

Summaries

On the sociogenesis of the word 'tabu' in Western-Europe. or: the 'Noble Savage' and the bourgeois of the 18th century

by P. J. H. Kapteyn

This article is part of a larger attempt to trace the social conditions and functions of what in Western-Europe in everyday-language is called 'tabu'. As a guide-line I use the word 'tabu' itself. The question is when, in what way and under what conditions this word has been introduced in Western-Europe.

After a first orientation it appears that the word has been introduced twice and with two distinguishable functions. The word was first discovered about 1780 by West-Europeans in Polynesia and refers in the records of their travels to the 'savage' prohibitions that raised their astonishment and seemed strange and irrational to them. 'Tabu' was a primitive word for them inherent in a 'lower' civilization but not fitting the 'higher' one of their own. The second time, a few decades later, the word appeared to fit quite well and got, ironically enough, the function to criticize the own civilization as being as strange and irrational as that of the savages.

The inquiry into the sociogenesis of the word 'tabu' is therefore the inquiry into the nature and social conditions of that peculiar tension in Western-European society where the same word both exalts and inveighs against its civilization. This article confines itself to the first part or 'pole' of this tension: the how and why of the exalting discovery of that abasing 'primitive' word 'tabu'.

The argument is based on the exposition of the social development in the 18th century. By the end of that century bourgeois people came in a closer, more business-like and — on their part — selfcomplacent contact with foreign countries; they lost the susceptibility of the older generation to the ideal of the 'noble savage'. The native was found no longer innocent, but shameless and uncivilized. One of his shortcomings was 'tabu' and the Western-European explorers could discover precisely these prohibitions because their rationality and selfconstraint were only then, and not earlier, strong enough.

Inequality of educational opportunity

by M. A. J. M. Matthijssen

Inequality of educational opportunity is a problem with a history. In the last 25 years views of this problem have been changing in connection with a growing awareness of social inequality as a fundamental characteristic of contemporary society. The definition of the problem varies with one's interpretation and definition of social reality. This article argues that at least five different definitions of this problem can be distinguished in the recent literature on education. They differ from each other in the number of features of the societal structure that are put as

problematic in the perspective of the emancipation of socially deprived groups from institutional coercion. As a result, the acquired historical patterns in the organization of educational processes in connection with the division of labor and power are either more or less taken for granted or put as a problem.

Important documents — English Education Act 1944, The Coleman Report . . . the 'deschooling movement' — are in this way classified and interpreted.