

Savage Minds Occasional Papers No. 11

**Cultural Anthropology and Psychiatry**

By Edward Sapir

Edited and with an introduction by Alex Golub

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## **Savage Minds Occasional Papers**

1. The Superorganic by Alfred Kroeber, edited and with an introduction by Alex Golub
2. Responses to “The Superorganic”: Texts by Alexander Goldenweiser and Edward Sapir, edited and with an introduction by Alex Golub
3. The History of the Personality of Anthropology by Alfred Kroeber, edited and with an introduction by Alex Golub
4. Culture and Ethnology by Robert Lowie, edited and with an introduction by Alex Golub
5. Culture, Genuine and Spurious by Edward Sapir, edited and with an introduction by Alex Golub
6. Culture in the Melting-Pot by Edward Sapir, edited and with an introduction by Alex Golub
7. Anthropology and the Humanities by Ruth Benedict, edited and with an introduction by Alex Golub
8. Configurations of Culture in North America, by Ruth Benedict, edited and with an introduction by Alex Golub
9. The Methods of Ethnology, by Franz Boas, edited and with an introduction by Alex Golub
10. The Science of Culture: The Bearing of Anthropology on Contemporary Thought, by Ruth Benedict, edited and with an introduction by Alex Golub
11. Cultural Anthropology and Psychiatry, by Edward Sapir, edited and with an introduction by Alex Golub

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## Introduction

“Cultural Anthropology and Psychiatry” is perhaps the best summary of Sapir’s approach to what would become known as the ‘culture and personality’ movement in anthropology. But this brief, rich, and intelligent essay is more than that. It is also a statement about the nature of culture, the role of human agency in culture, and the complex, differentiated nature of culture. It is a remarkable piece that demonstrates the incredible clarity and sophistication of Sapir’s thought.

Sapir begins his essay discussing anthropology’s main problem: anthropologists claim to study intersubjectively held beliefs, but always do so through the testimony of individuals -- and often, only one or two key informants. But can we generalize about what ‘The Haida’ believe on the basis of talking to one Haida person? What is the relationship between a single individual’s belief and the culture of the group as a whole?

He then moves on to the flaws of psychiatry. Psychiatry has never located the organic basis of the mental illness it claims to treat, and clearly lacks the efficacy of other branches of medicine. Sapir claims this is because human relationships, rather than biological constitution, are the source of ‘mental’ illness: the death of a loved one causes depression, abuse as a child makes one paranoid, and so on. Indeed, social relationships can produce ‘purely organic’ (biological) illnesses -- for instance, job stress at work can lead to an upset stomach. To be effective, then, psychiatry must understand these relationships.

Sapir then criticizes the Freudians for arguing that the mentally ill regress to the mental level of primitive people. This can’t be true, says Sapir, since all human beings share the same basic psychological makeup. Rather, he claims, anthropology is valuable to psychiatry because it shows that the definition of ‘normal’ varies within and across cultures and enables a more accurate and generalizable theory of culture and personality.

Sapir then enters into a remarkable and dense discussion of the nature of culture itself, a discussion which anticipates much of the argument of Berger and Luckmann’s *The Social Construction of Reality* by forty years. He begins by claiming that we cannot speak of the opposition of ‘individual’ to ‘society’ since ‘society’ is not a real thing, but an abstraction made by anthropologists to cover a wide range of concrete behavior. What we call ‘a culture’ or ‘a group’ is a rough and imprecise shorthand for a poorly defined group of people united by a label (‘Republicans’ or ‘the poor’) or by geography (‘New Yorkers’ or ‘The South’). All cultures -- if we still wish to speak of them as bounded at all -- are internally heterogeneous. A physicist at Harvard has a different stock of knowledge than the bartender who works across the street from the university. Even if cultural knowledge is shared, the psychological emphasis placed on it may vary. A businessman and an actress might both know the plot of *Hamlet*, but for one of them it is irrelevant to daily affairs, while to another it is central. Neither of them cares about how they both intuitively produce grammatical sentence, even though this may be central for the anthropologist studying them.

To understand the relationship of personality to culture, we must pinpoint *who* specifically we are speaking of, and put the individual in the context of the actual people with whom he has relationships. The key is locating the concrete social relationships that surround a person. Rather than assume that ‘individuals’ ‘adjust’ to ‘societal norms’ we must study how social life just is the process of people reacting to each other and the relationships they have with each other. This approach to culture and personality anticipates an empirically rigorous and

conceptually careful approach to the study of social process, one that differs in its subtlety from some of the excesses that were to mar the more simplistic segments of the culture and personality movement which gained power in the 1930s and 1940s. It is not too much to say, therefore, that Sapir was truly ahead of his time.



This version of “Cultural Anthropology and Psychiatry” is substantially complete, and has only been lightly edited for clarity. Unlike many of his contemporaries -- Kroeber and Lowie for instance -- Sapir’s prose lacks lazy digressions. It is, on the contrary, very carefully written, often to a fault. In order to make this article easier for introductory audiences to read, I have often removed the many clauses that Sapir uses to hedge his claims. I have also occasionally removed extra examples in those cases where Sapir has used three, when one would do. Hopefully this will result in a cleaner read which nonetheless preserves the flavor and intensity of Sapir’s prose. If the reader’s appetite is whetted for the full piece (as I hope it will be), they can find it on the Internet.

I hope that this paper, like the others in this series, will help present anthropological theory in a form that is accessible to everyone. There is today a tremendous amount of material which is open access, but it is difficult to find, inconvenient to read, and many people do not know where to start looking for it. By curating a selection of important open access work, I hope to make open access resources better known and to raise awareness of the actual history of anthropological theory.

-R

11 Mar 2014

Honolulu

## **Cultural Anthropology and Psychiatry**

by Edward Sapir

Before we try to establish a more intimate relation between cultural anthropology and psychiatry, it will be well to emphasize the apparent differences of subject matter and purpose which separate them. Cultural anthropology has emphasized the group and its traditions in contradistinction to individual variations of behavior. It aims to discover the generalized forms of action, thought and feeling which, in their complex interrelatedness, constitute the culture of a community. [Cultural anthropology thinks] of the individual as a more or less passive carrier of tradition or, to speak more dynamically, as the infinitely variable actualizer of ideas and of modes of behavior which are implicit in the structure and tradition of a given society. It is what all the individuals of a society have in common in their mutual relations which is the true subject matter of cultural anthropology. If the testimony of an individual is set down as such, it is not because of an interest in the individual himself as a matured and single organism of ideas but in his typicality for the community as a whole.

There are many statements in our ethnological monographs which, for all that they are presented in general terms, really rest on the authority of a few individuals, or even of one individual, who have had to bear testimony for the group as a whole. [T]he cultural anthropologist always hopes that the individual informant is near enough to the understandings of his society to report them duly, thereby implicitly eliminating himself as a factor in the method of research. All realistic field workers in native custom and belief are aware of the dangers of such an assumption and efforts are made to "check up" statements received from single individuals. This is not always possible, however, and our monographs present a kaleidoscopic picture of varying degrees of generality, often within the covers of a single volume. Thus, that the Haida Indians of Queen Charlotte Islands were divided into two exogamic phratries, the Eagles and the Ravens, is a statement which could be elicited from any normal Haida Indian. It has the same degree of impersonality that characterizes the statement that the United States is a republic governed by a President. The fundamental patterns are relatively clear and impersonal.

Yet in many cases we are not so fortunate as in the case of fundamental outlines of political organization or of kinship terminology or of house structure. What shall we do, for instance, with the cosmogonic system of the Bella Coola Indians of British Columbia? The five superimposed worlds which we learn about in this system not only have no close parallels among the other tribes of the Northwest Coast area but have not been vouched for by any informant other than the one individual from whom Boas obtained his information. Is this cosmogonic system typical Bella Coola religious belief? Is it individual fantasy construction or is it a peculiar individual elaboration on the basis of a simpler cosmogonic system which belongs to the community as a whole? In this instance the individual note obtrudes itself somewhat embarrassingly. In the main, however, the cultural anthropologist believes or hopes that such disquieting interruptions to the impersonality of his thinking do not occur frequently enough to spoil his science.

Psychiatry is an offshoot of the medical tradition and aims to diagnose, analyze, and cure those behavior disturbances of individuals which show as serious deviations from the normal attitude of the individual. The psychiatrist specializes in "mental" diseases as the dermatologist specializes in the diseases of the skin or the gynecologist concerns himself with diseases peculiar to women. The great difference between psychiatry and other medical disciplines is that while the latter have a definite bodily locus to work with and have been able to define and perfect their methods by diligent exploration of the limited and tangible area of observation assigned to them, psychiatry is apparently doomed to have no more definite locus than the total field of human behavior in its more remote or less immediately organic sense. The conventional companionship of psychiatry and neurology seems to be little more than a declaration of faith by the medical profession that all human ills are, at last analysis, of organic origin. It is an open secret, however, that the neurologist's science is one thing and the psychiatrist's practice another. [P]sychiatrists have been forced to be content with an elaborate array of clinical pictures, with terminological problems of diagnosis, and with such thumb rules of clinical procedure as seem to offer some hope of success in the handling of actual cases. It is no wonder that psychiatry tends to be distrusted by its sister disciplines within the field of medicine and that the psychiatrists themselves, worried by a largely useless medical training and secretly exasperated by their inability to apply the strictly biological part of their training to their peculiar problems, tend to magnify the importance of the biological approach in order that they may not feel that they have strayed away from the companionship of their more illustrious brethren.

These insurgent psychiatrists, among whom Freud must be reckoned the most courageous and the most fertile in ideas, feel that many of the so-called nervous and mental disorders can be looked upon as the logical development of systems of ideas and feelings which have grown up in the experience of the individual and which have an unconscious value for him as the symbolic solution of profound difficulties that arise in an effort to adjust to his human environment. The morbidity that the psychiatrist has to deal with seems to be not a morbidity of organic segments but of experience itself. His attempts to explain a morbid suspiciousness of one's companions by the functioning of the endocrine glands may be no more to the point than to explain the habit of swearing by the absence of a few teeth or by a poorly shaped mouth.

[P]sychiatry is moving away from its historic position of a medical discipline that is chronically unable to make good to that of a discipline that is compelled to attack fundamental problems of psychology and sociology. The locus, then, of psychiatry turns out not to be the human organism but the more intangible, and yet more intelligible, world of human relationships and ideas that such relationships bring forth. Those students of medicine who see in these trends little more than a return to the old mythology of the "soul" are utterly unrealistic, for they assume that all experience is but the mechanical sum of physiological processes lodged in isolated individuals. This is no more defensible a position than the naively metaphysical contention that a table or chair or hat or church can be intelligibly defined in terms of their molecular and atomic constitution.

That A hates B or hopelessly loves B or is jealous of B or is mortally afraid of B or hates him in one respect and loves him in another can result only from the complications of experience. If we work out a gradually complicating structure of morbid relationships between A and B and, by

successive transfers, between A or B and the rest of the human world, we discover behavior patterns that are none the less real and even tragic for not being attributable to some weakness of the nervous system. This does not mean that weakness of a strictly organic character may not result from a morbidity of human relationships. Such an organic theory would be no more startling than to maintain that a secret fear may impair one's digestion. There are, indeed, signs that psychiatry, slowly and painfully delivering itself from the somatic superstitions of medicine, may take its revenge by attempts to "mentalize" large sections of medical theory and practice. The future alone can tell how much of these psychological interpretations of organic disease is sound doctrine or a new mythology.

There is reason, then, to think that while cultural anthropology and psychiatry have distinct problems to begin with, they must, at some point, join hands in a highly significant way. That culture is a superorganic, impersonal whole is a useful methodological principle to begin with but becomes a serious deterrent to the more dynamic study of the genesis and development of cultural patterns because these cannot be realistically disconnected from those organizations of ideas and feelings which constitute the individual. The ultimate methodological error of the student of personality is less obvious than the error of the student of culture but is all the more insidious for that reason. Mechanisms which are unconsciously evolved by the neurotic or psychotic are by no means closed systems imprisoned within the biological walls of isolated individuals. They are tacit commentaries on the validity or invalidity of the intimate implications of culture for the adjustment processes of given individuals. We are not, therefore, to begin with a contrast between social patterns and individual behavior, but rather, to ask what is the meaning of culture in terms of individual behavior and whether the individual can be looked upon as the effective carrier of the culture of his group. As we follow tangible problems of behavior rather than problems set by recognized disciplines, we discover the field of social psychology, which is not a whit more social than it is individual and which is the mother science from which stem both the abstracted impersonal problems [of] the cultural anthropologist and the almost impertinently realistic explorations [of] the psychiatrist. What passes for individual psychology is little more than an ill-assorted melange of bits of physiology and of studies of highly fragmentary modes of behavior which have been artificially induced by the psychologist. This abortive discipline seems to be able to arrive at no integral conceptions of either individual or society and one can only hope that it will eventually surrender all its problems to physiology and social psychology.

Cultural anthropology has not been neglected by psychiatry. The psychoanalysts have made extensive use of the data of cultural anthropology to gather evidence in support of their theories of the supposed "racial inheritance of ideas" by the individual. Neurotic and psychotic, through the symbolic mechanisms which control their thinking, are believed to regress to a more primitive state of mental adjustment which is supposed to be preserved for our observation in the institutions of primitive peoples. In some undefined way the cultural experiences which have been accumulated by primitive man are believed to be unconsciously handed on to his more civilized progeny. Hence, we are told, it is very useful to study the culture of primitive man. The searching clinical investigation into the symbolisms of the neurotic recovers for us, on a modern and highly disguised level, what lies but a little beneath the surface among the primitives, who are still living under an archaic psychological regime.



It is exceedingly doubtful if many cultural anthropologists welcome the spirit in which psychoanalysts appreciate their data. The cultural anthropologist can make nothing of the hypothesis of the racial unconscious nor is he disposed to allow an immediate psychological analysis of the behavior of primitive people in any other sense than that which is allowable for our own culture. He believes that it is as illegitimate to analyze totemism in terms of the peculiar symbolisms discovered or invented by the psychoanalyst as it would be to analyze the most complex forms of modern social behavior in these terms. And he is disposed to think that if the resemblances between the neurotic and the primitive are more than fortuitous it is not because of a cultural atavism but simply because all human beings are, at rock bottom, psychologically primitive, and there is no reason why a significant unconscious symbolism which gives substitutive satisfaction to the individual may not become socialized on any level of human activity.

The service of cultural anthropology to psychiatry is not as mysterious as psychoanalytic mysticism would have us believe. It is of a much simpler and healthier sort. Cultural anthropology has the healthiest of all scepticisms about the validity of the concept "normal behavior". It cannot deny the useful tyranny of the normal in a given society but it believes the external form of normal adjustment to be an exceedingly elastic thing. It is very doubtful if the normalities of any primitive society are nearer the hypothetical responses of an archaic type of man than the normalities of a modern Chinese or Scotchman. One may even wonder whether they are not tangibly less so. It would be more than a joke to turn the tables and to suggest that the psychoanalysis of an over-ritualized Pueblo Indian or Toda might denude him sufficiently to set him "regressing" to the psychologically primitive status of an American professor. The psychoanalyst has confused the archaic in the conceptual or theoretical psychologic sense with the archaic in the literal chronological sense. Cultural anthropology is not valuable because it uncovers the archaic in the psychological sense. It is valuable because it is constantly rediscovering the normal. For the psychiatrist and for the student of personality this is of the greatest importance, for personalities are not conditioned by a generalized process of adjustment to "the normal" but by the necessity of adjusting to the greatest possible variety of idea patterns and action patterns according to the accidents of birth and biography.

The so-called culture of a group of human beings, as it is treated by the cultural anthropologist, is essentially a systematic list of all the socially inherited patterns of behavior which may be illustrated in the actual behavior of all or most of the individuals of the group. The true locus of these processes which, when abstracted into a totality, constitute culture is not society, for the term "society" is itself a cultural construct which is employed by individuals who stand in significant relations to each other in order to help them in the interpretation of certain aspects of their behavior. The true locus of culture is in the interactions of specific individuals and, on the subjective side, in the world of meanings which each one of these individuals may unconsciously abstract for himself from his participation in these interactions. Every individual is, then a representative of at least one sub-culture. Frequently, he is a representative of more than one sub-culture, and the degree to which the socialized behavior of any given individual can be abstracted from the generalized culture of a single group varies enormously from person to person.

It is impossible to think of any set of cultural patterns which can, in the literal sense of the word, be referred to society as such. There are no facts of political organization or family life or religious belief or magical procedure or technology or aesthetic endeavor which are coterminous with society or with any mechanically defined segment of society. The fact that John Doe is registered in some municipal office as a member of such and such a ward only vaguely defines him with reference to those cultural patterns which are conveniently assembled under "municipal administration." The psychological and the cultural realities of John Doe's registration may vary enormously. If John Doe is paying taxes on a house which is likely to keep him a resident of the ward for the rest of his life and if he also happens to be in personal contact with a number of municipal officers, ward classification may easily become a symbol of his orientation in his world of meanings which is comparable to his definition as a father or as a frequent participant in golf. Ward membership, for such an individual, may easily precipitate itself into many visible forms of behavior. The ward system and its functions, real or supposed, may for such a John Doe assume an impersonal and objective reality which is comparable to the objective reality of rain or sunshine.

But there is sure to be another John Doe, perhaps a neighbor of the first, who does not even know that the town is divided into wards and that he is enrolled in one of them and that he has certain duties and privileges connected with such enrollment. While the municipal office classifies these two John Does in exactly the same way and while there is a theory that ward organization is an entirely impersonal matter to which all members of a given society must adjust, it is rather obvious that such a manner of speech is a metaphor. The cultures of these two individuals are as significantly different, on the given level and scale, as though one were the representative of Italian culture and the other of Turkish culture. Such differences of culture never seem as significant as they really are; partly because in the workaday world of experience they [do] not emerge into sharp consciousness, partly because the economy of interpersonal relations and the friendly ambiguities of language reinterpret for each individual all behavior in the terms of those meanings which are relevant to his own life. The concept of culture, as it is handled by the cultural anthropologist, is necessarily something of a statistical fiction and it is easy to see that the social psychologist and the psychiatrist must eventually induce him to carefully reconsider his terms. It is not the concept of culture which is subtly misleading but the metaphysical locus to which culture is generally assigned.

Clearly, not all cultural traits are of equal importance for the development of personality. Some modes of behavior and attitude are pervasive and compelling beyond the power of even the most isolated individual to withstand or reject. Such patterns would be, for example, the symbolisms of affection or hostility; the overtones of emotionally significant words; certain fundamental implications of the economic order; much, but by no means all, of those understandings and procedures which constitute the law of the land. Patterns of this kind are compulsive for the vast majority of human beings but the degree of compulsiveness is in no simple relation to the official significance of these patterns. Thus, the use of an offensive word may be of negligible importance from a legal standpoint but may, psychologically considered, have a repelling potency that far transcends the significance of so serious a behavior pattern as, say, embezzlement. A culture as a whole cannot be said to be adequately known for purposes of

personality study until the varying degrees of compulsiveness which attach to its many aspects are definitely understood. No doubt there are cultural patterns which tend to be universal, not only in form but in psychological significance, but it is very easy to be mistaken in these matters and to impute equivalences of meaning which do not truly exist.

There are still other cultural patterns which are real and compelling only for special individuals or groups of individuals and are as good as non-existent for the rest of the group. Such, for instance, are the ideas, attitudes and modes of behavior which belong to specialized trades. The dairyman, the movie actress, the laboratory physicist, the party whip, have built up worlds which are anonymous or opaque to each other. There is much tacit mythology in such hugely complex societies as our own which makes it possible for the personal significance of sub-cultures to be overlooked. For each individual, the commonly accepted fund of meanings and values tends to be powerfully specialized by types of experience that are far from being the property of all men. If we consider that these specialized cultural participations are partly the result of contact with limited traditions and techniques, partly the result of identification with imposed groups as the family or the club, we see that the true psychological locus of a culture is *the individual or a specifically enumerated list of individuals*, not an economically or politically or socially defined group of individuals. "Individual" here means not simply a biologically defined organism, but that total world of form, meaning and implication of symbolic behavior which a given individual partly knows and directs, partly intuits and yields to, partly is ignorant of and is swayed by.

Still other cultural patterns may be termed marginal and while they may figure as important in the schema of a cultural theorist, [but] have little or no importance for the normal human being. Thus, the force of linguistic analogy which creates the plural "unicorns" is a most important force for the linguistic analyst to be clear about, but it is obvious that the psychological imminence of that force may be less than the avoidance of obscene words, an avoidance which the linguist may look upon as marginal to his sphere of interests. In the same way, while such municipal subdivisions as wards are, from the standpoint of political theory, of the same order as state lines and even national lines, they are not psychologically so. They are psychologically related to such saturated entities as New York or "the South" or Fifth Avenue or "the slums" as undeveloped property in the suburbs is economically related to real estate in the business heart of a great metropolis. Some of this cultural property is held as marginal by the vast majority of participants in the total culture, if we may still speak in terms of a "total culture". Others of these patterns are [marginal] only for certain individuals or groups of individuals. No doubt, to a movie actress the intense world of values which engages a physicist tends to be marginal in the same sense as a legal fiction or unactualized linguistic possibility may be marginal cultural property. A "hard-headed business man" may consign the movie actress and the physicist to two adjoining sectors, "lively" and "sleepy" respectively, of a marginal tract of "triviality". Culture varies infinitely, not only as to content but as to the distribution of psychologic emphases on the elements of this content. According to our scale of treatment, we have to deal with the cultures of groups and the cultures of individuals.

A personality is carved out by the subtle interaction of those systems of ideas which are characteristic of the culture as a whole, as well as of those systems of ideas which get established

for the individual through more special types of participation, with the physical and psychological needs of the individual organism, which cannot take over any of the cultural material that is offered in its original form but works it over more or less completely, so that it integrates with those needs. The more closely we study this interaction, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish society as a cultural and psychological unit from the individual who is a member of the society to whose culture he is required to adjust. No problem of social psychology can be phrased by starting with the contrast of the individual and his society. Nearly every problem of social psychology needs to consider the exact nature and implication of an idea complex, which we may look upon as the psychological correlate of the anthropologist's cultural pattern, to work out its relation to other idea complexes and what modifications it necessarily undergoes as it accommodates itself to these, and, above all, to ascertain the precise locus of such a complex. This locus is rarely identifiable with society as a whole, nor is it often lodged in the psyche of a single individual. Ordinarily the locus will be a substantial portion of the members of a community, each of them feeling that he is touching common interests so far as this particular culture pattern is concerned. We have learned that the individual in isolation from society is a psychological fiction. We have not had the courage to face the fact that formally organized groups are equally fictitious in the psychological sense, for geographically contiguous groups are merely a first approximation to the infinitely variable groupings of human beings to whom culture is actually to be credited as a matter of realistic psychology.

"Adjustment" is a superficial concept because it regards only the end product of individual behavior as judged from the standpoint of the requirements, real or supposed, of a particular society. In reality "adjustment" consists of two distinct and even conflicting types of process. It includes those accommodations to the behavior requirements of the group, but it includes just as significantly the effort to make felt in the opinions and attitudes of others that particular cosmos of ideas and values which has grown up in the experience of the individual. Ideally these two adjustment tendencies need to be compromised into behavior patterns which do justice to both requirements.

It is a dangerous thing for the individual to give up his identification with such cultural patterns as have come to symbolize for him his own personality integration. The task of external adjustment to social needs may require such abandonment on his part and consciously he may crave nothing more passionately, but if he does not wish to invite disharmony and inner weakness in his personality, he must see to it that every abandonment is made good by the acquisition of a psychologically equivalent symbolism. External observations on the adjustment processes of individuals are often highly misleading. The same types of behavior, judged externally, may have entirely distinct, even contradictory, meanings for different individuals. One may be a conservative out of fear or out of superb courage. A radical may be such because he is so secure in his psychic organization as to have no fear for the future, or, on the contrary, his courage may be merely the fantasied rebound from fear of the only too well known.

Strains which are due to this constant war of adjustment are by no means of equal intensity for all individuals. Systems of ideas grow up in endless ways, both within a so-called uniform culture and through the blending of so-called distinct cultures, and very different symbolisms and value emphases arise in the endless sub-cultures or private symbol organizations of the different

members of a group. Certain systems of ideas are more perilously exposed to the danger of disintegration than others. Even if it individual differences of an inherited sort are significantly responsible for mental breakdowns, such a "failure" in the life of an individual cannot be completely understood by the study of the individual's body and mind. Such a failure invites a study of his system of ideas as a more or less distinct cultural entity which has been vainly striving to maintain itself in a discouraging environment.

A psychosis, for instance, may be an index of the too great resistance of the individual to the forces that play upon him and, so far as his world of values is concerned, of the cultural poverty of his psychological environment. The more obvious conflicts of cultures in the modern world create an uneasiness which forms a fruitful soil for the eventual development of neurotic symptoms and mental breakdowns but they can hardly be considered sufficient to account for serious psychological derangements. These arise not on the basis of a generalized cultural conflict but out of specific conflicts of a more intimate sort, in which systems of ideas get attached to particular persons, or images of such persons, who play a decisive role in the life of the individual as representatives of cultural values.

The personal meaning of the symbolisms of an individual's subculture are constantly being reaffirmed by society or, at the least, he likes to think that they are. When they obviously cease to be, he loses his orientation and that strange instinct which in the history of culture has always tended to preserve a system of ideas from destruction, causes his alienation from an impossible world. Both the psychosis and the development of an idea or institution through the centuries manifest the stubbornness of idea complexes and their implications in the face of a material environment which is less demanding psychologically than physically. The mere problem of biological adjustment is comparatively simple. It is literally true that "man wants but little here below nor wants that little long". The trouble always is that he wants that little on his own terms. It is not enough to satisfy one's material wants, to have success in one's practical endeavors, to give and receive affection, or to accomplish any of the purposes laid down by psychologists and sociologists and moralists. Personality organizations, which at last analysis are psychologically comparable with the greatest cultures or idea systems, have as their first law of being their essential self-preservation, and all conscious attempts to define their functions or to manipulate their intention and direction are but the estimable rationalization of people who are wanting to "do things". Modern psychiatrists should be tolerant not only of varying personalities but of the different types of values which personality variations imply. Psychiatrists who are tolerant only in the sense that they refrain from criticizing anybody who is subjected to their care and who do their best to guide him back to the renewed performance of society's rituals may be good practical surgeons of the psyche. They are not necessarily the profoundly sympathetic students of the mind who respect the fundamental intent and direction of every personality organization.

Perhaps it is not too much to expect that a number of gifted psychiatrists may take up the serious study of exotic and primitive cultures, not in the spirit of meretricious voyaging in behalf of Greenwich Village nor to collect an anthology of psychoanalytic fairy tales, but in order to learn to understand, more fully than we can out of the resources of our own cultures, the development of ideas and symbols and their relevance for the problem of personality