

In 1939 Lévy-Bruhl became skeptical about his classification and wrote in his notebooks, partly published in 1947, a complete retraction of his views on prelogical thinking. But his reason for retracting his ideas on prelogical thinking was precisely the reason which made me, in the same year (1939), propose an intermediary stage, namely the stage of empirical logic or empirico-logical thinking. Lévy-Bruhl recognized that, in most respects, primitives reason quite as logically as ordinary Westerners, and are much more practical about the affairs of their daily life than the average Westerner is when he comes to live among them. They know the habits of useful animals, as well as the habits of animals which are dangerous. They know the effects of plants, deleterious or beneficial, whether one can eat given plants or animals safely; they know the best ways to hunt and fish; they know about the seasons; they know how to utilize natural resources with such tools and devices as they possess. In all these respects, they are incomparably superior to civilized foreigners who try to live with them as they live. Accordingly, Lévy-Bruhl realized that it is quite wrong to attribute "prelogical" mentality to primitives.^4

In short, the dichotomy between a prelogical, uncivilized mentality and a logical, civilized mentality cannot, in Lévy-Bruhl's opinion, be sustained.

Neither can a split be made between the ancient mind and the modern mind, as if they were disparate entities. Even the impressive technology of the twentieth century does not prove that the modern mind is different from, much less inferior to, the ancient mind. Albright reminds us that, long before the Industrial Revolution and the advent of Western science, men were achieving remarkable feats.

Among the Babylonians of the first centuries of the second millennium there were such inventions and discoveries as Diophantine algebra, named for a Greek mathematician of the Roman period who probably flourished in the third century A. D., and geometry, including individual cases of the famous Pythagorean theorem named for the Greek philosopher and mathematician of the sixth century B. C. The Egyptians had developed remarkable skill in surgery, anatomy, mensuration, and other fields. The Babylonians, having two languages which were totally different in structure, made remarkable progress in analyzing the structure of languages. The Egyptians did not even begin to develop philology because they had only one language. A greater triumph, however, was the remarkable development of ancient Near Eastern law, particularly in the Law of Moses in Exodus, which follows identically the same formulation and patterning as Ancient Oriental law-codes of the second millennium, but is distinctly advanced in detail. The greatest triumph of empirical logic was Israelite monotheism.^5

Albright, moreover, subjects to vigorous criticism the notion advanced by Thorlief Boman, among others, that the Hebrew mind must be put in a polar antithesis to the Greek mind -- temporal versus spatial, dynamic versus static, auditory versus visual. Pungently he remarks:

Boman's approach is completely wrong .... Boman just took a concept, "to be", which is somewhat differently expressed in Hebrew and Greek, and arbitrarily assumed that the differences were characteristic of different ways of thinking. If he had looked through his dictionaries carefully, he would have found that exactly the same ideas can be expressed, though in somewhat different ways. The hypothesis of different forms of logic and different mentalities based on difference of languages is erroneous.^6

Whether Hebrew or Greek, then, ancient or modern, primitive or civilized, man's mind is distinctively and everywhere the mind of man. In the light of this fact -- for fact it is -- the skepticism of J. Gresham Machen regarding almost airtight classifications among types and periods of human