

J.H. Steward: Evolution and Social Types.  
The Evolution of Man. (ed.) Sol Tax.  
Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960. p.170

One view, which is expressed by Huxley (in "Evolution of Life") if I understand him correctly, and by others, is that cultural evolution expresses the distinctive creativity of the human mind.

J.H. Steward. Evolutionary Principles and Social Types. The Evolution of Man. (ed.) Sol Tax. Univ. of Chicago Press. 1960. p.172

Certainly the clearest taxonomy has come from Leslie A. White<sup>23</sup> who proclaims complete allegiance in principle to the nineteenth century writers. White, however, deals not only with the origins of primitive culture but with the great transformation - "revolution," he calls it - that occurred among all societies which were fundamentally affected by plant and animal domestication. He has no place in his scheme for Kroeber's streams of history or for culture areas or local traditions. White's two main structures are: kin-based tribal societies, which controlled little energy; and the internally-differentiated, class-structured, territorial states, which controlled high energy. If we understand him correctly, he postulates that a third major



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~~structural change occurred after the industrial revolution and believes that a fourth is being initiated by the use of nuclear energy.~~

1. White, Leslie A. 1949. The Science of Culture. New York: Farrar, Strauss.
2. --- 1959a. The Evolution of Culture. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.
3. --- 1959b, "The Concept of Evolution in Cultural Anthropology," pp. 106-25 in Evolution and Anthropology: A Centennial Appraisal, Anthropological Society of Washington.

J. H. Steward. Evolutionary Principles and Social Types. The Evolution of Man. (ed.) Sol Tax. Univ. of Chicago Press. 1960. p.172.

The question of the developmental typology of whole cultures never became a major issue in nineteenth century anthropology, as pointed out by Bordes in his paper elsewhere in this volume, except that a small number of scholars offered world schemes of cultural evolution. For example, L.H. Morgan postulated classificatory diagnostics for each of seven stages from savagery to civilization and thereby became vulnerable on many scores. Most of the nineteenth century anthropologists treated the whole primitive world as a single category from which facts were drawn at random to illustrate their points, while the question of social change was left to Engels, Marx and their followers. The great impact that V. Gordon Childe has had upon understand-



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dings of culture-change arises less from theoretical claims than from the fact that he bridged the gap from the primitive to the civilized in the Middle East and was directly concerned with the profound structural changes involved. But Childe knew little about other areas.

1. Morgan, Lewis H. 1877. Ancient Society, or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery, through Barbarism to Civilization. New York: Henry Holt & Co.
2. Childe, V. G. 1951. Social Evolution. London and New York: H. Schuman.

J.H. Steward. Evolutionary Principles and Social Types. The Evolution of Man. (ed.) Sol Tax. Univ. of Chicago Press. 1960. p.173

Limited and detailed comparison, I believe, characterize the present trend. It grows out of the influence of Franz Boas, who introduced unrelenting empiricism and field research into cultural studies. In its extreme of "cultural relativism," Boas' influence led to the denial of evolutionary categories and causal relationships. It also led to re-examination of earlier evolutionary claims. Perhaps today, proceeding from the particular to the general, we can arrive at evolutionary principles that fill the bill better than those offered in the past.

J.H. Steward. Evolutionary Principles and Social Types. The Evolution of Man. (ed.) Sol Tax. Univ. of Chicago Press. 1960. p.173/4

In American research, following Boas' influence several decades ago, the culture area became the basic taxonomic category. Defined in terms of distinctive element-content and unique integration, the so-called "pattern" of each area was sometimes conceived more stylistically than structurally, as in Ruth Benedict's Patterns of Culture<sup>1</sup>. While no one, of course, claimed that these area patterns were god-given, they were treated as if they were part of an original creation. Little interest was taken in their origins, except to trace the diffusion of their elements. When the concept of cultural personality entered social science, the normative aspects of patterns became emphasized, and interest



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centered on how the distinctive cultural content  
athe psychological patterning of individual behavior  
constituted mutually-reinforcing factors that tended  
to resist change of culture patterns. Explanations  
of origins and transformations were avoided.

1. Benedict, Ruth. 1934. Patterns of Culture.  
Boston: Houghton Mufflin.

J.H. Steward. Evolutionary Principles and Social  
Types. The Evolution of Man. (ed.)  
Sol Tax. Univ. of Chicago Press.  
1960. p.174

In prehistoric archaeology, this trend has brought a  
shift from a predominating concern with implement  
typology to settlement pattern in relationship to  
environment, for example, Braidwood (in this volume),  
Beardsley et al.<sup>1</sup>, Willey<sup>2</sup> and Steward<sup>3</sup>. The  
universality of stages postulated by Braidwood and by  
Beardsley et al. is certainly not confirmed, and I  
question on ethnographic grounds whether there has  
ever been a "free wandering" stage. Whether this  
approach will fill the requirements of evolution  
is less important than the new problems which orient  
it. While diffusion is amply evident in the distri-  
bution of types and stylizations of early implements,  
the nature of human organizations which use these



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implements in the food quest is now commanding attention.

1. Beardsley, Richard K. et al. 1956 "Functional and Evolutionary Implications of Community Patterning" in Seminars in Archaeology: 1955. (Memoir No. 11, Society for American Archaeology.)
2. Willey, Gordon R. 1953. Settlement Patterns in the Viru Valley. (Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 155)
3. Steward, J.H. 1937. "Ecological Aspects of Southwestern Society," Anthrop. XXXII, 87-104.

J.H. Steward. Evolutionary Principles and Social Types. The Evolution of Man. (ed.) Sol Tax. Univ. of Chicago Press. 1960. p.176

It is noteworthy that most attempts to take a large view of cultural evolution focus upon change in structure, principles, and processes at that crucial point when internal specialization and social classes begin to supersede kinship groups, that is, when productive surplus and means of controlling it become central considerations. This is as true of Goldman's limited evolutionary sequence in Polynesia as of Willey's (Centennial Paper) shift of evolutionary criteria from technological to social features in the High civilizations of America and White's world stages.

J.H. Steward. Evolutionary Principles and Social Types. The Evolution of Man. (ed.) Sol Tax. Univ. of Chicago Press. 1960. p.180.

The transformation from primitive to civilized communities entails some conflict between the egalitarian principles of the former and the differentiation of status and role of the latter. This conflict has long been noted, more in sociological than in anthropological literature, and it is reflected in the dichotomy expressed by such pairs as gemeinschaft and gesellschaft, societas and civitas, and folk and urban. The conflict does not mean that societies cease to be structured along lines of sex, kinship, age, and associations. Instead, the earlier structures are modified and adapted to the functions of the newer and larger structure. The family and household surrender certain functions to the community, the community becomes integrated within the state, and so on, as a



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~~series of internal sublevels within higher levels of cultural integration. --Such levels are merely constructs for analyzing particular societies and histories. They do not represent cross-cultural abstractions or evolutionary stages, although they may be employed for this purpose.~~

The most profound transformation was that which followed the agricultural revolution. Some of the very general effects of this revolution are clear. There was an agricultural surplus which supported non-food-producers, dense and stable populations, class stratification, and political, religious, or military institutions that controlled the state.

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With reference to processes, cultural structures may then be viewed as culminations of predominant processes rather than as static, formal structures. This does not obviate the necessity of some kind of classification, however, for processes can only be recognized through their concrete manifestations at particular moments.



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