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ANALOGUES BETWEEN THE HOMERIC AND PREOPERATIONAL CONCEPTIONS OF MIND

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CONCEPTIONS OF MIND

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Jean Piaget and Eric Havelock are two writers who have essentially identical conceptions of the nature and development of ideas and the mind. This essential identity is the case even though Piaget is studying the cognitive development of the individual preoperational child, while Havelock is studying the development of the Homeric Greek mind and ideas in relation to the oral processes of communication which existed in Homeric Greece. Both the Homeric and the preoperational conceptions of the mind are examined in regard to the content and form of their ideas, as well as to the mechanisms of their development.

Both conceptions of mind view this mental development as the result of introducing new cultural information into the psyche. This new information conflicts with established structures and disrupts their equilibrium, eventually resulting in the development of a new more general cognitive structure which is in equilibrium with the new information. Each level of equilibrium has associated cognitive structures which are qualitatively different from those in the preceding level.

The form and content of both the preoperational and the Homeric conceptions of mind are shaped by the dominance of the perceptual faculties at that level. In both views, the mind is bound to perceptual concretes and is incapable of abstractions. Mental processes, such as they are at this level, are tied to actions, events, and mental imagery. These actions and events follow the structure of the perceptual processes in

that they are unidirectional and take place sequentially. The minds of the Homeric Greek and preoperational child are egocentric: they cannot take the viewpoint of another, and do not admit the existence of evidence which conflicts with their own beliefs, since everything is viewed from their particular perspective rather than from an "objective" abstract one.

The few differences noted between Piaget's conception of the pre-operational mind and Havelock's characterization of the Homeric mind are seen as a result of their varying perspectives, individual versus cultural, and not as a result of any essential difference.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An important part of man's approach to understanding himself is his attempt to understand the origin and nature of his ideas. Oftentimes, his conceptions about ideas are grouped into one of two extremes: either ideas are seen as the result of innate processes and hence are rigidly determined, or they are considered to be determined by environmental happenstance. Some contemporary writers concerned with the origin and nature of ideas, however, view each of these two extremes as too narrow to describe adequately the complexity and diversity of ideas. To such writers, ideas exist in relation to both innate and environmental conditions and exhibit varying degrees of influence from each at different times. Two of these writers are Jean Piaget and Eric Havelock.

Psychologist Jean Piaget has studied children extensively in order to understand their processes of thought in particular, and the nature and development of thought in general. He has found that, as the child matures, ideas develop through a series of stages. Each stage is characterized by a set of ideas which are qualitatively different from the previous stage; that is, the child sees the world and himself in radically different ways than he did before. For example, at the age of six or seven, the child passes from what Piaget terms the preoperational stage to the concrete operations stage. The child in the preoperational stage is tied to his perceptions of the world with its consequent distortions

and limitations--thus, the child's ideas about the world are colored by this perceptual perspective. In the next stage, that of concrete operations, however, the child begins to lose his dependence on perception and begins to form abstract ideas.

Piaget sees each of these cognitive stages through which the child passes as a necessary prerequisite for the stage which follows it. The conceptions of the earlier stages are never totally destroyed, but instead are transformed and incorporated into the later stages. According to Piaget, the particular nature of the stages and the order in which they occur are genetically determined--only the proper environmental conditions are required in order to bring about the progression from one stage to the next. The most important environmental parameter for the generation of these various stages in the child is the cultural one. If, for example, the thought of the culture is "preabstract" in nature, then the necessary environmental conditions which produce abstractions in the developing child are not present. Therefore, the child will not develop the ability to perform abstractions.

Eric Havelock, on the other hand, is concerned with the development of philosophical thought in ancient Greece. He has found that the mind and its ideas are shaped basically by the mode of communication which is prevalent in a society. Thus, since the communication among the preliterate Homeric Greeks was orally accomplished, their ideas were structured by this technology of communication. Havelock argues that, for the Homeric Greeks, important or significant communication was contained in sagas such as the Iliad and the Odyssey. From memory, bards recited these sagas to assemblages of Greeks. However, not all types of information and ideas are equally amenable to this oral process of communication; and if

information is not communicated to other Greeks, then it is not passed on in the culture. Thus in the sagas, there are stories of gods and heroes acting in a great society. This great society, then, serves as an exemplar for the individual Greek who uses the actions of the gods and heroes as a basis for his own actions. Thus words and phrases which evoke concrete imagery are used in the saga, since these words and phrases are easily transmitted from the speaker to the listener and, as well, easily understood and remembered by the latter. Abstract ideas are not so readily amenable to this verbal process since they cannot easily be put into these concrete formulations.

With the advent of literacy in ancient Greece, however, the Greek mind began to be capable of abstractions. Writing freed the mind from the necessity of committing large amounts of information to memory. Writing also enabled the individual, in effect, to see the various parts of the saga at one glance. Self-contradictions and conflicts became more obvious in the Iliad when it was written down than they were when it was orally performed, since in the oral performance sections which contradicted each other were not present to the consciousness at the same time. Philosophers, then, became able to classify and critique ideas. Literate communication therefore enabled the Greek mind to become abstract. This abstract mind is considered by Havelock to be qualitatively different from its predecessor, the Homeric mind; that is, the two minds viewed the world from radically different perspectives.

Parallels can be drawn between the various conceptions of the formation of ideas as given by Piaget and Havelock. The major parallel is found in the conception of an originally concrete mind tied to perceptions, which is then transformed into a qualitatively different abstract

mind. Of special interest here is the specific parallel between Havelock's conception of the Homeric mind and Piaget's characterization of the preoperational stage of mind. This preabstract level of mind is of special interest largely because adults in any culture often are considered to be capable of thinking in abstract modes, yet the Homeric Greeks seemed to have been "stuck" in a mode that, according to Piaget, was "preabstract" and which would be found in any child as he is growing up. Especially intriguing is the related idea of the possibility that cultures grow up in much the same way as individuals do.

The objective of this thesis is to assert the essential identity of the two conceptions of mind--the Homeric mind and the preoperational mind. The character of these minds is the same, even though it is arrived at by two authors using different routes. This identity of character is found both in the nature of the minds and in the mechanisms by which they developed--necessitating an explication of both of these aspects in regard to Piaget and Havelock.

The formulations, concerning the cognitive development of the individual and the nature of the poetic performance in Homeric Greece as given by the two authors, generally will be accepted--since the direction of this thesis is the exhibition of the two views as presented.

Invaluable to this discussion is the work of Hans Jonas on the phenomenological characteristics of hearing and vision. While his phenomenological analysis of hearing will be examined, his analysis of vision will not be presented in detail, since this paper is concerned with the similarities between a mind which is determined by an auditory mode of communication and the preoperational stage of cognitive development. Therefore, the material presented on Jonas' analysis of hearing will be

used both to support and to expand the presentation of Havelock's conceptions of the Homeric mind.

The order of the argument is as follows: Chapter II presents Jonas' phenomenological analysis of hearing, with an introduction to the Homeric mind which provides a background for the more detailed study in Chapters III and IV of how hearing works as a mode of communication for the Homeric Greek. Chapter V presents a detailed analysis of Piaget's conception of the preoperational stage of cognitive development, as well as his conceptions of the mechanisms of development of these stages. Specific points of comparison between the Homeric and the preoperational conception of minds also will be made in Chapter V. Chapter VI, the concluding chapter, summarizes the evidence of the preceeding chapters to show the essential identity between the two conceptions of the mind and its development.

CHAPTER II

HEARING AND THE HOMERIC MIND

The object of this chapter is to provide both groundwork and evidential support for Havelock's study of the Homeric mind. The sense of hearing, its nature and limitations, as determined by a phenomenological analysis, is of central importance for understanding how important cultural information can be preserved in an oral culture. A brief introduction to the general character of the Homeric mind will be given so as to place Jonas' phenomenological analysis of hearing in a suitable context. Next, the characteristics of the sense of hearing will be discussed in light of that phenomenological analysis. Finally, the way by which information could be passed on in an oral culture, given the phenomenal characteristics of hearing as analyzed by Jonas, will be ascertained. It should be noted that Jonas' analysis of hearing is expanded for the purposes of this paper and that his own primary purpose was only to help clarify the nature of vision by contrasting it with the sense of hearing.

To place this discussion of the phenomenal aspect of hearing in a suitable context, it is useful to explain a distinction that Havelock makes--a distinction between two levels or types of communication that exist in any culture. First, there exists the ordinary-everyday language in which common discourse is carried on. Secondly, and more importantly for the purposes of this thesis, is the area of preserved

communication which, being more specialized and significant, is reserved for formal purposes. The second type of communication acts much like a paradigm in that it sets limits on the range and nature of thought in a society.[1]

In a literate culture, for example, literature and science represent a portion of significant and hence preserved communication. Important information for a particular culture is stored and easily retrieved by the understanding and use of the formal languages of such academic areas. Likewise, in an oral culture,

> permanent and preserved communication is represented in the saga and its affiliates and only in them. These represent the maximum degree of sophistication. Homer, so far from being 'special' embodies the ruling state of mind.[2]

For members of a literate culture such as ours, it is difficult to understand fully what life is like in an oral culture where all transmission of important cultural information is dependent upon speaking and hearing. All information in an oral culture must exist in a living context or else it dies, for there is no place for it to go to be preserved unless it is carried in the active vehicle of individual minds. Information in an oral culture simply cannot be put in books and cannot wait for someone to dust it off to help preserve the thought. Rather, an oral culture's thoughts cannot be abstract and sterile, but have to be somewhat concrete in nature as well as of living relevance to the members of the culture.

Thus, for information to be transmitted in an oral culture, it has to be spoken, heard and remembered. Memory and the spoken word,

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[1]Eric A. Havelock, Preface To Plato (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 199.

[2]Ibid., p. 135.

which involve the shaping of both form and content of the message, will be discussed in the following several chapters. In the rest of the present chapter however, the sense of hearing, which lies between the spoken word and memory, and which conditions the nature of both, will be discussed. Jonas' phenomenological analysis of hearing illustrates why, in an oral culture, it is difficult to remember a large mass of material, and why the listener and the form and content of the information have to be shaped in a way which facilitates memory.

It will be helpful to begin with a brief analysis of what is meant by the methodology of phenomenology, and with an explanation of how it is used by Jonas.

Phenomenology, the methodology of Jonas, is not concerned, as is much of philosophy, with questions of appearance (phenomena) versus questions of reality (noumena), but instead is

> a method which consists in describing phenomena, that is, anything that is immediately given . . . its object is essence . . . , that is, the ideal intelligible content of phenomena, which is seized immediately in an act of vision--in the intuition of essence.[1]

A phenomenological analysis seeks to determine the structure of something as we perceive it, that is, it is not placed in some more general context such as a particular philosophical system or in that of some empirical science. For example, to the physicist, sound is "a mechanical disturbance propagated in matter by means of longitudinal waves of compression and decompression."[2] The physicist attempts to describe sound in a way free from the subjective experience of the perceiver

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[1]I. M. Bochenski, Contemporary European Philosophy (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 129-130.

[2]Otto Lowenstein, The Senses (Middlesex, Baltimore, and Victoria: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 121.

(with the result that sound becomes easily quantifiable), while the phenomenologist includes hearing as an important aspect of the description of sound--since he wants to intuit the essence of that experience.

In general, our sensory abilities provide us with a means of communication with the world outside us. Without our senses, we would be totally cut off from communication with both nature and man. According to Jonas, we see and touch objects as basic entities separate from us. Both the visual and tactile senses rely for their information on the spatial quality of separation of objects--the extension of space. (This separation of the perceiver from the perceived raises some fundamental epistemological questions of just how one can know the "real" nature of what is perceived. Jonas finds epistemological agnosticism to result from the separating of the various senses from one another.)

Hearing, however, is not a sense that can see or touch objects--it can only hear "sounds." Hearing, then, in isolation from the other senses, can refer only indirectly to external objects. According to Jonas, this indirect object reference characteristic of hearing is due to the fact that hearing operates for its object reference in a three step pattern. First, we hear sounds; second, these sounds indicate that something has occurred, i.e., there was some sort of action that happened; third, there is an entity outside of us that caused the action or occurrence. Therefore, we realize that sounds represent external entities to us, but that it takes more than just the sound itself, the first step, to "know" of an outside entity that has acted.

> By itself [the sound] does not reveal anything beyond it, and that there is an agent preceding and outlasting the acoustic act I know

> from information other than the acoustic one. The object-reference of sounds is not provided by the sounds as such, and it transcends the performance of mere hearing. All indications of existents, of enduring things beyond the sound-events themselves, are extraneous to their own nature.[1]

This very tenuous reference to external objects leads Jonas to note that sounds can have their own "immanent 'objectivity.'" Sounds, then, can refer only to themselves and not to external objects so that in music, for example, we can listen to the particular sounds and their interrelationships, thus concentrating on the pattern of sounds rather than looking for some existent thing outside of ourselves to which the sounds refer.[2]

Information, to be both useful and meaningful to us, cannot consist totally of discrete bits of data. These bits must be arranged in some kind of meaningful whole, i.e., information must be patterned. Sound, however, comes to us in a temporal sequence--one sound follows another and we have to combine those separate sounds in a way to give a meaningful whole. To achieve this synthesis, we must rely on memory.

> Through [memory] and certain anticipations, the whole sequence, though at each movement only atomically realized in one of its elements, is bound together into one comprehensive unity of experience.[3]

Without memory, the sounds would occur and just as quickly pass away and be of no use to us whatsoever. Even so, sounds never stay around for easy reference later on; in effect, they exist only as long as we hear them, and they do not persist when we turn our attention elsewhere. As Jonas says, "Extension of object and extension of its perception thus

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[1]Hans Jonas, The Phenomena of Life: Towards a Philosophical Biology (New York, N.Y.: Dell Publishing Co., 1966), p. 137.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 138.

coincide."[1] Music is a fitting example that Jonas uses to illustrate the immanent objectivity of sounds. Here sounds refer only to themselves, and we have to rely on memory for an ongoing synthesis of them into patterns.

According to Jonas' analysis, then, hearing is both a passive and a dynamic sense. It is passive in that by itself it does not initiate any action in regard to sounds, but has to wait for the sounds to occur. Hearing, however, becomes dynamic when the perceiver actively combines these sounds into meaningful patterns, i.e., through memory, into information.

Throughout the process of hearing, the perception of sounds is almost completely outside the subject's control. He has no real choice whether to hear or not to hear a sound except to provide a "state of attentive readiness for sounds to occur."[2] This invasive quality of sounds is quite important for survival. If we could shut off sounds at will as we can light (by closing our eyes), we might not hear the sound that might indicate danger to us.

Passivity, then, is a necessary consequence of the "event" nature of sound, whether it signifies a real existent out there or whether, like music (or, to relate this analysis to the overall topic of the paper, perhaps even like a saga), it just has an immanent objective character.

Jonas further notes in a philosophical vein that hearing is "related to event and not to existence, to becoming and not to being."[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 137.

[2] Ibid., p. 139.

[3] Ibid.

How does Jonas' analysis of hearing apply to the problem of the oral transmission of significant information in a culture? A few brief hints of this application of Jonas' analysis will help to introduce Eric Havelock's examination of the Homeric mind, and will help in the comparison and contrast of the two authors' views.

In oral communication, there sometimes is a tendency to be contradictory in what is said, as well as to be uncritical in what is remembered and, hence, in what is preserved. That is, on the part of the speaker, any attempt to improve what is said would be done extemporaneously (and often in a contradictory manner to what was said before); whereas on the part of the listener, any attempt to hold at a distance, to view objectively, and hence to notice contradictions and/or to make major revisions in the very large mass of material which is presented sequentially to his mind could not possibly be done as adequately or as thoroughly as could be done by a literate mind with a writing technology at hand.

The sequential nature of sounds, where sounds follow one another in a temporal sequence, tends to emphasize the evanescent nature of whatever we hear. With large masses of material to be remembered, we tend to lose much of what we hear and, as well, to change the remainder as we attempt to tell someone else what we have heard. Thus one would have to organize what is heard in order to make it simpler to memorize and to pass on unaltered.

It would be expected that in an oral culture, important information would be carried along in the context of the story--thus making it easier to remember. Easily visualized and concrete items, as well, are relatively easy to memorize and to use in a story. Therefore, highly practical information is the kind of information that would tend

to be preserved in an oral culture.

With oral memory being such a large facet of life, both the indirect object reference and the immanent objective character of sounds which Jonas proposes make the hearer forget the speaker and focus on the sounds themselves. This intense focus on the sounds makes the hearer forget the world around him, and makes him "live" in the story which the sounds (through their immanent objective character) have made to seem real. To the extent that sounds seem to become objectively real, the characteristics of sound and hearing would give the individual a biased picture of reality--a picture warped through the faculty of a dominant sense--in this case, all reality would be seen from the perspective of hearing as the vehicle of transmission.

The extent to which these amplifications of Jonas' views fit the preservation of knowledge in an oral culture as analyzed by Havelock will be examined in the next two chapters where the focus will be on what is said and how it is remembered.

CHAPTER III

MEMORIZATION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES

The major goal of Chapters III and IV is to ascertain the nature of (1) the Homeric/oral type of mind--how it works (psychological factors) and what it thinks (the content) and (2) the mechanisms which developed and sustained the Homeric mind.

The psychological processes which facilitate memory will be studied in Chapter III, while the content of the Homeric mind will be examined in Chapter IV. However, the discussion of the characteristics of the Homeric mind and the mechanisms which seem to have produced that mind will be delayed until the concluding pages of Chapter IV, after the necessary groundwork has been laid. Since both memory and what is spoken seem to be conditioned by the phenomenal process of hearing and sound, through which all information must be filtered, the relevance of Jonas' analysis of the sense of hearing will be kept in mind throughout both chapters.

Most of the evidence for Eric Havelock's position concerning the Homeric state of mind is based on his analysis of the Greek sagas the Iliad and the Odyssey. Therefore, the essential focus of this section of the paper concerning the psychological conditions necessary for (1) the poetic performance of the sagas and for (2) the process of learning large amounts of orally presented material will be on the laws and structures which Havelock abstracts from his study of the

Iliad and the Odyssey; little material from these sagas themselves will actually be examined.

In a literate culture, memorization consists of first seeing the printed page, then identifying the symbols on it, and lastly, attempting to memorize it. The symbols themselves are passive in relation to us:

> [they] have no power over us; they are silent and lifeless. We then do one of two things or a combination of two things; we either recollect our vision of these symbols so that we can see them again in the same order if we shut our eyes, or we translate them into sounds which in practice we have to mutter or recite 'to ourselves', as we say.[1]

Thus in a literate culture, performing the activity of memorization on passive symbols can take considerable effort, even though the symbols themselves remain stable so that they can be rechecked. But in an oral culture, the dynamic material presented impinges upon the listener. In oral memorization, the individual may have to be active to an extent, but is helped by the fact that the material is organized and arranged in a fashion that is especially conducive to oral memorization. That is, the material as presented is a "structured" becoming and is therefore aligned with certain psychological abilities of oral communication in an individual.

Three ways or methods which Havelock believes help structure the mass of material to be learned in oral memorization are the following: (1) the variety of possible linguistic statements has to be severely reduced in number; (2) "the co-operation of a whole series of motor reflexes throughout the entire body [are] enlisted to make memorisation and future recall and repetition more effective"[2]; and

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[1]Havelock, Preface to Plato, p. 146.

[2]Ibid., p. 157.

(3) the use of these bodily reflexes gives direct pleasure and provides relief from unpleasant emotions such as fear and stress. In doing this, these reflexes, in a sense, take over and provide an "emotional release for the unconscious layers of personality."[1]

In discussing how the first of these three (the reducing of the possible variety of linguistic statements) works, Havelock examines two mechanisms of memorization that help make this reduction possible. These two mechanisms are repetition and metrical scheme.

There are three kinds of repetition: first, "sheer repetition . . . Hector is dead; Hector is dead"; second, "a formulaic variation of word order . . . Hector is dead; dead indeed is Hector," with the meaning still unchanged; and third, "looking at [the same essential image] from different aspects or in slightly different ways by using words and syntax which do not alter the essential situation but restate it . . . Hector is dead; fallen is Hector. Yea Achilles slew him. Hector is defeated, Hector is dead."[2]

Thus, an essentially simple image--Hector's death--is transformed into a form that is more complex, more powerful, and more meaningful, as that image is expressed in increasingly complex ways through each of the three kinds of repetition. The basic principle of such a change in form is that of identity--but a type of identity that yields to slight variation. According to Havelock, "The mind's attention is continually bifocal: it preserves an identity, yet it makes room for a difference within this identity."[3]

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Ibid., p. 147.

[3]Ibid.

The second mechanism of memorization is that of a metrical scheme which refers only to the sounds involved in the recitation of a poem, not to the meaning of the sounds, and which contains two units of repetition, namely, the foot or bar and the line. A metrical scheme can vary in three ways which Havelock believes parallel the three kinds of repetition. For example, like sheer repetition, a metrical scheme can be repeated without any variation in either the constant repetition of the same stress pattern within a single line, or in the repetition of a constant stress pattern from one line to the next; or, like the second type of repetition in which there is slight variation, a constant metrical scheme may have a single variant which is repeated with regularity; or, like the third type of repetition, a metrical scheme may vary irregularly--more daringly and somewhat contrary to the scheme's constant formula. The effect of the repetition of a metrical scheme, even when the repetition is varied, is to aid memorization, as Havelock explains in discussing the third type of repetition of a particular metrical scheme (dactylic hexameter) which is used in the sagas.

> The meter is apportioned between lines of constant time length; the lines are like slow regular undulations, each of which is in turn composed of an internal pattern of ripples of two different wave lengths. The metrical effect is once more a variation within the same; the rhythmic memory constantly repeats itself.[1]

While such metrical patterns lack meaning in themselves, they can be imposed upon "verbal formulas" that do carry meaning.[2]

These two mechanisms of memorization, namely, repetition and a metrical scheme, as presented above, affect the ease of memorization considerably by reducing the number of possible linguistic statements

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[1]Ibid., p. 148.

[2]Ibid.

(as only certain types of statements or information can easily be memorized by using such mechanisms).

The importance of reducing the number of possible linguistic statements in orally preserved material is quite obvious especially in light of the nature of sound and hearing as presented in Chapter II. Since sound operates sequentially--is time-conditioned--it is evanescent. When the sound (from reciting a saga, for example) passes away, the information (contained in the saga) passes away too; so in order to be retained, in an oral culture, information must be retained in the memory in some fashion. In general, the greater the amount of material, the greater the difficulty in retaining it. So if similar events are reduced to formulaic descriptions, only one phrase or a group of lines, instead of many, has to be remembered.

The formulaic building blocks with which the oral composer has to work, and which are handed down through generations from poet to poet, provide fewer possibilities of variation than do the structural mechanisms used by the literate composer or writer. G. S. Kirk, in The Songs of Homer, explains how this limited possibility of variation works:

> [The oral poet's] expression and style are to some extent predetermined. Yet even so he can achieve different stylistic effects by his way of combining phrase-units, as well as by adaptations and new creations of his own. The phrases are usually quite short, two to five words, and this means that their effect on style is not overpowering; the sentences that can be built from them may differ in individuality and effect, they may be rhetorical or ironic, pathetic or factual, redundant or colourless.[1]

Thus the effect of this formulaic style is both to limit the amount of totally separate phrases that have to be said and to organize the mass of material in varying ways so as to achieve the greatest

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[1] G. S. Kirk, The Songs of Homer (Londaon, England: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 160.

possible range of expressive power. This reduction of possible linguistic statements is then used in such a way to overcome the limitations of the time-conditioned characteristic of hearing.

The following section dissusses why Havelock believes that these mechanisms of repetition of content and of metrical pattern in the oral composition, together with certain bodily reflexes, make the economy of speech and thought possible, and therefore, also make memory possible.

In addition to the reduction of possible linguistic statements, the second method involved in the oral learning process concerns the necessity of a coordination of a whole series of motor reflexes. There are three types of reflexes which Havelock discusses: reflexes of speaking; reflexes that are used when fingers produce music from some sort of stringed instrument; and reflexes of the dance.

Speaking reflexes are set up as the lungs, larynx, tongue, and teeth operate in the patterns of repetition and metrical rhythms discussed previously.[1] When using only the reflexes of speaking, however, the metrical pattern might be forgotten or rendered imperfectly, since

> In the first place, it is a complicated pattern in which you have to remember several things at once or several possible variations within the same. In the second place the speaker wants to say something and not just make harmonious noises.[2]

Other bodily reflexes, therefore, are brought into play in order to help retain the metrical pattern. For example, the reflexes of the fingers and arms can be used to set up a rhythm in the body that helps to preserve the poet's meter, as when one accompanies an oral performance by playing a stringed instrument. However, Havelock does not

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[1]Havelock, Preface to Plato, p. 148.

[2]Ibid., p. 149.

believe that this use of a stringed instrument can be considered music since it

> exists only to make the words more recollectable, or rather to make the undulations and ripples of the meter automatically recollectable, in order to free psychic energy for the recall of the words themselves.[1]

Even though Havelock denies that such a use of a stringed instrument can be considered to be music, it seems that Jonas' concept of "immanent objectivity," where sounds refer only to themsleves and not to external objects, is relevant. Jonas especially applies this concept to music; but, of course, it can be applied to the saga as well, with the saga's repetition and rhythm and the bodily reflexes moving in harmony with those mechanisms--all of which involve the listener to such an extent that he forgets that the performance is <u>just</u> a performance and concentrates on it as if the whole thing were objective or real (as was mentioned at the end of Chapter II). In a sense, then, this would not only make the listener free to recall the words, as Havelock says, but would also make him "live" the saga while it is being presented. (There are many activities, such as the playing of sports, or even reading books, where, while one is involved in the activity, one forgets the outside world--the activity takes over.) If this is so, the poetic performance would take over even to a greater degree than in the other activities; and since, in effect, one lives the saga, one tends to easily assimilate into his conduct the paradigms contained within, making the learning task involved much easier. In a sense, one would be "socialized" by the performance just as one would be socialized by living in a particular culture, but the effect of the

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[1]Ibid., p. 150.

performance, in short range terms, would be much more intense.

The third type of bodily reflex which Havelock mentions involves larger motor groups, such as the legs and feet, in dancing. Much the same as the actions of the fingers on the stringed instrument, dancing serves as a mnemonic device in order to enforce the metrical pattern. The audience, too, would be involved in the performance due to recitation or even with small, perhaps undetectable movements of their own legs acting in a sympathetic fashion.[1]

I want to emphasize that a type of communication such as one which is orally based seems to bias the mind to the use of a single sense--that of hearing, for example, in an oral communication. While there is a tendency to isolate one sense from the others in a major mode of communication, there cannot, of course, be any complete separation. The isolation is merely one of emphasis or perspective: other senses, such as vision or touch, which might come into play in the dance, or in the use of a lyre, etc., are used procrustian-like--in a supporting role for hearing. Thus, visual effects, etc., are used to support repetitive and metrical sound patterns to help memory overcome the phenomenal limitations of hearing.

A particular sense, then, seems to orient the mind in a particular way, both by the stressed use of that sense in communication and by the necessity of shaping the material that comes in so as to fit through the sense and to be made memorizable.

Our senses may, in fact, only be used in their phenomenal capacity when they are selectively enphasized as a primary mode of communication. Thus visual effects which phenomenally might be said to

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[1]Ibid.

show simultaneity of existence of various objects would, by mental focus on the movements of the dance, show a time-conditioned sequence of movements to fit the communicative pattern necessitated to transmit and remember verbal material.

Havelock presents a list of seven "psychological principles" which he says govern the intricate procedures of the poetic performance:

> First, all spoken speech is obviously created by physical movements performed in the throat and mouth. Second, in an oral culture, all preserved speech has likewise to be created in this way. Third, it can be preserved only as it is remembered and repeated. Fourth, to ensure ease of repetition, and hence of remembrance, the physical motions of mouth and throat must be organized in a special way. Fifth, this organization consists in setting up patterns of movements which are highly economical (that is, rhythmic). Sixth, these patterns then become automatic reflexes. Seventh, automatic behaviour in one part of the body (the voice organs) is then strengthened by parallel behaviour in other parts of the body (ears and limbs). The entire nervous system, in short, is geared to the task of memorisation.[1]

These principles basically summarize both the ideas and the arguments that underlie the use of bodily reflexes which Havelock believes help the process of memorization during the poetic performance.

Along with the first two essentially functional methods involved in the learning process for an oral culture--the reduction of possible linguistic statements and the coordination of a whole series of motor reflexes--there is a third and parallel purpose of these intricate mechanisms, where "they [represent] a mobilisation of the resources of the unconscious to assist the conscious."[2]

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[1]Ibid., p. 151.

[2]Ibid., pp. 151-152.

Beyond his capacity as an educator, the poet was generally considered by the Greeks as the "great releaser."[1] He gave them both pleasure and an escape from grief and anxiety. Thus, the technology of the oral recital with its rhythmic and emotional involvement of the audience became a type of tribal recreation. The motor reflexes involved in this recreation operated automatically without any real thought needing to be involved. This automatic operation meant that

> like similar reflexes of the sexual or digestive apparatus, [the motor reflexes] were highly sensual and were closely linked with the physical pleasures.[2]

Havelock admits that the total effect of this process would be somewhat hypnotic. The relaxing of physical and mental tensions would heighten suggestibility to some extent so that learning could be facilitated.

The linking of learning and pleasure, according to Havelock, helped make the Homeric Greek a complete man. What one wanted to do and what was one's duty to do were not separate, but were one and the same thing. Thus, Havelock finds the Greek's enjoyment in life and the "capacity for direct action and sincere action and for direct and sincere expression of motive and desire"[3] explicable in terms of this educational process of poetic memorization where the guide for duty and action was provided by the sagas.

In summary, there are various aspects of Havelock's ideas that are similar to Jonas'. Both Jonas and Havelock emphasize the dynamic

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[1]Ibid., p. 153.

[2]Ibid., p. 152.

[3]Ibid., p. 158.

nature of the sounds involved versus the required passivity of the hearer. Both authors emphasize the discrete nature of sounds as they are presented in a serial order--thus, sound and hearing are seen by both as time-conditioned. For Jonas and Havelock, then, sound and hearing are rather consistent with a dynamic becoming-event view of reality rather than a becalmed being-existence view. Here there is a difference in the two views, however. Jonas' phenomenological analysis is mostly concerned with sounds that we do not produce and are not necessarily expecting, while to Havelock, the sounds presented in a poetic performance are structured and in fact may have been heard and memorized before. One submits voluntarily to the poetic performance in order to use it as a guide for life. In a sense, then, for Havelock, becoming "becomes" structured and therefore mostly expected.

In his exposition, Havelock claims that the act of memorization and involvement in the poetic performance involves the whole nervous system of the participant and that the effect becomes somewhat hypnotic as the participant submits to the spell. Thus, Havelock's own exposition supports a contention that the participant becomes so involved in the performance that the performance itself becomes real. Moreover, according to Havelock, Plato's recognition of the hypnotic effect of poetry is expressed by Plato's equation of poetry with a dream-like state from which one must try to wake up.[1]

Just how real was this dream-like performance to the Homeric Greek? By "real" I mean that the Homeric Greek experienced the poetic performance while being performed as real as everyday life is (or perhaps even more real since the fundamental patterns of mind,

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[1]Ibid., p. 240.

life and society were transmitted through the saga). During the performance, instead of being just a spectator, the Greek became a participant or actor in the drama and was hence a hero or heroine, or a god or goddess. Therefore, the individual not only memorized the saga where a section of it might be quoted in regard to some rule of conduct, but the saga in fact could have such a hold on the Greek that the proper action came about almost automatically in everyday life as well.

It has been noted in this chapter that various activities can involve the participant to such an extent that he forgets the outside world. An example of such an activity is reading; and "losing oneself in a book" is a common happening. Who can say to what extent a reader who lives with the characters and actions in a book may become consciously or unconsciously changed by this absorption? If so, then this can be likened to the idea that Homeric man, in his intense participation in the saga, actually lived in the saga for a time and was thereby changed by the experience.

Hans Jonas' ideas on indirect object reference of sounds and the consequent possibility of the immanent objectivity of sounds, as noted previously, also may be of use here in ascertaining the possible reality of the participation in the poetic performance. The indirect object reference of sounds means that the hearing of sounds does not directly indicate the independent existence of some object in the environment which caused those sounds; rather, we can only be certain of the existence of sounds themselves, and can only infer that some action of some sort of entity has caused them. Thus there is a three-step pattern involved in saying that something caused certain sounds and, moreover, the existence of an entity which initiated the sounds

can only be known by the action of some other sense than hearing.

These sounds with their loose object reference, according to Jonas, can have a certain "immanent objective" character of their own; that is, the sounds can refer only to themselves, as in music, and not to any external events or entities. Therefore we can concentrate on the musical pattern rather than be concerned with the musical instruments which produced them. It would seem then that one can easily go beyond this analysis and see that in their loose object reference, sounds can be tied in our imagination to whatever imaginary events or objects that we desire. In a poetic performance with highly poeticized imagery, it would be easy to reverse the three-step pattern of object reference and believe that the sounds themselves and the stories related indicate some real object or event in the world. One could easily "see" the events and objects portrayed in the poetic performance much as one can with a radio drama where one can easily provide one's own mental pictures to go along with the characters and actions in the story so that one "knows" how a character must look (and of course one is often disappointed when he gets a look at those characters in real life). With the hypnotic effect that Havelock says goes along with the performance, the mental re-living of the saga would be much more real than any radio drama could be, no matter how absorbed one could be in it.

Another support for the contention that the poetic performance becomes real for the participants can be drawn out of Jonas' "Sight and Movement," an appendix to his paper on vision. In this appendix, he refers to purposive motility in the perception (and possible construction?) of reality.

> Only as purposive act does movement vitally contribute to the organization of the perceptual world. Self-movement indeed may be called the spatial organizer in each sense-species, and the synthesizer of the several senses toward one common objectivity.[1]

Thus, according to Jonas, feedback from self-directed motion involving especially hearing, touch and vision, leads to our perception of a real world. Jonas finds, in this regard, that excessive bias toward vision, with its static picture of reality and subject/object bifurcation, has led to epistemological agnosticism (where one doubts anything can be known). Jonas believes that a re-focus on the integration of the senses through motility may help the certitude of knowing.

To relate Jonas' ideas on motility to the idea of the reality of the poetic performance--it is likely that we rarely ever use any sense in total isolation from the others, and that motility always plays a role in giving us a common objectivity. Thus even with a visual bias we see a certain type of world as objectively real, even if we feel that we can never know whether our view of it is true or not (since we "know" that there is an unbridgeable gulf between the subject and object). In other words, as stated previously in this chapter, a particular sense used in isolation, as, say, the main vehicle of receiving communication, tends to integrate other senses as supporting ones. The other senses take on, in so far as it is possible, the phenomenal characteristics of the dominant sense and support that sense in its peculiar effects. Thus the use of the various senses and their feedback by motility, given the use of the bodily reflexes (speaking, finger moving, and dancing) in the poetic performance, provide a common objectivity or sense of reality that would be consonant with the

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[1]Jonas, The Phenomenon of Life, p. 153.

phenomenal characteristics of hearing, and thus with the verbally performed Homeric world of gods and heroes. While in this performance, the poetic performance can become "objectively" real to the participants.

While the above arguments do not conclusively prove that the poetic performance was as real as or more real than everyday life to the Homeric Greeks, they provide support for Havelock's contentions concerning the strong effect of the poetic performance on the Homeric mind. However, given the nature of this paper, where the main effort is to show a close correspondence between the Homeric mind as analyzed by Havelock, and a stage of individual mental development as understood by Piaget, the use of the above analysis is primarily to further an understanding of the Homeric mind as Havelock envisions it, and not so much to provide a great deal of evidential support for Havelock's notion of it.

This living or real character of the poetic performance can be used in the following ways to support and enhance Havelock's considerations of the Homeric mind.

First, the more "real" the effects of the performance, the more easily unconscious processes can enable one both to remember and to be socialized by the saga.

Second, the more "real" the poetic performance is for the Homeric participants, the greater the distance between the concrete mind of the ancient Greek and that of our present-day "conscious" and abstract mentality. If during the poetic performance the Greek was hypnotized to some extent and was subject to unconscious processes, then the process of memorization would not have to be a totally conscious process, and

the disparity between the material memorized and the memorizer would be lessened. Also, the characteristics of the Greek mind would be less likely to resemble the phenomenal characteristics of hearing which have been seen to approximate the Homeric mind as viewed by Havelock. Therefore, the material of the saga would be somewhat abstract, and hence the Homeric Greek mind would be less qualitatively different from our modern (or even the post-Socratic) mind. If the difference between the Homeric mind and ours were to be seen as just a quantitative one, then the contention of this thesis (that the Homeric mind according to Havelock is essentially the same as an early stage of individual mental development, where stages are differentiated qualitatively, as proposed by Piaget) would be damaged.

A third possibility which should be noted is that the epic might have been used for magical or cult purposes for the Homeric Greek rather than just as a transmission of significant information, as Havelock believes. In other words, rather than the saga just serving as a paradigm for cultural mores to help make the Greek acculturated, as Havelock would have it, the poetic performance also may have served to "enforce" the ideal of the Greek life upon the universe itself. Perhaps by certain laws of similarity (which are magical laws), the macrocosm would reflect the microcosm as performed in the saga.

Also, insofar as the performance of the saga was internalized and hypnotically powerful, the words as structured by the phenomenal characteristics of hearing would have a motivating effect on the Homeric Greek, and the power of these words might have caused a real effect upon the listener (hence, the magical power of words). The Greek, therefore, might have extended these magical words and magical performances (again the microcosm) to affect the exterior world (the macrocosm).

Havelock seems intent on stressing the practical nature of the Greek saga as a transmitter of significant cultural information. So, given the above speculation concerning the magical power of the performance, the Homeric Greeks might have had another practical aim, as well--the strengthening of the Greek heroic paradigm upon reality through a magical operation.

Material which will enhance this chapter on the psychological effects of the poetic performance will be presented in Chapter IV, where the content of the words spoken in the poetic performance is examined.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTENT OF THE POETIC UTTERANCE

Since what is heard and what is remembered are the subjects of Chapters II and III respectively, what is spoken, the content of the poetic performance, can now be examined. Havelock refers to the study of the poetic content as the finding of epistemological laws which "govern the arrangement of its language, the kind of syntax, so to speak, within which this type of communication is composed."[1]

The epistemological laws (Chapter IV), as well as the psychological laws of the poetic performance (Chapter III), and the structure of the hearing process (Chapter II) will all be examined at the end of the present chapter in order to see what light they give on one of the fundamental focuses of the thesis--that is, on the nature of the Homeric mind and the mechanisms which helped to construct that mind.

As a means of preparation for the exposition of the epistemological laws, Havelock summarizes three psychological conditions which he believes are closely related to the content aspect of the poetic performance. First, mnemonic rules of the poetic performance should, by their very nature, be adaptable for use by ordinary members of the general population, not just by the gifted few. This general ability to adapt to the mnemonic process is necessary if the preserved tradition is to be stable and used extensively. Second, the bodily reflexes

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[1]Ibid., p. 165.

involved with these rules are a type of action which can be excited through words that describe actions and hence help evoke those actions. Third, the content of the performance therefore should consist of a complete series of doings or events related by actions (of "structured becomings").

According to Havelock, ideas or concepts, as in written materials, usually do not involve action; rather, they are reflected upon in silence and without any movement being necessary.

> Re-enactment and emotional identification have no place in the cognitive process proper. But they are essential to the rhythmic mnemonic process, and you can re-enact only a description of action.[1]

This essential need of re-enactment and emotional identification leads directly into the content of the poetic performance, since action presupposes an actor or agent of an action. Havelock indicates that phenomena can be dealt with via action in the saga if the phenomena act as people act--only people, or beings similar to people (which can represent phenomena) in the Homeric culture, are agents for actions--only they can initiate actions.

Moreover, not just any person or people will suffice. It has to be a special kind of person, a political person who can help preserve the group's mores and thereby involve both the public and family laws of the group. These men must be 'political'

> in the most general sense of that term, men whose acts, passions, and thoughts will affect the behaviour and the fate of the society in which they live so that the things they do will send out vibrations into the farthest confines of this society, and the whole apparatus becomes alive and performs motions which are paradigmatic.[2]

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[1]Ibid., p. 167.

[2]Ibid., pp. 167-168.

These actors or political men who have this influence, who perform acts that are considered to be paradigms for the whole community, are known as heroes. Thus the main reason for heroes in Homeric society, according to Havelock, was both functional and technical rather than romantic.[1]

But of course the sagas speak not only of heroes, but of gods who act, as well. Here one finds the use of metaphor in this style of poetry. Phenomena, for the Homeric Greek, are thought of as acting much as people do, with thoughts and passions, and therefore, are thought of as gods rather than as impersonal forces. An individual Greek's moral action, for example, would not excite a response from an impersonal natural force, but would incur, for instance, the anger of a god (much as it would that of a person) and also would bring down the god's wrath. Thus, as Havelock says, the environment becomes a "great society" where the phenomena represent individual members of the society who interact much as humans do. For the Greek poets, series of actions by the gods replace any idea of an abstract cause-and-effect relationship between events:

> a sophisticated language which analyses history in terms of causes and effects, of factors and forces, of objectives and influences and the like, is in the living oral tradition impossible because it is not amenable to the psycho-dynamics of the memorising process.[2]

According to Havelock, the most common metaphor employed by the poet is that of a god. Thus, the Homeric Greeks would say that a conflict (such as a war) was due to the actions of the gods; they would not

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[1]Ibid., p. 168.

[2]Ibid., p. 169.

seek an abstract and impersonal cause/effect reason for the conflict, as such a reason would not occur to their concrete minds. To help make the memorization of what we would call cause and effect happenings relatively easy, the causal chain can be replaced by a story which might contain the emotions and associated actions of anger and conflict. Havelock defines the law by which one can understand the use of gods in the Homeric saga.

> [The gods] constantly provide an apparatus by which causal relations can be rendered in a verbal form with which the listener can identify. They become imitable and so memorisable. The complexity of the causative chain is simplified; the abstract factors are all crystallised as the interposition of powerful persons.[1]

(It would seem that monotheism would be difficult to use in this fashion, while polytheism probably would be greatly advantageous to use in an oral saga, for many complex interactions and events could be detailed as the working of a whole complex of gods.) Havelock emphasizes that the gods are organized in families and have relatively stable characteristics (and are used formulaically, as discussed in Chapter III) in order to help with the ease of remembrance of so much material as is in a saga.

> [The] stories [of the gods] thus in turn become paradigms of the operation of the public and private law which it is the business of the saga to preserve. They constitute a second society super-imposed upon the society of the heroes.[2]

The heroes of the sagas themselves follow the normal human sequence, beginning and ending with the boundaries of birth and death, and with their acts and words in between. But the hero, as well, is a part of a succession of humans who follow the same sequence in their lives.

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[1]Ibid., p. 170.

[2]Ibid., p. 171.

However, given the hero's significance in the oral culture, where he tends to embody the group's mores, his passing away threatens the continuity of cultural tradition. So the ceremony, for example, of a funeral, and also other ceremonies such as weddings, provides a transition from one state to another, linking and giving permanence to the society's mores.

Certain characteristics of the Greek language itself tend to enforce this idea of an anthropomorphically expressed unbroken and causal sequence:

> The verbs which identify birth and death . . . were linked with a predicate to represent an action or the result of an action. A new situation is so to speak 'born' or created by a previous action; a new phenomenon is born out of a previous one.[1]

All beings, and therefore phenomena, are born, act and pass away. All, that is, except for the gods. The gods are born and give birth and do all the things that humans do except die.

Thus the content of the saga can be viewed both as an "endless series of actions" and as an "equally endless series of births and deaths."[2] Havelock indicates that these series of actions and births and deaths can be applied metaphorically to phenomena as events.

> it can fairly be generalised that the saga considered from the standpoint of a later and more sophisticated critique is essentially the record of a event-series, of things happening, never of a system of relations or of causes or of categories and topics.[3]

This content of actions and events is consistent with the limitations of the mnemonic process in an oral culture where the phenomenal characteristics of sound and hearing have to be taken into account. All

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[1]Ibid., p. 172.

[2]Ibid., p. 173.

[3]Ibid.

verbal information comes in sequentially-linked, discrete words or phrases, and has to be linked by the powers of memory. This language of action and event provides organizing principles to aid memory so that a great deal of concrete material can be remembered.

Consistent with Havelock's presentation concerning the action and event character of the oral performance is Jonas' phenomenological analysis of hearing. Jonas finds that sound and hearing do not provide direct evidence that there is an object behind a sound--one hears a sound but only knows of an existent by other information that is gathered, for example, by sight and touch. For the listener, the sound is an event and not an object. Therefore, similar to Havelock's analysis of the content in a poetic performance, Jonas finds that hearing and sound are related to events and not to existence.

Jonas and Havelock also speak of succession. For Havelock, there is an endless series of events presented in a saga (events which are organized by a great story), while for Jonas, there is an emphasis on the discrete nature of sounds where they follow one another in sequence (which has to be organized by memory).

Generally, the language that Jonas and Havelock use in respectively describing the characteristics of hearing and the nature of an oral culture are both quite similar in terms of describing concrete levels of thought, events and serial relations.

However, to continue with Havelock's analysis of the content of the poetic performance, the information and prescriptions presented in the saga (or "tribal encyclopedia" as Havelock often calls it) are arranged into sets of doings and happenings as the fundamental units.[1]

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[1]Ibid., p. 174.

These doings and happenings must be placed in the context of a story or episode or else there will be an interruption in the flow of the narrative with a consequent disruption in the rhythmic memory.

> The chain of narrative association groups itself most naturally around the acts of an agent whose image has been evoked in an episode and whose words and acts then become the vehicles which are made to carry items of the tribal encyclopedia.[1]

This narrative association is what Havelock calls the "law of narrative relevance" which is essential to the adequate preservation of the tribal encyclopedia.

While short episodes are necessary in helping to transmit mores orally from generation to generation, such episodes have to go one step higher: they have to be placed in the context of a larger story with some over-all consistency of characters and coherent succession of episodes. The episodes contained in these great stories or sagas can be recalled later by individuals to give specific examples on how to act in any particular situation. The saga, therefore, operates for the members of the oral culture, in a manner similar to a paradigm. The particular paradigm of action that is contained in an episode "is recalled in its specific dynamism; its message may be general but only in sophisticated retrospect. The contents of the Iliad are the page references for the oral memory."[2]

In order to clarify the character or content of the poetic performance, Havelock explains that it differs in at least three aspects from a literate culture. These three differences generally concern (1) the time-conditioned aspects of the recorded events, (2) the

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[1]Ibid., p. 175.

[2]Ibid., p. 176.

discrete episodes joined together serially, and (3) the visual impact resulting from the performance.[1]

The time-conditioned aspect of the poetic performance is perhaps the most fundamental of these three aspects, and affects the "knowledge" contained in the poetic record. All events and hence all knowledge concerning events have to be presented as related in time. No events or knowledge can be considered to be free of this time-condition nor be outside of time. Everything is related to the past, present or future as an event or doing.

> What [the oral record] cannot do is to use the verb to be as a timeless copula in such a sentence as: 'human beings are responsible for the consequences of their own acts' . . . Kantian imperatives and mathematical relationships and analytic statements are inexpressible and also unthinkable. Equally an epistemology which can choose between the logically (and therefore eternally) true and the logically (and eternally) false is also impossible.[2]

Thus knowledge, in the sense of being something which is true at one time and equally true at any other time, is not really possible for the Homeric Greeks. The pre-Socratics and Plato then, according to Havelock, wanted to substitute a timeless discourse of becoming.

The second aspect in which the oral performance differed from one in a literate culture is the serial joining of discrete units of doings or episodes. Each of these happenings are self-contained units with which the audience identifies. The audience identifies successively with each self-contained happening unit, which is linked to the other units only by the law of narrative relevance which Havelock mentions earlier. There will be, in this linked series, a temporally

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[1]Ibid., p. 180.

[2]Ibid., pp. 181-182.

organized word order where

> the connection, implicit or explicit, between each doing will be 'and then'. Thus the memorised record consists of a vast plurality of acts and events, not integrated into chained groups of cause and effect, but rather linked associatively in endless series. In short, the rhythmic record in its very nature constitutes a 'many': it cannot submit to that abstract organisation which groups 'manys' into 'one'.[1]

This type of "natural" thinking essentially concurs with the natural order of things--the episodes are linked in the same order in which they would happen in sensual experience, i.e., "temporal-dynamic" order. The abstract cause/effect type of thinking often begins by describing the effect first and then the reasons or causes are identified later. Havelock says that it " . . . is the essential genius of the rhythmic record that its units of meaning are like vividly experienced moments of doing or happening."[2]

There is an associative linking of these moments of happenings to form episodes (parts) which, Havelock says in this case, are greater than the whole (the saga). This episodic character and temporal linking explain to some degree why the oral record is somewhat repetitive and contradictory. What is important is not the overall structure, but rather the narrative relevance of the episode in the poem--thus, what is appropriate in one context might not be appropriate in another context, while the opposite statement might be appropriate in the new context.

The third aspect in which the oral performance differs from a literate culture is the visual impact which results from the performance. The language of the poetic performance is one which is highly

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[1]Ibid., p. 183.

[2]Ibid., p. 185.

conducive to concrete imagery. Abstractions are difficult or impossible or visualize, while concretes such as actions and agents generally are easy to visualize.

> The visualisation thus exploited by minstrels was indirect. Words were grouped as to stress the visual aspects of things, and so encourage the listener to see with his mind's eye. The direct techniques of memorisation were all acoustic, and appealed for rhythmic acceptance in the hearing.[1]

In contrast to the effort required for these techniques of memorization, the written word frees the mind and the language of much effort. The language no longer has to have such an image-making power, and the written record simply can be shelved or set aside until it is needed.

Havelock's stress on visual imagery in the saga recalls and supports the earlier contention that the sense of reality of the saga was heightened by other senses used in conjunction with hearing. As stressed before, a sense such as vision is not used in its fullest character in the saga, but only those aspects of it are used which are conducive to supporting the dominant auditory sense. Specifically mentioned in this regard were the aspects of the dance, as its visual patterns repeat those of the auditory sense. However, Havelock says the most intense visualization was evoked by the language of the saga.

Havelock summarizes these three aspects of oral communication and even mentions a further aspect which he says

> corresponds to Plato's definition of 'opinion' as a state of mind that deals with becoming rather than being, and with the many rather than the one, and with the visible rather than with the invisible and thinkable. . . . The whole experience becomes a kind of dream in which image succeeds image automatically without conscious control on our part, without a pause to reflect, to rearrange or to generalise, and without a chance to ask a question or raise a

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[1]Ibid., p. 189.

> doubt, for this would at once interrupt and endanger the chain of association.[1]

Thus Havelock stresses the passiveness of the listener in the poetic performance. Here, a slight difference between Havelock's and Jonas' expositions may be detected--a difference again explicable by Jonas' analyzing the sense of hearing itself, and by Havelock's analyzing the major mode of communication in a culture. For Jonas, the listener is rather passive in regard to sounds in that he has to wait for them to occur, but is active in that he has to interpret or seek to understand the sounds and their patterns in order to get their meaning. Havelock stresses the real passivity of an oral culture's listener who has to do little to organize the sounds in order to draw out their meaning, for as a performance, the sounds are already organized--the listener merely has to submit to them.

Where Havelock stresses the passiveness of the perceiver and the dream-like quality of the poetic performance, he approaches the idea that the performance was as real or more real than "real" life. Whatever the actual case, if, as Havelock suggests, the epic as a great story acted as a paradigm for the Homeric Greeks, then the epic would be the centerpoint of their lives, because the paradigm would define and determine the reality and truthfulness of all else with which they came into contact.

Further insights into some of the fundamental problems with which this thesis is concerned are now possible. These problems concern the nature of the Homeric mind--what it was and how it functioned, and moreover, how it got that way. An assumption which seems to be inherent

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[1]Ibid., p. 190.

in the problems is that the Homeric mind was/is different from both the later "classical" Greek mind and from our modern minds as well. In fact, Havelock argues that the Homeric mind is qualitatively different from our own--that is, the difference is not merely one of degree, but of kind. The Greeks, then, had a radically different perspective on the whole world than what we have; but what specifically qualifies a particular mind to be qualitatively different from another mind?

Most people with whom we come into contact seem to be different from one another in that their personalities are different--thus presumably their minds also are different. Physicists, as well, for example, seem to think differently than do modern-day poets--hence the "two cultures" of C. P. Snow; but generally, compared to the degree of difference between the Homeric mind and our own, the above mentioned "modern minds" are virtually the same. The modern poet, for example, is less bound than his Homeric counterpart would be in portraying concrete actions and events. For that matter, the language which the modern poet uses in his poems is filled with abstract words and ideas which, since the physicist is a part of the same general culture as the poet, give essentially the same abstract language base for both the poet and the physicist.

The qualitative difference of which Havelock writes is a gulf much greater than that between the two cultures--it is the difference between the Homeric mind (which had not learned to form abstractions concerning the world and existence, and hence was overwhelmingly bound up with the immediate phenomenal world of the concrete and with its visual imagery) and the modern mind, fully comfortable with abstractions.

Further explication of the nature of the Homeric mind will be undertaken following a discussion of the mechanisms which produced that mind.

How then might nature or nurture, or in modern parlance, genetic or environmental determinants, mold a mind?

Havelock is not concerned with genetic determinants of knowledge but instead is concerned with environmental factors, i.e., the effect of the poetic performance upon the hearer. However, genetic controls upon the Homeric mind are found in the nature of the sensory mechanisms (since senses are genetically given), which condition the nature of the information that can be passed along from individual to individual. The nature of the information in an oral culture which thus can be transmitted is therefore consonant with the phenomenal character of sound and hearing as isolated and intensified by being used as the dominant mode of communication. Thus genetic sensory structures seem to control the limits of what can be transmitted insofar as the fullest utilization of a particular sensory structure is accomplished (in this case hearing), while other senses which act in a supportive role are only used in limited ways. In summation, genetic factors seem to control the formation of the Homeric mind via the nature of the sensory mechanisms of hearing. Therefore, the environment (the poetic performance and technology of communication) provides the information which utilizes the various potentialities of the mind, and which selects the particular mode of sensory structures (or genetic determinants) to be used at a particular time.

The mode of communication of information is therefore very important to the construction of the Homeric mind. This fact is due to

how information of any kind (cultural or natural) has to be structured to be remembered--it is very difficult to remember a large number of disconnected bits of data. To be very useful at all, information needs to be organized by some dominant framework or perspective--data needs to be placed into a hierarchy where new data can be fitted in and therefore remembered when required (which, in turn, depends upon what the framework tells about the relevance of that data to certain problems which arise).

A reason why the sensory modality of hearing, in particular, is so important in this discussion of the Homeric mind is that its phenomenal character gives a "natural" screen through which new ideas are filtered and are related to each other. That is, the phenomenal character of hearing shapes both the content and the form of the information which comes in; it is therefore easy or "natural" through this conveniently available structure, to assimilate new ideas. Oral communication in this way provides a major paradigm of the human mind. A paradigm is a dominant structure or framework which conditions all other ideas that we have, and even governs what questions we can ask.

In contrast to certain modern examples of paradigms, such as relativity physics or quantum mechanics, the oral type of paradigm is not so much one which concerns <u>what is transmitted</u> but rather concerns <u>the mode of transmission</u>. Relativity and quantum physics help us see nature in a clearer way, i.e., nature can be more adequately quantifible, but these as paradigmatic revolutions in no way change the fundamental sensory modalities involved in our human communication. The fundamental paradigms of communication (as metaparadigms?), on the other hand, involve the various senses such as hearing and seeing, and their cultural

artifacts--the poetic performance and written materials.

Thus, the construction of the Homeric mind, in the main, was the result of the necessity of orally communicating large quantities of significant information. This oral mode of communication seems to have shaped the Homeric mind in such a way as to resemble basic phenomenal characteristics of hearing. This mental structuring can be said to be a metaparadigm, a paradigm which is a basic structure of the human psyche--one that, in paralleling the genetically determined sensory modality of hearing, is a genetically given paradigm.

While the above discussion covers the nature of the mechanisms which made the Homeric mind, it is still necessary to delineate the precise nature of that mind. While this, of course, has been covered in Chapters III and IV, it is now necessary to summarize and to amplify that material, as well as to relate it specifically to the basic topics of this paper.

The question concerning the nature of the Homeric mind can be broked down into two subquestions concerning the form or structure of the Homeric mind and the content of that mind. The structure question will be discussed first. Since this paper is concerned with the communication of significant information, the structure question may be reduced to questions concerning the organizational rules of Homeric thought --what information will those rules admit in to that mind, and into what patterns will that information be put?

Generally, as an oral culture is that which is being considered, the information will be auditory in form. Of course, the visual and tactile senses will be used as well, but as mentioned previously, they are used to supplement the dominant sense, and their features which can

mimic the auditory sense are stressed. The information impinging upon the Homeric mind is largely pre-shaped so as to be easily digested. This auditory information is different from the unexpected nature of many sounds which then have to be organized, in that it is not only pre-organized but, being performed often so as to fulfill its educational task, is generally familiar as well. The Homeric mind then becomes passively receptive to this information which is preshaped and familiar. The rhythmic-repetitive quality of the sounds can carry the relaxed mind along with the story. The alertness of hearing, as well as any critical mode needed to differentiate sounds into categories of good, bad or indifferent, are relaxed.

Once the accepted information is in the mind, into what patterns is it organized? Generally, of course, this patterning will follow the hearing/sound paradigm, as discussed above. At this point, however, it is more useful to discuss specific organizational schemes rather than to reiterate ideas previously covered. Basically, since the information is filtered through an auditory sense, it comes into the mind sequentially as time-conditioned discrete bits. In the non-abstract mind of the Homeric Greeks, there were no abstract categories into which these bits of data could be fitted for their differentiation and integration. These bits of data were not placed into these categories where they could become "simultaneously available" to the psyche. Instead, according to Havelock, they were related in the natural sequence of things--that is, in the order in which they were perceived. Since the sounds were pre-organized into episodes and great stories, that order is one in which they were patterned in the mind and, as well, in which they were recalled when needed. In the becoming mode of mind, one episode of the saga could cause another and yet another episode to be recalled. Thus, the pattern of the Homeric mind

was a pattern closely identified with life as the Greeks knew it.

Now that the structure of the Homeric mind has been discussed, it is possible to cover briefly the content of that mind. Doing so will broaden this explanation of the characteristics of the Homeric mind, as is necessary for comparing this mind to Piaget's conception of the pre-operational mind.

In general, the Homeric mind was filled with the images of gods and goddesses and heroes. These beings, who, as Havelock says, take the place of impersonal phenomena for the Greeks, are seen in episodes and great stories, impassioned and acting much as men act. The actions of these gods and heroes worked as paradigms which governed the minds of the Greeks--they governed what the Greeks thought and how the Greeks acted. Thus specific actions of individuals could be governed by a general paradigm of what a hero had done, for example, in the Iliad, and thus, what one must do in "real" life. These specific guides for conduct were concrete and highly visual for the mind's eye.

The Homeric Greeks had discovered a basic genetically organized paradigm of thought which lifted them above the chaos of what might seem to primitive man as unorganized phenomena. The Greeks were able to organize and transmit what they termed significant information about their environment. They used this basic metaparadigm, albeit unconsciously, to derive other paradigms which contained and helped transmit the specifics of what they had learned.

The Homeric Greek, bound up with a living world of becoming, of which he was an event among many, did not seem to be alienated from that world. He did not, as it were, separate subject from object, since all in his world was seen as a living subject. These subjects moreover were

all seen in a relationship as defined by the organizational parameters of the Greek mind. In his world of relatedness where the Greek was moved by the power of the "dream," where the words and the performance were not something he could just hear and ignore, he may have believed, as well, that the world, filled as it was with living beings, could not ignore him and his performance either.

CHAPTER V

PIAGET AND THE PREOPERATIONAL MIND

In order to ascertain the validity of the thesis statement, as presented in Chapter I, it is necessary in this chapter to show the essential identity of the Homeric mind, as chiefly envisioned by Eric Havelock, with Jean Piaget's conception of the preoperational stage of mental development. This identity will be examined with reference to the origin and to the mechanisms of the development of thought. The mechanisms of development which Piaget proposes will be examined first as a prelude to the discussion of the stages of growth through the mind passes. Only the preoperational stage of mental development will be examined in detail, while the other three stages will be touched upon only as they facilitate that examination. Comparisons between Piaget's preoperational stage and the Homeric mind are made at relevant points in the discussion.

Jean Piaget's conception of genetic epistemology--how man's ways of obtaining and organizing knowledge are related to man's genetic heritage--reflects both his philosophical and biological background. His focus on the development of the mind is presented in relation to certain biological conceptions and terminology (such as adaptation, equilibrium, and structure).

Piaget identifies intelligence with adaptation and defines the latter as "an equilibrium between the action of the organism on

the environment and vice versa."[1] Equilibrium, for Piaget, is not something which can ever actually be reached. Instead, the organism has to change continually to try to keep in equilibrium with an ever changing environment. This attempt to seek an equilibrium with the environment is the goal of various types of functions--biological, affective and mental.[2] Thus, according to Piaget, cognitive development is essentially an adaptive process.

Piaget's whole developmental theory revolves around this biological idea of adaptation through equilibrium. That individuals change in order to be in balance with the environment is the crux of Piaget's notion of cognitive development. His idea of structure is a central feature of his concept of equilibrium.

> [The] interaction with the environment which [behaviour] instigates . . . requires a form or structure to determine the various possible circuits between subject and object. It is this structuring of behaviour that constitutes its cognitive aspect. A perception, sensori-motor learning (habit, etc.), an act of insight, a judgment, etc., all amount, in one way or another, to a structuring of the relations between the environment and the organism.[3]

The cognitive structures or forms which provide the pathway between the environment and the subject are known as "schemata." A child's schemata rapidly increase in number and become more complex through increasing contact with the environment as the child matures. These cognitive structures or schemata change in the following way: A child first has a belief system (schemata) of a particular kind in a near equilibrium (this cannot be a total equilibrium or else there

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[1]Jean Piaget, The Psychology of Intelligence (Totowa, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams & Company, 1976), p. 7.

[2]Henry W. Maier, Three Theories of Child Development (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 89.

[3]Piaget, The Psychology of Intelligence, p. 5.

would be no energy available to change that schemata and thus no need to change or adapt). New data in the form of experience is added to the current schemata of the child. This new data can be of a "repetitive" nature, having no conflict with the old data; or it can be a new type of data that does not fit in the old form so that there is a conflict. Data which is of a repetitive nature and which does not contradict the existing schemata in the child's mind is incorporated or "assimilated" into the present belief structures. This assimilated data reaffirms the present beliefs and helps the individual grow quantitatively in knowledge. In this case, the organism puts its own structure on the external environment rather than being passive in regard to that environment. New data, as well, comes in from the environment which tends to conform or "accommodate" the child's structures to the new data.

> [The] individual never suffers the impact of surrounding stimuli as such, but they simply modify the assimilatory cycle by accommodating him to themselves. Psychologically, we again find the same process in the sense that the pressure of circumstances always leads, not to a passive submission to them, but to a simple modification of the action affecting them.[1]

Adaptation, then, is not an imprinting of the environment on a totally passive individual, but is an equilibrium between his assimilation of the environment and the environment's accommodation of him. David Elkind, in his introduction to Piaget's book Six Psychological Studies, finds this process of equilibration between assimilation and accommodation to be dialectical in nature.

> These two poles of activity constitute a sort of thesis and antithesis whose eventual synthesis is effected by a process of equilibration. In practice, this means that a new structural system is evolved such that each new intrusion can be incorporated without either a change in the structure or a change in the stimulus--in

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[1]Ibid., p. 8.

other words, so that the integrity of the internal and external systems is conserved.[1]

The motivating force for these changes in the schemata do not result from some inner mental energy or Freudian "libido," but rather come from self-contradictions and conflicts in the existing schemata. Therefore, while a new schemata establishes an equilibrium, it is not a complete one since the child is opened up both to new information and to new possibilities of contradiction. Thus, each new structure remains open to new development.

Thus assimilation is quantitative in nature (both repetitive in acquisition of data, and attempting to fit data from the external world into old patterns); while accommodation leads to qualitative change--a new formulation of ideas in regard to the environment--thus the child, in regard to accommodation, both sees and organizes information about the world differently than he did heretofore. A relation can be drawn between this qualitative change through accommodation, for Piaget, and the idea of qualitative change from the Homeric mind to a later abstract mind, for Havelock. This relation is not apparent at first, since it is not apparent at a mere glance that Piaget views the difference between a mind one day and then the next as a qualitative difference. That is, Piaget sees the process of accommodation as carried out in a continual interchange between subject and object, wherein no great "qualitative" difference in the mind from the way it was on the day before the accommodation took place can be observed. However, the more apparent and major change of accommodations comes about when the views and conflicts

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[1]David Elkind, Introduction to Six Psychological Studies by Jean Piaget, ed. David Elkind, trans. Anita Tenzer (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. xii-xiii.

of an old stage are brought into agreement in a new, though qualitatively different, view. Thus, individual minds continually change from the day they reach a particular stage, and changes come about more rapidly near the end of the stage when the contradictions and conflicts of the stage are accepted as such. Therefore the major stages which Piaget delineates represent large scale accommodations in the sense that each stage has enough major differences from the previous stage to make new levels of mind qualitatively different. This large scale "stage" level is precisely where the agreement between Piaget and Havelock is revealed. More will be said about their agreement when Piaget's ideas of the specific stages are examined.

Now that the mechanisms for the generation of both the Homeric mind and the mind according to Piaget have been examined, it is possible to note parallels between the two. Do the mechanisms or forces which developed the preoperational stage seem to be the same or similar to those forces which developed the Homeric mind? It is quite difficult to compare the two since Havelock delves very little into mechanisms of development in a theoretical way. For Havelock, the form of communication which is chiefly used in the Homeric culture determines the mode of mind found in that culture. The necessary features of the process of oral communication determine that the Homeric concrete mentality will result, while, as well, a literate culture "writes" on the psyche certain dominant abstract features. To use Piaget's terminology, these cultural features of communication can be said to accommodate the individuals to those modes of communication.

While this process of accommodation through preliterate or literate modes of communication seems to determine the resulting concrete

or abstract orientation of the mind, there are other factors which contribute to the result as well. Other factors such as geography and economy, as well as the corpus of possible determinants of thought and culture that have been proposed by thinkers, also should be considered. Conscious invention, too, can play a part in forming cultural constructions. This multiplicity of causes is more obvious in the case of literate cultures (especially so since we have much more information about them) than it is in the case of an oral culture. If the mind were dominated totally by the process of communication (literate or oral) in a culture, then all cultures would be very similar in their particular ideas and thought. Instead, literate cultures all seem to be capable of abstraction in a general way, but the particular way in which they use this ability seems to be closely tied to many other cultural factors.

The Greeks, then, while not the only culture to become literate, stamped a rational-objective mode of thought upon their culture that was not shared by other ancient literate cultures. Thus, the Greeks could be said to put a pattern upon reality that is peculiarly theirs--in effect, to use Piaget's terminology, they assimilated the environment into their own patterns. For neither Piaget nor Havelock, then, is the individual or culture a passive bit of clay to be written upon only by the environment; instead, they are active shapers of the environment.

Are Piaget's and Havelock's ideas similar in respect to the concepts of equilibrium and conflict? Again Havelock does not speak in theoretical terms about dynamic equilibrium where conflict and self-contradiction always keep the structures mobile. However, even though literate thought is not examined in detail in this paper, it is clear that

Havelock believes newly acquired literacy definately forms a conflict with a dominantly oral type of mind. Literacy provides a medium where one can see contradictions in the oral messages which, until written down, are related only in a auditory sequence of sounds. The messages therefore are not subject to direct comparison and contrast until, in effect, they "can be seen at a glance." This topic of conflict will be explored further when the characteristics of the preoperational mind are examined in detail later in this chapter.

Havelock's conception of the mechanism of the Homeric mind can be fitted into Piaget's scheme of equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation. However, one problem which presents itself in this regard is the postulate by Havelock that, for the Homeric mind, it is hearing and its phenomenal structures which provide the major cultural patterns that have to be accommodated to and, as well, for the later abstract Greek mind, it is literacy as a mode of communication which shapes the incoming information that has to be accommodated to. While Piaget believes that the preoperational stage is dominated by perceptual forms, he does not identify them as specifically auditory in nature and does not believe that visual/perceptual structures have much, if anything, to do with the concrete or formal operational stages as Havelock might. This conflict may or may not be reconcilable, but mention of it will be made again after more thoroughly examining the preoperational stage of mental development. However, prior to examining that stage in detail, it is helpful to place the stage in the general context of the whole scheme of stages.

There are four developmental stages through which a child must go: the sensori-motor state (birth to 2 or 3 years); preoperational thinking (2 or 3 to 7 or 8 years); concrete operations (7 or 8 to 11 or

12 years); and formal operations (11 or 12 to 14 or 15 years).[1] The stages are presented in order from the earliest to the latest. According to Piaget, they must happen in sequence, for each new stage rests upon the schemata of the one before and incorporates the old structures within the new scheme. While these stages are separated according to certain over-all differences of schema and are therefore qualitatively different, there is no abrupt change whereby on one day a child is said to be preoperational, while on the next is said to be in the concrete operational stage. In fact, in some situations, the child or person can revert back to a previous stage.

A brief explanation of the sensori-motor stage will enable us to understand the later stages. A child is said to be in the sensori-motor stage from birth to two or three years. At this stage, the child's cognitive schemata in terms of reflexes and his comprehension of the world, are devined by actions. Objects are not separated from the actions which a child performs on them; a ball, for example, is not a round object but instead is something with which to play.[2] By the end of this first stage, however, the child begins to lose some of his egocentricity and to achieve what Piaget calls the "object concept" where objects are considered to continue to exist even when they are not being directly perceived by the child. Related to this object concept is the fact that a child begins to internalize activity and therefore even when he is not acting upon an object he can represent it in his mind by an image which then can be used in a symbolic way. The child, then, not

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[1]Guy R. Lefrancois, "Jean Piaget's Developmental Model: Equilibrium Through Adaptation," in Developmental Psychology: A Book of Readings, edited by William R. Loaft (Hinsdale, Illinois: Dryden Press, 1972), p. 302.

[2]Ibid.

only knows that the ball still exists when he does not perceive it, but, as well, can imagine in his mind playing with it.

Given Piaget's insistence that later structures of the mind simply have incorporated earlier ones, he also believes that

> sensori-motor intelligence lies at the source of thought, and continues to affect it throughout life through perceptions and practical sets . . . the schemata of sensori-motor intelligence form the practical equivalent of concepts and relations, and their co-ordination into spatio-temporal systems of objects and movements even arrives, though still in a practical and empirical form, both at the conservation of the object, and at a correlative group structure.[1]

The preoperational stage, the focus of this chapter, begins with language development at about two or three years and ends at approximately seven or eight years of age. With language development the child begins to internalize events--that is, to think. He is therefore less dependent upon direct sensori-motor actions for the direction of his behaviour.[2] Language also leads the child away from his egocentricity since it provides a method of communication with other individuals. This communication with others then leads to modifications of the child's schemata and thus to socialization or accommodation to the society of which he is a part.

This second stage is known as the preoperational stage and is therefore prior to "operations." Defining the term operation is thus central to understanding the preoperational stage.

> [Operation] refers to an action which is not only internalized but reversible as well. An action is reversible when the child realizes that an inverse action necessarily and logically nullifies it.[3]

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[1]Piaget, The Psychology of Intelligence, p. 119.

[2]Barry J. Wadsworth, Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development (New York: David McKay Company, 1971), p. 64.

[3]Lefrancois, "Jean Piaget's Developmental Model: Equilibrium Through Adaptation," p. 303.

Operations form systems and thus do not exist in a discontinuous state as do empirical actions and perceptions.[1] The preoperational stage, however, exhibits no reversals of actions and, being perceptual in nature, forms no systems.

This preoperational stage is divided by Piaget into two sub-periods: the pre-conceptual and the intuitive. The basic difference between these sub-periods is one of degree, with the intuitive period rather than the pre-conceptual period coming much closer to being operational. For the purpose of this paper, however, differentiation into these sub-periods will be ignored except where certain "intuitive" characteristics of thought are examined.

There are various characteristics of the preoperational stage that act to impede the development of operations or logical thought. These characteristics include egocentrism, transformations, centration, and irreversibility.

Egocentrism is characteristic of every stage of development from sensori-motor to formal operations. This characteristic is generally the greatest at the beginning of each stage and lessens as the child progresses through that stage. The child in the preoperational stage, however, is more egocentric and less able to take the viewpoint of another or to put himself into another's role than he is during the later stages.

> The preoperational child does not reflect on his own thoughts. As a result, he is never motivated to question his thinking, even when he is confronted with evidence that is contradictory to his thoughts. In such cases, the egocentric child concludes the evidence must be wrong, because his thoughts cannot be.[2]

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[1]Piaget, The Psychology of Intelligence, p. 35.

[2]Wadsworth, Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development, p. 71.

Thus in the preoperational period, the child tends not to realize the existence of conflicts and self-contradictions in his schemata. It is not until about the age of six or seven that social conflicts become more intense and that the child begins to see that there might be another viewpoint. In egocentrism, since the child does not attempt to question his own thinking, he has a tendency to assimilate instead of to accommodate. Thus the acquisition of any new cognitive structures during this period is inhibited.[1]

A characteristic of the Homeric mind, which is closely related to egocentricism in the preoperational child, is that self-contradictions and conflicts in the poetic performance are ignored. This may be due in part to the structural fact that in an oral performance the two contradictory elements are never present at the same time and thus are not even noticed. According to Havelock, however, the reasons runs deeper, in that the Homeric Greeks cared more about the narrative relevance of an element at a particular place in the story rather than whether it contradicted another element in the story. What was important was the context where the element was used.

Could the aspect of the Homeric Greek's conflict and self-contradiction have another relation to the preoperational level child's egocentrism? At first glance, it would seem that it does not, since the child's egocentrism is clearly anti-social in nature while the Homeric Greeks were well accommodated to their cultural environment. However, as the following discussion indicates, there is another type of relation between the two.

One of the characteristics of egocentrism in the preoperational

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[1]Ibid., p. 73.

child is that he is unable to assume the viewpoint of another; he does not reflect on his own thoughts, i.e., if evidence conflicts with his opinions, then he believes the evidence, rather than his opinions, must be wrong. The child loses his egocentrism via conflict with his peers in society who have different viewpoints. However, an abstract culture as a whole is not tied to one perspective on reality--there is a multiplicity of possible viewpoints (which may conflict) on a given issue. This was not the case in the Homeric culture where the saga provided the viewpoint to which all of the Greeks presumably subscribed. Thus the Homeric Greek really did not have to question his viewpoint and did not have to take the viewpoint of another since all viewpoints supposedly were the same. In this way, then, the Homeric Greeks, as the preoperational child, were egocentric. The Homeric Greeks did have contact with non-Greek cultures, but information from those cultures which might provide conflict with the Homeric culture was largely ignored as unimportant, as "barbarian."

Another characteristic of the child at the preoperational stage is the inability to perform transformations. This inability to perform transformations happens in the following way.

> The child, while observing a sequence of changes or successive states, focuses exclusively on the elements in the sequence, or the successive states, rather than on the transformation by which one state is changed to another. . . . He moves from a particular perceptual event to a particular perceptual event, but cannot integrate a series of events in terms of any beginning-end relationships.[1]

Thus, for example, if a ball were dropped, the child would focus exclusively on the starting position of the ball (before dropping it) and the ending position (where it landed) and not on any process or intermediate

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[1]Ibid.

stages in between. Again, this inability to follow transformations indicates the non-operational character of the preoperational stage which, being basically perceptual in nature, is discontinuous and non-systematic.

This characteristic inability to perform transformations is similar to certain elements of both the phenomenological analysis of hearing, by Hans Jonas, and the analysis of the poetic performance, by Havelock. Sounds, according to Jonas, are heard in temporal succession as discrete elements. They are never really heard simultaneously as they cannot be distinguished from one another if they are. In the hearing of sounds, moreover, the elements are often non-transformational to begin with, since there are no successive stages to hear between the sounds. Havelock's conception of the poetic performance also is similar to this non-transformational character of the preoperational child. The sounds heard in the poetic performance are perceptual elements which are arranged only in sequence and which therefore are discontinuous in nature. The sounds in the poetic performance are related by narrative relevance to form a great story.

The use of narrative relevance in the saga can be related to the kind of reasoning which Piaget indicates is used by the child who cannot form transformations. This kind of reasoning is not deductive nor inductive but is transductive or preconceptual.

> Pre-concepts are the notions which the child attaches to the first verbal signs he learns to use. The distinguishing characteristic of these schemata is that they remain midway between the generality of the concept and the individuality of the elements composing it, without arriving either at the one or at the other. . . . [transductive or preconceptual reasoning] consists of a sequence of actions symbolized in thought, a true "mental experiment", i.e., an internal imitation of actions and their results, with all the

> limitations that this kind of empiricism of the imagination involves.[1]

Transductive reasoning, with its emphasis on imitation and internalized sequences of actions, thus is the kind of reasoning used by the Homeric Greeks in the construction and understanding of the saga. Their reasoning, then, clearly was below the fully reversible level of operations and above the totally isolated action which was characteristic of the sensori-motor stage. This transductive type of reasoning, being just below the level of operations, becomes most highly developed in the intuitive sub-period of the preoperational stage.

Time and causality as conceived in this intuitive sub-period of the preoperational stage are closely related to the inability to form transformations.

> Intuitive time is a time which is tied to particular objects or movements and which has no homogeneity or uniform flow.[2]

Thus, there is no objective time that is always the same over and behind the succession of happenings. This consideration of temporal succession is like that given by Jonas when he analyzes hearing and sound, where the focus is on sequence and the sound event itself, rather than on abstract time beyond the events.

An important aspect of the poetic performance is that what the abstract mind sees as abstract notions of causality, and inanimate phenomena as causative principles, were replaced for the Homeric Greeks by concrete beings who acted--gods, goddesses, and heroes. This is similar to the preoperational intuitive view of causality which Piaget presents. For events that happen apart from any manipulation by a

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[1]Piaget, The Psychology of Intelligence, pp. 127-129.

[2]Ibid., p. 136.

subject, there are causal links to explain them:

> the explanation of the movement of rivers or clouds, the floating of boats, etc. . . . were based on bodily action; physical movement implies teleology, an active internal force; the river "leaps" over pebbles, the clouds make the wind, which in turn pushes them, and so on.[1]

While the child in modern society might not conceive of gods, etc. as the explanation of such non-human actions, it is easy to understand why an early culture such as that of the Homeric Greeks viewed such happenings as the result of the manipulation of subjects or beings.

A third characteristic of the preoperational stage, and closely related to both egocentrism and inability to transform, is a tendency for centration.

> When the child is presented with a visual stimulus, he tends to center or fix his attention on a limited perceptual aspect of the stimulus. The child seems unable to "explore" all aspects of the stimulus, or <u>decenter</u> his visual inspection. As a result, the child when centering tends to assimilate only the superficial aspects of an event. Any cognitive activity seems to be dominated by the perceptual aspects.[2]

In Piaget's example of vision, he includes, perhaps unconsciously as a presupposition the possibility that the visual field has a certain potential of simultaneous presentation to the child's own perception (as Jonas indicates in a phenomonological analysis of vision not directly examined in this paper) or else the child would not be able to decenter his perceptions when he reaches the stage of operations. However, the concept of centration can be applied to Jonas' characterization of hearing: the sequential nature of sounds makes them basically difficult to decenter. Sounds as communicated in the poetic performance, however, would come closer to being decentered by hearing than ordinary phenomenal

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[1]Ibid., p. 137.

[2]Wadsworth, <u>Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development</u>, pp. 74-75.

sounds would come, since the sounds in the poetic performance are structured becomings--are patterned--and therefore are linked together easily by memory and understanding.

Piaget sees the preoperational stage as tied to perception in general, while the operational stages lack a direct dependence on perceptual concretes. But it is possible that a particular mode of perception plays a larger role in each stage of development than other perceptual modes could play. One indicator of this is the close parallel that is found in this paper between the preoperational stage and the Homeric mind with its dependence on auditory perception. The characteristics of the preoperational stage are not only similar to the characteristics of the Homeric mind, but, as well, are similar to the phenomenal characteristics of hearing as presented by Hans Jonas. Moreover, in that same phenomenological analysis of vision, Jonas argues that abstractions and philosophical thought may use visual perception as a model. For Jonas, the phenomenal characteristics of vision basically are different from those of hearing, much in the same way as Havelock conceives of the difference between the auditory features of the Homeric mind and the literary and thus visual mode of communication. Thus hearing and vision may play a greater and more direct role in the preoperational and operational stages than what Piaget would believe.

Perhaps, in visual perception by itself, decenterings and reversals are not possible, but when vision is tied to the significant communication involved in literacy, vision becomes freed from the tyranny of oral communication which distorts vision for use as a support for the dominant sense of hearing. It has been noted that a particular mode of perception, when used in a supporting role for some sense in

significant communication, may have certain features of it selected and used by the dominant sense to enforce and assist the dominant sense. Therefore, visual effects in the poetic performance are presented sequentially to assist the hearing effects. But when literacy became predominant, vision no longer had to follow the lead of hearing but could explore its own nature and develop abstractions. It became easy, for example, to reverse one's examination of any section of the printed page. Vision, unlike hearing then, is not centered on some perceptual aspect of communication and thereby bound to it but is free to examine and reexamine in detail any particular symbol, word, or thought. Thus, the development of cognitive structures as Piaget views them can be explained at least partially by the changing perceptual structures that become dominant in different forms of communication.

Whatever the validity of the above discussion, the conception of centering provides support for the parallel which this paper draws between the Homeric mind and the preoperational level of mental development.

Centration, to continue the main line of discussion, helps lead to the characteristic of egocentricity of thought, since all is centered on the subject's action and is not made into an objective system. This centricity, according to Piaget, leads to several other characteristics which also are helpful in relating Havelock and Piaget.

> [Since] intuitive thought is from moment to moment "centered" on a given relation, it is phenomenalistic and grasps only the perceptual appearance of reality. It is therefore a prey to suggestion coming from immediate experience, which it copies and imitates instead of correcting. Now the reaction of intelligence at this level to the social environment is exactly parallel to its reaction to the physical environment, and this is self-evident, since the two kinds of experience are indistinguishable in reality.[1]

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[1]Piaget, The Psychology of Intelligence, p. 160.

Several points in this quotation are of value in comparing the Homeric to the preoperational mind. First, the phenomenalistic character of intuitive thought resulting from centering indicates that the preoperational stage is closely bound to perceptual appearances. This feature, as mentioned previously, is similar to that of the Homeric mind. Secondly, the relatively passive and suggestible character of the preoperational stage where little reorganization of reality is done, but instead is copied, also echoes the Homeric mind which finds the template for reality in the saga. Third, the equation of the social and physical environment for the preoperational stage also is similar to the Homeric conception of a great society of gods, goddesses, and heroes who are the actors behind phenomenal reality.

Irreversibility is the fourth important characteristic of the preoperational stage--

> Reversibility is the most clearly defined characteristic of intelligence according to Piaget. . . . If thought is reversible, it can follow the line of reasoning back to where it started. . . . The attainment of reversible operations is extremely difficult for the child. This is reasonable if one considers that all sensorimotor operations are irreversible by definition. Once a motor act is committed, it cannot be reversed. In much the same way perceptions cannot be reversed.[1]

Though Piaget, in another passage, illustrates this by visual perception, this irreversibility also must be the case in auditory perception where sounds happen and pass away. In the case of the poetic performance, there is a story full of actions and actors; and since it is action, it is irreversible. Even if action is internalized, it is still action. Havelock also points out that the happenings in the poetic performance proceed in a natural sequence as they would in real situations and that

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[1]Wadsworth, Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development, pp. 75-76.

that there are no such narrative devices such as flashbacks. The irreversible action then, to relate Piaget's conceptions to Jonas and Havelock to a greater degree, whether operationally internalized or as a sensori-motor action in the environment, has more of an "event" character than it does an object or "existent" character, for stable objects do not pass away as actions do.

In continuing the argument concerning the event character of the preoperational mind, such a character again is evidenced by that mind's egocentric nature. This is because that level of mind is

> centered on an object in accordance with the subject's own perspective [and this] perceptual composition cannot rise above the level of what [is described] as the "subjective" group, i.e., a system centered with reference to the subject's own action, and capable, at the most, of corrections and regulations.[1]

Thus an object, for the preoperational mind, is not truly separated from the subject and his action, and is therefore not truly considered by the child to be an object as we normally view objects--separate and existing in their own right. Likewise, there also was little separation between the Homeric Greek and his environment. He was a part of the whole which was defined by its relation to him. There was no attempt to objectify the world--for him to separate himself from it. Thus, the Homeric mind also did not see objects in the world as truly existing apart from him but as perceptual events impinging upon his attention as sounds do.

The lack of general conservation ability in the child is another important characteristic of the preoperational stage. However, conservation will be discussed very little except for noting that

> [it] is the conceptualization (schematization) that the amount or

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[1]Piaget, The Psychology of Intelligence, p. 115.

quantity of matter stays the same regardless of any changes in shape or position.[1]

It definitely would be interesting to know if the Homeric Greeks solved conservation problems in the same limited perceptual ways as do children at the preoperational stage. Presumably, since the ability to conserve is a result of the other characteristics of peroperational thought, the Greeks also would be unable to conserve. That is, of course, if the asserted parallels between the Homeric and the preoperational minds are valid.

A very brief outline of the two operational (logical) stages of development will be made in order to indicate the character of the mind's thought after the preoperational stage. The preoperational stage prepares the child for the large step up to logical thought. Logical thought is developed in two stages: that of concrete operations and that of formal operations. In the former stage, abstractions--and the newly acquired abilities of decentering, reversing operations and doing transformations--are performed still on concrete objects in the world rather than on abstract ideas. It is with the latter stage, that of formal operations, that fully developed logical abilities are found. In this stage, abstract operations are carried out on abstractions.

Of further interest, and related to the scope of this paper, is the possibility that the two operational stages have characteristics in common with later Greek thought. Presumably the concrete operations stage correlates with the pre-Socratics, and the stage of formal operations correlates with the fully developed abstract thought of Plato and Aristotle.

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[1]Wadsworth, Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development, p. 76.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The central theme of this thesis involves the following question: Is the Homeric mind, as chiefly conceptualized by Eric Havelock, essentially identical with Jean Piaget's concept of the pre-operational level of cognitive development? Answering this question involves an analysis of the nature of the content and form of both conceptions of mind and a discussion of the nature of the mechanisms by which those minds developed.

To explain the specific formulations of these conceptions of minds and their developmental mechanisms has been the task of the body of this thesis. A general summary and examination of the similarities and differences between the two views remains to be given.

First, the parallels between the mechanisms of the Homeric mind and the preoperational stage should be examined. This examination is complicated by the fact that Havelock does not detail his ideas about the mechanisms, even though Piaget does. The growth of mind, for both thinkers, clearly comes about as the result of dealing with information. For Havelock, it is the significant information in oral or literate communication that is important. For Piaget, the dealing with information through assimilation and accommodation is important, but it is likely that he would see all information as "significant" for the child. This is the case, even though the egocentric child at first ignores any

conflicting information which comes in, since the child ultimately has to take into the account others in his peer group who disagree with him. For Havelock, however, information which comes in that conflicts with the dominant paradigms as presented in the saga are ignored until literacy makes it possible to notice the fact of existence of conflicts. Thus, the preoperational child is always losing his egocentricity to some degree. The Homeric Greek keeps his egocentricity intact until the advent of literacy. If the preoperational child did not have conflicting ideas existing in the culture around him, he, like the Homeric Greek, would stay the same until those conflicts became available.

Specific comparisons between Piaget and Havelock on dynamic equilibrium and conflict are more difficult to obtain since Havelock does not really speak in this theoretical mode. However, using the above analysis concerning information, it is clear that conflict spurs changes in both the child and the Homeric Greek. The concept of equilibrium, too, is applicable to both. The preoperational child is continually losing his equilibrium, while the Greek culture is in a very near condition of stasis until literacy changes things. Thus, this agreement between Havelock's and Piaget's views of conflict and equilibrium indicates that the views are analogous.

Another point of agreement between the two authors is that they describe the development from one major type of mind to another as a qualitative change--that is, a change in kind. The steps involved in this process are slow and may not be obvious on a day to day basis, but become obvious over a long period of time.

The agreement between the conceptions of the mechanisms of generation of both the Homeric mind and the preoperational stage of mind

is significant enough to draw firm positive parallels. It is likely, moreover, that Piaget's language can be used to explain the process of development and growth of the Homeric mind--such as assimilation and accommodation of the information in the poetic performance.

In regard to what and how the Homeric and the preoperational minds think, there also is very close agreement. The four main characteristics of the preoperational stage of thought--egocentricity, centration, inability to do transformations, and irreversibility--are comparable between Havelock and Piaget, though they are theoretical formulations and are thus not the specifics of the preoperational mind. Details of the discussion of the above general characteristics of preoperational thought and their agreement to Homeric counterparts are covered sufficiently in Chapter V.

A more important agreement between Havelock and Piaget is found on the level of the specific elements of the characteristics of the two minds under discussion. First, both authors agree on the perceptual nature of their respective kinds of thought and minds. The minds as perceptually oriented operate in a non-reversible sequence of events and actions. These events essentially are discontinuous in nature and form no underlying objective patterns of relations. Second, the focus of both minds is on the concrete action or event rather than on some abstract idea or relation. Moreover, neither mind would believe that objects are truly separate existents from the individual as subject. Both the preoperational child and the Homeric Greek are immersed in experience and do not attempt to alienate themselves from it. Third, at the preoperational stage of development as well as at the level of the Homeric mind, the individual is a passive perceiver of information

--he has certain schemata which define what is, and he lets in material that fits in with what he already believes. Thus the child is not aware of conflicts, and likewise the Greek hears only the poet performing and ignores any possible different drummer. Fourth, time, for both types of minds, has no underlying objectivity but instead is just a simple succession of events. Fifth, causality is manipulation, either by the individuals involved or by outside agencies who act in goal-directed ways. Therefore, the specifics of experience for the Homeric mind, and those of the preoperational child's mind, are identical.

Disagreements between Piaget and Havelock are on a more abstract and theoretical level. Piaget writes about perception in a general way, but when he needs a specific example, he turns to vision to provide it. This is the case, at least, in material researched for the purpose of this paper. Thus the preoperational mind, for Piaget, is bound to perceptual structures with their limitations (which are stressed above as specifics of agreement between the two authors). Havelock, too, finds a kind of perceptual bias in the Homeric mind, but it is an auditory bias toward the poetic performance. Therefore, for Piaget, perception in general structures the preoperational mind, while for Havelock, auditory perceptions structure the Homeric mind. Material in Chapter V covers more thoroughly this problem with the mode of perception involved in the two types of minds. In this regard, the agreement of the preoperational stage of mental development with the phenomenal structures of hearing (via Hans Jonas) and the nature of the Homeric (via Havelock) is so definite that the conclusion can be drawn that the preoperational level of mind indeed is structured by hearing, which is used as

communication in the language that the child has just learned.

That the highly significant relation between the preoperational level of mind as described by Piaget and the Homeric mind as described by Havelock is not one of coincidence, but is an indication that the two authors are describing the same phenomenon from two different perspectives, is an inescapable conclusion.

Given the identity of the two views, further questions arise. Why are the preoperational stage and the Homeric mind the same? Did cultural development recapitulate individual development, or was it the other way around? This seems to be a chicken and egg problem, for the individuals in a culture have to develop these characteristics of mind before the culture can be said to be that way, but, according to Piaget, the environment or culture also has to have the particular features available for the individual child to be able to develop those features. Presumably, the answer is that in a culture which developed abstraction on its own (through literacy?), the individual and the society would evolve together in their development out of the oral mode of thought into the abstract literary mode. For the Homeric Greek, however, literacy and hence abstraction, according to Havelock, was not developed by a slow process within the culture, but was introduced from the outside. Therefore, certain individuals before others would have access to literacy and therefore could develop abstract abilities before the general culture provided abstractions in the environment.

More basic, however, than what came first in the order of time in a particular culture is the question of the origin of the culture's particular cognitive structures. Do these structures originate in individual genetic blueprints which are realized only when the environ-

mental conditions become right, or does the cultural environment somehow imprint these structures upon the individual? While this question cannot be answered absolutely, several possible answers are available.

Jean Piaget believes that the basic structure and directional vector of cognitive development is genetically engrained within the individual, and that the proper environmental conditions are all that is necessary to bring out the specific stages.

Eric Havelock, unlike Piaget, provides no neat theoretical answer; but some elaboration on his and Jonas' ideas, as mentioned in Chapter IV, is of use here. A metaparadigm is structured by the phenomenal characteristics of a particular perceptual mode used in communication in a society. This metaparadigm then conditions all other ideas and information in a given society, though its governing presence usually is not recognized but can be seen as generally comparable to Piaget's stages. The senses which construct these metaparadigms are genetically given as regards their structure; therefore the structure of the metaparadigm is genetically patterned. Since individuals and cultures begin with verbal communication which is much more basic and simple than writing, they therefore exhibit mental features which are keyed to the genetic characteristics of hearing. Later comes the development of writing, a more complex technology of communication in which visual perceptions are dominant. Therefore, the metaparadigm developed out of writing yields the ability to abstract. This ability to abstract would be common even to illiterate members of a dominantly literate culture, for once this ability to abstract has been generally achieved in the culture, the abstract mileau is that

which will develop those illiterate minds, at least to a minimal degree.

This alternative view of the development of these "genetic" structures therefore has no hidden mental location for the genetic component of cognition (as Piaget would imply)--these would reside in the phenomenal characteristics of the particular senses which are being dominantly used. This view has the advantage of explaining the curious identity of the characteristics of the preoperational stage with the phenomenal characteristics of hearing. As well, the development of an organized technology of oral communication could explain the development of the Homeric/preoperational mind.

Whatever the explanation, the fundamental identity of the two minds examined--the preoperational mind and the Homeric mind--is an intriguing fact.

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