Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis

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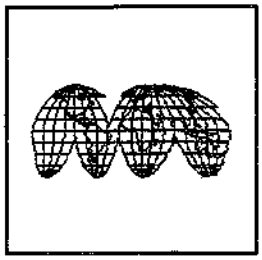
Colloquium Presentation
October 12, 1992



Learning, sharing, and working with the diverse languages in communicating and using knowledge.

The Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis combines teaching, research, and related activities where faculty, visiting scholars, and students have opportunities to participate in productive scholarship. The term "workshop" is used to emphasize a conviction that research skills are best acquired where students and faculty, working as apprentices and journeymen, participate in the organization and conduct of research.

Professor Piotr Chmielewski, Institute of Sociology, Warsaw University, Poland; and Visiting Research Associate at the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, will be the ***speaker for*** *the Workshop Colloquium on Monday, October 12, 1992.* His presentation is entitled "Is There an Evolution of Language?" An abstract of Ms paper is provided below.

> In this paper, I discuss the problem of the evolution of language in human societies. In the area of linguistics and other branches of anthropology, there is a controversy on whether languages evolve. I must confess right at the beginning that in that controversy I take the side of those who argue in support of the evolution of language. If we were able to discuss the problem of the evolution of culture, we should be able to discuss the evolution of language.
>
> There is a myriad of languages in this world. Every language presents a unique configuration of its elements. That configuration is the result of the history of a given people. It means that for the language users their language is an appropriate cultural tool. Every language serves its linguistic community to its best. However, a given culture is not the only context of a given language, there is also the environment of other cultures, and we can say that the problem of adaptation is strictly evolutionary. To understand the evolutionary role of language, one should approach it not so much as a system *sui generis* but as a human attribute; as a medium of communication and an important component of human thought.

A copy of Ms paper is available by calling the above telephone number. Colloquium sessions begin at 12 noon and adjourn promptly at 1:30 p.m. You are welcome to bring your lunch. Coffee is provided free of charge, and soft drinks are available. We hope you will be able to join us!

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PRELIMINARY, PARTIAL DRAFT; DO NOT QUOTE

IS THERE AN EVOLUTION OF LANGUAGE?

by

Piotr Chmielewski
Institute of Sociology
University of Warsaw
Warsaw, Poland
and
Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

Paper prepared for presentation at a colloquium held at the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, October 12, 1992.

Workshop in Political Theory & Policy Analysis, Indiana University, 513 North Park, Bloomington, Indiana 47405-3186 (Tel. 812 855-0441 / FAX 812 855-3150)

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In this paper, I discuss the problem of the evolution of language in human societies. In the area of linguistics and other branches of anthropology, there is a controversy on whether languages evolve. Below I present some major points of this controversy. I must confess right at the beginning that in this controversy I take the side of those who argue in support of the evolution of language.

What does the evolution of language mean? To define this phenomenon is not an easy task. First, the concept of evolution is a suggestive and ambiguous one. The term "evolution" means different things for different people (suffice is to look up the entry "evolution" in the Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). In such a delicate matter as language (and its evolution), a researcher is obliged to conceptual precision. He should explain the meaning of terms to avoid conceptual and linguistic traps.

An ambiguity built in the concept of evolution results, to a great extent, from its history. I do not intend to write a history of the idea of evolution. I only want to present some major meanings of the term and to remind that different meanings of evolution have appeared in different cultural and historical contexts.

Not to go too far into the past of social thought, I will start from Dante Alighieri who made the evolution of languages the subject of his study. Early in the fourteenth century, this famous Italian master of letters and language wrote that since man's:

> . . . language cannot be lasting or constant, but must vary according to times and places as do other human things such as manners and customs, I do not think there should be any doubt that language varies with time, but rather that this should be retained as certain; for if we examine our other works, we see much more discrepancy between ourselves and our ancient fellow-citizens than between ourselves and our distant contemporaries. (...). If therefore the language of one people varies, as we have said, gradually over the years, and can in no way remain stabilised, it must of necessity vary when peoples live separated and far from one another, just as manners and customs vary, which are not regularised by nature or by agreement, but simply by people's tastes and local conformity (A. Dante, 1981: 24, 25).

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In Ms work, Dante (whose major concern was to promote Italian vernaculars to the level of literary language, and whose life goal was to establish the national Italian literary language as opposed to the "artificial" Latin) refers to the problems of linguistic change and linguistic differentiation. Thus, in a sense, Dante can be called a forerunner of the evolutionary approach to the human language. He explained "the successive evolutions of what was originally one and the same language" (ibid.: 23) used an approach similar to what is presently called the "Biblical" or historical model of cultural evolution (G. Stocking, 1974). In setting up this model of cultural evolution, an important role was played by nineteenth century historical linguistics (dialectology) with its genealogical family tree diagram by the German linguist August Schleicher. Dante's model of the evolution of language is not as elaborated or sophisticated as Schleicher's, not to mention accomplishments of the twentieth century historical and comparative linguistics (R. Anttila, 1989). However, the author of ***Literature in the Vernaculars*** clearly makes evolutionary assumptions. For Dante, the evolution of language means the historical changes that brought about the linguistic diversity of his day. To explain evolution was, for him, to provide a picture of historical paths that led to the immense variety of speeches and tongues. Dante wanted to convince us that it is quite normal for every language to change, that, as manners and customs, languages have to adapt and differ, that there are causes and patterns of the linguistic change.

According to Dante, major events that constitute the evolutionary sequence of language (to be more precise: creationist-evolutionist sequence) are: (1) God creating man together with a particular form of speech (Hebrew language); (2) construction of the sky-high tower in Sennaar by the disobedient, wicked, and incorrigible human race that had used only one language of the same words and construction; (3) Creator's intervention that brought about linguistic confusion (this is the first differentiation of languages that God introduced according to functional division of labor: different groups that conducted different tasks in the process of construction kept their own languages and in effect were unable to communicate and cooperate effectively; difference of tongues made them strangers so they abandoned their work forever; that phenomenon of linguistic separation of mankind was accompanied by some degenerative processes: speech of every group now became more "rough and barbarous"; only a minority descending from Sem kept its sacred language; this minority, from which the people of Israel arose, did not take part in the construction of the Tower; (4) deserting the uncompleted city (Babylon) and the

Tower (Babel) due to communicational difficulties and scattering all over the earth, reaching all habitable zones and their extremities.

The confusion of languages brings to an end the first general (universal for all people) and basic, creationist stage (or core process) of the evolution of human language. At the same time, with dispersion and migrations of peoples, new processes in the evolution of language began. In general, I would call them processes of adaptive differentiation and diversification. Dante focused his attention on Europe. He presumed that resulting from God's punishment peoples of Europe had at their disposal "a tripartite language" which at the beginning encompassed: Southern Europe, Northern Europe, South-Eastern Europe, and part of Asia. From this very language then developed "various different vernaculars." Dante was most interested in the part of Europe that developed the third language from the primary tripartite language. This third language was used by three peoples: the Spaniards, the French, and the Italians. Lexical comparisons between different vernaculars of these three peoples indicate that most probably it was Provencal. The fact that the original language split up into the above three does not mean that the process of linguistic differentiation was completed. Actually, each of the three contained a lot of variations. Dante, naturally, was most interested in differences and variations in Italian. The Italian language is in fact divided into many differing tongues and dialects.

> So Italy alone is clearly divided into at least fourteen vernaculars, all of which have variations within themselves, (...) and even in the same city we may perceive variation (...). And if we count up the primary and secondary variations of the Italian vernacular, even in this small corner of world we shall find that the different varieties of speech not only reach but exceed a thousand (A. Dante, 1981: 27).

The above immense dialectal diversification does not mean that all vernaculars are equally appreciated. They do not meet the same standards. There are worse (undergrown) and better variants of speech (there are sociolinguistical variations of language). People shape their languages. It means that "reason of individual" has capabilities to improve human linguistic attributes. Looking for "illustrious Italian vernacular" Dante asserts that:

> . . . this language requires men who excel in learning and intelligence, and scorns others, (...). And since language is an instrument as necessary to our thought as a horse is to a knight, and since the best horses are appropriate for the best knights, then the best language, (...), is suited to the best concepts. But these can only exist where learning and intelligence are; therefore the best language is suited only to those who possess learning and intelligence (ibid.: 37, 38).

Thus, the development of language goes arm in arm with the development of human knowledge.

I have started from Dante's (unfinished) treatise on language to document the following points: (1) Dante used the term "evolution"; he took its meaning (sense) from the Latin verb *evolvere* (to unroll, to unfold); (2) Dante not only used the word "evolution" but he also took on a definite concept of it; in this sense he presented an evolutionary model; in fact, that model is a kind of rough historical-comparative reconstruction of the linguistic processes in Europe combined with the Biblical explanation of the origin and subsequent initial differentiation of human language (to use modern terms: Dante's model is an interesting example of a combination of creationism and transformism); I would also add, that in Dante's approach coexist two rough but different meanings of evolution: general and specific; (3) in Dante's model, the major elements are: graduality, continuity, slowness of linguistic change (changes occur over a very long period of time that are imperceptible for mortal and, by nature, brief living human beings), temporal (historical) and horizontal (local, geographical) variability of languages (ways of speaking), e.g., processes of linguistic differentiation and diversification. I call that model a branching evolution.

There is some naivete in Dante's thinking about evolution but I would like to emphasize that his model is a very modern one. I would not hesitate to say that his model and his linguistic considerations were too advanced to be understood by his contemporaries. The author of *La divina commedia* (The Divine Comedy) (written, of course, in Italian not in Latin) outstripped his era. This, Dante's outstanding accomplishment, sets a solid ground for a discussion of this, in my opinion, apparent alternative: individualism vs. holism. It is not, however, the topic of this presentation.

I have referred to Dante's example to illustrate a thesis that in the humanities and social thought of Europe similar terms and concepts of evolution of human culture and its specific aspects (for example, language) have functioned for centuries (say, since the Renaissance, to keep my promise not to go too far into the past). In this respect, the situation in natural sciences was a bit different.

Historians of ideas (in this case, historians of biology) argue that in the eighteenth century the term "evolution" was used in embryology (Albrecht von Haller and Charles Bonnet) to describe the theory of preformism. There was a strong belief in the planned and immanent development of an organism because the germ of the embryo was conceived as a complete miniature of an organism. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the well-known

German embryologist Karl von Baer emphasized that the evolution of an embryo is, in fact, a process of increase of heterogeneity or complexity of structure. Thus, "evolution" acquired a new meaning connected with a progressive trend. More or less at the same time, the term "evolution" appears (mainly under the impact of J. B. Lamarck's ***Philosophie zoologique*** [The Zoological Philosophy]) in a context of transmutation of species. Although Lamarck himself was talking about "progressively complex" or "perfect organization," his major argument was about gradual, slow and continuous transformations of species. In the area of biology, he pioneered in refusing essentialism. Thus, from a biological point of view:

> . . . in the mid-nineteenth century the term 'evolution' was being used occasionally (1) to refer to transmutation, but not necessarily in connection with progression, and (2) to describe the progression of life by authors who did not accept transmutation (P. Bowler, 1975: 103).

Being less progressive than Lamarck, Darwin was willing to use the term "evolution" for the general, historical process of life. In March 1837, after abandoning the concept of the invariability of species, he accepted evolution by common descent (we know this from Darwin's ***Notebooks on Transmutation*** *of* ***Species*** written in 1837-39). Darwin replaced the steady-state concept of the world with the dynamic concept and, simultaneously, introduced man to the stream of evolution of nature. Then, in September 1838, he found out the causal mechanism (the natural selection) in terms of which he could explain different phenomena of adaptation (multiplication of species). In brief, the natural selection produces adaptation (multiplication and diversity of species). In this approach, evolution means the descent with modification. It is a mechanism of gradual and undirectional (random variation) movements in nature. During the following twenty years, Darwin gathered evidence to confirm his revolutionary theory.

Ernst Mayr, one of the utmost authorities in the biological evolution, argues that in biology "evolution received hardly any attention prior to 1859, and (...) genuine evolutionary thinking rose remarkably late in history (...)" (1982: 104, 300). For him, "organic evolution includes two essentially independent processes, which we might call transformation and diversification," so the true evolutionary approach should:

> . . . include both transformation and diversification. Transformation deals with the 'vertical' (usually adaptive) component of change in time. Diversification deals with processes that occur simultaneously, like the multiplication of species, and can also be called the 'horizontal' component of change manifested by different populations and incipient species. (...). Lamarck was almost exclusively interested in transformational (vertical) evolution. He stressed change in time and development from the lower to the more perfect groups. Darwin, by contrast, was far more interested in diversification (horizontal evolution),

> particularly during the early years of his career. The two founders of evolutionism thereby established two traditions that are still with us (...)• Most evolutionists have concentrated on only one of the two components and have displayed rather little understanding of the other one (ibid.: 400, 401).

Although Darwin's theory, first, was microevolutionary, it also implied macroevolutionary problems, for example, overall development of life (general and historical process), sequence of biological events or evolutionary advance and progression. The latter problem brought about a lot of confusion. Darwin used such terms as, for example, progress, progression, improvement, advance. No doubt, he was sure that evolution is not a teleological process. He was against any form of finalism. According to him, there is no intrinsic drive to perfection in any organism (he refused the embryological meaning of progressive evolution). There is neither a natural law of progression from less to more perfect, nor a law of necessary development. I would emphasize here the fact that according to Darwin's concept of evolution the "progress" was not a necessary element of his theoretical model. The evolutionary model has functioned without the category of progress. Hence, for example, he was able to explain the improvement of species in adaptive terms. But the principle of progress was not intrinsic to Darwin's concept of evolution. In this context, let me now move on to Spencer's meaning of evolution. His concept of evolution is quite different.

For Herbert Spencer, evolution is "a change from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; through continuous differentiations and integrations" (1862: 216). Spencer's concept of evolution is founded on von Baer's principle of progressive embryological development from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous. It is clear that von Baer's principle was used by Spencer (he was familiar with it secondhandedly) as a basic element of the universal process of evolution. Theory of evolution is again the fundamental element of Spencer's philosophical system. That system was erected on the basis of the law of evolution. This law is a synthesis of all scientific laws. It is the most general law of nature. It means it applies to the Universe. The general laws of evolution are identical but there are three levels of the Universe. Those levels consist of specific kind of facts (physical, biological, or social). Thus, there are three phases/kinds of evolution: "inorganic, organic, superorganic." Those three kinds of evolution are regulated by common (universal) evolutionary laws but phenomena of every evolutionary level are of their own character that is created by specific kind of facts (for

example, social or biological). It means on every level there is a new factual quality and it is not possible to explain social phenomena in terms of a biological or physical level only (methodology of anti-reductionism).

To explain the phenomenon of social evolution Spencer appealed to the evolutionary laws. To describe and illustrate superorganic (social) evolution Spencer, according to his progressivist philosophy, used classification or typology. The classification was designed by him as an equivalent of the biological taxonomy (let us keep in mind that taxonomy implies a natural order of relationships among plants and animals). The major criterion of the classification of all known societies was the level of complexity. According to the degree of social complexity, Spencer distinguished: simple, compound, double-compound, and treble-compound societies. In this way Spencer, appealing to the progressive and universal law of transformation, was able to construct an evolutionary continuum from the simplest to the most compound societies. In other words, Spencer set up a special way of thinking about social evolution as a universal evolutionary sequence of social stages defined in terms of complexity. Spencer also introduced a typology of societies. The military and the industrial types of societies were ideal intellectual constructs used for the evaluation of different social systems. The industrial society was, in fact, Spencer's social ideal of "the perfect social state" (as ultimate goal of evolution). It was, at the same time, both an ideological and analytical (model) category. The space limitation does not allow me to describe this ideal of the future social state. Let me then quote a reliable historian of social thought:

> Spencer's theory as a conception of a historical process was only one of many. It looks, however, much more interesting if seen as a theory, the essence of which is the isolation of certain models of social order. When viewed in this way, it was surpassed only by Tocqueville's concepts of the aristocratic and democratic order (J. Szacki, 1979: 227).

There is also (besides von Baer's principle) the second cornerstone of Spencer's concept and theory of evolution: Lamarck's mechanism of adaptive evolution with the inheritance of acquired characters (also this one was known to Spencer secondhandedly). It was Lamarckian mechanism of "the inheritance of acquired characters" (proved invalid) and not Darwinian "natural selection" that appealed the most to Spencer's imagination. It warranted the consistency of his philosophical theory and fitted in his progressive vision of evolution. All his life Spencer considered Lamarckian adaptive mechanism as a *vera causa* of evolutionary process. The natural selection seemed for him to be secondary and unimportant. In 1893 he even wrote a characteristic essay *The Inadequacy of Natural Selection,* directed against neoDarwinians.

Spencer's philosophical (metaphysical) theory of macroevolution had a strong teleological bias. Kenneth Bock is right when saying that in this type of approach "change was natural, inevitable, progressive, parallel among distinct societies, from the simple to the complex, and, more specifically, from a condition unlike that represented by modern Western Europe to a condition like it" (1956: 10). I would say that for Spencer, in fact, evolution, progress, cosmos, or universe meant the same. It had to be so if evolution was defined in terms of progressive levels of complexity, because even Lamarck's concept of adaptation does not lead automatically to the increase of complexity. Spencer by his teleology is forced to appeal endlessly to his "universal law of transformation" (homogeneity — heterogeneity). Thus, progress is the basic feature of evolution. It is a fundamental principle of transformation. Progress is an evolutionary necessity.

In sum, Spencer and Darwin attached different meanings to the term evolution. They formulated two different theories of evolution that were based on different concepts. First, intellectual sources of these theories were different. Second, those two theories of evolution proposed different mechanisms of evolutionary variability and adaptation: according to Darwin, adaptation was the result of natural selection and the environment played the role of selector; according to Spencer, adaptation was a result of an immediate impact of environment that stimulated the change (Spencer was right: cultural evolution runs according to Lamarck's mechanism, however, he failed to understand the mechanism of biological evolution). Third, Darwin's approach to the evolutionary progress is at least ambivalent but progress is not a necessary element of his theory of evolution; Spencer's theory of evolution is based on the concept of progress and progress is an evolutionary necessity. Fourth, Darwin's theory was a microevolutionary one; it was the theory of the history of life forms that are somehow related (of common descent); this theory has explained diversification of forms of life by descent with modification (natural selection — adaptive modification — speciation); as a theory of the history of life, Darwin's theory was not a teleological one; it did not assume any necessary direction of evolutionary change. Spencer's theory was a macroevolutionary one; it was the theory of evolutionary transformation based on the law of progressive increase of the complexity of the phenomena of the Universe; it was the theory of progressive forms and stages with a very strong teleological undertone (it was the theory of process without history of forms). Fifth, both authors used totally different ways to formulate their theories. Despite the above differences both theories have been seen

(especially by scholars of social sciences) as identical. Why such a naivete? Before I answer this question let me first move on to the third great English evolutionist, Edward B. Tylor, who was Darwin's contemporary.

H. Spencer approached the society with his philosophical system of cosmic evolution. The Edward Tylor's approach is quite different. It is an approach of a cultural historian. Tylor himself pointed out that his "work on civilization insisting so strenuously on a theory of development or evolution" is independent of Darwin's and Spencer's works and is "arranged on its own lines, coming scarcely into contact of detail with the previous works of these eminent philosophers" (1970: Preface). Tylor's cultural history was a specific type of history based on comparative method. In this kind of comparative approach:

> . . . little respect need be had in such comparisons for date in history or for place on the map (...). If the field of enquiry be narrowed from History as a whole to that branch of it which is here called Culture, the history, not tribes or nations, but of the condition of knowledge, religion, art, custom, and the like among them, the task of investigation proves to lie within far more moderate compass. (...). The evidence is no longer so wildly heterogeneous, but may be more simply classified and compared, while the power of getting rid of extraneous matter, and treating each issue on its own proper set of facts, makes close reasoning on the whole more available than in general history. This may appear from a brief preliminary examination of the problem, how the phenomena of Culture may be classified and arranged, stage by stage, in a probable order of evolution (E. Tylor, 1970: 5, 6).

There is no doubt that Tylor's approach to history is similar, for example, to the historical approach of the Scottish moral philosophers, a type of history for which Dugald Stewart at the end of eighteenth century coined a term "conjectural or theoretical history" (J. Slotkin, 1965: 460). On the one hand, Tylor was convinced that "history, taken as our guide in explaining the different stages of civilization, offers a theory based on actual experience" (1970: 38), on the other hand, he wrote "that the history of mankind is part and parcel of the history of nature, that our thoughts, wills, and actions accord with laws as definite as those which govern the motion of waves, the combination of acids and bases, and the growth of plants and animals" (ibid.: 2).

From the beginning of his interests in society, Spencer tried to eliminate history and to substitute it with the philosophical system of cosmic evolution. Tylor proposed another approach: he made a history a permanent point of reference for his evolutionary reconstructions; he wanted to generalize history, to make it more scientific and, in this way, a more useful tool in his stormy polemics with the theories of degeneration. The most effective way to throw discredit upon the theory of degeneration is to contradict it with the phenomenon of progress. In this sense, the category of progress exists in Tylor's evolutionary approach. It is not an inevitable tendency for the

universe. It is a phenomenon connected to human mental, intellectual capabilities. Tylor is less interested than Spencer and Darwin in the mechanisms, forces, and causes of evolutionary process. He was really concerned with the reconstruction of evolutionary cultural stages that mankind was going through. How was this travel of humanity possible? To answer this question Tylor has introduced two key variables: human nature and human culture. He starts his *Primitive Culture* (1970) from:

> Culture or Civilization, (...), is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. The condition of culture among the various societies of mankind, (...), is a subject apt for the study of laws of human thought and action. On the one hand, the uniformity which so largely pervades civilization may be ascribed, in great measure, to the uniform action of uniform causes: while on the other hand its various grades may be regarded as stages of development or evolution, each the outcome of previous history, and about to do its proper part in shaping the history of the future (ibid.: 1).

For Tylor, the evolution of culture (or cultural history of mankind) means a sequence of gradual, slow, progressive stages (savagery, barbarity, civilization). These stages can be observed in different areas of human life. They do not create a kind of systemic or organic whole, a kind of a functional system of elements. Although he was talking about culture as a "complex whole," he was, in fact, dividing culture into many distinct elements (law, religion, language, technology, etc.). His evolution of culture was actually an evolution of language, art, mythology, religion, science, and so on. To be more general, it was an evolution of human intellect — a cultural or mental history of humankind. His explanation of cultural evolution is based on psychological laws that govern the human mind.

> The study of language has, perhaps, done more than any other in removing from our view of human thought and action the ideas of chance and arbitrary invention, and in substituting for them a theory of development by the co-operation of individual men, through processes ever reasonable and intelligible where the facts are fully known (E. Tylor, 1970: 18).

Human beings are rational beings; intelligent creatures. Having special problem-solving capabilities, humans in the process of fulfillment of their needs have invented (designed) and elaborated a special instrument that is at the same time a major attribute of their existence. Elvin Hutch mentions the Tylor's concept of culture when he writes that:

> . . . the nineteenth-century usage of the term 'culture' placed an emphasis on the element of createdness. Institutions like technology, science, law, government, and language were seen as the products of conscious, rational thought, created specifically for the purpose of improving the quality of human life.

> Culture was also conceived as 'artificial[1], for it was thought to separate us from nature and to set us apart from all other organisms, which necessarily live exclusively in nature. Unlike other creatures, we do not live 'in the raw' (E. Hatch, 1983: 24).

Thus, human inventiveness and culture depend directly upon mental, psychical processes, and especially on one of the most important of them: intellectual processes. All cultural phenomena have their cause and origin in "natural operations of the human mind," operations that are rational, not emotional. For example:

> language, so far as its constitution is understood, seems to have been developed like writing or music, like hunting or fire making, by the exercise of purely human faculties in purely human ways (...); human thought, language, and action generally, are (...) human arts and contrivances (E. Tylor, 1970: 234, 246).

Tylor explains process and Lamarckian mechanism of evolutionary change in nominalistic and utilitaristic terms. The major cause of that change is individual reason operating according to natural principles of the human mind. The human mind constantly interacts with the environment (culture, above all).

> The study of savage and civilized life alike avail us to trace in the early history of the human intellect, not gifts of transcendental wisdom, but rude shrewd sense taking up the facts of common life and shaping from them schemes of primitive philosophy. (...). Throughout the whole vast range of the history of human thought and habit, while civilization has to contend not only with survival from lower levels, but also with degeneration within its own borders, it yet proves capable of overcoming both and taking its own course. History with its proper field, and ethnography over a wide range, combine to show that the institutions which can best hold their own in the world gradually supersede the less fit ones, and that this incessant conflict determines the general resultant course of culture (ibid.: 68, 69).

After a nominalistic explanation of the major mechanism of evolutionary change — "collective social action is the mere resultant of many individual actions" (ibid.: 13); "a man is not less the intelligent innovator of a new word or a new metaphor, because twenty other intelligent inventors elsewhere may have fallen on a similar expedient" (ibid.: 236) — Tylor proposes the sequence of generalized historical linguistic phenomena. It is a process of the evolution of language. Language, of course, as other elements of culture, is a product of the human mind. Among different ways of human communication, Tylor has distinguished the first broad stage of "natural language" (self-expressive gesture and sound-gesture languages) that seems to describe the most primitive conditions of human existence (very early beginnings of the stage of savagery or halfway between the language of animals and the full human speech). "Articulate language" overcomes deficiencies of natural languages that are based on the close connection between sound and sense. It is "a whole system of sounds and meanings" which is used by a speaker and which creates a kind of catalogue of the contents of the world people are living. In this way, people are able to say what they are thinking about. Finally, there was an invention of writing, a visible

mark of the transition from barbarism to civilization. There were different phases in the evolution of writing (picture-writing, cuneiform, hieroglyphic, or alphabetic writing — to mention some of them). These stages do not necessarily mean unilinear evolutionary but rather universally-typological and unidirectional-progressive sequence.

At this point, let me quote from Tylor's *Anthropology* (1906) (his most evolutionary book). For him the evolution of language is:

> . . . the result of man's effort to get easier, fuller, and exacter expression of his thoughts. (...). As in the course of ages man's knowledge became wider and his civilization more complex, his language had to keep up with them. (...). By means of words we are enabled to deal with abstract ideas. (...). Language consists of sentences, and a sentence is made up of words, each word being a distinct spoken sound carrying a distinct meaning. (...). One use of etymology is that it teaches how men thus contrived, from words which expressed plain and easy thoughts, to make terms for more complex and abstruse thoughts. This is the high road along which the human mind has travelled from ignorance to knowledge. (...) When one begins by noticing the steps by which word-making and composition, declension and conjugation, concord and syntax, arise from the simplest and rudest beginnings, then the formation of language is seen to be reasonable, purposeful, and intelligible (ibid.: 133, 135, 136, 139, 150, 151).

I presume the above quotation represents the core of Tylor evolutionary and linguistic views. Language as a carrier of thought and a medium of human reason and intellect exhibits visible progressive features and tendencies. A general tendency is to come (through several stages) to a more elaborate form. This general tendency of human language (reconstructed on the basis of different historical languages) reflects only the universal progress of human intellect (knowledge). Thus, for Tylor, progress means something different than for Spencer. In Tylor's argumentation there is no concrete, fixed, well defined goal. There is no clear teleology. The evolution of culture means, in fact, an increased and cumulative rationality of mankind. In practice, progress of knowledge leads to a more perfect (wise) human being. Reason and truth overcome errors and fallacies. There is a switch from religion to positive science. Knowledge prevails the irrational custom and superstition, cultural progress dominates conservatism of culture. In this way, the history of humankind displays evolutionary order. That order results from human activity (conscious and intentional). The effects of this activity are passed on to future generations and create a phenomenon of human progress.

As I mentioned above, Tylor's evolutionary construction was largely based on history. To avoid an "invasion of speculative dogmatism" he wanted to use history as a constructive substance. But historical data were limited to time and place. To design his immense evolutionary vista with a difficult problem of human origins, Tylor was

forced to use the results of such historical disciplines as archeology, ethnology and linguistics. The latter seemed especially useful. At that time, the historical-comparative linguistics offered some transformistic arguments. Tylor carefully observed the efforts of linguistics. He was convinced that "in exploring the early life of nations, their languages may lead us far back, often much further than historical records" (E. Tylor, 1906: 165). Of course, his approach based on comparative method was different from historical linguistic, one that was based on the principle of genealogical kinship languages. He did not pay as much attention to reconstructing particular historical sequences of linguistic events as he did to reconstructing general typological stages that were conceived as milestones of the evolutionary process of given aspects of culture. The fact, however, that Tylor paid so much attention to the problem of cultural diffusion and appreciated historical evidence for the evolutionary approach is connected to his linguistic interests. Fred Eggan is partly right when he writes that:

> Tylor was essentially applying the linguistic model to the study of the development of culture, (...). Hence, though he worked with a broad evolutionary framework, he was generally concerned with more specific problems, and avoided the excesses of his evolutionary colleagues, for the most part (F. Eggan, 1965: 363).

It is better to say that, to some extent, Tylor used historical linguistics as a model of the evolution of culture, and linguistic data as resources that can help in the process of reconstruction of evolutionary change.

Let me now move on for a moment to historical linguistics. As I said above, it may serve as a model for cultural change (or evolutionary change, for that matter) and as an important helper in processes of reconstruction and verification of cultural change. Language as a subsystem of culture has played that role for many years. Let me remind you that in Dante's mixed model (creationist-transformative), God, Adam, Eve, and serpent were communicating in the Garden of Eden in Hebrew. Then, after the confusion and dispersion of human population, some historical and sociological processes in Europe resulted in the immense linguistic diversity. Dante's reconstruction of these processes is not too accurate and valid (especially from the vantage point of today). In his treatise, a parent language is Hebrew. As a result of the God's intelligence, there is, then, an "extended family of languages" (to use an ethnographic term). The closer to Dante's times, the more descendants of this family appear. Let me now mention that not only Hebrew but also other languages aspired to be a Paradise protolanguage of humankind (to mention only French or Flemish).

The year 1786 is commonly considered as the date of birth of historical-comparative linguistics. In that year, Sir William Jones, working as an English jurist in India, announced that Sanskrit, the ancient language of India, is similar to Greek and Latin. Then he extended these linguistic affinities to Germanic languages. His way of thinking was very simple: if the above languages disclose so many phonological and grammatical similarities they have to be related, they belong to "the same family" of Indo-European languages. All these languages must have "some common source" which probably "no longer exist." However, only in the first decades of the nineteenth century, Jone's Indo-European hypothesis received appropriate attention. Thus, new family of languages has appeared on linguistic map next to the family of Semitic languages (Hebrew is one of them). The nineteenth century, with its obsessive interests in origins and beginnings, has introduced to linguistics the problem of the most remote ancestor common for all family language (for example, Proto-Indo-European).

Latin (the language Dante considered not as natural language but as artificially created by scholars and jurists) was a kind of model for searching protolanguages. Romance languages — as one language group of Indo-European family — which are descendants of Latin are very important for historical-linguistic research. For this group, Latin is a base for further differentiation of Romance languages. There is an abundance of written materials for comparison. It was relatively easy to look for recurrent similarities (and differences) of phonological, lexical, and grammatical systems. Those systemic and systematic comparisons mean — as I mentioned above — the origins of the discipline.

It is impossible to achieve some sound conclusions by comparison of random words even if they are similar. Let me illustrate the genealogical study of historical linguistics by reference to the Romance languages. The present knowledge is more extended and precise than during Dante's time.

There is an assumption that about 4000 years ago the first Early Italic wave of Indo-Europeans came down from the north to what is now the territory of Italy. Their language was deeply modified by pre-Indo-European native substratum. Some remnants of that modified Early Italic can be observed, to a significant degree, in the language of the Sicilians in the eastern part of Sicily. In that historical period, vocabularies of the Volscians, Sabines, Etruscans, Ligurians, and perhaps Latin contained certain elements of the Early Italic. About 1500 B.C., there was a second wave of the dialects of the Italic group. The Latins, as one of the group of Italo-Celtic

peoples, first crossed the Alps and the Apennines to settle on the lower Tiber. During the next ten centuries, there were more influxes of different peoples and their dialects to the described territory. The most interesting fact is that between the seventh and fourth centuries B.C. Old Latin was used in the city of Rome on all its seven hills. Because of the small territory, Old Latin dialect was completely homogenous and distinct from other surrounding dialects. The rise, development, and collapse of the Roman Empire had its own impact on the Latin language. Between the third century B.C. and the fourth century A.D., the vulgar Latin (the language of the population of the Rome) that was a descendant of Old Latin extended into the northern part of the Balkans, into southern and western Europe, and the northern coast of Africa. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, at the beginning of the fifth century, the imperial, relatively homogeneous Latin started to split. The processes of fragmentation (between the sixth and the tenth centuries) led to the differentiation of Latin as the proto-Romance language into ten Romance languages. They have included: Romanian, Dalmatian dialects on the Adriatic (now extinct), Italian, Sardinian, the Rhaeto-Romanic dialects in the Alps and on the Isonzo, French, Provencal of the south France (that for Dante was the protolangauge of Italian vernaculars), Catalonian (around Barcelona), Spanish, and Portuguese. All these languages differ from one another but they create the group or family of Romance languages. Why is it the Romance family? Because the further we go back into the past, the differences between languages are constantly reduced (the entire process — what is very important and advantageous for linguists — is traced in written text). At the same point, the vulgar Latin of Rome comes to sight. Now it can be clearly seen as a parent, or protolanguage, of the Romance family.

These family relations can be, of course, extended and we can talk about Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit as sister languages. In this way, we are forced to look for a more distant parent language for the above three descendants (Proto-Indo-European). The model gets more and more branches and becomes like a tree. It is, however, good to remember, that:

> . . . one shortcoming it shares with the family model is its depiction of a language as a biological organism. Languages do not have independent existence, like an animal or a tree. They are sets of conventions, like conventions of fashion, games, and other human behavior. Changes are introduced in them by their speakers, not spontaneously by the language itself. By suggesting otherwise, the family tree model is dangerous (W. Lehmann, 1962: 139, 140).

I would add that it is also a simplified picture. For example, in my opinion, evolutionary processes contain not only a phenomenon of divergence, as a result of processes of differentiation, but also a phenomenon of convergence or unification as a result of mutual influences or similar conditions. To make my point more clear: in the search of genetic relationships among languages it is not safe to assume that they all had one common protolanguage because this leaves out processes of the language change. There are also examples to the opposite (extinction of languages). Evolution does not happen only in a time dimension (in terms of tree) but also in a space dimension (in terms of zones).

A contemporary historian of linguistics points out that:

> . . . the ambivalence that always plagued Indo-European studies, torn between structure and history. To the authors who used it, the notion of a 'family of languages' meant demonstrating the existence of affinities among different language groups. Those linguistic affinities were then justified either by historical and geographical connections between peoples (with a consequent implication of systematic borrowings) or by the idea of descent from a common ancestor to account for the existence of common word roots and grammatical structures. Some authors combined both arguments, and to this day the ambiguity persist in the form of a tension between typological models and historical arguments (M. Olender, 1992: 17).

In the foregoing, I have presented models of evolution (for example, micro- and macro-evolution) fundamental for the study of evolutionary processes in human society. They exhibit similarities; but the differences between them are more important. To many scholars, however, those differentiated evolutionary approaches are very similar or identical (R. Carneiro, 1981). They even talk about "evolutionary synthesis of Spencer and Darwin" (M. Harris 1968). Why does the point of view that blurs the important differences between different theories of evolution dominate in the social science? I have asked that question earlier. Let me answer it in the following way: in the American social science there are two types of interpretation of evolutionism. They are descendants of two different traditions that interpret evolutionism from two different points of view: naturalistic and humanistic. Both interpretations, however, do not pay much attention to the specificity of biological and cultural evolution.

The first point of view I would call a biological one. According to that approach, theories of cultural evolution have been cognates of biological theory of evolution. More precisely, their theoretical shape was determined by Darwin's evolutionary theory. Let me quote, for example, from Franz Boas who is commonly considered the

founding father of American cultural anthropology. Boas, in many of his works, connected the evolution of culture and the development of American anthropology with strong impact of Darwinian thought (F. Boas, 1904). He was convinced that theories of social and cultural evolution of Bachofen, Morgan, Spencer, and Tylor cannot be explained without reference to the biological theory of evolution (Boas believed that there is a single and consistent Darwinian theory of macroevolution). According to him, the development of evolutionary anthropology "was stimulated by the work of Darwin and his successors, and its fundamental ideas can be understood only as application of the theory of biological evolution to mental phenomena" (F. Boas, 1907: 274).

The second point of view is the humanistic one. It is exactly a reverse of the biological one. Darwinism is a peculiar result of humanistic ideas of cultural change. Representatives of this orientation argue, for example, that:

> . . . the idea of social and cultural development was shared by Darwin and humanists of his day, and it should be clear that Darwin received the idea from humanists, and not the reverse. It is enough to remember that a belief in the fixity of species had never been accompanied in Western thought by a belief in the fixity of human social and cultural forms. The idea of progress, of development or of evolution in its broadest sense was applied in some detail to human culture history many centuries before it was used by Darwin's predecessors in an effort to depict the history of kinds of organisms (K. Bock, 1980: 41).

This approach subsumes biological theories of evolution to humanistic reflection on social development. That reflection is, in fact, a specific philosophy of history and progress (rooted in the Greek philosophy and continuing during the eighteen and nineteen centuries). Its central idea is "the chain of being" (A. Lovejoy, 1960). It is based on the one of the eldest, the most persisting and general metaphors in the social thought of the West. The premises of the pattern of change in society are drawn "from a metaphor of growth, from the analogy of change in society to change in the growth-processes of the individual organism" (R. Nisbet, 1969: 166). According to this pattern, social or cultural change is: natural, directional, immanent, continuous, necessary, and proceeds from uniform causes.

Now I would like to draw your attention to two problems. The first problem is the theoretical identity of biological and cultural evolution. It seems evident that this identity is a result of the presumed immediate intellectual borrowing of basic concepts (in their unchanged forms) from one another. In this process, one area of human cognitive capabilities becomes only a passive recipient of the ready theoretical construct (there are some slight modifications but they rather do not matter). I do not hesitate to say that this kind of explanation creates,

rather, a folklore (interesting one, true, but still a folklore) about interdisciplinary influences than a solid knowledge. This folklore presents an amazing vitality and persistence as do all stereotypes and prejudices.

The second problem is delineating relative autonomy of biological and social sciences. The above mentioned opposite positions suggest that a more moderate picture of mutual influences should be drawn. I do not want to deny the impact Darwinism had on some social or cultural evolutionary theories (even on those whose origins were independent of Darwinism) but it is a simplification to say that they are derived directly from it. One should also remember about the general positivistic and scientific context of that time. There has been, however, a long tradition to look at culture or society in evolutionary and progressive terms. There is no doubt that, for example, historical linguistics had its own evolutionary tradition (model of branching evolution) many years before Darwin. Because of these processes, the English linguist Max Mueller could announce proudly: "in language, I was a Darwinian before Darwin" (1873: 562). Also, August Schleicher in his *Die Darwinsche Tkeorie und die Schprachwissenschaft* (Darwinian Theory and Linguistics [Philology]) (1863) showed the essential similarities between evolutionary theories in biology and genetic (tree model) of linguistic affinities. The latter was accepted earlier than the biological theory. There are similar trends in archaeology, physical anthropology, not to mention, Comtean or Spencerian sociology based on the philosophy of progress.

As it was pointed out above, Spencer accepted some concepts from natural science. They had, however, the Lamarckian and not Darwinian roots. Thus, the biological interpretation of social and cultural theories of evolution misses some evident facts of the history of knowledge.

There is a similar situation on another side. I mean that it is also an absurdity to explain Darwin's theory in terms of social thought and to assume that major impulses of Darwinian revolution came out from that area of human thought. Of course, Darwin worked in the definite social context but basic elements of his theory were shaped independently. The major argument of the supporters of social sources of Darwin's theory is based on the role the social ideas of Thomas Malthus' played in Darwinian discovery. However, as historians of Darwinism argue:

> . . . there is a real conceptual gulf between Darwin's struggle for existence and the *laissez-faire* philosophy, particularly as represented in Malthus' work. (...). Darwin himself emerges as a leading figure, who took a significant step beyond the social philosophy of his day as represented in Malthusian debate (P. Bowler, 1976: 636, 650).

In other words, for Darwin's theory of natural selection Malthus' social theory was not important. More important was his principle of population, that helped in Darwin's understanding the intensity of the struggle for existence among plants and animals. It is well known that major elements of the Darwinian theory of natural selection resulted from his biological research (M. Ruse, 1975) and that, in fact, Malthus' thesis about population (not his social model) is a capstone of Darwin's theory and not a cornerstone of it (E. Mayr, 1977).

Does it mean that we should eliminate or disdain the social context of Darwinian theory? Of course not. It is only to underscore the fact that it is too simple to say, for example, that Darwin's theory of the natural selection is an intellectual continuation of the socioeconomic views of Malthus (R. Young, 1969) or to argue that Victorian competitive ethos was a basic element in Darwin's concept of the struggle for existence (B. Gale, 1972). I do not agree that concepts of social science were fundamental premises of the concept of natural selection. No doubt that Malthus' statements on exponential growth of population were more important than his assumption about market and competition or his examples of intertribal wars. Thus, economy or sociology did not deliver ready solutions for Darwin's cognitive problems. I would argue, however, that language of these disciplines could strengthen Darwin's imagination on how human social world of competitive individuals works. The language of scholarly discourse of that time was the language of individualism. It is also known (from his *On the Origin of Species*, 1859) that Darwin had some ideas on what was going on in society. So, the role of social context of Darwin's theory should not be eliminated. However, social theories, cultural ethos, or everyday sociology of Darwin should not be treated as major ideas organizing his intellectual artisanship. For Darwin, far more important than social treatises or poetry were works by animal breeders or plant husbandries, his own biological research, and Malthus demographical studies (the principle of population), not to mention many other scientific studies. I would say that Darwin-naturalist lived in the definite social and cultural context. From it he received different signals. Some of them could have high adaptative potential but his view on evolution was, first, the result of his natural studies.

I would like to emphasize the fact that differences between Darwin's evolutionary theories and theories of evolution in social sciences were largely blurred by the language that was used in their construction and by some linguistic limitations. This confirms that language organizes our way of thinking and is not a transparent and

"nontoxical" means of communication in the process of mutual understanding. Let me quote from Rogers to illustrate my point. According to him:

> The central problem in the relation of Darwin to what was later called Social Darwinism lies in the highly metaphorical concepts in which Darwin expressed the theoretical aspects of natural selection. (...). Darwin, as discoverer, had the usual difficulty of transforming an established vocabulary to describe a new vision of the process of evolution. By using metaphorical concepts from Malthus and Spencer, Darwin made it more difficult to disassociate his new discovery in biology from older patterns of social thought. (...). Darwin obviously cannot be held responsible for the latter interpretations of his theory of natural selection advocated by proponents of various social philosophies. IBs theory of natural selection described a biological process and not a social philosophy. (...). Confusion of the Social Darwinists arose from their misunderstanding of Darwin's theory of natural selection. (...). Moreover, the so-called Social Darwinists were not even consistent Darwinists. They combined Darwin's theory of biological progress among animals and plants with Malthus' concept of a struggle for existence in human society. Although their resulting doctrine of inevitable human social progress (Spencer's survival of the fittest) contradicted both Malthus' and Darwin' views on human society, the Social Darwinists preferred to see their doctrine as a necessary consequence of Darwin's scientific theory. For those who could not distinguish between biological and social evolution, Darwin's theory offered the public authority of science by which they could attempt to legitimatize their private vision of human progress (J. Rogers, 1972: 268, 280).

There are three reasons behind my spending so much time to search for the differences between biological and humanistic approaches to evolution: (1) the evolutionary approach to the culture (language is one of the basic elements of culture) in anthropology of the twentieth century (especially in its second, present half) is largely concerned with efforts to reconcile and combine some previously contradictory approaches in order to create a new evolutionary approach to human culture, human language and human existence; (2) there is a strong proneness in the philosophy of science to use Darwinian theory of natural selection as a basic scientific tool in order to explain in evolutionary terms the emergence of the human mind, human consciousness, and human knowledge that all are closely connected with human language (for example, K. Popper, 1979 or D. Campbell, 1987); (3) there are visible efforts among leading scholars of political sciences to introduce the linguistic component to institutional analyses of the constitution of order in human societies (V. Ostrom, 1992). Before I present the contemporary approach to evolution of culture and evolution of language, I will make a comment on the history of the problem.

The above discussion of evolutionary theories has introduced several different meanings of evolution in different areas of knowledge. Sociocultural evolutionists, in principle, by the term "evolution" meant a directional sequence of social or cultural stages. It also included the more or less clearly described future goal of human development. All they:

> . . . agreed on orderly progression of human civilization as a guiding principle, and on the level of method, that we could determine the early forms of human civilization by reference to what they termed the 'simpler' societies. It was they who established the term 'primitive'. In their frame of reference their use of the word as the equivalent of 'primeval' showed a sound semantic sense. For them, these peoples, stragglers on the road of progress, were of scientific utility as contemporary ancestors to the more 'advanced' civilizations. A grasp of this historic fact brings the realization that they can scarcely be held responsible for the later connotative meanings that have continuously decreased the scientific utility of the word (M. Herskovits, 1965: 408).

Let me add at this point that "for the later connotative meanings that have continuously decreased the scientific utility of the word" the doctrine of cultural relativism was largely responsible and that Herskovits was one of the major constructors and exponents of cultural relativism in American anthropology.

In the first part of the present century, the doctrine of cultural relativism was considered as "the most meaningful contribution which anthropological studies have made to general knowledge" (C. Kluckhohn, 1939: 342). It was one of the offsprings of American historical and psychocultural anthropology connected with Franz Boas and his students. Historical anthropology arose in opposition to classical evolutionary American anthropology. Cultural relativism was a mean and result of severe attacks on cultural evolutionism. The major objects of that long standing offensive was the concept of evolution as a directional, gradual, and progressive process of cultural change that was based on a comparative-evolutionary method. Relativists protested against this type of theoretical constructs arguing that it is an artificial creature built up from accidental elements pulled out of different cultures:

> . . . a kind of mechanical Frankenstein's monster with a right eye from Fiji, a left from Europe, one leg from Tierra del Fuego, and one from Tahiti, and all the fingers and toes from still different regions. Such a figure corresponds to no reality in the past or present, and the fundamental difficulty is the same as if, let us say, psychiatry ended with a catalogue of the symbols of which psychopathic individuals make use, and ignored the study of patterns of symptomatic behaviour — schizophrenia, hysteria, and manic-depressive disorders — into which they are built (R. Benedict, 1959: 55).

In this way, relativists objected to the procedure of atomization of concrete cultures. They sometimes used expressions like, "culture as a whole" but they were not holists, they did not use organismic analogies and did not explain culture in systemic terms. However, as cultural historians, they were looking for and talking about "patterns of culture," "cultural configurations," "cultural complexes," "style and pattern of culture," and so on. All these cultural phenomena were expressed in terms of values and norms, mental cultural traits, shared behavioral characteristics. Every culture was a result of its particular history (for example, diffusion, integration,

acculturation, impact of natural environment, innovation, custom, tradition, and so on). Thus, it was not possible to explain culture in any deterministic terms (besides cultural categories) and to explain a given culture meant to describe its unique pattern in terms of configuration of cultural traits. In this sense, relativists were talking about "cultural integration."

Let me emphasize at this point the fact that relativists as evolutionists used an analogy of language to study the culture. Evolutionists accepted developmental models of languages of historical linguistics. Relativists (especially, Boas, Benedict, Herskovits, Sapir, and Whorf) were looking for analogy between cultural and linguistic patterns. David Aberle is correct in writing that there was a strong influence of linguistics on culture and personality approach (1960). The major premise of that analogical thinking was that if there are some patterns in language and they can be discovered, so *mutatis mutandis* the same patterns may be discovered in the domain of culture, especially if human culture is expressed in terms of configuration of mental traits. It is possible to look for cultural "grammar" or at least "morphology" because "the structure of cultures, like that of languages, also seem potentially describable in terms of an overall patterning" (A. Kroeber, 1957: 106).

Evolutionists, however, were under attack of Boasians not only because of their atomization of culture, but also because they formulated their accusations in moral categories. They blamed evolutionists for ethnocentrism and a lack of tolerance. Relativists could not accept evolutionary models due to the progressive tones built in them. The process of evolution with its Western bias (ranking different cultures in terms of European values) was perceived as ethnocentric and disdaining cultural achievements of other peoples.

> *Cultural relativism* is in essence an approach to the question of the nature and role of values in culture. (…). The principle of cultural relativism, briefly stated, is as follows: *Judgments are based on experience, and experience is interpreted by each individual in terms of his own enculturation.* Those who hold for the existence of fixed values will find materials in other societies that necessitate a reinvestigation of their assumptions (M. Herskovits, 1964: 49).

In place of common hierarchy of human values, relativists proposed relativity of them. They have argued that it is not plausible to talk about one moral order or one area of intellectual accomplishments. Human cultures cannot be arranged as lower or higher on one scale because every culture is a result of its own history. There are different patterns in not only that of European history but in the history of each culture. Human history is multidirectional. Each culture pursues its own specific goals according to their particular hierarchy of values. In

this sense, each culture presents original, unrepeated patterns which was made up of cultural traits selected during the historical processes. These configurations cannot be identical because cultural traits occur with different intensity in different areas of life. They create different but equally valuable patterns of culture. As M. Herskovits has written in his very influential textbook, there is "the tendency of every culture to exhibit greater complexity, greater variation in the institutions of some of its aspects than in others" (M. Herskovits, 1947: 542).

Thus, on the one hand, there are different cultures that are the results of particular histories and that are based on different values, and on the other hand, we do not have a proper "yardstick" at our disposal to measure those values. The conclusion is evident: we should stop comparing and ranking the different cultures. Every culture is as good as another one. In this way, European values (standards of progress and cultural achievements) cannot be recognized as absolute standards because they are the mental traits of some groups of people and not all mankind. The evolutionary model does not make any sense. It is a biased vision of human cultural history. The relativists have rejected the concept of progress and cultural hierarchy (superiority or inferiority of any culture): no absolute standards and values. In result of their relativist point of view, they have proposed cultural equality and justice.

The cultural relativism affected linguistic anthropology. Here the study of different languages brought in the conviction about relativity of human perception and knowledge. The theses of major linguistic anthropologists (especially Sapir's and Whorf's) have provoked one of the most vigorous and long-living debates in social sciences. This approach at its point of departure assumes that language (and especially the structure of language) has a great impact on the cognition and the world view of people using the language. This approach is well known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, different languages produce different (divergent) patterns of thought. Lexicons and grammars of particular languages can make their speakers think about their own experiences and aspects of their world in specifically distinctive manners. In fact, according to Sapir, for example, people are kind of linguistic prisoners. In his well known programmatic article on linguistics Sapir wrote:

> Language is a guide to 'social reality'. Though language is not ordinarily thought of as essential interest to the students of social sciences, it powerfully conditions all our thinking about social problems and processes. Human beings do not live in 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 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 (E. Sapir, 1929: 162).

Sapir's ideas have been expanded by his student B. Whorf. The latter conducted studies of the Hopi language of the American Southwest. Whorf realized, for example, that there are differences between the tense systems of Hopi and English languages. English divides time into the past, present, and future; the Hopi does not. Rather, grammar of the Hopi language distinguishes between events that indisputably exist or have existed (for which present and past tenses are used in English) and those that do not exist (English future events, along with imaginary, hypothetical, and fanciful). Then Whorf argues that those grammatical differences (which led Hopi and English speakers to different perceptions of time and reality) result in differences in the Hopi and English thinking. According to him, every language is based on grammar and the grammar of each particular language:

> . . . is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas, but rather is itself the shaper of ideas, the programm and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade. (...). Users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars toward different types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world (B. Whorf, 1956: 212, 221).

In general, Whorf's deterministic position assumes that human thought results, to a large extent, from categories of a given language. Thus, different languages organize the world of people in different ways. For Whorf:

> . . . it means that no individual is free to describe with absolute impartiality but is constrained to certain modes of interpretation even while he thinks himself almost free. The person most nearly free in such respect would be a linguist familiar with very many widely different linguistic systems. As yet no linguist is in any such position. We are thus introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated (B. Whorf, 1956: 214).

According to Sapir-Whorf, lexicons (language's names for things) can also produce a different perception of reality and, thus, cause differences in human thought and action. The Eskimo have three distinct words for different types of snow (that in English are all called "snow"); and the Nuer have an elaborate vocabulary for cattle. The argument runs that the Eskimo recognize, think about, and respond to the differences in snow that English speakers cannot even see because English language provides them with just one word.

Other anthropologists, however, argue that language reflects only Eskimo or Nuer environmental needs. When needs arise, English speakers can also elaborate their appropriate (cattle or snow) vocabulary. Vocabulary and lexical distinctions are linguistic areas which quickly change. Thus, the above facts do not confirm a principle of linguistic relativity.

> Rather, they illustrate the principle that where the specific differences among similar events are more important in the life of people than the membership in the general class, the people's language may not include the abstract, general term for the class in question. Specific functions are then more emphasized than the abstract class membership. To the Eskimo, in his struggle with his material environment, the differences in the varieties of snow are what are important. (...). His purposes differ from ours, and perceived differences, which are unimportant for us, are those to which he must most attend. The Eskimo's language does not, however, impose a specific metaphysics. (...). The 'principle of linguistic relativity' argues that there are incommensurable cultural universals. An incommensurable cultural universe would be an unknown one. The fact of linguistic communication, the fact of translation, belies the doctrine of relativity (L. Feuer, 1968: 417, 418).

Thus, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is a controversial and quite unproved one and we can see the problem. According to them, language is something more than a medium for expressing ideas. It is specific generator of our thoughts and actions. I would agree that language can channel and limit our way of thinking. However, as we know, changes of language also result from changes of other subsystems of culture. Human thoughts, languages, and cultures are interrelated (they even have to be). Languages create some ways of categorizing human experience and these categorizations can have an impact on human communication. However, it is an exaggeration to say that language is a major and basic determinant of human thought. I would say that language plays a very important role in setting up people's world view, but it is not only language that takes part in this process.

The extension of the principle of cultural relativity in the areas of language used to have interesting consequences: the acceptance of linguistic equality among horizontal linguistic diversity automatically eliminated any evolutionary linguistic formulations. Every language was unique and equal, no matter what kind of culture it served. For Sapir, for example, even evolutionary cultural differences do not affect equality of languages:

> The lowliest South African Bushman speaks in the forms of reach symbolic system that is in essence perfectly comparable to the speech of the cultivated Frenchman. It goes without saying that the more abstract concepts are not nearly so plentifully represented in the language of the savage, nor is there the rich terminology and the finer definition of nuances that reflect the higher culture. Yet the sort of linguistic development that parallels the historic growth of culture and which, in its later stages, we associate with literature is, at best, but a superficial thing. The fundamental groundwork of language - the development of a clear-cut phonetic system, the specific association of speech elements with concepts, and the delicate

> provision for formal expression of all manner of relations - all this meets us rigidly perfected and systematized in every language known to us. Many primitive languages have a formal richness, a latent luxuriance of expression, that eclipses anything known to the languages of modern civilization. (...). From this it follows that all attempts to connect particular types of linguistic morphology with certain correlated stages of cultural development are vain. Rightly understood, such correlations are rubbish. (...)• Both simple and complex types of language of an infinite number of varieties may be found spoken at any desired level of cultural advance. When it comes to linguistic form, Plato walks with the Macedonian swineherd, Confucius with the head-hunting savage of Assam (E. Sapir, 1949: 22, 219).

To me the above expression of Sapir is a confession of faith of linguistic romantic egalitarianism. There is a myriad of languages in this world. Every language presents a unique configuration of its elements. That configuration is the result of the history of a given people. It means that for the language users their language is an appropriate cultural tool. Every language serves its linguistic community to its best. From this point of view, the difference between spoken and written language (that was grasped by Tylor as the evidence of linguistic progress) is unessential. You can talk sense about language only in terms of its culture. You should forget about evolutionary linguistic ranking. I presume that there is a lot of rationale in Sapir's argumentation. However, a given culture is not the only context of a given language. There is also the environment of other cultures, and we can say that the problem of adaptation is strictly evolutionary. But we cannot address this problem in relativistic language. At this point, I will make a last short comment on cultural relativism.

Cultural relativism has been a great accomplishment of American cultural anthropology. The most important part of it was the ethical call for tolerance of others. Cultural relativism refused the exceptional role of Western civilization, the superiority of its values, and betterness of the Western way of life. There is multiplicity of different cultures based on quite different values that deserve the same attention and respect as the Western civilization. They are different but they result from their own history and they serve their people. Their values speak on behalf of people who foster them. To understand their culture and their behavior means to grasp values and norms that are constitutive for this behavior (thus, we are also able to understand deviant behavior). Understanding means tolerance and leniency because there is no absolute standards of human behavior and no universally obligatory norms. All cultural values are relative values. They are values of definite cultural configuration. Keeping the above in mind, we are able to understand (read: accept!) every culture, even the one that looks very strange or even scary to us.

At this point, however, an interesting question emerges: how far should we go in our acceptance of strangeness and dissimilarity of cultures and their values defining people's choices? Let us assume that E. Fromm's *The Fear of Freedom* (1942) explains the basic values and historical processes that constituted Nazi culture. In addition, (as German historians are now explaining) this culture was a participant of the processes of the German modernization. Should we then accept genocide and holocaust? What about totalitarian states that use coercion as a basic feature of their actions? Should we treat them as being equivalent of democratic institutions? To change a social scale: Should we accept continuous warfare and murders that accompany Yanomamo culture as values possessing equal rights with values of peaceful Zuni? What about such customs and stern rites of passage as *clitoridectomy* or *infibidation* that are present in some cultures?

I presume that cultural relativists rejecting some ethnocentric measures of human achievements and denying the concept of progress were caught in a relativist trap. Fighting with positivistic evolutionism from humanistic positions, they themselves have proposed dubious solutions as far as the human condition is concerned. It is not an easy task to answer these questions. They require a reconsideration of the problems of human and cultural values in a comparative perspective. The perspective of historical particularism and its focus on specific cultures failed to present a satisfactory solution of common human values. Are there any universal moral standards for all mankind? Is it possible to answer this question without any comparative perspective?

There is also a second question connected to cultural relativism and the concept of culture as a historical, integrated pattern or configuration. It is a question closely related to the problem of cultural traits, customs, institutions, and so on. What is their adaptative value? Do all of them (for example, annihilating rituals) exist for the human good or are they, in fact, "unfitted" to solve human problems (inhuman)? How can these questions be reconciled with the problem of development and such mechanism as, for example, natural selection? Again, all these questions lead us to problems of the evolution of culture, human knowledge, and progress.

The efforts of evolutionists in the second part of present century have been oriented to creating a new comparative perspective on a variety of human cultures and to avoid the mistakes of previous orientations. First, the concept of evolution has been redefined and several meanings of the term have appeared in social sciences.

Some scholars (A. Keller or G. Murdock) under the impact of Darwinian concept of evolution were willing to see the term evolution as a process of adaptive change only. "Adaptation, indeed, is the key note of the sociological school. From this point of view a culture is a system in the process of achieving equilibrium by the integration of its elements" (G. Murdock, 1937a: 451). Murdock does not speak about systemic integration as functionalists do. He understands integration of culture as a drive to consistency and shifts in equilibrium from one point to another. In that sense, evolution was a synonym of change. To avoid the traps connected with teleological thinking and progressivism they considered evolution as the adjustment of life (social, cultural) to its environment (understood in very broad terms).

George P. Murdock, for example, assumes that since processes of organic change result in the phenomenon of biological evolution, similarly the processes of cultural change result in cultural evolution. Murdock wants to avoid any conceptual abstraction (any schema of cultural development) and reserves the term evolution for a particular, historical sequence of adaptive change.

> The term 'evolution', of course, means merely a process of adaptive change. Since such a process is observable on the social as well as on biological level, the term has a perfectly legitimate place in social sciences, and its use by no means commit sociologist to 'social Darwinism' or other biological implication (G. Murdock, 1937: xvi).

He formulates four propositions that are:

> . . . the most outstanding general characteristics of evolution (...): 1) That evolution is an actual process of change, not a classificatory characterization of sequences. 2) That evolution consists of real events, not of abstractions from events, so that evolutionary development is historical in the strictest and most literal sense. 3) That the course of evolution is fundamentally divergent or multilinear. When parallel development occurs in more than one evolutionary line, the sequences and results are similar only in typological sense, and are never in any respect identical. 4) That evolution operates by a purely fortuitous mechanism, and is neither predictable, predetermined, nor purposive (G. Murdock, 1965: 134).

Thus, Murdock's approach eliminates not only a possibility of broad patterns of evolution but also the assumption of uniform mechanisms of cultural change. Emphasizing that the phenomenon of diffusion distinguishes cultural from biological evolution Murdock simultaneously states that different elements of culture adjust in a different way and pace in the processes of cultural change. Some of them are more autonomous than others.

> The forms and structure of language are known to constitute a relatively independent body within culture as a whole, changing according to a dynamics of their own in response to causative factors that are exceedingly difficult to relate to social events or the environing culture. (...) Social organization is a semi-

> independent system comparable in many respects to language, and similarly characterized by an internal dynamics of its own. It is not, however, quite such a closed system, for it demonstrably does change in response to external events, and in identifiable ways (G. Murdock, 1960: 199).

Let me conclude that in the Murdock approach cultural evolution means any type of adaptive change. However, the evolution of language seems to be a multidirectional kind of change without any other features. It means that the process of the evolution of language is "notably divergent," extremely varied in both grammar and lexicon. According to Murdock, language is especially impervious to diffusion. Thus, no wonder that "linguistic change parallels biological evolution even in minute particulars (...), and can therefore be appropriately designated as evolutionary in the most precise sense" (G. Murdock, 1965: 139, 141).

Many scholars, however, would argue that what makes sense in talking about evolution is the direction of evolutionary change. In fact, evolution is a special kind of social or cultural change that has some specific characters. When R. Maclver and Ch. Page were looking for the broad pattern of social change, they distinguished and defined evolution (along with such terms as development or regression) in qualitative terms, with respect to structural or functional differentiation. For them evolution means:

> . . . not only continuity but direction of change. (...). Evolution means more than growth. Evolution (..) involves something more intrinsic, a change not merely in size but at least in structure also. It is a change permeating the whole character of the object, a sequence in which the equilibrium of its entire structure undergoes modification (R. Maclver and Ch. Page, 1949: 522, 525).

Some anthropologists, inspired by Spencer, also propose to think about evolution as a process of the increase in structural complexity and emergence of higher forms of social organization. "Evolution is a change from relatively indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a relatively definite, coherent heterogeneity, through successive differentiations and integrations" (R. Cameiro, 1973: 90). This is the most general definition of evolution I know that assumes a direction of change.

For many years social scholars have undertaken efforts to apply Darwinian concept (and his different theories) of evolution to the social and cultural realms. One of the most successful solutions of that problem has been the discrimination between general and specific evolutions. According to this view:

> . . . in both its biological and cultural spheres evolution moves simultaneously in two directions. On one side, it creates diversity through adaptive modification: new forms differentiate from old. On the other side, evolution generates progress: higher forms arise from, and surpass, lower. The first of these directions is Specific Evolution, and the second, General Evolution. (...). Concerned with lines of descent, the study of specific evolution employs phylogenetic classification. In the general evolutionary outlook

> emphasis shifts to the character of progress itself, and forms are classed in stages or levels of development without reference to phylogeny. (...). In sum, specific evolution is the phylogenetic, adaptive, diversifying, specializing, ramifying aspect of total evolution. It is in this respect that evolution is often equated with movement from homogeneity to heterogeneity. But general evolution is another aspect. It is the emergence of higher forms of life, regardless of particular lines of descent or historical sequences of adaptive modifications (M. Sahlins, 1960: 12, 13, 16).

There are some points I should highlight. Sahlins (in his effort to reconcile biological and cultural evolutions and also relativist and evolutionist approaches to cultural change) uses the term specific evolution to any kind of adaptive, divergent change. In his vocabulary, specific evolution does not necessarily mean something becomes more complicated or elaborated. There are a lot of examples in ethnographic literature when cultural adaptation means simplification and even a kind of regression in social organization (let's say from the tribe to the band level). That leads us to the second problem. In order to contrast divergence and variation with advance and progress (specific evolution to a general one), Sahlins has to have at his disposal same measures of general evolution or overall progress. He assumes that the more advanced cultures transform more energy, are more complex in structural terms (have more parts that are more specialized and require more effective means of integration of given system), and display improvement in "all-round adaptability" (general progress reveals a tendency among higher cultures to dominate and replace lower ones).

In this way, general evolution (progress) denotes the direction that is expressed in terms of social complexity and successive levels (means) of integration and at the same times avoids specific teleological thinking. In that sense, we can talk about the single evolutionary process and do not worry about blames of unilinearity or ethnocentricity. As a contemporary evolutionist says:

> The concept of higher and lower with respect to complexity is neither subjective nor ethnocentric. Its use gives us a formal expression of the development of culture. When the earliest forms of prehistoric cultures are compared with present forms it is clear that the differences are best expressed in terms of complexity. This is the basis of evolutionism, which is therefore neither subjective nor ethnocentric. It is true that 'Western' civilization is the most complex of contemporary cultures. (...). When another culture replaces Western civilization in complexity it will of course then be the most evolved, the 'highest', and the standard by which to evaluate other cultures (G. Dole, 1973: 253).

In other words, the present form of evolutionary theory cannot be accused of ethnocentrism or teleological finalism despite using some absolute standards of directional advance. The concepts of specific and general evolutions make it possible to approach the problem of evolutionary progress in a more sophisticated way. A good example here is the law of evolutionary potential: "the more specialized and adapted a form in a given

evolutionary stage, the smaller is its potential for passing to the next stage. (...)• Specific evolutionary progress is inversely related to general evolutionary potential" (E. Service, 1960: 97). It is easy to find out that this law is the result of the distinction between specific and general evolutions. The specific evolution leads to the increase in adaptative specialization to a particular environment. That increasing adaptation to the environment eventually brings about evolutionary stabilization among extremely specialized forms. In this sense, we can sometimes talk, for example, about blind valleys of evolution (especially in cases of abrupt changes of environment). Of course, evolution does not stop because new more general forms (not so highly specialized and developmentally not self-limiting) are coming into being. As we remember, the evolution of species is the result adaptation. But the general evolution (the evolution of life) overcomes the particular specialized adaptations. Thus, the evolutionary progress cannot be unilinear.

In order to stress a nonlinear nature of progress, Service introduces two principles as obvious aspects of his general law: the phylogenetic discontinuity of progress and the local discontinuity of progress. According to him:

> . . . an advanced form does not normally beget the next stage of advance; the next stage begins in a different line. (...) if successive stages of progress are not likely to go from one species to its next descendant, then they are not likely to occur in the same locality. (...) this principle is especially appropriate for studies of cultural evolution because we so frequently name a culture after the territory in which it is found (E. Service, 1960: 98, 99).

The author gives many examples of his general law; the evolution of writing is one of them. In ancient Mediterranean, the Egyptian system of writing (based on combination of hieroglyphic and rebus writing) was the most advanced and specialized one. In this system, there were only a few single phonetic sounds. What is more important, the system was so adjusted to the rest of the Egyptian culture that the further development of phonetic sector of system was not possible.

> Instead, the much more effective and economical alphabetic system emerged elsewhere, among East Mediterranean peoples (some say the Phoenicians) who had *no writing at all* and who could, therefore, make a fresh start with only the most appropriate and efficient elements from the old composite system (E. Service, 1960: 104).

I presume that the above quotation raises several questions. Before I pose them, let me discuss in brief the problem of the Egyptian system of writing. This system was, in fact, a syllabic one despite its elements (hieroglyphics) appearing to be ideographic and pictographic. The hieroglyphic system was finally limited to only writing religious inscriptions on monuments. From this system the hieratic system emerged. Hieratic was used

for religious writings and was a simplified form of its hieroglyphical ancestor. The hieratic script, better suited for quick religious writings (rolls of papyrus), eventually generated its simpler form — demotic — for daily use. Thus, the writing system of the Egyptians, during its several thousand years of history, had evolved through almost all the stages: ideographic writing (some linguist do not consider it as a strict sense language); pictographic writing (where sign becomes the symbol of word); syllabic writing (decrease in the number of possible characters and increase in the possibility of combinations among limited number of characters); alphabetic writing (here words and syllables are made of individual speech sounds that never exceed one hundred in number: usually between seventy and twenty). Some linguists assume that the Egyptians could utilize the alphabetic principle but it is impossible to prove it. Hence, the oldest known alphabet is considered the Old Semitic (that was also a syllabic script).

Because of the structure of the Semitic languages, users of the Old Semitic alphabet (that was ancestor of the Phoenician, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic) could easily discover that besides a syllable there was also a smaller unit of the structure of the word: phoneme (the smallest linguistically significant unit of sound that alters the meaning of the words in which it occurs). Of course, having at their conceptual disposal only the tiniest part of speech that helps to distinguish one word from another, people could start to build a genuine alphabet. Then, those linguistically most important and significant for alphabetic writing innovations went to the Northwest to the Greeks and to the Southeast to the Brahmans of India. This time, thanks to the structure of the Greek language, another great improvement had been introduced into its linguistic system: signs for the vowels. The process of the production of an alphabet was completed and Greeks gave it their name *(alpha-beta).* Since then the alphabet may be defined as a set of symbols that consists of vowels and consonants. This "ready" and sophisticated knowledge of the alphabet went over to the Romans, but I interrupt the story at this point.

The process of evolution of the system of writing supports Service's thesis about discontinuity of progress but reveals some other problems. The process of evolution of the Egyptian system of writing was characterized by two interrelated processes. There was a tendency of simplification of its script that at the same time meant its bigger abstractness. The result of both these tendencies was increasing the efficiency of the system of writing.

The users of writing could save their effort and time, but first of all they were able to express and record in a more simple mode unlimited numbers of different concepts (thoughts and ideas). Does this mean that there was an increase in the complexity of written language? And what does the progress and advancement of language (not necessary written) mean? Does language (as a subsystem of cultural system) accompany the evolution of culture in terms of complexity? In other words, is it legitimate to talk about different (or varying) complexities of human languages?

According to the evolutionary statement on increasing the division of labor, the most rational (e.g., the least labor-consuming) solution is to look for answers to the above questions in linguistic literature. Unfortunately, linguists who normally talk about language change are very reluctant to take a look at language from the perspective of evolution or progress. They assume that languages are equal in terms of their linguistic complexity. According to them:

> . . . the forces for change and the forces for stability act upon language to put it into a state of slightly unstable equilibrium. (...). The opposing pressures for simplicity and complexity in language seem to balance each other fairly evenly, so that, as far as we can tell, all languages have roughly the same degree of complexity. The limits upon complexity and simplicity must be set by our common human linguistic capabilities (R. Burling, 1970: 196, 197).

Thus, linguists are talking about the linguistic change that affects each of three structural components of every language (phonology, morphology, and syntax) as well as its lexicon (vocabulary). The assumption of linguistic equilibrium means that over time languages maintain balance among their different subsystems. The loss of a particular feature in one subsystem (say, phonological) may be compensated by the addition of a new feature in another part of grammar (syntax). This kind of linguistic relativism assuming linguistic structural equality among different languages implies that it does not make sense to argue that languages are pursued in any specific direction. Respectively the concept of progress is unuseful in the study of language change because:

> . . . language is ebbing and flowing like the tide, but neither progressing nor decaying, as far as we can tell. Disruptive and therapeutic tendencies vie with one another, with neither one totally winning or losing, resulting in a perpetual stalemate (J. Aitchison, 1991: 214, 215).

Linguists refer to many sources and data to support their point of view. They set forth, for example, languages that in terms of grammatical relationships are moving in different (and sometimes opposite) directions. However,

their argumentation is conducted only on a linguistic level. I would say that they argue in favor of undirectional linguistic change assuming language *sui generis.*

Thus, it makes no sense to talk about more or less complex languages even with regard to people that use very simple technology and live on the band level of the social organization.

> Small, previously unknown groups of people are indeed discovered from time to time in jungle areas in New Guinea and the Philippines. These groups have apparently been isolated from other humans for long periods of time and have no knowledge of the modern world. (...). But despite the fact that the technology of such people is often at a Stone Age level, their languages appear to be as developed and as complex as any other human language. So far, then, no natural language (...) has been shown to be more primitive than any other language in terms of grammatical organization, expressiveness, and so forth. (...). All reconstructed languages appear to be full-fledged human languages, and there is no evidence that languages have become more expressive or more 'improved' in some sense during the past ten thousand years, the most remote time to which we can reconstruct language (A. Akmajian, R. Demers, R. Harnish, 1988: 343, 354).

However, in the same chapter, the above authors talk about the evolution of writing (from ideographic to alphabetic writing) and consider "each step representing an increased economy in the inventory of symbols needed" (p. 378). I presume that I did not misinterpret them to mean that they are willing to consider pidgin as not full-fledged but simplified language. The role of pidgin and creole for the development of the concept of evolution I will discuss in the second part of my paper.

The similar argumentation for equality of languages one can observe with regard to dialects. Dialects are considered by ordinary peoples as something worse than literary language. Here again linguists would point out that the dialect is one of the several versions of the language. They distinguish more and less acceptable varieties of dialects for members of a given society (so called: standard and nonstandard dialects) and argue that "all dialects of a language, like all languages, are fully adequate vehicles for communication. They are equally systematic, expressive, complete, capable of changing to meet future needs of their users, and so forth" (J. Falk, 1978: 289). It looks like a suggestion is included here that language has an ability to change automatically with the change of other subsystems of culture. This kind of conviction is common in linguistic literature and based, I presume, on the rational assumption of equal intellectual capabilities of human individuals (say, human nature). Linguists argue that:

> . . . the claim that is sometimes made that it would be impossible to describe certain things in a particular language because that language lacks the necessary resources is only partially valid at best. We must assume that all languages possess the resources that any speaker might require to say anything that he or

> she might want to say in that language. (...). It might be difficult currently to discuss advanced nuclear physics in Turkano or Basque, but should a compelling necessity arise in the Turkano-speaking and Basque-speaking communities for people to become experts in nuclear physics and use Turkano and Basque to do so, the two languages should prove quite adequate. (...). As recent events in many parts of the world have shown, one can go from horses and camels to Cadillacs and computers in a few short years (R. Wardhaugh, 1988: 218).

Recently this type of views has been challenged by V. Ostrom who considers:

> . . . that languages and their relationships to the human cultures run very deep, that the human uses of human languages are of varying complexities, that people learn how to draw upon the resources of multiple language systems only with great difficulties, and that the problem of dealing with these complexities presents a radical challenge for creating cultures of inquiry where life itself requires the acquisition of skills for addressing problematical situations of ambiguous or unknown types (1992a: 1).

Ostrom's concerns with language are related to the problem of the constitution of order in human society. Assuming that all human beings have the same intellectual potential (human reason), why are there so many different types of human orders? How can such evident and immense cultural diversity and differentiation be explained? Of course, efforts to understand and explain the problem of sociocultural diversity (different types of social order) resulted in a rising of the major part of human scholarly enterprise bringing about various solutions of the problem. Ostrom's basic diesis is: in order to understand existing sociopolitical disparities, we should focus on the role of language in human societies. Such a thesis is a result of two initial assumptions: (1) knowledge is the basis for all other human productive capabilities which shape every domain (social, political, economical, etc.) of the human condition; (2) human knowledge cannot exist (it means: to be acquired, used, and transmitted) without human language. The implication of the above assumptions is: language and knowledge have exerted tremendous influence on the constitution of rule-ordered relationships in human societies. The relationships between language and knowledge (epistemic order) are crucial for economic as well as political order. In other words, language permeates all levels of human activity.

Thus, Ostrom proposes to change the plane of discussion. Instead, to study language *sui generis,* he argues, is to consider language as the important tool making humans capable of solving their problems. Language is the medium of communication and the major subsystem of the cultural system. If we were able to discuss the problem of the evolution of culture, we should be able to discuss the evolution of language. However, some problems are hidden here.

The evolution of culture is constructed in terms of levels of increasing social complexity such as band, tribe, chiefdom, state. The state as the highest level of sociocultural integration (or as a stage in the process of general evolution) is very often accepted in evolutionary thinking about the human condition (just to give a few examples: H. Claessen and P. Skalnik, 1981; S. Eisenstadt, M. Abitol, N. Chazan, 1988; J. Hall and G. Ikenberry, 1989; A. Johnson and T. Earle, 1987). The message of these state oriented, "Hobbesian" thinkers is evident: the state as the major institution of the highest, most complex level of cultural evolution of humankind must be at the same time the most effective means of social integration and the most efficient problem-solving tool of human beings. However, there are many works that prove the falsehood of the above views. These works show that the state is something contradictory to the effective mechanism of problem solving and that human beings have capabilities to resolve their problems without centralized and hierarchical institutions (R. Dillon, 1990; A. Kaminski, 1992; V. Ostrom, 1991; A. Sawyer, 1992; J. Wunsch and D. Olowu, 1990). Thus, there is a current need to reformulate some assumptions of the general evolutionary theory that approaches the problem of culture and social orders in terms of increasing complexity. I believe the evolutionary role of language is a necessary element of that kind of study.

Let me now conclude the first part of this paper: (1) there are different concepts of the evolution of culture; (2) the approach to the evolution of language in solely linguistic terms fails to explain the role of language in the process of evolution of culture; (3) to understand the evolutionary role of language, one should approach it not so much as system *sui generis* but as a human attribute, as a medium of communication and an important component of human thought.

In the second part of this paper, I will focus on the evolution of language as a subsystem of culture and a major element of human thought. In the third part, I will analyze the mechanisms of linguistic change in comparison with the cultural change.

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