

however recently introduced, are naturally incapable of analysis from the point of view of the borrowing language.¹ We know, for instance, that the objects and offices denoted in English by the words *bow*, *arrow*, *spear*, *wheel*, *plough*, *king*, and *knight*, belong to a far more remote past than those indicated by such words as *railroad*, *insulator*, *battleship*, *submarine*, *percolator*, *capitalist*, and *attorney-general*, but we might have guessed this from the fact that the latter set, unlike the former, are clearly secondary formations, descriptive terms that seem to have been created out of older linguistic material to meet new cultural needs. This type of reasoning does not by any means imply that the older stock of non-descriptive words are necessarily in origin of a category distinct from the later descriptive ones. As a matter of fact, comparative, direct historical, or other evidence frequently enables us to show that what now appear to be non-descriptive terms are themselves originally descriptive in character, but, through the destructive agency of gradual phonetic change, have in time lost their morphological transparency.² It is this very obscuring, in course of time, of the analysis of a word, that gives the contrast between words of evident morphology and unanalysable words its chronological significance.

In aboriginal America there are undoubtedly countless examples that might be chosen of the operation of this method of inferring the relative ages of culture concepts, but linguistic data have as yet been so little employed by Americanists in the handling of ethnological problems³ that we need not be surprised to find them only sparsely, if at all, represented in the literature. An example or two will, therefore, be of service. The Tsimshian word for crest, *dzabk*, offers a contrast, from the point of view of morphologic analysis, to that for phratry, *ptc:x*. While the latter is, so far as we can see at present, a morphologically irreducible

¹ Thus, such a Wishram word as *st-stagin* "stockings" is incapable of Wishram analysis, but is naturally merely a recent loanword from English *stocking*.

² Thus, the word *king* (Anglo-Saxon *cuning*) can be shown to be a derivative of *kin* (Anglo-Saxon *cynn*); its significance at an earlier stage of its history was thus "one who belongs to (represents, leads) a kin-group." This example shows incidentally that linguistic analysis often helps to unravel the earlier history of a culture concept.

³ Aside from the use of the concept of linguistic stock, particularly as expressed in Powell's linguistic map of aboriginal America north of Mexico. Many ethnologists, indeed, have gone much further in the definitive and exclusive use of these stock groupings than the historical-minded linguist would concede as allowable.