INTRODUCTION: TWO SCENES OF CHILDHOOD

In the summer of 1978 a California court heard a case against the National Broadcasting Company. An eight-year-old girl had been sexually assaulted by a group of girls who had seen such an attack four days earlier in the TV movie Born Innocent. The leader of the group was said to have told police that she had “got the idea” from the movie. The victim’s mother was therefore suing the network that had shown the film.

Eight years earlier, the psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner had written:

Given the salience of violence in commercial television, including cartoons especially intended for children, there is every reason to believe that this mass medium is playing a significant role in generating and maintaining a high level of violence in American society, including the nation’s children and youth (Bronfenbrenner 1970:114).

Still, childhood in the United States is not all TV, violence, and sex. At Easter, for example, the familiar ritual of the egg hunt is widely practiced. At about the same time as the story of violence appeared, a Columbus, Ohio neighborhood newspaper announced that “thousands of candy eggs are ready for the Easter Bunny to deliver” to the park where the hunt is to take place on the day before Easter. The article continued, “areas will be designated according to age groups as follows: Red—ages four and under; Orange—ages five and six; Blue—ages seven, eight, and nine”. Prizes were being donated by an amusement park, a fast-food chain, and a civic organization.

The Easter egg hunt is a traditional event in many parts of the country, with one variant even taking place on the grounds of the White House. Like the gift-giving rituals of Christmas and the “trick or treat” of Halloween, this practice is associated with the transformation of religious celebrations into lay festivals centered about childhood. Three other aspects of the news announcement also bear mentioning: 1) The egg hunt is a competitive activity, in which prizes are awarded. There will be a minority of winners and a majority of nonwinners or losers. 2) To make the competition “fair,” the children are divided into age groups. 3) The organizations that offer prizes combine in this manner advertising directed at children with the creation of “good will” by community participation. (To the commercial establishments the cost is tax deductible.)

Competition is seen by the organizers as a “natural” ingredient of the event, which is required to make things “interesting” to the participants. It expresses the attitudes of the adults and transmits them to the children. Establishing age groups causes children to be involved with their “peers” rather than primarily with their kin, and children of the same family may compete in different groups. Note that although there is age segregation, a pattern widespread in the United States, no other type of segregation is announced, whether by sex, race, or ethnic group, nor is it specified that the event is limited to people living in a particular neighborhood.

Bronfenbrenner has suggested that TV and peer groups represent the major socializing influences on U.S. youngsters. Yet TV is created and directed by adults, just as the community ritual of the Easter egg hunt is. The segregated peer groups act within the field of influence created by adults, who transmit their attitudes, values, and even their fantasies to the children: age stratification, competition, violence, and the Easter Bunny all play their role in this picture.

The influence of the adults is, however, often unplanned and indirect, and perhaps the adults are, at times, unaware of the impact they have on children. Bronfenbrenner comments in the context of a comparison of systems of education and socialization:

The Soviet peer group is given explicit training for exerting desired influence on its members, whereas the American peer group is not ... The Soviet peer group is heavily—perhaps too heavily—influenced by the adult society. In contrast, the American peer group is relatively autonomous, cut off from the adult world—a particularly salient example of segregation by age (Bronfenbrenner 1970:115).

Bronfenbrenner attributes much of the violence, delinquency, and alienation of U.S. youth to the lack of adult involvement with the lives of youngsters, and the resulting major role played by self-directed peer groups; yet one might argue that age segregation in childhood prepares individuals for the segmentations of later life. Also, aggression and violence are given major significance in this country, in daily life, fiction, and sports.
What do we have to know about our society and culture to put the two events cited here into context and to make sense out of them? The first example appears to be a unique case, and the second one an event that is repeated over and over again, with variations from place to place. What else do we need to know? The reader's own experience may serve as a guide. Imagine explaining these events to a foreigner, not the proverbial Martian or "primitive." Think instead of someone from a complex society, where both TV and seasonal rituals are known, perhaps from East Europe or from the Middle East. What do these events tell us about our childhood, society, and culture?

How a society and its culture affect the development of its children, and how, in turn, childhood experiences influence society and culture are major subjects in psychological anthropology. Research in this area will be our concern in this chapter.

SOCIALIZATION AND ENCULTURATION

The interest in the relationship between culture and personality has had as one of its most significant and lasting results the stimulation of research into various aspects of childhood in different cultural settings. This development in anthropology has coincided in recent years with the growth of similar interests in mental psychologists, contains the following passage:

...behavior and personality development in young children, by a team of specialists, who have conducted overlapping and mutually relevant research in this broad area. The work of anthropologists, specifically, has had an important impact on the development of its children, and how, in turn, childhood experiences influence society and culture are major subjects in psychological anthropology. Research in this area will be our concern in this chapter.

The socialization of the human individual, his transformation from an infant organism into an adult participant in society, has emerged as the foremost topic of interdisciplinary concern in the behavioral sciences (LeVine 1973:61).

LeVine lists a series of specialists, ranging from primatologists to legal scholars, who have conducted overlapping and mutually relevant research in this broad area. The work of anthropologists, specifically, has had an important impact beyond the confines of their own specialty. For example, a review of emotional behavior and personality development in young children, by a team of developmental psychologists, contains the following passage:

"The enculturative experience, however, also includes those reactions to aspects of life that, as expressions of the creative drive, are only secondarily reactions to the social structures which make of society an organized unit (Herskovits 1948:640)."

Elsewhere he elaborates on this definition:

"The enculturative experience which marks man off from other creatures, and by means of which, initially, and in later life, he achieves competence in his culture, may be called enculturation. This is in essence a process of conscious or unconscious conditioning, exercised within the limits of a given body of custom (Herskovits 1948:39; italics in original)."

The aspect of the learning experience which marks man off from other creatures, and by means of which, initially, and in later life, he achieves competence in his culture, may be called enculturation. This is in essence a process of conscious or unconscious conditioning, exercised within the limits of a given body of custom (Herskovits 1948:39; italics in original).

Among the patterns to which the individual is enculturated Herskovits lists music, art, dance, and philosophical speculation. The concept implies that although specific cultural coloring is given to original innovative arts, innovation is possible. Enculturation and socialization do not limit the individual to becoming a replica of a preexisting model.

Margaret Mead has taken over the term "enculturation" but has redefined it for her own purposes. She uses "socialization" to mean "abstract statements..."
about learning as a social process,” limiting “enculturation” to refer to “the actual process of learning as it takes place in a specific culture” (Mead 1963:185). Mead also has favored the term culture transmission. This term includes not only what children learn from their elders or from peers, but also how culture is transmitted from one society to another.

The Developmental Processes
Considering the changes that occur in the individual from birth through infancy and childhood, we may distinguish, for analytic purposes, a series of developmental processes that occur more or less simultaneously and are of primary interest to somewhat different groups of researchers. In fact, however, in the experience of children and of parents, they are part of a single development of growing up. Although many of these processes are studied separately in a Western context, in the cross-cultural field they all may become subject matter for the anthropologist.

We may distinguish among them the physiological processes of maturation and seek to understand how they relate to genetics, nutrition, maternal and child health, the physical environment, and the cultural environment. In the last, specific methods of handling and caring for the child are of interest. In recent years such studies in traditional societies have increasingly been carried out by psychologists, often with the cooperation of anthropologists. Such carefully detailed investigation is possible and meaningful only within the context of a larger ethnographic study, or when the relevant background information is already available. The general subject becomes of broad interest to anthropologists when comparisons are made among human groups, or when generalizations are made about humanity at large.

In an evolutionary context, the immaturity of the human infant at birth, its total dependence on caretakers, and its slow rate of maturation as compared to the young of other species, all have been linked to the great amount of learning that occurs during this period and that, given the infant’s initial helplessness and its relative lack of innate responses, are required to insure survival. Because this early learning takes place in a particular social and cultural setting, cultural variability has its roots in the formative stages of personal and social development of the individual.

Among the learning processes that begin virtually at birth is the learning of a particular language. This process, with few exceptions (for example, Kimball 1970, 1972), has been studied almost exclusively among children in Western society, in groups speaking an Indo-European language. The development of the perceptual and cognitive capacities of the child constitutes another area of research, on which there is now a growing comparative, cross-cultural body of publications.1 Personality development and the development of social and cultural competence intertwine with all of these other processes, and the distinctions have not always been spelled out clearly in the anthropological literature. Indeed, anthropologists have tended to focus on some, but not all, of these processes, in part because of their lack of detailed specific training in these areas of developmental psychology. As already noted, however, more recently, some psychologists have become involved in this comparative, cross-cultural research. We shall consider some of this work now, and some of its impact on contemporary anthropological research.

Two Major Problems
During the past fifty years, anthropologists have placed emphasis on different aspects of infant and child development and the acquisition of culture. As we saw in Chapter 3, interest in the past has centered basically around two problems.

First, how do children acquire culturally appropriate behavior and attitudes? How are they “molded” by culture? How is culture transmitted to them? This issue has interested Benedict, Mead, and their associates. Mead has stated emphatically:

Everything that has been patiently accumulated on the subject of child-rearing in different cultures has demonstrated the most minute correspondence between the over-all pattern of a culture and the patterns of child-rearing in that culture (Mead 1963:134).

Elsewhere she has suggested (Mead 1964) that each culture involves a particular continuum of three different types of learning: empathy, imitation, and identification with the source of learning. These types appear not only in intergenerational learning, but also in learning from peers, by adults as well as by children. Moreover, Mead stresses inhibitions to learning—messages that certain behavior is socially inappropriate and must not be learned. Mead's work focuses on cultural differences and stresses the considerable malleability of human beings.

A more limited but significant interest of students of cultural transmission concerns formal education; specific educational institutions, such as schools, are examined in cross-cultural perspective (for example, Spindler 1974).

The second major problem is how child care affects the formation of the basic personality structure of adults in a given society, and how various aspects of culture result from that personality structure. In Chapter 3 we discussed this subject at some length; it is essentially the model put forth by Kardiner, who conceived of personality as mediating between two facets of culture. This formulation has been elaborated further in the work of J. W. M. Whiting and his associates, to which we shall turn shortly. Strong emphasis is placed by these investigators on factors that influence child-care practices. They note the ecological setting and subsistence patterns. Also, they study specific aspects of social structure, such as household composition, sleeping arrangements, work load of mothers, and so on. Although adult personality and adult culture are still part of the overall picture, the primary interest of this research approach is children and childhood.
The study of child care, socialization, enculturation, and transmission of culture, then, has acquired some degree of independence from the earlier area of culture and personality. It may be said to have become an end in itself, with its own methods, theories, specialties and subdivisions. The broad intuitive generalizations of the classical period of culture and personality research have largely been relegated to history.

However, before we turn to a review of some of this more recent research, we need to take another look backwards, into the history of the comparative study of personality development as related to cultural variations.

The Oedipus Complex: A Classic Debate

We remarked earlier that much of the cross-cultural research in psychological anthropology has revolved around the issue of a universal human nature. This focus is particularly strong in studies of stages in child development. One of the best known arguments in this area of research concerns the universality of the Oedipus complex.

Freud described a stage in the life of small boys in which the youngster has a strong sexual attachment to his mother and considers his father as a hated rival against whom he harbors death wishes. He found a model for this constellation of feelings in the Greek myth of King Oedipus, as represented in the tragedy by Sophocles. Freud and other educated men of his time had received a strong classical education, and the label clearly encapsulated the major elements of the complex: it was the fate of Oedipus to kill his father and to marry his mother, although he attempted to avoid that fate and actually committed his crimes unknowingly. Nonetheless, he had to suffer punishment for his deeds. In Freud's view, the child’s wishes are inescapable, and they are fearfully associated with the threat of punishment. In the normal child, the complex is eventually resolved and the memory of the emotions is repressed; the boy becomes a man, using his father as a model. His sexual interests are turned to women outside his family. Only in neurotic patients, in dreams, and in legends do traces of this complex remain in disguised form.

The anthropological debate on this subject began with Bronislaw Malinowski, who spent two years in the Trobriand Islands during World War I. His friend and mentor, C. G. Seligman, sent him some of Freud's writings and drew his attention to psychoanalysis. Malinowski proceeded to compare the matrilineal family of the Trobriand Islanders with the patriarchal European family of Freud’s acquaintance. When he returned to England after the war, he presented his view on a Trobriand “family complex” radically different from the Oedipus complex. A debate ensued between him and the psychoanalyst Ernest Jones.

Malinowski published his exposition, together with his responses to Jones, in 1927 in Sex and Repression in Savage Society. He claimed that among the Trobriand Islanders no friction exists between father and son, “and all the infantile craving of the child for its mother is allowed gradually to spend itself in a natural, spontaneous manner” (Malinowski 1955 [orig. 1927]:74). At this point the maternal uncle, the boy's mother’s brother, begins to exert his authority. It is he from whom the boy will inherit and to whose village the boy will move when he marries. This relationship, Malinowski tells us, is an ambivalent one, tinged with resentment and veneration. In many respects, the uncle in this society is said to play a role similar to that of the father in the European family of the period. At the same time, a severe avoidance rule is established between brothers and sisters. It is largely this rule, Malinowski suggests, that helps to make the sister the target of strong but repressed incestuous wishes. He finds evidence for both elements of this complex in the dreams of Trobriand Islanders as well as in their myths.

The argument between Jones and Malinowski revolved largely about concepts derived from the classical evolutionary anthropology, which Malinowski considered outworn. (Yet more than a little of the old terminology and the old concepts still lingers on in Malinowski's own part of this discussion.) Most important is the fact that Malinowski appears to think that up to the age of about six or seven when the Trobriand “family complex” begins, that is, when socialization with regard to the role of the mother’s brother and the brother-sister taboo starts to have its impact on the child, the Trobriand youngster’s development is “natural,” and that it is only at that time that his “nature” is beginning to be molded.

There is no evidence that Malinowski carried out a detailed study of infancy and childhood among the Trobriand Islanders. Röheim, in an attempt to check Malinowski's findings, carried out research on Normanby Island, among another matrilineal Melanesian group, and reported finding an Oedipus complex of the classical type there. In criticizing Malinowski, he writes with some disdain:

Fancy! Somebody who admits that he has never analysed a dream himself—for the obvious reason that he does not know how to do it—is testing Freud's theory! (Röheim 1932:7; italics in original).

Victor Barnouw (1973) offers a detailed analysis of all of Malinowski's writings on the Trobriand Islanders and dealing with sexuality and social organization. He concludes that there is evidence that they do, after all, have the classic type of Oedipus complex. He also notes Röheim's claim to have found it in Trobriand mythology. However, regardless of what one concludes about the Oedipus complex among the Trobriand Islanders, it does not invalidate Malinowski's claim to have discovered a different sort of family complex, one that has its roots in later socialization and in which unconscious hostility is directed toward the maternal uncle, whereas incestuous desires are directed toward the sister.

The debate between Malinowski and the psychoanalysts has had an impact on psychoanalysts and anthropologists alike. In part because of it, for example, Erich Fromm (1948) has argued that the true basis of the hostility of the son to the father is conflict over authority. In the European family, the roles of authoritarian and of sexual rival are both combined in the role of father, whereas in the matrilineal situation the two functions are separated. The same point is made by...
Campbell and Naroll (1972). Freud dealt with a family triangle consisting of three individuals (child, mother, father) and three relationships (child-mother, child-father, mother-father). Malinowski also deals with three individuals (boy, sister, mother's brother), but there are only two relationships (boy-sister, uncle-nephew).

Following Malinowski, anthropologists have sought to identify the particular critical family relationships that typify a given society, with some students finding both the sexual and the rivalry aspects of the family triangle discovered by Freud, and others focusing on only one or the other of this pair of attitudes. A third attitude, affection and support offered by the father to the son, has too often been neglected. In an important article that seeks to reassess the significance of psychoanalysis for anthropology, R. A. Paul (1976) argues that the male intergenerational problem is universal. The Trobriand Islanders, he says, have solved it by using two cultural roles, that of the affectionate father and that of the authoritarian mother’s brother. Together they represent the image of the primal father:

What makes cultures different is not whether all these emotions are present, for they are; but rather how they are symbolically distributed, and what devices are employed to express them, and to try to resolve the inherent conflicts among them (Paul 1976:348).

From quite a different perspective, Margaret Mead writes:

the oedipal situation, in the widest meaning, is a way of describing what any given society does with the fact that children and adults are involved in the growing child’s sexual attitudes, especially toward the parent of the opposite sex (Mead 1952:411; italics in original).

She notes that “crises of relationships between parents and children” may occur at a variety of developmental stages; the parents’ behavior should be seen as resulting from their situation as adults, and not merely as delayed responses to their own childhood experiences. As an example she mentions “the current crises in the American middle-class male” at a daughter’s marriage or at the birth of her first child. Mead suggests that such crises may be traced to the youth cult in our society. Although she speaks in connection with the “oedipal situation,” about “the nature of human growth and human parenthood,” she denies any fixity, or universality, in the process of the child’s growth. Instead, she looks at the variety of family forms and household groupings, as well as the background of cultural factors, in order to explain the developmental crises that are characteristic of specific societies.

Mead draws our attention to the reaction of adults to the Oedipal situation, not only to that of children. The observation that the attitudes of children, and of adolescents as well, have a reciprocal term in the behavior of their parents or other significant adults is of major importance. Herskovits and Herskovits (1958),
pattern is reflected in a triangle of relationships that Parsons calls the “South Italian nuclear complex”: the relationship between a man and his daughter on the one hand, and his son-in-law on the other.

Parsons, who began her presentation of the South Italian data with a review of the Malinowski-Jones debate, concludes:

For the original question of whether the Oedipus Complex is universal or not, we would sum up by saying that it is no longer very meaningful in that particular form. The more important contemporary question would rather be: what is the possible range within which culture can utilize and elaborate the instinctually given human potentialities, and what are the psychologically given limits of this range? (Parsons 1964:328).

As we have seen, anthropologists have been intrigued by the hypothesis of the Oedipus complex. In their investigations over the last fifty years they have, however, redefined this hypothesis over and over. In part, this redefinition has been a response to the great variety of family situations they have had occasion to observe. The redefinitions have also been a response to what was felt, at any given moment, to be a more meaningful and significant problem, testable by the means at the disposal of the anthropologist. Instead of dealing with clinical data and unconscious repressed materials from early childhood, anthropologists have looked at evidence of intergenerational hostility among males, sources of conflict to be discovered within the social structure and the value system, and so on. Therefore rather than finding that the original hypothesis has been either confirmed or disconfirmed, we cannot claim that it actually has been tested, or assert whether or not the Oedipus complex is universal. Instead, we have a series of different formulations and noncomparable answers. The story of the Oedipus complex is a good example of how science proceeds in a spiral fashion, finding unsuspected complications when attempts are made at answering questions, and rather than answering them, moves on to redefine them.

COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF INFANCY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

In 1976, M. J. Konner, who conducted a comprehensive study of infancy among the !Kung Bushmen of Botswana, listed reasons for carrying on such research: it broadens the range of variation of our information concerning infant behavior and development as well as maternal care, it adds another set of leads to what may be universal features of human infancy, and it provides data that can be used for comparisons between humans and other species. That is, the data collected in a study of !Kung infancy can help us in resolving the following questions: in what respects are human beings similar to other primates, particularly the great apes, and in what respects are they unique? We may be interested in a particular study of infancy and maternal behavior to discover 1) what is culturally unique, 2) what is universally human, 3) what is unique to the human species, and 4) what it shares with other related life forms. Konner adds another point, which he finds of particular relevance in a study of the !Kung. Such research, he says, adds a temporal or evolutionary and (potentially) causal dimension to the extent that we can guess, by extrapolation from modern hunter-gatherers, what adaptation in infant care and development must have characterized ancestral populations of hunter-gatherers (Konner 1976:220; italics in original).

The reasons Konner offers for his work illustrate clearly a series of interests that are currently in the forefront of comparative research into human infancy. They also show us a great difference between present-day orientations and those on which most of the studies of the “classical” period of culture and personality were based. Information on infancy is increasingly sought as an end in itself. Studies of specific cultural groups are considered desirable for comparative purposes in an evolutionary framework, not merely to add documentation to the thesis of cultural relativity. Moreover, in contrast to earlier work such as that of Du Bois, or even that of Mead and her associates, no questions concerning personality are asked. No attempt is made to extrapolate from infant or child experience to adult personality. Conversely, no attempt is made to explain adult behavior as resulting from infantile experiences. Instead, the work on infancy focuses specifically on aspects of physiological maturation, interpersonal contacts, group composition, and so on. Also, in contrast to earlier studies, instead of offering a generalized picture of !Kung infancy, Konner explains his methodology in detail and presents his data in statistical form, so that information on variation among individuals is available.

The possibility that Konner suggests of drawing inferences concerning ancestral hunter-gatherer populations on the basis of research among the modern !Kung must be approached with considerable caution, however. The !Kung live in the particularly harsh environment of the Kalahari Desert. Certain other contemporary hunter-gatherer groups, such as the Pygmies of the Ituri Forest, to the contrary, live in a relatively positive environment to which they have worked out an optimal adaptation. Still others, like the Eskimo, who also live in a harsh environment, must face problems of adaptation of quite a different character than those confronting the !Kung. Furthermore, ancient hunter-gatherer groups, before the development of agriculture during the Neolithic period, must be assumed to have lived in much more hospitable environments, which must have presented different types of problems.

The ecological, demographic, and social context of infant care is given considerable attention in modern studies. In the case of the !Kung, such data were available to Konner, for his work was part of a large project, continuing over a decade and involving many different specialists who have focused on a variety of aspects of !Kung life. Team research of this type differs from earlier studies where the researcher—Du Bois, for example—was alone in the field. Also, the extensive
modern technology available to the fieldworker, such as the tape recorder for obtaining data and the computer for analyzing it, have transformed anthropological fieldwork in many important respects.

Neuromotor Development

One of the subjects Konner deals with concerns the neuromotor development of !Kung infants. He studied the age at which infants attain independent sitting, rising, and walking and compared his findings with those of investigators who have tested infants in the U.S. and in Great Britain. Although Konner observes no differences between !Kung babies and the other groups at birth, the !Kung are substantially ahead of the other test populations soon thereafter. For example, some of the !Kung infants were able to sit up at less than two months of age (50 days), and all of them were able to do so at less then seven months (just over 200 days). At the same age, only 50 percent of the sample in the United States had reached that level of performance. Similarly, 50 percent of the !Kung infants were able to stand up at the age of 250 days, while none of the infants in the U.S. at that age were able to do so. Although !Kung infants were found to reach the first phase of independent walking at about the same time as infants here, they reached the full, mature state of walking sooner.

These findings are of particular interest when they are placed in the context of a debate that was begun in 1956, with the publication of a series of remarkable findings by the French investigator Marcelle Géber. She reported that infants she studied in Uganda (mostly Ganda but also some others) showed greater skeletal maturity at birth and were also precocious with regard to motor abilities, compared to European infants (Géber 1956, Géber and Dean 1967). For example, 107 Ugandan infants, most of whom were born in the hospital rather than at home, were examined within the first week after birth, the majority of them within two days. Of these infants it is reported that their motor behavior resembled in many ways that of the four- to six-week-old European infants, and even older ones. Moreover, precocity of African infants in neuromotor development is found to continue into the third year of life. Using the Gesell tests, it was found that all the babies of six months or less were ahead of the European averages, as were most of those tested during the second six months. The percentage of those exceeding the European averages decreased at later age levels. African infants were also found to be precocious in language development and personal-social behavior.

Although all of these findings require explanation, the matter of precocity at birth has been seriously questioned, because it suggests a possible genetic factor, race differences in prenatal development. Konner (1976:231) reports, on the basis of unpublished research, that Géber was not able to replicate her original findings concerning differences at birth in an investigation of infants in Zambia, nor was N. Warren, of Sussex University, who worked in Uganda. Warren (1972) has offered major criticisms of Géber's methodology. However, the findings concern-
mother's general health, her nutritional status, her activity level, and her attitude toward the pregnancy. The preliminary information we have appears to go in opposite directions: Western mothers are likely to have better nutrition and general health, but also to be less active physically, and, it has been argued by some, more likely to have a negative attitude. There is little systematic research available here.

For example, Géber and Dean (1967) mention the positive attitude toward pregnancy of African mothers. However, as Munroe, Munroe, and LeVine (1972:78) point out, there have been no studies to show how widespread such positive prenatal attitudes are among the Ganda. They note that it is not legitimate to use general positive cultural attitudes toward human fertility as a basis for assuming that individual mothers, in such societies, typically have anxiety-free pregnancies. Moreover, because of the relatively high rates of mortality for both infants and mothers in Third World countries, the general prevalence of such untrodden positive attitudes would be surprising. A second, related factor is stimulation of infants in the course of child care. Kilbride, Robbins, and Kilbride (1970) mention that Ganda mothers carry their children on their backs, which affects the child's ability to support his head and to adjust to the mother's movements. Kimball (1975) mentions that Malay children are carried on the hip. Through participant observation she became aware that children learn to grasp the hip with their thighs, and that this action is a prerequisite for this mode of transport. Children who have not learned it simply slip off the hip. Konner (1976) has paid particular attention to the carrying sling used by the !Kung and the specific vestibular stimulation he believes results from it for the child.

In Peru, as in many other societies, women carry young children on their backs.

A number of experimental studies have been carried out in this country on the relationship between vestibular stimulation and neuromotor functioning and development in both humans and animals. D. L. Clark (1977) at the Ohio State University, has specifically tested the influence of vestibular stimulation on the motor development of normal infants between three and thirteen months who have not yet learned to walk. In another study, by Kanters, Clark, Allen, and Chase (1976), the effect of such stimulation on developmentally impaired infants was investigated. Both groups showed significant improvement in motor performance as a result of vestibular stimulation. In these researches a specially designed rotary chair was used to spin the child, who was held on the lap of an adult.

Konner (1976:234) reports discussing child motor development with !Kung parents. He tells us that:

They insist that a child not taught to sit, crawl, stand, and walk will never perform these behaviors (even as late as age three) because the bones of the back will be "soft" and "not tightened together." So they go through training routines for each of these behaviors. Infants too young to sit are propped up in front of their mothers in the sand with a wall of sand around their buttocks to support them. When they fall they are propped up again. Incipient walkers are lured with bits of food to push to the limits of their ability. And so on (Konner 1976:234).

Furthermore, Konner notes that among the !Kung "infants are rarely permitted to lie down while awake. Mothers consider that this is bad for infants and that it retards motor development" (Konner 1976:222). He parenthetically contrasts this belief and the behavior that flows from what he terms:

folk belief in the northeastern United States where grandparents, at any rate, say that vertical posture is bad, at least for very young infants. Hence, presumably, the American parental pattern of laying babies down most of the time (Konner 1976:222).

During this first year of life !Kung babies are in constant physical contact with their mothers or other caretakers while awake. Only when sleeping may they lie on the ground, near their mothers. Otherwise, they are held on laps or carried in a sling on the mother's hip. In this latter position the infant sees what and whom the mother sees and participates in her social world. The child also can nurse whenever it wants to because it is close to the mother's breasts. Since neither mother nor child wears clothing, there is constant skin contact between them. When placed on her lap or in the sling, the child can play with the mother's ornaments. There is thus continuous physical and social contact and sensorimotor stimulation.

Although the situation and the sociocultural context is quite different for the black children in the United States Young reports on, here, too, there is a considerable amount of contact and stimulation, compared to the general picture we have of the middle-class white child: "The baby finds," writes Young (1970:275) "that its environment is almost wholly human. Cribs, baby carriages,
and high chairs are almost never seen. The baby is held and carried most of the time and when it is laid down it is seldom without company." She goes on to note that there is an intense relationship and constant interaction between the holder and the child. Moreover, there is a high density of social context; households are crowded, and older children and other adults, men as well as women, take an active interest in infants. Konner makes a similar observation concerning the !Kung.

This great amount of social contact is important for mothers as well as for children. We may contrast the atmosphere of the !Kung camp provided for child rearing as well as that of Young's Southern black community with the picture offered by an urban middle-class white mother in the following passage:

My daughter was born in New York City in 1965. She was lonely and cranky and bored stuffed up in an apartment and I was too. Whitney's father worked in an office all day. And there wasn't a grandmother in five hundred miles. There were all these other mothers and babies living within blocks of us, but we didn't know each other ... This was the way it was supposed to be, one woman and her children alone (Harlow 1975:1).

She goes on to tell us about the baby's need for continual care and attention: "She was mine. All mine. I hated the every-minute-of-every-day responsibility I was saddled with and the loneliness."

!Kung children in Africa and black children in the United States appear to be advanced in neuromotor development compared to white children in the United States and Europe during the first two to three years of life. There is no material offered on later development of !Kung infants, but for other African populations it appears that the early advances may be lost. Géber found that among non-nursery school children in Uganda at about three years the African children fall behind their European counterparts on test results. She has suggested that these reversals are the result of the traumatic experience of abrupt weaning. Munroe, Munroe, and LeVine (1972) point out that evidence suggests that the weaning experience may be only temporarily traumatic, but that the changed attitude toward the child, of whom new independent behavior is now expected, may be equally traumatic. Moreover, there is some evidence that weaning in the tropics leads to more or less prolonged protein deficiency. The nature of the tests themselves may also be an important factor in yielding these results. As Géber (1961) herself has pointed out, by the age of twenty months to twenty-six months, the infants in her sample had mastered all the elements of the neuromotor tests, and they could therefore make no further gains. The verbal tests appropriate for older children are standardized on Western populations and contain a considerably greater cultural component than the neuromotor tests. However, the latter, too, are by no means "culture-free"; they include such items as "walks up and down stairs" and "jumps over rope."

Certainly many questions remain to be answered about the varying rates of neuromotor development among different populations, as well as about individual differences within given populations. For some aspects of this process it is important to develop more appropriate tests. Also, as Konner's work, in particular, has shown, it is important to pursue research aimed at obtaining as complete a picture as possible of the cultural context in which child development takes place. This picture should include not only a maximum of information on the behavior of caretakers, but also their views of child development.

Our present, admittedly incomplete, picture suggests that cultural factors intervene from the very beginning of an individual's life; their influence is obvious from the moment of birth onward, but they probably have an important impact on intrauterine development as well. Maternal nutrition during pregnancy may be modified by various food taboos. Her physical regimen may affect the development of the fetus. Her attitudes toward pregnancy and toward the unborn child are likely to be influenced by cultural factors, and they, in turn, will have implications for her attitudes toward the infant after it is born. For example, Sears, Maccoby, and Levin (1957) show a correlation among mothers in the United States between a positive attitude toward pregnancy and warmth toward the infant.

One implication of the studies of neuromotor development that we have been discussing is that there exists an interrelationship between such aspects of biological maturation as neuromotor development and cultural factors. Biology and culture must be seen as intertwined at every stage of human development, not as separate and independent causal factors. Another implication is that what we, in the Western world, take to be scientifically established knowledge, in this case concerning neuromotor maturation, may contain a number of unanalyzed and unsuspected folk assumptions.

**Bonding and Interactions**

Another aspect of infant development that has attracted a good deal of attention centers about the development of a mutual attachment between mother and infant, sometimes referred to as mother-infant "bonding." Because of the total early dependence of the human infant on its caretakers, this process of attachment formation is crucial to its survival. It has been the subject of considerable research by psychologists and psychiatrists with human infants as well as in a cross-species perspective. However, only a limited amount of work has been done cross-culturally. Much of the research has had its starting point in various types of pathological phenomena in infant and child development, and it has therefore centered about what has come to be called "maternal deprivation." The work of Spitz (1945) and Bowlby (1952) in particular has had important implications for the improvement of child care, especially in institutional settings.

M. S. Ainsworth (1977), who carried on comparative research in this area for many years, has summed up the importance of the concept of attachment by pointing out that it implies...
genetic determinants of early social behavior [of infants] that for all societies place certain limits beyond which a society cannot push its efforts to mold the child to conform to social demands—at least not without risking gross and maladaptive anomalies of development inimical to the survival of that society (Ainsworth 1977:65).

Cross-cultural research should help us to discover what these limits are. As is shown clearly in this citation, we are again confronted with the possibility, indeed, the great likelihood of the existence of a general human nature that imposes limits on cultural variability. More correctly, it may be argued that different cultures represent experiments in adaptation, and those that push beyond "certain limits" pay a price in evolutionary terms.

Rohner (1975), who investigated rejection and neglect of children cross-culturally, claims that few societies reject infants, for if they did the survival of the society might be jeopardized. Even among the Alores, where the maternal role seems to be accepted with some reservation, as we have seen, women stay with their newborn infants for two weeks at least before returning to work in the fields during the heavy agricultural season. It is evident, however, that societies differ substantially in the ways in which infants are handled and treated from the beginning. There are few detailed studies available on this subject. Mary Ainsworth (1967) investigated the psychosocial development of infants in Uganda. The twenty-seven babies she studied ranged in age from four to fourteen weeks, and their families varied in degree of acculturation or westernization. The infants fell into three groups, classified as secure-attached, insecure-attached, and non-attached. Ainsworth found the type of attachment of the infant to be a response to three aspects of the mother's attitude and behavior, as shown in interviews with the mothers: the amount of care she reported giving the child, her enjoyment of breast-feeding, and her excellence as an informant. Ainsworth considers that these factors reflect the mother's interest in the child and her concern for it.

Much of the research dealing with infant attachment has focused on two matters: disorders of childhood traceable to maternal deprivation and their remedies on the one hand, and on the other, the process whereby mother-infant attachment develops. For example, in this country it has long been the practice to isolate newborns from their mothers and others during the immediate postpartum stay in the hospital. This isolation was originally instituted in order to reduce dangers of infection and infant mortality. Since the 1950s there has been a gradual growth of interest in keeping infants with their mothers, the "rooming-in" practice. Several investigators have studied the effect on "mothering" of routine hospital separation, and found that it has negative effects on the mother's capacity to deal effectively with the infant. M. H. Klaus and J. H. Kennel write:

Observations in human mothers suggest that affectional bonds are forming before delivery, but that they are fragile and may be easily altered in the first days of life. A preliminary inspection of fragments of available data suggests that maternal behav-

ior may be altered in some women by a period of separation, just as infant behavior is affected by isolation from the mother (1970:1035).

They go on to suggest a "thorough review and evaluation of our present perinatal care practices." Among the questions they wish to see investigated, two are directly related to cultural factors:

Has the hospital culture, which has taken over both birth and death, produced disorders of mothering which last a lifetime?
Are the diseases of failure-to-thrive, the battered child syndrome, and the vulnerable child syndrome in part related to hospital care practices? (Klaus and Kennel 1970:1035).

As a first step in observation of mother-child interaction, Konner (1976) noted what percentage of the time !Kung infants were in physical contact with their mothers. He compared his findings with some reports on home-reared and institution-reared infants in the United States. He reports that !Kung infants spend as much as 70 percent of the time in passive physical contact with their mothers during the first several weeks of their lives. This figure declines to 30 percent by the middle of the second year. There are some differences between males and females, the female infants being in contact with their mothers somewhat more from the beginning, and this difference increases throughout the period of observation. At fifteen weeks of age, when the !Kung infant is in contact with the mother about 70 percent of the time, the home-reared infant in this country is in contact about 20 percent of the time, and the institution-reared infant less that 10 percent. Moreover, the contacts of the !Kung infants are not limited to their mothers; they interact with and are held by a sizable number of other individuals, including older children. Although they gradually move about and venture away from their mothers, they still like to be carried even after they are weaned, and it is the "weaning from the back," the cessation of being carried, that the !Kung child experiences as a particularly difficult transition.

In some societies, infants and young children may be in primary contact with persons other than their mothers. For example, Margaret Read (1960) reports that among the Ngoni of Malawi in Southern Africa, the mother was secluded in her hut with the new baby until the falling of the umbilical cord. Shortly thereafter a nurse girl was assigned to its care by the child's grandmother. These girls were teenagers who took care of the child and carried it about from morning to nightfall, bringing it back to its mother periodically for nursing. The child continued to spend much of its time with the nurse girl even after weaning. Often infants were more strongly attached to their nurses than to their mothers.

Cross-cultural differences have been found both in the amount and in the kind of interaction that takes place between infants and their mothers or mother surrogates. William Caudill (1972) reports observations of mother-child interactions in two samples of thirty families, one in Japan, the other in the United States. He finds a number of statistically significant differences between them. For
example, when the child is awake, the Japanese mother is likely to be present even when not engaged in child-care activities. In the United States, on the other hand, when the mother is with the child, she tends to be specifically occupied with it. When the child is asleep, the Japanese mother is by far more likely to be present, whether or not she is engaged in child-care activities, whereas here the mother is more likely to be absent.

In another study, comparing child care in the United States and Japan, Caudill and Schoeler (1973) show that for children both at two and one-half and at six years of age, there is a much higher activity level in both the child and the caretaker in the United States than in Japan. Also, there is a much greater amount of physical contact and encouragement of dependency behavior among the Japanese. Caudill notes that there is much greater emphasis on vocal contact and de-emphasis on physical contact by U.S. mothers; the reverse is the case among the Japanese. He seeks to understand these differences by placing them in the context of differences in the concept that mothers have, both of their babies and of themselves. For instance, he suggests that for the mother here, "the baby is from birth a distinct personality with his own needs and desires which she must learn to recognize and to care for." By contrast, the Japanese mother "views the baby much more as an extension of herself, and psychologically the boundaries between the two are blurred... She knows what is best for the baby, and there is no particular need for him to tell her what he wants, because, after all, they are virtually one." Because the U.S. mother views her child as a separate person, she stresses "vocal communication, so that he can 'tell' her what he wants and she can respond appropriately. She de-emphasizes physical contact... and encourages the infant through her voice to explore and to deal with his environment by himself" (Caudill 1972:43). The Japanese mother, who knows what the child wants, does precisely the opposite: she stresses physical contact between herself and the child, and de-emphasizes vocal communication. Furthermore, because of the concept of separateness, the U.S. mother also values time for herself, which she may have when the child is asleep. The Japanese mother has no such concerns. Instead of the independence that is emphasized in the United States, the Japanese stress interdependence in adulthood she may have when the child is asleep. The Japanese mother has no such concerns. Instead of the independence that is emphasized in the United States, the Japanese stress interdependence in adulthood.

It seems the American mother wants a happily vocal, active, and exploring baby, and the Japanese mother wants a quiet, inactive, and contented baby. Our data indicates that by three to four months of age infants in the two cultures have already learned to behave in culturally patterned ways, well before any development of the ability to use language. Thus, culture would appear to be "built into" the person, at least in nascent form, even by three months of age (Caudill 1976:40).

Therefore, for behavior as for neuromotor development, culture has an early and profound impact on the human individual.

A New Focus

As we see in these few examples of studies conducted in the 1970s, it is evident that they differ from work carried out in the 1930s and 1940s in a number of important respects. The classic studies sought to describe the "typical" childhood of a given society, and to relate it, in causal sequence, to adult personality and to aspects of culture viewed as expressive of that personality. Many of the contemporary studies are more limited in scope, and more highly systematic and empirical in their methods, not only in the collection of data, but even more importantly, in the reporting of data. For example, Caudill's observations are highly focused; they involve time sampling, and comparisons are reported in statistical terms. Although much of the earlier work undoubtedly involved equally careful observations, the observations tended to be more diffuse and all-encompassing, and in the reporting little emphasis was placed on noting either the range of variations in behavior or the specification of intracultural variations that might be related to particular variables. In other words, just as cultural anthropologists in general have become more interested in problem-oriented research and in the testing of specific hypotheses, so have students of child development and socialization.

Moreover, there has also been a general change in the view of culture held explicitly or implicitly by anthropologists. We have seen that the earlier emphasis stressed cultural relativity and cultural uniqueness, which tended to discourage comparisons and generalizations. In part, this approach probably was due to the earlier, excessive, and unwarranted grand generalizations, against which the relativists reacted. We have come full circle, and dominant interests are again turned toward the search for answers to broader questions, which are thought to be obtainable through systematic cross-cultural research.

CROSS-CULTURAL AND COMPARATIVE STUDIES

We mentioned earlier that the vast accumulation of descriptive information on hundreds of societies led anthropologists by the 1950s to recognize a need to take stock and to create order. David French wrote a bit caustically, that anthropologists "do not know what they know, they do not know the questions for which they have accumulated the answers" (French 1963:417).

Although French's comment still holds a good deal of truth, some progress has been made in sorting out the questions as well as the answers. Essentially, two strategies have been used in this situation. One has been to carry out large-scale, cross-cultural statistical, or holocultural studies to test specific hypotheses, culling the data from the available ethnographic literature. The other has been to set
up a series of highly focused field studies, to be conducted either simultaneously or successively in a number of different societies, so that the results might be compared. Both of these approaches have been used over the past twenty-five years by John W. M. Whiting, Beatrice B. Whiting, and their numerous associates, first at Yale and later at Harvard.

As John W. M. Whiting (1966) himself has stressed, this research grew out of the work carried out at the Institute of Human Relations at Yale during the 1930s and 1940s. There, anthropologists collaborated with psychologists and sociologists and developed an "integrated behavioral science approach" that combined elements from a number of sources: psychoanalytic theory of personality development, learning theory, and cultural anthropology. In this setting, anthropology was a rich source of data on which hypotheses derived from a combination of psychoanalytic theory and learning theory could be tested.

A Milestone Study and Its Limitations

A major contribution to the process of formulating and testing hypotheses of this type was made in 1953, with the publication of Child Training and Personality, by John W. M. Whiting and I. L. Child. In this innovative work the then new cross-cultural statistical method was used for the first time to test hypotheses concerning the interrelationship of certain child-training variables with cultural practices, used as indicators of personality.

Child training was divided into five "behavior systems." Such a system was defined as "a set of habits or customs motivated by a common drive and leading to common satisfaction." It was assumed that the five systems chosen would be found in all societies (Whiting and Child 1953:45). Three behavior systems were selected on the basis of the Freudian theory of psychosexual development. They concerned nursing and weaning (oral); toilet training (anal); and masturbation, sex play, and modesty training (sexual). To them were added two other systems, derived from the work of Dollard and his associates on aggression (Dollard et al. 1939): dependence, expressed in parental reactions to crying and asking for help, and aggression, expressed both physically and verbally. A more strict Freudian view would have held that these latter behavior systems were in fact already subsumed in the other three. Each of the five behavior systems was divided into two phases, initial indulgence and socialization. For example, in the oral system, nursing constituted the phase of initial indulgence, weaning, the phase of socialization.

These behavior systems constituted the independent variable. The dependent variable selected concerned native theories of disease and native therapeutic practices; it, too, was two-pronged. There was, then, no direct measure of personality; rather, aspects of culture considered to be expressive of personality were correlated with child-training variables. In a theory of "personality integration of culture" it was held that the personality typical of a society constituted a link between the child training and the cultural beliefs and practices under study.

A sample of seventy-five societies from all parts of the world was selected, and information on the degree of indulgence and the severity of socialization in the five behavior systems was rated by three assistants who were not aware of the hypotheses being tested. The information on the dependent variables was similarly analyzed by another group of "naive" raters.

A number of hypotheses, derived from psychoanalytic theory and reformulated in terms of learning theory, were tested in this manner. One of them concerned the psychoanalytic concept of "fixation." Whiting and Child note that in the psychoanalytic literature this term is applied to consequences of experiencing either "extreme frustration" or "extreme satisfaction" in early childhood in any one of the behavior systems. Because they infer from learning theory that quite different consequences should flow from such opposite types of experience, they propose to differentiate between "positive fixation" and "negative fixation."

Negative fixation in the oral behavior system, for example, would be evidenced by a relationship between "high socialization anxiety" (harsh weaning) and an explanation of illness as due to oral causes (eating, drinking, or verbal spells). On the other hand, positive fixation would involve a relationship between initial satisfaction in a given behavior system and the use of that same system for purposes of therapy, such as the taking of oral remedies.

High socialization anxiety in three of the five behavior systems was found to be statistically related to native explanations of illness. The three were the oral, dependence, and aggression behavior systems. Significant results were not obtained with regard to the anal and the sexual systems. On the other hand, as far as therapeutic practices are concerned, only the sexual system showed significant results. However, here the numbers involved were very small, for there were only two societies with adequate child-training data, where sexual intercourse was reported for curing purposes. Therefore we may conclude that "fixation" is a meaningful term when applied to "extreme frustration" in the socialization of behavior systems. The study gives no support for the concept of "positive fixation."

Like most new departures in research, this study is of much greater importance for the work to which it gave rise than for its immediate findings. Because of its newness, it necessarily suffered from a number of weaknesses. Writing in 1966, Whiting himself lists some of its principal difficulties.

The basic and most evident handicap of this study is to be found in its data. The materials that were available had been collected by anthropologists who varied widely with regard to their interest in child training, and consequently the quality and quantity of the data on which raters based their judgments were not adequate. The sources were not strictly comparable, and vital information was frequently lacking.

Whiting notes, furthermore, that a number of questionable assumptions were built into the research. First, it was assumed that there was little intracultural variation, so a single judgment, say on age of weaning, could be made for each society. Whether or not there is such homogeneity ought to be investigated, not
assumed. Second, it was assumed that there was intergenerational stability in child training. That is, Whiting assumed that child-training practices reported by the anthropologists had been in force for some time, so as to give rise to the cultural practices with which they were being correlated. Although this assumption was probably true for a majority of the traditional societies that made up the sample, it was not necessarily true of all. Third, in Whiting’s words:

the use of a cultural belief system (theories of disease) as a projective index of personality assumes a “modal” personality that was not directly measured. Such cultural indices would be more convincing if they could be buttressed by some estimate of the characteristic behavior of individual members of the society being studied (Whiting 1966:viii).

Some other criticisms and comments also should be mentioned. For example, from a strictly technical, statistical point of view, the sampling of societies was faulty, with no attention given to how the societies in the sample related to a larger universe of human societies. This problem is a subject to which much attention has been paid since 1953, and more recent cross-cultural studies are more carefully designed in this respect. Another problem concerns the model used in this research. We actually learn little about societies or cultures; instead, we learn about the statistical interrelation of variables. We do not glimpse the modal personality that is assumed to be integrating the elements of a given cultural system. Moreover, the model assumes, by implication, that each culture is characterized by a single fixation and has one typical explanation of illness. In fact, in any given culture we may find more than one behavior system in which socialization is traumatic, and we may find more than one characteristic type of explanation of illness. In other words, the procedure used in this study takes cultures apart, but it does not put them together again.

This criticism may become clearer if we apply it to a concrete example. Among Haitian peasants, a variety of explanations of illness are used. An individual who is ill may believe the illness is a result of an enemy's oral aggression in the form of verbal spells or magically poisoned food. On the other hand, a vodoun specialist may say that an enemy has sent spirits of dead persons to possess the one who is ill. This cause falls into the category of dependency explanations of illness. In yet a different manner, illness may be diagnosed as being due to supernatural punishment. Whiting and Child found this last type of explanation to be significantly linked to severity of punishment for aggression in childhood. This experience certainly fits the Haitian case, where children are expected to be submissive to elders, including elder siblings. We might expect the oral explanations of illness also, for although children are nursed on demand, the nursing is somewhat unreliable. Moreover, the child will be put to the breast to calm it, even though the discomfort may be due to some other cause. Weaning generally takes place at one and one-half years, which is below the median age of weaning (over two years) found in the Whiting and Child sample of societies. With regard to dependency, children are pushed early to accept responsibilities, whether for the care of younger siblings, or for a variety of chores. It is, of course, difficult to guess how the project analysts would have rated a society not in their sample, but on the whole the type of explanations of illness we see in Haiti might indeed have been expected on the basis of Haitian child-training customs. It is interesting that much of the aggression is oral in nature, and much of the therapy similarly is oral.

The Haitian materials also highlight another problem of such research: what is illness? For example, Haitian peasants believe in the phenomenon of the zombi, who, according to their view, is an individual who has died and then has been partially revived by a sorcerer. In that condition, Zombs remain under the control of the sorcerer and do not have an independent existence. They do not know their name or identity. Feeding zomis salt, however, will cause them to remember who they are and to die, or perhaps to go home. Some zomis, it is believed, are transformed into animals. Is a zombi a sick person, and if so, how is this sort of explanation to be categorized?

The Haitian psychiatrist Louis Mars (1947:76–82) has published the results of his examination of a woman who was purported to be a zombi, a dead person returned from the grave. He diagnosed her as syphilitic and schizophrenic, unable to identify herself or to give an account of herself. By Western medical criteria, this “zombi” was mentally deranged, a sick person; by Haitian peasant criteria, she was a creature of quite a different sort.

For purposes of comparative research, then, there exists a problem of definition. Some people who are sick by Western standards may be seen as something else in another cultural interpretation, and conversely, some who are adjudged sick in another culture may not be sick according to Western medical views. Thus, matters that seem to be straightforward and to involve “commonsense” concepts may turn out to be complicated by problems of cultural relativity. Whiting and Child (1953) were interested in the variability of explanations of illness and of therapeutic practices, but they did not consider variability in the very concept of illness. Illness was coded whenever the authors of the original field reports used that term, and no further questions were raised. The problem of cultural variability in one way or another, lurks in the background of cross-cultural research.

A More Complex Research Strategy

As a result of what they had learned from their 1953 study, Whiting and Child proceeded to develop a more complex research strategy that involved a combination of cross-cultural statistical research with a series of field studies. These studies would take into account intracultural variation and would provide an opportunity for the intercultural replication of research (the Six Cultures Project, to which we shall turn presently). In order to carry out research along these various lines, they turned toward directly observable, behavioral child-training variables that could be expected to exist in all cultures. They also wished to avoid a research strategy that called for inferences about internal states, such as anxiety.

This ambitious enterprise involved the development of a more complex model than that used in the original 1953 study. Its most recent version was published...
A MODEL FOR PSYCHOCULTURAL RESEARCH FROM WHITING AND WHITING, CHILDREN OF SIX CULTURES (1975).

In 1975, in *Children of Six Cultures*, by Beatrice and John Whiting, termed "a model for psychocultural research," it includes six major components. Remember that the original model dealt with child training but not with the antecedents or causes of that training. The new model, by contrast, goes back several steps. It begins with environment and history. Environment includes such aspects as climate, flora, fauna, and terrain, and history includes migrations, borrowings, and inventions. Together these two components are thought of as giving rise to the *maintenance systems*, which include such segments of culture as subsistence patterns, means of production, settlement patterns, social structure, systems of defense, law and social control, and division of labor. The maintenance system, so conceived, gives rise to the *child's learning environment*. Under this heading are considered the settings occupied, caretakers and teachers, tasks assigned, and the mother's work load. These factors act on the infant with its innate needs, drives, and capacities to produce the individual adult, who has acquired a series of learned characteristics: behavior styles, skills and abilities, value priorities, conflicts, and defenses. The psychological dispositions of individuals, combining innate and learned elements, give rise to the *projective expressive systems*. Here are listed not only religion, magic beliefs, and ritual and ceremony, but also art and recreation, games and play, crime rates, and suicide rates.

The resultant research, whether library-based cross-cultural studies or field studies, deals with interrelationships among several of these elements. Antecedents are considered as independent variables and consequences as dependent variables, the causal chain being assumed to run from environment and history.
to the projective expressive systems. It is recognized that feedback exists among various of these elements, and that in some instances causality may run the other way, but the primary emphasis is placed on the causal chain presented in the model.

The resulting cross-cultural and comparative studies have focused, for the most part, on the relationship between various aspects of the maintenance system and the child’s learning environment or the specifics of child training, and between child training and various aspects of the projective expressive systems. Only a few studies have dealt with ecological variables.

Whiting (1966, 1974) has summarized these research efforts in historical terms. In doing so, he points to two important difficulties with the original work (Whiting and Child 1953), which were fundamental to the new formulations employed in the subsequent studies. In reviewing the type of information available in the ethnographic literature on the training of infants and young children, Whiting notes that “parents in most cultures were more concerned with interpersonal relations than with body functions,” which had been stressed by using the oral, anal, and sexual behavior systems. The approach therefore was defective in that it stressed the wrong features and in that “it left out of account the personal relationship between mother and child, and the role of the father in the socialization process. Oedipal rivalry, identification and super-ego development had been bypassed” (Whiting 1974:4). That is to say, one aspect of psychoanalytic theory, the concept of psychosexual development, had been incorporated into the study, albeit stripped of the idea of a sequence of stages. At the same time, in translating Freudian theory into the language of learning theory, another, equally important aspect of psychoanalytic theory had been omitted, namely the interpersonal relationships that form the social and cultural context of infant and child development. It is on this aspect of psychoanalytic theory that much of the cross-cultural and comparative work under discussion here has been constructed. Now, however, the biological dimensions of infant development have been, on the whole, deemphasized.

Biological and Ecological Cross-Cultural Studies

There have been a few studies dealing with biological and ecological variables. For example, Whiting and Landauer (1968), in one of several related studies, considered physical stress as part of the child’s learning environment, and investigated its relationship to adult stature. The hypothesis was derived from experimental research with animals that showed that physical stress and repeated separation of infant and mother lead to increased growth rates, greater adult stature, and a greater tendency on the part of the mature animal to explore its environment. Although the findings confirmed the hypothesis, this study has been received with a good deal of criticism.

In another study, J. W. M. Whiting (1964) worked out a long chain of statistical associations, starting with climatic factors and including relationships of pairs of variables that had been established in several previous studies, to account for the observation that harsh male initiation rites appear to be limited to sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania. The chain begins with a hot, rainy, tropical climate. It is known that under such conditions there is a great risk of protein deficiency disease (kwashiorkor) in infancy and early childhood. Such climatic conditions are statistically linked to a long postpartum sex taboo, which is in turn associated with polygyny, a prolonged period of nursing, and mother-child households. Polygyny makes the sex taboo on the mother tolerable for the male and results in the spacing of children. In such a setting, there is a strong and lasting tie between mother and child. Such mother-child households are found in societies with patriloclal residence. At puberty, boys undergo vigorous collective initiation rites. The argument here is that because of the long association between child and mother, and child training practiced virtually exclusively by women, it is important for the establishment of male sex identity to separate boys impressively from women and to impose on them a new group and sex identity.

This ecologically based study is a follow-up on earlier work by Whiting, Kluckhohn, and Anthony (1958), in which they found a link between such initiation rites, a prolonged postpartum sex taboo, and exclusive mother-child sleeping arrangements. In both of these studies an aspect of infancy is linked to an aspect of later socialization, initiation rites. Furthermore, the infancy sleeping arrangements are themselves linked to household organization and the rules governing the relations among husbands and wives.

Slater and Slater (1965) have given a psychodynamic dimension to this complex of relationships among elements. They developed a score for narcissism and discovered high narcissism to be related to a weak marital relationship, which is shown by the presence of the prolonged sex taboo and polygyny. They suggest that strong male narcissism leads to a weak marital relationship, which in turn affects the relationship between the mother and the male child. The mother, who in such a situation is herself sexually deprived, reacts to this situation by being both demanding and depriving toward the child. This treatment leads to narcissism in the child and in turn, to a weak marital relationship. Slater and Slater thus suggest a circular scheme with two types of feedback, rather than a linear causal chain.

This scheme does not deny the possibility that, given certain environmental constraints, specifically the dangers of high infant mortality due to kwashiorkor in the humid tropics, a long infant nursing period, favored by a lengthy postpartum sex taboo, is indeed adaptive in biological terms. It makes sense to think that societies that have invented these practices have been selected for. It also makes sense to think that given the prolonged, exclusive mother-son association, the invention and institution of harsh male initiation practices was also adaptive in resolving the identity problems that developed for boys in such a situation. Slater and Slater note the psychological consequences for mother and son of their association, and the way in which the narcissism developed in this manner in men helps to perpetuate the weak marital relationship that is a necessary social institution in this series of interconnected elements. This psychological dimension provides the motive force, as it were, of the whole complex.
While the Slaters as well as Whiting have related male initiation ceremonies to aspects of infancy, other students of the subject have sought and discovered other statistically significant relationships. For example, Young (1962) found such rites to be linked to the existence of exclusively male organizations, and Cohen (1964) has found them to be associated with the presence of unilineal descent groups and with the existence in a society of the legal concept of joint liability.

It is important to understand that one given feature of culture, in this case male initiation rites, may be significantly related to a number of other cultural and ecological features. As Wallace (1966) has stressed, the various explanations offered for initiation rites are better understood as complementary than as contradictory.

Other Approaches to Puberty and Initiation: A Digression

It should be pointed out that the initiation ceremonies these authors are concerned with, which involve the inflicting of pain and the segregation, for a time, of boys from women and girls, are associated with male puberty and constitute a rite of passage into adulthood. They are tribal initiations that groups of boys undergo jointly. They are not initiations into secret societies, such as the hazing of pledges who wish to join college fraternities in the United States. They are also different from the type of tribal initiation that exists, for example, among the Hopi, in which both boys and girls learn certain tribal secrets; these rites are not limited to boys and do not involve the element of segregation. The specific types of male initiation treated in holocultural studies we have just reviewed are characteristic of only a particular kind of society: they are located in the tropics of Africa and in the Pacific, they have unilineal descent and polygyny, men and women live very different lives, and until initiation boys are closely associated with their mothers and with women in general. This particular type of initiation and its social context represent an intriguing problem, and therefore they have attracted much attention. However, the subject of the transition from childhood to adulthood, and its ritualization, is a much broader one, and these holocultural studies, important though they are, do not exhaust it.

More broadly interpreted, rites that separate adulthood from childhood are widespread. They serve to mark the attainment of a new position, while at the same time they induct the individual into a new set of roles. C. W. M. Hart (1963) suggests that childhood learning experiences in primitive societies in general are unstructured and informal, whereas the puberty rites are formal learning situations, in which the novices are taught about the sacred world as well as the society at large. The initiation is conducted by strangers rather than by family members, and where no strangers are available, masks disguise the identity of familiar persons. This point is interesting, for masks are widely used in puberty initiations.

Hart suggests that the informality of childhood learning makes it highly unstandardized and diversified, and he argues that this fact accounts for the great variations in individual personalities the fieldworker in any primitive society is likely to discover. The standardization of later, postpuberty learning results in the acquisition of knowledge and skills, not of personality characteristics. Although Hart refers to reports on a number of different societies, his starting point is his own extensive observations among the Tiwi of Northern Australia.

W. E. Precourt (1975) has considered both initiation ceremonies and secret societies as educational institutions. He suggests that in addition to the explicit content of these institutions, a hidden curriculum is conveyed to the participants. His hypothesis is that in egalitarian tribal societies there will be initiation rites for all young men, whereas in societies that have some social stratification, such as chiefdoms, only some will be initiated into secret societies. In the first case the hidden curriculum speaks of equality; in the second the message is that there are differences. Precourt confirms his hypothesis by means of a holocultural study.

When Precourt speaks of "egalitarian" societies he, like others who use the term, is speaking of societies where there are few status distinctions between men, especially men of the same age group or generation. Nothing is implied concerning the status of women. Because the male rites we have been discussing are spectacular, they have been much studied. Female initiation rites tend to be less widespread and less spectacular, and perhaps for this reason they have been given less attention. There are important differences in the growing up processes of boys and girls. For boys, there is always a move from the women's side of society to that of the men. In patriloccal societies, a shift from the mother's home to wife's home is added. As a rule, boys' initiations occur on a group basis. For girls, on the other hand, there is a marking of first menstruation, and so the initiation rite is a personal, individualized event. In numerous societies where girls marry early, the marriage ritual may be seen as a type of initiation, or a substitute for it, because marriage produces a drastic change in status. This change is particularly great in patriloccal societies, such as traditional India or China. Here the girl goes off to live among strangers, and there is now a physical as well as social separation between her and the household in which she grew up.

Where male initiation rites concern such matters as social structure and religious concepts, female rites, whether on an individual or group basis, strikingly often concern sex and fertility, as well as the ritual demonstration of domestic and economic skills. Where there are sexual operations, a pattern widespread in East Africa and in the Arab world, the emphasis is on the effect of such operations either on sexual behavior, or on risk in childbirth, or both.

A particularly interesting example of a girls' initiation rite comes from the Tsonga, who live in the border area of Mozambique and South Africa. We are told that "'Khomba,' the Tsonga girls' initiation school, teaches the women's role as husband-pleaser, infant-bearer, home-keeper, and tiller of the soil, in that order" (Johnston 1977:219–220). The ritual, which emphasizes fertility, makes the girls eligible for marriage. If the young married woman is infertile, she will not have fulfilled her social obligation and will bring disgrace on her father and male relatives, who will have to return the marriage gift of cattle to the husband's
Because infertility is such a grave matter, it is often attributed to witchcraft. In the khomba ritual, fertility is assured by the use of drugs, recitation of secret formulae, vigorous dances, and various symbolic acts and gestures. The drugs and the rituals with which they are linked produce visions of supernatural snakes, which support the traditional beliefs concerning fertility.

Rites of Passage and Adult Roles. Ceremonials that transform an individual's position in society, in this case changing a child into an adult, are called rites of passage. How these rites are carried out and what their overt and symbolic contents are appears, as we have seen, to depend on a variety of cultural and social factors. In our own society, there seem to be numerous such rites, yet there is a characteristic hesitancy or incompleteness about the sequence. When might we say that a youngster in the United States becomes an adult? What are the clearest markers? School graduation? We have graduations every few years, from nursery school to doctorate! After each graduation, one starts again at the bottom of the next sequence, whether first year in senior high school, freshman in college or in medical school, or beginning graduate school. Acquiring a driver's license, or voting age? They do not necessarily come next sequence, whether first year in senior high school, freshman in college or in medical school, or beginning graduate school. Acquiring a driver's license, or voting age? They do not necessarily come at the same time, nor are they connected with full adult status. Marriage, or being self-supporting? Again, these two circumstances need not be connected, and numerous are the individuals who are married and have children but still are not either self-supporting or out of school. The implication seems to be that there are many rituals and markers of status change, but the pattern is inconsistent, and numerous are the individuals who are married and have children but still are not self-supporting or out of school. The implication seems to be that there are many rituals and markers of status change, but the pattern is inconsistent, and to the one going through the sequence, often confusing. Moreover, since the system requires both competition and conformity, it is important to keep up with one's age cohort, or better, to be slightly ahead of it. "I'll have my M.A. before I'll be able to drink full strength beer," complained an Ohio State student who was a bit ahead of her age cohort.

There is a great contrast between the complex modern industrial societies and those of traditional American Indian tribal groups, who were, in the majority, hunter-gatherers. Guy Swanson (1973) deals with a characteristic feature of many of these societies, the search for a guardian spirit. Swanson's thesis is that this search by the individual youth for a vision and for the power bestowed on him by a spirit is a rite of empowerment "for the office of manhood." Whereas the male initiation rites that we discussed earlier are corporate rites initiating the individual into a group, in the guardian spirit quest no groups are involved. The individual acquires power on his own; he initiates himself into a new status by his own effort. Swanson finds the guardian spirit complex to be present in societies depending largely but not exclusively on hunting and fishing. He also finds it associated with a type of political organization with room for both common and special interests, rather than those that are completely individualistic or those that are dominated by common interests and allow for little individual autonomy. That is, both economy and political organization are relevant to the existence of this practice. Two other variables are also related to the existence of the guardian spirit quest: the residence rule of virilocality, whereby married brothers reside in the same community, and linguistic stock, suggesting that cultural diffusion, a historical factor, also helps us to account for the distribution of the guardian spirit complex in North America.

Note that in Swanson's explanation of the guardian spirit complex there is no reference to infancy or child training. Instead, economic and sociological factors are given principal importance. Swanson took as his starting point an important earlier study by Barry, Child, and Bacon (1959) to which we referred in another context (p. 61). These authors, it will be remembered, sought to understand the relationship between child training and one aspect of the maintenance system, subsistence economy. They dealt with childhood, a period later in life than that emphasized in the original work of Whiting and Child (1953). They hypothesized that different types of economies require different sorts of personality attributes and that children would be pressured to acquire those traits useful for the fulfillment of adult economic roles. They selected the dependence behavior system of the original study and broke it down into six separate aspects of training: obedience, responsibility, nurturance, achievement, self-reliance, and general independence. A sample of 110 societies was chosen, and the training of boys and girls was rated separately for each of the six aspects. It was hypothesized that societies with high accumulation economies (agriculture and animal husbandry) would favor conscientious, conservative, and compliant individuals and would therefore pressure children toward obedience, responsibility, and nurturance. On the other hand, societies with low accumulation economies (hunting and fishing) would favor independent, venturesome individuals and would therefore pressure children toward achievement, self-reliance, and general independence. The findings confirmed the hypothesis. However, this study, as well as an earlier one (Barry,
Bacon, and Child 1957) showed important sex differences: girls were consistently pressured more toward compliance (obedience, responsibility, and nurturance) and boys more toward assertion (achievement, self-reliance, and general independence).

This statistical research is partly confirmed by an intensive field study by Patricia Draper (1972, 1976) among two groups of !Kung Bushmen with different types of subsistence economies. Among one group, which had recently become sedentary and agricultural, she found pressures on children toward compliance (obedience, responsibility, and nurturance), while among the hunter-gatherer !Kung she found no such pressures. This finding is as expected. The first observation is, however, of particular interest, because it indicates a shift in child-training practices and parental attitudes as soon as a change in subsistence economy takes place: there is no time lag between economic change and change in child training. This fact suggests a virtually immediate change in adult attitudes, unrelated to their own experiences and to the value system in which they themselves had been reared.

Among the nomadic hunter-gatherer !Kung, Draper notes that children, contrary to expectation, are not pushed to accept an early orientation toward achievement, self-reliance, and independence. However, Shostak (1976), in reviewing the autobiographical statement of a !Kung woman among the hunter-gatherers, remarks on the considerable amount of independence that children are permitted. There is, then, a distinction to be made, it would seem, between positive pressures toward independence and permissiveness with regard to the independent behavior exhibited by children.

**The Six Cultures Project**

More ambitious than the series of statistical studies testing the Whiting model, which we have been discussing, was the important Six Cultures Project conducted by John and Beatrice Whiting and their associates. This project involved the simultaneous, coordinated study of child training in six communities. The people of five of these communities were subsistence farmers, the exception being the people of Orchard Town, a New England community. Three of these communities were rated as more complex, three as less complex by such criteria as degree of occupational specialization, differentiation of settlement pattern, political centralization, social stratification, and religious specialization. J. W. M. Whiting (1974) notes that the findings of this project appear to contradict those of Barry, Child, and Bacon in that the tasks assigned to children vary with the maintenance system of the culture in which the child is being brought up. The observation that complex societies, like hunter-gatherer societies, stress achievement, whereas agriculturalists (tribal and peasant societies) stress compliance fits well into a picture of curvilinear relationships, which have been suggested for other elements of culture. For example, matrilineal descent and matrilocal residence are more likely to appear in middle range societies than among the simplest or the most complex.

Nevertheless, these findings raise a number of questions. Given the importance that is placed on the mother’s work load in the Six Cultures Project, it would now be interesting to recode the sample of societies used by Barry, Child, and Bacon (1959) for this variable, and to note whether it also produces a significant correlation with socialization pressures on children. An inspection of this sample, however, reveals the lack of representation of the type of complex society in which the comparative ethnographic studies discovered stress on achievement. The mother’s work load makes sense as a differentiating variable among societies, for we can easily see how it might act to draw children, particularly girls, into the mother’s sphere of responsibilities. For example, Draper (1975), comparing sedentary agricultural and migratory hunter-gatherer !Kung, finds that the differ-
ences in women’s economic responsibilities affect the assistance they require of
dughterl, and as a result, the kind of socialization pressures for compliance
they bring to bear on them. The boys, who are off with the animals they help
tend, are not affected in the same way by the mother’s activities.

In complex societies, Whiting considers that it is the presence of both schooling
and “a social class structure with achievable statuses” (Whiting 1974:8) that
causes pressure on children to achieve. Thus he implies that in two of the five
societies in which schooling is present (Jutlakahua in Mexico, and Tarong in the
Philippines) schooling is not perceived as an avenue to social mobility.

It is interesting to compare these communities with high accumulation econom­
ies to another community a different sort: the type of communal-collective
village in Israel called a kibbutz. Here children are reared in groups and interact
with parents primarily, if not exclusively, in leisure time. From the age of six,
when they begin formal schooling, they also begin regular work assignments in
the dormitory, the schoolroom, and the children’s community’s own farm. In the
school program there are no grades, and students are not failed. In this setting,
children develop a strong sense of social responsibility and learn to strive for the
success of the group, rather than for personal achievement, which would imply
competition among group members. There is no striving for individual success
or for the acquisition of property. The things that give prestige, which individual
children seek to achieve, involve contributions to group welfare. The mother’s
work load is irrelevant, for children do not interact with their mothers in situa­tions
involving work. Task assignment is largely organized through the children’s
own community: children plan the school curriculum, and they allocate work
assignments. Nor is there a class structure and social mobility within it.

In this case, we have a society that was consciously planned to achieve certain
social and educational goals, and it has been highly successful. The social or­
ganization of the kibbutz, however, as well as the specific information available on
child behavior, are so different from the other societies under discussion here that
a true comparison is not possible. Nonetheless, the kibbutz appears in many
respects to cut across our several types of societies.

Contrasts between Holocultural Research and the Six Cultures Project. Both the
cross-cultural statistical studies we have reviewed so far and the Six Cultures
Project investigated the effects of various antecedents, primarily elements of
the maintenance system, on child training and child behavior. Before taking a closer
look at the Six Cultures Project it may be useful to stop for a moment to consider
the differences between these two approaches, their advantages and disadvan­tages,
their strengths, and their limitations. As we have already seen, there is
important feedback between them, and our knowledge of the possible effects of
various antecedents is advanced in this way.

The statistical studies are designed to test hypotheses on a large sample of
societies. The answers we obtain from them are formulated in terms of probabili­
ties. On the other hand, when we do fieldwork and discover a pattern in a given
society, we cannot generalize beyond that society. For example, among the
!Kung, we find low pressure on children for compliance. We cannot know from
that case alone whether the !Kung are, in this respect, typical of hunter-gatherer
societies. Nor can we infer that their economy is relevant to their child-training
practices, although we may be able to trace multiple relations between them as
we study the full context of child training. For example, we note not only that
children are not assigned child-care chores, but also that infants are spaced far
apart, perhaps as much as four years, and are also nursed for a long time.
Moreover, we know that the !Kung spend a relatively small amount of time on
subsistence activities: Draper (1976) estimates approximately three days a week.
Some of the relationships among type of economy, total amount of work, moth­
er’s work load, and child involvement in work responsibilities become clearer
when we compare the hunter-gatherer !Kung with others of their kin who have
taken up agricultural activities. Unlike the statistical studies, this limited, con­trolled comparison shows us changes in the whole pattern of interrelated ele­ments.

Statistical studies provide us with correlations among the variables we suspect
to begin with as having important bearing on each other. The method of research
limits us to the testing of preformulated hypotheses. We cannot generate new,
unhypothesized information. Also, we are limited by the information available
in the literature: most of the ethnographic studies we must draw on were not
originally designed for the purposes for which we utilize them. In this instance
we must use reports on certain specific aspects of child training, of the subsistence
economy, and of other elements in the maintenance system.

The Six Cultures Project allows us systematic comparison not only between
cultures but also with regard to variation within cultures. Yet it must be remem­bered
that this ambitious project—which required about two years of data collect­ion
by six teams of investigators and has now involved more than two decades of
analysis, the work of some two dozen people, and the utilization of electronic
data processing, and which has not yet been fully completed—has dealt with only
six communities. In realistic terms, it is clear that such intensive, coordinated
studies must be limited to only a few communities and can be significantly
complemented by the broad statistical test of hypotheses they generate. Both
research strategies, then, have important contributions to make, despite their
characteristic limitations.

The Six Cultures Project: A Closer Look. The fieldwork for the Six Cultures
Project was carried out by six teams in 1954 and 1955 on the basis of a common
research plan, jointly developed by them and the principal investigators, John W.
Whiting, Irving L. Child, and William W. Lambert. The communities selected
for research were “Orchard Town” in New England; Nyasongo, a community of
the Bantu-speaking Gusii tribe in Kenya; Taira, a village on the island of
Okinawa; the Rajputs, a caste in the village of Khalapur in Northern India, some
ninety miles from Delhi; Tarong, a barrio, or community of scattered hamlets,
on the island of Luzon in the Philippines; and finally, Mixtecanspeaking Indians in the town of Juxtlahuaca, in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Three major books have resulted from this research, as well as a large number of articles and other publications, including an important research guide (J. W. M. Whiting 1966). The first of these books was edited by Beatrice Whiting, who acted as research coordinator. It was published in 1963 under the title Six Cultures: Studies in Child Rearing. It consists of a general discussion of the research plan and of the conceptual model as then conceived, and it contains six parts, each by one of the research teams. These individual monographs, which have also been published separately, present a general ethnography of the specific culture as background for a detailed description of the child-rearing practices of the society. In spite of the fact that fieldwork was structured by a common research plan, there are some differences in emphasis in the resulting reports, largely because each culture presents its own particular challenges and its special elaborations.

In addition to the collection of the background materials presented in the 1963 volume, the research also involved the selection, on the basis of census information, of a sample of children, both boys and girls, between the ages of three and eleven. These children were observed systematically, and a standardized interview was administrated to their mothers. The protocols of the observations and the interviews were sent back to the United States for coding and analysis. A study based on the interviews was published in 1964 by L. Minturn and W. W. Lambert under the title Mothers of Six Cultures: Antecedents of Child Rearing. The results of the study of child behavior have been presented by Beatrice and John Whiting, in collaboration with Richard Longabough, in Children of Six Cultures: A Psychocultural Analysis, which was brought out in 1975. There is enough repetition and summary of the related work, so that each of these volumes can be studied separately.

The specific aim of the Six Cultures Project was to investigate child personality in relation to a series of independent variables. The children's social behavior, observed in a natural setting, was used as a measure of personality, rather than responses to tests or behavior in experimental situations. The researchers observed the behavior of each sample child in interaction with others—infants, peers, or adults—during a five-minute period. A total of 9,581 such samples were collected. The social behavior of children, then, constituted the dependent variable. The independent variables were five in number: culture, that is, the child's specific learning environment; sex; age; target(s) with whom the child is observed in interaction; and differences within a culture that distinguish some children from others. Analysis of the behavior samples in terms of these five variables makes it possible to identify the effect of both cultural and noncultural factors on child behavior and on child personality. In coding the observational protocols, the behaviors were broken down into twelve types of "acts" that occur in all cultures. With the exception of "acts sociably," which ranks first in all six cultures, the remaining acts vary in frequency cross-culturally.

The analysis of this rich body of information has yielded a number of important results. On the one hand, it is evident that culture "makes a difference." Certain aspects of the child's learning environment have an important impact on the child's behavior. Furthermore, behavior is not merely situational, but does involve consistency across targets; for example, children who were above the median in sociability in relating to peers were also above the median in relating to infants. In other words, it is, indeed, appropriate to speak of social behavior as a measure of child personality, and this personality is shown to affect behavior in specific situations.

At the same time, there are a number of remarkable consistencies that cut across cultures. We shall consider them first, particularly because such cross-cultural regularities often are not appreciated fully by anthropologists. For example, Whiting and Whiting (1975) distinguish between "childish" and "adult" styles in the behavior of children between the ages of three and five. They note sex differences and changes in behavior with age. They summarize some of their findings for the total sample as follows:

At the 3–5 age period both boys and girls have different "childish" styles of social behavior. Boys engage in more horseplay... girls seek help and touch each other more frequently. These behaviors decrease sharply with age. Acting sociably... is another form of "childish" behavior on which both young boys and girls score high, but which also decreases with age. Boys remain more aggressive in the older age group, insulting and continuing horseplay, and they increase in seeking attention and dominance.

Sex distinctions are not limited to "childish" behavior styles, but appear also in "adult" styles:

Boys and girls are equally nurturant during the 3–5 age period, but the proportion of nurturant behavior exhibited by girls increases rapidly as they grow older, while the nurturant scores for boys remain relatively constant. Suggesting responsibily and reprimanding are not sex typed; they start low and increase rapidly with age for both boys and girls (Whiting and Whiting 1975:182).

It is interesting that these effects of sex and age on behavior generally hold true for each of the six cultures separately as well as for the total sample. The authors are particularly impressed by the cross-cultural "consistency of sex differences." They draw specific attention to the fact that horseplay and intimate dependency (seeking help and physical contact), are differentiated by sex everywhere between the ages of three and five but not later, and they suggest that such age-specific sex differences may be due to innate factors. By contrast, sex differences that increase with age, they suggest, "are more likely to be culturally determined, and their similarity can be attributed to the similarities in the roles of men and women in the six cultures" (Whiting and Whiting 1975:182).

Another interesting finding that is consistent cross-culturally is that children in the total sample acted differently toward infants, peers, and parents. Children
When the six cultures were compared on each of these dimensions, groupings were found above and beyond the uniqueness of each culture. The twelve types of behavioral acts of the children in the six cultures, as reported in the observational protocols, were analyzed by means of multidimensional scaling. This method produced two dimensions. Dimension A contrasts offers help, offers support, and suggests responsibly, on the positive side, with seeks help, seeks dominance, and seeks attention on the negative side. The first group is termed “nurturance” and “responsibility,” and the second “dependence” and “dominance.” On the other hand, Dimension B contrasts, on the positive side, “sociable-intimate” behavior (acts sociably, assaults sociably, touches) with “authoritarian-aggressive” behavior (reprimands, assaults), on the negative side. When the six cultures were compared on each of these dimensions, groupings were found above and beyond the uniqueness of each culture.

For Dimension A, cultures that ranked high as nurturant-responsible turned out to be the simplest three of the six: Nyasongo, Juxtlahuaca, and Tarong. The three most complex cultures, Orchard Town, Khalapur, and Taira, ranked high on the dependence-dominance end of the dimension. In attempting to understand these differences, the authors considered the mothers’ work load and the resulting assignment of tasks to children. The nurturant-responsible behavior of the children is seen as a direct consequence of the assignment of infant care and household chores to them. Because these tasks are given more often to girls than to boys, girls are everywhere socialized to be nurturant and responsible to a higher degree than boys.

Although women in all the six cultures are responsible for childcare, food preparation, and housework, how much work each of these responsibilities entails varies considerably among the societies and depends on the number and kinds of specialized agencies available in the societies. Also, in the simpler of the six societies women have specific responsibilities for gardening. The societies vary a good deal in their assignment of tasks to young children. For example, three-and-four-year-olds among the Gusii of Nyasongo had as many as five tasks to perform, and among the Mixtecs of Juxtlahuaca and the Ilocos of Tarong two and three tasks, respectively. In the three most complex societies, they were responsible for only one task. A larger number of tasks are assigned as children get older, and Whiting and Whiting suggest that performance of many different kinds of tasks is one of the mechanisms by which children, particularly in the simpler societies, learn to be nurturant and responsible. Moreover, they suggest that in the simpler societies, the tasks assigned seem reasonable, and it is self-evident how these tasks contribute to the welfare of the family and to the economy. On the other hand, in urban societies tasks that children are assigned may seem to be arbitrary and less related to the overall welfare of the family. In these more complex societies, children score high on dominance-dependence. “Competition for good grades,” the authors remark, “is training in egoism and does not encourage a child to consider the needs of others” (Whiting and Whiting 1975:107). (In this connection, it is interesting to note that it is the Rajputs of Khalapur, and not the people of the most complex culture, Orchard Town, who have the most extreme score on dominance-dependence.)

Task assignment, moreover, is related to obedience training. In the simpler cultures mothers claim that they insist more strictly on obedience than in the more complex cultures. Also, they have less tolerance of aggression against themselves and more overall control of the child.

Whereas Dimension A differentiates societies by complexity, Dimension B is related to another variable, household composition. The three cultures that have nuclear households (Orchard Town, Juxtlahuaca, and Tarong) score high on the sociable-intimate end of the dimension. The children in the cultures with non-nuclear households (Nyasongo, Khalapur, and Taira) are more typically authoritarian-aggressive. This dimension, as can be seen, cuts across the differentiation between simpler and more complex cultures: two out of three of the simpler
cultures have nuclear households, but so does Orchard Town; and on the other hand, two out of the three of the more complex cultures have non-nuclear households, but so have the Gusii of Nyasongo, the simplest of the six cultures. In Orchard Town, for example, the children in this culture with nuclear households are sociable-intimate rather than authoritarian-aggressive, but at the same time, they are also dependent-dominant. Of the six cultures, Orchard Town is the only one that presents this constellation of behaviors. In this society, where there are few tasks assigned to children and mothers have a low work load, mothers also claim less overall control of the child than do mothers in the simpler societies.

In their conclusions, Whiting and Whiting observe that the social behavior of children is generally consistent with the way in which they will be expected to behave as adults. The complexity of the socioeconomic structure and the organization of the household, in effect, dictate the appropriate behavior of adults. This demand is expressed in the values of a culture:

Nurturance and responsibility, success, authority, and casual intimacy are types of behavior that are differentially preferred by different cultures. These values are apparently transmitted to the child before the age of six (Whiting and Whiting 1975:179).

The types of chores assigned to children seem to be of crucial importance here. Giving children responsibility for the care of infants encourages the development of nurturance and discourages dependent-dominant behavior. This observation helps to explain differences both among cultures and among individuals within cultures. The contrast between authoritarian-aggressive and sociable-intimate children appears to be related to the children's identification with adults and to their imitation of adult role behavior. Presumably, there is considerable tension and conflict in extended family households, and children observe it. Like their elders, they become authoritarian-aggressive, which, in the simpler societies, is combined with being nurturant and responsible. It is particularly interesting that the mothers of aggressive children claimed to punish aggressive behavior more than the mothers of sociable-intimate children.

The results of the Six Culture Project appear to have amply justified the original plan with its limited goals. Its conclusions could not have been arrived at on the basis of research in a single society: comparison makes it possible to distinguish significant variables and to identify features that cut across cultural differences.

Reviewing twenty-five years of their own work, John and Beatrice Whiting conclude:

We remain dedicated to developing and testing hypotheses designed to be true for all people at all times. We are also interested in explaining the individual, culture, and the interaction between them. And we remain convinced that child rearing involves more than the simple and intentional transmission of culture (Whiting and Whiting 1978:58).

In the Six Cultures research, the Whitings have brought us a long way toward identifying the basis of personality differences among cultures as well as the mechanisms by which these differences are passed on from generation to generation.

SUMMARY

As we have seen, there are diverse approaches to the subject of socialization. In the preceding pages we have sampled them and pointed to a number of significant problems, research strategies, and findings. We referred to this broad subject earlier, and we do so elsewhere in this book, for early experiences and formative stages seem to be at the heart of the processes, insofar as we are able to identify them, that underlie human behavioral regularities—regularities within cultures, which lead to cross-cultural differences, as well as regularities across cultures. We have seen evidence of both in data from the societies studied in the Six Cultures Project.

In general, studies that emphasize comparison (sedentary versus hunter-gatherer) or child training in Japan versus the United States) tend to show how the groups under discussion differ. Studies that focus on a single culture can show differences within a single group—by sex, age, birth order, class differences in stratified societies, and so on. In addition, even within homogeneous groups and within a single category we can see a range of variations. Nonetheless, anthropologists tend to emphasize averages or typicality rather than diversity and variation.

Variation is important for a number of different reasons, in spite of our stress on regularities. It helps us to discover why some individuals in a group are better at what they do than others, more likely to choose certain roles, happier and better adjusted, more eager to learn new ways, more exposed to emotional (and perhaps physical) ills, innovative or conservative, and so on. These questions should be kept in mind as we look at ways of assessing adult personalities in our next chapter.

NOTES

1. See Chapter 6 for a discussion of cross-cultural studies of perception and cognition.
2. Stimulation of a portion of the inner ear, which makes an important contribution to hearing, emotional (and
3. For details on kibbutz education, see Bettelheim (1969), Rabin (1965), Rabin and Hazan (1973), and Spiro (1954, 1958).