Culture and Personality

The organic analogy of the British structural-functionalists necessarily implied a holistic view of culture. On the other hand, while Franz Boas insisted on the holistic study of culture, he lacked a compelling principle to guide his work. Although he used the rhetoric of holism, many of the historical particularists tended to treat culture as a chance association of disparate features. One way that several of Boas' students sought to circumvent this problem without challenging the bases of historical particularism was through ideas borrowed from Gestalt psychology. Gestalt psychologists examined personality as an interrelated psychological pattern rather than a collection of separate elements. This insight particularly influenced the work of Ruth Fulton Benedict (1887–1948), Margaret Mead (1901–1978), and others, who focused on the psychological concept of personality as their unifying theme.

Benedict, Mead, Abram Kardiner (1891–1981), and Cora Du Bois (1903–1991) examined the problem of how humans acquired culture and culture's relationship to individual personality. Because they focused on the interaction between individual personality and culture, they became known as founding members of the culture and personality school. Lett (1987) points out the three broad themes represented in this perspective: the relationship between culture and human nature (represented here by Mead's essay); the relationship between culture and individual personality (represented by Benedict's essay); and the relationship between culture and a society's typical personality type, which was explored by Kardiner and Du Bois.

The interest of anthropologists in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory was a major impetus behind the development of the culture and personality field. A. L. Kroeber, for example, underwent psychoanalysis and practiced as a lay analyst for a brief time. Although most anthropologists rejected Freud's forays into anthropological theory, they were interested in the effect of culture on the individual and recognized psychoanalysis as a powerful tool for probing the human psyche.

The major figures associated with founding this school all had close ties to Boas and to each other. For example, Edward Sapir was one of Boas's most gifted students. Although primarily known for his work in linguistics, Sapir was well versed in psychoanalytic literature and was good friends with Benedict, who also taught at Columbia with Boas. Their correspondence played an important role in shaping Benedict's theories. Mead was one of Benedict's first students and also studied under Boas.

Benedict came to anthropology from literature, having taught English before starting her career in anthropology. Her interest in the interplay between culture and personality was encouraged by her friend Sapir and her mentor Boas. A cultural relativist in the Boasian tradition, Benedict believed that there were no higher or lower cultures, just different lifestyles. Elaborating on this belief, Benedict wrote an article called "Anthropology and the Abnormal" (1934), in which she argued that normal and abnormal were culturally determined, and that what was abnormal in one culture might be perfectly acceptable in another. The most comprehensive expression of Benedict's ideas was her book *Patterns of Culture* (1934). Here, Benedict proposed that each culture had a unique pattern, called a ***cultural configuration,***

which determined the fundamental personality characteristics of its members. To illustrate this concept, Benedict selected three societies—Zuñi, Dobu, and the Kwakiutl. Relying on her own and Elsie Clew Parsons's observations among the Zuñi, Reo Fortune's work with the people of Dobu, and Boas' writings on the Kwakiutl, she described the configuration for each society based on the dominant personality characteristics observed in those cultures. It was Benedict's contention that people were molded into their culture's dominant personality type through enculturation, what Garbarino calls a "master plan of psychological patterning" (1977:66). Thus, Zuñi peoples were identified as Apollonian, Dobuans as paranoid, and the Kwakiutl as megalomaniacal.

Boas' students were predisposed to look for cultural influences on personality development because of their mentor's focus on the effect of historical circumstances on cultural developments. Margaret Mead's work clearly illustrates this theme. In a series of studies, Mead focused on the influence of culture on human social development. Starting with *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) and continuing with *Growing up in New Guinea* (1930) and one of her more controversial books, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935), Mead attempted to separate the biological and cultural factors that control human behavioral and personality development. Together with Benedict's *Patterns of Culture,* Mead's trilogy firmly established the cultural configuration and national character approaches in American psychological anthropology (Hsu 1980:349).

Later in Mead's career, particularly in a 1942 study conducted with her third husband, Gregory Bateson (1904–1980), the influence of Freud showed strongly in her work. In *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis,* (1942), she and Bateson tried to visually document how child-rearing techniques affected Balinese personality development.

The selection chosen for use in this volume is Mead's introduction to *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies.* It clearly shows Mead's interest in culture as a primary factor determining masculine and feminine social characteristics and behavior and was written to inform Americans about the nature of human cultural diversity (McDowell 1980:278).

Although Benedict's and Mead's work had great popular appeal, both were widely criticized by anthropologists. Both assumed culture as a given and claimed that it determined personality, but neither could specify how this process occurred. If culture determined personality, where did it originate? In the 1930s and 1940s psychoanalyst Abram Kardiner, in collaboration with anthropologists Du Bois, Sapir, and Ralph Linton (1893–1953) among others, developed a neo-Freudian approach to the study of these questions. According to Langness (1987), Kardiner formulated his theory after reading Freud's *The Future of an Illusion* (1961, orig. 1928), in which Freud proposed that children's early life experiences determine their later religious beliefs. For example, children raised in a household with a strict authoritarian father conceptualize their deities as demanding, always observant, and punishing misbehavior. Following this line of thought, Kardiner advanced a theory that explained the mechanism by which culture determined personality. He proposed what he called the *basic personality structure,* a collection of fundamental personality traits shared by the normal members of a society. Following Freud, Kardiner believed that the foundations of personality development were set in early childhood. He argued that since childrearing procedures such as disciplining, weaning, and toilet training (what Kardiner termed primary institutions) are generally standardized within a society, all members of that society are subjected to the same basic influences on their personality development. Consequently, a society's primary institutions lead to the formation of its basic personality structure. Personality, in turn, influences culture through the creation of secondary institutions. These are cultural institutions, such as religion, created to satisfy the needs of personality through the psychological mechanism of projection.

Kardiner tested his theory with anthropological data supplied by his anthropologist colleagues in a series of seminars in 1936 and 1937. Unfortunately, it soon became apparent that no data had been collected specifically for the sort of

analysis Kardiner proposed. To resolve this issue, anthropologist Cora Du Bois traveled to the island of Alor in the Dutch East Indies to gather the appropriate types of information. Du Bois collected a variety of ethnographic and psychological data (such as Rorschach tests, life histories, and reports of dreams) from Alorese informants. After her return in 1939, Du Bois, Kardiner, and other independent analysts reviewed the data; they all reached the same fundamental conclusions concerning the basic characteristics of Alorese personality.

A weakness in Kardiner's theory was that the basic personality structure could not account for the variation in personality present in even the smallest society. To finesse this problem, Du Bois proposed the modal personality, the personality type that was statistically most common in a society (Kaplan and Manners 1972). Like Kardiner, Du Bois hypothesized that primary institutions would lead to the formation of a basic set of personality characteristics (as illustrated by her Alorese information), but there would also exist individual variation in how personalities developed and were expressed. The modal personality provided a theoretical tool for examining the interplay of personality and culture while allowing for the psychological variation that exists among the members of a society.

The outbreak of World War II provided anthropologists with opportunities to push culture and personality research still further. In the 1940s and during the Cold War, the United States became vitally interested in studying the psychology of the citizens of the nations with which it was in conflict. The culture and personality theorists responded with national character studies. Although an outgrowth of the work on modal personality, these studies were different in several ways. First, they dealt with industrial nation-states rather than primitive societies. Culture and personality theorists typically worked with small numbers of people and relied on descriptive ethnography. Because national character studies involved nations with millions of people, participant observation was inappropriate; because the nations being studied were sometimes hostile, participant observation was often impractical. To find their way around these problems, anthropologists interviewed immigrants, analyzed literature and films, and searched government records. The results were mixed.

Two of the most famous national character studies are Benedict's *Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946), a study of the Japanese, and Geoffrey Gorer and John Rickman's *The People of Great Russia: A Psychological Study* (1949). Both followed a neo-Freudian approach, attempting to relate childrearing practices to adult personality types. Benedict, for example, examined Japanese toilet-training practices in relation to the alleged Japanese preoccupation with obedience and order. Gore and Rickman hypothesized that the Russian national character (supposedly a manic-depressive personality type) resulted from the practice of swaddling infants. It is easy to see how this study fit into the politics of the Cold War.

While Benedict's work has withstood the test of time somewhat better than Gorer and Rickman's, subsequent research has shown that most of the national character studies were simply inaccurate. The practice of swaddling, for example, was not widespread in Russia, thus it could not explain the Russian personality type—if such a thing existed. Such errors played a large part in the declining popularity of national character studies. By the late 1950s, most anthropologists had rejected the psychoanalytic approach to cultural analysis.

Despite this decline of scholarly acceptance, culture and personality, and national character studies in particular, remain keen areas of popular interest. Introductory books in cultural anthropology still reference Mead and Benedict's work (see Crapo 1993 and Kottak 1994). Numerous books, such as Harrison's recent *Who Prospers: How Cultural Values Shape Economic and Political Success* (1992), are published detailing aspects of the cultural personality of this or that group. Usually, like Copeland's *Going International: How To Make Friends and Deal Effectively in the Global Marketplace* (1985), these are marketed as guides for businesspeople.

16. Psychological Types in the Cultures of the Southwest

Ruth Fulton Benedict (1887–1948)

THE CULTURE OF THE PUEBLO INDIANS IS strongly differentiated from that of surrounding peoples.[1] Most obviously, all aspects of their life are highly ritualized, highly formalized. No one has lived among them who has not been struck by the importance of the formal detail in rite and dance, the intricate interrelations of the ceremonial organization, the lack of concern with personal religious experience or with personal prestige or exploit. The emphasis in their all-absorbing ceremonial routine is placed where it was in the medieval Roman church of certain periods, on the formal observance, the ritualistic detail for its own sake.

This is so conspicuously true for the Southwest peoples that in descriptions of their culture we have been content to let the matter rest with this characterization. Yet in a civilization such as that of the North American Indians high ritualistic development sets no group off in any definitive fashion from the vast majority of peoples. The ritual of the sun dance, the peace pipe ceremonies, the cult groups, and age-societies of the Plains, or the winter ceremonial of the Northwest Coast bulk perhaps slightly less prominently in the total life of these people than the calendric dances and retreats of the Southwest, but it is not by any such matter of gradation that the Southwest is set off from other American Indian cultures. There is in their cultural attitudes and choices a difference in psychological type fundamentally to be distinguished from that of surrounding regions. It goes deeper than the presence or the absence of ritualism; ritualism itself is of a fundamentally different character within this area, and without the understanding of this fundamental psychological set among the Pueblo peoples we must be baffled in our attempts to understand the cultural history of this region.[a]

It is Nietzsche who has named and described, in the course of his studies in Greek tragedy, the two psychological types which have established themselves in the region of the Southwest in the cultures of the Pueblo.[2] He has called them the Dionysian and the Apollonian. He means by his classification essentially confidence in two diametrically different ways of arriving at the values of existence.[b] The Dionysian pursues them through "the annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence"; he seeks to attain in his most valued moments escape from the boundaries imposed upon him by his five senses, to break through into another order of experience. The desire of the Dionysian, in personal experience or in ritual, is to press beyond, to reach a certain psychological state, to achieve excess. The closest analogy to the emotions he seeks is drunkenness, and he values the illuminations of frenzy. With

(1930)

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[1] Benedict did fieldwork among the Zuñi, Cochiti, and Pima throughout the mid-1920s. This paper, first presented in 1928, was her first major analysis of her experiences there. In it, she develops themes later elaborated in *Patterns of Culture*, published in 1934. Perhaps because it was designed for a popular audience and written in an engaging style, *Patterns of Culture* became an enduring classic of anthropology – one still frequently read by students in introductory courses. Despite frequent criticism, Benedict's descriptions of Native American cultures and her theoretical position have had an important effect on American anthropology.

[2] Benedict derives her categories of Apollonian and Dionysian from *The Birth of Tragedy* (1956, originally published in 1872), a study of the origins of Greek drama by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Some biographers have suggested that Benedict's intellectual preference for this classification scheme was related to her experience as a very young child, when, at her father's open-casket funeral, she experienced the contrast between her mother's open grief and her father's calm, tragic corpse (Modell 1983:1).

Blake,[3] he believes "the path of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." The Apollonian distrusts all this, if by chance he has any inkling of the occurrence of such experiences; he finds means to outlaw them from his conscious life. He "knows but one law, measure in the Hellenic sense." He keeps the middle of the road, stays within the known map, maintains his control over all disruptive psychological states. In Nietzsche's fine phrase, even in the exaltation of the dance, "he remains what he is, and retains his civic name."[c]

The Southwest Pueblos are, of course, Apollonian, and in the consistency with which they pursue the proper valuations of the Apollonian they contrast with very nearly the whole of aboriginal America. They possess in a small area, islanded in the midst of predominantly Dionysian cultures, an *ethos* distinguished by sobriety, by its distrust of excess, that minimizes to the last possible vanishing point any challenging or dangerous experiences. They have a religion of fertility without orgy, and absorption in the dance without using it to arrive at ecstasy. They have abjured torture. They indulge in no wholesale destruction of property at death. They have never made or bought intoxicating liquors in the fashion of other tribes about them, and they have never given themselves up to the use of drugs. They have even stripped sex of its mystic danger. They allow to the individual no disruptive role in their social order. Certainly in all of these traits they stand so strikingly over against their neighbors that it is necessary to seek some explanation for the cultural resistances of the Pueblos.[4]

The most conspicuous contrast, in the Pueblos, is their outlawry of the divine frenzy and the vision. Now in North America at large the value of ecstatic experience in religion is a cornerstone of the whole religious structure. It may be induced by intoxicants and drugs; it may be self-induced—which may include such means as fasting and torture—or it may be achieved in the dance.

We may consider first the ecstasy induced by intoxicants and drugs.[5] For the neighboring Pima, who share the culture of the primitive tribes of northern Mexico, intoxication is the visible mirroring of religion, it is the symbol of its exaltation, the pattern of its mingling of clouded vision and of insight. Theory and practice are explicitly Dionysian.

> "And I was made drunk and given the sacred songs;"
> "He breathed the red liquor into me,"

are in their songs common forms of reference to the shamanistic experience. Their great ceremony is the drinking of the "tizwin," the fermented juice of the fruit of the giant cactus. The ceremony begins with all religious formality and the recitation of ritual, but its virtue lies in the intoxication itself; the desired state is that of roused excitement, and they accept even extreme violence

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[3] The reference is to William Blake (1757–1827), an English poet, painter, and visionary. Benedict, who had studied English literature at Vassar College, was a more artful writer than most anthropologists. In addition to her anthropological works, Benedict wrote poetry under the pen name of Anne Singleton, a name that may be revealing of her personality. Her poems appeared in literary magazines, but she was unable to get a collection of them published. Thankfully for anthropology, her inability to find a publisher for her book dissuaded her from a career in poetry.

[4] Benedict speaks here of seeking explanation for Pueblo Apollonian behavior, but offers none. Benedict saw culture as personality writ large. She believed that societies were able to choose their cultures out of the full range of human variability, but she was not concerned with understanding why a society would choose one type of culture rather than another. While Benedict's work offered many examples of Pueblo Apollonian behavior, it provided no historical context – she made no attempt to explain the origins of the cultural personalities she documented. The lack of history is surprising since Franz Boas, her teacher, placed such an emphasis on historical reconstruction. Despite their Boasian backgrounds, culture and personality writers were generally ahistorical.

[5] While Benedict's anthropology is psychological, it is not Freudian. Like other Boasians, she rejected Sigmund Freud's notions of cultural evolution as nonscientific and ethnocentric. She traced her intellectual descent from the German psychologist Wilhelm Dilthey (1883–1911), who believed that the goal of psychology was to understand the inner life of the mind. He also proposed the existence of different *weltanshauungen* or worldviews, which were categories much like Benedict's Apollonian and Dionysian.

more readily than a state of lethargy. Their ideal is to stave off the final insensibility indefinitely while achieving the full excitation of the intoxicant. This is of course a form of fertility and health magic and is in complete accord with the Dionysian slant of their culture.

It is much commoner, north of Mexico, to use drugs rather than intoxicants for religious ends. The peyote or mescal bean of northern Mexico has been traded up the Mississippi Valley as far as the Canadian border, and has been the occasion of serious religious movements among many tribes. It gives supernormal experiences with particularly strong affect, no erotic excitation, very often brilliant color images. The cult is best described for the Winnebago[d] where the peyote is identified with the supernatural. "It is the only holy thing I have been aware of in all my life"; "this medicine alone is holy and has rid me of all evil."[e] It was eaten everywhere with the object of attaining the trance or supernormal sensations which the drug can give. The Arapaho ate it in an all-night ceremony after which the effects of the drug prolonged themselves throughout the following day.[f] The Winnebago speak of eating it for four days and nights without sleep.

The *datura* is a more drastic poison. I have been told by the Serrano[6] and Cahuilla of boys who have died as a result of the drink, and the Luiseño tell also the same story.[g] It was used by the tribes of Southern California, and north including the Yokuts, for the initiation of boys at puberty. Among the Serrano the boys were overcome by the drug during the night and lay in a comatose condition through the next day and night, during which time they were granted visions. On the following day they ran a race.[h] Among the Luiseño it seems to have been the same, four nights of trance being spoken of as excessive.[i] The Diegueño reckon only one night of complete stupefaction.[j] The Mohave drank *datura* in order to gain luck in gambling; they were said to be unconscious for four days,[k] during which time they received their power in a dream.

None of these alcohol- and drug-induced excitations have gained currency among the Pueblos.[7] The Pima are the nearest settled neighbors of the Zuñi to the southwest and easily accessible; tribes of the Plains with which the eastern Pueblos came in contact are the very ones in which peyote practices are important; and to the west the tribes of Southern California share certain characteristic traits of this very Pueblo culture. The absence of these traits in the Pueblos is therefore not due to the cultural isolation of impassable barriers. We know too that the period of time during which the Pueblos and their neighbors have been settled relatively near to one another is of considerable antiquity. But the Pueblos have defended themselves against the use of drugs and intoxicants to produce trance or excitement even in cases where the drugs themselves are known among them. Any Dionysian effect from them is, we may infer, repulsive to the Pueblos, and if they receive cultural recognition at all it is in a guise suited to Apollonian sobriety. They did not themselves brew any native intoxicant in the old days, nor do they now. Alone among the Indian reservations, the whiskey of the whites has never been a problem in the Southwest. When, in 1912, drinking seemed to be making some headway among the younger generation in Zuñi, it was the Pueblo elders themselves who took the matter in hand. It is not that it is a religious taboo; it is deeper than that, it is uncongenial. The peyote has been introduced only in Taos, which is in many ways marginal to Pueblo culture.

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[6] While Benedict here mentions her own 1922 study of the Serrano, she did little fieldwork, preferring instead to draw on studies from many sources.

[7] Benedict started her career in ethnology as a student of Elsie Clew Parsons at the New School for Social Research but soon went to study under Franz Boas at Columbia. After the completion of her dissertation, she remained with Boas until his retirement in 1936; she herself continued at Columbia until her death in 1948. The particularly close relationship between Boas and Benedict gave her exceptional access to the work and friendship of his other students, particularly Edward Sapir, Margaret Mead, (essay 17), and A. L. Kroeber (see essay 11). Both their work, and her conversations and correspondence with them, had a profound influence on Benedict's anthropology. Note the strong reliance on work by Boas,

Datura is used in Zuñi as it was in ancient Mexico[l] in order to discover a thief, and Mrs. Stevenson[8] gives an account of the manner of its use.[m] Read in connection with her quotations on datura poisoning and the two to four day trances of the Mohave and Mission Indians, it is a classic example of the Apollonian recasting of a Dionysian technique. In Zuñi the man who is to take the drug has a small quantity put in his mouth by the officiating priest, who then retires to the next room and listens for the incriminating name from the lips of the man who has taken the *datura*. He is not supposed to be comatose at any time; he alternately sleeps and walks about the room. In the morning he is said to have no memory of the insight he has received. The chief care is to remove every trace of the drug and two common desacratizing techniques are employed: first, he is given an emetic, four times, till every vestige of the drug is supposed to be ejected; then his hair is washed in yucca suds.[9] The other Zuñi use of *datura* is even further from any connection with a Dionysian technique; members of the priestly orders go out at night to plant prayer sticks on certain occasions "to ask the birds to sing for rain," and at such times a minute quantity of the powdered root is put into the eyes, ears, and mouth of each priest. Here any connections with the physical properties of the drug are lost sight of.

Much more fundamental in North America than any use of drugs or alcohol to induce ecstasy was the cult of the self-induced vision. This was a near-universality from ocean to ocean, and everywhere it was regarded as the source of religious power. The Southwest is by no means beyond the southern limits of its distribution, but it is the one outstanding area of North America where the characteristic development of the vision is not found. This experience has several quite definite characteristics for North America: it is achieved characteristically in isolation, and it gives to the successful individual a personal manitou or guardian spirit who stands to him in a definite life-long relationship. Though west of the Rockies it is often regarded as an involuntary blessing available only for those of a particular psychological make-up, throughout the great extent of the continent it is sought by isolation and fasting, and in the central part of the continent often by self-torture. This "vision," from which supernatural power was supposed to flow, did not by any means signify only supernormal or Dionysian experiences, but it provided always a pattern within which such an experience had peculiar and institutionalized value; and in the great majority of cases it was these more extreme experiences that were believed to give the greater blessing.

The absence of this vision complex in the Southwest is one of the most striking cases of cultural resistance or of cultural reinterpretation that we know in North America. The formal elements are found there: the seeking of dangerous places, the friendship with a bird or animal, fasting, the belief in special blessings from supernatural encounters. But they are no longer instinct with the will to achieve ecstasy. There is complete reinterpretation. In the pueblos they go out at night to feared or sacred places and listen for a voice, not that they may break through to communication with the supernatural, but that they

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[8] Matilda Stevenson (1849–1915) was a pioneering American ethnographer who did extensive fieldwork among the Zuñi between 1879 and 1915 and published several monographs on them. Stevenson, founder and first president of the Women's Anthropological Society, was one of the first ethnographers to do work that centered on women and children.

[9] Two aspects of Boasian thought exerted particularly strong influences on Benedict. The first was cultural relativism. Notice that her language describing the use of hallucinogens, an exotic and possibly offensive cultural practice, is matter-of-fact and nonjudgmental. While Apollonian culture traits might seem more desirable to upper-middle class intellectual Americans (her primary audience), her writing here and in *Patterns of Culture* describes Apollonian and Dionysian cultures as equally attractive.

The second Boasian influence was an emphasis on holism. Boas suggested that cultures were integrated; Benedict pushed this idea further. She saw culture as having internal logical consistency and being characterized by a single dominant trend or pattern. This essay is largely an exercise in the demonstration of the holism that she saw in culture in general and among the Pueblo peoples in particular. Throughout the essay, she tries to show that all Pueblo practices, even

may take the omens of good luck and bad. It is regarded as a minor ordeal during which you are badly frightened, and the great taboo connected with it is that you must not look behind you on the way home no matter what seems to be following you. The objective performance is much the same as in the vision quest; in each case, they go out during the preparation for a difficult undertaking—in the Southwest often a race—and make capital of the darkness, the solitariness, the appearance of animals. But the significance is utterly different.[10]

Fasting, the technique most often used in connection with the self-induced vision, has received the same sort of reinterpretation in the Southwest. It is no longer utilized to dredge up experiences that normally lie below the level of consciousness; it is here a requirement for ceremonial cleanness. Nothing could be more unexpected to a Pueblo Indian than any theory of a connection between fasting and any sort of exaltation. Fasting is required during all retreats, before participation in a dance, in a race, etc., etc., but it is never followed by power-giving experience; it is never Dionysian. Fasting, also, like drugs and visions, has been revamped to the requirements of the Apollonian.

Torture, on the contrary, has been much more nearly excluded.[11] It is important only in the initiations and dances of certain curing societies[n] and in these cases there is no suggestion of any states of self-oblivion. It is interesting that the Pueblos have been exposed to self-torture practices, both in the aboriginal culture of the Plains, and in European-derived practices of the Mexican Penitentes.[12] The eastern Pueblos are in the very heart of the Santa Fe Penitentes country and these Mexicans attend their dances and ceremonies regularly and without hindrance. Much in their practice they have in common with the Indians: the retreats in the ceremonial house, the organization of the brotherhood (priesthood, for the Indian), the planting of crosses. But the self-lashing with cactus whips, the crucifixion on Good Friday, are alien; torture has not penetrated Pueblo life either from these practices or from those of the Plains or of California. Among the Pueblos, every man's hand has its five fingers,[13] and unless he has been tortured as a witch, he is unscarred.

No more than the Pueblos have allowed ecstasy as induced by alcohol or drugs, or under the guise of the vision, have they admitted it as induced by the dance. Perhaps no people in North America spend more time in dance than the Southwest Pueblos. But its use as the most direct technique at our command for the inducement of supernormal experience is alien to them. With the frenzy of a Nootka bear dance, of a Kwakiutl cannibal dance, of a ghost dance, of a Mexican whirling dance, their dancing has nothing in common. It is rather a technique of monotonous appeal, of unvarying statement; always, in the phrase of Nietzsche's I used before, "they remain as they are and retain their civic names." Their theory seems to be that by the reiteration of the dance they can exercise compulsion upon the forces they wish to influence.

There are several striking instances of the loss, for the Pueblos, of the Dionysian significance of specific dance behavior, the objective aspects of which they still share with their neighbors. The best is probably the dance upon the altar. For the Cora of northern Mexico the climax

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[10] Benedict's focus here is not on the actions performed, but on how the actors interpret their actions. Boas wanted to build anthropology on a scientific, empirical model; Benedict came to see anthropology as an interpretive art, as much a humanity as a social science. At the end of her life, she wrote that anthropology stood at the boundary between science and the humanities (1948:585). This view has made her an important figure for many interpretive and post-modern anthropologists.

[11] Notice that Benedict offers no reason why the Pueblo have rejected torture. It is simply an aspect of their culture, and culture is an independent force creating itself.

[12] Penitentes are individuals who, at Easter, imitate the suffering of Jesus by whipping themselves and imitating his crucifixion.

[13] Five fingers refers to a common Plains Indian practice of chopping off a finger joint in mourning or for spiritual purposes.

of the whirling dance is reached in the dancer's ecstatic, and otherwise sacrilegious, dancing upon the ground altar itself. In his madness it is destroyed, trampled into the sand again.[o] But this is also a Pueblo pattern. Especially the Hopi at the climax of their dances in the kivas dance upon the altar destroying the ground painting. Here there is no ecstasy; it is raw material used to build up one of the common Pueblo dance patterns where two "sides" which have previously come out alternately from opposite sides, now come out together for the dance climax. In the snake dance, for instance,[p] in the first set Antelope (dancer of Antelope society) dances, squatting, the circuit of the altar, retires; Snake (dancer of Snake society) repeats. In the second set Antelope receives a vine in his mouth and dances before the initiates trailing it over their knees; retires; Snake repeats with a live rattlesnake held in the same fashion. In the final set Antelope and Snake come out together, dancing together upon the altar, still in the squatting position, and destroy the ground painting. It is a formal sequence, like a Morris dance.[14]

It is evident that ecstatic experience is not recognized in the Southwest and that the techniques associated with it in other areas are reinterpreted or refused admittance. The consequence of this is enormous: it rules out shamanism. For the shaman, the religious practitioner whose power comes from experiences of this type, is everywhere else in North America of first rate importance. Wherever the authority of religion is derived from his solitary mental aberrations and stress experiences and his instructions derived therefrom are put into practice by the tribe as a sacred privilege, that people is provided with a technique of cultural change which is limited only by the unimaginativeness of the human mind.[15] This is a sufficient limitation; so much so that it has never been shown that cultures which operate on this basic theory are more given to innovation than those which disallow such disruptive influences. This should not blind us to the fact, however, that the setting in these two cultures for the exercise of individuality is quite different; individual initiative which would be fully allowed in the one case[q] would in the other be suspect, and these consequences are fully carried out in the Southwest. They have hardly left space for an impromptu individual act in their closely knit religious program; if they come across such an act they label the perpetrator a witch. One of the Zuñi tales I have recorded tells of the chief priest of Zuñi who made prayer sticks and went out to deposit them. It was not the time of the moon when prayer sticks must be planted by members of the curing societies, and the people said, "Why does the chief priest plant prayer sticks? He must be conjuring." As a matter of fact he was calling an earthquake for a private revenge. If this is so in the most personal of Zuñi religious acts, that of planting prayer sticks, it is doubly so of more formal activities like retreats, dances, etc. Even individual prayers of the most personal sort—those where cornmeal is scattered—must be said at sunrise, or over a dead animal, or at a particular point in a program, etc.; the times and seasons are always stipulated. No one must ever wonder why an individual was moved to pray.

Instead therefore of shamans with their disruptive influence upon communal practices and settled traditions, the Southwest has religious practitioners who become priests by rote memorizing and by membership in societies and cult groups. This membership is determined by heredity and by payment[r] for though in their own theory serious illness or an accident like snake bite or being struck by lightning are the accepted

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[14] Critics have frequently accused Benedict of being so guided by her vision of the logical constancy of culture that she distorted her data. They point out that, Benedict's claims to the contrary, alcoholism was common on the Pueblo reservations during her fieldwork (and is so today). In this passage, Benedict suggests that a dance done with a live rattlesnake in the mouth is not an ecstatic ritual. Maybe so, but most observers would probably disagree.

[15] Benedict comments in passing on the "unimaginativeness of the human mind." Like Boas, Benedict believed that within a culture, most traits originated by diffusion rather than independent invention. However, neither agreed at all with the

reasons for membership in certain societies, there are always alternative ways of joining even the curing societies so that no man with interest and sufficient means remains outside. In Zuñi heredity is the chief factor in membership in the priestly groups, payment in the curing societies; in neither is individual supernatural power ever claimed by any member as a result of personal illumination. Those who practice curing in Zuñi are merely those who by payment and by knowledge of ritual have reached the highest orders of the curing societies and received the personal corn fetish, the *mili*.

If the ecstasy of the Dionysian has been rejected in the Southwest with all its implications, so too has the orgy.[16] There is no doubt that the idea of fertility bulks large in the religious practices of the Southwest,[s] and with fertility rites we almost automatically couple orgy, so universally have they been associated in the world. But the Southwest has a religion of fertility founded on other associations. Haeberlin's study gives a useful summary of the type of ritual that is here considered to have this efficacy.[t] The cylinders the men carry and the amulets carried by the women in ceremonies are sex symbols and are thrown by them into springs or onto ground paintings; or in the women's dance two are dressed as male dancers and shoot arrows into a bundle of cornhusks; or a line of women with yucca rings run in competition with a line of men with kicking sticks. In Peru in a race of exactly similar import, men racing women, the men ran naked and violated every woman they overtook.[u] The pattern is self-evident and common throughout the world, but not in the Southwest. In Zuñi there are three occasions on which laxness is countenanced. One of these is in the retreat of the Tlewekwe society, which has power over cold weather. The priestesses of the medicine bundle of this society (*te etone*) and the associated bundle (*mu etone*) during one night receive lovers, and they collect a thumb's length of turquoise from their partners to add to the decorations of their bundles. It is an isolated case in Zuñi and the society can no longer be very satisfactorily studied. The other two cases are rather a relaxation of the customary strict chaperonage of the young people, and occur at the ceremonial rabbit hunt[v] and on the nights of the scalp dance; children conceived on these nights are said to be exceptionally vigorous. Doctor Bunzel[17] writes, "These occasions on which boys and girls dance together or are out together at night provide an opportunity for sweethearts. There is no promiscuity, and they are never, never orgiastic in character. There is amiable tolerance of sexual laxity; a 'boys will be boys' attitude." It is all very far indeed from the common Dionysian sex practices for the sake of fertility.

It is not only in connection with fertility and sex that orgy is common among the peoples of America. In the region immediately surrounding the Southwest, there is on the one hand the orgy of sun dance torturing to the east and the orgy of wholesale destruction in the mourning ceremonies to the west. As I have said, torture plays a very slight role in the Southwest, orgiastic or otherwise. Mourning is made oppressive by fear of the dead, but there is no trace of abandon. Mourning here is made into the semblance of an anxiety complex; it is a completely different thing from the wild scenes of burning the dead in a bonfire of offered property and of clothes stripped from the mourner's backs that the Mohave practice[w] and that is found in such Dionysian fullness

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[16] Throughout this essay, but particularly here and below, the examples given are quite sensational, even risqué. This is typical of much of the anthropology of Benedict's time and, in her case, there were at least two reasons for it. First, she often wrote for a popular audience, and like Sigmund Freud, Margaret Mead, and Bronislaw Malinowski, used the lure of the discussion of forbidden topics such as sex to attract and hold her audience. Second, she was a firm believer in cultural relativism. Showing exotic cultural practices that were unacceptable to her audience in a calm and rational light helped build the case for the acceptance of all cultures as equally valid. In this connection, it should be noted that Benedict did practice what she preached. She was a bitter opponent of racism and a forceful advocate for tolerance within her own society.

[17] Like many of those that Benedict mentions, Ruth Bunzel (1898–1990) was a student of Boas and a member of Bene-

commonly in California, where among the Maidu mourners have to be forcibly restrained from throwing themselves into the flames,[x] and among the Pomo they snatch pieces of the corpse and devour them.[y]

One Dionysian ceremony of wide American distribution has established itself in the Southwest—the scalp dance.[18] This is the victory dance of the Plains, or the women's dance, and the position of honor given to women in it, the four-circle coil danced around the encampment, the close-fitting war bonnet, certain treatments of the scalp, are the same in the Southwest as on the Plains. The wilder abandons of the Plains dance are, as we should expect, omitted, but there occurs in this dance, at least in Zuñi, one of the few ritual Dionysian acts of the Southwest—the washing and biting of the scalp. For the repulsion against contact with bones or a corpse is intense among these people, so that it makes an occasion for horror out of placing a scalp between the teeth, whereas placing a snake between the teeth in the snake dance is no such matter. The woman who carries the scalp in the dance—the position of honor—must rise to this pitch and every girl is said to dread being called out for the role.

Ecstasy and orgy, therefore, which are characteristic of America at large are alien in the Southwest. Let me illustrate this fundamental Apollonian bent in the Southwest by certain specific examples of the way in which it has worked itself out in their culture.

There is considerable emphasis in North America upon the ritualistic eating of filth and it is in this category that the very slightly developed cannibalistic behavior of the Northwest Coast belongs.[19] That is, the emphasis there is never, as so often in cannibalism, upon the feast, nor on doing honor to or reviling the dead. The cannibal dance of the Kwakiutl is a typically Dionysian ritual.[z] It is not only that it is conceived as a dramatization of a condition of ecstasy which the main participant must dance to its climax before he can be restored to normal life; every ritualistic arrangement is designed—I do not mean consciously—to heighten the sense of the anti-natural act. A long period of fasting and isolation precedes the rite, the dance itself is a crouching, ecstatic pursuit of the prepared body held outstretched toward him by a woman attendant. With the required ritualistic bites the anti-natural climax is conceived to be attained, and prolonged vomiting and fasting and isolation follows.

In the filth eating of the Southwest, which is the psychological equivalent to this initiation of the Kwakiutl cannibal, the picture is entirely different. The rite is not used to attain horror, nor to dramatize a psychological climax of tension and release. Captain Bourke has recorded the Newekwe feast he attended with Cushing, at which gallon jars of urine were consumed by the members of the society. The picture is as far from that of the Kwakiutl rite as any buffoonery of our circus clowns. The atmosphere was one of coarse joviality, each man trying to outdo the others. "The dancers swallowed huge decanters, smacked their lips, and amid the roaring merriment of the spectators, remarked that it was very, very good. The clowns were now upon their mettle, each trying to surpass his neighbors in feats of nastiness."[aa]

The same comment is true not only of filth eating but of clowning in the Southwest in general.[20] I take it that the true Dionysian use of clowning is as comic relief in sacred ceremonial where the release from tension is as full of meaning as the preceding tension, and serves to accentuate it. This use of clowning seems to have been

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[18] In this passage, Benedict seems to allow that an Apollonian society can include some Dionysian practices. However, this apparent contradiction is reconciled by the fact that those who perform the Dionysian act dread participating in it.

[19] Here, as in *Patterns of Culture,* Benedict uses the Kwakiutl as her chief example of a Dionysian culture. In so doing, she relied almost entirely on the work of Boas. She had access not only to Boas' published work, but also his notebooks and journals. More importantly, she worked extremely closely with Boas for almost twenty years.

[20] Notice Benedict's use of the first person in this paragraph and below. Her reporting of Pueblo clowning is not couched in neutral, scientific language, rather she focuses on how things seemed to her. This articulates well with her view of anthropology as an interpretive art.

developed, for instance, in the ancient Aztec rites. Now I have never seen any clowning in the Pueblos that seemed to me remotely even to partake of this character, and I do not know of any description which would indicate its presence. Clowning can be buffoonery with no Dionysian implications, as we know well enough from the examples in our own civilization. It is this same use that is most prominent in the Southwest, but clowning is used there also for social satire, as in the take-offs of agents, churches, Indian representatives, etc., and it is common too as a substitute for the joking-relationship, which is absent here, and its license for very personal public comment.

Another striking example of the Southwest Apollonian bent is their interpretation of witch power. The Southwest has taken the European witch complex with all its broomsticks and witches' animal suits and eyes laid on a shelf, but they have fitted it into their own *Weltanschauung*. The most articulate statement that I know of a widespread attitude is still in manuscript in Doctor Parson's monograph on Isleta.[21] The difference, for Isleta, between witch power and good power is simply that good supernatural power is always removed from you as soon as you have put it to the use you intended; witch power is nonremovable, it rides you for life. Their practice perfectly agrees with this; after every sacred investiture every participant in any rite is desacratized, the unwanted mysterious power is laid aside. Nothing could conceptualize more forcibly their discomfort in the face of mystery. Even the best supernatural power is uncanny.

Their lack of comprehension of suicide is, I think, another specific Apollonian trait. The Pima tell many stories of men who have killed themselves for women, and the Plains made suicide a ceremonial pattern; fundamentally their vows to assume the slit sash were suicide pledges in order to raise their rank. But the Pueblos tell the most inept stories[bb] which are obvious misunderstandings of the concept. Again and again I have tried to convey the general idea of suicide to different Pueblo Indians, either by story or by exposition. They always miss the point. Yet in their stories they have the equivalent. There are a number of Zuñi stories[cc] which tell of a man or woman whose spouse has been unfaithful—or of priests whose people have been unruly; they send messengers, often birds, to the Apache and summon them against their pueblo. When the fourth day has come—nothing ever happens in the Southwest till the fourth day—they wash themselves ceremonially and put on their finest costumes and go out to meet the enemy that they may be the first to be killed. When I have asked them about suicide no one has ever mentioned these stories, though they had perhaps been told that very day, and indeed they do not see them in that light at all. They are ritual revenge and the Dionysian gesture of throwing away one's life is not in question.

The cultural situation in the Southwest is in many ways hard to explain.[22] With no natural barriers to isolate it from surrounding peoples, it presents probably the most abrupt cultural break that we know in America. All our efforts to trace out the influences from other areas are impressive for the fragmentariness of the detail; we find bits of the weft or woof of the culture, we do not find any very significant clues to its pattern. From the point of view of the present paper this clue is to be found in a fundamental psychological set which has undoubtedly been established for centuries in the culture of this region, and which has bent to its own uses any details it imitated from surrounding peoples and has created an intricate cultural pattern to express its own preferences. It is not only that the understanding of this psychological set is necessary for a descriptive statement of this culture; without it the cultural dynamics

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[21] Benedict draws much of her information on the Pueblos from the work of Parsons, her first teacher, who worked extensively among the Pueblos and published many books on them. Boas and Parsons were very close friends and did some of their research together.

[22] In conclusion, Benedict again declares the fundamental inexplicability of culture. In *Patterns of Culture,* she used a Digger Indian myth to explain cultural origins and differences: "God gave to every people . . . a cup of clay, and from this cup

of this region are unintelligible. For the typical choices of the Apollonian have been creative in the formation of this culture, they have excluded what was displeasing, revamped what they took, and brought into being endless demonstrations of the Apollonian delight in formality, in the intricacies and elaborations of organization.

Notes

Proceedings of the Twenty-third International Congress of Americanists, September 1928 (New York, 1930), 572–81.

a. For the theoretical justification of this position in the study of culture see Benedict, Ruth, "Cultures and Psychological Types," *America Anthropologist,* N. S., in press.

b. I have not followed Nietzsche's definitions in their entirety; I have used that aspect which is pertinent to the problems of the Southwest.

c. *Birth of Tragedy,* p. 68.

d. Radin, Paul, "The Winnebago Tribe," *Thirty-seventh Annual Report Bureau of American Ethnology,* Washington, 1923, 388–426.

e. Ibid., pp. 408; 392.

f. Kroeber, A. L., "The Arapaho," *Bulletin, American Museum of Natural History,* vol. 18, New York, 1907, p. 398.

g. Kroeber, A. L., "Handbook of the Indians of California," *Bulletin 78, Bureau of American Ethnology,* Washington, 1925, p. 669.

h. Benedict, Ruth, "A Brief Sketch of Serrano Culture," *American Anthropologist,* N. S., vol. 26, pp. 366–392, 1924, p. 383.

i. Kroeber, A. L., *Handbook,* p. 669.

j. *Ibid.*

k. *Ibid.*, p. 779.

l. Safford, William E., "Narcotic Daturas of the Old and New World; an Account of Their Remarkable Properties and Their Uses as Intoxicants and in Divination," *Annual Report, Smithsonian Institution for 1920,* pp. 537–567, Washington, 1922, p. 551.

m. Stevenson, Matilda C., "The Zuñi Indians, Their Mythology, Esoteric Fraternities and Ceremonies," *Twenty-third Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology,* Washington, 1904, p. 89.

n. Cushing, F. H., "My Experience in Zuñi," *Century Magazine,* N. S., 4, p. 31; Stevenson, M. A., *The Zuñi Indians,* p. 503. "All are filled with the spirit of good nature."

o. Preuss, K. T., *Die Nayarit-Expedition.* Leipzïg, 1912, p. 55.

p. Voth, H. R., "Oraibi Summer Snake Ceremony," *Field Columbian Museum, Publication* 83. Chicago, 1903, p. 299.

q. See Radin, Paul, *Primitive Man as Philosopher.* New York and London, 1927, pp. 257–275, for discussion of the wide limits of individualism among the Winnebago.

r. Except for the war chiefs' societies where it was necessary to have taken a scalp.

s. Haeberlin, H. K., "The Idea of Fertilization in the Culture of the Pueblo Indians," *Memoirs, American Anthropological Association,* vol. 3, no. 1, 1916.

t. *Ibid.*, especially p. 39 ff.

u. Arriaga, P. J., *Extirpacion de la Idolotria del Peru.* Lima, 1621, p. 36 sq.

v. Information from Dr. Ruth Bunzel.

w. Kroeber, *"Handbook,"* p. 750.

x. *Ibid.*, p. 431.

y. *Ibid.*, p. 253.

z. Boas, Franz, "The Social Organization and Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl," *Report, United States National Museum for 1895,* Washington, 1897, p. 537 sq.

aa. Bourke, John G., *Compilation of Notes and Memoranda Bearing on the Use of Human Ordure and Human Urine in Rites of a Religious or Semi-religious Character among Various Nations.* Washington, 1888, p. 9.

bb. Parsons, Elsie Clews, "A Zuñi Detective," *Man,* vol. 16, pp. 168–170, London, 1916, p. 169.

cc. Benedict, R., Mss.