

Conditions of Culture Borrowing. The second group of factors involved in culture transmission, that referring to the receptivity of the borrowing tribe, is probably even more important than the factors already considered. Only one of these factors need be mentioned here—the relative ease with which the borrowed culture element is assimilated to the culture of the borrowing tribe. Almost invariably we find that a new idea or activity borrowed from without falls in line with already existing ideas or activities; it does not so much constitute a new departure in cultural endeavour as fill out with a new richness of detail a pigeon-hole of culture ready to receive it. Frequently enough, in the process of borrowing, its primary significance is either lost or distorted; such loss or distortion is nearly always an expression of the assimilating power of the borrowing culture. In only a vast minority of cases, indeed, is an element of culture transplanted *in toto*, without undergoing assimilatory modifications. As far as the problem of rapidity of transmission is concerned, we are in the main safe in saying that the more perfectly an element fits into its new cultural environment, the more nearly, in other words, it answers to the immediate needs or interests of the borrowers, the more rapid will be the rate of transmission. Hence it is not difficult to understand why myth plots, spectacular dances, games, and certain decorative designs spread with tremendous rapidity and may, in many cases, cover larger areas of distribution than culture elements of greater age. These considerations make it peculiarly hazardous to infer greater age on the basis of geographical distribution when the elements compared belong to widely distinct categories of thought or activity, say social organization and methods of securing game.

External Conditions of Diffusion. The communicability of a culture element and the receptivity of the borrowing tribe, so far as already discussed, are conditioned by the nature of the element itself. External factors of various sorts, however, are generally highly important determinants of the course and rapidity of transmission. These form the third group referred to. Most or all of them may be summarized under the heading of degree of intimacy subsisting between the two tribes involved. Thus, tribes that are on a friendly footing for a long period of