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Cherokee Values and World View

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In this paper I will try to describe the covert cultural patterns of conservative Cherokee life. To do this I shall examine these covert patterns through two different analytical frameworks. First, I will list a number of "traits" which make up these covert patterns — Cherokee values. Secondly, I will talk about this pattern as if it were a philosophical system — world view.

Before I start my first task, to list a number of values, let me briefly state what I think is the core of this value system. The Cherokee tries to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships with his fellow Cherokee by avoiding giving offense, on the negative side, and by giving of himself to his fellow Cherokee in regard to his time and his material goods, on the positive side. I think this value system is a source of some reward in the average conservative Cherokee. Besides playing out his role in the world as he has been taught to do and as he sees it, which must, in itself, be rewarding; he is part of one of the most highly developed "social security" systems in the world. This reward the Cherokee must have in common with people who live in tribal societies around the world.

Of course, this brief statement about the Cherokee value system is not meaningful without some definitions attached. For instance, you will note that I used the term "offense" rather than "agression" which has psychological ramifications. "Offense," to my mind, can be used purely
in terms of behavior and ideals without getting into the inner man. Gearing has been thinking of the term "intrusion" in order to avoid using the term "aggression." But what is "giving offense" in Cherokee terms? It is any situation in which the autonomy of the individual is interfered with. These situations, behavior-wise, would range from areas of over-zealous joking or unsolicited advice to open hostility. For instance, Cherokees will allow the driver of a car to run into a ditch without saying a word to him. It is assumed that he knows what he is doing and is not to be interfered with.

However, once one has received offense from another Cherokee this does not mean that one has the option to act aggressively toward the offender, to defend one's "honor" as southern whites would do. This kind of action would only be further upsetting the harmony of the group. So one withdraws from the whole situation, on a public level at least. However, if an individual keeps on giving offense to you and does not respond to the pressure by the society at large to stop this kind of behavior, one has recourse to taking action on a non-public level such as resorting to black magic. But open hostility between two people on the local level must not appear.

It should be clear in the discussion by this time how important it is whether acts are public or not in this ethical system. Perhaps, in my opening statement I should have said "overt" harmonious interpersonal relationships. Because this system is not an internalized morality in the same sense the Christian moral code must be in order to be effective. Cherokees do express a great deal of hostility toward other Cherokees in the form of gossip and this is perfectly legitimate, in Cherokee eyes. In fact, gossip is one of the means of social control in Cherokee society.
But one can, also, trick another person to get something one wants by an act that would offend the other person if he knew about it. Or one can use black magic to influence other people. All of the foregoing techniques are legitimate as long as they do not become public knowledge and so disrupt the harmony.

Of course, any discussion of a value system without talking about the structure of a society is taking the behavior out of context. It is not the purpose of this paper to put this value system in a structural context, but to list and discuss aspects of this value system. But a few general points need to be discussed. The main point I wish to make in this regard is that each structural situation modifies this general value system in some way. In the nature of the case those situations which call for immediate decisions and actions most violate this ethic. Gearing has shown how in aboriginal times the behavior in times of warfare most violated this ethic and how most war leaders were very authoritarian. In recent times the tribal government, as an institution, most violates this ethic. The white man must be dealt with and right away. So in voting situations in the tribal council, although unanimous agreement is striven for, the majority will overrule the minority. This process especially shocks the sensibilities of the conservatives when there is a split in the ranks of the conservative on the tribal council. Tribal councilmen, in fact, tend to act differently in a tribal council situation than they would in an institution such as the gadoogi. And Conservative Cherokees tend to select generally more authoritarian personalities for political leaders than they do for religious or gadoogi leaders.

The gadoogi as an institution most exemplifies this value system. It is, also, not an accident that this is the last real aboriginal institution
remaining and one of the strongest in present conservative life. And
gadoogi leaders, generally, represent the kind of approval personality
which would naturally accrue from such a value system—a permissive,
generous, well-liked, "weak" (in a white sense) leader. Outside of the
institutions and specific strucuat situations, kinship tends to act as
mechanism to specifically define and structure interpersonal relationships.
The old Crow system defines behavior between ego and almost every other
Cherokee. As I stated in a previous paper, it is no wonder, given this
kind of ethical system, that this all-pervasive regulating mechanism
lingered on even after the lineage ceased to function in many institutions
and areas of life.¹

Given such a concept of proper behavior it follows that social sanctions
today are gossip and withdrawal. If a person gets "out of line" in a
Cherokee community the gossip starts and the errant individual begins to
feel the pressure in a diffuse way. If he persists in his behavior, the
society withdraws from around him leaving him isolated.² People simply
avoid and withdraw from him. If he cannot be so controlled, an impersonal
outside agency, "the law," is called upon. But it is evident that Cherokees
are much more interested in having an errant individual stop his bad behavior
than they are in punishing him for it. The punishment simply compounds the
disharmony. This difference in conception of the function of "law" makes for
bad communication between whites and Indians in a court case and a general
"foul-up" in law situations.

In past times, fear of black magic and institutionalized joking were
forms of social control. But this type of joking has all but disappeared,
and the present diffuse type of joking is not used as a form of social control to any great extent by the eastern Cherokee, nor is black magic as important as it once was. In Oklahoma diffuse joking and fear of black magic are still very important methods of social control.

Of course, gossip, withdrawal, joking, and black magic function as releases for aggression as well as social sanctions in the society as a whole.

One last word about this value system. This system gives very little tangible reward to the individual for being a "good Cherokee." Harmonious relations are the norm — the minimum — rather than some goal to be reached. And violations of this ethic are punished by the above sanctions which though diffuse, are severe to one raised to be sensitive to others. To achieve rewards in this system one must be a "super Cherokee" in all of these respects — almost an unobtainable goal for the average human being. And the rewards are once again very diffuse — being held in esteem by other Cherokees. One almost has to be a Christ-like figure to be held "beloved" by the Cherokees.

Having given a synopsis of the core of the Cherokee value system, I now intend to talk about specific Cherokee values rather than the system. As a heuristic device, I will take the nine "psychological" features that George D. and Louise S. Spindler list as common to American Indians as a whole in their article, "American Indian Personality Types and Their Socio-cultural Roots" in The Annals, Volume 311, page 147-158. Using their list gives me an already made list of "traits" and allows me to place Cherokee values against the background of American Indians generally.
1. Non-demonstrative emotionality and reserve, accompanied by a high degree of control over interpersonal aggression in the in-group.

It seems to me that the Spindlers are actually listing two traits here or, at least for my purposes, I would separate non-demonstrative emotionality and "reserve" from "a high degree of control over..." I think I have discussed sufficiently in my analysis of the core of the value system, the "aggression" or the "avoiding of giving offense" as I like to term it. I will look at the "non-demonstrative emotionality or reserve" or stoicism as I shall term it.

The stoicism seems to me to be a natural outgrowth of the value system as I have described it. In order to avoid giving offense to his fellow, the Cherokee must wait and see what the other's likes and dislikes are, and in order to give of himself he must be able to perceive what demands are likely to be made of him. Two Cherokee interacting remind me of two ants meeting with their antennae out feeling around. By definition then, cues are subliminal, and Cherokees seem stoical to whites. But the cues are there, and whites seem to "over cue" in Cherokee eyes. This whole process is especially noticeable when the Cherokee meets a stranger. He just has to wait "within himself" before setting up a basis for interaction. If the stranger is a white man and the individual Cherokee knows little about whites, he is "stuck on high center." Or he can define the stranger as an out-group member and interact with him on the basis that the rules do not apply.

All of this "subliminality" in Cherokee interpersonal relationships tends to play down emotionality. This, coupled with the fact that a Cherokee does not like to stand out from the group, makes him appear stoical. One emotion, anger, is not just subliminal but it is actively suppressed because it violates the ethic. Laughter, however, except by one individual
in a group, is played up. Laughter, to the Cherokee, is a sign that relations are harmonious. Cherokees judge behavior on face value and do not introspect, so laughter is a great symbol of the harmony. Generally, excess emotion, like all excesses, seems immoral in Cherokee eyes.

2. A pattern of generosity that varies greatly to the extent to which it is a formalized social device without emotional depth.

I am not sure I know what Spindler means in this regard. All American Indians I know anything about have social institutions in which generosity is displayed, and informal generosity on another level. And what does have emotional depth to American Indians? I am not sure that very much of anything does. In any case, generosity is valued highly by Cherokees. If we go back again to the first discussion, I will reiterate that Cherokees give of themselves to other Cherokees—either time or material goods. If another Cherokee comes to see you and you are working, you stop working and give of yourself to him. Harmonious relationships are much more important than any reward or achievement for yourself. On the other hand, if you did not give of your time, censure in the form of gossip would make life a little uncomfortable for you. This, also, applies to people in need. Even if they make no explicit demands on you, the very fact that they are in need and that you have more than they do obligates you to help them. Everyone is the same size economically in this tribal society. Not to respond to another's needs would, in a sense, be giving offense. This is particularly true of food. The sharing of food has great symbolic value in Cherokee society and there is a special Cherokee word which means stingy with food apart from another word which means stingy in other respects.
As I say, like most American Indians, Cherokees have institutionalized sharing such as in the gadoogi organization - across kin lines - and more informal sharing to kinmen and friends.

3. Autonomy of the individual, linked with sociopolitical structures bow in dominance-submission hierarchies.

I think this statement speaks for itself in line of what has been said before. Any authority given to one individual to wield over another is immoral according to Cherokee standards. This would be real interference and "giving offense." In the old aboriginal structures and institutions lack of hierarchy is apparent in the structure themselves. Cherokees have taken over institutions from white culture which, in their form, imply authority. However, they do not work this way in a Cherokee context. The various offices become only positions in their institutions and imply nothing more. This is very evident, for example, in the full blood political organization. Other features that go along with this kind of institution, such as parliamentary procedure and majority rule, are given lip service only. One western institution is admirably suited to Cherokee ideas and is used a lot - the committee. The Committee does not imply authority relationships and as Cherokees like to have a structure to work in, the Cherokees are committee "mad." A committee is appointed on any and all occasions.

4. Ability to endure pain, hardship, hunger, and frustration without external evidence of discomfort.

Certainly Cherokees resemble other American Indians in this respect. They do give very little sign of discomfort under unpleasant conditions.

However, if I were Spindler, I would not list this as a trait separate from his "nondemonstrative emotionality and reserve." Both of these attitudes
seem to me to be part and parcel of the same feature - the general stoical aspect of American Indians in general and Cherokees in particular. Cherokees are able to endure pain and hardship. The Cherokee assumes that this is the nature of the world, that one cannot do much about these things, and that emotional excess is unseemly. Even so, Cherokee response, as in other matters, is so subliminal as to be missed by most whites. The "fatalist attitude toward pain and hunger is not so evident in the Cherokee's response to situations of frustration. A Cherokee will withdraw from a frustrating situation and will give little sign of his discomfort, although the withdrawal is in itself a sign of discomfort; but certainly he does not forget it, and he criticizes an individual who places him in such a predicament.

Certainly Cherokee gossip and criticism about others is pronounced. This is true of the view Cherokees have of their relations with whites. Conservative Cherokees are always talking about what a good life they had before whites came and robbed them of their land, how poor they are and how rich whites are, and how badly whites treat them, generally. Even if these criticisms were largely justified they are certainly blown up out of proportion. And I, personally, am offended by so much of this. Cherokees, in common with many other American Indian groups, seem like "whiners" to me.

5. A positive valuation on bravery and courage that varies sharply with respect to emphasis on highly aggressive daring in military exploit.

Cherokees do put a positive valuation on bravery and courage. But I might ask what people do not in some degree? In comparison with southern whites, Cherokee do not value bravery and courage highly. And certainly any action that is defined as bravery and courage must be done in a structured context and what southern whites would interpret as bravery and daring
(defending one's honor) would be considered a great transgression of the Cherokee ethic. The ballgame is one context where Cherokee can fight Cherokee and the victor is praised for his courage and bravery. Another context is a law officer who has courage. And, to some small extent a soldier is praised for these qualities.

It is in this last that modern Cherokees differ so radically from modern plains Indians and from their own ancestors. Modern Cherokees do not reward and emphasize aggressive daring in military exploit to any great extent. In the eighteenth century Cherokees rewarded their warriors with military titles and honors in the form of dances. A man could dance in the scalp dance, telling of war exploits and receive a new prestigious name. But there was some conflict between the general Cherokee ethic and warfare and a good deal of conflict within the war organization itself. In the wars with the Americans, Cherokees allowed their war chiefs almost to control their society. But after the war was lost, warfare and the behavior that went along with it was completely discredited. At the same time, Cherokees began to conceive of whites and other Indians as, perhaps, half-way human beings and, thus, that the Cherokee ethic applied in some degree to relations with other peoples. When Cherokees became Christians that clinched this attitude.

Of course, it would be unfair to compare the Cherokee with the modern Plains Indians as they are the extreme among American Indians in putting an emphasis on daring in military exploits; but Cherokees now, because of recent history, certainly do not emphasize daring in military exploits as much as modern Greeks or Iroquois. Modern Cherokees tend to be "semi-passivists" like the Pueblo and Papago.
6. A generalized view of the world as dangerous, and particularly a fear of witchcraft.

I think a generalized view of the world as dangerous is another outgrowth of the core of the value system I described in the first part of the paper. To Cherokees, and I think American Indians in general, the most dangerous part of the dangerous world is mankind. If one must avoid giving offense all the time, wait to see what demands are going to be made on one, and be punished if one does not conform then it is indeed a dangerous world. I think that to most Cherokees, each situation in which a new person has to be fitted into a set of interpersonal relations or in which a known person has to be faced in a new context becomes something of a trauma. I speak from personal experience and I do not think I am too much of a deviant Cherokee.

And, of course, since the other person is an unknown quality, an x factor, and one is never sure of one's relations with him, then fear of witchcraft becomes important. Fear of witchcraft acts to keep relations smooth and to punish offenders. Eastern Cherokees are losing their fear of witchcraft, not because the world is less dangerous, but because they no longer believe in the efficacy of witchcraft as a technique.

7. A "practical joker" strain that is nearly everywhere channelized institutionally, as in the common brother-in-law joking prerogative, and that appears to be a safety valve for in-group aggressions held sharply in check.

This "feature" of Spindler's would certainly apply to Cherokees forty years ago. The old Crow system spelled out in detail who you could joke with and who you could not and even specified the degree, kind, and intensity of the joking. Whether or not this is a "safety valve" as he says, I am not in a position to say, but I think this is pretty shaky speculation.
Certainly, this kind of joking was an important means of social control. Today, however, such is not the case, at least, with Cherokees under sixty years of age. The kinship system has changed and the specific joking relations have gone. There is still a tendency for men to joke brothers-in-law and anyone called sibling, but generally the joking is unstructured and diffuse and does not function as a means of social control nor as a safety valve. This is not the case in Oklahoma where the joking is very "rough and ready" between people of the same generation and does act as a means of social control and, perhaps, a safety valve. Will Rogers' joking of important people when he would first meet them is very much in the pattern of Oklahoma Cherokee joking -- cutting a man down to size.

8. Attention to the concrete realities of the present -- what Rorschachist would call the "large D" approach to problem solving -- practically, in contrast to abstract intergration in terms of long-range goals.

The Cherokee certainly follow this pattern as Kutsche's Rorschachs attest. It is pretty hard to think in terms of long range if one has to focus on immediate interpersonal relations. The Cherokee is so busy being (being a good Cherokee) that he doesn't have time to become in the sense that whites are striving toward a long-range goal and always becoming in the process, but never reaching the end of the becoming. Spindler seems to see as casual in this "feature" the fact that most American Indians are hunters. Certainly, the Cherokee does as a good hunter does and eats when there is food to be had and takes hardships as part of the game. But so does the Pueblo who is much less of a hunter than the Cherokee and so does the Ojibwa who is much more of a hunter. I can't see too much difference between American Indians in this regard. I can say this "psychological feature" of Spindler's is very consistent with the general American Indian ethic.
9. A dependence upon supernatural power outside of one's self-power that determines one's fate, which is expressed to and can be acquired through dreams, and for which the individual is not held personally accountable, at least not in the sense that one's "will" is accountable for one's acts in Western culture.

I think it is in this last feature that Cherokees differ so radically from American Indians as a whole. Cherokees have little concept of power in the sense Spindler is talking about. There was never a vision quest in aboriginal Cherokee times nor anything like the guardian spirit complexes. Cherokees come to manipulate their fate and the world not through power but through "knowledge." One cannot acquire power through dreams, one must study for the "priesthood" and learn a general theory and many techniques in order to be powerful. New techniques can be acquired through dreams, such as a new herb, a short formula, or some small ritual. But power, itself, cannot be acquired directly. Cherokees "gain knowledge" as it is said in Cherokee. They do not acquire power. When two medicine men come together they will say, "What do you know?" To say, "He knows a lot," is a compliment in Cherokee. Knowledge is almost a commodity and one can be called stingy with "what one knows." And one does not "gain knowledge" just by learning the "medicinal" techniques and formulae alone. One can experiment with new herbs or one can gain new insights into purposes of technique by seeing a new relationship between the parts of the general theory or between a technique and another part of the theory. So a man becomes more knowledgeable by experimentation and a kind of "rational" thinking, a very different process from acquiring power. I think it becomes obvious how this "pragmatic" approach to life that the Cherokee hold would seem very different from the approach to life that tribes who have a power concept would have. And these
differences in the basic approach to life would have all kinds of ramifications in all parts of culture. The whole approach to outside threats, such as the white man, by Cherokees would be different than in a tribe where people believed in acquiring power. I am not going to belabor this point, but I think one can understand better Cherokee’s reaction to whites and the whole course of recent Cherokee history if one remembers what a "pragmatic," "rational," seeking-after-knowledge view of life Cherokees hold.

As I look back over the comparison of Cherokees to what Spindler sees as American Indian generally, I think one can say that Cherokees mostly fit into the patterns. In two of these features Cherokees depart from the norm – the practical joking and the positive evaluation of bravery – because of changes in recent historic times. The last feature discussed, regarding power, I would regard as an old basic difference. Let me just say this about Spindler’s features, and that is I think it is a poor list. I think I could make up a list of more significant features. My main objection to the list is methodological, however. Not only are the "features" of unequal weight and sometimes not comparable units, but they are consistent theory-wise. For instance, some of the traits seem to be psychological traits, others are values, others are description of overt institutional behavior, etc. As a matter of fact, I am not sure how many of these features are really common to most American Indians. I would say that the features in which Cherokees differ from this general picture is the three places where a great many tribes differ in some degree from the "norm." For instance, Basin and Southwestern people generally do not value bravery particularly. Most bi-lateral societies do not have institutionalized practical joking. And the power concept is absent in the Pueblos and Navajoes and very weak in the Southeast generally
Now let me discuss these covert patterns as a philosophy of life - a world view.

To begin with, the conservative Cherokee sees himself as a special kind of human being, different from all nationalities, created so by God and ordained to be different and separate from the beginning of the world to the end of time. This is not to say that he sees all outsiders as sub-humans, as his ancestors did at some remote period. But he sees himself as the Jews must have conceived of themselves in their early days - as a chosen people among different peoples of the world. I think the conservative Cherokee sees himself in ever-widening circles of identification. He is first a Cherokee, secondly, an Indian, and thirdly, a human being. And his obligation is to people in that order. Certainly on an abstract level he sees all men as having some claim on him. He is, after all, a Christian in a Christian world. But this generalized common humanity is very tangential to his feeling that he is a different order of man - a Cherokee.

To the conservative Cherokee a Cherokee or an "Indian" (Yunwiya) is one who had at least one parent who was a functioning member of conservative society and who is himself a functioning member of that society. By a "functioning member of that society" I mean one who interacted with other conservative Cherokees, is a real part of the community, and who is linguistically and culturally a Cherokee. For instance, older Cherokees who knew John Swany in his youth before he cut his ties with the conservatives, speak of him as an Indian. The George boys on Soo, who are about one-quarter Cherokee but whose mother is a functioning member of conservative society and who speak Cherokee, are called Indians. John Ross, today as in the 1820's, would be called an Indian. Several Cherokees have said "We tend to class a man with his mother's side." This is probably a reflection of the old lineage system.
A full Indian (ka'li, yunwiya) is one who had both parents as functioning members of conservative society and who is linguistically and culturally Cherokee. There are some "Indians" who had a white parent but who will be spoken of as just "like a full Indian," if they are very Indian in regard to covert patterns. John Swaney is put into this category by many older conservatives.

The non-Cherokee speakers of predominant Indian ancestry, who I refer to as generalized Indians, do not fit so easily into these categories. If a non-Cherokee speaker is the offspring of two Cherokee speakers he will grudgingly be called an Indian, but certainly rarely a "full Indian." And in many contexts these people are spoken of as white Indians because of their white cultural orientations and thus, are not really conceived to be true members of Cherokee society. However, all of these definitions are subject to some alternation in classifying an individual because of the different weights given the variables entering in, or because of the context. I think most conservatives, for instance would call Lloyd Lambert a full Indian, even though one of his parents was white Indian, because he is culturally so Cherokee. Bob Bigmelt would be classified as a full Indian because he was raised so, even though he leans on the white Indian side now.

These classifications are very important, interaction-wise, because they cross-cut kin groups and tend to tear asunder many extended families. Many Indians will have closer relations with other Indian friends than they do with "white Indian" (generalized Indian) cousins.

The eastern Cherokee conservative does see himself as an aboriginal of this "island" and as such has a certain kinship with other Indian groups.
He does not conceive them to be exactly the same order of man as himself, but as having more in common with other Indians than any other people. The term Indian (Yunwiya) will be extended in certain contexts to include all American Indians. He sees commonality among all Indians but also difference. And he, like all "hicks," thinks that many customs of other tribes are nothing short of ridiculous. And, of course, the Cherokee is the superior type Indian. Cherokee prestige in whites' eyes bolsters Cherokee's evaluation of themselves in relation to other Indians.

The white, to the conservative, is the great "bugaboo." He is the cause of most of the ills of the Cherokee. He is "smart" but his behavior is seen as erratic and unpredicatable. He is, however, going to do "bad things" consistently to the Cherokee. Whites may even be superior in intelligence and general competence to the Cherokee but they are morally inferior to the Cherokee. However, all of these judgments about whites are on an abstract, collective level, and Cherokees can have warm interpersonal relationships with individual whites if the opportunity presents itself and the initial suspicion is overcome. When I say "warm interpersonal relationships" I mean as warm as Cherokee have with one another, which is not too warm by white standards. And once the initial suspicion is overcome, the Cherokee is in a very vulnerable position in relation to a white. Cherokees do not judge the inner man and thus are born "suckers." When a Cherokee establishes a relationship with a white, he judges the white in the same way he would judge another Cherokee. If he has money and a car, which is more than most Cherokees have, then one can make demands on him and thus establish a "dependency relationship" with the white person. In some sense, the Cherokee as a whole have some claim on whites as a whole
because of the differential in wealth and because whites have a moral obligation to Cherokees because of previous bad treatment, in Cherokee eyes. Certainly, the central government has a historic obligation because of past obligation defined by treaty, almost a sacred sanctioned obligation. When whites do not respond, they are judged as a Cherokee who has violated the ethic and thus the perpetual "harranging" of whites in general.

Conservative Cherokees' understanding of culture is in terms of overt traits. A way of life is the traits and institutions of a people. And the Cherokee are "like whites" in that they have taken over many institutions from the white world and see themselves as a civilized people like whites. This matter of "being a respectable people" is very important in Cherokee eyes. There are some traits which are exclusively Cherokee such as the language which conservative Cherokees want to preserve. Conservatives are always bemoaning the fact that so many children are growing up not speaking Cherokee and that English is the speech of most public gatherings. Conservatives still have a respect for such things as Indian medicine, but the great medicine men are in the past in the eyes of most people, and the present state of knowledge is a very inferior product. Many people still have a respect for the "knowledge" of their ancestors. It is not insignificant that last winter when some Cherokees became interested in the revival of ceremonies and the "fire," the greatest response came from Big Cove and Snowbird.

What an anthropologist would call "covert culture," the Cherokee would see as the "nature" of the Indian. The Cherokee conceives that one inherits this nature but that it can be altered somewhat throughout life. Indians and whites inherit different natures. The idea resembles the old white
southern idea of "blood," except that the Cherokee conception of nature admits of being alterable and the white conception of "blood" does not. For instance, such remarks as "he acts like a white man" or that the people are more "real Indians" than other places points this out. To the conservatives, however, too much departure from the Cherokee ethic is seen as becoming "crooked." The white man is by nature "crooked" and so if one becomes like a white, one becomes "crooked." Older conservatives say, "Education just makes crooks out of the Indian. They are not for the people, just out for themselves." The generalized Indian devaluates some aspects of this Indian nature and, even when being a real Indian is good in some contexts, the behavior can only be described in a negative way. Perhaps this is because English vocabulary for characterizing behavior is so tied to the American value system that one cannot describe this kind of behavior positively. How does the ordinary English speaker characterize this behavior without implying moral judgment? Social scientists look hard and long for a way to get out of using "shyness" and "backwardness" in the ordinary usage and have had consciously to create a special vocabulary to handle this problem. It is a verbal trap. But the conservative, being a real Indian does not think real Indian nature, is so bad, but he is a little defensive about it: Certainly, it is at this level that his conception of the white man as "smart" (by nature) puts him in an indefensible position.

The conservative does want to be "like whites," i.e. "civilized," but he, also, wants to preserve the one symbol of Cherokeeess, the language, and, perhaps, a few other traits like the medicine. He does not want to be a white man - lose his identity or his nature which would make him a white man and a "crook." In our terms, he wants to preserve this covert level of culture, but he conceives of the situation differently.
The Cherokee view of man, for instance, even his view of the "nature" of the different orders of man, stems from a much different base than whites'. Cherokees do not look at the inner man. They do not introspect. All the judgments about the "nature" of different orders of mankind is made on a purely behavioristic basis. This conception of the nature of man (and now I use nature in the standard philosophical manner) is that the inner man is stable and neutral, insofar as one can say the Cherokee even thinks of an inner man. But men do act in a good manner or a bad manner. There is certainly no conception such as "character," and so Cherokees cannot predict how a man is going to act from one situation to another. As I understand white's conception of character, it is a holistic, multifaceted moral judgment that allows one to say that if a man does one bad act he may do so again and that this bad act implies that he may do other kinds of bad acts in other contexts. If a man is drunk in public he will probably continue to get drunk in public again and he no doubt, also, beats his wife, doesn't provide for his children, etc. The Cherokee conception allows for no such prediction. An act is judged at the time and if a man stops doing bad things then he is "readmitted" to his former status. This ties in with the whole system of social controls, and it is probably no accident that in Cherokee it is hard to distinguish between an action and a state of being or condition.

Cherokees have no real conception of sin although they have been Baptists for over one hundred years. Actions are judged not in relation to the inner man's relation to some strict prohibition but as to whether his action disrupts the harmony of the group or not. For instance, old Cherokees will say, "Drinking is bad" or in English, "Drinking is a sin." But, if you pin
them down to a case, they will say a man is doing right or wrong in relation to how his action affects the group harmony. A man who drinks and who does not "bother" anyone is not doing wrong. Drinking is wrong, on an abstract level, because usually this is when Cherokees become aggressive. But judgments are made situationally.

If one remembers how nebulous interpersonal relations are, as I described them in the first part of the paper, and put this together with Cherokees' ideas of the natures of man, one can see why Cherokees do not become as "close" emotionally to one another as whites do. Most Cherokee would not think of telling inner thoughts to another person.

I have talked about how the Cherokee views his environment, has relations with other peoples, has view of the nature of culture, and the nature of men. Now let me turn to the Cherokee view of the nature of the world. In a nutshell, the Cherokee world is an ordered system. The system has parts and there are reciprocal obligations between the parts. Cherokees are a "part" and have these kinds of obligations. They have an obligation to maintain harmonious interpersonal relations and if this is done, the system works and everyone has the good life or, just another way, the supernatural is obligated to do its part. Cherokees say "We have got to stop fighting among ourselves all the time before God is going to help out the Cherokee." Or, "Seems like things are getting worse all the time for the Cherokee." Or, "Seems like things are getting worse all the time for the Cherokee, we just can't get along any more like we used to and we won't help each other out and love one another." "We need something to make our faith stronger." Or, "If we do right and stop fighting among ourselves, God will help us." Or, "We're never going to be in any better shape than we are now if we don't
stop fighting among ourselves and help each other." This philosophy is put in Christian terms, and God has come to stand for the whole supernatural and, in fact, the order itself. Redfield's description of the ordered universe of the primitive man applies very well in the Cherokee case. If the Cherokee lives up to the Cherokee value system (the Cherokee moral code) then the order is restored and the "good life," which is the norm in Cherokee eyes, accrues.

This system not only works on this abstract level but, also, in the relation between each man and the universe. Each person's "good life" depends on his good relations with the rest of the world, and a good man gets some kind of reward. This theory is the basis of old Cherokee medical practice. Sickness was brought about because the individual had come into conflict with something in the human, animal, or supernatural world. Then disease is brought by a person working against you, an animal ghost that you have offended or some supernatural force because a taboo has been broken. The cure is brought about by using some technique from the Cherokee store of "knowledge" to combat the sickness. Cherokee medicine can also be used positively to keep interpersonal relations harmonious and to bring one "luck."

This view of life has ramifications in all behavior. For instance, if the world is ordered, then how can there be "mistakes," in the white man's sense? Another person more often, then, "lies." He does not make a mistake. And Cherokees judge other Cherokees behavior in time of this definition. This is why most old Cherokees will go into explicit detail, in a matter of fact way, in order to relate some small incident. This is why Indian recall is so good. It has to be. A man's intellectual effort is pushed in this
direction. And if you tell a Cherokee something, you had better do it. There are no extenuating circumstances. You do it or you have "lied." But "lying" is not as serious as among whites since; it does not imply a lack of "character."

Another instance of how this basic philosophy works in all aspects of life is that Cherokees look around to find out what persons involved in a bad situation caused the bad situation. As I said in a paper before, if you believe that your good fortune depends on your harmonious relations with other people, then you find the person who caused your bad luck. There are no "circumstances" to explain misfortune in the Cherokee world, nor "accidents" nor "coincidences." Thus, all the accusations between individuals and all the condemning of white Indians on the level of the whole society become clearer.

Let me just say a word about how Baptist Christianity has affected this philosophy. Cherokees have assumed the basic nature of the universe and interpreted Christianity in this light. What has happened is that Jesus' moral code has bolstered the old Cherokee values and, in fact, they have become one and the same thing. But protestants have failed to put across Protestantism as such because Christianity is presented to another people on too high a level of assumption and as bits of dogma. Cherokees know little about whites and, probably, could not see the connection between the white man's nature (covert culture) and Protestantism even if they understood the whites. Even some parts of Protestant dogma which Cherokees have understood they have ignored. Consider the Cherokee view of sex relations. They have responded to those things such as Jesus' morality which makes sense in terms of old Cherokee ideas; have ignored other parts.
of dogma which did not, except in the form of lip service, and have not even understood that there was a whole different idea of the nature of man and the universe involved in Protestantism. Really to make Cherokees into Baptists you would, in fact, have to remake the individual Cherokee and his whole community.

If one asks the question how do I really know that this value system and world view that I have described is really typical of the Cherokee conservatives I would have to talk some about my field technique to make the case and present the "proof." I think I saw the value system I have described operating in enough contexts and could give enough examples of concrete bits of behavior to make the case for it. But world view, as I see it, is another matter. A value system can be tied directly to items of behavior but a world view, in the sense that it is a philosophical system and that consequences in behavior follow from the philosophy, is another matter. A philosophy is less easily observed and is on a different level of abstraction. I think I got to know well a few older Cherokees, possibly ten or twelve, and to understand their view of life even though much of their view is unsystematized and "masked" by being talked about in a Baptist context. I have, then, inferred from concrete items of behavior and incidental remarks of many Cherokees over 40 that the world view that I see in this handful of people is, in some degree typical of most of the conservatives over 40. Harriett Kapferer's work with the school children seems to show that the idea of immanent justice is strong among conservative children and this may mean that the idea of the ordered universe is still strong among younger conservatives. Neighboring white children of the same age group do not have this idea so I tend to think a belief in
Eminent justice is a reflection of the ordered universe and not a reflection of the punishment theme of rural Baptism. The Cherokee view of the human being and the world is implicit in the Cherokee language and it is hard for me to imagine that young conservatives do not "think" as their fathers do.

Needless to say, there are a great many methodological holes in this paper besides the nebulous nature of the "proof." I think that we may be seeing three different levels of behavior among the conservative - behavior in common with all "hicks" in the world; behavior in common with all people who live in a "closed" tribal community, and then really cultural behavior such as I have tried to describe in this paper. And of course, the behavior manifests itself in different ways according to external conditions, and a minority situation can be such an "external condition."

What really bothers me methodologically is that Cherokees sound so much like other American Indians. You could, almost, substitute the word Cherokee for much of the material present on Navajo values or Chippewa, and so on, around the country. We haven't the terms to really describe this behavior and thus differentiate, except at a gross level. Even Gillin's description of Guatemalan Indian world view sounds too much like what we say about North American Indians. We cannot say what is distinctively Cherokee as against Navajo in the same way that we can say this for so closely related peoples as Americans and English. We really seeing American Indians at even this gross level? Are we seeing "tribal" societies? Or are we just seeing the European in negative?
Notes supplied by John Gulick after personal communication with the author.

1. The lineage - which generally amounted to a matrilineal extended family - was a work, residence, mutual aid group. It defined marriage and joking rules in itself and vis-a-vis the lineages of both grandfathers.

Lineage structure in the above sense was destroyed by the Removal, which broke up extended families, and the process may well have begun earlier.

Though the lineage is technically a clan-segment, the destruction of the lineage did not immediately wear the destruction of the clan concept, for the latter enabled people to relate themselves to other people in predictable ways, even though these other people could not be related to one in any precise genealogical sense.

The clan concept continued, even after the effective lineage as an ecological unit had disappeared. Person’s in one’s own father’s and grandfather’s clans would be treated as if they were close relatives in these categories. This obviated much of the awkward “feeling out” and “testing” of strangers which is noticeable today.

The clan concept itself did not begin to be weakened until the early 20th century when it, along with other old traits, began to be denigrated.

2. Although the major Cherokee sanction is withdrawal resulting in the social isolation of the offender, the ideal Cherokee interpersonal behavior involves non-interference and leaving other people alone.
In the white world-view, the Cherokee ideal itself seems to be a species of social isolation, and therefore the relation between Cherokee sanction and ideal seems paradoxical. Why should the sanction be effective among people who appear to be "rugged individualists" of the Daniel Boone sort?

The answer appears to be that the Cherokee is not a "rugged individualist."
The non-interference ideal does not imply a desire to be socially isolated. Quite the contrary. It is, rather, an orientation to desired relationships in which "sociability" is desired but without assertiveness or aggressiveness.

3. Most specifically, the doctrine of Original Sin, and its implications for human nature, is entirely foreign to Cherokee thinking.