

stood in two ways. We may either succeed in showing that the intervening tribes, who once possessed the culture element, have lost it; or we may show that one or more of the tribes of one of the areas formerly lived in geographical contact with the tribes of the other area and was, at a subsequent period, severed from them either by a peaceful migration or by the irruption of hostile tribes. In either case the problem is reduced to the normal one of the continuous diffusion of a culture element from a single centre.

For chronological purposes, cases of the interrupted distribution of a culture element are of particular importance. In a general way, a culture element whose area of distribution is a broken one must be considered as of older date, other things being equal, than a culture element diffused over an equivalent but continuous area. The reason for this is that in the former case we have to add to the lapse of time allowed for the diffusion of the element over its area of distribution the time taken to bring about the present isolation of the two areas, a time which may vary from a few years or a generation to a number of centuries. Thus, any culture traits which, *e.g.*, the Tuscarora may be shown to have in common with the non-contiguous tribes of the Iroquois League alone may well be suspected to be of greater antiquity than such as say the Neuters or Erie may be shown to share with the neighbouring League tribes alone.

More specifically, the interrupted distribution of a culture element gives us a minimum relative date for the origin of the culture element itself. The element must have arisen prior to the event or series of events that resulted in the geographical isolation of the two areas. Examples of this type of chronological reasoning will occur to every one; they are particularly easy to understand where there has been a tribal migration. Thus, the peculiar type of star myth (identification of mythological heroes with stars or constellations) found among both the Arikara of North Dakota and the Pawnee of Nebraska, but not among the intervening Siouan tribes, was doubtless developed before the northward drift of the Arikara away from their linguistic kinsmen. In a similar way, we may conclude that the family hunting territories, with tendency to paternal descent, of the Algonkin