Perhaps the whole thing could be put into a nutshell, but only approximately, by saying that all cultural studies maintain themselves in direct adherence to specific time and place, whereas what I would call conceptual sciences, including psychology, are able to enunciate statements that are valid at unrelated places and times. The real point is that history evaluates experience as it is directly unfolded and thus is in a philosophical sense somewhat related to art; the sciences proper, if you can only get yourself to see it, do not really concern themselves with reality directly experienced (Golla 1984:256 [letter 246, Sapir to Kroeber, 28 November 1917]).

... clearly recognize the difference between psychology as a science and what one might call the history of thought or of psychological attitudes. The latter is, of course, nothing but a particular aspect of culture-history. What the specific psychological attitude of an artist or of a tribe of Indians toward a given phenomenon is, is a purely historical fact, not a psychological one any more than a specific technical account of a building is mineralogy or chemistry. In both cases concepts are employed which are taken out of the quarry of conceptual

\[1\] For access to original epistolary material in the A.L. Kroeber and Robert H. Lowie papers, I thank the Bancroft Library of the University of California, Berkeley. Some of this material is now available through the publication of Lowie (1965) and Golla (1984), to which references are keyed in the text. For written comments on the reading text of this paper, contributing to the revision printed here, I thank Charles L. Briggs, Michael K. Foster, and William F. Hanks.
From the distinctly "conceptual-scientific" perspective of contemporary linguistics, centered firmly in the tradition represented by the succession of Saussure → Bloomfield → Harris/Hockett → Chomsky, these thoughts have a pointed strangeness. Sapir asserts in 1917 that for the activities that Saussure comprehends in the practice of synchronic linguistics — 

Boas's descriptive linguistics, Harris's structural linguistics, Chomsky's study of grammar — the theoretical framework is cultural patterning. And such patterning is historical, directly experienced by its participants and its observers, and totalizing in its very essence, according to Sapir. 

In 1917, he is writing critically to Kroeber about Kroeber's (1917) abstraction of a so-called superorganic quality of culture, using terms that come directly out of Boas's paper "The Study of Geography," published in 1887. There, Boas attempts to show that the Naturwissenschaft/Geisteswissenschaft distinction is in principle irreducible, and proceeds not from any objective nature of phenomena as such, but from two fundamentally different psychological drives, the aesthetic vs. the affective impulses, guiding the subjective intellect of the investigator or observer. 

Science (material or psychic), but that is unavoidable. Every historical fact subsumes, in description, one or more scientific concept-groups, explicitly or implicitly. (Golla 1984:258 [letter 242, Sapir to Kroeber, 29 October 1917]) 

Geography (including anthropo-geography, or ethnology), Boas claims, is not reducible to the sum of component geological, physiological, and psychological studies. These proceed from the logical or aesthetic impulse and aim to systematize the laws of this or that abstracted aspect of phenomena in ever more general fashion. Such studies can therefore order analyzed phenomena according to a range of simple to complex. Geology, meteorology, and even the then-unrealized scientific psychology are these kinds of "physical science," with its objective delineation of phenomena as mere instances of general laws. This search for law-like regularity allows the resultant temporal ordering, called evolution, of how the deducible complexity develops over time. Geography, by contrast, is what Boas calls "cosmography" — explicitly honouring Alexander von Humboldt — springing from an affective impulse that puts it close to art. It tries to comprehend and describe unique, total phenomena as historically and subjectively specific configurations, the specificity of which can never be totally equated with the intersection of general laws in the systems of the "auxiliary sciences," as mentioned above. Cosmographic objects "must be described in an artistic way in order to satisfy the feeling in which [their study] originated" (Boas 1940 [1887]:647), reaching for the subjective and experiential truth of the individual phenomenon that Goethe celebrated, "without any regard to its place in a system." Cosmography's temporal dimension is uniquely the establishment of the true history of individual phenomena. Thus 

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plification on the enemy evolutionist terrain, doing battle then behind the lines in terms of analytic schemes of traits and complexes, emphasizing their diffusion and other specifically historical effects on traits. Culture (and language) as such, historical cosmographic objects, remain implicit residuals of the argument, virtually but not actually present in his discourse. Compare also the very late piece, his reply taking issue with Kroeber on "History and Science in Anthropology," in which he hearkens again back to his own 1887 paper (Boas 1940 [1887]:305). 

4The Epicurean measure of scientific parsimony and elegance as fundamental to correct explanation, rather than (mere) phenomenal "truth," is, for Boas, the extreme of aestheticism. Yet see below on Sapir's own "psychic impulse" to aesthetics. 

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we must eschew schemes of development that attempt evolutionary ordering, for cosmographical treatment of phenomena cannot treat them as simple or complex but merely as subjectively unified to the mind of the observer.

For the ethnologist as observer, it is the “direct adherence to specific time and place,” as Sapir glosses it for Kroeber, i.e., the historical frame of artistic factuality, that constitutes the cosmographic moment of the discourse of cultural studies. But further, as Sapir notes, the very phenomenon one is describing is itself a cosmographical thing, for it is “reality directly experienced” by the natives as observers, “the specific psychological attitude of an artist or of a tribe of Indians toward a given phenomenon,” i.e., their subjective experience of it as totality and unity. In culture, one cannot get any closer to pure “conceptual science” (Boas’s “physics”) — with its notion of synchrony, or achrony. For while describing facts of culture implicates laws of a “material or psychic” nature, it is never the equivalent of the interaction-effects of such laws instantiated by happenstance.

Sapir’s linguistic career is, I would maintain, a working through of this position that along the way manages to transcend it in ways I do not think he realized. But the rereading of Sapir in now retrospective terms has been crucial to later practitioners’ ability to incorporate him as an ancestor in the emerging synchronic (even achronic) framework of linguistic science. To be sure, even from the conceptual-scientific, the “physical” point of view, Sapir has been justly perceived as perhaps the greatest descriptivist or synchronic linguist of the century, in respect of speed, range, depth, accuracy, and fundamental, lasting insights into incredibly many specific linguistic structures. Consummate art, to be sure; but one embraceable and, in the instance, one that has heretofore been embraced only as a contribution to a tradition that wants to be known as “Science.” What irony!

We must see rather how Sapir’s intellectual and methodological framework is an exemplar of the specifically Boasian historicist and cosmographical point of view, down to the very descriptive tools — the “concepts . . . taken out of the quarry of conceptual science” — that allow Sapir, focusing on language, to contribute to the larger intellectual project of his reference group. We must appreciate the characteristically Boasian form of argumentation that Sapir employs in all his theoretical writing, even down through such major pieces as Language (1921) and “The Psychological Reality of Phonemes” (Mandelbaum 1949 [1933b]:46–60). We must understand how the argument between historicism and particularistic culturalism vs. evolutionism and universalistic trait-typologism provides the framework for his incredible activity in gathering and publishing data on language after language, even down through his Navajo work of the late 1920s and 1930s. We must see that even Sapir’s notion of the phoneme — that magical, quantifiable unit on which, for Bloomfield and his followers, one could erect the church of “scientific” linguistics — is a truly Boasian one, developed in the context of a typical Boasian argument with received tradition about phonetic objectivity. What an irony that it resulted in the terms of a new positive science of synchronic linguistics, each layer of language gradually brought under the methodological control of a phonology [= phonemics]-like conceptualization of structure.

But Sapir’s linguistic theorizing remains Boasian, even at
a period (mid-1920s on) when synchronic phonology was really emerging as a foundational force in the newer descriptive structuralism of a now non-anthropological discipline. For Sapir moves more and more decisively from culture history to the other pole of the cosmographic, that of the individual in culture:

Of course I'm interested in cultural patterns, linguistic included. All I claim is that their consistencies and spatial and temporal persistencies can be, and ultimately should be, explained in terms of humble psychological formulations, with particular emphasis on interpersonal relations. I have no consciousness whatever of being revolutionary or of losing an interest in what is generally phrased in an impersonal way. Quite the contrary. I feel rather like a physicist who believes the immensities of the atom are not unrelated to the immensities of interstellar space.

But my basic philosophy has little to do with my specific interests. I am as much as ever interested in large scale patterning, in such problems as reconstructing Athapaskan and placing Tokharian accurately in a genetic and historical sense. . . . (Sapir to Kroeber, 25 August 1938)

Moving, metaphorically, from "the immensities of interstellar space," as he puts it, to "the immensities of the atom," is no real movement, if the same forces are operative. And indeed, in the cosmographic paradigm it is the same "affective" subjectivities involved in both. So Sapir was ultimately seeking to understand processual and affective aspects of "a social psychology of form which has hardly been more than adumbrated" (Mandelbaum 1949 [1927a]:339). He drew on a Jungian and then Sullivanian psychiatry of the individual (note the latter's characteristic phrase "interpersonal relations"), attempting to understand society as a virtual structure of meaningful or symbolic dynamic acts of individual social participation in levels or layers of groups, constantly forming, constantly shifting.

Using language is, of course, one such kind of act, or one means of so acting, and this social participation through affective bonds to the group of reference is what Sapir later emphasized about language as well as about the rest of culture — see the Encyclopaedia articles, for example, on "Lan-

guage" (Mandelbaum 1949 [1933a]:7-32), "Dialect" (Mandelbaum 1949 [1931b]:83-88), "Symbolism" (Mandelbaum 1949 [1934b]:564-568). We see the movement within Sapir's still "synchronic" treatment of language, to an emerging micro-cosmography, the case-study of personality and psyche through language (even using autobiography as an ethnographic tool). Sapir contributed both theory and methodological tools, and encouraged a number of students in such work.6

It is interesting and poignantly symptomatic that Sapir did not really conduct such work himself, even when he clearly saw the scholarly necessity for it. In a sense, his culture had become at least partly, "spurious" rather than genuine (Mandelbaum 1949 [1924a]:316, 323-327) toward the end of his life; he was seemingly resigned to a partial intellectual emptiness. Observe how he wrote to Kroeber in 1938, that whatever his perception of the ultimate need for a unified "humble psychological" attack on both large-scale patternings and the individual's interpersonal relations, this now "has little to do with [his] specific interests." These specific activities return to the reconstruction of linguistic families such as Athapaskan and Indo-European, the history of which in the Boasian macro-cosmographical framework of his earlier period gave him such obvious affective delight (Preston 1984:192, quoting Sapir's wife). It was a backing away from the implications of his

6See his "Speech as a Personality Trait" (Sapir 1927c), "The Unconscious Patterning of Behavior in Society" (1929b), and "A Study in Phonetic Symbolism" (1929a), as well as autobiographies like Walter Dyk's Son of Old Man Hat (1938), A Navaho Autobiography (1947), and Left-Handed: A Navajo Autobiography (Dyk and Dyk 1980) — Sapir (1938a:vi) calls the first a "primitive case history" — and the psychiatric work with the language of adolescents by Stanley Newman (1939, 1941a, 1941b, Newman and Mather 1938), as well as the latter's "Further Experiments in Phonetic Symbolism" (Newman 1933), which incorporates some of Sapir's own data gathered in connection with Sapir (1929a). This working through of the "psychiatric" basis for socialized symbolisms in and through language was specifically distinct as a research tradition from what emerged in the culture-and-personality school of anthropology, and certainly from any linguistically-based psychological developments, like psycholinguistics or the psychiatric indicators work of either the "paralinguistics" group around Trager-Bateson-McQuown-Birdwhistell et al. or other similar groups.
theoretical writings of the time to the affectively more comfortable vantage point of culture-historical studies of language. Nevertheless, the linguistic thrust of his theoretical writings in the 1930s is still a Boasian cosmography writ small, concentrating on the affective dimension Boas had earlier described as the essential personal foundation of cosmography. Sapir’s theoretical position, calling for a “psychiatric” perspective on language, is a working through of the implications of his earlier formulations to their position of logical totality.

So there is indeed a consistency over time. It is a working-through, to be sure, but in a real sense within a point or moment of a particular Sapirian cosmographical linguistics: over time, it contemplates the cosmographical object, language, rotating and examining all the different facets of its complex and unstable crystalline structure. By the early 1930s, Sapir had worked through his position to the exact understanding of why, from the cosmographical viewpoint, each individual also has a culture — “the immensities of the atom” — and hence a language, just like the aggregate population of which the individual is a member. Such a Sapirian linguistics is distinct in its very essence from the sundered synchronic vs. diachronic perspectives on language of the abstract, scientific linguistics that has triumphed in our era. It is not a predecessor.

To be sure, the internal or “court” history of self-styled science perforce must present its temporal dimension as what Boas called evolution, “lead[ing] to a systematical arrangement, which gives to the aesthetic desire as much satisfaction as the formulation of laws” (1940 [1887]:645). In this way, Sapir has indeed been presented as an ancestor, a precursor in this or that respect, in the eventual triumph of synchronic structuralism. Thus, writing in 1951 in review of Mandelbaum’s Selected Writings of Edward Sapir (Mandelbaum 1949), Zellig Harris retrospectively evaluates Sapir in terms of his compatibility with specific distributionalist, formalist, anti-“mentalists,” synchronic shibboleths of post-Bloomfieldian structuralism. Sapir’s so-called process formulations of the pattern of alternants of a single functional unit in language structure can easily be converted to direct distributional terms, Harris claims, and so are to be accepted as all right, clearly a forerunner of contemporary practice (Harris 1951:291).

... the use of the process model ... occupies a determinate position from the point of view of the history of science. It seems to constitute a stage in the separation of descriptive method both from historical analysis and from the older psychologizing of grammatical forms.

In a remarkable pronouncement, perhaps the origin of this oft-repeated sentiment, Harris demonstrates the scientific linguist’s mythology about sequential, evolutionary ordering of figures in the field (1951:291, n.8):

It is interesting that Bloomfield’s work, which (as suggested above) represents a later stage in this particular development, presents phonemes no longer as the result of process but as direct classification, whereas the morphology is still largely described in terms of process.

Remarkable, because it orders these virtual contemporaries in terms of their alleged use of distributional presentation of facts, and the degree to which (ascending from phonemics) the several planes of language were explicitly described with such formalisms. Inherent “evolution”: Sapir → Bloomfield → “us” (i.e., Harris et al.). As an evolutionary sequence, this is wrong.

*Observe that Rulon Wells, writing on the transformation of phonetics to phonology during the Neogrammarian period (1876–1900), also draws parallels of a similar sort (1974:441):

Jan Baudouin de Courtenay (1845–1929) ... is particularly important as showing the transition from a diachronic and phonetic approach to a synchronic and phonemic one. Precisely the point of interest is that the two transitions, from diachronic to synchronic and from phonetic to phonemic, go hand in hand.

It is not so much the notation, as the focus of explanation, that shifts from the diachronic, or inherently processual-in-time, to the synchronic, or inherently not so. For Wells, then, the “discovery” of the phoneme IS, in essence, tantamount to the creation of the synchronic perspective, and evolutionarily supplants the diachronic.

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*Compare Charles F. Hockett, “Two Models of Grammatical Description,” written at about the same time, where (1954:210) the characterization...
on every count, except for the one that really differentiates these two figures, the notion that linguistics is cosmography vs. that it is "Science."  

In the contemporary period, Noam Chomsky and his followers in the new, post-distributional and re-processualized formalisms of transformational-generative grammar, would claim Sapir as their ancestor in the true synchronic science of language, precisely because he allegedly did not hold views attributed to Bloomfield and the Bloomfieldians in this newer "evolutionary" reconstruction of scientific succession. With a curious *argumentum ex silentio* it was concluded that because, for example, his 1925c [=Mandelbaum 1949:33-45] and 1933b [=Mandelbaum 1949:46-60] articles make no explicit distinction between "taxonomic" phonemes (the kind of phoneme at the center of linguists' models from the late 1930s on, allegedly) and "systematic" phonemes (roughly, morphophonemes of the distributionists), he was doing an early form of (approved) level-mixing transformationalist phonology. Because he formul-

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Even the late Stanley Newman, though a devoted student and co-worker of Sapir, also writing in review of Mandelbaum 1949 in *JAL* (Newman 1951), gives a long, one might say pleading, apologia for the master saying that yes, Sapir did believe in science as the post-Bloomfieldians have it, and he practiced, but did not preach it (1951:185, 186):

The recent arguments over "mentalism" may have obscured Sapir's position on the relation of linguistics to the other sciences of human behavior. He was as thoroughly committed as Bloomfield to the view that a valid linguistic science must be a coherent and self-consistent body of concepts. It must not look for extra-linguistic formulations for support, or, still worse, to validate its findings.

Although Sapir used linguistic methods and procedures with consummate skill, he was an artist rather than a scientist in this regard. It was Bloomfield who formulated the methods of linguistic science into a clearly defined and tightly coherent body of doctrine.

Indeed, note that Sapir early writes to Kroeber (Golla 1984:265 [letter 246, Sapir to Kroeber, 28 November 1917]), "As to the necessity of our keeping ourselves methodologically free from psychological and biological entanglements, I more than agree with you."

lated conditions on the way units of linguistic representation at various levels are combined and undergo variations of shape in terms of a set of "grammatical" and "phonetic" processes, his is seen as a primordial generativist phonology. And so on.  

These views on all sides are charter myths, bespeaking the very essence of that "presentist" ideological history — what Boas called evolution — that especially vitalizes all scientific subculture "with its frenetic desire" (Mandelbaum 1949 [1924b]:159).

By contrast, we can pay no greater respect to Sapir than trying to give a cosmographical, historical account of his work, "lovingly try[ing] to penetrate into its secrets until every feature is plain and clear" — the phrase is again Boas's (1940 [1887]:645). Sapir's linguistics itself works through a cosmographical position — not, I must stress, a pre- or proto-scientific one — that language is a cosmographical object and hence can only be seen cosmographically by "[a] study of groups of phenomena which seem to be connected only in the mind of the observer" (Boas 1940 [1887]:645). Observe again the two implications here, one for the nature of the object of study, the other for the nature of the study itself.

First, it is only in terms of the native's subjective point of view that the very objects of investigation exist (recall Boas's loving Kiel dissertation of 1881 on the perception of the hue of water; cf. Stocking 1968:124-143). Hence, if language is a

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To be sure, a characteristic rhetoric of contrastive self-legitimization is involved, as much as that for any "school" of would-be Science, arrogating to oneself the charisma (mana) of a great figure by asserting intellectual ancestry and continuity with that figure after the ecclesiastical error of immediate predecessors. See Chomsky (1964); Chomsky and Halle (1968:76, n.), explaining the pointed title of *The Sound Pattern of English* in relation to Sapir (1925c); Postal (1968:98-99, 140, 239). *Per contra*, at least in part, see McCawley (1967), where the crucial point is whether or not Sapir had a concept of abstract classes of sounds and archi-segments, based on relativistic distinctive phonetic features, as generative phonology of that year did. (Sapir's very different conceptualization of phonological abstractions will be dealt with below.) Ironically, in response to one of McCawley's points, Hymes and Fought (1975:994) attempt to legitimate Sapir for the moderns, as it were, in the framework of science, seeming to want to substantiate the inclusion of Sapir in the generativists' patrimony of scientific "truth."
cosmographical object, it can be correctly apprehended by the analyst, as Boas puts it in the Introduction to the *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, only “as though an intelligent Indian was going to develop the forms of his own thoughts by an analysis of his own form of speech” (1911:81; cf. Stocking 1974a on the “plan”). Linguistics in the Boasian idiom is trying to capture the native’s conscious subjectivity, based on the subjective “intuition” (Mandelbaum 1949 [1924b]:156; [1927b]:422) of the native speakers; for it is only that intuitive knowledge that creates or constitutes the object of study. How to develop methods that allow us, as outsiders to a language (and culture), to accomplish the equivalent in our subjectivity is the problem.

The second implication, then, is about linguistics itself, that it must recognize that our investigator’s perception is always bounded by the particularity of recognizing distinct traditions of language. That is, there is a variety of languages, each one a distinct object, of its own time and place, lovingly to be encountered as part of a historical — not evolutionary — succession of tradition in some local geographical — not geological — framework. The investigative framework is irreducibly historical; the historical object is the product maintained through the subjectivity of the native others, at each moment part of an unbroken transmission of subjective intuitions, what Sapir calls in his 29 October 1917 letter to Kroeber (cited above) “the history ... of psychological attitudes.” Linguistics, like all other cultural studies, is “psychological” in this special Boasian sense; for like all the rest of culture, language lies at the intersection of history and the individual through the socialization of subjectivity. How utterly different from the world-view of synchronic structuralism; how utterly distinct from the cognitive-scientific strivings of contemporary positivist linguistics; how remarkably phenomenological and hermeneutic!

And Sapir followed through on the Boasian cosmographical view in seeing that not only are language and culture *sui generis* aspects of humanity perceivable only through languages and cultures, which are, indeed, also *sui generis*. He ultimately went all the way to articulating the *sui generis* and equally totalizing and cosmographically valid character of the language and culture of every individual, constituted as they are by the individual’s subjectivity and reflected in the historically-specific complex organization called “personality” (see Mandelbaum 1949 [1932]:516–520). Universals at any level are for science; they can only be the backdrop — the “quarry” for explanatory concepts — against which the anthropologist/linguist can reconstitute or understand history and subjectivity, both for the culture- and language-bearing group and for the individual.

But there is a further irony in all this, when we consider how Sapir has been appropriated by the scientific temper of his successors. For Boas observes (1940 [1887]:643) that the scientific temper must be considered an emanation of the aesthetic disposition, which is offended by confusion and want of clearness. When occupied in satisfying this desire, the regularity of the processes and phenomena would attain a far greater importance than the single phenomenon, which is only considered important as being a specimen of the class to which it belongs. The more clearly all phenomena are arranged, the better will the aesthetic desire be satisfied, and, for that reason, the most general laws and ideas are considered the most valuable results of science.


I find that what I most care for is beauty of form, whether in substance or, perhaps even more keenly, in spirit. A perfect style, a well-balanced system of philosophy, a perfect bit of music, a clearly-conceived linguistic organism, the beauty of mathematical relations — these are some of the things that, in the sphere of the immaterial, have most deeply stirred me.

This is repeated, autobiographically and point for point, in the conclusion of “The Grammarian and His Language” of 1924 (Mandelbaum 1949 [1924b]:159) about the “certain type of mind” for whom linguistics has a “profoundly serene and satisfying quality.” Sapir is at heart one of Boas’s scientists after all, trying to be an expositor and practitioner of cosmography. It was a tension that persisted in both a practical and intellectual fashion.
This tension at first found a practical balance, during Sapir’s Ottawa period (1910-1925), by dividing professional commitments from the avocational creation of socially-recognized “aesthetic” objects such as poems and pieces of music. But the scientist in Sapir could also not be repressed, and the gradual realization that the cultural and linguistic intuition is in fine an “aesthetic” impulse, in the Boasian term, the drive to pattern — this became the recurrent and pervasive theme of Sapir's intellectual reformulations of Boasian positions. To be sure, he dutifully carried out the Boasian programme of destroying the determinate a priori orderings so dear to cultural and linguistic evolutionism in favour of the accidental sequences of phenomena crucial to relativistic historicism. He aimed to destroy objective and external physicalism as frameworks for cultural facts in favour of subjective and internal intuitive formalism.

But in consciously carrying out that Boasian programme, Sapir did, almost inevitably in spite of himself, demonstrate for posterity the subject matter of a self-consciously scientific linguistics at the intersection of what we call synchrony and diachrony, “the formation and transmission of such submerged formal systems as are disclosed to us in the languages of the world” (Mandelbaum 1949 [1924b]:156). He articulated the cosmographical concept of “drift,” of “inner” or “organic” form in language, and all his seemingly synchronic theorizing is really also organized around it, not, as the post-Bloomfieldian era writers (e.g., Harris 1951:308; Martinet and Greenberg in Tax et al. 1953:107-108 and 288-290, respectively; Hoijer 1954:637-638) would have it, merely his seemingly diachronic work.11

But what are the questions that Sapir was implicitly posing and explicitly answering in his seemingly synchronic work? Do they form a Boasian programme in the sense I have outlined, and if so, how? Where is the “diachrony” in Sapir’s “synchronic” linguistics? Let us consider the framework of such questions from general to specific. We start with the question of the typology of linguistic systems, nowadays the central synchronic-structural problem that animates discussion of universal vs. specific in language across all theoretical paradigms. In earlier years the framework for research and theorizing on such matters was different.

Boas’s antagonists, racial or cultural evolutionists, created a priori typologies of cultural (including linguistic) traits, useful to them because such traits could be “scientifically” ordered, or seriated, as stages of a particular inevitable — as it was thought — temporal process. The relative placement of peoples so characterized by cultural (or “mental”) traits indicated to the evolutionists inequalities of the endowment of people in their racial or psycho-biological essentials. Simpler language, along such preconceived typological dimensions, indicates simpler mentality of speakers, and hence their earlier stage along evolutionary paths, their more primitive minds, etc. Boas and his students combatted this vigorously along a number of fronts that, taken together, do amount to a profound the most probative comparisons for linguistic classification and history; e.g., Sapir (1925a:491-492):

... it may appear, and frequently does appear, that the most important grammatical features of a given language and perhaps the bulk of what is conventionally called its grammar are of little value for the remoter comparison, which may rest largely on submerged features that are of only minor interest to descriptive analysis. Those who find this a paradox think descriptively rather than historically.

Indeed, methodologically, “drift” involves the historical dimensions of what is quintessentially synchronic (or, methodologically, “descriptive”) at any given moment in the life of language, as we shall see below. It is precisely what makes of the “submerged features” useful for historical linguistics the structural debris of an earlier time that they are. To reconstruct historically, then, is to undo the dynamics of “drift.”

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11In fact, in the specific ways they use and exemplify the term “drift,” these writers, like others later — see references in Malkiel (1981) — have it precisely backwards. Hoijer (1954), for example, identifies the concept of drift with the comparison of remotely-related languages which show “significant parallels in complex and distinctive morphological features that are, by their submerged character, obviously archaic in the languages concerned.” Harris (1951) identifies Sapir’s “drift” as the cause of what Meillet called “parallel independent developments” in genetically related languages (cf. here Greenberg’s remarks). In fact, just like Meillet’s, Sapir’s historical linguistics involved undoing and ignoring the results of “drift” in order to
gramme of overthrowing the evolutionary view. Attack the inevitability of predictable, unidirectional temporal transformations; complicate the picture of what such transformations consist of; attack the sufficiency of proposed typologies that were read as the evolutionary development of traits; attack the very universal applicability of absolute physical, objective, and scientific/logical characterizations to the very traits one wishes to order in series; demonstrate instead the cosmographical, locally historical-subjective constitution of "traits": achieve this, and you have overthrown the evolutionist, typological approach, and at the same time captured its object of study for cosmography, for Boasian ethnology and linguistics. This plays itself out in Sapir's linguistics in a number of specific ways.

Thus note Sapir's 1917 response to C.C. Uhlenbeck's formulation of an evolutionary development in verbal voice morphology, passive type of construction of the proposition ("The rat was eaten by the cat") evolving to active ("The cat ate the rat"). "To Uhlenbeck's speculations as to primitiveness of the passive verb," Sapir writes (1917b:85),

I am not inclined to attach much importance. Such questions must be attacked morphologically and historically, not ethno-psychologically. As long as we are not better informed as to the exact distribution of types of pronominal classification and as to the historical drifts inferred from comparative linguistic research, it is premature to talk of certain features as primitive, of others as secondary.

Observe what is implied: the Uhlenbeck evolutionary scheme is an ethno-psychological a priori; it needs to be examined from the point of view of linguistic morphology and its history. Languages have to be studied for "the exact distribution of types," i.e., geographically — for diffusion — as well as with standard comparative-historical studies — for regular change — and "primitive" vs. "secondary" features will emerge from the "drifts" inferable from historical change. Characteristic Boasian rhetorical negativism, saving the day for evolution by hedging the latter with exposure of its unexamined assumptions, posed through counterexemplification as actually problems for future research.

This is also the case with Sapir's early treatment of morphological typology in his doctoral dissertation, the Takelma grammar finished in the summer of 1907 (Sapir 1922:281-282), and more generally in the compendious 1911 lecture "The History and Varieties of Human Speech" (1913:588-595), and its later development, Chapter 6 of the book Language of 1920-21, (Sapir 1921), and similar later pieces, such as "Language" (Mandelbaum 1949 [1933a]:18-22) from the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences. Bad typologies of traits are exposed; better, more inclusive and generalizing ones are substituted; and then even these are shown to have no unilinear evolutionary trends, nor nontrivial absolute correlations with any language-external factors, such as environment (Mandelbaum 1949 [1912]:89-103), race and culture in Language (1949 [1921]:207-220), etc. Even Sapir's treatments of general typological phenomena, such as noun incorporation (1911), pronominal inflectional systems (1917b), and possession (1917c), are ultimately oriented to such negative use of typology.

But perhaps the most remarkable negative instance in the whole Sapirian œuvre is the differentiation demonstrated between the physical, objective traits of the laboratory phonetician and the cosmographical, subjective systems of implied points of what Sapir eventually was to call the phonemic pattern of languages. Here we see that Boasian rhetorical negativism notwithstanding, Sapir creates a set of positive concepts and theoretical formulations that constitute insights of a new field. And here, more than anywhere else, we see the contrast between Sapir's cosmographical-historicist linguistics and Bloomfield's physical-scientistic linguistics. Observe how Sapir reviews J. Alden Mason's Salinan grammar (1920:305):

Mason's treatment of the Salinan phonetic system, as a system and without regard to sound relationships, is eminently satisfactory and shows considerable grounding in general phonetics.13 Less satisfactory

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13The in-joke here seems to be that Sapir taught Mason general phonetics at the University of Pennsylvania while on the first year of his fellowship there in 1909-1910. Sapir was Mason's supervisor in graduate work in
are Mason's contributions to the phonology of Salinan. For purposes of linguistic comparison it is important to know not so much the distinctive sounds found, in their various nuances, in a given language, as the irreducible set of organically, or better, etymologically, distinct sounds with which one has to operate. Thus to say that two languages both possess a given sound, say x, is not even suggestive unless we know that the status of the x is analogous, in other words, that it is both a primary consonant or secondarily developed from an identical source.

Irreducible, organic, etymologically distinct, primary sounds vs. secondary developments from them or from some other source. The apparent appeal to historical time here should not merely be read as a terminologically pre-differentiated stage in the transition to clearer, synchronic terminology from the 19th-century talk of phonetic changes. The point is, organic or "etymological" sounds are those which are, paradoxically, truly objective, i.e., not a priori, for such cosmographical objects as language, whose objectivity to us as outsiders is always in a historical framework, but whose objectivity to the insider, as we shall see, is constituted through intuitions of pattern. Hence, as Sapir says, it is important for us to understand the relative status of the two sounds [x] "for the purpose of linguistic comparison," i.e., to establish the specific historical-psychological position of the sounds in their respective languages. The redemptive development from such primary or etymological sounds, into all the various nuances that would be captured in a phonetic record. What is the status of such processes?

Like others of the period, Sapir inherited from the 19th has still to be gathered from other Athabaskan dialects. It is already reasonably certain that the inflected tones of Sarcee are of secondary origin and cannot be credited [sic] to the original Athabaskan tongue. . . .

How did tone come to have grammatical function . . . ? Are these functional uses the consequences of merely mechanical tone principles and not directly symbolic in origin?

Or, of this same period, his discussion of Haida phonetics, where he notes (Sapir 1923:154):

The vocalic nuances seem to be due primarily to secondary phonetic causes rather than to basic etymological differences. It is quite probable that there are only three organically distinct vowels.

Note he contrasts such "nuancing" with what he calls "definite phonetic process," as in the following continuing discussion:

After anterior palatals there is good reason to believe that an original a is sometimes completely palatalized to i, i. This is not a mere matter of nuancing . . . but a definite phonetic process that disconnects the new vowel from its old category.

And note that what we now call "phonemic" or "phonological" is "etymological" in Sapir's usage (1923:155–156): "In [Eskimo, Wakashan, and Tsimshian] vocalic quantity is as much a matter of etymology as is the consonantal framework of the word." These examples, almost exactly coeval with "Sound Patterns in Language" (1925c), show the CONSISTENCY of Sapir's usage, an important aspect of seeing that it is not fortuitous, transitional, or in similar respect not a constant of his way of thinking. Only in the mid-to-late 1930s, with the rapid development of terminology under the influence of Bloomfield and his followers, does Sapir's work use the terms "phoneme," etc. in the dominant fashion. But it is presumably only as a matter of discourse fashion, since all his research is still in the framework of earlier years.

Especially interesting in comparison to Sapir (1913) are Bloomfield's An Introduction to the Study of Language (1914:195–258), and Saussure's Cours de linguistique générale (1960 [1916]:193–260, 291–303; based on lectures of date roughly comparable to Sapir's first published general statement). Though Sapir (1913) makes reference only to Franz Nikolaus Finck's Die anthropology from the 1908–1909 year (see Golla 1984:42, 45–46, 49–50 [letters 47, 51, 55, Sapir to Kroeber, 18 August 1909, 12 December 1909, 16 March 1910]).
century the understanding that, as a historical process of transformation of form, language change consisted essentially of phonetic change (see 1913 and 1931a [Mandelbaum 1949:74], some 20 years apart). Analogy also creates forms based on meaning-encoding grammatical structure; it is a kind of restorative or readjusting tendency of linguistic systems, seeking equilibrium and operating as a consequence of phonetic change (Sapir 1913:582-587). Phonetic change is, in this view, regular, exceptionless, and, it was thought, mechanical, in the sense that it proceeded from physical or physiological characteristics of articulating sounds in particular combinations during utterance. If sound systems of languages were truly cosmographical objects, however, even the phonetic history of language should not be a matter of physiology exclusively; for language itself, including sound systems, must be a subjective totality to the native, one that the native's intuition constitutes. The discovery of the nature of this intuition is gradually enunciated by the time of the close of Sapir's Ottawa period. As he says in concluding “Sound Patterns in Language” (Mandelbaum 1949 [1925c]:44):

In this paper I do not wish to go into the complex and tangled problems of the nature and generality of sound changes in language. All that I wish to point out here is that it is obviously not immaterial to understand how a sound pattern if we are to understand its history. Of course, it is true that mechanical sound changes may bring about serious readjustments of phonetic pattern and may even create new configurations within the pattern. But it is equally true that the pattern feeling acts as a hindrance of, or stimulus to, certain sound changes and that it is not permissible to look for universally valid sound changes under like articulatory conditions. . . . A complete theory of

Haupttypen des Sprachbaus (1910), a work of eight grammatical sketches — not the sketches of the Handbook (Boas 1911) — the background for his theoretical outlook, in addition to Boas's, should be sought in such standard works as Hermann Paul's Principien der Sprachgeschichte (1880, 4th ed. 1909), e.g., Paul (1880:32-34, 38-39, 100-103), with the methodological individualism of which — as opposed to the rival [cf. Paul 1909:v-vii] theoretical outlook of Wundt with which Bloomfield (1914) explicitly allies itself — Sapir's early formulation of linguistic history is, ironically, entirely compatible.

sound change has to take constant account of the orientation of sounds in our sense.

Here, then, is the assertion about the cosmography of sound: when we describe the subjectively real sounds, we will have constituted the valid object of historical interest to us as outsiders, a pattern of sounds (later, phonemes) on which sound laws operate, even if these latter are in part purely physiological. Sapir even sets the stage in the very first paragraph of this paper (Mandelbaum 1949 [1925c]:33) by addressing himself to “phonetic processes” or “sound processes” such as Umlaut and Grimm's Law, which, he will show, “cannot be properly understood in such simple, mechanical terms” as an a priori, nonsubjective phonetics would have it. It is not a physical or physiological typology of phonetic sounds that is valid, for historical or any other type of analysis; it is only a conception of typology that sees these sounds as inner points in a sound pattern, physically realized but ultimately nonphysical entities that stand at the intersection of native subjectivity and externally-viewed historical development (cf. Sapir 1949 [1921]:182-183).

So the processes that affect these entities are at once historical and “psychological” in the special sense of this word. Speakers of a language produce and use these entities, these organically distinct sounds, through a set of nuanced actualizations developed in terms of them. At the same time, history can document the record of nuances — “conditioned variations” — peculiar to specific times and places in the course of transmission of the tradition of a language. At an earlier period in the tradition, such recoverable variations in actualization once affected the organic sounds, now seen as (in our sense) etymologically distinct sounds. And in terms of this, sound laws are like processes of actualization by native speakers that we now describe in the real time of tradition, because their time-and-place as “psychological” realities has passed.

Here is how Sapir (Mandelbaum 1949 [1933b]:48-49) reports his 1910 experience in teaching Tony Tillohash, the Southern Paiute speaker, to write his own language (and cf. Golla 1984:220–222 [letter 208, Sapir to Kroeberr, 8 September 1916]):
As an example of a comparatively simple word I selected \( pd\beta \)a “at the water” . . . I instructed Tony to divide the word into its syllables and to discover by careful hearing what sounds entered into the composition of each of the syllables, and in what order, then to attempt to write down the proper symbol for each of the discovered phonetic elements. To my astonishment Tony then syllabified: \( pa\); pause \( pa\). I say “astonishment” because I at once recognized the paradox that Tony was not “hearing” in terms of the actual sounds (the voiced bilabial \( \beta \) was objectively very different from the initial stop) but in terms of an etymological reconstruction: \( pa\) “water” plus postposition *-\( pa\) “at.” The slight pause which intervened after the stem was enough to divert Tony from the phonetically proper form of the postposition to a theoretically real but actually nonexistent form.

Mr. Tilhoash “heard etymologically” only in the sense that, in this case, as in all the other cases Sapir reports on in his theoretical and descriptive works about phonology, the “true” sounds are both subjectively organic and historically etymological. It is not so much a recapitulationist point of view, as who already in his 1917 Tagalog grammar had a clear idea of the distinction theoretical and descriptive works about phonology, the “true” has been later emphasized, as an undifferentiated one.\(^ 17\) As

\(^{17}\)The recapitulationism is indeed later given sharper focus by Bloomfield, who already in his 1917 Tagalog grammar had a clear idea of the distinction between historical and descriptive or logical ordering of processes (1917:10, 211n), and who makes the whole issue explicit in his “Menomini Morphophonemics” (1939a [Hockett 1970:351–362]). Indeed, the exact situation of the phonological or grammatical “process” as a purely synchronic notion became more than an acute terminological problem for later commentators, in different ways. Post-Bloomfieldian descriptivists eventually settled on their own self-justifying explanatory understanding of the history of the field, formulating the “evolution” of process-models of language structure, seen as remnants of an earlier historicism, into pure distributional models. See Harris’s “Yokuts Structure and Newman’s Grammar” (1944), and compare the remarks quoted earlier from Harris (1951); Hockett’s “Two Models” paper (1954), with its query about the presumed “historical” priority of base over derived forms in a process statement (p. 211); and others. Note that the issue of recapitulation of the actual order of historical changes in language by the (logical) ordering of synchronic processes of a grammatical description came once more to the fore as an actual issue about language itself — not one of remnant terminology or formalisms of an “earlier” linguistics — in generative phonology. For example, Halle’s well-known paper in *Word* on “Phonology in Generative Grammar” cites Bloomfield and discusses examples (1962:66–68). Observe that, however they rationalize the any modern descriptivist would see, Sapir attributes the occurrence of the non-spirantized \( p \) in -\( pa\) “at” to the emergence of a kind of word-initial position after the articulatory pause — recall, “\( pa\); pause, \( pa\)” — that removes the context for the application of the Southern Paiute rule of intervocalic spirantization. Observe that the particular alternant of the phoneme (or morphophoneme) that occurs in the “everywhere else” position, i.e., unconditioned, or non-specifically conditioned, is the one that is attributed “organic” or “etymological” status. Hence, when two phonetically identical sounds [\( x \)] occur, one an “organic” one and one merely a “secondary development” or “deflection” from a distinct “organic” sound, the “organic” sound is called a “true” sound \( x \) and the other, a secondary one, merely a “pseudo”-sound \( x \). The terminology runs through the entire œuvre, beginning with the Takelma grammar of 1907, where this is well worked out, down through the specifically phonological papers of 1925c and 1933b, and beyond.

Sapir’s examples in “The Psychological Reality of Phonemes” (Mandelbaum 1949 [1933b]:46–60), as well as remarks he develops in several other places on the unconscious patterning of linguistic and other behaviour in society (e.g., 1927b:422–423, Mandelbaum 1949 [1929b]:544–559), indicate the central point he wishes to make about the “subjectivity” inherent in such “organic” — or, we might say, “genuine” — patterns. Recall that Boas, in delimiting “cosmography” in 1887, had spoken of the affective basis of apprehension of some object of cosmographic study in its totality. Indeed, in the Introduction to the *Handbook*, this same theme is played again in speaking of the “unconscious character of linguistic phenomena” (1911:67–73, esp. 67):

... all these concepts, although they are in constant use, have never risen into consciousness, and ... consequently their origin must be sought, not in rational, but in entirely unconscious, we may perhaps say instinctive, processes of the mind. ... It would seem that the essential difference between linguistic phenomena and other ethnomental problem, all these writers accept the fundamental opposition of synchrony and diachrony, in terms of which only does the recapitulationist argument make sense.
phenomena is, that the linguistic classifications never rise into consciousness, while in other ethnological phenomena, although the same unconscious origin prevails, these often rise into consciousness, and thus give rise to secondary reasoning and re-interpretations.

Such secondary reasoning and reinterpretation were, for Boas, conscious processes that constituted "misleading and disturbing factors" to the ethnologist's cosmographic search for the "real history of the development of ideas," something much more easily achieved, according to Boas, in language (1911:71; 1908 [Stocking, ed. 1974:278–280]). A native's consciousness is always, we would say, false consciousness. And as a subjective experience, the native reacts to a violation of categories basically in terms of "the influence of strong emotions" (1911:70), since for Boas it is an affective attachment that sparks the sense of cosmographic wholeness of an object (here, category). Hence, Boas's predecessors dismissed American Indian languages as showing lack of categorial clarity, including "fluctuation" or "alternation" in sounds that just did not fit within expected European categories of phonetic expectations (Boas 1889 [Stocking, ed. 1974:72–77]; cf. Stocking 1968:157–160, and contrast Wells 1974:445–450).

By contrast, for Sapir the phonological pattern, though intuitive and unconscious, underlies the very ability of the subject to have a conscious apprehension of his own as well as of others' phonetic behaviour. In the famous negative title theme of his paper (Mandelbaum 1949 [1924a]:314–315):

"It is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to teach a native to take account of purely mechanical phonetic variations which have no phonemic reality for him. ... The native realizes what he is taught "clicks" with what his phonological intuitions have already taught him; but he is made uncomfortable when purely phonetic distinctions are pointed out to him which seem real enough when he focuses his attention on them but which are always fading out of his consciousness because their objective reality is not confirmed by these intuitions."

More positively, as Sapir asserts in Language (1949 [1921]:55),

"the more restricted "inner" or "ideal" system which, while perhaps equally unconscious as a system to the naive speaker, can far more readily than any other [purely objective system of sounds] be brought to his consciousness as a finished pattern, a psychological mechanism.

Hence, unlike Boas's (and later, of course, Whorf's) notion of the essentially distorting and false consciousness of natives' secondary rationalizations about their own cultural and linguistic systems, Sapir argues that consciousness develops an essential sense of aesthetic satisfaction, of "genuineness," to use one of the Sapirian catchwords, about a match between it and the unconscious, or inner, form of a system. Consciously, we resonate, or "click" with the true system of sounds, as orthography experiments demonstrate, just as we do with the rest of culture. And further, Sapir argues this point in terms of an aesthetic, not an affective, psychic mechanism: inner phonological form, like any inner or genuine cultural form, is the unconscious artwork that underlies conscious apprehension of both native and scientist. In the original Boasian cosmographic terms, the "genuine" conscious apprehension of the phenomenon must, ironically, be aesthetic in origin, "form-feeling." And the seemingly positive "objectivity" of absolute and universal scientific considerations can only be founded on "affectively"-driven calibration of intuitions (cf. again Whorf). No wonder Boas him-

\[18\]So Sapir's formulation of a "genuine" culture (as opposed to a "spurious" one) is couched in terms of how such a cultural pattern gives to the consciousness its sense of fulfillment (Mandelbaum 1949 [1924a]:314–315):

"The genuine culture ... is merely inherently harmonious, balanced, self-satisfactory. It is the expression of a richly varied and yet somehow unified and consistent attitude toward life, an attitude which sees the significance of any one element of civilization in its relation to all others. It is, ideally speaking, a culture in which nothing is spiritually meaningless, in which no important part of the general functioning brings with it a sense of frustration, of misdirected or unsympathetic effort. It is not a spiritual hybrid of contradictory patches, of water-tight compartments of consciousness that avoid participation in a harmonious synthesis.

Such statements and terminology run throughout Sapir's work, only without the modifier "genuine" for the term "culture."
self became more and more the anti-comparative and even anti-historical particularist!

So if phonological patterns are art, how can we consciously discover them? Do we perforce need to violate the cosmographer’s methods and use science? Here, one of the most interesting aspects of Sapir’s work emerges, first found in the Takelma dissertation, though recurrent in the formalisms he used in presenting phonology down through the 1930s. It is, in fact, the other, more external viewpoint on the cosmographical object, history, incorporated as an analytic moment of phonology.

As was said above, linguistic history at that time was seen as consisting not only of various phonetic laws, or sound changes the differentiating results of which were observable in pronunciation of related linguistic forms, but also of restorative analogical processes. The typical formulation of such analogies was in terms of the proportional relation, schematically, $a_1 : b_1 :: a_2 : x ; x = b_2$. Substituting constants for the variables, this was useful in explaining the creation of more “regular” — i.e., proportional — new forms that replace forms made irregular by phonetic change, as Latin honor [nom. sg.] replaced *hōnos as though it was a systematically better solution to the proportion ὀράτοριον ∶ ὀράτορ ∶ ὁνόρεμ : $x$, the form honorem having been the automatic consequence of a phonetic change of *s to r between vowels (Saussure 1960 [1916]:222). Writers down through Bloomfield (1933:273–276) understood such analogies to be what we now call synchronic in nature; that is, the potential of the grammatical system as a structuring norm asserts itself in the domain of meaningful forms like words each time we speak, and “analogous concepts and relations,” as Sapir himself wrote (1949 [1921]:38), “are most conveniently symbolized in analogous forms.” Change of analogy, or analogical change, as a historical event, was the creation of a more regular occurring form for $x$, the proportional $b_2$ in our formula, for some other form that would occur from the operation of purely mechanical phonetic changes, and other historical events, that tend to make the analogical regularity of the system less patent. Analogic formulae thus express relationships of forms within the same system of, if you will, oppositions; they were generally employed only for historical creations at the morphological level.

What Sapir does in his Takelma work is to extend the notion of analogic formula to words considered entirely from the “phonetic” point of view. He calls them “phonetic (not morphologic) proportions” (Sapir 1922:11), indicating that he knows exactly what he is doing. In such phonologic (as he later would say) proportions, sets of forms are contrasted as proportional phonetic equals, even though the overt (i.e., explicit, recordable) forms clearly need not be comparable. Thus, the italicized phonetic sequences in the following example from Sapir are proportional as phonetic shapes regardless of any differences in grammatical structure and meaning of the words in which they occur: $gai'k’ 'it seems that he ate it'; $gayawอะ ‘I ate it’ ∶ $ga·ik’ ‘it seems that he grew’ ∶ $ga·ayอะ t ‘he will grow’. Here, we have illustrated the parallel alternation, under proper syllabic conditions alone, of short and long diphthongs $[ai]$ vs. $[a·i] = [a^2y]$, the first pair phonologically /ai/, the second /a·i/. It is the forms conceived of in terms of their “organic” or “etymological” status that enter into such proportions, regardless of their meanings. That is, whatever secondary phonetic changes have operated on the etymological formations, their proportionality in some non-phonetic sense is still the fundamental, or organic, property for the purposes of analyzing the language. Sapir has discovered that constructions in language can be presented entirely in terms of a structure of sound, and that forms in this sound structure have the same kinds of analogical properties as does grammar (i.e., morphology). The formalisms of the rest of his œuvre follow from this discovery, or implicit methodological assertion

19 Note also the case of phonological glottalized /s'/, which has the constant phonetic form /t's/, though by parallelism of occurrence in conditions of glottalization of a consonant, it clearly functions as the glottalization product of /s/ (=/s/), as shown by the proportional aorist vs. future stems in the formula: *t’omom- ∶ do’mm- ∶ *p’ugug- ∶ bu’g- ∶ ∶ ∶ t’sadad- ∶ so’a·d- (Sapir 1922:34; irrelevant diacritics omitted).

20 And note that Sapir uses an asterisk (*) to indicate morphologically expected “theoretical forms” that one would observe if phonologic rules/phonetic changes had not operated. Notation emphasizes the covering nature of the term “etymological.”
of equivalence of sound and grammar. (See especially Sapir in Mandelbaum 1949 [1925c]:42 for the general methodological principle.)

Just as analogies of form, proportional oppositions, are the means of analyzing and presenting language at the grammatical level, the very principle of orderliness that holds morphology and syntax together, so also are they at the level of sound. There is not only a physics, a physiology of sound there is a "grammar" of sound in exactly the same dually historical and subjective sense.

This viewpoint is confirmed again and again in Sapir’s work in his introduction of the critical concept of “drift,” which was his way of speaking of the doubly constituted object of cosmographical linguistics. The major innovation in treatment over Boas in Sapir’s 1921 Language, in fact, comes from this startling dénouement: demonstrating grammatical “drift” by using as an example the loss of the modern English form whom (in favour of who) in Chapter 7, based on the notions developed in Chapter 6 about linguistic types, to one of which English as a language is said still to be moving, a major “drift.” And then, startlingly, in Chapter 8, treating “phonetic law” itself— that erstwhile solidly physiological mechanism— as really systemic phonological drift! Phonetic processes come and go; minutely-transcribable phonetic shapes of words shift this way and that; but the “drift,” definable in terms of overall phonological type, cumulates in specific directions, achieving a kind of “punctuated equilibrium” trajectory from points of systemic cohesion and rest through periods of transition to other points of systemic cohesion. Just like morphology and syntax, Sapir wishes to demonstrate that it is the phonological SYSTEM itself that is the locus of change, not mere phonetics at the level of articulatory/auditory usage. He later summarized this in his Encyclopaedia article (Mandelbaum 1949 [1933a]:23):

21Compare Jakobson’s work on historical phonology in the late 1920s and early 1930s (e.g., Jakobson 1931), in which the notion that the system of phonological oppositions in language is the actual locus of “sound laws” was also developed. Similarly, Jakobson early introduced American post-Bloomfieldians to the notions of “static diachrony” and “dynamic synchrony,” which, together, deal with the equivalent of Sapir’s “drift.” See, for instance, his remarks at the 1952 “Anthropology Today” Symposium of the Wenner-Gren Foundation in Tax et al. (1953:313–314). Jakobson continued to emphasize these dimensions in opposition to the unexamined Neogrammarians’ world view of American linguistics— including so-called sociolinguistics— which persists even today.

“Drift” was apparently widely misunderstood by Sapir’s contemporaries, at least partly, one supposes, because it was introduced so innovatively, with the usual historical linguistic treatment reversed, morphological analogy being discussed before sound change. It was also introduced with no real technical terminology, but rather with watery metaphors, e.g., “at the surface the current is relatively fast” (Sapir 1949 [1921]:171); “only certain wave movements in the bay outline the tide” (p. 155); “drift ... renders innocuous by washing the old significance out” (p. 166); “the cumulative force that selects these or those particular variations of the individual on which to float the pattern readjustments” (p. 183); “swept into being by one of the surface drifts of the language” (p. 190); etc. But, as was mentioned before, any “scientific” and Bloomfieldian tradition will misconstrue “drift” as a specifically historical causal force of some unexamined kind (see remarks quoted in notes 5 and 11), and indeed the misconstrual continues to the present day, to judge from recent comments (see Malkiel 1981 and references there). It apparently had a “mystical” ring about it to Robert Lowie— of course, himself one of the proponents of a “science” of ethnological laws in the structural-functionalist mode, and very anti-cosmography. Sapir writes about this in a letter to Lowie of 23 May 1921 (Lowie 1965:48–49), after Lowie had read and commented upon the manuscript of Language:22

Interestingly, even as an emeritus professor, Lowie felt obliged to repeat
The “mysticism” about drift is due to the fact that the precise nature (psychological or otherwise) of the sequential process, involving accelerated movement to type, is not understood. We can feel the facts and the process even if we cannot intelligently define the process. We get these drifts also in the history of art, religion, social forms. The determinants of the concept of “drift” doubtless involve mathematical and quasi-aesthetic intuitions. “Evolution” as ordinarily understood is probably an utterly different process. “Drift” may be a poor word, but it has the advantage of being non-committal. It is too innocent to hurt much.

We should also observe what we might call the metaphorical geometry or topology that unites in the concept of “drift” the internal historical and subjective dimensions of language as the Boasian cosmographical object par excellence. “Language moves down time in a current of its own making,” wrote Sapir, internalizing diachrony in the object itself. “It has a drift” (1949 [1921]:150). And indeed (p. 154):

his judgment for his assembled colleagues in 1952 (Tax et al. 1953:290-291):

I should like to revert to the concept of drift, which has been bothering me ever since I encountered it in Sapir’s book on language. It seems to me that there is an analogy here between drift and orthogenesis in evolution. A mystical flavor clings about the concept of drift, as it is used in Sapir’s book.

To a generation that had become firmly convinced of the statistical and fortuitous genetic basis of evolutionary change in the biology of the “New Synthesis,” the comparison of drift with orthogenesis — which hovered in biology between organism-internal Lamarckism and other teleologies — could not have been intended or received as a flattering one. But Lowie goes on, moreover, to assimilate drift to his own structural-functionalism of the covariationist sort, never countenancing the level of system itself:

As in culture, so in that subpart of culture which we call “linguistics,” certain aspects are functionally correlated, and one might deduce, then, the occurrence of a particular phenomenon from the occurrence of some other phenomenon. Sapir gives illustrations — I think in connection with the recurrence in quite unrelated families of such a phenomenon as the dual number. . . . He seems to suggest that with this phenomenon there would be other phenomena.

[I cannot locate the passage in question. —MS]

. . . if this drift of language is not merely the familiar set of individual variations seen in vertical perspective, that is historically, instead of horizontally, that is in daily experience, what is it?

So the historical dimension of the object is vertical, and the horizontal is the subjectivity of use of the system, that is, the “daily experience” of the native speakers. But this horizontal dimension must, in effect, be seen radially, from an “inner” core, to an outer or surface of manifest actualization. Thus, the sound system of language is described (1949 [1921]:55):

Back of the purely objective system of sounds that is peculiar to a language and which can be arrived at only by painstaking phonetic analysis, there is a more restricted “inner” or “ideal” system . . . The inner sound-system, overlaid though it may be by the mechanical or the irrelevant, is a real and immensely important principle in the life of a language.23

The “purely objective” phenomena produced in actualization of the system by mechanical processes are at once at the surface of drift and at the outer periphery of the language system, implying a three-dimensional space of a non-linear and non-rectilinear sort. At any moment, the relationship between the outer and the inner is dynamically balanced as also constituting a relationship between higher (diachronically earlier, hence, “etymological”) and lower (diachronically later, hence, 23The consistency of this metaphor is revealed in Sapir’s more mature considerations of culture more generally, e.g., in a 1934 paper (Mandelbaum 1949 [1934a]:594):

Behind the simple diagrammatic forms of culture is concealed a peculiar network of relationships, which, in their totality, carve out entirely new forms that stand in no simple relation to the obvious cultural table of contents. Thus, a word, a gesture, a genealogy, a type of religious belief may unexpectedly join hands in a common symbolism of status definition.

Sapir is contrasting the institutional domains and action patterns of the “obvious cultural table of contents” of the sociologist and social anthropologist of his day with the “inner” (or, as we say in our metaphor, underlying) symbolic structure that gives processual life to the mutual indexical actualizations of behaviour.
“on the make,” as it were,” to use Sapir’s own phraseology (Mandelbaum 1949 [1938b]:229). Outer-to-inner is the methodological route by which we seek to capture the system from the natives’ point of view; higher-to-lower/lower-to-higher is the way we can view the system abstractly as a temporal object. But each implies the other. To the native, looking “in,” as it were, is looking “up”; hence, the native hears “etymological” sounds. To the linguist, looking “out,” as it were, is looking “down”; hence the linguist documents “secondary” and “pseudo”-sounds as the leading edge of variation/drift. As with sound system, so with the rest of grammar. “Drift” is the curvilinear topology of synchronic dynamics/diachronic statics (cf. note 21) that the cosmographic system constitutes as “of its own making.”

It has been easy for the scientific trend in linguistics to incorporate piecemeal such of Sapir’s linguistics as could be fathomed from within that point of view, which Bloomfield and his successors to the present day have spent so much energy in promoting like evangelical preachers. Indeed, it is in phonology more than anywhere else that Bloomfield himself paid compliment to his colleague, though not in very profound ways. (In reviewing Sapir’s Language, for example, Bloomfield (1922 [Hockett 1970:91-94]) condemned the typology of which Sapir was so proud,24 bringing together as it did all of the Boasian ideas about grammatical processes and grammatical concepts, and paving the way for the dénouement, “drift.”) Sapir himself continued vigorously to collect important new linguistic data well into the 1930s, but it is clear that this represented relaxation of a more “practical” sort rather than theoretical-level exertions. The essential intellectual configuration of cosmography within Boasian anthropology pushed him more and more to explore the nature of individual subjectivity within culture, taking off from his particular concern with the “aesthetics” lying behind symbolic expression in consciousness and subjectivity. This led Sapir to concentrate on the broader psychic substrate of symbolic processes, which, as he said in his 1938 letter to Kroeber (cited earlier), ought ultimately to explain the “consistencies and spatial and temporal persistencies” “in cultural patterns, linguistics included.” Such study would serve Bloomfield and his successors in linguistics as an example from “such twilit realms as anthropology, psychology, and philosophy” (Bloomfield 1939b [Hockett 1970:365]) of “vestigial traits in culture: shreds of medieval speculation still hanging to the propellers of science and sometimes fouling them” (Bloomfield 1943 [Hockett 1970:407]). A place has been found for Sapir, or rather for pieces of the Sapirian œuvre, by this scientized linguistics, according to the terms of its own consciousness — emic, false, or otherwise.

It is time, on his centenary, to attempt to reconstruct the real scholarly subjectivity of Sapir as a historical, not scriptural figure. In doing so, and in discovering the cosmographic Sapir, we return to profound issues in the social sciences that may once again be able to rejuvenate the study of language.

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24See Lowie (1965:47-49, 58-59), with letters of Sapir to Lowie of 19 April 1921, 23 May 1921 and 25 March 1926. There are clear continuities in the typological aspects of Sapir (1913) that are obvious on a comparative reading of this with Sapir (1921).


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Presumably "organic" comes out of that as the adjectival form. But it doesn’t deal with the physiological as such. Sapir is quite clear when he talks about physical and physiological that he’s talking there about what we now call biology.

Edwin Weinstein: Yes, it’s puzzled me often with Sapir’s use of the term “psychological.” He often uses it where today we would use “neurological” and he seems to use psychological as opposed to linguistic.

Michael Silverstein: I think there’s a slightly subtler distinction that Sapir makes at least in his later works between what he calls “psychological,” meaning what we would now call socialized cognition in cognitive psychology, and “psychiatric,” which is the perspective on the individual from the point of view of the basic, as he had it in his own mind, post-Freudian and Sullivanian traditions of psychiatry. And therefore he talks in his later works about a “psychiatric” perspective on culture and language in the unpublished lecture notes for his Yale seminars of the mid 1930s, on the Psychology of Culture. He makes a distinction between psychological in what we would now call socialized cognition, which you have to study through studying cultural objects like languages and patterns in culture, and “psychiatric,” which is this more fundamental sort of thing. But that’s a late differentiation in his work. That’s to say it really comes from the late 20s after he went to the University of Chicago.

Yakov Malkiel (University of California/Berkeley): I would like to make a very brief comment on the word “organic.” We must remember that Sapir as a very young man was a student of Germanics before he became a convert to Boasian anthropology and linguistics. And of course in German literature it was the great Weimar period and Goethe that were studied in those days, and in Goethe the word “organic” is a basic term of his Weltanschauung. Yes, he even wrote a philosophical poem which I think is called Grundworte or Urworte, and one of the Urworte is Das Organische. I don’t wish to give a lecture here on Goethe, but I suppose that the source of Sapirian concept of organic is probably the Goethean sense.

Michael Silverstein: I agree that it’s perfectly likely if he was a Germanist that he would have come in contact with...
Goethe's works, to be sure; however, I'm simply operating as, if you will, a cosmographer of his *œuvre*, and I can go no further back in terms of actual historical contact than with the Boasian use of the word. It comes out of this metaphor of the cultural organism, and linguistic organism of which each piece is "organic." But indeed that metaphor is a much wider Romantic view than that even of Charles Darwin.

Yakov Malkiel: I am fascinated by the use of the term "etymological." I have given some thought to etymology over the years, but this particular use is new to me and I'm very eager in light of your lecture to study Sapir's concept of "etymology." It goes beyond the ordinary concept of etymology, which is just the history of individual words and the sources of individual words which we know from etymological dictionaries and the like, but there is here something considerably deeper, I think.

Michael Silverstein: Well, the important point about the use of the word, given the fact that the word "etymological" occurs in things which we now read as synchronic descriptions of languages in our perspective, is that it means in the Boasian idiom the combination of simple elements into derived elements, i.e., what we see now as complex morphology of forms from simple elements; hence those elements forming the etymology in an undifferentiated sense. Remember, for Boas's cosmographical objects the only valid perspective on these was the fact that these morphological complexes must have been formed in a historical sense, put together under the notion of fundamental traits that historically agglomerate in some way. Boas's problem was that he had no way of telling why certain traits agglomerate and others didn't. Sapir finally provided the solution in terms of this doctrine of a system, that is to say what Saussure also independently discovered about the notion of proportional relationships. So "etymological" really has this double sense always for these writers and my argument is of course that it has to, given their framework.

Kenneth Pike ([Summer Institute of Linguistics]): I want to ask a question: 1) whether my historical memory in your opinion is correct, and 2) if it's correct, if what you've said is an explanation for it. I was at the University of Michigan in the summers from 1937 to 1940. In 1937, the general atmosphere was strongly treating Sapir as the great teacher; by 1940, the shift had left Sapir almost totally and it was almost totally toward Bloomfield. That's my memory. It appeared to me that the shift was enormously sharp along about 1939 or 1940.

Michael Silverstein: That's a question about what Leslie White used to like to call the social organization of ethno- logical theory, more than simply the individual intellectual history that I'm dealing with. However, I believe that one can easily see why that might have been the case, given the fact that Sapir's own students more and more were operating within the other framework, and indeed were writing their papers, publishing, getting commissions for work and so forth entirely in the other perspective. Thus ultimately Sapir's particular outlook, as I said, was incorporated only insofar as it could be comprehended through the notion of descriptive linguistics as a science in that kind of very particular positivist sense that Bloomfield so enjoyed inducing. There is an interesting quotation of the course descriptions of the introduction to linguistics and the fieldwork courses that both Sapir and then later Bloomfield gave at the Summer Institutes quoted by Dr. [Stephen] Murray as I recall in his *Group Formation in Social Science* ([Edmonton: Linguistics Research] 1983), where Sapir talks about the inductive study of a language in terms that look very much like the standard positivist ones (we don't know if Sapir actually wrote the description or not), and Bloomfield talks about general typology and so on and so forth as the aims of his course, so that one might see that indeed in 1937 perhaps Bloomfield just hadn't come forward. It took a few years until "that book" became famous, Bloomfield's *Language* of 1933, which didn't get reviewed and digested and used in courses until a while later, for a year or something like that [see Hockett's *Leonard Bloomfield Anthology* 1970:258–280]. But my colleague Fred Eggan suggested that this opposition between cosmography and science was heightened by the professional climate as well, where you had to call yourself a scientist to really have stature and rewards and so forth, and I suspect that there is a good deal of that involved in the shift in social organization as well. But I do think that more and more, only pieces of Sapir's tradition were appreciated even by his own students.
David Murray (Brandeis University): I'm interested in the rationalization process and how it can build layers upon layers of rationalizations. If I followed you, there is the Boasian idea that secondary rationalizations are problematic; they exclude perhaps in some sense the more interesting phenomenon but...

Michael Silverstein: They are as Marx would say distorting.

David Murray: Right, but for Sapir, and for the subjectivist, for the cosmographer, they become themselves enormously important data: the "clicking" relationship. We look for the relationship between the native's secondary rationalizations and his actual production of behaviour. Now, again, taking the contemporary "scientistic" linguistics then presumably as the tertiary operation, the further rationalization of the rationalizations of the natives', you know, building layers of them — the status of linguistic science — if by some, no doubt remarkable hydraulic process, Sapir were to drift by again and view contemporary scientistic linguistics, would he be dismayed by the outcome or would it itself be an interesting datum? When the "clicking" begins to occur between the tertiary rationalizations — our scientific categories — and the natives' secondary rationalizations — their understandings of their own actual behaviour that they've classified and elaborated into a kind of objective phenomenon — wouldn't that itself become the most interesting linguistic phenomenon?

[Tape incomplete.]

Hokan-Siouan Revisited

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This paper examines Sapir's conception of the genetic constructs called Hokan and Hokan-Siouan, not with a view to ascertain whether these are in fact legitimated or proven language relationships, but rather to evaluate them within the context of Sapir's work, and to investigate what they reveal of his conception of linguistic relationship and language change. It seems appropriate in the context of this conference to focus on Sapir's classification of the languages of North America as an object of study in its own right. Too often, comments on the classification are prompted by attitudes toward far-reaching genetic linguistic connections, i.e., whether the author allies himself with the "splitters" or the "lumpers." Historically, there was a period when the accepted wisdom demanded adherence to the Sapir classification as the most authoritative proposal available, perhaps until about 1958 (Haas 1958). This was followed by an intermediate period of reassessment resulting in the Map of North American Languages (Voegelin and Voegelin 1966). Recently, we note a return to a more conservative splitting stance (Campbell and Mithun 1979). Most positions on the issue favour an alternative scheme, but nowhere is there to my knowledge a genuine analysis of the Sapir classification based on the nature of the evidence he adduced and the underlying assumptions that led to the proposal in the first place. I intend here to discuss only the Hokan-Siouan portion of the classification, but an assessment of it as a whole is also needed, since the

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1I am grateful to Brenda Gossett for extracting relevant forms from the Sapir unpublished handwritten notes and for providing the figures in Table 4 in the Appendix.