

Iroquoian tribes, including the Hurons and Neuters, despite the hostility of these to the League; or to find the various tribes of Nootka Indians, speaking diverse but mutually intelligible dialects, sharing certain ethnological traits in contrast to their Kwakiutl and Salish neighbours. Such a case as that of the Hupa, Yurok, and Karok, or of the Tsimshian and Haida, is, properly speaking, only an apparent exception; for, where contact between tribes of radically distinct speech is close, there will practically always be found a number, sometimes even the majority of one of the tribes, who are bilingual. It is these bilingual individuals who undoubtedly serve, to a large extent, as the media of cultural interinfluences. Generally speaking, then, far-reaching cultural contact can hardly take place except as conditioned by some sort of mutual intelligibility of speech. It is often assumed off-hand that cultural resemblances between linguistically related tribes must go back to a time antedating the present linguistic differentiation. Yet it is evident from what we have said that the very fact of close linguistic affinity paves the way for a more than ordinarily rapid transmission within the geographical bounds of the larger linguistic unit. This in no way contradicts the statement made earlier in the paper that linguistic and cultural areas at least tend to be congruent. It merely points out that such congruence is not altogether necessitated by genetic factors (by a common historical heritage), but may, very largely, be shaped by the secondary process of borrowing under a favouring linguistic condition. This point of view may well cause hesitation in too free a use of the hypothesis of tremendous cultural conservatism in explaining the numerous and often startling resemblances in culture details between various Eskimo tribes. The hoary antiquity of at least some such features, when closely scrutinized, may resolve itself into a relatively recent spread of fashion.

We have already referred to geographical barriers as limiting the even spread of an element of culture. This opens up the question of accessibility of tribe to tribe, of aboriginal waterways and trade routes generally. Clearly, not only articles of trade, such as implements, foods, clothing, and ornament, but all manifestations of culture, whether material or not, travel