sunday as a day of rest is the strongest exception to this pattern.

Flexibility is absorbed in an easy-going, often indirect, noncompulsive learning process which is localized in a social environment that reflects no rigid organization. Yet, in some respects, the Eskimo household is ordered and such ordering cannot fail to be observed by the growing child. Food, for example, does not lie available to free access but is served only at particular times of the day by the mother. Toilet training is not severely inculcated, but a system of elimination does exist and the child early comes to realize that there are appropriate places for elimination. While mother resign themselves to a child's will in many things, they rarely do so with regard to aggression of selfishness. These facts suggest that flexibility in the child's early environment is not as high as it theoretically might be. The degree of flexibility in Eskimo culture is correlated with relatively, but not wholly, permissive circumstances

[22] WILSON, Godfrey, and WILSON, Monica, *The Analysis of Social Change* (Cambridge, University Press, 1945), pp. 89-90.

obtaining in early life. Early permissiveness, in turn, would appear to be predictably associated with relatively simple community organization and a subsistence system based on food gathering plus trapping.

SUMMARY

Great Whale River Eskimo culture is characterized by interpersonal warmth and friendliness, optimism toward ordinary problems of existence, as well as by idealization of the self and display of a sense of personal responsibility. Behavior reveals limited tolerance of social rejection or frustration; that is, interpersonal relations are marked by touchiness. A quality of deference also pervades social relationships. In many procedures people adopt a relaxed and casual manner of approach to problems of living.

These stylistic features of behavior, it has been recognized, overlap. It is assumed that they are also functionally dependent on certain interrelated patterns of child rearing as well as on other designated patterns of socially standardized behavior.

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