Theoretical Conceptions of Culture-Personality Relations

Lacking a systematic theory of its own, culture and personality has provided a fertile field for the extension of theories from a variety of disciplines, including cultural anthropology, psychoanalysis, and sociology. A number of differing viewpoints on the relation between culture and personality have thus developed and influenced investigators in this field. Since it is virtually impossible to understand the contributions of these investigators without being acquainted with the range of their conceptions of culture-personality relations, this chapter is designed to review the fundamental theoretical orientations extant in the field.

The several existing positions on the relation of culture to personality appear to fall into five main classes: anti-culture-personality positions; reductionist positions; the personality-is-culture view; the personality mediation view; the "two systems" view. Each position includes not only a general model of culture-personality relations in a stable society but also assumptions concerning the socialization of individuals (see Chapter 4) and how personality should be assessed (Chapter 5).

Anti-Culture-Personality Positions

Despite the psychological inclinations of such major contemporary theorists as Harold Lasswell (1930, 1948, 1968) and Talcott Parsons (1964), the dominant theoretical positions in the "institutional" social sciences of anthropology, economics, history, political science, and sociology do not favor acceptance of the basic assumptions on which the study of culture and personality is based. Their general line of reasoning, insofar as it can be collectively summarized, follows.

Men everywhere strive to live rather than die, to maximize pleasure and minimize pain in their lives. When the survival of the individual or

his group is jeopardized, it becomes the paramount consideration in his life and gives rise to adaptive responses based on a rational (or quasi-rational) calculus of environmental probabilities for survival. For most men at most times and places, survival has been uncertain enough that such considerations have given their adaptive behavior its primary shape. Even when survival is relatively certain, however, human behavior is shaped by the coercive pressures of "social survival"—the maintenance and enhancement of career, reputation, status, and the esteem of others. Just as individuals must organize their behavior in accordance with the environment to avoid starvation and death, they must do so to avoid being socially stigmatized and to obtain the rewards available in their community; in both cases individual behavior reflects environmental contingencies calculated through application of the individual's capacities for perceiving and logically processing information about environmental demands. If there are vast differences in institutionalized patterns of behavior between prehistoric and modern man, Western and non-Western societies, and groups of differing cultural traditions, we must look to their environments for the explanation—to the differences in the ecological, institutional, and ideological conditions to which they had to adjust. Such differences reflect the processes of sociocultural evolution (including technological and institutional development and differentiation, urbanization, bureaucratization) that have directional properties of their own that coerce the adaptation of individuals in all times and places. Understanding these processes and their outcomes does not require delving into the psychology of the individual apart from recognizing that he, like all other normal humans, has the capacity for appraising and adapting to his environment so as to maximize his rewards and minimize his risks.

This statement represents a view that is at least tacitly and often militantly accepted by a large proportion of institutional social scientists, regardless of their positions on other issues. Those sociologists and social anthropologists who follow Emile Durkheim in his concern with the moral order or Max Weber in his interest in ideology might take exception to the rationalistic emphasis of the statement, but on the whole they, too, have most often formulated the relationship between the individual and the normative order in such a way that the latter is seen as an environmental system to which the individual must adapt but which he cannot alter. For them, too, the socially relevant aspects of individual behavior are predictable from knowledge of the environmental context in which the individual functions without reference to other characteristics of his own behavioral organization.

Within this common framework, institutional theorists antagonistic to the culture and personality position have a variety of views on personality as it is studied by psychologists. Some anthropologists (e.g., Hart,

Culture-Personality Relations

1954) go so far as to assert that there are no significant between-group differences in personality; personality types or traits have a single normal distribution replicated in each human society. The "discovery" of individual differences in personality within populations is regarded as *prima facie* evidence for the falsity of other culture and personality approaches, which are accused of positing that all individuals in a given culture are identical. Since this accusation is incorrect and used primarily as a polemical device, this position would seem to be patently invalid. It nevertheless serves to raise the important methodological question of whether there are measurable personality differences between human populations. The gibes of critics who answer "no" to this question on the basis of insufficient evidence should act as a stimulant to more precise and wide-ranging attempts at cross-cultural personality assessment.

A more serious attack on the field of culture and personality comes from those social scientists who claim that how populations differ psychologically is of little social significance. In its most extreme form, this position is associated with single-cause theories of culture, viz, ecological, economic, structural, or organizational determinism. In these theories, an environmental system external to the individual (*superorganic* is the term used by some anthropologists) is conceptualized as containing the cause of cultural variations in behavior. The motives and habits of individuals are seen as conforming automatically to the requirements of these powerful external determinants, so it is unnecessary to measure individual characteristics independently. For example, economic determinists may assume that a market system or a capitalist economy has certain consequences wherever it exists regardless of the psychological attributes of the participating individuals. Culturologists (for example, White, 1949) emphasize the power of a cultural tradition antedating the present generation of individuals to determine the direction of cultural behavior and the powerlessness of each generation to change the tradition without the intervention of external supraindividual forces. Ecological determinists do not expect that the reactions of populations to arid conditions, a hunting and gathering subsistence base, or irrigation will vary with the personality characteristics of their members. The assumption throughout is that personality differences are irrelevant to the operation of these strong determinants of behavior and can neither impede nor facilitate them.

A less extreme form of this position involves the concession that differences in personality and values can impede or facilitate the operation of supraindividual behavior determinants in the short run but that they are irrelevant to long-term trends. From the macrohistorical perspective of cultural evolutionists, the psychologically determined resistance of a population to a basic advance in subsistence technology and its consequent increments in societal complexity, will, if social and environmental

conditions are right, delay but not prevent the expected set of changes. Similarly, most conceptions of stages in economic growth and mathematical theories of economic development are based on the assumption that the psychological characteristics of populations make minor differences that are eventually overwhelmed by economic forces and may therefore be ignored in the long-range view that they take. Thus, industrial development may be seen as involving changes in social structure, although the latter may alter the immediate capacity of a population to begin changing.

Such points of view are not necessarily incompatible with comparative personality study, although their proponents consistently minimize the significance of personality factors. In effect they are saying: "Personality factors account for such a small and ephemeral portion of the variance we are trying to explain that we cannot waste our time with them." This is not a doctrinaire position but one that puts the burden of the proof on culture-personality investigators, to demonstrate through empirical research that personality factors do account for substantial portions of the variance in socially significant behaviors. The confrontation of structural with personality-oriented positions in attempts to explain juvenile delinquency, for example, is likely to be beneficial for research development in that area (see Inkeles, 1963). Furthermore, it is usually acknowledged by proponents of the long-range view that their scientific objectives differ somewhat from those of culture-personality investigators; the short-run differences that they acknowledge may not be relevant to their predictions but may be of great import to the subjective satisfactions and emotional condition of great masses of people.

At the present time the most fundamental theoretical challenge to the basic assumptions of the culture and personality field comes not from social scientists concerned with large-scale institutional systems and processes but from sociological social psychologists of the "symbolic interactionist" school (e.g., Becker, 1970; Brim and Wheeler, 1966; Cottrell, 1969; Goffman, 1959a, 1961a, 1961b, 1963, 1967; Shibutani, 1961; Turner, 1956; Young, 1965). Although they share the environmentalist and rationalist position summarized above, they concentrate on the individual's view of his immediate social situation (the phenomenological perspective), emphasizing the normative pressures in that situation that induce him to behave as he is observed to behave. As followers of the philosopher George Herbert Mead, the members of the symbolic interactionist school operate with the notion that the individual's concept of self is generated from social interaction in the situations that make up his life. The self comprises the only characteristics of the individual's psychological organization that one must know about to understand his social adaptation, but it is itself derived from his social environment and changes with that

environment through his lifespan. Understanding the individual's social behavior, therefore, is achieved through intensive examination of the situational environments to which he is responding, to discover the composition of his social self and the options available to him for maintaining self-esteem and the esteem of others. The basic assumption is that variations between groups in observable behavior can be explained in terms of situational pressures experienced by the individual, without evidence about deeper psychological factors.

Thus symbolic interactionism brings the argument between sociological and psychological interpretations of social behavior down to the immediate environment of the individual, the situation in which his adaptation occurs. Where the culture and personality theorist would see the behavioral expression of a personality disposition the symbolic interactionist sees a self-esteem-maintaining response to a situational constraint. The symbolic interactionist position represents, at the level of the situation, all those social theories that deny the autonomous influence of enduring personality dispositions on social behavior.

The general strategy of symbolic interactionists is to demonstrate by situational analysis that a pattern of social behavior that might be accounted for in terms of personality dispositions is more properly understood as reflecting situational pressures to which the individual is responding. Thus Goffman (1963) argues that the behavior of patients in mental hospitals should be seen not as the expression of their psychotic personalities but as the outcome of the way they are treated in that institutional setting, and he provides detailed ethnographic evidence to support his interpretation. Thus Young (1965) argues that male initiation ceremonies in non-Western cultures function, not as a means of resolving the identity conflicts of boys (as proposed by Whiting, Kluckhohn and Anthony, 1958, and Burton and Whiting, 1961), but as a solution to the problem of organizational continuity for the men of the community. In a similar vein, though without explicitly invoking the symbolic interactionist position, MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969) propose a social explanation of drunkenness in human populations:

[We] have attempted to document the inadequacy of the conventional understanding of the effects of alcohol on human conduct and to present a radically social-psychological formulation in its stead. Rather than viewing drunken comportment as a function of toxically disinhibited brains operating in impulse-driven bodies, we have recommended that what is fundamentally at issue are the learned relations that exist among men living together in a society. More specifically, we have contended that the way people comport themselves when they are drunk is determined not by alcohol's toxic assault upon the seat of moral judgment, conscience or the like, but by what their society makes of and imparts to them concerning the state of drunkenness (p. 165).

The lesson that symbolic interactionists intend to teach is that explanations involving unobservable psychological processes are made unnecessary by careful observation and analysis of the situation in which the individual is functioning. Like behaviorists of the social-learning school (Bandura, 1969), they are particularly critical of psychoanalytic explanations for locating the causes of behavior in hypothetical complexities of personality structure rather than in the visible contingencies of the situation faced by the individual.

Although much symbolic interactionist writing has a doctrinaire and polemical quality, particularly in its anti-Freudian attack, it poses a problem of the most profound significance for culture and personality studies. The problem is that the institutionalized behavior of humans, like many adaptive animal behavior patterns, represents a fit between the action of the individual and his environment that is inherently ambiguous in its origins: Is correspondence between what the individual does and what the environment rewards him for doing achieved by the individual's possessing the appropriate adaptive equipment before his contact with the environment or by learning through experience with that environment? The symbolic interactionists focus on experiential effects and minimize the influence of the individual's adaptive equipment, thus reversing an emphasis found in much writing on culture and personality. Controversies over sociological versus psychological interpretations of social behavior patterns have not solved the problem. We need a reexamination of the kinds of evidence that would demonstrate the contributions of organism and environmental pressure to observed adaptive behavior. My own effort in this direction begins with Chapter 12.

Reductionist Positions

Psychological reductionism or psychological determinism is the point of view from which individual psychological factors are seen as independent causes of cultural and social behavior. This point of view is by no means limited to the theorists discussed here, but they give it such an exclusive place in their theoretical systems that other views of cultural and social behavior are overlooked or minimized.

Psychological reductionism has a long history in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century social thought, most of which is of only marginal interest today. (See Allport, 1968, for a review of the relevant literature.) The major contemporary reductionism has been Freudian and the pioneer in applying psychoanalysis to anthropological materials—after Freud himself—was the psychoanalyst-anthropologist Géza Roheim (1950; see Wilbur and Muensterberger, 1951, for a bibliography). For Roheim, the developmental patterns described in the works of Freud (i.e., the stages of psychosexual development, including the Oedipus complex) were

Culture-Personality Relations

human universals which determined interpersonal behavior and group fantasy in all cultures. In the manner of Freud's analysis of primitive belief and ritual, by assuming that unconscious meanings discovered in clinical work with Western patients were applicable in all cultural contexts, Roheim analyzed the myths, folk tales, and beliefs of peoples ranging from the peasants of his native Hungary to the Australian aborigines with whom he did field work. In so doing, he—and others working along similar lines—claimed to have discovered recurrent symbolic formulations in which, for example, snakes and other reptiles represent the penis, children devour or are devoured by their mothers, and sons kill their fathers. The belief systems of folk cultures were seen as the direct outgrowth of the invariant developmental patterns and as serving psychological functions for the individuals whose anxieties, hostilities and other unconscious motives were represented in religion and folklore. While his field work in Australia and Melanesia made an innovative contribution to method in culture and personality (see Chapter 14), Roheim's theoretical formulations were focused on speculative issues like the origin of culture, issues that lend themselves to lofty generalizations tending to be either self-evident but vacuous (e.g., "Human culture as a whole is the consequence of our prolonged infancy," Roheim, 1969, p. 50) or outrageously over-simplified (e.g., "Civilization originated in delayed infancy and its function as security. It is a huge network of more or less successful attitudes to protect mankind against object-loss, the colossal efforts made by a baby who is afraid of being left alone in the dark," 1943, p. 100). Roheim asserted the primacy of intrapsychic motives and their fantasy derivatives over man's rational and adaptive capacities, as in the following statements:

[The] bulk of human culture, even in its adaptational or ego-aspects, arises out of play or ritual activities. The reason for these activities lies in the infantile situation, and they acquire survival value secondarily by assimilating a part of the environment to man's needs. . . . Our tools are the projections of our body and we owe the art of making fire to a displaced play repetition of the genital act or of masturbation (1969, pp. 46–47).

Roheim never presented the logical argument that might have connected such statements with common sense and endowed them with plausibility. He seemed to delight in making uncompromisingly flat assertions that would convince only those who already agreed with him, and he apparently felt that operating within the Freudian theoretical tradition he had no need to construct a systematic theoretical formulation of his own. In consequence, his reductionist position has never been taken very seriously by anthropologists.

Roheim's naive psychological reductionism is also blind to history and institutional process; considerations of time sequence in the culture pat-

terms being analyzed, where they came from, how they were introduced and institutionalized, whether surrounding groups have them—all questions of great concern to the anthropologist who wants to know whether and how he can legitimately link a culturally shared imaginative production with the underlying motives of the population—are simply ignored.

The most distinctive and fundamental weakness of Roheim's approach to culture, however, is that it does not seriously attempt to explain cultural differences. Culture patterns are, for the most part, seen as expressions of motives, emotional constellations, and preoccupations that are panhuman; the emphasis is more on "universal themes and symbols than on variation along psychosocial dimensions. Roheim believed that cultures varied in their infantile traumata and thus in their expressive behavior, but this was not the major focus of his work. Although it has contributed some understanding to the cultural forms taken by panhuman situations, such as the mother-child relationship and the anatomical differences between the sexes, analysis of this sort is largely irrelevant to the central concern of culture and personality work: the assessment and explanation of group differences in personality. Ironically, the major contribution of psychoanalysis to culture and personality so far has been made not by those who took literally the more speculative theorizing of Freud concerning the invariant properties of development and cultural fantasy, but by those who saw Freud's wide-ranging attempts to uncover unconscious motives and residues of childhood experience as a possible basis for explaining the cultural differences documented by ethnographers. Psychoanalysts such as Kardiner, Fromm, and Erikson, who concerned themselves with cultural variation, did not adhere to a strict psychological reductionism; they admitted geographic, economic, and structural factors as causal variables in their theoretical formulations.

A more sophisticated and scientific reductionist approach to culture and personality is that of David C. McClelland, a personality psychologist. He looks back upon previous reductionist efforts and isolates the reasons for their failure:

Psychology as the basic science of human behavior ought to be able to contribute to other disciplines interested in man like history and economics, but to date its contributions have not been impressive. It has made attempts to be helpful, but they have nearly always involved such extensive extrapolations beyond observed facts that social scientists have by and large remained unimpressed. For example, Dodge discovered years ago that human beings showed a built-in variability of response, that the same response—e.g., the knee jerk reflex—could not be elicited twice in succession without a short pause. He tied this in on the one hand with the refractory phase of the nerve impulse and on the other with the observed tendency of societies to avoid doing the same thing twice in a row. He suggested, for instance, that the fact that the United States holds a national election only once every

four years might reflect the basic human tendency to avoid immediate repetition of an act, a tendency which should incidentally contribute to the survival of the species by leading to discontinuance of unsuccessful responses. No political scientist that I know of has ever made anything of Dodge's suggestion. . . . The reason is not hard to find: Dodge made no suggestions as to how the variables in his hypothesis might be measured nor did he suggest any concrete series of intervening behavioral events by which refractory phase in reflex behavior gets transformed into refractory phase in social institutions. So his extrapolation from simple human behavior remains untested and perhaps even untestable (1958, p. 518).

McClelland notes that the more recent, psychoanalytically influenced, psychological reductionism, although dealing with what would seem more socially relevant variables, has also failed to gain social science acceptance. He considers the analysis by Gorer and Rickman (1949) of Great Russian attitudes toward political authority as related to the swaddling experience which Great Russians undergo as infants, and comes to the following conclusion:

The fact is . . . that the hypothesis is neither more nor less testable than Dodge's. It is simply not easily testable. Neither Gorer nor Rickman nor anyone else has gone about systematically testing what the reactions to swaddling are in Russia or elsewhere and attempting to build a concrete series of empirically established links between such reactions and social institutions. Until we can measure both psychological reactions to swaddling and degree of "firmness of political control," the hypothesis cannot be tested and social scientists have a right to remain skeptical about it (1958, p. 519).

The position taken by McClelland, explicitly and implicitly, is that psychological reductionist propositions deserve to be taken seriously when (1) independent operational measures are proposed for both the psychological antecedents and the social or cultural consequences, (2) the intervening connections between the psychological antecedents and the social consequences are spelled out in considerable detail, (3) the hypothesized connections are submitted to replicable and repeated empirical tests using methods of statistical inference prevalent in behavioral science research. For research linking motives to social action, he emphasizes the first of these requirements, obtaining "estimates of the average motivational level of social groups which are independent of the behavior of those groups." Given these stringent conditions, it appears that the more remote the psychosocial connection proposed in a hypothesis, the less likely it is to survive empirical testing if it lacks validity.

In his own research, McClelland (1961) proposes a connection between the average level of achievement motivation in a population (as measured in the content of its imaginative productions) and its level of economic and cultural achievement (as measured primarily by economic

indices and secondarily through the consensus of historians). He argues not only that populations with a high level of achievement motivation have more productive economic activity than those with a low level of need for achievement, but also that in the history of a single society a rise in achievement motivation precedes economic growth and a fall in need for achievement precedes economic decline. The motives of individuals are seen as causes of cross-cultural variations and large-scale socioeconomic changes.

It is true that McClelland sees the shared motives of individuals in a population as having cultural origins, because they are produced by child-training practices that are caused by the prevailing religious or ideological conditions. In this respect he is close to the views of Kardiner, Whiting, and Child. In spite of this and despite his plea for a balanced interpretation of history rather than a one-sided psychological one, there are several reasons for regarding McClelland's theoretical position as basically reductionist. He posits an influence of personality on culture that is not limited to clearly affective and "expressive" aspects of culture such as religion, art, and interpersonal relations but applies as well to "instrumental" and seemingly impersonal kinds of social behavior such as economic development and fluctuations in the business cycle. Second, his approach to role systems is explicitly reductionistic: He analyzes them into the individual capacities and performance patterns required for their successful operation, links the acquisition of these capacities and performance patterns to unconscious motives of the individual, and concludes that the operating level of the role system is caused by the population-wide strength of the unconscious motives. Finally, McClelland argues the general case for motives as independent driving forces in history, criticizing those "who have tended to think of man as reacting to the demands and pressures of the environment rather than as actively molding and reshaping it to suit his needs." The strength of McClelland's reductionism, as contrasted with that of previous psychological determinists, lies in its being harnessed to an empirical method of verification and in its ingenious and relentless search for objective indexes of human motives.

The Personality-Is-Culture View

The theoretical position of Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead and some of their co-workers (notably Geoffrey Gorer), sometimes called the configurational approach to culture and personality, represents the application of cultural-relativist doctrine to the phenomena of personality psychology. Cultural relativists hold that human populations vary widely in their conceptions of what is good, true, and beautiful, and that the understanding of a culture different from one's own

Culture-Personality Relations

requires seeing it from the indigenous point of view. Anthropologists taking a strict relativist line seek to document variations in cultural values and to demonstrate that the differences are so great and so pervasive that there are hardly any universal aspects on which to base cross-cultural comparison; they see attempts to classify or rank cultures as necessarily involving ethnocentric neglect of the indigenous context from which customs derive their distinctive and noncomparable meanings. Benedict and Mead extended this view to the subject of personality, demonstrating that psychologists had ethnocentrically presumed the universality of patterns of child rearing, personality development, sex-role behavior, and mental disorder that were in fact variable from one culture to another (Mead, 1928, 1930, 1932, 1935; Benedict, 1934a, 1934b, 1938, 1949). This demonstration had a profound and irreversible effect on psychology and psychiatry, but Benedict and Mead were trying to prove that personality patterns not only varied across human populations but were integral parts of pervasive, culturally distinctive configurations that gave them meaning and apart from which they could not be adequately understood. Personality was, in other words, an aspect of culture, the aspect in which the emotional responses and cognitive capacities of the individual were programmed in accordance with the overall design or configuration of his culture (the "cultural patterning of personality"); social relations, religion, politics, art, and recreation were programmed in accordance with the same design.

This is the theoretical perspective in which Benedict and Mead rejected the conceptual distinction between culture and personality. For them, separating the two would be equivalent to saying that personality could exist without being culturally patterned. Both "culture" and "personality" refer to configurations of behavior that are manifested and carried by individuals but are characteristic of a group. They would agree with the psychological reductionists that culture can be studied and psychologically interpreted in the behavior of individuals and in collective products such as myth, ritual, and art; but they reject deterministic formulations of psychological causes for cultural effects as doing violence to the basic equivalence of culture and personality.

In place of a causal conception of culture and personality, the proponents of this school of thought assume and attempt to describe the configurations that are reflected or expressed in almost every sphere of activity, communication, and interpersonal relations, so that whether one observes interaction in a given society or analyzes its films and magazines, he will find the same underlying patterns. The configurations are described not as "causing" their diverse cultural manifestations but as characterizing the unified, consistent quality inherent in the behavior of people of a particular cultural group. The question of how these configurations developed historically is often ignored or briefly presented.

In this view, the relation between culture and individuals is the problem of the transmission of configurations from generation to generation. How do human infants of basically similar behavioral potentialities come as adults to exhibit the distinctive patterns of the cultures into which they were born? This formulation of the problem leads to the emphasis on child-rearing practices for which this school of thought is well known. In some of Geoffrey Gorer's analyses of child rearing in particular societies (1943, Gorer and Rickman, 1949), the argument takes on a deterministic flavor; he seems to be saying that the toilet training of Japanese infants or the swaddling of Great Russian infants makes them what they are as adults. Margaret Mead (1954) disputes this interpretation of Gorer's work, however, and has laid down what may be considered the official position of this school on the subject of child rearing. According to her (and Benedict, 1949), child-rearing practices are primarily significant as indicators or clues to the cultural values and emotional attitudes of a particular cultural group. As a universal situation that can be variously structured, parent-child interaction reflects culturally dominant preferences concerning role relationships and the handling of impulses, preferences that guide parents in the rearing of their offspring. Child rearing is a sample of parental behavior and indicates as much about adult values as about the personality development of children. Nevertheless, it has some special significance as the first contact of the child with the configurations of his culture.

The transmission of culture from generation to generation is, in Mead's view, a process of communication in which many aspects of the growing individual's cultural environment relay the same messages to him, messages reflecting the dominant configurations of his culture. He acquires his "cultural character" by internalizing the substance of these consistent messages. The first set of messages is transmitted to him by his parents in infancy and early childhood. They enter into communication with him by making certain (culturally approved) reactions to his cries, his performance of bodily functions, his attempts to move and grasp; much of this communication is nonverbal and implicit. It lays a basis for the later transmission of the same underlying messages in a thousand other ways, some of them more explicit, as the child increasingly participates in the various aspects of adult culture. Child rearing is fundamental in the acquisition of cultural character, but it is only the first of many formative experiences, each reinforcing the other in communicating cultural configurations to the individual. Mead and her co-workers (Mead and Wolfenstein, 1955) have particularly emphasized the role of esthetic aspects of culture, such as drama, dance, and children's literature, in this communication process.

Three major criticisms have been made of this position on the relation of culture to personality. (1) It exaggerates the internal consistency of

Culture-Personality Relations

culture by an exclusive focus on patterns that pervade all aspects of cultural behavior and by using subjective methods of analyzing cultural materials that prevent disproof of alleged configurations. Many social scientists argue that the correspondence "of different aspects of culture with one another is a question for empirical inquiry, not to be incorporated as a basic assumption in a theory. (2) When culture and personality are assumed to be equivalent, there is no way of assessing the degree of adjustment between the individual and his cultural norms; we are forced to assume a good "fit" that may not exist. This conceptual fusion of culture and personality can lead to the interpretation of all cultural products, from myths to magazines, as directly expressive of the motives, habits, and values of a population of individuals. The possibility of more complex relations of such products to the expressive behaviors of individuals in the population is ignored. (3) A circular concept of personality development that avoids the problem of what causes particular patterns of behavior to develop in individuals is assumed. Child-rearing practices and art, for example, are both regarded as being simultaneously formative and expressive of cultural character. This formulation is presented as being more in tune with a complex reality than child-rearing determinism is, but it is also more vague and less susceptible to empirical test. Several aspects of culture may reinforce each other in the education of the child, but this does not relieve us of the task of isolating their separate effects. A parent may be expressing cultural values in the ways he rears his child, but this does not tell us whether the child actually acquires those cultural values in that situation or whether he learns them later on in a different context. While Mead's view of the development of cultural character avoids the obvious fallacy of a unicausal child-rearing determinism, it obscures the picture of development by raising culture to the status of a general determinant operating simultaneously in so many ways that there is no use attempting to isolate specific causes. We are asked to forfeit the aim of explaining cross-cultural differences in personality in favor of simply appreciating them.

In essence, the personality-is-culture view takes culture as its central organizing concept while reducing personality to a mere individual reflection of culture, and personality development to the intergenerational transmission of culture. Those associated with this view, however, have often taken a modified psychoanalytic approach involving child-rearing determinism in studies of personality formation in various cultures.

The Personality Mediation View

Abram Kardiner (1939, 1945), a psychoanalyst, in collaboration with the anthropologist Ralph Linton (1936, 1945), first formulated the personality mediation view. In 1953 the anthropologist-psychologist team of

John W. M. Whiting and Irvin L. Child published their own theory along very similar lines. In essence, the position involves splitting culture into two parts, one of which is seen as made up of determinants of personality while the other consists of expressions of personality. Personality, then, is a connective or mediator between two aspects of culture.

In Kardiner's first formulation, the two aspects of culture are the *primary institutions*, consisting of the socioeconomic structure and child-rearing practices that comprise the environmental constraints and influences on the development of personality, and the *secondary institutions*, consisting of the religion, art, folklore, and other expressive media that are influenced by and satisfying to those aspects of personality shared by members of a society. In the Whiting and Child version, the environmental determinants of group personality are divided into two parts: the *maintenance system*, which is the institutionalized ecology, economy, and sociopolitical structure, and functions for the survival of the group in relation to its external environment; and *child training* or *socialization*, which operates within the constraints set by the maintenance system, shaping personality in accordance with the adaptive needs of the group but often against the needs of individuals. The expressive aspects of culture are referred to as the *projective system*; they are shaped by the common-denominator personality needs that have been socialized in child training but not eliminated as pressing personal motives. In both theories, child-rearing practices are seen as operating within the constraints of the socioeconomic structure to form personalities in a society with common needs and motives reflected in the religion, art, and folklore of the group.

A recent revision of the Whiting theory is shown in Figure 3.1 (from LeVine and LeVine, *Nyansongo,* 1966). For Whiting and Child (1953) as opposed to Kardiner, the cultural causes (or antecedents) of personality and its cultural effects (or consequents) are seen as analogous to the independent and dependent variables in a learning experiment in which half the animals are given special rewards or punishments for behaving in the trial situation that the other half are not; the effects of reinforcement on performance are then sought in subsequent behavior in the same trial situation. Cross-cultural variations in child training constitute the experiment, and concomitant variations in projective systems represent its permanent behavioral effects. The personalities of members of the societies are the intervening variables, connecting early experience with religion, folk belief, and esthetic forms. Both Kardiner and Whiting and Child, however, attempted in their theoretical formulations to reconcile sociological and cultural approaches with that of psychological reductionism by giving the latter its place in respect to the projective systems—secondary institutions—while assigning causal priority to socioeconomic structure and the socially structured environment of childhood.
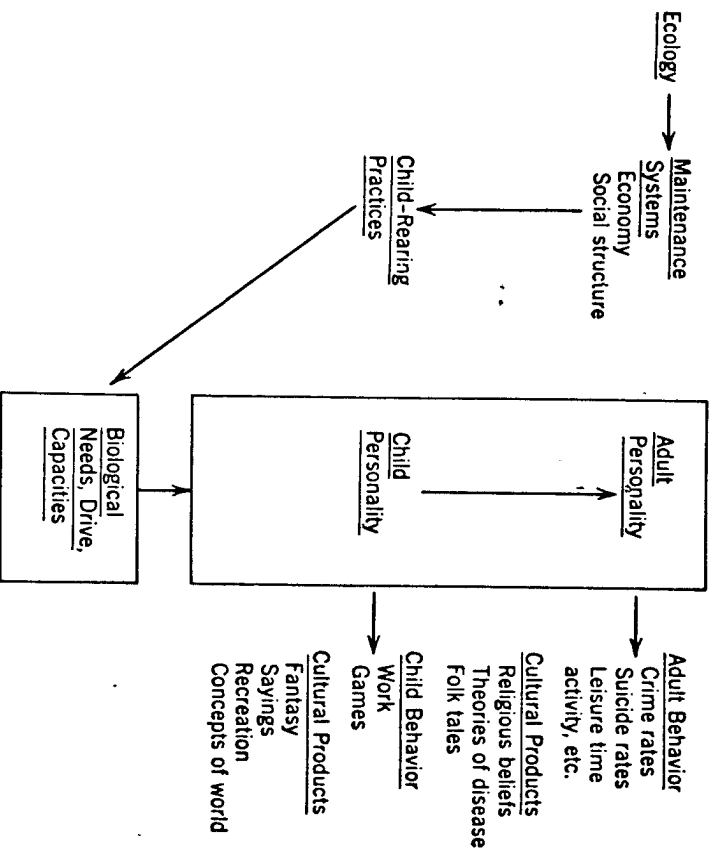
Ecology ——→ Maintenance Systems
  Economy
  Social structure
——→ Child-Rearing Practices ——→ Child Personality
——→ Biological Needs, Drive, Capacities ——→ Adult Personality

Adult Behavior
  Crime rates
  Suicide rates
  Leisure time activity, etc.

Cultural Products
  Religious beliefs
  Theories of disease
  Folk tales

Child Behavior
  Work
  Games

Cultural Products
  Fantasy
  Sayings
  Recreation
  Concepts of world

FIGURE 3.1. *The relation of personality to culture.* (Source: LeVine/LeVine, *Nyansongo,* © 1966 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)

In both formulations, personality—"basic personality structure" (Kardiner) or "typical personality" (Whiting and Child)—is seen not only as mediating causal influence between two aspects of culture but also as actively integrating them with one another. Implicitly or explicitly, culture is held to be a system of interdependent parts (including economy, social structure, and religion) in which personality plays an integrating role as the common denominator of individual factors that makes these disparate institutions consistent with one another in social action. Having made their own compromise between socioeconomic demands and their own needs as developing organisms, the individual members of a society shape a normative structure in the expressive institutions that tends to maintain that compromise for future generations.

Whiting's views on the functions of cultural beliefs and values have changed over the years. Although in earlier formulations (Whiting and Child, 1953; Whiting, 1961), he regarded magico-religious beliefs as reflecting the drives frustrated in the socialization process and the interpersonal residues of childhood experience, his recent work on values (Whiting et al., 1966) is somewhat different. Cultural values, including the central religious beliefs of a people, are held to reconcile childhood-

derived unconscious goals with adult assessments of social and economic realities; insofar as the two are discrepant, values reduce the sense of incompatibility (cognitive dissonance) between them. Thus the Zuni Indians resolve the dissonance between the prohibitions on aggression they internalized in childhood and the aggressive behavior engendered by their crowded housing through values emphasizing belief in the harmony of the universe. Religious and other values are thus designed to give cognitive comfort to members of a society in the face of their unfulfilled needs. Their function is no less defensive than that in Whiting's earlier statements, but the emphasis now is on the attainment of cognitive consistency when psychological needs and socioeconomic reality conflict. This view of religion is discussed further in Chapter 6.

The "Two Systems" View

This conception, formulated by Inkeles and Levinson (1954) and Spiro (1961a) and based in part on ideas from Parsons (1964) and Hallo-well (1955), represents (modal) personality and sociocultural institu-tions as two systems interacting with each other. Each system is com-prised of interdependent parts and has requirements for its maintenance. Both sets of requirements make demands of individual behavior, the personality system for satisfaction of psychological needs, the socio-cultural system for socially valued performance in the roles that are in-stitutionalized in the social structure. Stability in the interaction of the two systems is attained only when their respective requirements are functionally integrated by standards of role performance that permit the individual to satisfy his psychological needs and meet sociocultural de-mands at the same time. Psychologically satisfying conformity, as Spiro (1961a) conceives of it, makes possible what Inkeles and Levinson (1954) call functional congruence between the personality and sociocultural systems. Since this congruence is, in the long run, essential for societal survival, every society must provide for it through socialization of the child and adult; and in every existing society congruence should exist as either a strong tendency or an accomplished fact. Thus, for example, societies with highly authoritarian social structures should be found in comparative study to have a larger proportion of members with authori-tarian personality characteristics than societies with less authoritarian social structures.

Inkeles and Levinson (1954) do not assume that the stable state of functional congruence is universal; noncongruence may be induced by changes coming from either system, what they call institutionally induced noncongruence and personality-induced noncongruence. The change in one system necessitates a change in the other for congruence to be re-gained and stability restored. The emphasis in this and other work by

Culture-Personality Relations

Inkeles (1955, 1966a, 1966b), however, is strongly on institutionally in-duced noncongruence, as in a society undergoing industrialization or socialist revolution. Parents are seen as the mediators of change, trans-forming novel institutional demands into personal characteristics as they socialize their children. Spiro (1961b, 1965, 1966, 1967), however, is pri-marily interested in the ways in which personality affects the operations of the sociocultural system, in stability as well as change, and he has argued (1961b) that this should be the primary task of psychological anthropology. His own work emphasizes the influence of personality on religion, and in this he shares the psychological mediationists' view that religion is a projective system for personality needs, providing institu-tionalized solutions for the unconscious conflicts of individuals (see Chapter 6). Spiro and Inkeles thus differ in the theoretical emphasis of their empirical work and in some of their underlying assumptions con-cerning psychological vs. sociological determinism, but their overall models of culture-personality relations are basically similar.

Summary

These five conceptions of culture-personality relations—the anti-culture-personality positions, psychological reductionism, personality-is-culture, personality mediation and two systems—presented briefly above can be summarized in even more abbreviated fashion as follows:

Anti-culture-personality	$C \rightarrow P$
Psychological reductionism	$P \rightarrow C$
Personality-is-culture	$P = C$
Personality mediation	$C_1 \rightarrow P \rightarrow C_2$
Two systems	$P \leftrightarrow C$

Only the personality mediation and two systems views are maintained by active investigators in the field. Anti-culture-personality positions characterize outsiders to the field. Psychological reductionism has been persuasively revived by McClelland, but even he uses it as an element in a more complex conception closer to the personality mediation view. Personality-is-culture remains as an influence on contemporary research but is no longer seen as a tenable position on which to base empirical study. But all five positions represent directions of thought that have given rise to the concepts of socialization, methods of assessing person-ality and other conceptions that will be considered in the next three chapters.