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CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF SOME NAVAHO LINGUISTIC CATEGORIES

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Some years ago,¹ in an article called *The status of linguistics as a science* (Lg. 5.207-14 [1929]), Edward Sapir made an interesting statement describing language in part as 'a guide to "social reality"'. The statement goes on to say (209):

Though language is not ordinarily thought of as of essential interest to the students of social science, it powerfully conditions all our thinking about social problems and processes. Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.

One of Sapir's students, Benjamin L. Whorf, followed this lead in a series of brilliant papers, recently re-issued in a pamphlet published by the Foreign Service Institute of the Department of State under the title *Four articles on metalinguistics*. In the longest and most important of these, *The relation of habitual thought and behavior to language*, Whorf compares the language patterns of Hopi, an Indian tongue spoken in Arizona, with those of modern European languages, mainly English, French, and German.² His purpose is stated as follows (Sapir memorial volume 78):

The portion of the whole investigation here to be reported may be summed up in two questions: (1) Are our own concepts of "time," "space," and "matter" given in substantially the same form by experience to all men, or are they in part conditioned by the structure of particular languages? (2) Are there traceable affinities between (a) cultural and behavioral norms and (b) large-scale linguistic patterns?

Incidentally, and to avoid possible misunderstanding, Whorf explicitly denies (ibid.) 'that there is anything so definite as "a correlation" between culture and language, and especially between ethnological rubrics such as "agricultural," "hunting," etc., and linguistic ones like "inflected," "synthetic," or "isolating."'

We need not summarize Whorf's discussion of the problems he sets, but I should like to quote from his conclusions (92-3):

Concepts of "time" and "matter" are not given in substantially the same form by experience to all men but depend on the nature of the language or languages through the use of

¹ This paper was presented as a forum lecture at the Linguistic Institute in Ann Arbor, Michigan, 20 July 1950.

² Originally published in the Sapir memorial volume, ed. by Leslie Spier: *Language, culture, and personality* 75-93 (Menasha, Wis., 1941).

which they have been developed. They do not depend so much upon *any one system* (e.g., tense, or nouns) within the grammar as upon the ways of analyzing and reporting experience which have become fixed in the language as integrated "fashions of speaking" and which cut across the typical grammatical classifications, so that such a "fashion" may include lexical, morphological, syntactic, and otherwise systemically diverse means coordinated in a certain frame of consistency. ...

As for our second question ... There are connections but not correlations or diagnostic correspondences between cultural norms and linguistic patterns. Although it would be impossible to infer the existence of Crier Chiefs from the lack of tenses in Hopi, or vice versa, there is a relation between a language and the rest of the culture of the society which uses it.

It seems likely that Whorf is understating the significance of the 'connections' he elucidates between language and other aspects of culture. It is altogether probable that there may be 'diagnostic correspondences', not in the specific fashion of Whorf's example, but in a more abstract or remote sense. If a study of a language, a set of patterns of speaking, uncovers a certain framework for reality characteristic of its speakers, and if a study of non-linguistic cultural patterns lays bare similar fundamental concepts, there is more than just a non-diagnostic connection between the several aspects of a culture. But this is a problem as yet uninvestigated; Whorf's analysis does no more than suggest certain lines of research.

My purpose in this paper is to apply Whorf's technique of analysis to a quite different culture, that of the Navaho Indians of New Mexico and Arizona. In passing, it is not without interest that the Navaho, though they lived as neighbors of the Hopi for more than 400 years and have taken over many of the overt patterns of Hopi culture,¹ are nevertheless very different from them in their basic cultural assumptions and outlook. The world of social reality characteristic of the Navaho, and reflected in their language, is no more like that of the Hopi than it is like our own.

Before we investigate the Navaho fashions of speech germane to our purpose, it is necessary to outline briefly the major structural characteristics of the Navaho language, and in particular of the verb.² Navaho morphological constructions, however they may be subdivided, are fundamentally much alike in structure. Each consists of a theme—composed of a stem or set of stems with or without a thematic prefix—which may occur either alone or with one or more non-thematic prefixes. Many constructions also include one or more proclitics and enclitics, semi-independent elements which usually have syntactic function.

Three major form classes may be recognized: particles, nouns, and verbs. These differ mainly in the amount and kind of grammatical inflection they undergo. Particles—e.g. pronouns, numerals, modifiers, conjunctions—are not inflected, though they often take one or more proclitics or enclitics. Nouns occur as free themes (i.e. in absolute constructions), preceded by a possessive pronoun prefix (i.e. in possessive constructions), and in compounds or complex phrase-like constructions which function as nouns. A small number of noun themes,

³ Details will be found in my papers on the Apachean verb, IJAL 11.193-203 (1945); 12.1-13, 51-9 (1946); 14.247-59 (1948); 15.12-22 (1949).

together with all independent postpositions, appear only in possessive constructions or in compounds; these have no free forms. Another but very small set of themes appears both as nouns and as verbs: thus, the theme *naíòh* in absolute and possessive noun constructions has the meaning 'tobacco' and, in verb constructions, the meaning 'to smoke [a cigar or cigarette]'.⁴

Verb themes never occur as free forms and are usually provided with from three to seven or more distinctive stems, with or without a thematic prefix. Non-thematic verb prefixes are of two kinds, derivational and paradigmatic. The former are mainly adverbial in function, while the latter denote concepts of aspect, mode, tense, number, and the pronouns for the subject, object, and indirect object.

Some verb themes can be made into verb constructions solely by the addition of one or more appropriate paradigmatic prefixes to one of its stem forms. Most verb themes, however, require one or another set of derivational prefixes in addition to the appropriate paradigmatic elements. Such derivations (i.e. verb themes plus derivational prefixes) are called verb bases. Many themes appear in several bases and some, like the theme 'one round object moves', in more than a hundred bases.⁵ The term 'verb base' applies, however, to any verb segment to which paradigmatic prefixes may be added to form a free verb construction, whether this consists of a theme alone or of a theme plus derivational prefixes.

Verb bases fall into two major categories, neuter and active. Neuter bases are conjugated for person and number in only one paradigm (the stem is invariable throughout the paradigm), but active bases have seven required paradigms: imperfective, perfective, progressive, future, iterative, customary, and optative. Active bases may have as many as five distinctive stems (e.g. one each for imperfective, perfective, progressive and future, iterative and customary, and optative), but some have fewer (i.e. where a single stem appears in more than one paradigm), and, in a few instances, one stem may occur in all seven paradigms.

Verb bases built on the same theme occasionally employ different though related sets of stems. Compare, for example, the bases *di-...-bá'h*, *-bá'?*, *-bàh* 'begin to go on a raid' and *nà-...-bá'h*, *-bà'?*, *-bàh*, *-bá'h* 'go about raiding'. Contrasts such as these testify that particular stem configurations denote specific aspects, cutting across the division into the categories listed above. Thus *di-...-bá'h*, *-bá'?*, *-bàh* is a base defining momentaneous action as contrasted with *nà-...-bá'h*, *-bà'?*, *-bàh*, *-bá'h*, which defines continuative action. The numerous verb bases employing the theme 'a round object moves' are divided into no less than seven aspectual categories, each with a distinctive set of stems.⁶

Turning our attention now to the meanings of these verbal categories, we find that neuter verbs in general report states or conditions. Neuter verbs contain

⁴ For further details, see The structure of the noun in the Apachean languages, Actes du 28^e Congrès international des Américanistes 174 (Paris, 1948).

⁵ For illustrations, see IJAL 15.17-21.

⁶ IJAL 15.13-7.

no morpheme denoting tense, mode, or aspect, but simply report a state of being (an absence of movement or action) like 'being at rest', 'standing', or 'sitting'. Some neuter verbs define qualities: to be 'blue', 'white', 'thin', 'fat', or 'tall'.

Active verbs, on the other hand, report events, movements, and actions. These are reported, not necessarily in relation to tense categories, but mainly in respect to aspect and mode. In an imperfective active verb, the event is moving toward fulfillment; the third person imperfective *nìndà'h*, for example, means 'he moves to a sitting position'. Note that the emphasis lies not on the present tense (unavoidable in the English translation) but on the uncompleted nature of the movement. The same verb in the third person perfective, *nìndá*, means 'he has moved to a sitting position', that is, the movement to a sitting position has been completed or achieved. Both these expressions can be given tense by adding appropriate but optional enclitics: *nìndà'h-dò* (-*dò*, future tense enclitic) 'he will be moving to a sitting position' and *nìndá-dò* 'he will have moved to a sitting position'. But although such tense enclitics as -*dò* may or may not be used, the active verb cannot avoid aspectival or modal denotation, for it must be expressed in one or another of the seven required paradigms.

In the progressive aspect—e.g. *nò-dà-l* 'he goes along moving to a sitting position'—events are reported in continuous process without reference to a beginning or end. A better example is found in *yò-à-l*, roughly 'he is carrying a round object', which, upon analysis, turns out to mean 'he moves along handling a round object'. Again note the emphasis on the state rather than the time of the action; compare *yò-à-l-nì*? (-*nì*?, past tense enclitic) 'he was moving along handling a round object'.

Iterative forms of the active verb have clearly aspectival denotation; the third person iterative of 'one moves to a sitting position' (the verb base cited above) is *nìndà'h* 'he moves to a sitting position repeatedly'. Emphasis here lies solely on the repetition of the event, a repetition which has no end. The customary, a paradigm made up by combining the imperfective prefix complex with the iterative stem, while it also emphasizes repetition, carries the further denotation that such repetition is a matter of habit or custom. Such forms are particularly numerous in reports of customs, habitual modes of group behavior, where, for example, the Navaho will say (NT 404)⁷ *nà-dq?* ('corn') *dèiyìš* ('they customarily gather it') *à-dó* ('and') *dèilà?* ('they customarily husk it').

The optative is purely a modal category. For example (NT 20), Coyote, because the weather is hot, says: *kòs* ('clouds') *hólè?* ('let there be!'), *hò-dóžòl* ('let it sprinkle [with rain]!'); and when the water from the rain is high, *šìldó-è-l* ('let [the water] begin to float with me!').

Only the future paradigm expresses tense in Navaho (e.g. *nìdò-dà-l* 'he will move to a sitting position'), and even here there is some evidence, too tentative to introduce in this paper, that the future, so-called, is better interpreted as an inceptive progressive—that is, as an aspect rather than a tense category.

While at first sight the Navaho division of verb bases into neuters and actives

⁷ Edward Sapir and Harry Hoijer, *Navaho texts* (Iowa City, 1942). The number in parentheses refers to the page on which the citation appears.

appears to represent a sharp dichotomy, further analysis reveals both a structural and a semantic relation between them. Neuter verb bases, though never conjugated in more than one paradigm, are not all conjugated in the same paradigm. There are, in fact, five neuter paradigms, each with its own meaning, as follows:

(1) The *s*-neuter, structurally identical with the *s*-perfective of active verb bases, which reports a position at a point in space or time, (an object) in a given position. Thus, *ʒił* ('mountain') *siʔq̄* ('a round solid object lies at rest') = 'a mountain lies at rest'.

(2) The *n*-neuter, structurally identical with the *n*-perfective of active verb bases, which reports a position extending in a line from one point to another. Thus, *ʒił* ('mountain') *niʔq̄* ('round solid objects lie in a row') = 'a range of mountains lies extending from one point to another'.

(3) The *y*-neuter, structurally identical with the *y*-perfective of active verb bases, which reports a position extending indefinitely from a fixed point. Thus, *cé* ('rock, stone') *yíʔá* ('a rigid object has extension from a fixed point') = 'a [slender pinnacle of] stone extends [upward]'. This phrase is also a noun, referring to the slender, phallus-like rocks so common in the Navaho country.

(4) The imperfective neuter, structurally identical with the imperfective of active verb bases, which reports qualities similar to those denoted by adjectives in English. Thus, *hiǵdi* 'it is white'.

(5) The progressive neuter, structurally identical with the progressive of active verb bases. We find only one example: *yóʔǵ* 'he has him in view, he sees him'.

These several forms of the neuter category strongly suggest that the neuter represents semantically a phase of events characterized by the withdrawal of motion: the state of being that remains when movement of a particular kind ends.

To summarize this phase of our investigation, it would appear that Navaho verb categories center very largely about the reporting of events, or better, 'eventings'. These eventings are divided into neuters, eventings solidified, as it were, into states of being by virtue of the withdrawal of motion, and actives, eventings in motion. The latter are further subdivided into imperfectives, eventings in process of completion; perfectives, eventings completed; progressives, eventings moving along; and iteratives, eventings repeated over and over again. The customary reports eventings repeated by force of habit or custom; the optative, a desire that an eventing take place; and the future, the expectation that an eventing will occur.

But this is not all. A careful analysis of the meanings of Navaho verb bases, neuter and active, reveals that eventings themselves are conceived, not abstractly for the most part, but very concretely in terms of the movements of corporeal bodies, or of entities metaphorically linked with corporeal bodies. Movement itself is reported in painstaking detail, even to the extent of classifying as semantically different the movements of one, two, or several bodies, and sometimes distinguishing as well between movements of bodies differentiated by their shape and distribution in space.

To illustrate, there are four basic and different verb themes which report the unspecified movement of human beings, other animate beings, and certain natural objects classed as animate. Of these, *-há·h* means 'one (member of this class) moves', *-ʔá·š* means 'two or a few move', *-ká·h* means 'several move', and *-zé·h* means 'a group moves en masse'. If movement is more precisely specified, still other themes must be employed: *-łó·š* 'move on all fours, trot', *-γè·d* 'move at a run', *-lá·h* 'move by flying', *-ʔè·l* 'move by floating on water', *-bá·s* 'move by rolling [as a hoop or wheel]'. In the five themes last cited, the number moving is not specified; the theme is the same for one, two, or more.

An especially vivid example of the Navaho pattern of reporting movement in terms of an object or objects moving is revealed by a literal analysis of the meaning 'he picks something up' or 'he chooses or selects something'. Twelve verbs express this meaning. All have the same prefix complex: *náidì·-* 'third person causes it [to move] upward', but each has a different theme, depending on the nature of the referent of 'it'. If 'it' refers to a round solid object, the theme (in its imperfective form) is *-ʔá·h*; thus, *náidì·ʔá·h* 'third person causes a round solid object to move upward'. Long slender objects require the theme *-tì·h*, one animate object the theme *-tè·h*, a set of objects the theme *-ní·l*, a rigid container with contents the theme *-ká·h*, a fabric-like object the theme *-cò·s*, a bulky object the theme *-zò·d*, a set of parallel objects the theme *-žó·š*, an unspecified mass the theme *-žá·h*, a wool-like mass the theme *-žò·l*, a rope-like object the theme *-lé*, and a mud-like mass the theme *-łè·h*.⁸

As I have indicated previously, the meaning of a verb base may be denoted by a theme alone or by a theme with one or more derivational prefixes. Prefixes and prefix combinations, like the themes we have just cited, also refer in large part to movement. To illustrate, let us cite a few of the more than one hundred verb bases formed on the theme *-há·h* 'one animate object moves [in an unspecified fashion]'. I quote only the prefix complexes plus the meanings of the completed verb bases: *0à·di·-*...^{8a} 'one moves away from, outwalks', *0à·na·-*... 'one comes back to', *0à·-*... 'one comes or goes to', *0à·ná·-*... 'one again comes or goes to', *ʔa·-*... 'one moves away, out of sight', *ʔa·hé·-*... 'one moves in a circle back to the starting point', *dàh·di·-*... 'one starts off on a journey', *tá·di·-*... 'one moves to one place after another', *tá·h·-*... 'one moves into the water', *na·-*... 'one moves across', *ha·-*... 'one moves out of an enclosed space', *há·di·-*... 'one starts off to fetch', *yáh·ʔa·-*... 'one goes inside [e.g. a house]', *0·čá·-*... 'one moves away from', *0·čá·h·ʔa·-*... 'one moves in between', *čì·-*... 'one moves outside [e.g. of a house]'.⁹

But this high degree of specificity in the reporting of movement is not confined in Navaho to verbs having particular reference to motion of one sort or another. On the contrary, it permeates the Navaho lexicon in the sense that many verbs, not at first sight expressive of movement, prove to be so on more detailed analysis. For example, the theme *-há·h* 'one animate object moves [in an unspecified fashion]' is easily recognized in a large number of bases, the meanings of which appear to be far distant from any concept of movement. The fol-

⁸ IJAL 11.13-23.

^{8a} *0* represents any pronominal prefix.

⁹ See also IJAL 15.12-22, esp. 18-21.

lowing examples are typical: *Oà-nà-...-há* 'be busy, preoccupied', literally 'one moves continuously about with reference to it'; *ʔé-h-...-há-h* 'one dresses', lit. 'one moves into clothing'; *ho-...-há-h* 'a ceremony begins', lit. 'a happening moves'; *nà-...-há* 'one lives', lit. 'one moves about here and there'; *ʔání-nà-...-há* 'one is young', lit. 'one moves about newly'; *yìsdá-...-há-h* 'one is rescued, saved', lit. 'one moves to safety'.

Similar examples follow, based on the theme *-ʔà-h* 'a round object moves': *O-dá-h-...-ʔà-h* 'greet someone with a message', lit. 'move a round solid object to meet someone'; *nà-ho-...-ʔà* 'make plans', lit. 'move happenings about here and there'; *Oè-nì-ho-...-ʔà-h* 'decide upon, make a rule about', lit. 'move a rule down to rest by means of [it]'; *ha-di-...-ʔà-h* 'sing', lit. 'move words out of an enclosed space'; *é-ho-...-ʔà-h* 'make [it] known', lit. 'move an event outside'.

A third Navaho speech pattern further emphasizes movement; this is the technique of reporting substantive concepts in terms of some characteristic action or movement of an object or set of objects. Structurally, this means that finite verb forms or larger expressions containing finite verb forms may have two grammatical functions—nominal and verbal.¹⁰ Thus, *hànt-bá-z* 'full moon' or 'a hoop-like object has rolled out' (act. pf.), *ʔadìldìl* 'stave game' or 'several objects move repeatedly through space' (act. ipf.), *nà-lcò-s* 'a paper, letter' or 'a fabric-like object is moved about' (pass. ipf.), *cìnà-bà-s* 'wagon' or 'wood rolls about hoop-like' (*cìn* 'wood' + *nà-bà-s* 'it rolls about hoop-like', act. prog.).

Neuter verb bases parallel those in the active category, for states or conditions, like eventings, are often reported only in reference to specified classes of objects. For each of the twelve active verb themes earlier cited in translating 'he picks it up' we have a corresponding neuter theme which denotes the same class of object at rest. Thus, *sìʔá* 'a round solid object is at rest', *sìtá* 'a long slender object is at rest', *sìtì* 'an animate object lies', *sìnil* 'a set of objects lie', *sìká* 'a rigid container with contents is at rest', *sìlcò-z* 'a fabric-like object is at rest', *sìžò-d* 'a bulky object is at rest', *sìžò-ž* 'a set of parallel objects is at rest', *sìžà* 'an unspecified mass is at rest', *sìžò-l* 'a wool-like mass is at rest', *sìlá* 'a rope-like object is at rest', and *sìłé?* 'a mud-like mass is at rest'.

To summarize: in three broad speech patterns, illustrated by the conjugation of active verbs, the reporting of actions and events, and the framing of substantive concepts, Navaho emphasizes movement and specifies the nature, direction, and status of such movement in considerable detail. Even the neuter category is relatable to the dominant conception of a universe in motion; for, just as someone is reported to have described architecture as frozen music, so the Navaho define position as a resultant of the withdrawal of motion.

Parallels to this semantic theme may be found in almost every aspect of Navaho culture taken as a whole. Even today the Navaho are fundamentally a wandering, nomadic folk, following their flocks from one pasturage to another. Myths and legends reflect this emphasis most markedly, for both gods and culture heroes move restlessly from one holy place to the next, seeking by their motion to perfect and repair the dynamic flux which is the universe. As illustration, the reader may consult any of the tales recorded in Navaho Texts, especially per-

¹⁰ See the paper cited in fn. 4, pp. 183-4.

haps that entitled *The Origin of Horses*, the tale of Turquoise Boy as he seeks out a mode of transport for man (NT 108–25).

To turn now to another aspect of verb structure: what is the precise relationship, in semantic terms, between the subjects and goals of a Navaho verb on the one hand and the verb base on the other? We have already noted that the finite verb form, active and neuter, is a syntactic construction in microcosm, for inevitably included in such forms are anaphoric pronouns referring to words or phrases outside the verb which define its subject, object, and indirect object.

In neuter intransitive verbs the subject pronoun prefix refers to an object which (a) belongs to the class of objects defined by the verb theme and (b) is characterized by the state or condition denoted by the verb base. An example: from *-tł* 'one animate object lies' we may form *sítł* 'I lie', *sínítł* 'you lie', and *sítł* 'he lies'. *si-* is a prefix used with neuters, and the pronoun prefixes (*i-* first person, *n-* second person, and zero third person) refer to single beings characterized by the condition of lying.

In neuter transitives, however, the subject pronoun prefix denotes, not a member of the class defined by the verb theme, but some thing or being outside this class. It is the direct-object prefix that refers to an object in the class defined by the verb theme and characterized by the state or condition denoted by the verb base. Furthermore, the subject pronoun prefix refers to an agency conceived as responsible for the object denoted by the goal pronoun. Thus, if we transitivize the forms quoted above, and add to them respectively the goal pronouns *n-* second person, *ši-* first person, and *yi-* third person, we obtain: *ñsítł* 'I have you lying', *šisínítł* 'you have me lying', and *yisítł* (< *yi-si-l-tł*) 'he has him lying'.

A more concrete illustration of this contrast comes from the following two phrases: *łé'ží sítł* 'the Night Way [a ceremony] is in progress' (*łé'ží* 'Night Way' plus *sítł* 'a round solid object is in position'; ceremonials are included in the category of round solid objects) and *łé'ží yisítł* 'he is responsible for [this] performance of the Night Way' (*yisítł* < *yi-si-l-tł*). In the first phrase *łé'ží* is the subject of the verb *sítł*, but in the second it is the goal of *yisítł*, and the subject, an agency referred to by the third-person subject prefix, is conceived in a state of responsibility for the ceremony.

In active intransitive verbs, the subject pronoun prefix refers to an object which (a) belongs to the class of objects defined by the verb theme and (b) participates as actor in the action denoted by the verb base. Note this significant detail: that the object denoted by the subject pronoun does not perform the action; it is, rather, included in the action of a set of objects to which it belongs. An example: from the base *ni-...-tèh* 'one animate object moves to a lying position (i.e. lies down)', we may form the imperfectives *nìštèh* 'I lie down', *nítèh* 'you lie down', and *nìtèh* 'he lies down'. *ni-* is a derivational prefix (the prefix for the imperfective is zero), and the subject pronouns (*š-* first person, high tone second person, and zero third person) refer to actors included by virtue of their animateness in the meaning of the verb base.

Active transitive verbs introduce the notion of agency. Here the subject pronoun prefix refers to an agent who initiates the action denoted by the verb base in reference to a specified object, symbolized by the goal pronoun, included

in the class of objects defined by the verb theme. An example: from the causative base *di-...-l-tè·h* 'begin to cause an animate object to move (i.e. begin to carry an animate object)', we may form the following imperfectives: *ndištè·h* (< *nì-di-š-l-tè·h*) 'I begin to carry you', *šidiltè·h* 'you begin to carry me', and *yidiiltè·h* 'he begins to carry him'. *di-* is a derivational prefix 'begin to ...' and *l-* functions as a causative prefix. The subject pronouns (*š-* first person, high tone second person, and zero third person) denote agents who initiate the movement of the objects referred to by the goal pronouns (*nì-* second person, *ši-* first person, and *yì-* third person). These objects, being animate, are of course included in the meaning of the verb theme, 'an animate object moves'.

This analysis of the relation of subject to verb and verb to goal illustrates a second basic theme of Navaho culture, one that is clearly related to the Navaho division of objective reality into a number of sharply defined object classes in motion or at rest. Both movement and position, in terms of Navaho semantic and grammatical categories, are inherent in and specific to an object class; they are not extraneously produced by an actor, nor imposed as a force upon a goal. Accordingly, in Navaho intransitive verbs, the subject is not reported as performing an action, but as a person or other entity associated with an action or position. The third-person neuter verb *sidd*, roughly 'he sits', means literally that the entity symbolized by the third-person subject pronoun, by virtue of its membership in the object class 'one animate being' assumes the kind of sitting position characteristic of this class. Similarly, in the third-person active intransitive verb *nd·γd*, roughly 'he wanders about', the third person referred to by the subject pronoun, again by reason of its membership in the object class 'one animate being', participates in the action 'wander about' as specified for this class. In forms like these, the events are reported as if object-class positions and actions existed independently and the so-called 'actors' merely hitched a ride on them.

But if men and other beings may not, in the Navaho world of reality, produce or perform actions, they can and do relate themselves as agents to object classes in position or in motion. In a construction previously cited, *šé·ʔʒi yis·d* 'he is responsible for [this] performance of the Night Way', the agency referred to by the subject pronoun sponsors a performance of the Night Way as a specific instance of a round solid object in position. He does not perform it nor cause others to do so; he simply, as it were, ties a particular performance of the Night Way to a round object position already in the universe. Similarly, in active transitive verb expressions, as in *cé yidi·d·h*, roughly 'he begins to carry a stone' the agency referred to by the subject pronoun of *yidi·d·h* makes *cé* 'stone' a particular member of the round object class in this kind of motion. Again the agency does not of itself produce the motion, nor act upon the goal; it simply links a given round object with a movement of round objects already extant.

In conclusion, it is of interest to note that this relationship of subject, action, and goal, and its implications for the world view of the Navaho, are strikingly paralleled by a conclusion drawn by Kluckhohn, mainly from non-linguistic data. Kluckhohn abstracts from his studies of Navaho culture a number of basic cultural premises, covert assumptions or postulates underlying Navaho be-

havior. One of these postulates is: 'Nature is more powerful than man'; it is amplified by Kluckhohn in the following words:¹¹

Navahos accept nature and adapt themselves to her demands as best they can, but they are not utterly passive, not completely the pawns of nature. They do a great many things that are designed to control nature physically and to repair damage caused by the elements. But they do not even hope to master nature. For the most part The People [i.e. the Navaho] try to influence her with songs and rituals, but they feel that the forces of nature, rather than anything that man does, determine success or failure ...

Many white people have the opposite view; namely, that nature is a malignant force with useful aspects that must be harnessed, and useless, harmful ones that must be shorn of their power. ... Their premise is that nature will destroy them unless they prevent it; the Navahos' is that nature will take care of them if they behave as they should and do as she directs.

Again we note a cultural premise which may be illustrated in both the language and the non-linguistic aspects of culture. It is my suggestion that this phenomenon connotes a functional interrelationship between socially patterned habits of speaking and thinking and other socially patterned habits, of the utmost importance for the student of language who proposes to do more than merely describe linguistic structures. Contrastive analyses of habits of speaking yield much understanding of many wholly subconscious aspects of human behavior, undetectable by any other means. But more important, it is by reason of such correlations between language and non-linguistic culture that we shall come to understand how and why linguistic structures change, and to understand, moreover, the still unexplained relationships between overt behavior and the numerous symbolic systems that men set up as a screen between themselves and the objective universe in which they live.

¹¹ Clyde Kluckhohn and Dorothea Leighton, *The Navaho* 227-8 (Cambridge, Mass., 1946).