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An Analysis of the Recognized Consistencies and Inconsistencies of Three National Character Studies of the Japanese People: Its Implication for the General Theory of National Character

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE RECOGNIZED CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES OF
THREE NATIONAL CHARACTER STUDIES OF THE JAPANESE PEOPLE--
ITS IMPLICATION FOR THE GENERAL THEORY OF
NATIONAL CHARACTER ANALYSIS

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
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LIFE

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The writer has published an article entitled, "The Quiet Beauty of Old Japan," The Catholic World (September, 1960), 374-380.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: NATIONAL CHARACTER STUDIES

The people of particular cultures have been more systematically evaluated in recent years than ever before. Since the early 1930's scientific analysis of the relationship between culture and personality has been made by representatives of the behavioral sciences. In the examination of literate and non-literate societies one of their objectives has been to determine the effects which cultural forces produce upon the members of that cultural group. Anthropologists have led the way in this analysis, joined later by social psychologists, psychiatrists, and sociologists. The interaction between these disciplines in the culture-personality studies is evident in most of the journals and particularly in the works collected by Haring in Personal Character and Cultural Milieu.¹ They have not always agreed nor have they always been mutually cooperative, yet the convergence of these several disciplines in these studies has produced results that could not be made by any single one.

¹ Clyde Kluckhohn, "The Influence of Psychiatry on Anthropology in America During the Past One Hundred Years," Edward Sapir, "Why Cultural Anthropology Needs the Psychiatrist," and A. Irving Hallowell, "Psychological Leads of Ethnological Field Workers," Personal Character and Cultural Milieu, ed. Douglas G. Haring (New York, 1956), pp. 485-512, 719-726, 341-388.

These disciplines have faced the serious problem of harmonizing two apparently contradictory concepts, culture and personality. Is it possible to have culture without personalities? Can personalities exist without their cultural backgrounds? The only way one concept can be considered without the other and vice versa is by abstracting intellectually one from the other. A dichotomy in the two terms exists only in this sense. In reality the one is never found without the other.² In order to show the intimate relationship of the two terms such titles as "personality-in-culture" or "culture-in-personality," or the most non-committal of all, "culture-personality" have been used. The term "culture and personality," however, has endured and is used extensively in the literature found on the subject.

More recently some of the behavioral scientists have concentrated on national groups and have produced studies on these groups in terms of their national characteristics. Geoffrey Gorer³ attributes much of the initial impetus in this area to Ruth Benedict and her book, Patterns of Culture.⁴ Gorer defines a

²Gardner Murphy, "The Relationship of Culture and Personality," Culture and Personality, S. Stansfeld Sargent and Marian W. Smith, eds. (New York, 1949), pp. 13-27.

³Geoffrey Gorer, "The Concept of National Character," Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture, ed. Clyde Kluckhohn et al. (New York, 1955), p. 247.

⁴Ruth Fulton Benedict, Patterns of Culture (New York, 1946).

country's national character as "personality in culture, people in their social setting, not of the individual envisaged either as isolated or in a tacitly known society."⁵ Morris Ginsberg describes group character as "the differences in the distribution of certain traits or perhaps types in different groups."⁶ Ginsberg adds that national character is found in the behavior patterns of the group as a whole; that is, in its national organization as embodied in its institutions, its collective achievements, and its public policy.⁷

There are those, of course, who have not been in agreement about national character and how it is determined. David Potter has pointed out⁸ that Hamilton Fyfe in his book, The Illusion of National Character,⁹ was not repudiating the idea of national character as such, "but the concept of an unalterable, genetically determined national character." Fyfe's book was not denying the proposition "that the majority of a national population may collectively tend to acquire certain adaptive traits, but the idea that all the members of a national population are destined to pos-

⁵Gorer.

⁶In Otto Klienber, "A Science of National Character," The Journal of Social Psychology, IXX (1944), pp. 147-163.

⁷Ibid.

⁸David M. Potter, People of Plenty (Chicago, 1954), p. 26.

⁹Hamilton H. Fyfe, The Illusion of National Character (London, 1940).

ness certain inherent traits."¹⁰ Potter does not believe Fyfe's book, which proposes to be destructive of national character, has any relevance.¹¹

The viewpoints of those who have made national character studies are as divergent as are the fields which they represent. The anthropologist is concerned with "social heredity," and "the way of life in any society."¹² The sociologist focuses primarily on the group, concerning himself with the complex structure of society, as it forms a basis for the understanding of interpersonal relations. For him the formation of personality cannot be understood "except with reference to the positions which the individuals involved occupy in the structural system of their society."¹³ The psychologist and the psychiatrist, who have been largely psychoanalytic in their approach, work on the basic postulate that culture is derived from innate tendencies that man has inherited out of the distant past.¹⁴ For example, such things as myths and folktales have been thought to stem from incestuous impulses as

¹⁰Potter, p. 27.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ralph Linton, The Cultural Background of Personality (New York, 1945), p. 30.

¹³Ibid., p. xxi.

¹⁴John J. Honigmann, Culture and Personality (New York, 1952), p. 64.

the Oedipus complex directs a boy toward his mother with consequent hatred and jealousy of the father.¹⁵ The psychologist contributes facts about the unconscious dynamics of one's action and offers his knowledge of such things as learning, conditioning, anxiety, and security. The members of these disciplines, while pursuing their information from different viewpoints, are contributors to the single area of national character studies.

One of the primary concerns of research workers centers around the shared habits of a given national group; especially at the time when these habits were first learned, in childhood. At this point the shared habits can be observed in their initial stages and it is upon this foundation that the national character rests. The focal points of interest are child-training practices: weening and sphincter training, as well as principles of reward and punishment.

The two terms, culture and personality, are defined and distinguished by those researchers who pursue investigations of early childhood-training practices. Socially standardized behavior of some enduring group is one aspect of culture. This is understood to be the actions, thoughts, and feelings of the individuals in the group. The material products of a cultural group are also thought of as their culture. National character studies speak of

¹⁵Ibid., p. 65.

the phenomenon which cannot be directly observed, such as their ideas and feelings, as the "covert culture," and the observable aspects, such as the material products, as the "overt culture."¹⁶ Observable personality connotes the actual behavior in one's own environmental orbit. The unobservable personality, on the other hand, is the emotions and thoughts of the individual. For both of these levels of personality the term behavior is used.¹⁷

While a similarity in terminology is apparent in national character studies, some noticeable differences are evident. Such terms as modal personality,¹⁸ character structure,¹⁹ basic personality,²⁰ and national character²¹ have different meanings; however, the slight variation in their meanings has been past over by several and in some cases these terms are defined synonymously by different analysts. The need for greater refinement of such terms is apparent.

In the work of the researchers of national character the methods and procedures used are the same as those worked out by analysts of culture and personality. The methods are those of the

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 22

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

²⁰ Abram Kardiner, The Individual and His Society (New York, 1939), p. 132.

²¹ Kluckhohn, p. 247.

clinical scientist rather than of the laboratory scientist. The clinical scientist attends to total and complex situations that occur in life. The work of the laboratory scientist is upon behavior in a closely limited setting. His chief objective is to keep conditions uniform and controlled.²² Researchers of national character must be clinical scientists because life is lived as one finds it. Once observation has been made on verbal and nonverbal behavior, a formulation of the data is attempted. It is held by some that the analyst is to express his findings qualitatively rather than quantitatively. This is true because of the very nature of the data. These findings will not be assessed in statistical tables and graphs, but rather in terms of descriptions and listings of verbal assertions.²³

However, such statements may be challenged on the grounds that any type of data can be graphed or quantified under certain aspects for significance to someone. The incidence of certain elements of a culture can be enumerated or graphically shown to correlate with other elements in that culture. The very possibility of such presentation of data leaves the opinion that any type of quantification is invalid to future appraisal.

The results that are finally drawn up will undoubtedly bear

²²Honigsmann, p. 89.

²³Kluckhohn, p. 257.

the mark of the field from which the analyst comes. Each of the researchers, depending on whether he is an anthropologist, psychiatrist, or sociologist, will come to the situation in which he hopes to learn more of the national character of the cultural group he is studying and will interpret and investigate those areas that are peculiarly of interest to his field. For example, Weston LaBarre, a clinical psychologist, who has done work on the Japanese national character,²⁴ relates his findings in terms of his profession. He describes the Japanese as the "most compulsive people in the world ethnological museum."²⁵ The cultural anthropologist, on the other hand, analyzing the same ethnic group, interprets the same data from his own point of view. As a result, the conclusions drawn by researchers from divergent fields are different in the language they use as well as in many of the characteristics they include in their descriptions of the national character of this people.

The critics of national character studies are primarily concerned with their methodology, dynamic quality, and Freudian orientations. Harold Orlansky has critically evaluated the asser-

²⁴ Weston LaBarre, "Some Observations on Character Structure in the Orient: The Japanese," Psychiatry VIII (August, 1945), pp. 319-342.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 326.

tions about infant care and its effect on later personality development.²⁶ He has shown that "there is no body of evidence to support assertions" like those made showing that rigid bowel training has contributed the main features of the adult personality. "The same childhood experience," Orlansky continues, "is arbitrarily read as having one significance for personality formation in one society and the opposite significance in another."²⁷ Alfred R. Lindesmith and Anselm L. Strauss²⁸ also point out that the effects of infantile experiences on the adult personality (which are not dealt with adequately, if at all, in the writings on the subject) raise serious methodological problems. "A verifiable theory," they state in their article,²⁹ "is one which can be proved to be right, and this implies that conceivably it might be proved wrong by exceptional cases. The latter possibility is not allowed for in this doctrine." On this problem of methodology, Orlansky is in agreement.³⁰

In addition to methodological problems, there are those con-

²⁶ Harold Orlansky, "Infant Care and Personality," Psychological Bulletin, XLVI (January, 1949), pp. 1-48.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 27.

²⁸ Alfred R. Lindesmith and Anselm L. Strauss, "A Critique of Culture-Personality Writings," American Sociological Review, XV (October, 1950), pp. 586-600.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 597.

³⁰ Orlansky, p. 27.

cerned with the dynamic interpretation of society that make the study of national character difficult. Whether or not the character of a people will be different because of the time in which a study is made is a point of dispute by several critics. Some believe that national character studies are history-bound, that they reveal a personality which is accurately determined, yet one that cannot be thought to be applicable to this same group for all time. Maurice L. Farber, commenting on this instability of national group character, is in agreement:

The national character of modern Greece is doubtless not that of Ancient Greece, of the Japanese of 1850 not that of the partially Westernized Japanese of today. There is every reason to believe that as a culture changes historically personality structure within it is concomitantly altered. In this connection, Kardiner and Linton have demonstrated, in a happily discovered "natural experiment," how an economic shift from a dry-rice culture to a wet-rice culture apparently caused marked shifts in character structure in Tanala-Betsileo of Madagascar.³¹

As to the Freudian orientations evident in national character writings, critics are of the opinion that the existence of any innate instinctual impulses remain an unproven assumption. "The notion that all people outside of civilized communities are unable to institute effective control over disallowed unconscious impulses . . . is gratuitous and not supported by facts."³²

³¹ Maurice L. Farber, "The Problem of National Character: A Methodological Analysis," The Study of Personality, ed., Howard Brand (New York, 1954), p. 390.

³² Honigmann, p. 65.

While there may not be agreement on the methods, dynamics, and orientations of national character studies, all do agree that the techniques used in the field are difficult and detailed. According to Honigmann, the most difficult methodological problem is that of finding adequate sampling of large national groups, sampling which is representative of the total community and from which one can validly predict the behavior for the entire population.³³ Observation of behavior in its natural setting (participant and spectator observation) is a widely used technique, yet very difficult because of customs forbidding outsiders of an ethnic group from participating in certain forms of their culture. While participation is not essential to observation, it is nonetheless a far richer experience for the research worker of the culture. Both passive and active interviewing, along with life history and dream recording are further tools of national character research. Testing has also been employed, though, in itself, this is a tool of the laboratory scientist rather than that of the clinician. Rorschach and Murray's Thematic Apperception tests have been given. Even the popular forms of communication such as short stories from current magazines, fairy tales, poetry, films, and hit songs are used for a deeper insight into a nation's character traits.

However, before national character studies can claim scientific validity, it must clarify its problems of methodology, re-

³³Ibid., p. 110.

solve doubts of its dynamic validity, resolve the inconsistencies of its result-findings, and resolve the discrepancies of interpretation, evaluation, and the conclusions of its workers. This thesis attempts such a clarification. By concentrating on viewpoint, methodology, findings, child-training practices and later personality characteristics reported by well-known national character studies, it is hoped that an evaluation can be made of the methods, contents, and generalizations made by researchers, whose scientific methods are valid, but whose works have been vitiated by non-scientific, personal intrusions upon these methods.

Three national character studies of the Japanese people will be utilized. The first to be analyzed is The Chrysanthemum and the Sword by the cultural anthropologist, Ruth Fulton Benedict.³⁴ The second work to be analyzed is a study done by Douglas G. Haring in two separate articles.³⁵ The third analysis will deal with Weston LaBarre's work, which he did as a clinical psychologist on Japanese war-time internees.³⁶ These three authors and their work are chosen as being typical of Japanese national character studies in general. Benedict's methods are typical of

³⁴Ruth Fulton Benedict, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword (Boston, 1946).

³⁵Douglas G. Haring, "Comment on Japanese Personal Character: Pre-War," and "Aspects of Personal Character in Japan," Personal Character and Cultural Milieu (New York, 1956), pp. 405-423.

³⁶LaBarre.

anthropologists whose technique is indirect observation. Such are the works of Mead,³⁷ Lanham,³⁸ and the Norbecks.³⁹ Haring's first article is typical of the anthropologists oriented to the historical past, such as Embree⁴⁰ and Sansom.⁴¹ In his second article he utilizes the methods of social psychology as does, for example, Stoetzel.⁴² LaBarre's work is typical of psychoanalytically-orientated national character studies, of which Gorer⁴³ is representative.

Thus this thesis essays a comparative analysis of the inconsistencies of these three typical national character studies and will trace the origin of these inconsistencies to the purely personal orientations of the individual workers. It will be maintained that if Benedict, Haring, and LaBarre have misused other-

³⁷ Margaret Mead, An Anthropologist at Work (Cambridge, 1959).

³⁸ Betty B. Lanham, "Aspects of Child Care in Japan: Preliminary Report," Personal Character and Cultural Milieu, ed. Douglas G. Haring (New York, 1956), pp. 565-583.

³⁹ Edward and Margaret Norbeck, "Child Training in A Japanese Fishing Community," Personal Character and Cultural Milieu, ed., Douglas G. Haring (New York, 1956), pp. 651-673.

⁴⁰ John Fu Embree, Suye Mura (Chicago, 1939).

⁴¹ George B. Sansom, Japan, A Short Cultural History (New York, 1953).

⁴² Jean Stoetzel, Without the Chrysanthemum and the Sword (New York, 1955).

⁴³ Geoffrey Gorer, "Themes in Japanese Culture," Personal Character and Cultural Milieu, ed. Douglas G. Haring (New York, 1956), pp. 273-290.

wise valid precedural methods, such inconsistencies which do appear are not inherent in national character studies as such. This safeguards the scientific possibility of and basis for a less confusing picture of national character in general and of the Japanese people in particular.

CHAPTER II

RUTH FULTON BENEDICT'S STUDY

In June, 1944, during World War II, Ruth Benedict¹ was asked by the United States government to examine the nature of the Japanese people as an ethnic group from the vantage point of the cultural anthropologist. The approach she was asked to take is described clearly by Geoffrey Gorer:

Cultural anthropology is the study of shared habits, of habits which are common either to all the members of a society, or at least to significant or relevant portions thereof. The basic assumption that underlies the description of a culture by the observations of a few months or years is that the relatively few observations that the field worker is physically able to make are representative of an infinitely larger series of identical or similar items of behavior which members of the observed society will continue to perform whenever the appropriate situation arises.²

America, at war with Japan, wanted to know what to expect from the Japanese people as well as from those in power.

¹Benedict received her A.B. from Vassar College in 1909 and her Ph.D. from Columbia U. in 1923. She was a lecturer in anthropology at Columbia U., 1923-30, was assistant professor, 1930-36, and an associate professor, 1936-48. She has made field trips to the American Indian tribes from 1922-39.

²Geoffrey Gorer, "The Concept of National Character," Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture, ed. Clyde Kluckhohn et al. (New York, 1955), pp. 247-8.

We had to try to understand Japanese habits of thought and emotion and the patterns into which these habits fell. We had to know the sanctions behind these actions and opinions. We had to put aside for the moment the premises on which we act as Americans and to keep ourselves as far as possible from leaping to the easy conclusion that what we would do in a given situation was what they would do.³

It was her purpose to study and describe to the American government the nature of the enemy. By studying the habits, the shared habits, she attempted to understand the cultural basis for the enemy's action under prescribed circumstances. What follows are the actual findings and conclusions of Benedict's efforts in the work under scrutiny.

"Taking one's proper station" is, according to Benedict, at the core of understanding the Japanese and is essential to understanding any and all aspects of their life. What freedom and equality are to Americans, order and hierarchy are to the Japanese. One cannot hope to understand the relationship between individuals, the Japanese's relation to the State, the intercommunication in family life, and the activity of their religious and economic life without first understanding this key concept.

Inequality, Benedict reports, has been for centuries the rule of their organized lives and behavior that recognizes hierarchy is basic to their character. Lest one think that class differences are the only criterion for knowing one's proper station, it must

³Ruth F. Benedict, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword (Boston, 1946).

be noted that sex, age, and family ties enter into the necessary calculations. From the time the baby is carried about on his mother's back he learns respect by giving the proper bows. The wife bows to her husband, children bow to their father, younger brothers to elder brothers, and sisters bow to all brothers no matter what their age. These bows are not just formality either, according to Benedict. It is a conscious recognition of hierarchy of sex and generation.⁴

The social role of the father in Japanese life is that of the responsible guardian of the family. He makes the important decisions which govern the family, and commands the respect of those within that household. It is his duty to recall to his sons the legacy of the family, both in material and spiritual things. The claims that the family puts upon each member of that Japanese family come before the claims of the individual.

The role of the mother in Japan is greatly respected. A woman wants children not only for her emotional satisfaction in having them, but because it is only as a mother that she gains status. In some cases the childless wife is simply discarded. If a woman is without a son, she can never look forward to exercising authority over her son's marriage and over her son's wife. A woman's position in Japanese society remains on an inferior level

⁴Benedict, p. 52. This and the rest of the data on the family is taken from the same chapter, "Taking One's Proper Station," pp. 43-75.

until she fulfills her womanhood in child bearing. The childless wife is held in subjection to her husband, yet is allowed certain freedoms, such as shopping and caring for the family finances, and governing the servants, if there be any.

The major portion of Benedict's study of the national character of the Japanese people is devoted to the people's great indebtedness to their ancestors. The Japanese people feel an obligation to be a credit to men so illustrious. In their daily living can be found very many ramifications of this sense of obligation which they experience. This core concept of profound indebtedness to forefathers, Benedict states, has influenced and probably will continue to influence so much of the thought and activity of the Japanese people. This obligation, which the Japanese call on, is defined as a "load, an indebtedness, a burden, which one carries as best one may."⁵ The Japanese speak of receiving on from a superior and the act of accepting an on from anyone not one's superior or at least one's equal gives one a sense of inferiority. On is a debt that must be repaid also. A man's indebtedness in itself is not virtue, yet his repayment is. Some repayments on on are limitless both in amount and in duration, and others are quantitative and due on special occasions only.

The second key concept that Benedict discovers is the Japanese philosophy of self-gratification. Around this concept she

⁵Benedict, p. 99.

centers very much of her discussion. She states that the Japanese value physical pleasures to a high degree. Eating and sleeping are pleasures, Benedict tells us, that Japanese value in themselves.⁶

The pleasure expressed in romantic love is another human feeling which the Japanese cultivate. In the novels and movies Benedict used for her study she found this topic discussed and exploited freely. Sex, for the Japanese, just as any other human feeling, they regard as good in its minor place in life. If a Japanese married man can afford it, he may obtain a mistress. The obligation the Japanese feel toward their families is in no way in conflict with their human feelings for others whose purpose is to give them sexual pleasure.

Traditionally, according to Benedict, homosexual behavior has been condoned in Japan. Again it is a matter of self-gratification so highly respected in Japan. Intoxication, another permissible pleasure indulged in, is frequently experienced at urban sake parties. With this, Benedict says, homosexual activity is often combined.⁷

Summing up the particular aspects of the Japanese pleasurable activities, Benedict concludes that in the Japanese philosophy, the flesh is good. Sir George Sansom writes: "Throughout their

⁶ Ibid., pp. 117-182.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 187-189.

history the Japanese seem to have retained in some measure this incapacity to discern, or this reluctance to grapple with, the problem of evil."⁸ The Japanese have always been extremely explicit in denying that virtue consists in fighting evil. The supreme task in Japanese life, moreover, according to Benedict, is that of fulfilling one's obligations. The people will readily accept obligations in repaying on even when these mean sacrificing one's personal desires and pleasures. When conflicts arise in paying these obligations, the Japanese person must decide which is of greater importance. This the people refer to as their "dilemma of virtue."

What Benedict observes about this dilemma is not, according to one critic, objectively correct. He criticizes her opinion thus:

That the author mentioned the "dilemma of virtue" as one of the characteristics of Japanese culture is evidence of her keen insight. But as far as the analysis of it is concerned, the most important factors are neglected. First, the moral principles that determine the behavior of the Japanese are not internal sanctions, but external sanctions (such as contempt from the world, losing one's face, etc.) and this fact is closely related to the existence of the "dilemma." Second, the life of the Japanese is like a double-exposure negative, where the opposing elements are superimposed one on the other, fusing and interpenetrating. For example, the samurai morals (the absolute denial of the natural

⁸George B. Sansom, Japan, A Short Cultural History (New York, 1953), p. 51.

man) vs. ordinary people's morals,⁹ (the open assertion of the natural and physical man).

To restrain Japanese self-indulgence or self-gratification, Benedict reports, there is honored discipline, which is self-imposed. According to Benedict's findings, self-discipline which gives competence to an individual, and self-discipline which gives expertness to one or another field are the two simple divisions of this virtue. The concepts of self-indulgence, of discipline, and of obligation to one's ancestors are explained by Benedict in terms of the Japanese child-training practices. These explanations will be systematically treated below.

Benedict begins by telling us that the concept of freedom and indulgence, which we Americans allow to the mature individual, is not true of the Japanese. The Japanese, Benedict states, allow indulgence and freedom to the young and aged, but not to those with full use of their intellectual powers.

The mother's pleasure, according to Benedict, of nursing one's baby is considered by the Japanese as the woman's greatest physiological pleasure. She tells us that in this way the baby learns to share the mother's pleasure. The spread-eagle strapping of the baby next to the mother's body also allows the baby to share her pleasure. According to Benedict, this practice explains

⁹Tetsuro Watsuji, "Criticism of Benedict's The Chrysanthemum and the Sword," Japanese Journal of Ethnology, XIV (October, 1949), p. 85.

the passivity in the adult Japanese and babies thus carried tend to grow up with a capacity for sleeping anywhere, anyhow. But such an assertion is nowhere scientifically verified; not even by an insight explanation. Benedict merely assumes this is the cause of passivity and the ability for sleeping anywhere.

Benedict further points out that, to emphasize this principle of self-discipline in the young, the mother imposes toilet training in the baby at the age of three or four months. The process she uses is to hold the baby out of doors for intervals of time, whistling low and monotonously. This is intended as an auditory stimulus and it is hoped that the child will make the proper association. To intensify now this principle of discipline, the mother holds the baby away from her own body with a firm grip.

Only within the past twenty or thirty years, Benedict states, was the Japanese baby ever allowed to take any steps by himself before it was a year old. Previous to that time mothers prevented any attempts at walking before the child was a year old.¹⁰

Benedict explains that for centuries it was the practice that a baby was not weaned until shortly before the mother was ready to deliver another baby. In late years, however, the government's Mother's Magazine has approved of weaning the baby at eight months. This latter fact stated by Benedict has no apparent relevance to

¹⁰The data for the child-training practices were taken from chapter XII, "The Child Learns," pp. 253-296.

her study. The effect of such government advice on the adult personality could not be related to the childhood practices at the time of her writing.

Self-indulgence is allowed the children toward their mother, who is given abuse and is the object of their tantrums. The father, on the other hand, is held in respect and is honored as head of the household. This is transferred from the respect owed to the Emperor and the ancestors.

Thus the indulgence principle supplants and is almost simultaneously taught with the discipline principle. Benedict tells how candy is given to the child to distract him or her from scoldings for minor offenses.

The children of Japan learn also the severe discipline of the commonly used sitting position. A modest position of legs for women and girls is very important for the Japanese. Even while asleep the young girl is expected to keep her legs together, while her brothers are not restricted in this regard.

Benedict states that the facts of life are known to the Japanese child because his parents are free in conversing about them in the home. Also, close family quarters permit immediate knowledge of such things to the young. Mothers call attention to the genitals of their children while playing with or bathing them. Again, the indulgence principle is evident. Masturbation is not considered as dangerous and because they know no shame, as the Japanese say, children are so happy. Almost absolute freedom in

these matters is tolerated in the young. Only in adult life are restrictions imposed upon them regarding sexual conduct.

Endeavoring to explain ancestor respect from the early child-training practices, Benedict states that attitudes toward the supernatural are learned, in general, in the home where a shrine is set up. Daily the family places food offerings there. The elders of the family announce all family events to their ancestors and give the customary respect bows. The home that shelters a shrine, whether it be Shinto or Buddhist, is also the home where the children play and enjoy growing up. Nothing in the child's experience, Benedict states, makes him fear the gods or shape his conduct to satisfy just or censorious dieties. Thus the indulgence principle receives supernatural sanction.

After these comments on early training practices of Japanese children, Benedict turns to later personality characteristics. She explains that the first three grades of school are co-educational and the teacher at this time lays special emphasis on the dangers of getting into "embarrassing situations." Children are still too young for "shame," but they are taught to avoid being "embarrassed." The terms, according to Benedict, carry distinct meanings. Ridicule is the means used by teachers and parents for instilling this discipline principle in the children. They are taught further that they have certain obligations, owe their on, and that these cannot be avoided. The child must subordinate his activity and personal wishes to others to whom are due his respect

and obedience.

By the time a boy is eight or nine, Benedict explains by way of an example, his family may in sober truth reject him because of some mischievous activity in school. The parents, learning of this from the teacher, will discipline him by turning him away from home. Boys in later elementary school are sometimes confined to the house in order to repent and are forced to occupy themselves with that Japanese obsession, the writing of diaries. In some cases boys are told not to return home again.

After nine or ten years of age, boys are segregated from the girls and much is made of their male solidarity. In this self-gratifying experience, they exclude girls almost completely. At this age the girl in Japan experiences the end of her childhood pleasures. Childhood ends for her in exclusion. The only gratification girls receive are in the form of flattering coiffures.

Sex discipline is at this time enforced. The boy is expected to be shy with girls and not to show his affection in any way. His parents will arrange his marriage and the art of love-making is to be learned from those whose purpose it is to teach such, the geishas. The girl's discipline in this matter is different. She is taught, Benedict reports, that as a young wife her role is to be that of a faithful wife. While her husband may carry on a love affair with another woman, she is not allowed the same gratification with another man. It is understood, Benedict reports, that when her husband turns from her for sexual relations, she is to

have recourse to the accepted Japanese customs of masturbation.

The one strand of continuity that connects the earlier and latter periods of a child's life is the emphasis placed on being accepted by one's fellow companions. Unrestrained gratification of self can be inhibited only by a severe and fearful ostracism. This is consciously dreaded, Benedict states, by all Japanese.

In Benedict's final chapter she singles out some general characteristics that she thinks are significant in drawing the final lines to the Japanese national character. If properly motivated, she states, the Japanese forego gratifications; but the saving of one's face is the reason for such renouncements.

Japanese self-respect always involves restraints, Benedict explains, because self-restraint means control of impulses that seek to confound a proper life. This fact motivates their self-restraint and, in so doing, insures their self-respect.

According to Benedict, the essential problem that all Japanese try to solve is that of reconciling the gratification of one's experiences with the restraints which promise security in later life. Some stake everything on restraining their lives, some are afraid of their own aggressiveness which they dam up within themselves, and others, placing emphasis on the indulgence of childhood, experience extreme anxiety in the face of all that is demanding of them as adults. The latter group increase their dependence when it is no longer appropriate. Benedict believes these are two characteristic personality deviations to which the

adult Japanese may succumb.

In the final analysis, Benedict states that the Japanese do derive pleasure from the simple experiences of viewing cherry blossoms, chrysanthemums, the moon, or new-fallen snow; arranging flowers; writing short verses; or drinking tea. She observes that these are not activities of deeply disturbed people. She believes therefore that the Japanese people reconcile the two principles of self-gratification and self-discipline in their adult lives by relinquishing their gratifications lest they incur social ostracism.

Critics have taken special notice of Benedict's methodology, findings, and conclusions. Now that the findings have been set forth, a treatment of the critics will follow.

The fundamental supposition maintained by Benedict was that the Japanese acted in character both in and out of warfare. Through a field trip, observation of the Japanese in their local setting in the most acceptable technique of the cultural anthropologist she could have determined what values the people had, how these were introduced to their children, and how they were accepted and employed by these children. The war, however, made a field trip to Japan impossible. To discover how the daily stresses and strains of life were handled so that she could settle upon the habits which the Japanese shared, she turned to Japanese literature for descriptions of their customs, rituals, and how they were brought up, loved, and disciplined. Because the field trip was

denied her, much of what she reports is so much less valuable in the eyes of several critics. Robert Peel, especially, criticizes her for the study made under such a handicap:

As a result [of this drawback] it has a bookish quality that puts it at a long remove from the realities of present-day Japan. This obvious limitation escapes Dr. Benedict's supposedly trained eye. . . . One must regretfully record of Dr. Benedict, for all the carefulness of her work, that, having seen all, she has seen nothing.¹¹

To supplement what she read and to further substitute for field study in Japan, Benedict settled on observing and interviewing Japanese in this country who had been reared in Japan. Some persons in her study were of Japanese parentage and others were Americans who had grown up in Japan. In addition, Benedict also examined motion pictures which had been produced in Japan--propaganda, historical, and contemporary life movies of Tokyo and the farm villages. Admittedly these movies were an advantage to her study, yet the fact that these sources were not necessarily the most representative movies of their kind is an evident disadvantage to the scientific nature of her work.

Another of Benedict's sources of information was the questioning of Japanese natives who were in the United States at the time of her study and of those who had previously traveled there.

¹¹ Robert Peel, Christian Science Monitor (December 16, 1946), p. 16. The same objection is repeated in an English summary of a criticism by Tetsuro Watsuji in the Japanese Journal of Ethnology, XIV (1949), pp. 84-86.

Benedict states nothing about how these interrogated persons were selected in order to get a truly representative sampling. Here again is questionable methodology.

While it is generally accepted that human behavior is learned in daily living, the methods through which this learning process can be studied in primitive cultures as well as in more modern cultures has caused much discussion and argumentation between anthropologists and sociologists. Among the latter, Robert Bierstedt has outlined a number of limitations under which anthropologists work when they attempt to interpret data on modern complex societies with their anthropological methods. He states:

The first limitation of anthropological methods in sociological research is that, designed as they were for an approach to non-literate societies, they cannot do full justice to societies which are literate. This is, in fact, their principal limitation. . . . An approach which has in general confined itself to the non-literate aspects of culture is likely to be unduly narrow and not altogether free from unintentional bias when applied to societies which, ¹² are distinguished, above all, by their literacy.

Citing particularly Benedict's work, The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, he points out another limitation in the category of causality. For her, analysis of the society as a whole, with its folkways, mores, and institutions, proceeds in terms of psychological processes and concepts. The temperament and character of individuals are given more weight than are historical antecedents

¹²Robert Bierstedt, "The Limitations of Anthropological Methods in Sociology," American Journal of Sociology, LIV (July, 1948), 23.

and events, some of which may have been of momentous consequences, yet are given no consideration.¹³ Benedict maintains that the range of trivial habits in daily living indicate a determining influence upon a nation's future. With this view, Bierstedt is completely at odds. It is more probable, according to him, that a knowledge of foreign folkways and mores, such as exhibited in Benedict's book, could be more influential in affecting a nation's future than would the folkways and mores themselves. Both positions do serve to point up the difficulties and dangers in using one approach only or one perspective only in the analysis of a people.

In similar opposition to Benedict's analysis of a modern culture, sociologists Alfred Lindesmith and Anselm Strauss actually suggest that her methods and conclusions about the Japanese stimulate the growth of skepticism concerning the information which anthropologists have given us about even non-literate peoples. Supporting their position they point out that "undoubtedly the heterogeneity of modern nations, as many of the writers themselves have pointed out, offers a considerable obstacle to the application of present configurational methods."¹⁴ Thus there has been much criticism of cultural anthropologists for their use of techniques used in analysis of primitive cultures which have not been

¹³Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁴Lindesmith and Strauss, ASR, XV, 590.

proven valid when applied to modern societies.

According to Benedict, her task is to discover the total configuration of Japanese cultural patterns, to examine Japanese assumptions about the conduct of life, and to describe these assumptions as they have manifested themselves in all types of activities. The book is not about Japanese religion or economic life or politics or the family. It is about all these things as parts of Japanese cultural configurations which indicate core values.

CHAPTER III

DOUGLAS G. HARING'S STUDY

Benedict's studies were made in this country because of World War II. Long before that Douglas G. Haring was able to make his anthropological investigations as a direct observer of the Japanese people. From 1917-1926 he lived, studied, and worked with the Japanese.¹ The role of the direct observer, according to cultural anthropologists, is a coveted position for learning the habits of any ethnic group. In order to delineate their peculiar culture, he observes his subjects in their natural setting, observing their seemingly insignificant activities and the training they give their young.

There had been considerable American interest awakened in national character studies of enemy nations in World War II. The studies aimed at gaining knowledge of enemy ways of living and thinking in order to increase the advantage in warfare. In con-

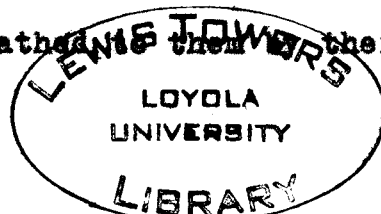
¹Haring, "Aspects of Personal Character in Japan," Personal Character, p. 415. Haring received his B.S. from Colgate U. in 1914, a B.D. from Rochester Theological Seminary in 1923, a diploma from the Japanese Language and Culture School, Tokyo, in 1925, and an A.M. from Columbia in 1923. He was a lecturer of sociology at Columbia, 1926-27, a member of the faculty at Syracuse U. since 1927, the chairman of the departments of sociology and anthropology since 1957, and did field research in the Ryukyu Islands in Japan, 1951-52.

junction with this wartime interest Haring published his research work on the Japanese people. Of his two articles to be considered here, the first² deals with the pre-war Japanese people, and his second³ amplifies his observations on the post-war Japanese.

In his former article, Haring recognizes as the key to the Japanese character their respect for the Emperor--the aim of all education. Ramifications of this insight are throughout delineated with confirmatory details.

He emphatically denies that the feudalistic mentality of the Japanese has ever ceased. The pre-war Japanese employee cherishes the same ideas as his ancestors concerning filial respect for the Emperor. The factory employee's self-concept is not that of a mere machine operator. He is a samurai in armor, brandishing his two swords in the face of Japan's enemies.

The Japanese believe, Haring states, that they have the optimum in ability. They are confident that they can encounter, for example, Marx and Tolstoi and not in any way be found inferior to them. Nothing the world outside has to offer, they feel, could possibly excel that which has been bequeathed to them by their Japanese ancestors.



²Haring, "Comment on Japanese Personal Character: Pre War," Personal Character, pp. 405-410. This article, written in 1943 about Japan before the war, is part of Haring's larger work, Blood on the Rising Sun (Philadelphia, 1943), pp. 22-25, 68-75, 125-126.

³Haring, "Aspects of Personal Character in Japan," Personal Character, p. 412-423.

For generations feudal morality meant unquestioned obedience, personal loyalty to one's superior, and frugality. These qualities are required by feudal lords in all their subjects. When feudal rights and titles were abolished, the Emperor replaced the overlord as the object of all obedience, loyalty, and self-denial.

Thus a young man may be getting \$2500 in Japan, working in a government position. Subsequently he is offered \$25,000 for the very same job but by the Dutch government in Java. There is no point in deliberating here. He refuses immediately. Money has no value when so much more is at stake, for he will lose his own and his wife's social and civic standing if he were employed by the Dutch government. Given a feudal mentality, political status is of greater importance than any increase in salary.

Other examples cited by Haring point up the people's attitude toward civil authority. Authority, be it found in the Emperor or in someone duly receiving it from him, can do no wrong. Authority receives respect, and the most formal reverence is required in all dealings with it. Haring believes Japan remains feudal at heart and the Emperor and his subordinates feel their obligations to each other in reciprocal payment for obligations incurred.⁴

Haring, in his appraisal of the Japanese personal character has pointed to what he calls the four souls of every Japanese. To

⁴ Haring, "Comment on Japanese Personal Character: Pre-War," Personal Character, p. 410.

close his character study he outlines these four souls which, if found balanced in an individual, will result in a well-ordered disposition. When, however, one of these predominates, it governs the total disposition and activity.

The first of these is the nagi-mitama or gentle spirit. When this is in ascendancy, a person is polite, kind, and friendly. A poet, scholar, or saint manifest, according to Haring, the supernatural potency of this gentle spirit.

About the kushi-mitama or wonder spirit, Haring points out that it is that quality in a person which looks to possible changes in things, can speculate about possible happenings, and makes a person more reflective than ordinary.

The third type of soul is the ara-mitama or rough, violent spirit. When this is aroused, one gives way to temper and uncontrolled fury. An intractable rebel or a successful traitor is thought to possess a rough spirit of more than natural violence. This soul in him predominates and governs his external activity.

The last soul is saki-mitama or luck spirit. Haring maintains that the Japanese believe their fondest hopes come true when the luck spirit is in the ascendancy.

In his second article, Haring mentions that cessation of hostilities has opened the way for research in Germany and Japan in particular. Having these people under their jurisdiction, Americans are required to know the mentality and emotional habits of their wards. This article deals largely with former studies

made on the Japanese which were anthropological-psychoanalytic. He evaluates these studies in the light of his own impressions from personal residence in Japan. In particular Haring deals with studies made by Gorer, Meadow, Benedict, Parsons, and LaBarre. These authors agree that the unique aspects of any society are determined by emotional habits learned in infancy. This is why child-training practices, noted and studied, are so important. A variety of socially-important habits are learned before the infant talks. These continue throughout life vague and unconscious. Sometimes the adult feels that certain types of social situations are congenial and feels at home with them, while in other situations he is ill at ease. According to these authors, he has developed from an early age unconscious criteria of social and cultural choice.⁵ After infancy one indeed goes on learning and acquiring new tastes. But, according to these analysts, one's pre-linguistic habits maintain a subtle primacy, because they are buried beyond the reach of self-conscious analysis.

Another major element that Haring says these analysts have found is that of deep feelings of correctness and wickedness in conduct and in personal relationships. These gain force from the circumstance that they were learned at an age of maximum organic vigor and security. Whatever persists in organic habit from that

⁵Haring, "Aspects of Personal Character in Japan," Personal Character, p. 414.

period of one's life when learning seems to be at its optimum acquires symbolic values. These symbolic values are often dramatized in folklore and mythology. These analysts indicate that one's ideal constellation of persons and conduct is a result of a complex of emotional compulsions that impel him to seek a social milieu whose feeling-tone approximates the world of his infancy. On this Haring concurs. The child will tend to reproduce faithfully in the second generation an exact copy of the attitudes of his father towards his family and friends. This will be true unless some social fracture in the family relationship precludes formation of a father image. Thus the unconscious teaching parents give their children before the children are able to speak is profoundly important.

These authors further assert, he finds, that the individual seeks to establish within the social order personal relations that are congruent with the feeling-patterns established in his infancy. If a child is reared in a family where there an autocratic system prevails, he will produce the same in his own adult life whenever he is in a position to do so. If his life has been in a democratic milieu, he will reproduce democratic institutions in adulthood.

Having summarized the contributions of these authors, Haring reminds us that almost without exception the contributors were handicapped by lack of first-hand experience in Japan. Their data have come from books about Japan, from biographies of Japanese, from Japanese cinema, from issei and nisei (first and second gener-

ation Japanese now living in the United States), from experience in internment centers, and from Japanese literature and school-books.

Haring then proceeds to carry out his second purpose, that of evaluating the contributions of the analysts by comparing them with his own residual impressions from personal residence in Japan.

Beyond any doubt, according to Haring's observation, the period of infancy is a period of indulgence. This is especially true for boys. They are over-fed, over-fondled, and over-cared for. There seems to be an almost uninterrupted bodily contact in the infant life of the Japanese. The child is never left alone in his bed, and during the daytime the child in Japan is strapped to its mother's back, asleep or awake, while the mother goes about her family and household duties.

Haring found, as did Benedict, that the infant is weaned when a sibling is expected by his mother. At this time the Japanese infant abruptly loses his warm, secure world of bodily contact with the mother. The experience is repeated when he begins to walk. From then on he learns the taboo quite prevalent in Japan of not touching others. This learning is so complete, Haring tells us, that foreigners have come away from Japan with the verdict that the Japanese society is cold and formal.

At this point, when deprived of his mother's breast, he is also deprived of genital manipulation previously administered by mother or nursemaid. Haring lists taboos concerned with living in

Japanese houses--further restrictions placed upon young Japanese. The frailty of Japanese house structure requires such extraordinary childhood inhibition. The growing child must even learn to avoid dividing lines separating the straw floor-mats. He must always avoid the place of honor reserved in the guest room.

Toys, for the youngster, are in line with Japanese frugality. The toys are few and the child must learn to make the most of a limited range of play activities. This may bear relation to psychological developments in their later life, but the exact lines of such are not drawn by Haring.

The strict forms of etiquette are imposed on the Japanese child from his first steps. Bowing epitomizes the respect he must show his parents. Upon returning from school he must make the necessary bows to father and mother and recite the formulas proper to coming home or going out.

Haring points out that to psychologists the drastic change from affection and body contact to cold bowing and formalistic salutation involves personality traumata, with consequences disruptive of later adult emotional life.⁶ In any event, in Haring's opinion, frustration results, even for the youngster. The child's response to such frustration is often the temper tantrum. Tantrums of Japanese boys are usually expressed toward animals and women. Mothers accept verbal and physical abuses from their sons.

⁶Ibid., p. 417.

Girls, on the other hand, are not allowed any freedom to express this frustration. They are promptly suppressed in these efforts, if they should dare.

Another aspect of infantile frustration, Haring found, appeared in the feelings of adolescent or adult males toward their own bodies. Here Haring's psychological bent is noticeable. The adolescent male finds in sex a symbol of frustrated aggression and a longing for dominance. Often behavior is tinged with sadistic violence. Sometimes a fierce obscenity is found among Japanese schoolboys. Homosexuality, contempt for wives, and sexual mutilation of helpless enemies are the accepted alleviation for such frustrations. All these were observed personally by Haring.

An individual's mistakes, when known by those outside the family circle, expose the entire family to ridicule. As a result, Haring states, children learn to fear outsiders and to cringe at the merest hint of ridicule. The child, then, is placed in a position of increasingly tense insecurity. This is an oddity of the family system in Japan. Before too long the child finds that open affection and mutual confidence are not forthcoming within the family. He finds himself responsible to a group in which he feels no real psychological security.

Haring states that the approved pattern of masculine personality in Japan is narcissistic and auto-erotic. This phase of the people's psychological development is the result of early experiences. The female in Japan is relegated to an inferior place, so

mutuality in love is excluded. The prostitute caters to the male narcissism and auto-eroticism. A man's wife is but a mechanism for perpetuating the family. To the Japanese, life is worthless and may be discarded; other persons are of no value; love is obscene and is of no enduring consequence. To Haring such attitudes symbolize the repudiation of sex and consequently of the value of the human body.

Haring maintains that analysis of Japanese personal character must include a compulsive preoccupation with small objects. He suggests that "perhaps this compulsion symbolizes the lost pleasures of infancy that centered in the manipulation of a highly interesting 'little thing' by mother or nursemaid."⁷ Other details of Japanese daily living have significance for the psychoanalyst, such as the near-pathological persistence and conscientiousness of most Japanese, the self-righteous fanaticism and arrogance typical of narcissistic persons, and the effects of the taboo against touching others.

Euro-Americans have thought that the Japanese were neurotic. Wartime studies of Japanese personality have indicated neurotic traits. Haring reports that such resemblances may be superficial, according to many anthropologists. They likewise believe that tradition imposes upon individuals habits resembling those of

⁷Ibid., p. 419.

Occidental neurotics without development of the inner conflicts in which true neuroses arise. The evidence that is accessible, however, favors the conclusion that genuine neurosis occurs far more frequently in Japanese society than in many other societies. Genuine neurosis involves inner conflict, misery, and social maladjustment. This is the situation reported from Japan.

Haring then delimits hypothesis areas that he believes need further verification. Certain questions need yet to be answered. Are the patterns of personal development here suggested universal? What other patterns of personal character appear, and what is their statistical frequency of occurrence? Present knowledge is inadequate, spotty, unverified, non-specific, and preclude generalization. He further suggests that most of our knowledge suffers from wartime bias.⁸

If an anthropologist wishes to go to Japan, Haring warns, he should be prepared to remain a long time there and not be anxious to leave after a few months of investigation. Only then will he really learn something of the people and be in a position to verify his hypothetical assumptions. Haring also believes that research into Japanese mentality should be cooperative and organized on a definite plan. He believes that personnel for such a group to study this mentality should be selected from anthropologists familiar with Japan and her history, psychologists and psychoanalysts, and sociologists.

⁸Ibid., p. 422.

CHAPTER IV

WESTON LA BARRE'S STUDY

National character studies in method and objective have tended to be sociological, anthropological, psychological, and socio-psychological. In these interdisciplinary studies each discipline contributes perspectives that clarify national character profiles. Clinical psychology has contributed to this interdisciplinary field, and Dr. Weston LaBarre¹ has made a contribution representative of this field which has offered data previously unknown to those of other branches of national character study.

Honigmann has pointed out that the theory underlying research in culture and personality comes from several realms of knowledge but particularly from psychology and psychiatry. To deal with facts of personality in group situations the student must be familiar with already discovered laws, hypotheses, concepts, and assumptions concerning human behavior.² The relationship between the sciences is clear and LaBarre's contribution is significant as

¹ LaBarre received his A.B. degree from Princeton University in 1933 and his Ph.D. degree from Yale University in 1937. Direct observation in the relocation camp forms the basis for his statements on Japanese national character. His study was published in Psychiatry, VIII (August, 1945), pp. 319-342, and its title is "Some Observations on Character Structure in the Orient: The Japanese."

² Honigmann, p. 71.

noted in the first chapter of this thesis.

The methodology used by LaBarre was that used by all clinical psychologists of his residence and research among the internees at the Central Utah Project, War Relocation Authority, Topaz, Utah, in 1943. The subjects of LaBarre's study were primarily of issei, or first generation aliens, and kibei, those who have visited and returned from Japan. The second generation nisei were thought to be too thoroughly Americanized for valid inferential purposes.³

The findings of LaBarre are outlined in the article under definite headings. However, an initial general statement sets the tenor of the rest of the article. LaBarre tells us that "the Japanese are probably the most compulsive people in the world ethnological museum."⁴

LaBarre tells us that the clinical analysts have shown that in the psycho-genesis of the compulsive picture, the crucial trauma is at the anal level of development. There is only a possibility of traumata at the oral level.⁵ Many authors put the oral stage of development from birth to the end of the first year and the anal stage from the beginning of the second year to the

³LaBarre, Psychiatry, VIII, 326. Lindesmith and Strauss, "A Critique of Culture-Personality Writings," American Sociological Review, XV (October 1950), p. 596, using the evidence of Harold Orlansky, severely criticize LaBarre's methodology.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

end of the fourth year.

LaBarre also believes that the compulsive character is thus largely the product of severity or cruelty during the period of cleanliness training, in which the child is forced to relinquish primary gratifications and to take on culturally colored conditioning of the sphincter muscles.⁶

LaBarre's findings demonstrate some twenty expressions of the basic compulsive personality. The characteristics of this type of personality occur, LaBarre tells us, "with great consistency in typical Japanese character structure."⁷ The statement of his findings is accompanied by his psychological explanations, which are generally in terms of child-training practices.

Secretiveness in the hiding of emotions and attitudes, LaBarre states, is the first characteristic noted by Americans of the Japanese people. Appealing to psychoanalysis, LaBarre says that those trained in this field report extreme politeness in the Japanese which is a reaction-formation against repressed hostile aggressiveness. Overtones of hostility in extreme politeness have also been recognized. This reaction is expressed in the varying grades of the Japanese honorific language. The basic function of Japanese politeness is to use the conventional to mask the real in emotions. For the compulsive Japanese, there is little immediate

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 327.

externalizing of feelings. This is especially true of their aggressive feelings.

It is likewise characteristic of the Japanese to guard preservation and persistency in their lives. The Japanese fight to the bitter end, even in the face of certain defeat and destruction. This has been authenticated in their previous history. Japanese soldiers go through a period of indoctrination in which each is taught that he is symbolically dead when he leaves his country. As he may permit himself neither retreat nor departure in battle, his only way out is physical death.

LaBarre recognizes this facet of their behavior to be due to their fundamental compulsive characteristic of always completing any undertaking once begun.

The Japanese are found to be extremely conscientious. LaBarre claims that rigid standards of discipline and performance in the compulsive and conscientious person are the result of severe conditioning during the period of toilet training. Mothers force their children to conform to standards of sphincter training in such wise that the children generalize this sensitivity to other behavioral areas.

The Japanese child is nursed until another child is expected by the mother. Temper tantrums are the result of this displacement from an over-indulged babyhood. At this time the father gives greater attention to the child. Fathers never seem to tire of being with their very young children. A love for the father

grows in the child while the mother has been training the child by weaning and toilet-training. As a result, towards herself the mother engenders only hostility. Any real or symbolic revolt, however, against parental authority is quite unthinkable.

Another quality of the compulsive personality is his self-righteousness. It is believed that from a conscious sense of successful, but sometimes difficult, obedience to a tyrannical superego or conscience, the ego feels it has earned the right to its unassailable sense of correctness and probity. The superego is not questioned as to its existence or function, but remains psychologically unassailable.

A tendency to project attitudes is another expression of this personality. This is done to save the self-righteousness. "To retain one's feelings of self-righteousness intact," says LaBarre, "it is often necessary to repudiate, to 'excrete,' or get rid of, motives which, if conscious, would not be sanctioned by the super-ego."⁸ This is commonly done through the projection mechanism.

The ego's common sense may sometimes obscurely question the extravagances of the superego. LaBarre calls fanaticism the product of this struggle against a sadistic superego. He explains that unless the conditions of reality allow a certain balance to the compulsive, the strain will increase to such a degree that there is manic flight from the hounding of one's conscience. If

⁸Ibid., p. 330.

this does not come about, then a total abdication of the ego to the superego will take place and there will be a turning inward upon the self of the built-up aggressiveness. Conflict would be too simple a term for this aspect of personality. A self-destructive punishment, even suicide, is common in the latter phase of this reaction.

Arrogance, another facet of the compulsive, LaBarre finds to come from mixed origins. There seems to be partial identification with the self-image. In this, one takes pride since it should represent a certain superiority. However, there is a certain reaction-formation of arrogance built against one's own feelings of inferiority. This latter phase, the inferiority complex, is quite common in the Japanese personality.

The characteristic of "touchiness," LaBarre calls it, can be understood in view of the fact that an easily affronted pride argues to a weak and insecure ego. In such compulsive personality the ego is weak by reason of its frequent defeats in the hands of the overly-powerful and sadistic superego. Ceremonial suicide, or hara-kiri, has as its basis the desire for a spectacular revenge against a sense of outraged "face." The Japanese cannot allow anything to interfere with their self-concept. Whenever any object threatens the security of this concept, there is premeditated warfare organized to defend the waning loss of face.

Preciseness is a further quality attributed to the Japanese. LaBarre reports that it has shown itself in the manner in which

the nation has changed in a mere matter of decades from a medieval feudal agricultural society to the only important industrial nation in the Eastern hemisphere. The Japanese have a tremendous natural drive which, when allowed to express itself, has accomplished tremendous feats. What they have accomplished has been done with precision and perfectionism.

A further index of the compulsive personality is notable cleanliness. LaBarre finds the Japanese to be almost fanatical in their neatness and ritualistic cleanliness. Visitors to Japan remark how neat and clean are the Japanese dwellings. Even the poorest of people there look forward to at least a weekly bath. LaBarre attributes this to childhood conditioning in cleanliness patterns. Even though the Japanese baby may be allowed great freedom and is given almost every comfort, he is never allowed to disturb the order and cleanliness of his surroundings. Not only does their care for cleanliness extend to their persons and their surroundings, but even to symbolic lengths in their religion. Shinto is a ritual of purification.

As early as six months after birth the Japanese infant is forcibly taught how to make proper bows of respect. Before he is a year old he has been taught how to sit quite stiffly on his haunches. The Japanese people are extremely ceremonious. The ramifications of this quality are far-reaching, LaBarre states. The child is taught to hide any thoughts of ill-feeling and to express outwardly only remarks that conform to respect and polite-

ness.

The ceremoniousness peculiar to the Japanese reaches its height in the no plays and in the famous chanoyu or tea ceremony. It is sufficient to relate that the ceremoniousness of the Japanese in social intercourse, according to LaBarre, is one of the most salient factors which go to make up their character.

Since the Japanese are respectful and are taught from an early age to obey authority, conformity to rule is one of their chief attributes. Both in and out of school, children learn to obey by means of sanction. Japanese children learn to fear ridicule and as they have a highly developed sense of "touchiness" in this regard, they are afraid to do anything which will bring ridicule to them or their family name. Behind the fear of "losing face" is the fear of ridicule and ostracism. They are always scrupulous in avoiding ridicule arising from actions made in public which are contrary to custom.

The term parentalism is a word coined by LaBarre which he uses to contrast a concept of parent-centered living with the sibling organization of society in Britain, America, and Russia. Parentalism he describes as a "carry-over" into social structure of the emotional and power-constellations of the individual parent-centered family.⁹ In Japan this parentalism is quite explicit and is noticed in many forms of Japanese living. The whole plan

⁹Ibid., p. 334.

of education is based on this parentalism--in obeying commands of teachers and in carrying out assignments under the watchful eye of the parent who gives the teacher his status of authority. A school child caught doing anything out of the ordinary has been thereby disobedient to the teacher, and deserves to be scorned or ignored by his classmates. These facts are important when one considers the compulsive Japanese character. This type of personality, LaBarre says, is shaped by punishment for any and all activity which has been non-conformist in character.

LaBarre informs us that in no way should it be understood that such a compulsive personality is completely passive and shows no signs of aggression. The aggression is unmistakably there. LaBarre proceeds to demonstrate the expression of this aggression.

The compulsive character has two ways of expressing his tension. He may do so in a manic or a depressive behavior. LaBarre believes that, given a sadistic superego, the Japanese often do not fly from the tension felt, but rather give total surrender to the tyrannical superego.¹⁰

Successful revolt against a father-figure is completely unheard of because of rigidly-instilled reverence for authority and parental jurisdiction. LaBarre cites, however, two sadistic and two masochistic expressions of the stored-up affect. The sadistic might be designated as male dominance or terrorism; the masochistic

¹⁰Ibid., p. 335.

might be designated as hypochondriasis and suicide.

The Japanese male baby is forbidden all aggression against his male authority-figures. On the other hand, the male baby is allowed to shower his mother and sisters with insults and physical injury. By the age of four he has learned that it is quite permissible to get rid of pent-up emotions by expressing dislike in the forms of striking, biting, and kicking upon females. The male commands; the despised female world must obey.

LaBarre sees the relationship between this dominance of the male over the female and the Japanese dominance over weaker, hence "inferior," peoples. This is evidenced in the Japanese treatment of Koreans and the well-authenticated "rape of Nanking."¹¹

It is likewise true, according to LaBarre, that the Japanese is reluctant to "stick out his neck" in public. He compulsively needs the cloak of public conformity and approval. However, if a person knows that the group holds him in darkness and anonymity, he vents his aggression in some form or other. This is what LaBarre has termed terrorism. Incidents are cited of attacks at night in the Topaz Relocation Center. Terroristic methods in killing are not uncommon in Japan. But terrorism, as a psychological technique, has its own severe self-limitations. In some Japanese it is found that they are deeply frightened by the unaccustomed violence of their inhibited aggression, for they expect their

¹¹ Ibid., p. 336.

victims to be as frightened as they are by it.

The masochistic expression of Japanese inhibited aggression takes either of two forms, suicide or hypochondriasis. The latter is the symbolic equivalent of the former. LaBarre says that if his compulsion diagnosis is valid, then the explanation for Japanese suicide is relatively simple. Due to the respect for the father-figure engendered in every Japanese from infancy, the father-figure with all his tyranny is symbolically unassailable. It would then follow that one of the theoretically possible mechanisms could be a turning back masochistically upon the self of the aggression. The mild form of this is self-depreciation and the more severe form is the self-punishment of hypochondriasis. The most severe form, of course, of this depressive masochism is suicide.

Cases are cited by LaBarre for the purpose of acquainting his Western readers with the incidence of suicide among the Japanese. American marines saw and reported these incidences of suicide during the war. Some Japanese took their own lives in a ceremonious manner, completely incredible to American eyes.

LaBarre realizes full well that the situation in the Topaz camp was quite artificial. Nonetheless, the magnified importance of the health center, and especially of the kitchen and diet schedule, grew daily in the minds of the interned Japanese. A previously existing semi-religious health cult, the Seicho-no-ive, enjoyed a vigorous revival in the camp. It was a Christian Sci-

ence group whose central aim was not salvation or immortality or an ethical code, but health. A number of other cults also rose up which reflected the masochistic behavior among neurotics in the camp. But lest one think such hypochondriasis exists only in the Japanese-American War Relocation camps, LaBarre reports that this masochistic expression is likewise found in the cultural life of Japanese in their own country. Several advertisements are cited from Japanese newspapers to reveal this characteristic. One typical advertisement reads:

SIX-CHARACTER MEDICINE: This medicine is prepared from gall of a rare animal and herbs and barks of trees highly curable character properly mixed. "The Six-Character Medicine" is mainly good for the following diseases: Food-poisoning, morning after, heat-stroke, belly-ache, vomiting, less urine, tooth-ache, lumbago, head-ache, constipation, moist cough, alcoholic poisoning, neutralization of poisons, crying at night, teeth-grinding and others.¹²

The diseases, says LaBarre, which were chosen for cure are not without their psychiatric significance.

Suspiciousness, also noted by LaBarre, is due to one's own unconscious hostility. The Japanese spy system during the war was widely known. Jealousy and envy, to name two more, are fortified by the sharp contrast between the suckling Japanese child and the recently-weaned toddler who now must take second place to the new-born sibling.

LaBarre states that it is characteristic of the compulsive to

¹²Ibid., p. 339.

have a very unstable and variable sense of self-worth. This is due very often to the changing tides of the struggle between the ego and the superego.

It is noticed in Japanese poetry, their drama, and art that the people of Japan are pedantic to the point that their care for minutiae and formalism is detrimental to the art-form expressed. The tea ceremony and the theory and practice of flower arrangement are elaborately pedantic also. The meticulousness of Japanese art is scarcely rivalled in the East. Psychologically this is quite consistent, LaBarre maintains, with the compulsive nature of the people and their preoccupation with little things.

Sentimentality is essentially a masquerading of stereotyped rehearsed affection, according to LaBarre. It is notable too that there is a narrow range in which the Japanese may express their sentiment. They may do so at the cherry-blossom festivals or at the chrysanthemum-viewing parties. Spontaneous feeling one may enjoy when alone, but expression of sentimentality is displayed for the approval of an audience. It is in the latter expression that the sadist takes particular delight.

The final characteristic cited by LaBarre in delineating the compulsive character of the Japanese people is their love of scatological obscenity and anal sexuality. Japanese jokes are more often of the bathroom than of the bedroom. Scatological humor is, according to LaBarre, a permitted aggression upon taboos that are of a traumatic nature; and, in another sense, a return of the re-

pressed pleasure itself. The latter is permitted because it is "only in fun." This is LaBarre's explanation.

Thus LaBarre delineates the Japanese compulsive character. The monolithic nature of their activity is both amazing and satisfying to LaBarre. If the concept of a compulsive personality is drawn correctly, then the Japanese people as a nation possess all its qualities. It is the compulsive personality that is the national character of the Japanese.

CHAPTER V

THE CONSISTENCIES AND INCONSISTENCIES IN THE THREE STUDIES COMPARISON -- RESOLUTION

Previous chapters have analyzed the work of each author individually. The present chapter discusses similarities and divergencies found in (1) basic explanations of specific findings of the three authors, (2) child-training practices considered in the studies, (3) adolescent and adult personality characteristics, (4) problems of methodology, and, finally, (5) conclusions and generalizations. The analysis will respect both the agreements and discrepancies found in the three studies.

Benedict's study fundamentally is a delineation of adult behavioral patterns that center around the three core concepts of self-gratification, self-indulgence, and on paid to the Emperor, ancestors, and acquaintances. All ramifications of these are explained in terms of antecedent child-training procedures.

Haring shows in his summary of studies of other analysts that they explain personality characteristics by child-training practices. His explanation of what he himself found in Japan is also formulated in terms of child-training.

LaBarre's major insight into the Japanese character is its compulsiveness. Not every characteristic of this personality is explained by LaBarre in terms of child-training practices. But

LaBarre's alternative explanations can in turn be easily traced to early training practices.

The similarity in the explanations above can easily be seen. Almost every finding or personality characteristic is interpreted as one or other aspect of Japanese child-training practices. The authors may not ascribe the same proximate explanation for any given adult personality characteristic, but they look to child-training practice for an understanding of remote causation.

Ten child-training practices are listed in the three authors. Benedict¹ and Haring² both mention that infancy is the period of indulgence, and that only later are restrictions imposed. The fact that boys are given greater attention than girls throughout their childhood and teen-age years is observed by both Benedict³ and Haring.⁴ All three authors note that the time of weaning takes place when a sibling is expected.⁵ Benedict⁶ and Haring⁷ point out that walking is usually imposed on the child after its first year. The epitome of respect for parents is bowing, which

¹ See above, p. 23.

² See above, p. 38.

³ See above, p. 25.

⁴ See above, p. 38.

⁵ See above, pp. 22, 38, and 46.

⁶ See above, p. 22.

⁷ See above, p. 38.

is unanimously attested to by the authors.⁸ That the mother is the object of the child's temper tantrums is also noted by all three authors.⁹ This phenomenon is true of both sexes while very young; but once the children should know better, girls are not allowed to express their frustrations in this way, even though the boy is permitted to do so. Benedict¹⁰ and Haring¹¹ both comment on this. All three authors say that at a very early age the child is taught to fear ridicule.¹² The toilet-training practices as part of child training are briefly alluded to by Benedict.¹³ Haring¹⁴ observes the rigid toilet-training and comments on scatological interpretations of personality, to which some authors devote much time. LaBarre¹⁵ on this point speaks of a demanding and severe conditioning during the period of toilet-training. He

⁸See above, pp. 17, 39, and 49.

⁹See above, pp. 23, 39, and 47.

¹⁰See above, p. 25.

¹¹See above, p. 40.

¹²See above, pp. 25, 40, and 47.

¹³See above, p. 22.

¹⁴Haring, "Aspects of Personal Character in Japan," Personal Character, p. 416.

¹⁵See above, pp. 45-46.

agrees with Gorer's¹⁶ observations on this aspect of Japanese training. Respect for the Emperor is remarked by all three of the authors;¹⁷ and, finally, proper sitting position is cited by Benedict¹⁸ and LaBarre¹⁹ as being learned at a very early age. Thus the authors approach a unity in observance and explanation of Japanese practices in child training.

Later personality characteristics, however, while observed by more than one author, are not explained uniformly by each. In thirteen instances they offer divergent explanations for basically the same phenomenon.

Compulsiveness with small objects, according to Haring,²⁰ is a typical Japanese characteristic. He sees this as a symbol of lost pleasures of infancy which centered in the manipulation of a highly interesting "little thing" by mother or nursemaid. But LaBarre²¹ maintains this compulsiveness should be traced back to a crucial trauma at the anal or oral level of development. For

¹⁶ LaBarre makes reference on p. 329 of his study to Gorer's work which was at the time of LaBarre's writing unknown to him, yet it was given attention in Time magazine in the August 7, 1944, issue.

¹⁷ See above, pp. 16, 33, and 49.

¹⁸ See above, p. 23.

¹⁹ See above, p. 49.

²⁰ See above, p. 41.

²¹ See above, p. 44.

LaBarre compulsiveness is the product of severity or cruelty during the period of cleanliness training of sphincter muscles. Indeed, all the authors agree that compulsiveness is a Japanese trait; they do not agree on the training practice which has been its cause.

The characteristic of extreme politeness, according to Benedict,²² is taught the child in its first years when told to "take his proper station" in relation to the Emperor, parents, brothers, and sisters. From the time the baby is carried about on its mother's back, it learns respect for others as she bows to acknowledge them. Benedict maintains these bows are not simply formalistic and unconscious, but a deliberate recognition of the hierarchy of sex and generation. Haring,²³ however, attributes this extreme politeness to a basically feudalistic mentality. When given to the Emperor, this politeness is a key concept in understanding the Japanese character. Haring sees this as the aim of all Japanese education. But LaBarre,²⁴ who offers a psychoanalytic explanation, contends that it is a reaction formation against repressed hostile aggressiveness. Overtones of hostility have been noted in this extreme politeness whose function is to hide feelings of hostility behind honorific language. Here again the same characteristic is

²²See above, p. 16.

²³See above, p. 34.

²⁴See above, p. 45.

recognized by the authors, but is explained differently by each.

Benedict and Haring disagree in their explanation of the Japanese people's attitude toward sex in general. Benedict²⁵ says that sex, just as any other human phenomenon, is regarded as good in its minor place in life. Married men may take mistresses; this is good and not at all incongruous with affection for their families. Even the early life of the Japanese child is found to have considerable freedom in terms of masturbation and genital manipulation. Geishas teach the young men how to make love.²⁶ Haring,²⁷ on the contrary, states that to the Japanese life is worthless and may be discarded and love is obscene and of no enduring consequence. To Haring these attitudes symbolize the repudiation of sex and the value of the human body. Clearly Benedict and Haring disagree here on the place of sex in the Japanese hierarchy of values. This is one of the few findings made by the analysts whose explanation involves such contradictory differences of opinion.

Homosexual behavior, according to Benedict,²⁸ has been condoned in Japan. It is consonant with the principle of self-gratification, which Benedict maintains is the second key concept in

²⁵See above, p. 19.

²⁶See above, p. 25.

²⁷See above, p. 41.

²⁸See above, p. 19.

understanding the Japanese character. Furthermore, because the Japanese place an extraordinary value on physical pleasure, Haring sees in homosexual activity a reaction to infantile frustration.²⁹ According to his explanation the adolescent Japanese male finds sex a symbol of frustrated aggression and desire for dominance. In Japan homosexuality is the accepted mode of alleviating such frustration, he says. Benedict and Haring thus explain Japanese homosexuality differently.

It is basic, too, that the Japanese male has a contempt for his wife. During adolescence, Benedict³⁰ points out, girls learn their role in marriage is that of a faithful wife, while her husband may openly indulge in extra-marital relations. The wife at this time, however, is not allowed this freedom, but may instead turn to the socially accepted forms of female masturbation. According to Haring,³¹ the approved pattern of masculine behavior in Japan is auto-erotic or narcissistic. He believes that this phase of male development is the natural outcome of early child-training experiences. Because the female is relegated to an inferior place in Japan, mutuality in love is naturally excluded. A man's wife is but a necessary link in the perpetuation of his family. In

²⁹ See above, p. 40.

³⁰ See above, p. 25.

³¹ See above, p. 40.

this case there is general similarity in the reasoning of Benedict and Haring.

The Japanese throughout their history show perseverance in their undertakings to the point of compulsiveness. LaBarre³² says this is an expression of their determination which he finds basic to the personality. Both Benedict³³ and Haring³⁴ point to this persistence in the way the Japanese, though unfaithful to their wives, doggedly maintain the externals of family structure. The outward faithfulness merely satisfies accepted customs, which, if violated, would cause loss of face and subsequent ridicule from family and friends. The social disapproval that comes to an unfaithful husband or wife arises from national custom and is not related to any phase of child-training.

However the Japanese are exceptionally conscientious. LaBarre³⁵ sees here a reflection of rigid standards of discipline and performance. These are traced to harsh toilet-training practices. Haring³⁶ contends that this conscientiousness is near-pathological in nature; however, he does not specifically relate it to severe toilet-training.

³²See above, p. 46.

³³See above, p. 25.

³⁴See above, p. 40.

³⁵See above, p. 46.

³⁶See above, p. 41.

LaBarre³⁷ interprets Japanese fanaticism in terms of a struggle against a sadistic superego. If the struggle should happen to be too great, it results in manic flight. Self-destructive punishment--even suicide--is common in the later phases of this reaction, LaBarre states. Haring,³⁸ however, remarks that the fanaticism of the Japanese is self-righteous. Yet knowing his own limitations, Haring points out that this characteristic is highly significant to the psychoanalyst, though he himself refrains from any explanation.

Arrogance is singled out by LaBarre³⁹ as another characteristic of the Japanese that comes from mixed origins. He says it is a partial identification with the self-image and also is a reaction-formation built against one's own feelings of inferiority. Haring,⁴⁰ again, while mentioning it, can offer no direct explanation.

In her treatment of Japanese toilet-training practices Benedict⁴¹ insists on adult cleanliness as having important ramifications in many phases of Japanese life. Haring⁴² also, in explaining the significance of toilet-training practices, shows how

³⁷ See above, p. 47.

³⁸ See above, p. 41.

³⁹ See above, p. 48.

⁴⁰ See above, p. 42.

⁴¹ See above, p. 22.

⁴² See above, p. 38.

this principle of cleanliness is instilled into the child for life. LaBarre⁴³ explains this Japanese characteristic by childhood conditioning in cleanliness patterns. Even though in childhood the Japanese child is allowed much freedom and indulgence, he is never allowed to violate cleanliness of his body or surroundings. This same fact is attested to be both Benedict⁴⁴ and Haring.⁴⁵ LaBarre remarks further that Shinto, so prevalent in Japan, is a ritual of purification, which shows how the cleanliness principle has made its way even into the moral lives of the people. Benedict, Haring, and LaBarre here agree in their findings and explanations.

As to the expression of childhood emotion, Benedict⁴⁶ emphasizes that self-indulgence is allowed children towards the mother, yet is prohibited toward the father and other authority-figures. Haring,⁴⁷ too, points out that temper tantrums are permitted the male child toward the mother alone. Girls, on the other hand, must simply suppress such emotions. LaBarre⁴⁸ observes that the Japanese male baby is forbidden all aggression against his male

⁴³See above, p. 49.

⁴⁴See above, p. 24.

⁴⁵See above, p. 38.

⁴⁶See above, p. 23.

⁴⁷See above, p. 39.

⁴⁸See above, p. 52.

authority figures. By the age of four the child knows he can loose all his pent-up emotions upon his mother. Toward all females he indulges in various forms of kicking, biting, and striking. All three authors here agree that these attitudes toward the parents are ingrained quite early in the Japanese children.

A preoccupation with small objects is a Japanese characteristic noted by Haring.⁴⁹ He says they are almost compulsive in this and suggests that perhaps it symbolizes lost pleasures of childhood, such as genital manipulation. LaBarre⁵⁰ notes this same characteristic in the rigid conventions followed by the Japanese in their poetry, drama, flower arrangements, tea ceremonies. All of these involve rigid concern for minutiae and small objects. He explains the characteristic by saying it may be attributed to the complexity of the people's psychological make-up. Because of the vagueness of LaBarre's explanation, it is difficult to judge whether Haring and he disagree or agree.

The ceremonious nature of the people is attributed by Benedict⁵¹ to the early training children receive in respect for and bows to the Emperor and family. She believes this attests to their profound sense of hierarchy in sex, generation, and family

⁴⁹See above, p. 41.

⁵⁰See above, p. 55.

⁵¹See above, p. 17.

ties. Haring⁵² alleges that bowing epitomizes the people's respect for their parents. LaBarre⁵³ contends that this ceremoniousness results in hiding thoughts of ill-feeling. He maintains, indeed, that ceremoniousness in social intercourse is one of the salient factors in their character make-up. The three authors are here unanimous in their report of the facts, but, again, differ in their explanations.

Thus it is clear that three reputable and representative authors have attained some unity in reporting the Japanese national phenomenon, the same basic characteristics. It is clear, too, that they then proceed to diversity in their respective explanations of data agreed upon. Such diversity in the face of unity can be understood and evaluated only by a consideration of the ambiguity and diversity underlying the methodology, disciplinary presuppositions and orientations of the three authors involved.

Benedict, for example, did her work as a cultural anthropologist through indirect contact with the people. She began with the fundamental supposition that the Japanese people acted the same way in and out of war. Since Benedict wanted to know how the people would act during war, she had to analyze the people as she found them in a pre-war Japan. This she has done. Haring, recognizing her war-time limitations, thought it necessary to make post-

⁵²See above, p. 39.

⁵³See above, p. 48.

war studies in order to gain a more accurate picture. And, as expected, he found the people had changed after having gone through the cataclysmic experience of war. Given a new set of circumstances for any length of time, the living creature adapts itself and adopts patterns of activity different from those it had antecedently. This is especially true of the set of circumstances are the severe incidents of war, for these unmistakably change attitudes and plans for future activity.

Because Benedict was deprived of a field trip to Japan, she turned primarily to literature for data on the character of the people. The literature she analyzed must be representative of all the literature on the people's customs and habits. It must be questioned how Benedict could make a sampling accurate enough to generalize about a nation's personal character. It must be questioned, too, how far back into the people's history such descriptions of their habits and customs took Benedict. There is no indication in her writings what works were consulted nor their dates. She has presented us with her findings and her interpretations. Her sources and methods leave much room for question and this ambiguity alone could account for diversity in her findings and those of Haring and LaBarre.

Benedict observed and interviewed Japanese in America who had been reared in Japan. Some were of Japanese parentage and others were Americans who had grown up in Japan. Before her findings can enjoy universal validity, examination must be made of Benedict's

method in choosing those she interviewed. It should be asked, too, whether Benedict determined how long these people had lived in Japan and whether they came from the same social, hereditary, or economic grouping. Intelligent and planned sampling is relevant to the delineation of an accurate picture of a nation's character. This phase of the methodology can not be over-stressed and if neglected would easily contribute to diversity in finding, understanding, or interpretation.

Motion pictures were another data source which Benedict consulted in determining the Japanese national character. She limited herself to motion pictures that had been produced in Japan. These she classified as propaganda, historical, and contemporary-life movies. Propaganda films would be tendentious and biased. Movies of contemporary life ignore influences from earlier centuries and tend to blur the sociological differences between the modern home, office, factory, and farm, or political, military, and social life of a people. Yet Benedict gives no indication of the method used to attain a sampling needed to justify her inductions.

Thus Benedict's lack of clarity in sources, selection, and especially in suppositions and methods can be invoked to explain the differences which have been found to exist between her results and those of Haring and LaBarre.

For himself, Haring has taken the role of the cultural anthropologist and direct observer in his study of the Japanese. As a

participant observer Haring visited several areas for his research. Since he could not participate in every mode of Japanese life, it was of the greatest importance to determine which localities were "typical" of the whole nation and each level of its social stratification. But Haring indicates neither the territories in which he made his study nor what norms he used in their selection. This ambiguity could itself account for the diversity in Haring's conclusions from those of Benedict and LaBarre.

In making his studies of Japanese national character, LaBarre, as a clinical psychologist, based his conclusions on experience among internees of a war relocation camp. Under such limited conditions, war-time conditions of resentment, hostility, coercion, suspicion, and mass transplantation of peoples, it is questionable whether his observations of these Japanese could be the basis for generalized conclusions on Japanese national character. The artificial and confining conditions of camp life inhibited natural expression of customs and practices native to Japan. Internees, it must be remembered, had spent not a little time in the United States before being forcibly relocated in camp. These people had indeed undergone a certain degree of Americanization. In view of this, their behavior patterns may not at all accurately reflect a true picture of the Japanese national character. Because of the war this deficiency in LaBarre's selection was unavoidable, but itself may explain any diversity in his findings from those of Benedict and Haring.

Thus some of the diversity and inconsistency in findings can be explained in terms of personal errors, misapplication of otherwise valid disciplinary procedures, and lack of competence on the individual researcher's part. Benedict erred in converting anthropology into sociology. Here research further suffered from her inability to make significant personal contacts. Haring's work gives scant evidence of a sufficiently broad sampling nor of a systematically significant analysis to justify national universality for his findings. The wider he broadened the base of research, as he himself admits, the less confidence he had in his findings. War-time bias has hindered LaBarre in his work.

But most of the inconsistencies can be understood to be inherent in the very structure of national character study. They originate from the very diversity of the disciplines involved. Benedict, the cultural anthropologist limited to secondary sources, makes much of toilet-training practices. LaBarre's report comes in terms of symbolic reference, frustration, suppression, and compensation. Haring, with his historical sense, sees the same phenomena but must go back to the feudalistic cast of the Japanese mind to explain the behavioral patterns now present in time and space. Indeed, to the casual reader the three studies seem disparate, disjointed and unrelated.

Clearly, in these studies, subject matter, orientation, aim, and method do differ, for these three authors have approached their subject from independent viewpoints, isolated from one an-

other, without the possibility or wish for community of effort. Having followed independent disciplines, their results are different, diverse, sometimes seemingly contrary, but never contradictory. However, the disciplines, though isolated, are supplementary, not mutually destructive.

Benedict herself was deeply impressed by the harsh methods of toilet training, enforced practices of external, formalistic respect, sharp repression of hostility feeling to authority figures, and the explosive nature of the Japanese male child's reaction to its mother. Haring notes the Japanese formalism and the almost serf-like attitude of awe and respect demanded by Emperor and State. LaBarre has emphasized the extremes of masochism and narcissistic male love as features remarkable in Japanese patterns of emotional expression.

Yet these are but three phenomenological levels of the same data sources. Behind the three reports there lies the possibility of a synthesis which shows the Japanese character as marked by necessity and compulsion. Benedict indicates childhood origins, Haring points to a rigid caste mentality, LaBarre shows the compulsive personality in attempts to save itself from collapse. Though the reports appear as diverse and unrelated, they can find harmony in a higher synthesis, the compulsive personality.

That harmony in diversity can be found among these three authors and among national character studies in general is the scope of the present writer's contention. These three authors will

yield to a higher synthesis in which the Japanese character stands out compulsive in all it has hitherto done. That the Japanese character is such in actual fact has been substantiated in a brilliant article by Haring in 1953, in which he reports the striking changes which the Japanese character has undergone in the rapid moving post-war years.⁵⁴

Haring maintains that since the eighth century A.D. the Japanese have produced historical chronicles, novels, poetry, religious treatises and discourses. In reading the "Manyoshu," an eighth century anthology of poetry, or the eleventh century novel, Tale of Genji, no one would apply the formula "compulsive personality" to the Japanese of those far-off centuries. They enjoyed much freedom, bore obligations lightly, were not overawed by ancestors or Emperor, were unpreoccupied with ceremonial suicide. Yet the people are much different in the twentieth century.⁵⁵

The Japanese of modern times are products of a dictatorship that foreshadowed the totalitarian police states of the twentieth century. Pre-war militaristic Japan emerged naturally and without a break from this background of three centuries preparation.⁵⁶

⁵⁴Haring, "Japanese National Character," Personal Character, pp. 424-437.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 429.

⁵⁶Ibid.

Haring contends that history reveals the answer for the difference.⁵⁷

Of particular importance to Haring were the succession of Japanese rulers as Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokigawa Iyeyasu, and the establishment of the House of Tokigawa that would dominate Japan for the two and a half centuries up to the Second World War. Detailed laws were laid down directing people into two social classes and prescribing the exact nature of their house, dress, food, and etiquette.

Omniscient espionage kept everyone suspicious of his own household. Enforcement of the codes devolved upon the two-sworded samurai, professional warriors who were authorized to decapitate on the spot anyone of lesser status whose conduct was "other than expected." The price of survival was constant vigilance, meticulous conformity to the numerous codes and cultivation of a smiling face--or at least a "deadpan"--regardless of real emotions. The survivors were those who learned in early childhood to keep their own counsel, trust no one, and conform fanatically to whatever might be ordered.⁵⁸

These details are supplied by historical documents.

In modern Japan the ancient discipline has been replaced by efficient centralized police. Respect for the Emperor now stems

⁵⁷ The influence of history on the American national character is shown in Geoffrey Gorer's The American People, A Study in National Character (New York, 1948) and Hortense Powdermaker's Hollywood, The Dream Factory (Boston, 1950). These authors agree with Haring as to the unmistakable influence of history but go on to show the existing frustration, anxiety, and competition in America are all the result of economic abundance that is her inheritance.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 430.

from Shinto ideology which is a cult of fanatic loyalty to the Emperor and supreme devotion to his state. Police stand guard prepared to enforce this loyalty and patriotic zeal upon the people.

In post-war Japan Haring has had the advantage of studying national character since the police state has vanished. He spent nearly four months in 1952 as a guest both in cities and on farms. He noted the Japanese behavior had changed strikingly during the twenty-six years that he had been absent from Japan. The people of this decade have responded with enthusiasm to wider freedom in speech, movement, and manners. In addition to this and as a kind of corroboration, Haring found a community of Japanese which had remained in isolation from the Tokugawa discipline on the island of Amami Oshima. The Japanese there are characterized as cheerful, affectionate, frank, hospitable; their emotions are open and unrepressed.

The taut repressions of the pre-war Japanese do not appear in Amamians; they are not secretive, do not conceal emotions, are not unduly persistent, are free from self-righteousness and exaggerated conscientiousness, are neither fanatical nor arrogant, lack ceremoniousness, and, to put it mildly, hold their passion for ritual cleanliness within bounds.⁵⁹

It is almost as though these Japanese had just stepped from the pages of the Manyoshu itself.

Thus, clearly Haring has contributed much to further character studies of Japan. He has had an admirable opportunity to sub-

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 437.

stantiate his historical insights and verify his surmise that feudalism and tyranny have had a profound effect on Japanese behavior. He does not discredit Benedict's observations on cleanliness training, but calls for a re-appraisal of her work in the larger sociological and historical context of parental fear and anxiety communicated more or less overtly to the Japanese child. Nor does he reject the work of LaBarre, but shows, indeed, the depth of the character traits involved, by pointing to the length of time Japanese history has spent in their development. Haring thus indirectly confirms the main contention of the present writer that one can resolve much of the diversity in finding and interpretation by the realization that the individual disciplines involved were isolated and that their results, far from being contradictory, are actually complementary, in an intelligent hierarchy of value judgments.

The interpretations and explanations of the authors, likewise, while not similar, may be easily harmonized, once seen as three deepening perspectives in the analysis of a common phenomenon. The characteristic of extreme politeness found in the Japanese is reported by all three authors.⁶⁰ Benedict explains it on one level of meaning when she says it is learned from early childhood in the form of respectful bows made by the child's mother. Haring offers a further explanation when he says this politeness is root-

⁶⁰See above, pp. 17, 34, and 45.

ed in the mentality of the people, which is feudalistic at its core. LaBarre explains the phenomenon psychoanalytically as a reaction formation against repressed hostile aggressiveness. Thus all three offer explanations which, while differing, can be seen merely to go deeper into the meaning level desired.

Benedict's explanations are basically centered around a few generalizations. These include knowing one's place with regard to the Emperor, family, friends; the indulgence principle; and the self-gratification principle. Most of Haring's explanations are tinged with psychological terminology. He himself admits that many of his findings can be explained fully only by a qualified psychologist. In this regard he points the way to the study done by LaBarre.

Seen in this perspective, the interpretations are indeed often diverse, but mutually supplementary. Though independent, they do contribute the raw materials, out of which a unified picture of the Japanese national character could be drawn.

Thus diversity inherent in the independence of the several disciplines involved has been found and must henceforth be expected. As long as national character study is the domain of the isolated, albeit competent, worker, diversity and inconsistency must be its lot. The need for some principle of operational unity is now clear. A new dynamic synthesis must be found before national character study can claim the universality due to social science.

Chapter six reviews the current trends in national character

study and projects the type of research conditions it must have to reach results at once harmonious, mutually constructive, and valid.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

APPRAISAL -- PROJECTION

For greater understanding of the three authors analyzed in this study, David M. Potter's work¹ is of special value in our present consideration. In an important study of American character, Potter has shown that a significant break has taken place in national character studies since the appearance of articles by Mead² and Klienberg.³ He points out that the traditional approach to studies of national character had been wedded to the concept that race is the ultimate explanation for a people's character, that their characteristics are peculiar to their race.⁴

The study of national character, Potter points out, must be linked with the branches of study of both group character and personality.⁵ The former is the object of anthropology; the latter, of psychology. The work done by these on national character, has

¹See above, p. 3.

²Mead, "The Study of National Character," The Policy Sciences: Recent Developments in Scope and Method, ed., Daniel Lerner (California, 1951).

³See above, p. 3.

⁴Potter, p. 30.

⁵Ibid., p. 33.

made them outstanding among the behavioral sciences which have contributed to the subject. The difficulties born by the traditional concepts were eliminated when the new analysts applied their techniques to the subject.⁶ The doctrine of race characteristics as an explanation had been repudiated in face of the new studies that were concerned with description. Potter states:

Where earlier writers tried first of all to prove the validity of a causal force and thence to infer that such a force must have resulted in a national character, these behavioral scientists are perhaps more concerned with establishing the existence of such a character and ascertaining its nature than with explaining it in any ultimate sense. This is, in all probability, an excellent corrective for the former situation, in which historians, geographers, climatologists, and so on, were so busy constructing hypotheses to explain national character that they did not trouble to verify the existence of what they were explaining.⁷

Potter's analyses of three studies of the American character show that, though they come from three diverse fields of science, they converge in essence to say the same thing. Potter indicates that since each study is formulated in its own anthropological, psychological, or psychoanalytical terms, there is naturally an appearance of diversity. One may not at first be aware to what an extent they are saying the same thing.⁸ The American character is epitomized by Mead as being "third generation," or as Potter puts

⁶ Ibid., pp. 41-2.

⁷ Ibid., p. 62.

⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

it, "the third-generation individual is launched by his parents into the competition for success, in which he is required to go beyond them in perfecting his conformity to American ways in winning the approbation of his American neighbors."⁹ David Riesman's interpretation¹⁰ is that the American character is found epitomized in the "other-directed man," who has no internalized values of his own but who alters his behavior, his opinions, his activities, his manners, and his entire way of life to gain the approval of those around him. Karen Horney,¹¹ the third analyst, lays the fundamental stress present in American society on the principle of individual competition--"a principle which is economically based but which extends to such highly personal values as popularity and attractiveness and which impinges on the individual in infancy, at school, and as an adult."¹² The common ground, Potter states, on which these three stand is their emphasis on the effects of the competitive spirit. Competition is the common denominator for the studies he has analyzed and, though they are of diverse origins and written in the idiom of diverse disciplines, they reinforce

⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

¹⁰ David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character (New Haven, 1950).

¹¹ Karen Horney, The Neurotic Personality of Our Time (New York, 1937).

¹² As found in Potter, p. 55.

and corroborate one another in their findings as to the essential elements of the American character.¹³ Thus Potter confirms the principal contention of the present writer that in national character studies diversity calls for hierarchy of value judgements, but does not, of itself, imply reprehensible inconsistency.

Potter believes these new investigators have made a major contribution to national character studies and have met all the difficulties which the traditionalists offered them. He enumerates clearly:

First of all, they have been at great pains to demonstrate, at the purely expository level, that uniformities of attitude and behavior actually exist and thus that national character is verifiable as a factual reality. Second, by their attention to the culture, they have explored the medium within which national character develops and have provided a basis for regarding it, as it should be regarded, as a relative rather than as an absolute quality, altering gradually in response to changing conditions and manifesting itself as a tendency in the majority of members of the national group rather than as a universal attribute present in all of them. Further, the emphasis upon culture has freed the concept of national character from the curse of racism, for culture finds the continuum in the complex of social custom and not in the genes. Still further, these writers are all subtle and perceptive interpreters of the complexities of social culture and individual personality, and thus they avoid the errors of crude environmentalism, which so often failed to understand the workings of the human receptors upon which environmental forces operated. Also, they are acutely conscious of the secondary environment, and, indeed, one of Riesman's chief contributions is in tracing the effects of the change

¹³Ibid., p. 57.

from an environment that motivated the individual¹⁴ as producer to one that motivates him as consumer.

The synthesis of anthropology and psychology in the field of national character, Potter states, was due when psychology had developed the integrative concept of personality, deeply differentiated in different societies by diverse processes of socialization, and when anthropology had developed the integrative concept of culture, also differentiated in different societies and acting as the medium through which external conditions were transformed into determinants of personality.¹⁵ "Culture, the medium, and personality, the receptor, were indispensable, each to the other."¹⁶ It is likewise the belief of Potter that the determinant of the culture must be given considerable attention if the society is to be fully understood. It is at this point that history must be introduced.¹⁷ The importance of historical perspective in the study of national character has already been referred to.¹⁸

Potter has pointed to the unity in diversity among various national character studies on Americans, and thus confirms at

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁸ See above, p. 78.

least the antecedent possibility of the contention of the present writer that unity can be found in the welter of diverse results concerning the character of the Japanese people. This unity can be seen through application of the concept of independent, but hierarchical studies. Anthropology, sociology, psychology, and history are independent areas of research. Yet, when contributing to a national character study they are no longer isolated, but allied. Their results while diverse are in reality harmonious.

However, it is becoming daily clearer that such diversification of result can represent a stage in national character research which is fast passing away. The days of the past when diversity must be explained or defended has given way to the present when ambiguity, inconsistency, diversity, are excluded by the professional competence of the researchers and the mutuality of their efforts.

Several areas of research technique still need attention if progress is to prevail. Scientific methodology must be worked out. Extreme care here is imperative. Sampling accuracy must be of high quality. Observation must be scientifically controlled--precision, focus, reliability, validity of interviewing procedures must be investigated. All recent developments made in scaling techniques must be utilized. Special attention must be paid to measurable social and economic differences between urban and rural dwellers, differences in sex and education, and differences found when group observation is prolonged or shortened. All these

elements must be considered if future study is to be of greater scientific value.

It cannot be ignored that the Japanese are not primitives, but a civilized group that has a history. The nation's history must be studied to observe the nature of change that may have taken place in the people over years. As no nation changes over night, only history can show what this change is.

It seems evident, too, that research in this field should be made on the same group of individuals if the study is to be valuable. This group should be carefully screened and should be observed by all analysts or research workers for the same period of time. This control factor is important for unified results, since workers from different scientific fields contribute to national character studies.

For a complete understanding of national character the researchers on this team should be men from the fields of anthropology, sociology, psychology, and history. In addition to this, it may be argued that the researchers be personnel of Japanese lineage, who have been born and reared in Japan. The purpose for this is to obtain national character researchers who can interpret the customs and habits of Japanese to foreign scientists on the team who, in turn, will interpret the Japanese culture to people of their own idiom. Only if Japanese sociologists, psychologists, historians, and anthropologists enlist their professional training to the study of the nation's character will there be an authentic

interpretation of the nation's customs and practices. Otherwise, what results are produced are made by someone foreign to the Japanese culture who endeavors to interpret data that is contrary, or at best analogous, to his own experience and habit.

In 1939 research was begun in Ukiah, California, on an organized and co-operative scale which may serve as a model for research to be made by all the social sciences on one specific subject group.¹⁹ The group under study, the Pomo Indians, was studied with three aims in mind: to make a long-term study of a culture from the points of view of all the social sciences, including a reconstruction of the historical past and an analysis of cultural change and cultural integration as it took place; to provide supervised training in field work for students of professional social scientists; to test established techniques, methods, theories, and conclusions of research; and to refine and improve upon established procedures. The work in this locality was made mostly with Pomo Indians, though a small percentage of Italians, Chinese, Filipinos, and Mexicans was also included. The project involved interviews with Indian and white informants and wide-scale participation in the social events of both Indians and whites. The records that were available in Sacramento, San Francisco, and Berkeley concerning the people in this community were consulted. This study, it is to be noted, gave impetus to another "social science

¹⁹William Henderson and B. W. Aginsky, "A Social Science Field Laboratory," ASR, VI (February, 1941), pp. 34-36.

field laboratory," as it has been called, at Okayama, Japan, under the auspices of the Center for Japanese Studies at the University of Michigan.²⁰ This field laboratory, however, was closed in 1956 after six years of research because of the high cost of operation, difficulty in maintaining adequate managerial staff, and a decline in the number of subjects that could best be studied in the provincial setting of Okayama. A complete report on the field laboratory is due to appear in the University's Occasional Papers before the end of 1962. Though the University of Michigan project proved abortive, such a cooperative venture that required the services of researchers from all the social sciences is clearly akin to the conceptualized team of researchers which has been advocated in this thesis. It alone would produce results that are the outcome of a concentrated effort on a single group of subjects whose behavior is observed in the same location and by all for the same length of time. Such team work would obviate the diversity in finding and interpretation which, while resolvable, is yet a defect in the actual practise of national character study.

With a field laboratory doing this work, the delineation of a national character will be reliable and can be studied with confidence. This is the kind of analysis that must be made to correct the incomplete thinking and insufficient evidence which has been

²⁰ Information in a letter to the thesis writer from Richard K. Beardsley, Director of the Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, April 16, 1962.

prevalent for so many years. Only when this is done will there be an advancement in present knowledge of national character, profiting by experimentation, learning new research, and employing it to further man's knowledge and understanding of his own culture and that of his neighbor.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Lawrence J. Carlino, S.J.
has been read and approved by three members of the
Department of Sociology.

The final copies have been examined by the director
of the thesis and the signature which appears below
verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been
incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval
with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Nov. 30, 1962.
Date

Francis A. Cizon
Signature of Adviser