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PRIFYSGOL CYMRU LLANBEDR PONT STEFFAN

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Mae'r Copi Digidol hwn ac unrhyw gopi digidol neu argraffedig a ddarparwyd ar eich cyfer neu a wnaed gennych o dan amodau'r Drwydded i'w defnyddio ar gyfer y Cwrs Astudio hwn. Gallwch gadw copïau o'r fath ar ddiwedd y cwrs, ond ar gyfer eich defnydd personol yn unig.

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Mae gan yr awdur (term sy'n cynnwys artistiaid a chrëwyr gweledol eraill) hawliau moesol yn y gwaith ac ni all staff na myfyrwyr beri, na chaniatáu, i'r gwaith gael ei wyrdroi, ei lurgunio na'i newid mewn unrhyw ffordd arall, nac i gael ei drin yn ddifrïol mewn unrhyw ffordd, a fyddai'n niweidiol i anrhydedd neu enw da'r awdur.

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Chapter III

THE INTEGRATION OF CULTURE

The diversity of cultures can be endlessly documented. A field of human behaviour may be ignored in some societies until it barely exists; it may even be in some cases unimagined. Or it may almost monopolize the whole organized behaviour of the society, and the most alien situations be manipulated only in its terms. Traits having no intrinsic relation one with the other, and historically independent, merge and become inextricable, providing the occasion for behaviour that has no counterpart in regions that do not make these identifications. It is a corollary of this that standards, no matter in what aspect of behaviour, range in different cultures from the positive to the negative pole. We might suppose that in the matter of taking life all peoples would agree in condemnation. On the contrary, in a matter of homicide, it may be held that one is blameless if diplomatic relations have been severed between neighbouring countries, or that one kills by custom his first two children, or that a husband has right of life and death over his wife, or that it is the duty of the child to kill his parents before they are old. It may be that those are killed who steal a fowl, or who cut their upper teeth first, or who are born on a Wednesday. Among some peoples a person suffers torments at having caused an accidental death; among others it is a matter of no consequence. Suicide also may be a light matter, the recourse of anyone who has suffered some slight rebuff, an act that occurs constantly in a tribe. It may be the highest and noblest act a wise man can perform. The very tale of it, on the other hand, may be a matter for incredulous mirth, and the act itself impossible to conceive as a human possibility. Or it may be a crime punishable by law, or regarded as a sin against the gods.

The diversity of custom in the world is not, however, a matter which we can only helplessly chronicle. Self-torture here, head-hunting there, prenuptial chastity in one tribe and adolescent licence in another, are not a list of unrelated facts, each of them to be greeted with surprise wherever it is found or wherever it is absent. The tabus on killing oneself or another, similarly, though they relate to no absolute standard, are not therefore fortuitous.

The significance of cultural behaviour is not exhausted when we have clearly understood that it is local and man-made and hugely variable. It tends also to be integrated. A culture, like an individual, is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action. Within each culture there come into being characteristic purposes not necessarily shared by other types of society. In obedience to these purposes, each people further and further consolidates its experience, and in proportion to the urgency of these drives the heterogeneous items of behaviour take more and more congruous shape. Taken up by a well-integrated culture, the most ill-assorted acts become characteristic of its peculiar goals, often by the most unlikely metamorphoses. The form that these acts take we can understand only by understanding first the emotional and intellectual mainsprings of that society.

Such patterning of culture cannot be ignored as if it were an unimportant detail. The whole, as modern science is insisting in many fields, is not merely the sum of all its parts, but the result of a unique arrangement and inter-relation of the parts that has brought about a new entity. Gunpowder is not merely the sum of sulphur and charcoal and saltpetre, and no amount of knowledge even of all three of its elements in all the forms they take in the natural world will demonstrate the nature of gunpowder. New potentialities have come into being in the resulting compound that were not present in its elements, and its mode of behaviour is indefinitely changed from that of any of its elements in other combinations.

Cultures, likewise, are more than the sum of their traits. We may know all about the distribution of a tribe's form of marriage, ritual dances, and puberty initiations, and yet understand nothing of the culture as a whole which has used these elements to its own purpose. This purpose selects from among the possible traits in the surrounding regions those which it can use, and discards those which it cannot. Other traits it recasts into conformity with its demands. The process, of course, need never be conscious during its whole course, but to overlook it in the study of the patternings of human behaviour is to renounce the possibility of intelligent interpretation.

This integration of cultures is not in the least mystical. It is the same process by which a style in art comes into being and persists. Gothic architecture, beginning in what was hardly more than a preference for altitude and light, became, by the operation of some canon of taste that developed within its

technique, the unique and homogeneous art of the thirteenth century. It discarded elements that were incongruous, modified others to its purposes, and invented others that accorded with its taste. When we describe the process historically, we inevitably use animistic forms of expression as if there were choice and purpose in the growth of this great art-form. But this is due to the difficulty in our language-forms. There was no conscious choice, and no purpose. What was at first no more than a slight bias in local forms and techniques expressed itself more and more forcibly, integrated itself in more and more definite standards, and eventuated in Gothic art.

What has happened in the great art-styles happens also in cultures as a whole. All the miscellaneous behaviour directed towards getting a living, mating, warring, and worshipping the gods, is made over into consistent patterns in accordance with unconscious canons of choice that develop within the culture. Some cultures, like some periods of art, fail of such integration, and about many others we know too little to understand the motives that actuate them. But cultures at every level of complexity, even the simplest, have achieved it. Such cultures are more or less successful attainments of integrated behaviour, and the marvel is that there can be so many of these possible configurations.

Anthropological work has been overwhelmingly devoted to the analysis of culture traits, however, rather than to the study of cultures as articulated wholes. This has been due in great measure to the nature of earlier ethnological descriptions. The classical anthropologists did not write out of first-hand knowledge of primitive people. They were armchair students who had at their disposal the anecdotes of travellers and missionaries and the formal and schematic accounts of the early ethnologists. It was possible to trace from these details the distribution of the custom of knocking out teeth, or of divination by entrails, but it was not possible to see how these traits were embedded in different tribes in characteristic configurations that gave form and meaning to the procedures.

Studies of culture like *The Golden Bough* and the usual comparative ethnological volumes are analytical discussions of traits and ignore all the aspects of cultural integration. Mating or death practices are illustrated by bits of behaviour selected indiscriminately from the most different cultures, and the discussion builds up a kind of mechanical Frankenstein's monster

with a right eye from Fiji, a left from Europe, one leg from Tierra del Fuego, and one from Tahiti, and all the fingers and toes from still different regions. Such a figure corresponds to no reality in the past or present, and the fundamental difficulty is the same as if, let us say, psychiatry ended with a catalogue of the symbols of which psychopathic individuals make use, and ignored the study of patterns of symptomatic behaviour—schizophrenia, hysteria, and manic-depression disorders—into which they are built. The rôle of the trait in the behaviour of the psychotic, the degree to which it is dynamic in the total personality, and its relation to all other items of experience, differ completely. If we are interested in mental processes, we can satisfy ourselves only by relating the particular symbol to the total configuration of the individual.

There is as great an unreality in similar studies of culture. If we are interested in cultural processes, the only way in which we can know the significance of the selected detail of behaviour is against the background of the motives and emotions and values that are institutionalized in that culture. The first essential, so it seems to-day, is to study the living culture, to know its habits of thought and the functions of its institutions, and such knowledge cannot come out of post-mortem dissections and reconstructions.

The necessity for functional studies of culture has been stressed over and over again by Malinowski. He criticizes the usual diffusion studies as post-mortem dissections of organisms we might rather study in their living and functioning vitality. One of the best and earliest of the full-length pictures of a primitive people which have made modern ethnology possible is Malinowski's extended account of the Trobriand Islanders of Melanesia. Malinowski, however, in his ethnological generalizations is content to emphasize that traits have a living context in the culture of which they are a part, that they function. He then generalizes the Trobriand traits—the importance of reciprocal obligations, the local character of magic, the Trobriand domestic family—as valid for the primitive world instead of recognizing the Trobriand configuration as one of many observed types, each with its characteristic arrangements in the economic, the religious, and the domestic sphere.

The study of cultural behaviour, however, can no longer be handled by equating particular local arrangements with the generic primitive. Anthropologists are turning from the study of primitive culture to that of primitive cultures, and the implica-

tions of this change from the singular to the plural are only just beginning to be evident.

The importance of the study of the whole configuration as over against the continued analysis of its parts is stressed in field after field of modern science. Wilhelm Stern has made it basic in his work in philosophy and psychology. He insists that the undivided totality of the person must be the point of departure. He criticizes the atomistic studies that have been almost universal both in introspective and experimental psychology, and he substitutes investigation into the configuration of personality. The whole *Struktur* school has devoted itself to work of this kind in various fields. Worringer has shown how fundamental a difference this approach makes in the field of æsthetics. He contrasts the highly developed art of two periods, the Greek and the Byzantine. The older criticism, he insists, which defined art in absolute terms and identified it with the classical standards, could not possibly understand the processes of art as they are represented in Byzantine painting or mosaic. Achievement in one cannot be judged in terms of the other, because each was attempting to achieve quite different ends. The Greeks in their art attempted to give expression to their own pleasure in activity; they sought to embody their identification of their vitality with the objective world. Byzantine art, on the other hand, objectified abstraction, a profound feeling of separation in the face of outside nature. Any understanding of the two must take account, not only of comparisons of artistic ability, but far more of differences of artistic intention. The two forms were contrasting, integrated configurations, each of which could make use of forms and standards that were incredible in the other.

The *Gestalt* (configuration) psychology has done some of the most striking work in justifying the importance of this point of departure from the whole rather than from its parts. *Gestalt* psychologists have shown that in the simplest sense-perception no analysis of the separate percepts can account for the total experience. It is not enough to divide perceptions up into objective fragments. The subjective framework, the forms provided by past experience, are crucial and cannot be omitted. The "wholeness-properties" and the "wholeness-tendencies" must be studied in addition to the simple association mechanisms with which psychology has been satisfied since the time of Locke. The whole determines its parts, not only their relation but their very nature. Between two wholes there is a discontinuity in kind,

and any understanding must take account of their different natures, over and above a recognition of the similar elements that have entered into the two. The work in *Gestalt* psychology has been chiefly in those fields where evidence can be experimentally arrived at in the laboratory, but its implications reach far beyond the simple demonstrations which are associated with its work.

In the social sciences the importance of integration and configuration was stressed in the last generation by Wilhelm Dilthey. His primary interest was in the great philosophies and interpretations of life. Especially in *Die Typen der Weltanschauung* he analyses part of the history of thought to show the relativity of philosophical systems. He sees them as great expressions of the variety of life, moods, *Lebensstimmungen*, integrated attitudes the fundamental categories of which cannot be resolved one into another. He argues vigorously against the assumption that any one of them can be final. He does not formulate as cultural the different attitudes he discusses, but because he takes for discussion great philosophical configurations, and historical periods like that of Frederick the Great, his work has led naturally to more and more conscious recognition of the rôle of culture.

This recognition has been given its most elaborate expression by Oswald Spengler. His *Decline of the West* takes its title not from its theme of destiny ideas, as he calls the dominant patterning of a civilization, but from a thesis which has no bearing upon our present discussion, namely, that these cultural configurations have, like any organism, a span of life they cannot overpass. This thesis of the doom of civilizations is argued on the basis of the shift of cultural centres in Western civilization and the periodicity of high cultural achievement. He buttresses this description with the analogy, which can never be more than an analogy, with the birth- and death-cycle of living organisms. Every civilization, he believes, has its lusty youth, its strong manhood, and its disintegrating senescence.

It is this latter interpretation of history which is generally identified with *The Decline of the West*, but Spengler's far more valuable and original analysis is that of contrasting configurations in Western civilization. He distinguishes two great destiny ideas : the Apollonian of the classical world and the Faustian of the modern world. Apollonian man conceived of his soul " as a cosmos ordered in a group of excellent parts ". There was no place in his universe for will, and conflict was an evil which his

as Edward Carpenter says, "endlessly catching its trains", as it is to characterize it as Faustian, with a longing for the infinite.

Anthropologically speaking, Spengler's picture of world civilizations suffers from the necessity under which he labours of treating modern stratified society as if it had the essential homogeneity of a folk culture. In our present state of knowledge, the historical data of western European culture are too complex and the social differentiation too thorough-going to yield to the necessary analysis. However suggestive Spengler's discussion of Faustian man is for a study of European literature and philosophy, and however just his emphasis upon the relativity of values, his analysis cannot be final because other equally valid pictures can be drawn. In the retrospect it may be possible to characterize adequately a great and complex whole like Western civilization, but in spite of the importance and the truth of Spengler's postulate of incommensurable destiny ideas, at the present time the attempt to interpret the Western world in terms of any one selected trait results in confusion.

It is one of the philosophical justifications for the study of primitive peoples that the facts of simpler cultures may make clear social facts that are otherwise baffling and not open to demonstration. This is nowhere more true than in the matter of the fundamental and distinctive cultural configurations that pattern existence and condition the thoughts and emotions of the individuals who participate in those cultures. The whole problem of the formation of the individual's habit-patterns under the influence of traditional custom can best be understood at the present time through the study of simpler peoples. This does not mean that the facts and processes we can discover in this way are limited in their application to primitive civilizations. Cultural configurations are as compelling and as significant in the highest and most complex societies of which we have knowledge. But the material is too intricate and too close to our eyes for us to cope with it successfully.

The understanding we need of our own cultural processes can most economically be arrived at by a détour. When the historical relations of human beings and their immediate forbears in the animal kingdom were too involved to use in establishing the fact of biological evolution, Darwin made use instead of the structure of beetles, and the process, which in the complex physical organization of the human is confused, in the simpler material was transparent in its cogency. It is the same in the

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study of cultural mechanisms. We need all the enlightenment we can obtain from the study of thought and behaviour as it is organized in the less complicated groups.

I have chosen three primitive civilizations to picture in some detail. A few cultures understood as coherent organizations of behaviour are more enlightening than many touched upon only at their high spots. The relation of motivations and purposes to the separate items of cultural behaviour at birth, at death, at puberty, and at marriage can never be made clear by a comprehensive survey of the world. We must hold ourselves to the less ambitious task, the many-sided understanding of a few cultures.