

ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORY

An Introductory History

FOURTH EDITION

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3. Ethnical Periods

LEWIS HENRY MORGAN (1818-1881)

THE LATEST INVESTIGATIONS respecting the early condition of the human race are tending to the conclusion that mankind commenced their career at the bottom of the scale and worked their way up from savagery to civilization through the slow accumulations of experimental knowledge.¹

As it is undeniable that portions of the human family have existed in a state of savagery, other portions in a state of barbarism, and still other portions in a state of civilization, it seems equally so that these three distinct conditions are connected with each other in a natural as well as necessary sequence of progress. Moreover, that this sequence has been historically true of the entire human family, up to the status attained by each branch respectively, is rendered probable by the conditions under which all progress occurs, and by the known advancement of several branches of the family through two or more of these conditions.

An attempt will be made in the following pages to bring forward additional evidence of the rudeness of the early condition of mankind, of the gradual evolution of their mental and moral powers through experience, and of their protracted struggle with opposing obstacles while winning their way to civilization. It will be drawn, in part, from the great sequence of inventions

and discoveries which stretches along the entire pathway of human progress; but chiefly from domestic institutions, which express the growth of certain ideas and passions.²

As we re-ascend along the several lines of progress toward the primitive ages of mankind, and eliminate one after the other, in the order in which they appeared, inventions and discoveries on the one hand, and institutions on the other, we are enabled to perceive that the former stand to each other in progressive, and the latter in unfolding relations. While the former class have had a connection, more or less direct, the latter have been developed from a few primary germs of thought. Modern institutions plant their roots in the period of barbarism, into which their germs were transmitted from the previous period of savagery. They have had a lineal descent through the ages, with the streams of the blood, as well as a logical development.³

Two independent lines of investigations thus invite our attention. The one leads through inventions and discoveries, and the other through primary institutions. With the knowledge gained therefrom, we may hope to indicate the principal stages of human development. The proofs to be adduced will be drawn chiefly from domestic

From *Ancient Society* (1877)

¹ In this first paragraph, Morgan shows that he, like other nineteenth-century anthropologists, viewed cultural evolution as progressive. His statement that humans worked their way up "to civilization through the slow accumulations of experimental knowledge" sounds very much as though he had Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection on his mind when he wrote this chapter.

² A common belief among social scientists of Morgan's day was that cultural evolution referred not only to technological progress but also to moral development. Notice that Morgan speaks of "winning" civilization. The influence of Darwin's concept of evolution as a battle for survival is evident in Morgan's characterization of cultural evolution as a "protracted struggle."

³ Morgan's comment on the lineal descent of institutions through the ages refers to two different aspects of his thought. Morgan was well acquainted with *The Geological Evidence for the Antiquity of Man* by Sir Charles Lyell (1797-1875) (Tooker 1992). Thus, he was versed in the latest geological evidence demonstrating that the earth and human beings were ancient far beyond biblical projections, and he was able to incorporate this time scale in his evolutionary theory. Second, Morgan's reference to "germs of thought" refers to his belief that there were universal ideas, which, like seeds, would germinate and blossom in the proper environment. Because Morgan, like Tylor, accepted this concept of the psychic unity of humankind, he believed that unilineal evolution was "natural and necessary."

institutions; the references to achievements more strictly intellectual being general as well as subordinate.⁴

The facts indicate the gradual formation and subsequent development of certain ideas, passions, and aspirations. Those which hold the most prominent positions may be generalized as growths of the particular ideas with which they severally stand connected. Apart from inventions and discoveries they are the following:

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|------------------------|---------------------------|
| I. <i>Subsistence,</i> | V. <i>Religion,</i> |
| II. <i>Government,</i> | VI. <i>House Life and</i> |
| III. <i>Language,</i> | <i>Architecture,</i> |
| IV. <i>The Family,</i> | VII. <i>Property.</i> |

First. Subsistence has been increased and perfected by a series of successive arts, introduced at long intervals of time, and connected more or less directly with inventions and discoveries.⁵

Second. The germ of government must be sought in the organization into gentes⁶ in the Status of savagery; and followed down, through the advancing forms of this institution, to the establishment of political society.

Third. Human speech seems to have been developed from the rudest and simplest forms of expression. Gesture or sign language, as intimated by Lucretius,^a must have preceded articulate language, as thought preceded speech. The monosyllabical preceded the syllabical, as the latter did that of concrete words. Human intelligence, unconscious of design, evolved articulate language by utilizing the vocal sounds. This great subject, a department of knowledge by itself, does not fall within the scope of the present investigation.⁷

Fourth. With respect to the family, the stages of its growth are embodied in systems of consanguinity and affinity, and in usages relating to marriage, by means of which, collectively, the family can be definitely traced through several successive forms.

Fifth. The growth of religious ideas is environed with such intrinsic difficulties that it may never receive a perfectly satisfactory exposition. Religion deals so largely with the imaginative and emotional nature, and consequently with such uncertain elements of knowledge, that all primitive religions are grotesque and to some extent

⁴ Morgan was interested in the evolution of culture as a pan-human event but divides the evidence used in his analysis. He proposed to trace the development of "inventions and discoveries" but considered them subordinate to the development of "primary institutions," such as subsistence, government, language, and property, that were transmitted by germs of thought. Morgan believed that inventions and discoveries were correlated with stages of cultural evolution but developed by different processes. He wrote that inventions and discoveries had a direct, progressive relationship and were connected to developments in subsistence. However, the primary institutions have "unfolding relations." They were seeded as germs of thought in the period of Savagery, germinated in the period of Barbarism, and flowered in Civilization. Although Morgan lists seven of these institutions, the one on which he placed the greatest importance was subsistence. In Morgan's view, it was developments in subsistence that lay behind evolutionary progress.

⁵ The keys to cultural evolution, according to Morgan, were techniques of food production, which distinguished humans from other animals. As a result, he devoted a chapter of *Ancient Society* to outlining the development of different types of subsistence and their role in cultural evolution. Morgan speculated that human beings first

subsisted by gathering wild vegetable foods, which meant that people were originally found in tropical climates. His conjecture is surprisingly accurate: modern paleontological research indicates that early human ancestors were foragers on the savannas of Africa. The primary place of subsistence in Morgan's work was adopted later by cultural ecological thinkers such as Julian Steward (essay 19), as well as many contemporary materialists.

⁶ *Gentes*: Latin for a patrilineal clan.

⁷ As indicated by his reference to the Roman poet and philosopher Lucretius (96?-55 B.C.E.), Morgan subscribed to the popular idea that evolution proceeded from simple to more complex forms. This idea is expressed here in the comment that gestural forms of communication are more primitive than speech. Morgan believed that forms of communication could be ranked and that primitive people spoke primitive languages. This notion survives today in ideas about the linguistic poverty of the poor or the inferiority of nonstandard forms of English. In fact, forms of communication such as American Sign Language are just as complex and expressive as spoken language. Edward Sapir, a student of Boas, attacked the idea of simple and complex languages when he developed the notion of linguistic relativism. For Boasians, all languages were equally evolved.

unintelligible. This subject also falls without the plan of this work excepting as it may prompt incidental suggestions.⁸

Sixth. House architecture, which connects itself with the form of the family and the plan of domestic life, affords a tolerably complete illustration of progress from savagery to civilization. Its growth can be traced from the hut of the savage, through the communal houses of the barbarians, to the house of the single family of civilized nations, with all the successive links by which one extreme is connected with the other. This subject will be noticed incidentally.

Lastly. The idea of property was slowly formed in the human mind, remaining nascent and feeble through immense periods of time. Springing into life in savagery, it required all the experience of this period of barbarism to develop the germ, and to prepare the human brain for the acceptance of its controlling influence. Its dominance as a passion over all other passions marks the commencement of civilization. It not only led mankind to overcome the obstacles which delayed civilization, but to establish political society on the basis of territory and of property. A critical knowledge of the evolution of the idea of property would embody, in some respects, the most remarkable portion of the mental history of mankind.⁹

It will be my object to present some evidence of human progress along these several lines, and

through successive ethnical periods, as it is revealed by inventions and discoveries, and by the growth of the ideas of government, of the family, and of property.

It may be here premised that all forms of government are reducible to two general plans, using the word plan in its scientific sense. In their bases the two are fundamentally distinct. The first, in the order of time, is founded upon persons, and upon relations purely personal, and may be distinguished as a society (*societas*). The gens is the unit of this organization; giving as the successive stages of integration, in the archaic period, the gens, the phratry, the tribe, and the confederacy of tribes, which constituted a people or nation (*populus*).¹⁰ At a later period a coalescence of tribes in the same area into a nation took the place of a confederacy of tribes occupying independent areas. Such, through prolonged ages, after the gens appeared, was the substantially universal organization of ancient society; and it remained among the Greeks and Romans after civilization supervened. The second is founded upon territory and upon property, and may be distinguished as a state (*civitas*). The township or ward, circumscribed by metes and bounds, with the property it contains, is the basis or unit of the latter, and political society is the result. Political society is organized upon territorial areas, and deals with property as well as

⁸ The idea that religion was not fit for scientific study because it was "imaginative and emotional" was common among nineteenth-century anthropologists. However, it was specifically rejected by E. B. Tylor, who attempted to trace the evolutionary history of religion in his book *Primitive Culture* (see essay 2).

⁹ Morgan's assertion that the concept of property led to the beginning of civilization as well as the establishment of political organizations may have had its origin in the work of John Locke, but it dovetails nicely with Marxist concerns. One can see why Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were so interested in Morgan's work. Marx read and extensively annotated *Ancient Society* but died before he was able to publish anything about it. Thus, it was Engels who had the task of integrating Morgan into Marxist theory. Engels believed that, in *Ancient Society*, Morgan had developed a materialist conception of history. Further, Engels claimed that Morgan's comparisons of different societies had led him to the same conclusions as Marx

(Resek 1960:161). In 1884, Engels, working from Marx's annotations, published *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, which he subtitled *In the Light of the Researches of Lewis Henry Morgan*. There, he claimed Morgan had proven Marx's theory by demonstrating that private property and the state were only passing phases in the continuing evolution of human society. Although Engels believed *Ancient Society* confirmed the truth of Marxist analysis, Morgan was not a Marxist. His ideas of psychic unity and unilineal evolution are very different from Marx's notions that human nature is contingent and created through labor (see pages 57–58).

¹⁰ *Gens* and *gentes* are synonymous terms for patrilineal clans. A *phratry* is a unilineal descent group composed of related clans. Morgan postulated that there were two basic forms of government: those based on kinship and those based on property. He believed that the modern state was founded upon notions of territory and property rather than kinship.

with persons through territorial relations. The successive stages of integration are the township or ward, which is the unit of organization; the county or province, which is an aggregation of townships or wards; and the national domain or territory, which is an aggregation of counties or provinces; the people of each of which are organized into a body politic. It taxed the Greeks and Romans to the extent of their capacities, after they had gained civilization, to invent the deme or township and the city ward; and thus inaugurate the second great plan of government, which remains among civilized nations to the present hour. In ancient society this territorial plan was unknown. When it came in it fixed the boundary line between ancient and modern society, as the distinction will be recognized in these pages.

It may be further observed that the domestic institutions of the barbarous, and even of the savage ancestors of mankind, are still exemplified in portions of the human family with such completeness that, with the exception of the strictly primitive period, the several stages of this progress are tolerably well preserved. They are seen in the organization of society upon the basis of sex, then upon the basis of kin, and finally upon the basis

of territory;¹¹ through the successive forms of marriage and of the family, with the systems of consanguinity thereby created; through house life and architecture; and through progress in usages with respect to the ownership and inheritance of property.¹²

The theory of human degradation to explain the existence of savages and of barbarians is no longer tenable. It came in as a corollary from the Mosaic cosmogony, and was acquiesced in from a supposed necessity which no longer exists. As a theory, it is not only incapable of explaining the existence of savages, but it is without support in the facts of human experience.¹³

The remote ancestors of the Aryan nations presumptively passed through an experience similar to that of existing barbarous and savage tribes. Though the experience of these nations embodies all the information necessary to illustrate the periods of civilization, both ancient and modern, together with a part of that in the Later period of barbarism, their anterior experience must be deduced, in the main, from the traceable connection between the elements of their existing institutions and inventions, and similar elements still preserved in those of savage and barbarous tribes.¹⁴

¹¹ When Morgan mentions the preservation of earlier stages that can be seen in the organization of society on the basis of sex, then kin, he is referring to the work of Johann J. Bachofen. Bachofen (1815–1887) was a lawyer and a scholar in classical mythology. He and Morgan were intimately familiar with each other's work. Morgan's descriptions of the matrilineal Iroquois in his book *The League of the Iroquois* (1851) provided Bachofen with ethnographic data to support the theory he outlined in his major work *Das Mutterrecht, or Mother Right* (1861). In *Mother Right* (1861) Bachofen proposed that in its earliest state, society was organized and controlled by women. Only later did men assert themselves to form patriarchal, patrilineal societies. Following Bachofen's scheme, Morgan assumed that matrilineal societies such as the Iroquois were representative of an earlier stage of political evolution.

¹² Morgan considered primitive societies to be living fossils and assumed that they resembled earlier stages in the development of Western society. Because simple societies, such as foraging bands, are structured by kinship

ties, Morgan assumed that similar structures characterized the earliest stages of political evolution in the "archaic" (pre-savagery) period.

¹³ The "theory of degradation," or degenerationism, was based on the Old Testament book of Genesis (Morgan's "Mosaic cosmogony"). The theory is explained on page 5. A leading degenerationist, W. Cooke Taylor outlined this view in *Natural History of Society* (1840). He "insisted upon a literal sequence of fall, flood, Babel, and diaspora. Some groups thereafter degenerated in savagery, but others, aided by God, progressed towards new heights of civilization" (Harris 1968:58). The "supposed necessity" Morgan mentions here refers to the view that there had been a relatively brief period of time since creation. He is saying that Lyell's work in geology has discredited degenerationism, making a biblical explanation of civilization unnecessary.

¹⁴ Although he does not make it explicit, Morgan is referring in this paragraph to E. B. Tylor's concept of survivals. For more on survivals, refer to essay 2.

It may be remarked finally that the experience of mankind has run in nearly uniform channels; that human necessities in similar conditions have been substantially the same; and that the operations of the mental principle have been uniform in virtue of the specific identity of the brain of all the races of mankind. This, however, is but a part of the explanation of uniformity in results. The germs of the principal institutions and arts of life were developed while man was still a savage. To a very great extent the experience of the subsequent periods of barbarism and of civilization have been expended in the further development of these original conceptions. Wherever a connection can be traced on different continents between a present institution and a common germ, the derivation of the people themselves from a common original stock is implied.¹⁵

The discussion of these several classes of facts will be facilitated by the establishment of a certain number of Ethnical Periods; each representing a distinct condition of society, and distinguishable by a mode of life peculiar to itself. The terms "Age of Stone," "of Bronze," and "of Iron," introduced by Danish archaeologists, have been extremely useful for certain purposes, and will remain so for the classification of objects of ancient art; but the progress of knowledge has

rendered other and different subdivisions necessary. Stone implements were not entirely laid aside with the introduction of tools of iron, nor of those of bronze. The invention of the process of smelting iron ore created an ethnical epoch, yet we could scarcely date another from the production of bronze. Moreover, since the period of stone implements overlaps those of bronze and of iron, and since that of bronze also overlaps that of iron, they are not capable of a circumscription that would leave each independent and distinct.¹⁶

It is probable that the successive arts of subsistence which arose at long intervals will ultimately, from the great influence they must have exercised upon the condition of mankind, afford the most satisfactory bases for these divisions. But investigation has not been carried far enough in this direction to yield the necessary information. With our present knowledge the main result can be attained by selecting such other inventions or discoveries as will afford sufficient tests of progress to characterize the commencement of successive ethnical periods. Even though accepted as provisional, these periods will be found convenient and useful. Each of those about to be proposed will be found to cover a distinct culture, and to represent a particular mode of life.¹⁷

¹⁵ The "uniform mental principle" Morgan mentions here reflects his belief in the psychic unity of humankind. Like Tylor before him, Morgan argued that unilineal evolution occurred because human thinking follows a universal course of development. But as the second half of this paragraph shows, Morgan was aware that cross-cultural similarities may imply that people share a common origin or that ideas can spread through diffusion. The concept of diffusion was popularized, at the turn of this century, by the German anthropogeographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904) and his student Leo Froebenius (1873–1938). It was carried to an extreme in the first decades of the twentieth century by such radical diffusionists as the Englishmen Grafton Elliot Smith (1871–1937) and W. J. Perry (1887–1949), who proposed that all world culture had begun in Egypt and diffused from that source (Smith 1928). Additionally, when Morgan wrote that "human necessities in similar conditions have been substantially the same," he anticipated the concept of cul-

tural types outlined in Julian Steward's theory of multilineal evolution sixty years later (see essay 19).

¹⁶ The terms *Stone Age*, *Bronze Age*, and *Iron Age* were introduced by the first curator of the Danish National Museum, Christian J. Thomsen, in order to chronologically rank European artifacts in an 1807 exhibit. This "three-age system," as it came to be known, was soon widely used throughout Europe (Fagan 1989:34).

¹⁷ Morgan's goal was to outline the stages of cultural evolution. He proposed that the transition between stages could be marked by the acquisition of certain kin patterns and modes of subsistence and the development of certain technological innovations. Half a century later, this insight would be essential in the work of the neoevolutionists Leslie White and Julian Steward, who examined cultural evolution in relation to subsistence and technology (essays 18 and 19). In the next several paragraphs Morgan outlines his design for separating one stage of cultural evolution from another.

The period of savagery, of the early part of which very little is known, may be divided, provisionally, into three subperiods. These may be named respectively the *Older*, the *Middle*, and the *Later* period of savagery; and the condition of society in each, respectively, may be distinguished as the *Lower*, the *Middle*, and the *Upper Status* of savagery.

In like manner, the period of barbarism divides naturally into three sub-periods, which will be called, respectively, the *Older*, the *Middle*, and the *Later* period of barbarism; and the condition of society in each, respectively, will be distinguished as the *Lower*, the *Middle*, and the *Upper Status* of barbarism.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to find such tests of progress to mark the commencement of these several periods as will be found absolute in their application, and without exceptions upon all the continents. Neither is it necessary, for the purpose in hand, that exceptions should not exist. It will be sufficient if the principal tribes of mankind can be classified, according to the degree of their relative progress, into conditions which can be recognized as distinct.

I. LOWER STATUS OF SAVAGERY¹⁸

This period commenced with the infancy of the human race, and may be said to have ended with the acquisition of a fish subsistence and of a knowledge of the use of fire. Mankind were then living in their original restricted habitat, and subsisting upon fruits and nuts. The commencement of articulate speech belongs to this period. No exemplification of tribes of mankind in this condition remained to the historical period.

II. MIDDLE STATUS OF SAVAGERY

It commenced with the acquisition of a fish subsistence and a knowledge of the use of fire, and ended with the invention of the bow and arrow. Mankind, while in this condition, spread from their original habitat over the greater portion of the earth's surface. Among tribes still existing it will leave in the Middle Status of savagery, for example, the Australians and the greater part of the Polynesians when discovered. It will be sufficient to give one or more exemplifications of each status.

III. UPPER STATUS OF SAVAGERY

It commenced with the invention of the bow and arrow, and ended with the invention of the art of pottery. It leaves in the Upper Status of Savagery the Athapascan tribes of the Hudson's Bay Territory, the tribes of the valley of the Columbia, and certain coast tribes of North and South America; but with relation to the time of their discovery. This closes the period of Savagery.

IV. LOWER STATUS OF BARBARISM

The invention or practice of the art of pottery, all things considered, is probably the most effective and conclusive test that can be selected to fix a boundary line, necessarily arbitrary, between savagery and barbarism. The distinctness of the two conditions has long been recognized, but no criterion of progress out of the former into the latter has hitherto been brought forward. All such tribes, then, as never attained to the art of pottery will be classed as savages, and those possessing this art but who never attained a phonetic alphabet and the use of writing will be classed as barbarians.

¹⁸ Here Morgan begins to outline the factors upon which he distinguishes the stages of cultural evolution. Much of the criticism of his theory was based on the fact that Morgan's system created illogical groupings, lumping

together societies that we now consider to have vastly different levels of social organization. This critique was first pointed out by Franz Boas in the early part of this century (see footnote 21).

The first sub-period of barbarism commenced with the manufacture of pottery, whether by original invention or adoption. In finding its termination, and the commencement of the Middle Status, a difficulty is encountered in the unequal endowments of the two hemispheres, which began to be influential upon human affairs after the period of savagery had passed. It may be met, however, by the adoption of equivalents. In the Eastern hemisphere, the domestication of animals, and the Western, the cultivation of maize and plants by irrigation, together with the use of adobe-brick and stone in house building have been selected as sufficient evidence of progress to work a transition out of the Lower and into the Middle Status of barbarism. It leaves, for example, in the Lower Status, the Indian tribes of the United States east of the Missouri River, and such tribes of Europe and Asia as practiced the art of pottery, but were without domestic animals.

V. MIDDLE STATUS OF BARBARISM

It commenced with the domestication of animals in the Eastern hemisphere, and in the Western with cultivation by irrigation and with the use of abode-brick and stone in architecture, as shown. Its termination may be fixed with the invention of the process of smelting iron ore. This places in the Middle Status, for example, the Village Indians of New Mexico, Mexico, Central America and Peru, and such tribes in the Eastern hemisphere as possessed domestic animals but were without a knowledge of iron. The ancient Britons, although familiar with the use of iron, fairly belong in this connection. The vicinity of more advanced continental tribes had advanced the arts of life among them far beyond the state of development of their domestic institutions.¹⁹

VI. UPPER STATUS OF BARBARISM

It commenced with the manufacture of iron, and ended with the invention of a phonetic alphabet, and the use of writing in literary composition. Here civilization begins. This leaves in the Upper Status, for example, the Grecian tribes of the Homeric age, the Italian tribes shortly before the founding of Rome, and the Germanic tribes of the time of Caesar.

VII. STATUS OF CIVILIZATION

It commenced, as stated, with the use of a phonetic alphabet and the production of literary records, and divides into *Ancient* and *Modern*. As an equivalent, hieroglyphical writing upon stone may be admitted.

RECAPITULATION

<i>Periods.</i>	<i>Conditions.</i>
I. <i>Older Period of Savagery,</i>	I. <i>Lower Status of Savagery,</i>
II. <i>Middle Period of Savagery,</i>	II. <i>Middle Status of Savagery,</i>
III. <i>Later Period of Savagery,</i>	III. <i>Upper Status of Savagery,</i>
IV. <i>Older Period of Barbarism,</i>	IV. <i>Lower Status of Barbarism,</i>
V. <i>Middle Period of Barbarism,</i>	V. <i>Middle Status of Barbarism,</i>
VI. <i>Later Period of Barbarism,</i>	VI. <i>Upper Status of Barbarism,</i>

¹⁹ A society's evolutionary stage was gauged by its technology, subsistence pattern, and kin and family structure together. Consequently, although groups such as the ancient Britons had acquired technological achievements

of more advanced societies, such as the use of iron (diagnostic of Upper Barbarism), Morgan believes that the development of their domestic institutions places them squarely in the stage of Middle Barbarism.

VII. *Status of Civilization.*

- I. *Lower Status of Savagery,* *From the Infancy of the Human Race to the commencement of the next Period.*
- II. *Middle Status of Savagery,* *From the acquisition of a fish subsistence and a knowledge of the use of fire, to etc.*
- III. *Upper Status of Savagery,* *From the Invention of the Bow and Arrow, to etc.*
- IV. *Lower Status of Barbarism,* *From the Invention of the Art of Pottery, to etc.*
- V. *Middle Status of Barbarism,* *From the Domestication of animals on the Eastern hemisphere, and in the Western from the cultivation of maize and plants by Irrigation, with the use of adobe-brick and stone, to etc.*
- VI. *Upper Status of Barbarism,* *From the Invention of the process of Smelting Iron Ore, with the use of iron tools, to etc.*
- VII. *Status of Civilization,* *From the Invention of a Phonetic Alphabet, with the use of writing, to the present time.*

Since the use of pottery is less significant than that of domestic animals, of iron, or of a phonetic alphabet, employed to mark the commencement of subsequent ethnical periods, the reasons for its adoption should be stated. The manufacture of pottery presupposes village life, and considerable progress in the simple arts.^b Flint and stone implements are older than pottery, remains of the former having been found in ancient repositories in numerous instances unaccompanied by the latter. A succession of inventions of greater need and adapted to a lower condition must have occurred before the want of pottery would be felt. The commencement of village life, with some degree of control over subsistence, wooden vessels and utensils, finger weaving with filaments of bark, basket making, and the bow and arrow make their appearance before the art of pottery. The Village Indians who were in the Middle Status of barbarism, such as the Zuñians, the Aztecs and the Cholulans, manufactured pottery in large quantities and in many forms of considerable excellence; the partially Village Indians of the United States, who were in the Lower Status of barbarism, such as the Iroquois, the Choc-tas, and the Cherokees, made it in smaller quantities and in a limited number of forms; but the non-horticultural Indians, who were in the Status of savagery, such as the Athapascans, the tribes of California and of the valley of the Columbia, were ignorant of its use.^c In Lub-bock's *Pre-Historic Times*, in Tylor's *Early History of Mankind*, and in Peschel's *Races of Man*, the particulars respecting this art, and the extent of its distribution, have been collected with remarkable breadth of research. It was unknown in Polynesia (with the exception of the Islands of the Tongans and Fijians), in Australia, in California, and in the Hudson's Bay Territory. Mr. Tylor remarks that "the art of weaving was unknown in most of the Islands away from Asia," and that "in most of the South Sea Islands there was no knowledge of pottery."^d The Rev. Lorimer Fison, an English missionary residing in Australia, informed the author in answer to inquiries, that "the Australians had no woven fabrics, no pottery, and

Each of these periods has a distinct culture and exhibits a mode of life more or less special and peculiar to itself. This specialization of ethnical periods renders it possible to treat a particular society according to its condition of relative advancement, and to make it a subject of independent study and discussion. It does not affect the main result that different tribes and nations on the same continent, and even of the same linguistic family, are in different conditions at the same time, since for our purpose the *condition* of each is the material fact, the *time* being immaterial.

were ignorant of the bow and arrow."²⁰ This last fact was also true in general of the Polyne-
sians.²¹ The introduction of the ceramic art
produced a new epoch in human progress in
the direction of an improved living and in-
creased domestic conveniences. While flint and
stone implements—which came in earlier and
required long periods of time to develop all
their uses—gave the canoe, wooden vessels and
utensils, and ultimately timber and plank in
house architecture,^e pottery gave a durable ves-
sel for boiling food, which before that had been
rudely accomplished in baskets coated with
clay, and in ground cavities lined with skin, the
boiling being effected with heated stones.^f

Whether the pottery of the aborigines was
hardened by fire or cured by the simple process
of drying, has been made a question. Prof E. T.
Cox, of Indianapolis, has shown by comparing the
analyses of ancient pottery and hydraulic cements,
"that so far as chemical constituents are
concerned it (the pottery) agrees very well with
the composition of hydraulic stones." He remarks
further, that "all the pottery belonging to the
mound-builders' age, which I have seen, is com-
posed of alluvial clay and sand, or a mixture of
the former with pulverized freshwater shells. A
paste made of such a mixture possesses in a high
degree the properties of hydraulic Puzzuolani and
Portland cement, so that vessels formed of it

hardened without being burned, as is customary
with modern pottery. The fragments of shells
served the purpose of gravel or fragments of stone
as at present used in connection with hydraulic
lime for the manufacture of artificial stone."^g The
composition of Indian pottery in analogy with that
of hydraulic cement suggests the difficulties in
the way of inventing the art, and tends also to ex-
plain the lateness of its introduction in the course
of human experience. Notwithstanding the ingen-
ious suggestion of Prof. Cox, it is probable that
pottery was hardened by artificial heat. In some
cases the fact is directly attested. Thus Adair,
speaking of the Gulf Tribes, remarks that "they
make earthen pots of very different sizes, so as to
contain from two to ten gallons, large pitchers to
carry water, bowls, dishes, platters, basins, and a
prodigious number of other vessels of such anti-
quated forms as would be tedious to describe, and
impossible to name. Their method of glazing
them is, they place them over a large fire of smoky
pitch-pine, which makes them smooth, black and
firm."^h

Another advantage of fixing definite ethnical
periods is the direction of special investigation
to those tribes and nations which afford the best
exemplification of each status, with the view of
making each both standard and illustrative.
Some tribes and families have been left in geo-
graphical isolation to work out the problems of

²⁰ Morgan cites Lubbock and Fison, whose work was an im-
portant influence on his own. John Lubbock (1834–1913),
also known as Lord Avebury, was an amateur ethnologist
and natural historian. A prosperous banker and liberal
member of Parliament, Lubbock also served as president of
the Royal Anthropological Institute and Ethnological Society
of London. His boyhood home was near that of Darwin, and
Lubbock became close friends with Darwin and a staunch
defender of the *Origin of Species*. Lubbock developed an
evolutionary theory of human society based on his study of
European and North American archaeology. He proposed a
natural progression of social evolution from the primitive to
the civilized, and he coined the terms *paleolithic* and
neolithic. He published his ideas in *Prehistoric Times* (1865)
and *The Origin of Civilization* (1870).

Lorimer Fison (1832–1907) was a missionary, journal-
ist, and anthropologist. Morgan's studies of kinship were
based on extensive questionnaires sent to European travel-

ers and missionaries throughout the world. While in Fiji
in 1869, Fison received one of these questionnaires. It
drew his interest to anthropology and he became an ar-
dent follower of Morgan, with whom he corresponded
extensively. Fison's research into Australian aboriginal
kinship systems, based on interviews with European set-
tlers, provided important data for E. B. Tylor, J. G. Frazer,
and Émile Durkheim as well as Morgan.

²¹ Morgan's critics cited his placement of the Polynesians
in Middle Savagery together with Australian Aborigines as
an example of an illogical grouping created by his theory.
Aboriginal society was organized by family-based forag-
ing bands. Polynesian society, though without pottery or
the technological innovations Morgan mentions here,
was composed of highly stratified chiefdoms and was far
more complex.

progress by original mental effort; and have, consequently, retained their arts and institutions pure and homogeneous; while those of other tribes and nations have been adulterated through external influence. Thus, while Africa was and is an ethnical chaos of savagery and barbarism, Australia and Polynesia were in savagery, pure and simple, with the arts and institutions belonging to that condition.²² In like manner, the Indian family of America, unlike any other existing family, exemplified the condition of mankind in three successive ethnical periods. In the undisturbed possession of a great continent, of common descent, and with homogeneous institutions, they illustrated, when discovered, each of these conditions, and especially those of the Lower and of the Middle Status of barbarism, more elaborately and completely than any other portion of mankind. The far northern Indians and some of the coast tribes of North and South America were in the Upper Status of savagery, the partially Village Indians east of the Mississippi were in the Lower Status of barbarism, and the Village Indians of North and South America were in the Middle Status. Such an opportunity to recover full and minute information of the course of human experience and progress in developing their arts and institutions through these successive conditions has not been offered within the historical period. It must be added that it has been indifferently improved. Our greatest deficiencies relate to the last period named.²³

Differences in the culture of the same period in the Eastern and Western hemispheres undoubtedly existed in consequence of the unequal endowments of the continents; but the condition

of society in the corresponding status must have been, in the main, substantially similar.

The ancestors of the Grecian, Roman, and German tribes passed through the stages we have indicated, in the midst of the last of which the light of history fell upon them. Their differentiation from the undistinguishable mass of barbarians did not occur, probably, earlier than the commencement of the Middle Period of barbarism. The experience of these tribes has been lost, with the exception of so much as is represented by the institutions, inventions and discoveries which they had brought with them, and possessed when they first came under historical observation. The Grecian and Latin tribes of the Homeric and Romulian periods afford the highest exemplification of the Upper Status of barbarism.²⁴ Their institutions were likewise pure and homogeneous, and their experience stands directly connected with the final achievement of civilization.

Commencing, then, with the Australians and Polynesians, following with the American Indian tribes, and concluding with the Roman and Grecian who afford the highest exemplifications respectively of the six great stages of human progress, the sum of their united experiences may be supposed fairly to represent that of the human family from the Middle Status of savagery to the end of ancient civilization. Consequently, the Aryan nations will find the type of the condition of their remote ancestors, when in savagery, in that of the Australians and Polynesians; when in the Lower Status of barbarism in that of the partially Village Indians of America; and when in the Middle Status in that of the Village Indians, with which their own experience in

²² Morgan believed that diffusion confused the evolutionary process. Although he believed all groups evolved along the same path, he did not claim all people were equal. Morgan contended that different races evolved at different speeds. Thus, he talks about "ethnical chaos" because, in his view, diffusion meant that some groups were exposed to other cultures that were far beyond the simpler group's evolutionary development or capabilities.

²³ Morgan had a lifelong interest in Native American culture. He studied the linguistics and kinship systems

of Native Americans and as a lawyer was active in the defense of Native American land rights. The recording of Native American culture concerned Morgan, who raises the issue in this paragraph. The fear that these cultures were disappearing motivated Franz Boas and his students to work in Native American societies in the early years of the twentieth century.

²⁴ The Homeric and Romulian periods refers to the times of Homer, the Greek poet of the eighth century B.C.E., and Romulus, mythological founder of Rome in 753 B.C.E.

the Upper Status directly connects. So essentially identical are the arts, institutions and mode of life in the same status upon all the continents, that the archaic form of the principal domestic institutions of the Greeks and Romans must even now be sought in the corresponding institution of the American aborigines, as will be shown in the course of this volume. This fact forms a part of the accumulating evidence tending to show that the principal institutions of mankind have been developed from a few primary germs of thought; and that the course and manner of their development was predetermined, as well as restricted within narrow limits

of divergence, by the natural logic of the human mind and the necessary limitations of its powers.²⁵ Progress has been found to be substantially the same in kind in tribes and nations inhabiting different and even disconnected continents, while in the same status, with deviations from uniformity in particular instances produced by special causes. The argument when extended tends to establish the unity of origin of mankind.²⁶

In studying the condition of tribes and nations in these several ethnical periods we are dealing, substantially, with the ancient history and condition of our own remote ancestors.

²⁵ One consequence of Morgan's belief that human thought was restricted along certain paths is his contention that all humans had the potential to be equal, even though this equality had not been achieved by all groups. This may explain Morgan's interest in the Iroquois and his relatively enlightened attitude toward Native Americans. Do not mistake this attitude for a belief in racial equality, however. Morgan, like most social scientists of his day, believed Caucasians were superior to other ethnic groups. Despite his respect for Native Americans, he did not consider them equal to people of northern European descent (those he calls "Aryans"). You will note that he consistently identifies the Greek, Roman, and Aryan peoples as evolving first and fastest, consigning the great African and Mesoamerican civilizations to earlier stages in his evolutionary scheme. This notion of Aryan superiority was popularized and given a "scientific" veneer by the German biologist Ernst Heinrich Haeckel, most famous for his statement of recapitulation theory, which found political expression during Adolph Hitler's rise to power in Nazi Germany. Applying the theory to ethnic groups, Haeckel argued that the "lower races" were like Caucasians during infancy. This idea is also reflected in Freud and his followers' views of people in primitive societies.

In another section of *Ancient Society* Morgan speaks of the inferior brain size of Native Americans and the "pre-eminent endowment" of the Aryan and Semitic families. This statement is racist, but Morgan was reflecting the scientific opinion of his time, which held that brain size was related to intelligence. Morgan must have been aware of the work of Dr. Samuel G. Morton, who measured the interior capacity of skull samples from different ethnic groups. In his most famous works—*Crania Americana* (1839) and *Crania Aegyptica* (1844)—Morton claimed that whites had bigger brains than any other group, from

which he concluded that they were intellectually and morally superior to those other groups. Morton's data (although not his conclusions) stood unquestioned until 1981 when Harvard biologist Stephen Jay Gould published an analysis of that data. Gould discovered that Morton had committed gross errors in sampling when he chose his selection of skulls for measurement and had incorrectly analyzed his own data. When the sampling errors were corrected and the data reanalyzed, Gould found no significant differences between the skull volumes of different ethnic groups in Morton's collection.

²⁶ Here Morgan outlines his grand vision of cultural evolution; Australians and Polynesians in savagery, various Native American groups in different stages of barbarism depending on their types of subsistence, and the Greeks and Romans as the first examples of civilization. He supported his theory through the use of the nineteenth-century doctrine of the comparative method and psychic unity. The comparative method proposed that contemporary primitive societies were like living fossils; for example, see Morgan's assertion that the principal institutions of the Greeks and Romans can be seen in archaic form in Native American societies. A clear expression of psychic unity is also found in this paragraph. Morgan states that human development is predetermined by the "natural logic of the human mind," which was based on universal "germs of thought." This doctrine of psychic unity justified the uncritical use of the comparative method, which formed the basis for the belief in unilineal theories of cultural evolution. The logic used in this argument is thus circular: Why are there universals of cultural evolution? Because of the psychic unity of humankind. How do we know psychic unity is a valid concept? Because we see common patterns of cultural development.

NOTES

^aEt pueros commendarunt mulierbreque saeculum
Vocibus, et gestu, cum balbe significant,
Imbecillorum esse aequum miserier omnium.

—*De Rerum Natura*, lib. v, 1020.

^bMr. Edwin B. Tylor observes that Goquet "first propounded, in the last century, the notion that the way in which pottery came to be made, was that people daubed such combustible vessels as these with clay to protect them from fire, till they found that clay alone would answer the purpose, and thus the art of pottery came into the world."—*Early History of Mankind*, p. 237. Goquet relates of Capt. Gonneville who visited the southeast coast of South America in 1503, that he found "their household utensils of wood, even their boiling pots, but plastered with a kind of clay, a good finger thick, which prevented the fire from burning them."—*Ib.* 273.

^cPottery has been found in aboriginal mounds in Oregon within a few years past.—Foster's *Pre-Historic Races of the United States*, I, 152. The first vessels of pottery among the Aborigines of the United States seem to have been made in baskets of rushes or willows used as moulds which were burned off after the vessel hardened.—Jones's *Antiquities of Southern Indians*, p. 461. Prof. Rau's article on *Pottery*. *Smithsonian Report*, 1866, p. 352.

^d*Early History of Mankind*, p. 181; *Pre-Historic Times*, pp. 437, 441, 462, 477, 533, 542.

^eLewis and Clarke (1805) found plank in use in houses among the tribes of the Columbia River.—*Travels*, Longman's Ed., 1814, p. 503. Mr. John Keast Lord found "cedar plank chipped from the solid tree with chisels and hatchets made of stone," in Indian houses on Vancouver's Island.—*Naturalist in British Columbia*, I, 169.

^fTylor's *Early History of Mankind*, p. 265, *et seq.*

^g*Geological Survey of Indiana*, 1873, p. 119. He gives the following analysis:

Ancient Pottery, "Bone Bank," Posey Co., Indiana.

Moisture at 212°F,	1.00	Alumina,	5.00
		Peroxide of iron,	5.50
Silica,	36.00	Sulphuric acid,	.20
Carbonate of lime,	25.50	Organic matter (alkalies and loess),	23.60
Carbonate of magnesia,	3.02		100.00

^h*History of the American Indians*, Lond. ed., 1775, p. 424. The Iroquois affirm that in ancient times their forefathers cured their pottery before a fire.

4. Feuerbach: Opposition of the Materialist and Idealist Outlook

KARL MARX (1818-1883) AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS (1820-1895)

THE ILLUSIONS OF GERMAN IDEOLOGY

As we hear from German ideologists, Germany has in the last few years gone through an unparalleled revolution.¹ The decomposition of the

From *The German Ideology* (1845-1846)

¹ Marx and Engels, living in exile in Belgium, collaborated on *The German Ideology* in 1845 and 1846. They sent the manuscript to Germany for publication, but political crises prevented it from appearing. Marx later remarked that it had been abandoned to "the gnawing criticism of the mice." At the time *The German Ideology* was written, Marx and Engels were developing a thoroughly materialist worldview, which separated them from other German philosophers. This work

Hegelian philosophy, which began with Strauss, has developed into a universal ferment into which all the "powers of the past" are swept. In the general chaos mighty empires have arisen only to meet with immediate doom, heroes have emerged momentarily only to be hurled back into obscurity

is the first relatively complete statement of this worldview, although the materialist position it presents is foreshadowed in works like "On the Jewish Question" (1863, orig. 1844) and "The Holy Family" (1875, orig. 1845). The complete version of *The German Ideology* was not available until the 1930s. Thus, while European and American theorists of the early twentieth century were profoundly affected by Marx, they did not have this particular work.