

THE CONCEPT OF BASIC PERSONALITY
STRUCTURE AS AN OPERATIONAL TOOL IN THE
----- SOCIAL SCIENCES -----

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The Processes of adaptation in man have been treated in various ways. The biologist limits the meaning of the term to those autoplasmic changes in bodily structure which take place presumably to accommodate the organism to its physical environment. On this basis he can describe certain long-term phases of human adjustment, but he has to treat his subject with bold strokes and in relation to long periods of time. Morphological criteria cannot be used to describe the adaptive maneuvers of man covering short periods of time. Morphological adaptation in our species seems to have become almost stabilized, in spite of a long series of minor variations which now form the basis for the concept of race. Moreover, such adaptations record only the response of man to his external physical environment. What has become more important in the thinking of the past century is the adaptation of man to his human environment, the behavioral adjustments which he has to make to the conditions imposed by social living.

While the morphological adjustments of our species could be studied and described in the familiar terms of biology, new techniques had to be devised for the description of behavioral and psychological adjustments. The concept which showed the greatest usefulness and viability in this connection was that of culture. This concept was purely descriptive, but it furnished a definite way of identifying at least the end products of the

processes of adaptation and hence laid a basis for the comparison of various types of adaptive maneuvers.

The culture concept was first used with relation to the culture - trait, an item of behavior common to the members of a particular - society. Such a culture trait was presumably isolated and idiosyn - cratic. Later, the sociologist developed the concept of institutions - configurations of functionally interrelated culture traits, which are the dynamic units within culture. Although comparative studies of the - forms of the institutions within various cultures could now be made, - no significant conclusions concerning the relations of institutions with in the same culture were possible without the aid of new techniques. Up to now only one technique has been able to yield decisive results in the interpretation of the variations in institutional combinations - and this technique is a psychological one. This psychological technique has shown itself capable of investigating the minutiae of those adaptive proc esses which cover short spans of time and represent reactions to both - the natural and the human environment.

Preliminary attempts to establish relationships between institu - tions within the same culture had to draw heavily upon our knowledge of psychopathology. From this contact there emerged the concept of the psychological culture pattern.¹ However, early attempts based on too - close analogies between society and the individual did not furnish a basis for a dynamic concept of society. The culture pattern merely gave recog - nition to the fact that personality and institutions were always to be found in some persistent relationship. It remained a difficult technical problem

¹ Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (New York, 1934)

to demonstrate this relationship in an empirically verifiable manner without merely referring in a descriptive way to certain pathological configurations of frequent occurrence in individuals

The study of "primitive" societies offered the best opportunity for the working out of such a technique. It could be legitimately anticipated that "primitive" societies would prove simpler in structure than our own and that the psychological constellations there found would be more consistent and more naïve in character. By far the most difficult problem was that of selecting a psychological technique suited to this particular assignment. Neither the classical psychologies, behaviorism, nor Gestalt psychology had made more than sporadic attempts to apply themselves to this problem. Psychoanalysis seemed the technique best suited to the task; yet Freud himself, in spite of his application of psychoanalysis to sociology, did not develop an empirically verifiable technique. On the whole, his efforts were dedicated to the verification in primitive society of those constellations found in modern man. This endeavor was consistent with the evolutionary hypothesis regarding the development of society and culture which was in vogue at the end of the nineteenth century. Among the most valuable suggestions made by Freud was that of an analogy between the practices of primitive people and neurotic symptoms. Some rather unproductive hypotheses resulted from the pursuit of this analogy to too great lengths; nevertheless, the study of the origin of neurotic symptoms in the individual laid a basis for the understanding of the minimal adaptive tools of man. Thus, even though the neurotic symptom is a special case, the principles upon which symptom formation are based

cannot be very different from those involved in the development of any of the habitual modes of behavior which we identify in the character of the individual.

The integration of the two techniques, anthropological and psychological, was later facilitated by the abandonment of the evolutionary hypothesis exploited by the early anthropologist. For this was substituted the concept of cultures as functional wholes and the study of primitive societies as entities, a point of view of which Malinowski was the earliest exponent. All that was gained by the application of the concept of psychological culture pattern to primitive societies was the impression that institutions within a society were in large measure consistent with each other and that this consistency could be described in terms of analogies with entities found in psychopathology. This was a definite gain, but it was not a technique.

The most obvious approach to the problem of devising a definite technique was to utilize the known fact that cultures are transmitted within a society from generation to generation. It was natural, therefore, to attempt to develop such a technique with the aid of learning theory formulations. However, what we know about acculturation and diffusion indicates that there is a limit to the sort of culture content which can be transmitted by direct learning processes. Though no one can deny the role of direct learning in culture transmission, qualified of course by the age of the individual who is exposed to culture change, there seems to be a high degree of selection in the acceptance of elements from any culture by individuals reared in another. Moreover, if

learning process alone could account for the transmission of culture, it is difficult to see how culture change without borrowing from other cultures could ever take place. The point is that learning processes do not account for the integrative character of the human mind in so far as the emotional relationships of the individual to his environment are concerned. There is another factor at work, a factor upon which psychoanalytic technique can throw much light. In addition to direct learning processes, the individual builds up a highly complicated series of integrative systems which are not a result of direct learning. The concept of basic personality structure was established on the basis of a recognition of these factors.

The purely descriptive use of very similar concepts is an exceedingly old one. One can easily find it, by implication, in the writings of Herodotus and Caesar. Both of these authors recognize that the various peoples they described not only had unique customs and practices but were also unique in temperament, disposition, and character. Caesar took this factor into account and used it to the advantage of Rome in his dealings with the various barbarian tribes. However, the recognition that there are different basic personality structures for different societies really takes us no farther than did the concept of psychological culture pattern. It can acquire an operational significance only when the formation of this basic personality structure can be tracked down to identifiable causes and if significant generalizations can be made concerning the relation between the formation of basic personality structure and the individual's specific potentialities for adaptation.

The realization that the concept of basic personality structure - was a dynamic instrument of sociological research was not an a priori judgment. It was a conclusion reached after two cultures described by Linton - the Tanala and the Marquesan - had been analyzed with the - objective of correlating personality with institutions. In the analysis of these two cultures the potentialities of psychoanalytic principles - were first shown. The analyses began with the study of the integrational systems formed in the child by the direct experiences during the process of growth. In other words, the approach was a genetic one. It followed two standards:(1) that integrative processes were at work, and (2) that the end results of these integrative processes could be identified. A - technique which follows this line is, however, bound to have limitations. The first limitation is that, if the investigator is a citizen of Western - society, and if he is moreover a psychopathologist, he will usually be - able to identify only those end products which have significance in the - neurotic and psychotic disturbances in his own society. But it must be recognized that, simultaneously, other end products were formed which we in our society could not possibly identify. Notwithstanding these limitations, some significant results were obtained in the first few attempts. The first correlation to be observed was that, in any given culture, re - ligious systems were replicas of the experiences of the child with paren - tal disciplines. It was noted that the concept of deity was universal, but that the technique for soliciting divine aid varied according to the specific experiences of the child and the particular life goals defined by the society. In the culture this technique for solicitation was merely to demonstrate -

endurance, in another it was to punish oneself in order to be reinstated in the good graces of the deity, a position that had been lost by some transgression clearly defined in the actual life practices sanctioned by the community. These variations in the technique of soliciting divine aid pointed, therefore, to different influences which shaped the personality in each specific culture.

From this first correlation several important conclusions could be drawn. The first of these was that certain culturally established techniques of child treatment had the effect of shaping basic attitudes toward parents and that these attitudes enjoyed a permanent existence in the mental equipment of the individual. The institutions from which the growing child received the experience responsible for the production of these basic constellations were, therefore, called primary institutions. The religious ideologies and methods of solicitation were, for the most part, consistent with these basic constellations and had presumably been derived from them by a process known as projection. In other words, primary institutions laid the basis for the projective system which was subsequently reflected in the development of other institutions. Institutions developed as a result of the projective systems were, therefore, called secondary institutions. If this correlation proved to be correct, it followed that between the primary experiences and the end results, identifiable through their projective manifestations, there stood this entity which could now be called the basic personality structure. Primary institutions were responsible for the basic personality structure which, in turn, was responsible for the secondary institutions. It must

be emphasized that the important feature of this concept is not its name - although a good many investigators have since attempted variations in the name without any effort to modify or criticize the technique by which it was derived. This name stands for a special technique. Its importance depends upon the fact that it is possible to demonstrate that certain practices are significant for the individual during his period of growth and - that the constellations thus formed remain as a continuity in the personality. This technique is an achievement of psychodynamics.

Although the development of these correlations began with a demonstration of the relation of religion to childhood experiences, as time went on, the technique was extended to include more and more factors. When all the institutions of a culture had been described, it became possible to classify them and to point out many which were instrumental in the creation of specific disposition, temperament, and values. Furthermore, many of the institutions proved to be oriented toward specific conditions in the life of a particular society as, for example, food supply. It was shown conclusively that in the Marquesas Islands anxiety about food created within the individual a specific series of integrative systems - from which were derived special value systems, as well as certain religious practices.

Because of its many strange contrasts with the conditions of life - and the value systems of our society, the Marquesans ² furnished the - first opportunity to establish the influence of early constellations. In this culture the ratio of men to women was $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. It was a society much -

² See A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society* (New York 1939)

occupied with the threat of periodic starvation. Accordingly, its folk - tales showed that the relationship of men to women was strikingly - different from that in our society. The initiative seemed to be decid- edly in the hands of the women, and in many of the tales the young boy occupied precisely the same position that the innocent girl in our cul- ture occupies in relation to the sex-hungry, brutal male. It was the - woman who appeared in the place of the bad man of our society. The boy was subject to the sexual wishes of the woman. It was clear to see from these folktales that certain processes not present in our society were at work. It was the woman who was desired and hated, yet there was little overt hostility of the men toward each other in their competi- tion for women. In other words, here was another evidence of areas of repression that differ from those in our culture.

In Tanala, as described by Linton,³ another important aspect of basic personality structure was uncovered. There the important lesson was the demonstration of the confusion created by social changes when the basic personality remained intact. The old Tanala society had as its - economic basis the cultivation of dry rice. This technique permitted a - certain type of social organization, based on communal ownership of - land, in which produce was divided under the extremely authoritarian rule of the father. The basic needs of the individual (that is, particular- ly of the younger sons upon whose labor the economy chiefly depended) were completely satisfied, notwithstanding what we should call in our society submission to despotic rule. Passive adaptation to a father was perfectly satisfactory as long as the basic needs of the individual were

³ Ibid.

met. When the wet method of rice cultivation was introduced, communal ownership of land had to be abandoned. The individual suddenly became important, and his rights were threatened by the competitive needs of other individuals for the same means of subsistence. In other words, private property was introduced. The mad scramble for the favored valleys led to the disruption of the whole family organization. This resulted in a great increase in crime, homosexuality, magic, and hysterical illnesses. These social phenomena indicated quite clearly that when the personality, as shaped by the customs suited to the old method of economy, encountered, in the new economy, psychological tasks it was in no way prepared to meet, the result was an enormous outbreak of anxiety with various manifestations. Defensive measures had to be introduced by both the "haves" and the "have-nots".

Still another facet of basic personality structure was clearly demonstrated in Linton's description of the Comanche. These were a predatory people. Enterprise, courage, and initiative were the attributes needed in the individual to perpetuate the society. It was a society in which the young and able-bodied male bore all the burdens. Moreover it was a society which demanded a high degree of coöperation between the young males. It is clearly predictable from these demands that the greatest anxiety for the individual would come at that period in life when his powers, endurance, and courage were on the wane. Since there were no vested interests in this society, the individual could not accumulate any emblems of social value to perpetuate a status once achieved. Preforce, the society was a democracy in which status must be constantly

validated. The discipline to which the individual must conform in childhood could not therefore be of a kind that would impede development and growth, especially along those lines most valuable to the society. Accordingly we find that no impediments were placed in the path of development; the self-esteem, courage and enterprise of the individual were fostered by every possible device, and the qualifications he had to meet in later life were consistent with the constellations created in childhood. It is therefore not surprising to find that the projective systems in Comanche were extremely uncomplicated. In their religion there was no concept of sin and no complicated ritual for reinstatement in the good graces of the deity. A Comanche who wanted "power" simply asked for it, or demonstrated his fortitude. In other words, the practical religion was merely a replica of those conventions which guaranteed the fullest coöperation between the males for their common enterprise.

Up to this point we have been using source material of a limited kind. We have used only the institutional set-up of a given society and have established a relationship between the various institutions by demonstrating their consistency with the basic experiences of the individual during the process of growth. Even if our conclusions are valid, no more can be said for the result obtained than that it is a good guess. But thus far we have no way of checking the validity of our conclusions. New data are imperative. If there is such a thing as a basic personality, we should be able to identify it in the individuals composing a particular society. However, we are obliged to reckon with the fact that all individuals are different, that is, each has a different -

character. Therefore, how is it possible to reconcile the idea of basic personality with the known fact that each individual in a given culture - has his own individual character?

This question is readily answered when we examine the structure of the personalities of one hundred individuals in our own society. Each of them will have a specific character-structure shaped partly by potentialities at birth and by innate predispositions, but also by those - specific influences encountered during the process of growth. Were it not for the fact that there is a basic personality among these one - hundred people, we could never identify such specific constellations as Oedipus complex, castration complex, and so on, which were made so noteworthy by Freud. Freud, however, did not know that these constellations, which were so universal in the people in our society, were - specific to our culture. He believed that they were universal to all mankind, and therefore that many of them were of phylogenetic origin. One can define such a thing as a basic personality among these one hundred individuals in our society by the fact that they all have been shaped by - situations which have their origin in institutional practices. Each individual handles the specific influences in a characteristic way, but this - notwithstanding, the character-structure is formed within an ambit of a certain range of potentialities, and within this latter the basic personality is to be found.

A study of biographies therefore became imperative for the further development of our work. It was important also that there should be a series of biographies for each society -- in fact, the more the better.

But the study of a dozen biographies including both sexes and representing variations in status and age could give us not only those features which all had in common but could also indicate for us those places at which the variations occurred. It might be mentioned parenthetically that the technique of taking such a biography is not an easy task, because when individuals are invited to recount the story of their lives they take for granted all the background of value systems and socially approved objectives and therefore all one gets is a curriculum vitae. Such a record is of no value. What is needed is a cross-section of the individual which embraces the influences of his childhood, the history of his entire development, and a cross-section of his adaptation at the time the history is taken.

The opportunity for such an experiment presented itself in the description of Alor culture by Dr. Cora DuBois. She brought back from this culture not only a description of the institutional set-up, but a series of eight biographies together with Porteus intelligence tests, children's drawings, and a series of thirty-seven Rorschach tests. The study of this culture revealed the following: The conclusions already reached in the study of Marquesans, Tanala, and Comanche were corroborated. From the institutional description of Alor it was not difficult to reconstruct the basic personality. The influences to which the child was subjected in this society were of a unique character. Owing to the peculiar division of function between the males and the females, the woman bore the brunt of the vegetable food economy. She worked in the fields all day and could take care of her children only before she went out to the fields and after she returned.

Maternal neglect was therefore the rule, and by that is meant that the supportive influences of the mother in establishing the structure of the ego were in default. Tensions from hunger, the need for support, for emotional response, were therefore greatly neglected, and the child was left in the care of older siblings, relatives, or other persons. The consistency of the disciplines was therefore destroyed; the image of the parent as a persistent and solicitous helper in case of need was not built up. The ego was feeble in development and filled with anxiety. The patterns of aggression remained amorphous. Accordingly, although we find in the projective systems the concept of a deity, there is no effort at idealization of the divine image and the Alorese perform their religious rituals only under the pressure of urgent circumstances, and then in a reluctant manner. The interpersonal tensions within the society run high, distrust is universal, and the emotional development retarded and filled with anxiety.

We then turned our attention to the study of the individual biographers. Fortunately they were documented in such a way that the basic requirements for our specific needs were fully met, notwithstanding the fact that many of them were faulty from the point of view of a fully documented life history. Many things concerning the character structure of the individuals were picked up by observing these subjects in the actual process of living from day to day, and moreover by observing their reactions to the ethnographer and by studying their dream life. In connection with the studies of these individuals certain new features concerning basic personality were unraveled. It was an extraordinary fact to find in half a dozen of these bio-

ographies that, whenever the subject of hunger was touched upon, the associations led to some form of natural catastrophe, such as earthquake or flood. This was quite in accordance with what we would expect and what we predicted from the study of the basic personality structure. Each of these eight people had an individual character, but nevertheless all had certain features in common, not because they followed certain conventions in common but because the deeper fabric of their personalities was molded on similar lines. Furthermore, the points at which the individuals differed in character structure could be clearly tracked down to variations in the influences at work during the period of growth. Where the parental care was good, specific variations in character appeared. For example, one of the men proved to have a conscience molded upon lines similar to those found in our society. He had moreover a patent Oedipus complex. But all these factors were clearly traceable to the influence of a powerful father who had more than the usual amount of solicitude for his son. Conscience was a rare phenomenon among the Alorese, and the relation of conscience to the absence of good parental care was therefore clearly demonstrated. Moreover all the individuals showed similar sequences in aggression patterns and in the absence of specific constellations that are found in our society.

But we still had, in addition to these biographical studies, a new series of data which could be used to corroborate, amplify, or refute the findings up to this point. These were the conclusions of the Rorschach tests, which were made by Dr. Emil Oberholzer "blind", that is, without knowledge either of the personalities or of the specific features of

the culture. Dr. Oberholzer's report concerning these Rorschach findings was to me the most astonishing confirmation of the validity of the concept of basic personality. First of all, he identified certain features which all Alorese had in common. Secondly, the specific individuals all showed individual variations from this basic pattern. But to me these findings were less important than another order of data revealed by the Rorschach tests. As previously stated, the psychologist who operates only within the knowledge of the psychopathological entities found in our society has an insuperable handicap - he is capable of identifying only those entities found in our society. It is at this point that the Rorschach test adds a new series of data. Whereas the Rorschach test can give no information concerning the genesis of distinctive traits in the individual or in the group, the test nevertheless demonstrates emotional combinations which are not identifiable in the psychopathological entities common in our society. With the aid of those features, revealed by the Rorschach but which do not appear either in the basic personality or in the study of biographies, it is now possible to rework the original genetic picture so as to describe how the new entities came into existence. The Rorschach test therefore is an instrument not only for checking conclusions already reached but for discovering new entities inaccessible to the other techniques. It may be objected that, after all, the Rorschach is a projective test and therefore its utility may be limited by the fact that its norm has been based upon the study of our society, or, to be more specific, upon the citizen of Switzerland. In actual operation this limitation proves to be unimportant.

In studies undertaken after the Alorese only three yielded significant results: a description by Mr. James West of a community in the United States called Plainville; a study of Sikh culture, described by Dr. Marian W. Smith; and a study of the Ojibwa, described by Miss Ernestine Friedl.

The first study showed that Plainville, a small, rural community in the Middle West, had distinctive features which deviated in a considerable number of respects from urban communities. Furthermore, it precipitated the entire question of whether one can study such large groups as nations with the aid of the concept of basic personality. The answer seems to be in the affirmative, since the Plainville variations from the norm established in urban centers are not very wide. The study of Plainville also precipitated the issue of whether or not the concept of basic personality may be profitably applied to the history of Western society. This is a problem yet to be resolved.

In the study of Sikh we again found some unique features. Here we worked largely with a description of the institutions and with Rorschach tests. The consistency of the two kinds of data was again quite remarkable. The same was true of Ojibwa. It was clearly demonstrated that the Rorschach was indispensable in checking up essential features of basic personality which could not be identified from the genetic picture alone. For example, it was noted in Ojibwa that the disciplines of childhood and the folktales concerning Wenebojo (the Ojibwa culture hero) all pointed to the fact that the claims the child made upon the parent were definitely limited. He was discouraged from believing that the parent had magical

powers which could be used for the benefit of the child. The tenor of the early disciplines was all in the direction of informing the child - that he could make but limited claims upon the parent, all this notwithstanding the fact that the child was given excellent care. We had here, therefore, a combination not to be found in our society: the personality was given a good foundation, but emotional development was limited in a manner very different from anything we find in our society. This limitation could not be completely identified from the genetic picture of the development of the child. It required the Rorschach test to demonstrate quite conclusively the peculiar limitations of the Ojibwa in his emotional contact with others. A second feature of Ojibwa was that it afforded an excellent opportunity for the study of the acculturation processes and the specific manner in which acculturation took place. It was very clear from the Rorschach picture that these processes introduced factors into the emotional life of the individual which were common in our society but unknown to Ojibwa, who had not been exposed to the ways of white men or to Catholicism.

The technique of deriving the basic personality as it has been described up to this point is open to some serious objections. One may say that people are what they are because they grow up under certain conditions; we have known that for some thousands of years. Quite true. But the technique as described furnishes a specific bill of particulars as to what conditions give rise to precisely what results in the personality; moreover, because of the integrational processes at work and the unforeseen combinations, it is able to derive some indirect -

results. But so far the technique is open to a still more serious objection: It gives no answer to the question of why one people finds it necessary to institute certain disciplines, impulse controls, and so on, while others do not. This objection finally reduces the technique to a refinement of the old saw that some people do one thing and some do another, a position not far removed from that furnished by the use of the culture pattern.

The crucial question then becomes: What determines the parental attitude toward children and hence the specific influences to which the child is subject? In general, one can say that these parental attitudes are determined by the social organization and the subsistence techniques. Whereas this statement is, strictly speaking, true, we are likely to get many surprises unless we qualify it with several conditions. And these conditions are of the highest importance in relation to cultural change.

If we attempt to define those conditions which qualify the socioeconomic determinants of parental attitudes, apparently we immediately run into the problem of social origins. This is a hopeless task, and theories at this point are no substitute for demonstrable evidence. An excellent case in point is Comanche culture. As we compare the institutions of the old Plateau culture form which the Comanche derived, we notice that some institutions are the same in both, some are modified, and some disappear in the new conditions. Hunting medicine, though common in the old culture, disappears in the new. The reason is obvious. In the new environment game was plentiful, which meant no anxiety and no need for supernatural aid, skill being the only requirement. The raising of the young, especially the young male, was not the same in the

new culture as in the old. But there was an Anlage in the old culture for the new development; and the new economy could not be aided in any way by impulse control over the young. On the contrary, everything was to be gained from an unobstructed development of the young male.

In old Tanala the parental attitudes were likewise consistent with the economy of communal ownership of land; but when private property was introduced, chaos resulted because the disciplines in the old culture qualified the individual for a very passive adaptation to an economy devoid of opportunities for competition. The new economy demanded strong competitive attitudes; the result was only an increase in anxiety, symptomatic of the absence of executive capacities to deal with the situation.

One would be inclined to generalize from the illustration of Comanche and to conclude that, of course, when economic and social conditions change, attitudes to children and hence the conditions for growth change. This might be true if the parental attitude were determined by factors which were perfectly well known to the parents. They are not. And hence one cannot generalize from Comanche, which is the exception and not the rule. We have long since heard of the "cultural lag", which some attempt to account for on the basis of an inertia principle. Such philosophical formulae, even if true, do not explain the facts.

The case of Alor is one in which the rearing of the child and the influences to which it is exposed are in keeping with the socioeconomic conditions. But we do not know the origins of the particular type of economy, nor does it appear to make any sense to us. In Alor the divi-

sion of labor is such that the female carries the entire burden -- with sporadic help--of the main diet of vegetable food. She is thus raken away from the children all day, caring for them before she leaves for the fields and after she returns. The fields are not contiguous and are sometimes quite far from the village. The effects of the absent mother we have already described, but we cannot answer the question of why labor is so unevenly and capriciously divided. The remote effects of this single institution on the culture as a whole is surely not known to the Alorese. If we say that this institution is not rationally determined, or that it is an illustration of cultural lag, we are not saying much. This cultural lag is no abstract principle of inertia; it is caused by the accumulation of vested emotional interests, which in this instance accrue on the side of the males. To discontinue these interests would cause enormous resistance and discomfort, even if the women had imagination enough to demand that some of the burden of the food economy be lifted from their shoulders. This is an illustration of how -- "rights" of a certain group in a society (in this instance the males) are established and maintained. To alter the economy would be to alter the entire psychological adaptation of both males and females. This is precisely the point at which anxiety and defensive maneuvers become necessary to retain a system of adaptation and to resist change.

We must pause to make a parenthetical observation on the relative usefulness of a descriptive versus an operational concept. To call the phenomena described in the preceding paragraph a principle of inertia is not incorrect--even though it calls to mind the physical phenomena on -

which the principle of inertia was based and is hence a false analogy. The real objection to it is that the concept does not reach the facts. Moreover, to a law of inertia one can only bow with humility. But if we point out that this inertia is localized in specific emotional factors, we can mobilize some specific antidotes at these points.

What we have been saying is that the operational value of the concept of basic personality is not only to diagnose the factors which mold the personality but also to furnish some clues about why these influences are what they are. The concept therefore implies a technique which will explore with some degree of accuracy the widest ramifications between culture and personality.

It remains a question whether this technique can be used to describe the dynamics of Western society and to attempt an analysis of the dynamics of culture change over long spans of time. Such an attempt would really be the proof of the technique. But this problem is not as simple as the one in "primitive society". "Western" society is not a single culture but a conglomeration of cultures in which the socio-economic order has gone through a host of vicissitudes. The number of factors which must be brought into correlation is much greater than any we have encountered in primitive society. Whether the attempt at such correlation can succeed remains to be seen; meanwhile there have been enough efforts to solve the problem by other techniques to show us what to avoid. We cannot work on the basis of physiological analogies as did Spengler. One can tell a good story by comparing the rise and fall of civilizations with the physiological life cycle of individual, but societies are organisms of a quite different order. Following the

fate of elites, as does Pareto, leaves many questions unanswered. We can get no real guidance from Toynbee, who tries to follow the process of adaptation of large groups according to various ideas--successful or unsuccessful struggle with the external environment, and soon--without benefit of a psychology to track down the minutiae of adaptation. Least of all can we extract much benefit from a long series of correlations - such as Mumford⁴ marshals and then proceeds to evaluate on the basis of a highly personal system of value judgment.. Endeavors like these give no empirical basis for action based on rational principles. They must degenerate into doctrines which one may endorse or reject according to personal predilection or in defense of interest, whether - conscious or unconscious.

The outline for a plan of research derived from our present knowledge of basis personality type is given elsewhere.⁵ Here we can only make a few suggestions about technique. One can determine the basic personality for a few communities, both urban and rural. There are appreciable differences between the two. One can then see where the - points of difference lie and try to ascertain their causes. The same - procedure can be used for communities in other countries as, for ex - ample, England and France. Once a dozen such studies have been made, accompanied by biographies, Rorschachs and other projective tests, we can tell what clues to follow in our historical researches. We have al -

⁴ Lewis Mumford, *The Condition of Man* (New York, 1944)

⁵ A. Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (New York, in press)

ready done enough of this to know that there are three systems whose vicissitudes we must follow historically; (1) the projective systems, (2) the empirically derived rational systems, such as technologies - and (3) the endless labyrinths or rationalizations whereby actions - are justified but the sources of which lie in projective systems of which man is not aware. One cannot follow the reactions of man - to his physical and human environment without the aid of these - psychological guides.

The promise which this new technique offers lies in a direction quite different from the current condition of decisions by force of - the defense of personal or class interests. It offers a greater in - sight into personal and social motivations and points the way to - ward the introduction of controls over the anxieties of men and the defenses mobilized by these anxieties. Any plan for social action based on these principles must, however, compete with powerful - forces lined up on the side of simple principles, such as race - - theories of superiority; of eugenic selection of elites, of the "rights" of certain classes, and so on, which derive from the projective sys - tems of contemporary man. These forces are all polarized toward the dominance-submission principle. The triumph of empirically - derived directives for social action can only follow in the wake of a triumph for greater democracy and of an increased desire to gain in - sight into the psychological fabric of the forces that can either hold society together or tear it apart and destroy it.