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THEMES AS DYNAMIC FORCES IN CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

In every culture are found a limited number of dynamic affirmations, called *themes*, which control behavior or stimulate activity. The activities, prohibitions of activities, or references which result from the acceptance of a theme are its *expressions*. Such expressions may be formalized or unformalized. Limiting factors, often the existence of other opposed or circumscribing themes and their extensions, control the number, force, and variety of a theme's expressions. The interplay of theme and countertheme is the key to the equilibrium achieved in a culture, and structure in culture is essentially their interrelation and balance.

A study of any society, nonliterate or "modern," ordinarily divides into familiar categories, such as political organization, economy, social life, religion, art, etc. Yet, in spite of the universality of human needs which this suggests and the historical connections between peoples of which we are aware, each culture, in specific respects and in its totality, is different from every other, both in content and in organization.

We have, of course, ways of referring to the uniqueness of the individual culture. We speak of the "flavor," the "feel," the "spirit," or the "genius" of a particular way of life. We may ascribe its peculiar characteristics to the "pattern" into which its elements have fallen or to a "configuration" into which the behavior and thinking of its carriers fit. But this expressive vocabulary, though it has been useful and even at times illuminating, implies more than it actually reveals. To borrow terms and concepts from art, psychology, and philosophy may add flexibility and sparkle to the social scientist's descriptive offerings, but it has its limitations for serious analytical work.

Before the entrance of the United States into World War II, I began, with the help of two graduate students, to apply to a body of data a viewpoint, method, and vocabulary which had evolved out of my field-work experiences and my contacts with social scientists and their writings.

¹ I am greatly indebted to Dr. Clyde Kluckhohn, to Lieutenant Commander Alexander H. Leighton, and to Dr. Ruth Benedict for suggestions and criticisms.

War has interrupted the work, but it may be timely in spite of its incompleteness to present briefly some of the concepts and definitions involved.

It is the thesis of this paper that a limited number of dynamic affirmations, which I shall call *themes*, can be identified in every culture and that the key to the character, structure, and direction of the specific culture is to be sought in the nature, expression, and interrelationship of these themes. So that the principal examples cited can be easily followed, I shall take them from a single volume—my Chiricahua Apache ethnology.²

The term "theme" is used here in a technical sense to denote a postulate or position, declared or implied, and usually controlling behavior or stimulating activity, which is tacitly approved or openly promoted in a society.³

² *An Apache Life-Way* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941).

³ "Theme" as here defined in some ways resembles the "value attitude" of Talcott Parsons' *The Structure of Social Action* and more particularly Kluckhohn's "cultural configuration" as this concept has been developed in a series of recent articles. Dr. Kluckhohn restricts the term he employs to designate incentives to action of which the people concerned are not aware—a limitation which I do not impose on themes. Moreover, I believe that the word "configuration" implies a formal relationship between the expressions of a theme which I doubt actually exists. See Clyde Kluckhohn, "Patterning as Exemplified in Navaho Culture," in *Language, Culture, and Personality*, ed. Lealie Spier (Menasha, Wis.: George Banta Pub. Co., 1941), and "Covert Culture and Administrative Problems," *American Anthropologist*, XLV, No. 2 (1943), 213-27. Cf. also

The nature of a theme may be illustrated by a concept that is far from being exclusive to Chiricahua Apache society, namely, that men are physically, mentally, and morally superior to women. Hints that this is, indeed, a theme of the culture are found in more than one aspect of Chiricahua thought and behavior. Even predictions concerning an unborn child are guided by this theme, for, if a fetus "has lots of life," it is assumed that the child will be a boy. The value given to prenatal movement derives from the fact that, in this society, success depends largely on activity and participation. There are many other clues. Chiricahua women are charged with being more excitable and unstable than men and more likely to say or to do things that cause domestic or inter-family strife. They also are credited with less will-power than men and are said to be more easily "tempted," in regard both to sorcery and to irregular sexual conduct. It must be remembered that this is not the judgment of the men only but an appraisal which the Chiricahua women accept and help to perpetuate.

There are constant reminders of the same theme in political life and in social forms. The tribal leaders are all men, and all posts of importance are formally assumed by men. In council it is ordinarily the oldest active male who speaks for the extended family. In social etiquette the same deference to men is evident. Men must be allowed to precede women along paths. At feasts a special place is arranged for the men; the women eat wherever they find a place. If guests are present, the male guests are served first and the women of the entertaining household last of all.

In ceremonial life, too, women suffer some restrictions. For instance, they may not use the sweat lodge or impersonate important supernaturals called "mountain spirits." A menstruating woman is particu-

larly dangerous. Her condition is less danger to the health of men with whom she comes in contact at this time and may even "spoil" good male horses. While the thoughtless act of individual men can bring misfortune, males are not contaminating because of sex-linked natural functions. Even recreation is not free from the influence of this theme. Thus, women are not expected to sing social dance songs, and the grounds of the hoop-and-pole games, where men gather daily, are strictly forbidden to women under the supernatural sanction of blindness. Women have no comparable sanctuary.

All these translations of a theme into conduct or belief I call its *expressions*, a term by which is designated the activities, prohibition of activities, or references which result from the acceptance or affirmation of a theme in a society. The expressions of a theme, of course, aid us in discovering it.

Expressions of a theme are not all of one piece. The quest for "long life" is an important Chiricahua Apache concern and theme. During the girl's puberty rite, in keeping with this theme, the adolescent *ahóyá* walks through a "life-trail" of pollen footprints. There is no room for latitude or judgment in regard to the time of occurrence or the manner of performance of this act. At puberty every girl must pass through this rite, and this element is deemed essential to the completion of the ceremony. Its omission could not be rationalized in terms of the personalities involved or modified by special circumstances. Such a conventionalized and ordered response I name a *formalized expression of a theme*. This term refers to activities, prohibitions of activity, or references which have become fixed in time or place and to which everyone to whom they apply must respond without significant variation.

In contrast to this type of expression stands the variety which has the force of a more general guide to conduct rather than that of an undeviating rule. The Chiricahua woman, for example, is expected to be retiring and deferential in the presence of men

Clyde Kluckhohn and William H. Kelly, "The Concept of Culture," in *The Science of Man in the World Crisis*, ed. Ralph Linton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), pp. 78-106.

and to allow them to make the first friendly overtures in speech or action. But what is considered becomingly modest in a woman is likely to depend on the ages of the persons involved, on whether the man and woman or their families are well acquainted, on the distance separating the two families, and on a number of other intrusive factors. The actual expression of the theme, consequently, becomes a function of a web of elements and therefore cannot be agreed on in advance. What is really expected of the woman is that she meet any novel or unexpected situation in which men are involved in the spirit of the theme. As far as specific behavior is concerned, she is allowed various solutions compatible with a socially accepted standard of conduct. Such fulfillments of a theme, which test the resourcefulness, ingenuity, and originality of those who devise them, I term *unformalized expressions*. These are the expressions of a theme whose precise character, time, or place are not carefully defined by the culture.

Expressions of a theme can be analyzed from still another direction. When the man always precedes the woman in walking or in eating, it is not difficult to establish the concept of superordination-subordination which is involved. Expressions such as these, which are so directly and obviously related to the theme, may be considered *primary expressions*. It may require more inquiry and more familiarity with the culture than is necessary for the recognition of primary themes to discover that excessive movement of a fetus during gestation is interpreted to mean that a male child is about to be born. Here the movement or activity *stands for* the male principle. Such substitutive realizations of a theme we may call *symbolic expressions*. These may be defined as substances, gestures, ideas, or figures of speech not necessarily logically related to themes but which have become recognized vehicles for their representation. Symbolic expressions may also be formalized or unformalized and may be of a material or a nonmaterial nature. Thus the "trail of pol-

len" of the girl's puberty rite is a formalized, symbolic, nonmaterial expression of the theme of the importance of long life.

As this suggests, the terms "formalized," "unformalized," "primary," "symbolic," "material," and "nonmaterial" are co-ordinate concepts. Thus a formalized expression can also be primary and material, symbolic and nonmaterial, symbolic and material, primary and nonmaterial, etc. There is no rank order involved; none of these concepts takes precedence over any other, as far as I can see. If there is any particular correlation or tendency to nexus, it is, for obvious reasons, between symbolic and nonmaterial expressions.

But to identify a theme is not to evaluate it. How is the importance of a theme to the culture to be measured and its place in comparison with other themes to be gauged?

One approach to this problem—the simplest and crudest because it avoids qualitative considerations—is to count the number of expressions of a theme. In general, a theme which is expressed many times in a culture, especially in a variety of contexts, is likely to be more fundamental and to exert more influence than one which is expressed infrequently. In fact, to be considered a valid theme in the sense in which the term has been defined here, an interest must be expressed quite a few times in the cultural round. In the study of Jicarilla Apache culture, for example, I have been interested in a theme which I tentatively call "the affirmation of the family chain of responsibility." As a result of the workings of this theme, family members share responsibility for what happens to each other and believe that their actions influence the outcome of the ventures of close kin. Thus the behavior of the father and mother before the birth of a child determines many of his characteristics. The fortunes of the Jicarilla hunter, raider, and warrior are thought to fluctuate in accordance with the conduct at home of family representatives, who obey many restrictions while the men are engaged in these missions. The expressions of this theme are many and varied in Jicarilla society. But in

Chiricahua Apache culture there are only one or two usages which are vaguely reminiscent of the Jicarilla development. And these are so few in number and so lightly considered that it would be obviously improper to treat them as expressions of a Chiricahua theme.

Even the task of determining the number of expressions of a theme which pervade a culture may not be as easy as it at first seems. Formalized expressions, because of the regularity or inevitability of their appearance, are relatively simple to note; a full outline of the traditional aspects of a culture usually throws most of them into relief. Where a culture tends to emphasize tradition and prescribes the details of behavior and etiquette for many occasions, the search for formalized expressions of a theme is likely to be most rewarding. But for the identification of unformalized expressions of a theme, close observation, accounts of personal experiences, and autobiographical materials must be utilized in addition. Also it requires a better acquaintance with the culture to interpret symbolic expressions correctly than it does to recognize the derivation of the more explicit primary expressions. Moreover, nonmaterial expressions are generally more elusive than material evidences of a theme.

Another rough indication of the importance of a theme is the degree to which a group shows concern when its terms are violated. The intensity of the reaction and the character of the sanctions invoked are significant clues.

In assessing the position of a theme in a given culture, it is also well to determine in how many facets of the total system of ideas and practices it appears. The theme of male dominance is not by any means the most striking or important affirmation of its kind in Chiricahua culture. Yet it is represented in more than one branch of tribal thought and endeavor. We have already cited evidence to show that a woman has certain religious disabilities in Chiricahua society. In addition, it is considered wrong, because of her greater "weakness," for a woman to

accompany a man on the hunt. Even to bring a woven basket, the symbol of woman's handiwork, on the hunt will result in bad luck. So at least two large "compartments" of Chiricahua culture—economic and ritualistic—are marked by expressions of this theme.

But more important than anything else in judging the place of a theme in the cultural whole is the recognition of the restraints which exist to its extreme and unimpeded expression. These are the *limiting factors*, the circumstances (often the existence of other opposed or circumscribing themes and their extensions) which control the number, force, and variety of a theme's expressions. Unless I am mistaken, the concept of limiting factors is the key to the understanding of the integration or equilibrium that is achieved or approximated in the structure of most cultures.

The pertinence of these guides to the evaluation of a theme can best be illustrated by applying them. Is the doctrine of male superiority a dominant and overshadowing tenet of Chiricahua society? Is the Chiricahua woman a virtual slave to man in this culture and may man play the bully with impunity? In terms of the criteria which have been introduced, I believe it can be established that the superiority attributed to men is comparatively slight, that the disabilities of women are minor, and that women are relatively well treated and protected in this setting.

In the first place, there actually are not a very large number of expressions of the theme of male dominance and female inferiority. I have mentioned all of them that I can find or that I can recall. Moreover, those expressions of the theme that do exist are not too important in context. Women may not use the sweat lodge, but the sweat lodge is not a particularly vital element of Chiricahua ceremonialism. Again, a woman may not impersonate the mountain spirits, that is, she may not act as a masked dancer. Yet she may seek and obtain supernatural power on a plane of equality with men and accordingly may become a powerful shaman.

—something much more fundamental to the ritual life. To turn to the economy, women should not accompany men on the hunt. But this is hardly a serious penalty, for the division of labor has left women many essential and esteemed tasks to perform.

Further, the sanctions against violating the spirit or the letter of this theme are not very drastic. If a woman walks too near the grounds of the hoop-and-pole game, the men stop their play and stand with poles erect until she is out of sight. Her punishment, if she has watched the game, is left to the supernaturals. A woman who is brash in her contacts with men or who usurps her husband's place in council or in dealings with her neighbors invites ridicule and perhaps a certain amount of ostracism. But nothing more severe is done to her. In short, Chiricahua women do labor under some handicaps and disqualifications, but these are not too serious or overrestrictive.

When we examine the limiting factors which prevent the theme of male dominance from becoming too powerful, the structural reasons for the mildness of the expressions of the theme become apparent.

To begin with, residence after marriage among the Chiricahua is matrilocal. The husband comes to live at the encampment of his bride's family and by his presence and his labor makes good the loss sustained when a young man of this family weds and moves away. The Chiricahua husband is expected to work for his parents-in-law, and out of respect he avoids or "hides from" them. Obviously, he cannot abuse his wife without inviting retaliation from affinal kin to whom he owes obedience and deference. The Chiricahua woman remains with or near her closest relatives all her life. She is protected by them before marriage, she stays among them after marriage, and if she should be widowed or if her marriage should end in divorce, they continue to offer her a haven.

Also, because men leave the paternal encampment at marriage while girls attract strong sons-in-law to provide for the older relatives, girls are quite as welcome as boys the Chiricahua household. There is no

tendency to female infanticide. The girl's puberty rite, which marks a girl's approach to marriageable age, is an occasion of public rejoicing. Tribesmen come from all over the surrounding region to congratulate the family on having reared their daughter to maturity.

Nor is the woman at great disadvantage in economic activities. Chiricahua food economy is based on hunting and gathering techniques. The wild plants which the woman gathers and prepares are a source of food rivaling the products of the hunt in importance. Any restrictions which would seriously limit the mobility of the woman or would interfere with her ability to carry out her part of the food quest would strike at the very subsistence of the group.

Because of the highly mobile life and the extreme fear of the dead or their possessions, property was exclusively personal among the Chiricahua and was destroyed at the death of the owner. Since women made and used quite as many objects as men, their list of possessions was just as long. As a result of the destruction of all the individual's property at death, there was no way for men as a group to accumulate more wealth than did women.

Without multiplying examples, it is not difficult to see that the theme of male superiority and female subordination could never become a pre-eminent note of Chiricahua culture unless decided shifts occurred in other aspects of the culture as well. It is apparent that the Chiricahua conception of the place of women and of the proper behavior of women in relation to men crosses other themes and expressions of themes, and these act as limiting factors and moderating influences.

Such a view of the interplay of theme and countertheme has important implications for social theory. It is probable that much of what we have loosely called "structure" in culture is essentially the interrelation and balance of themes. Also this analysis of the nature of themes offers a clue to the unformulated but real dissatisfaction of social scientists with writers who present ex-

treme aspects of "exotic" cultures as typical, and who arrive at a caricature of a culture because they overemphasize unusual themes and pay far too little attention to the limiting factors which provide equilibrium.

Moreover, the approach points to the essential weakness in the theoretical views of social anthropologists and sociologists who limit inquiry into the nature of the structure of culture to the study of the realm of social organization. Even from the few examples given above it should be clear that themes important to the structure and ordering of a society are not delimited by kinship or its extensions. Familial structure is not more important by definition than, say, religious structure, and both of these respond to the more comprehensive system of themes. Structure is not something to be abstracted from one aspect of a culture. Rather it is the organization of fundamental ideas and their derivatives revealed by empirical study of actual behavior.

In order to illustrate how the expressions of a theme are distributed throughout the various fields of interest and how the limiting factors operate, it may be well to examine a theme of Chiricahua Apache culture which can be summed up in these words: "Long life and old age are important goals."

The desire for long life is common to much of humanity, of course, and not infrequently we of Western culture offer a toast to a friend's longevity and health. For the Apache, however, long life is not a vague desideratum but a condition to be achieved by the incessant manipulation of supernatural power and the unflagging efforts of men. It is an end-product of constant strivings, punctuated by a number of definite steps.

The process begins as soon as the Chiricahua child is born. Shortly after delivery, the umbilical cord and the afterbirth are placed in a young tree, so that the life and growth of the child may parallel that of a natural object which ordinarily reaches a great age. Later, when the child wears his first moccasins, he is led through four footprints outlined in pollen, a symbol of the path of long

life. Not long afterward a spring-hair-cutting ceremony is performed for the child, a rite that is in large part a prayer for his continued health and longevity. Parents are especially pleased when an old person whom they have befriended blesses their child, for the youngster is then likely to live to the age of the one who voices the blessing. Also, it is fortunate to have an old person conduct a ceremony over a child; the child is then likely to attain a like age.

The girl's puberty rite serves as a focus for many expressions of the theme. If a girl does not undergo a puberty rite, she is doomed to a short life. The priest of the puberty rite always prays earnestly for the long life of the adolescent, and his reputation depends in good measure on the continued existence and health of the girls for whom he has "sung." At one point in the rite, the girl's body is rubbed and massaged in order "to straighten out her life and make it long." To be assured of old age, she walks through a trail of pollen footprints and runs to the east along a symbolic trail of long life. Needless to say, nearly every song and prayer of the puberty rite mentions long life, and old women who are present burst into a call of reverent applause when the word for "long life" is uttered. The fire-poker used by the ceremonialist during the rite is termed the "age stick" and represents the cane on which the girl will lean when she has attained old age. Allusion is made to the "age stick" in many of the songs, and one of the most important of the songs has the "age stick" for its title and subject. In fact, the song cycle offers safeguards for every stage and condition of life and is considered a means by which a girl can be brought without mishap to old age.

There are other indications of the quest for old age. A first cigarette is rolled for a youth by an old person, so that the smoker may reach the age of the one who has acted for him. One of the central anxieties of the Apache is that witches and ghosts are trying to shorten their lives. Existence is conceived of as a struggle for long life, with good men and beneficent supernatural pow-

er on one side and witches, ghosts, and evil power on the other. So frequent are references to old age and long life that mere children respond to the theme as an ideal and a goal: I have a record of a child of eight who dreamed that the supernaturals had promised him long life!

Quite naturally, the great importance attributed to old age as such has resulted in deference to those who have attained it. An old person is respectfully permitted to open conversations and to take the initiative in greetings. The older person always takes the lead in embracing, the Apache form of greeting at a time of great emotional stress or when returning after a long absence.

It may appear to some that such intense concern for long life and old age must result in a gerontocracy. We may well ask whether those who survive to old age are unchecked in their control of Chiricahua society. They are not. Again there are limiting factors which offset and moderate the workings of this particular theme.

One theme which checks any tendency to the predominant influence of the aged is one which I call "validation by participation." Chiricahua society is particularly congenial to activists. Wisdom and sagacity are valued, but they are subordinate to and must be linked with performance. A leader is one who actually commands in warfare or on raiding or hunting expeditions. When failing health or old age interferes with success, the leader yields to someone younger and better equipped. As long as a man is physically fit and active, age is an asset, for it denotes experience and wisdom in addition to the other virtues. But when a leader can no longer keep pace with the strenuous young men, his years and his knowledge do not prevent his retirement.

It is much the same in matters of ceremonial. The relationship between the shaman and the supernatural power through which he works is an extremely close and personal one. The shaman draws the power's attention to the rite and to the patient's plight by prayer and song and then pleads with his power for help. He does not shrink

from reminding his power of its past promises to him or from threatening henceforth to ignore the power if it does not comply with his wishes. In dealing with his source of power, the shaman benefits by abundant self-confidence, a strong voice, and a rich vocabulary. Age often blurs this control and dissolves the relationship. "The older you get," an informant has told me, "the weaker you become with your ceremony. Your mind is weak. Your praying is mixed up. You get the lines in the wrong order in the songs and prayers. . . . Your voice is feeble and you can't sing as you used to. You can't have a good vigorous talk with your power any more." Thus, despite the theoretical prerogatives of age, the inability of a very old person to enter into ceremonial life with the former gusto may result in his gradual withdrawal from ritual life.⁴

The theme that affirms the existence of sorcerers capable of causing trouble, sickness, and death also operates against unqualified approbation for the aged. If all goes moderately well with the affairs of an elderly person and those associated with him, there will be no tendency to suspect him of sorcery. But if an individual lives on to a great age while young and seemingly healthy individuals inexplicably become ill and die around him, it may be rumored that this occurs because, when his turn to die approaches, he bargains with evil power and "sacrifices" a younger victim in his stead. Such stories are especially likely to arise if the elderly person is aberrant or queer or if he has become crabbed or difficult with the years. Thus the respect owed to the aged is often tempered by the latent fear that the "long life" has been purchased at the cost of the lives of the innocent and young.

I do not wish to give the impression that I consider a culture always to be in a perfect

⁴ It must be remembered, however, that ordinarily the tendency is for the old to be eliminated from raiding and from those activities which demand physical exertion before they lose prestige as ceremonialists. An old person who retains his memory and commanding way in the performance of ritual may function as a shaman until the end of his life.

state of equilibrium as a result of the balancing of themes and that I do not take cognizance of the predominant role that any one theme may occasionally play. Although I believe that some kind of equilibrium in the structure of a culture must prevail unless there is to be total chaos, I am well aware that there are instances where no adequate restraints upon an emergent theme exist or are created. There are periods when the system of equilibrium is in flux. There are times when a theme, because of changes which weaken or remove the ordinary limiting factors, becomes abnormally influential. These conditions can be illustrated by reference to a single Chiricahua theme.

Even before the historical period, one of the most poorly adjusted areas in the structure of Chiricahua culture was that which dealt with sorcery. Around this concept were organized some of the most serious tensions and anxieties of the culture. A Chiricahua usually relied upon his kin to defend him against injustice. But witchcraft was so horrible a subject that no one, it was said, would prefer accusations of witchcraft unless he were "sure." And, since witches were reputed to make a specialty of victimizing their own relatives, the kin of the accused had reason to treat the charges with some respect. Then, too, witches were usually identified in ceremonies by shamans. To refuse to heed the message was to fly in the face of religion. Moreover, to defend a witch was most unprofitable and dangerous, for, on the theory that witches defend one another, it placed the advocate under suspicion for the same offense. As a result of all this, the principal barrier to the unhealthy growth of the witchcraft theme was a sense of proportion and a general state of good will among the Chiricahua themselves. As long as reverses were overbalanced by successes and a sense of security prevailed, morbid preoccupation with ideas of witchcraft did not menace the welfare of the tribe.

With the coming of the white man and the beginning of the Indian wars, the situation changed drastically. The tribe was

plunged into a series of conflicts and suffered an enormous number of casualties. Tribal territories were lost. During this period the group was decimated by epidemics. Because of the frustrations, the uncertainties, and the pressures, factionalism flourished. In keeping with the religious pattern shamans sought explanations for the misfortunes and found them in the usual revelations concerning the activities of sorcerers. Charges and countercharges increased. Murders, executions, and retaliations were common, and feuds raged. The furor over witchcraft threatened for a time to complete what the white man's weapons and diseases had begun.

Thus a study of the themes in culture can often illuminate the history of the cultural dynamic. It can also offer clues to the direction of the cultural dynamic and to problems of acculturation. Another comparison between Chiricahua Apache and Jicarilla Apache practices will perhaps make this clear.

According to the major religious theme in Chiricahua culture, the universe is pervaded by supernatural power accessible to any man or woman who earnestly wishes to become a shaman and "to know something to live by." On the other hand, the Jicarilla Apache in their religious thinking emphasize traditional or "long-life" ceremonies. These are not the result of an individual power quest but were supposedly taught by the supernaturals in the early days of mankind. Consequently, they should be continued without change or personal interpretation by successive generations of practitioners who learn them by rote.

The shamanistic Chiricahua religious round, because it rests on personal experiences, is flexible and adaptive. Christianity can be accepted, for instance, as simply another "power," with Jesus as its source. As a result of the adjustments and rationalizations which its themal form has permitted it to take, Chiricahua ritual life has retained its vitality to a remarkable degree.

The Jicarilla Apache have been more isolated than the Chiricahua and less subject

to the white man's influence. A reasonable guess would be that aboriginal Jicarilla religious practices are better preserved than are those of the Chiricahua. Yet, because of the insistence on a faithful reproduction of former observances, when proper materials are lacking or when conditions are not satisfactory, discouragement mounts and Jicarilla ritual life deteriorates. Consequently, instead of substitution or realistic compromise there is a greater loss of content and detail in Jicarilla than in Chiricahua culture. According to Jicarilla legend, to give an illustration, the long, flowing hair of the members of a certain dance group symbolizes the clouds and the rain. The tale threatens the tribe with drought and sorrow if anyone who has had his hair cut (unless ritually in

childhood or for mourning) should perform this dance. This injunction is still honored in spite of altered conditions. Because the Jicarilla boys were forced to have their hair cropped when they were sent to schools, the great ceremony in which such dancers appear has not taken place for many years and may never again be presented.

This paper represents a very short excursion into the vast domain of structural analysis and cultural dynamics. It is meant to be suggestive rather than exhaustive and provocative rather than definitive. Yet it does seek to explore concepts in which the social scientist is becoming increasingly interested.

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