

BRITISH EAST AFRICA: SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS*

IT IS not often that a psychologist has an opportunity to travel to out-of-the-way places. This privilege is usually reserved for our anthropological colleagues. Consequently when early last winter I was invited to join a small group of social scientists on an expedition to East Africa, I leapt at the opportunity. Our sponsor was the Carnegie Corporation of New York, with the co-operation of the Institute of International Education. Our group consisted of four social scientists, an economist, a political scientist, an historian, and a psychologist. A fifth was added after we arrived in Africa, a brilliant young man who has been sent out by the Crane Foundation to study the operations of the East Africa High Commission. He proved also to be a famous big game hunter, which added not only to the interest of the expedition but also, at times, to our feeling of security. Our mission was to investigate possibilities of constructive social science research in the East African territories. None of us went over as an expert. We had altogether only something over three months for our tour, which included for some of us periods in Central and South Africa and for me an additional week in the Belgian Congo. When I report some of our experiences I must consequently make it quite clear that I am not speaking as an expert. We were sent to become acquainted with the country, to bring back some research ideas and, it was hoped, some enthusiasm. We saw quite a lot of the country, including some very wild parts. We visited and interviewed countless offi-

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cials, missionaries, native leaders and ordinary people of the towns and villages. We have certainly brought back unbounded enthusiasm, and I think we have brought back a few fairly good ideas for research. I should like to discuss with you a few of the problems that suggest themselves to a psychologist who visits East Africa.

In the United Nations and in our own Point 4 Program we are now expressing a deep interest in and concern for the underdeveloped areas of the world. East Africa is one of these underdeveloped areas. Its resources are relatively untapped. Its people are, according to our standards, primitive. We want to gear its economic production into the world economy. We should like to welcome its people into the family of nations. But the people of East Africa are also underdeveloped. The world is crowding in on them. Whether or not they like it, and whether or not we consider it right, they are being drawn into the maelstrom of world affairs. They now lack the knowledge, the skills and the maturity to compete successfully with the rest of us. We, as a more advanced people, have an obligation to help them to survive. Underdeveloped people, like children, have to be helped. But before we can help them, we must understand them; and to understand them, we must study them. This is part of the challenge of East Africa to the social scientist.

Before I begin to talk psychology, may I quickly review a few broad facts about the territories of East Africa? If your knowledge is as meagre as mine was when I went over, you will find a few facts useful. It may help to look at a map. East Africa technically comprises three territories: Uganda, a British protectorate, Kenya, most of which is a British colony, but part of which is a protectorate, and Tanganyika, a United Nations mandate, before World War I a German colony. I shall also include the tiny but utterly entrancing

little islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, which still have their own Sultan but which are administered by the British colonial office. All four territories are co-ordinated through the East African High Commission. Together they occupy an area more than one fifth the size of the United States. It is a big place. It contains lakes that vie in size with the Great Lakes; Lake Victoria is only slightly smaller than Lake Superior; Lake Tanganyika and Lake Nyasa are both larger than Lake Erie. It boasts mountains that dwarf the highest peaks of the American Rockies. It contains lush tropical jungles, rich farmland producing bananas, sugarcane, cotton, sisal, coffee and a wide assortment of grains, great stretches of open cattle-country, and untold square miles of barren wasteland, where the scarcity of water makes human habitation impracticable. East Africa still teems with wild life. Elephants roam in great herds, lions and leopards stalk the unwary zebras and antelopes, and wild buffalo thunder across the plains. If you live by a river or lake, the hippos are likely to crash into your garden at night, and the crocodiles are ready to receive you if you are reckless enough to step into the water. There are unbelievably beautiful gazelles, ridiculous looking giraffes and ostriches, and impudent baboons, and if you enter the jungle you may, if you are lucky, catch a glimpse of a giant mountain gorilla. The producer of King Solomon's Mines crowded a great many animals into one picture; but they are all there, and even the casual traveller can see most of them.

The equator runs through the heart of Uganda and Kenya, but the climate is for the most part quite pleasant. Most of the country is upland territory, between three and five thousand feet above sea-level. The days may be warm but the nights are cool and often chilly. In Kampala, Uganda, for instance, the mean monthly temperature varies between

68 degrees and 73 degrees F., and it seldom rises higher than the middle 80's or falls lower than the middle 60's. In Nairobi, Kenya, the mean temperature is somewhat lower, because Nairobi has a greater altitude; and down on the coast it is naturally higher. New York City by contrast has a range of monthly mean temperatures from 32 degrees to 75 degrees. Even on the coast, where it can be uncomfortably warm, I never suffered as much as I have in Washington, D. C. Perhaps one of the reasons is that the Africans, unlike the Washingtonians, have learned to slow their movements down to a pace that is appropriate to the climate. There are only two seasons in East Africa, the dry and the wet. Except for the desert areas, the total rainfall would appear to be adequate. In Nairobi, for instance, the mean annual rainfall is 38 in., as compared with 42 in. for New York City. This is an adequate rainfall, but unfortunately it is not evenly distributed. During the rainy season the water comes down in torrents, and during the rest of the year the country gradually dries up. This is particularly true of Kenya and Tanganyika; in Uganda the rainfall is better distributed. As it happened, our visit was timed to coincide with the rainy season, so that now we know what real rain is like. I am grateful for the experience, in retrospect. During one particular deluge last April the rain-gauge in Nairobi registered almost five inches during the course of one hour. You may not believe it, but you would if you saw tiny rivulets transformed in a few minutes into raging torrents, roads turned into lakes, and parked automobiles swept a hundred yards down the street. When it rains like that you give up the idea of driving anywhere, for the roads become quagmires, and you are lucky if the few lonely railway lines that wander across the territory have not been washed out. We

spent our first month travelling by car. After that we gave up and used airplanes.

In all East Africa there are approximately 18,000,000 people. Of these, possibly 200,000, or 1% are Asians, i.e., Indians, Pakistani, Goans; 85,000 are Arabs, most of whom live along the coast and in Zanzibar and Pemba, and altogether there are perhaps 50,000 people of European stock, $\frac{1}{4}\%$ of the total population. Population figures, I might mention, are difficult to collect in a country where the great majority of the people do not even know how to count beyond the number three. Most of the Europeans are clustered in the larger towns, Kampala, Jinja, Nairobi, Mombasa, and Dar-es-salam, and in a few areas in Kenya that have been opened up to European settlement. So, you can see, it is still a black man's country, at least in population. Probably millions of East Africans have never yet seen a European, and even in many of the places we were able to visit, the appearance of a European was an occasion for great excitement. Except for the white settlers in Kenya and the occasional white plantation managers in other parts of the territory, most of the Europeans outside the towns are missionaries or government officials, and these are dotted so thinly that the Commissioner of an outlying district may have to travel for 50 miles before he can see another European face.

But the Indians we find everywhere. They are the great commercial middle-class. Wherever you go, even to the most remote village, you are likely to find a little Indian *duka*, a one roomed shop, where the Africans make whatever purchases they are able to make. In the towns the Indians not only control the commercial life, but they may have an important say in politics as well. The mayor of

Kampala is an Indian; so is the mayor of Dar-es-salam. With a few exceptions the wealthiest people of East Africa are not Europeans, but Indians. The Indians of East Africa are not a depressed minority. They are a minority, but a minority that wields power. They are vigorous, enterprising and, according to the Africans, unscrupulous. They are growing rapidly in number, because of a high birth-rate and a liberal immigration policy. Many people wonder whether East Africa is destined to become eventually an Indian colony.

The Arabs present an interesting contrast. Dotted along the coast-line the Arab communities date back for hundreds of years. The Arabs were the old time slave-traders, who in bygone days were vigorous, adventurous, and ruthless, who organized expeditions deep into dangerous unexplored territory, who battled and bartered with native chiefs for slaves, and who bargained shrewdly with the slave-traders of the west. To-day they are a different people. The twentieth century has passed them by. Some of them still live on their great estates or behind the massive, bronze-studded doors of the fine houses of Zanzibar. But they have lost their language and their contact with the homeland. They now speak Swahili, and what Arabic they know is merely what they have learned by rote in the Koran school. Bit by bit their property is being wheedled away from them by the Indians. The great majority of the East Coast Arabs are now poor and defeated people, still proud of the heritage that they only dimly understand but lacking the will to compete with the industrious, ambitious, imaginative newcomers. One cannot help feeling a bit sad about the East Coast Arabs.

But there is an interesting division in the Arab community that invites sociological study. Each year there is an invasion of Arab traders from the Old Country. These are rough,

tough, semi-barbaric men who arrive at Mombasa and Zanzibar in their picturesque dhows, and who usually stay for several months. They are filthy, they swagger about the streets with highly ornamented daggers at their belts, and they drive hard bargains. The old Arabs of the coast look down upon them because they are uncouth and uneducated. But there is one thing about them that they envy; they still speak Arabic, the language that the old Arabs have lost. So we now find a movement among the old Arabs of the coast to revive the Arabic language and to restore self-respect to the Arab community. Whether it will succeed is an open question.

But the people we are most interested in are not the Indians, the Arabs, or the Europeans in East Africa, but the Africans themselves. When I think of the people of East Africa I think of people with dark brown skins, bare-footed people with rings in their ears and around their necks and ankles, with tribal scars on their cheeks and chests, clad in goat-skins, in robes of bark-cloth, in pathetic imitations of European clothing or in no clothing at all. I think of women walking proudly erect with bundles on their heads or struggling along with great burdens on their backs, supported by a thong around the forehead. I think of wide-eyed children with beaming smiles and a natural grace that only childhood can achieve. I think of men who live from morning to night in a daze of partial drunkenness, of men who are struggling to understand a strange new world that is thrusting itself upon them, who are trying to maintain dignity in the face of challenges that they do not fully comprehend, of men who see us as a threat to all that they hold dear, who are prepared to fight back, knowing all the while that it will be a losing battle.

East Africans are primitive people, among the most primi-

tive we can find anywhere in the world. But they are people. Anyone who is interested in people, as a psychologist ought to be, finds them all the more fascinating the more they differ from himself. I found the Africans entrancing and lovable. Like other Europeans I found them amusing and exasperating. But, above all, I found them challenging. Here for the first time in my own experience I encountered people who live in a world utterly different from my own. I should like to have the kind of omniscience that would permit me to peer through the eyes of the African padding his bare-footed way along a jungle path.

There is, of course, no such thing as "an African." This is merely the label the Europeans use to designate the people who were there before them. It is interesting to note that as you move south the designation changes. In Southern Rhodesia they are called "natives"; in South Africa they are called "blacks." In East Africa, however, they are still Africans, and one likes to think that this is a tacit admission on the part of the European that he is in somebody else's country. This is in fact the attitude of most of the British officials in East Africa. I came to know a great number of them. I was prepared to find them stuffy. I found instead a group of keen, for the most part young, and almost without exception devoted men, who saw their job as that of helping the Africans to learn how to manage their own affairs.

The nearly 18,000,000 natives of East Africa represent a variety of so-called racial types. It is customary to recognize three major stocks, the Nilotic, the Hamitic, and the Negroid. But these terms really have very little meaning. In appearance they range from tall, lightly boned, thin featured people who in profile resemble the figures in the Egyptian museum in Cairo, to the short, broad-nosed thick-lipped types usually associated with the American Negro. But there is no uni-

formity. For the most part, they are shorter and more lightly built than we are, but there have been so many internal migrations in the past that if there ever was any racial purity it has long since ceased to exist. They speak a multitude of languages, most of them variants of the Bantu type, although some bear very little resemblance to Bantu. There is no real lingua franca, but the nearest thing to it is Swahili, the language of some of the coastal tribes, that was brought inland by the Arab slave-traders. The traveller can usually find someone who has a smattering of Swahili. The people live for the most part in small villages, ruled by their local tribal chiefs, their everyday lives governed pretty much by tribal custom. The British colonial administration operates through these tribal chiefs, by a system known as the Native Authority, the theory being that government should always be as consonant as possible with tribal tradition, although the District Commissioner will step in and administer justice himself in the case of a serious crime like murder.

The houses of the Africans are usually small, round, one-roomed, mud-and-wattle huts, thatched with straw, papyrus, or whatever other thatching material happens to be available. In an agricultural community they make their living from their little *shambas*, or small farms. On the plains, their lives are centered about their cattle. The basic economy is one of local self-sufficiency. They eat and clothe themselves with what they produce. In banana-growing districts the staple is a banana mush, called *matoke*; in the grain-growing districts it is a grain mush, called *posho*; in the cattle country they are likely to subsist on blood and milk, with occasional meat and grain supplements. In recent years the introduction of coffee, sugar, cotton and sisal plantations, and a certain amount of small scale industry, has attracted migrant workers away from the villages. A common pattern of living

nowadays is for a man to leave his shamba to be cultivated by his wives, if he can afford more than one, and to go away for several months or even years to work for money on a plantation, on the roads, or in a factory. The increasing use of migrant labor is creating new social problems. Where men from different tribes are employed together, the sanctions of tribal tradition tend to break down. One of the acute social problems of East Africa is consequently that of the "detrribalized" African, the man who has lost his moorings in tribal life and has found no adequate social substitute. Although it is recognized that if East Africa is to move in the direction of industrialization, large-scale detrribalization is inevitable, one can nevertheless see the bad effects of too rapid detrribalization in the increasing crime rates in the larger towns.

Religion is still pretty much a tribal affair. Even in the districts where the missionaries have been most active, and the various warring sects have been competing with one another for converts, it is still difficult to classify people according to religious faith. I met one man whose children went to a Protestant school, who nevertheless regularly propitiated the spirits of his ancestors by placing food offerings before a miniature straw hut in the corner of his shamba. We were received most hospitably by the chief of one of the Tanganyika tribes who was a member in good standing of the Roman Catholic Church. He is a most charming man, in an advanced stage of syphilis, who has several wives, and two of whose daughters were bringing in a little extra income through prostitution. I met one of the daughters, an attractive girl, who works during the daytime as a teacher in the local government school. Two of her illegitimate children attend the school. Perhaps the most vigorous single religion is the Moslem religion, which was brought

into East Africa by the Arab slave-traders. In the costal districts, virtually every African is a Moslem, but one finds them in great numbers in the back country as well. From the African point of view it is a practical religion, for it has a very simple theology, a readily intelligible code of ethics, and it permits polygamy, to which the Africans are devoted.

Please do not interpret what I am saying as a disparagement of the Christian missions. The theologically minded missionaries may have confused the Africans with their sectarian squabbles. For the most part, however, the missionaries, Protestant and Roman Catholic, have been genuinely devoted to the welfare of the people, have tried to understand them, and have been responsible for much of the social progress that has been achieved. Perhaps the most inspiring experience of our whole trip was a visit to a leper colony in Eastern Uganda, where an English doctor, supported only by one English medical assistant and two English nurses, has organized hundreds of lepers into a happy community based on the principle of self-help. What funds he has have come from private subscription in England. He receives his medical supplies from the government, but all the work is done under his direction and inspiration by the lepers themselves. Under his supervision they cook their own meals, they raise their own crops to provide the food, they build their own houses with bricks that he has taught them how to make. He has even trained a group of lepers as medical assistants who give the treatments that the patients regularly receive. I do not know whether Dr. H. R. Wheate is to be listed as a missionary, but he is an example of the kind of devotion that is an expression of the missionary spirit.

If it were not for the missionaries even the present inadequate educational facilities would not be what they are. The

mission schools, Protestant and Roman Catholic, are still carrying a large share of the task of primary education. The financing of these schools is gradually being taken over by the government, but the task ahead is enormous. There are not enough schools, there are not enough teachers, to take care of even the most elementary needs of the African population. To have had four grades of schooling is a distinct privilege. To have had six grades of schooling may qualify one to be a teacher. In all East Africa there is only one institution offering education beyond the High School level. This is Makerere College in Kampala, Uganda, where about 300 carefully selected African students are preparing themselves for careers in teaching, agriculture, engineering and medicine. Three hundred young men and women out of a total population of nearly 18,000,000! Makerere cannot begin to meet the need. What they are doing in Makerere is an inspiring story in itself, but that story would require a separate lecture.

East Africa presents problems that challenge the economist, the political scientist and the sociologist. The problem that challenges the psychologist is the problem of "African mentality." Most of the people one meets in East Africa are not psychologically sophisticated. There are almost no educated Africans, and apart from the missionaries, whose training is not always what it might be, the Europeans one meets are either colonial officials, whose training has probably been in the practical aspects of administration, or rough and tumble pioneering types who have little patience with human weaknesses and no curiosity about human nature. All these people talk about "the African." They have many adjectives to describe him, the most respectable of which is "childlike." The more thoughtful of them may wonder why the African cannot adapt himself to European

ways. Most of them will simply condemn him as an inferior being. The psychologist as a scientist cannot accept such prejudgments of people. His duty is rather to raise questions and to try to find answers.

One of the fascinating things for me was that one's first observations all tended to support the stereotype. One saw an African trying to insert a bolt into a nut, and he simply could not master the principle of the threaded screw. Africans have great difficulty in ploughing a straight line, in laying bricks according to a rectangular pattern, in setting out coffee plants at equally spaced intervals. Africans seem to have a defective time sense. A planter of my acquaintance asked a group of prospective employees to wait for a few minutes, and then he forgot about them. Two days later they were still waiting, quite patiently and with no resentment. Africans do not respond to ordinary money incentives. You raise their wages to make them work harder, and they stop working all the sooner. Africans seem to have no emotional depth. They grin when you scold them; if they become angry, a joke will restore them to good humor; they laugh uproariously if someone tumbles from a truck and breaks a leg. All in all they present the picture of undeveloped people, shallow, irresponsible, lovable—just like children. I have often been asked about the possible danger of Communism in East Africa. The answer is that most of them could not understand even the most elementary Communist ideas.

Those who work for the development of East Africa are confronted by many obstacles. The uneven rainfall adds to the difficulty of agricultural planning, to which the ill-starred ground-nut scheme bears witness. Until the tse-tse fly can be conquered, great stretches of potentially good cattle land will remain unproductive. East Africa has no

natural fuel supply; her water-power is difficult to harness; and roads and railways are still primitive.

But the greatest obstacle of all is the mentality of the African. Employers of labor complain bitterly of the labor shortage; yet wherever one looks there are Africans standing around idle. Employers have not yet discovered how to induce them to work. Agricultural officers try patiently to teach them the benefits of contour ploughing, of crop rotation and of soil fertilization; but the results are discouraging. The cattle-herders cannot understand the principles of selective breeding. They overgraze their land, and refuse to sell their surplus. For them wealth is defined in terms of cattle, not in terms of the money received from their sale. Medical men try to teach them the elements of sanitation and hygiene. Administrators try to encourage in them an interest in responsible self-government. Small advances are being made along all these lines, but the progress is so slow as to be disheartening. Time and again even their well-wishers come to the conclusion that the Africans lack the necessary intelligence and initiative to participate fully in the development of their country. They are really just children, and we cannot expect much of children.

Even if I were qualified to do so, I could not in one brief talk examine all the interesting psychological problems suggested by the mentality of the African. I shall limit myself to just a few of these, which I shall present as hypotheses that invite research. I cannot give you the answers because the research has not yet been performed.

The first and most common answer one hears might be called the biological-genetic hypothesis. This is simply that Africans come from a different stock that is constitutionally inferior to our own. Those who defend this hypothesis on scientific grounds argue from the principles of evolutionary

biology. Africans, they say, have evolved in an environment that places few demands on individual initiative and ingenuity. Natural selection in the tropics does not operate to maintain and accentuate the characteristics that we admire most. Furthermore, in districts in which famines are recurrent, natural selection favors the individual who can live on a low level of energy output. In such an environment nature literally discourages intelligence and initiative. This, I think, is the least plausible of the hypotheses I am going to present. What we know of heredity does not tend to support the application of the doctrine of natural selection to the inheritance of psychological characteristics. Furthermore, we have the mounting evidence that members of supposedly inferior races, when placed in a more stimulating environment, will tend to lose their apparent inferiority. Nevertheless, the question should not be considered as settled. We must still concede the possibility that, through as yet undiscovered genetic processes, psychological characteristics may be inherited. It may be that natural selection in one form or another has produced a constitutional type different from our own.

The second is a physiological hypothesis, which I find somewhat more inviting. This suggests a relation between African mentality and dietary deficiency, particularly deficiency in the proteins. And here we have some evidence. According to our nutritional standards there is a serious protein deficiency in the diet of the great majority of East Africans. The banana diet is particularly low in proteins, and the grain diets are only slightly higher. And even where some meat and fish are available the people do not get enough to make up the deficiency. One of the most common diseases of East Africa, particularly of the banana-eating districts, is what is called *kwashiorkor*. Kwashiorkor pa-

tients are stunted in their growth, have lost much of their pigmentation, and in acute cases present the appearance of almost completely apathy. Dr. H. C. Trowell of the Mulago Hospital in Kampala, who has spent a quarter of a century in that part of the world, has concluded that kwashiorkor represents a protein deficiency syndrome. Unfortunately, an adult with these symptoms is only slightly improved if protein is added to his diet. Something can be done, however, for the children. In almost any hospital in Uganda one finds what they call the "brown babies." These are children who show the kwashiorkor symptoms. They are light in color, undersized, emotionally apathetic and obviously retarded in their intellectual development. When these are put on a diet richer in proteins they come back to normal, and the improvement is sometimes quite dramatic. Dr. Trowell, who is my main source of information, suggests that the critical period for protein deficiency is in early childhood. African children are usually breast-fed until they are two and a half to three years old. During the first year the mothers's milk is adequate. During the second and third years, however, the child is literally protein starved. If it is given any dietary supplement, this will be a low-protein banana or grain mush. This protein starvation during a critical period of growth results, according to Dr. Trowell, in a retardation of cellular development, possibly even in the cells of the central nervous system. Dr. Trowell suggests that this retarded physiological development, which is due to protein deficiency in childhood, may be responsible for what looks like widespread psychological retardation. The protein deficiency hypothesis is only one of a number of physiological hypotheses, but it is an hypothesis that can and, we hope, will be tested by research.

A third type of hypothesis might be called the psycho-

logical-genetic. During recent years there has been a great deal of emphasis in psychology on the role of early childhood experience in the development and organization of the personality. Freud and his disciples have been particularly influential in this respect, but the recognition of the importance of early childhood is not confined to the Freudians. It has been suggested, for instance, that much of what we think of as the Russian character is related to the widespread Russian habit of tightly swaddling their infants, that the preoccupation of the Balinese with graceful ritualistic dances is rooted in an attitude engendered in early childhood as a reaction to the Balinese habit of alternately fondling and teasing their children, that some of the Japanese character traits are based on early childhood toilet training practices. Many of these interpretations are undoubtedly oversimplified, and I am prepared to argue against an exclusively genetic approach to the understanding of personality. Nevertheless, the different cultures of the world vary widely in their attitudes toward children and in their approved ways of rearing children. It would be strange indeed if we could not gain some insight into the mentality of the adult from an understanding of the way in which his life got started.

Certainly the problem of African mentality invites such a study. African children are lovable, irresistible little creatures, happy, friendly, and tractable. African babies seldom cry; children on the playground seldom quarrel with one another; the school-teacher may have problems of inattention among his pupils, but for him there is no problem of discipline as we know it. African children may fail to understand or to remember what we tell them to do, but they are always smilingly co-operative; and they grow into adults who are for the most part happy and serene. Perhaps their infant experience had something to do with it. Child rearing

practices vary, of course, from tribe to tribe, but for the most part African children are born into a world that loves children. Every man wants children, and for the African woman life without children would be unthinkable. There is no fear of parental responsibility, there are no books on child psychology to make parents uneasy about the way they are bringing their children up, no feeding schedules, no rules for toilet-training, and very few precious possessions which the child must not touch. For the first few years of his life the African child is virtually a part of his mother. During the day he lives on her back, nestling down in a cloth that envelopes her shoulders, or toddles beside her clutching her skirt. At night he is beside her on her sleeping mat. As we have noted he is always breast-fed, and, since Mother is always accessible, hunger is assuaged as soon as it is felt. He will continue to suckle for perhaps two or three years. Weaning is a gradual process that merely accompanies his developing taste for other foods. Even after he is old enough to run about and play by himself he is likely to remain physically close to his mother as she plies her hoe in the field, carries home her bundle of firewood or pounds her maize or millet in front of her hut. For the little African early childhood is thus a period in which there are no major threats, no serious frustrations, and almost no unanswered needs. Later he may learn to fear the leopards and the crocodiles, to realize that the law of nature and the law of the tribe may deny him many things that he wants; but during early childhood he lives in a world that contains no conflict.

What is the effect of this kind of childhood on the developing personality? Unfortunately this is a branch of psychology in which facts are difficult to establish and hypotheses cannot readily be tested. There are too many people

who call themselves psychologists and talk as though they knew the truth about cause and effect in child development, who are willing to present personal hunches and popular prejudices as though they were the established findings of careful scientific research. It will be many a long year before any responsible scientist will dare to assert what causes produce what effects during the course of psychological development. And certainly no scientist can say with assurance that one method of child rearing is right and another method wrong. Nevertheless, one cannot observe the children of Africa without being led to wonder about the implications of what one sees for the theory of psychological development, and to question the soundness of some of our commonly accepted beliefs.

One immediately thinks of the concept of security. It is often asserted that psychological security in early childhood is basic to good adjustment in later life. Security is a popular term in the psychological jargon of to-day. We like to damn our friends by saying they are basically insecure. Insecurity is supposed to be bad; we are damaging our children and our students when we create insecurity in them. I sometimes wish we could banish the word from psychology, or at least insist that every use of it be prefaced by a definition. One dictionary defines "secure" as "free from care, anxiety or apprehension; easy in mind, not fearing for the future; undisturbed, untroubled as to the future." If psychological security is to be found in childhood anywhere, we certainly find it in Africa, and in varying degrees it is found in many other so-called primitive people. According to the psychologists who preach the importance of psychological security, such children should develop into healthy, well-adjusted adults. But do they? The disturbing thought is that perhaps they do. I have never seen people so free from care,

anxiety or apprehension, so unconcerned about the future as the Africans. They are not ridden by guilt and anxiety feelings. They do not worry about the day after to-morrow. This is one of the reasons why we find them so charming and lovable. But this is also one of the reasons why Europeans find them so completely exasperating. They do not worry about the past or the future; that is, they are irresponsible and undependable. Punishments do not affect them deeply, and rewards do not provide effective incentives. They lack those fine pioneering virtues that we admire so much, ambition, stubborn perseverance, grim determination. Can it be that psychological security in childhood leads to precisely the kind of personality that cannot survive in the tough, competitive world in which we live, that the child who learns to think of the world as loving and friendly will grow into an adult who will be petted and patronized, and perhaps even loved, but never really respected?

Now it would obviously be unscientific to argue that, because in one part of the world psychologically secure childhood is followed by ineffectual adulthood, there is therefore a causal relation between them. We all remember the elementary logical fallacy, "Post hoc ergo propter hoc." From such observations we can do nothing more than draw an interesting hypothesis. It may be that the psychologically secure child does in truth grow into a psychologically secure adult, an adult with the naive and trusting simplicity of childhood, and that we, the so-called civilized people, are the ones who are frustrated, maladjusted, and insecure. It may be, on the other hand, that psychological security is not entirely a good thing, that too much security engenders an attitude of dependance that will later become a psychological liability. It may be that too much security prevents the development of initiative, imagination, and creativity, that the experience

of being frightened and thwarted is actually essential to the development of genuine selfhood. I shall not argue for one alternative rather than the other. What I do suggest, however, is that here there is a rich field for exciting and profitable research. The extent to which the pattern of personality is laid down in early childhood experience can never be determined through the study of only one culture, but when we look at even one culture that is radically different from our own we are given ample food for thought.

A fourth type of hypothesis to account for African mentality might be called the psychological-social hypothesis. According to this, the conditions of social living in an African tribe are such as to favor a kind of mentality that is quite different from our own. Basic to this hypothesis is the further hypothesis that the psychological characteristics of people are essentially reflections of the kind of culture they live in. Some anthropologists have gone so far as to postulate a basic personality type for each culture. Thus, the culture of the Kwakiutl Indians, with its tremendous emphasis on prestige, generates an individual who is typically ambitious and aggressive; whereas among the peaceful ceremonial Zuni the typical individual is self-effacing. The doctrine of basic personality type is too complex a subject to be discussed at this time, but without categorically accepting or rejecting it we can see many ways in which mentality is clearly related to social structure.

Let me begin with an example which was new to me but which is familiar to my anthropological colleagues. Being impressed by the obvious childlike characteristics of Africans, I was reminded of one of the peculiarities of children as I know them. When a small child, aged three perhaps, looks at a picture we are sometimes troubled by the fact that he seems to see it just as easily upside down as right

side up. There have unfortunately been very few studies of this phenomenon, but such studies as we have indicate that for the very young child the orientation of a picture in space is relatively unimportant, and that as he grows up he becomes more and more bound by the up-down, right-left dimensions, until eventually he finds it difficult as we do to recognize upside-down pictures. I naively thought that childlike African adults might have childlike picture-perceptions. I began asking questions. The answer was rather upsetting, namely that Africans cannot see pictures. Now this is obviously not true, because educated Africans can see pictures as well as we can, and some of them can paint very much better pictures than at least I can. But time after time I heard the story of uneducated Africans, straight from the village, who would look at a photograph of some familiar person or object, would turn it this way and that, and say, "What is it?" For them the bi-dimensional representation of a tri-dimensional object or scene is not perceived as a representation at all. We do not know what they see when they look at a picture. So far as I know, no one has ever done any research on the subject. Their eyes are at least as good as ours, and probably better; yet somehow or other the relationship of pictorial representation seems to play no part in their perception. I could speculate about the reasons, but this would take me away from the subject. The point is that even in such an apparently elementary function as visual perception they do not see things as we see them. A member of a cattle-herding tribe may own 100 cattle. Cattle are his life. He loves every one of them; yet if you ask him how many he has he cannot tell you, for he cannot count beyond three or four. Nevertheless he knows them all by name, and if necessary he will name them all for you. I have often had the experience, working through

an interpreter, of asking what seemed to me to be a simple question, and finding that it took the interpreter a long time, with many repetitions, to convey the meaning of the question. The difficulty was that my question had contained some abstract concept for which there was no word in the native language. It is often said that primitive people cannot abstract. This is untrue, but some of the abstractions familiar to us are meaningless to them.

One could multiply such examples indefinitely, but the point I wish to make is that what we mean by mentality must include not merely mental capacity but also mental content. It may be that there are essential differences in mental capacity between Africans and people of other races, although I doubt it, but certainly there is a tremendous difference in mental content. When people live in a world that makes no demand for pictorial representation, or for the enumeration of individuals, pictorial relationships and number concepts will not develop. A much quoted philosopher of the past once said, "Entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem." Things (or concepts) are not to be multiplied beyond necessity. We call this the principle of *parsimony in science*. The minds of people work according to the principle of *parsimony*. For the most part we do not see in the world about us much more than we really need to see.

What is it then that the African sees in the world about him? What is the content of his psychological world? This is, it seems to me, merely a restatement of the first question we must ask in any psychological investigation. We can never fully understand people merely by observing, counting and tabulating their reactions. We begin to understand them as we begin to see the world through their eyes and to grasp the meanings that their words have for them. This,

as we all know, is a difficult task when we are studying people very much like ourselves. It is still more difficult when we try to understand the mind of the child. It is baffling, but at the same time fascinating, when we try to comprehend what is going on in the minds of people as utterly different from us as are the Africans. We have at present no adequate research tools for such an enterprise. We gain some indirect insights, of course, through the analysis of language, artistic productions, religious beliefs, legal practices and other cultural products, although in East Africa even these records are woefully inadequate. What we need is more direct methods of determining the mental content of other people, tests that will reveal not only the components of African mentality that will correspond to our own expectations but the mental contents that are peculiar to the Africans themselves. We have, for instance, a test of mental ability designed by one of our own psychologists that has been publicized as a "culture free" test. It depends largely on the manipulation in visual imagination of certain geometric forms. The African scores very low on such a test because in his culture there are no such simple geometric designs. Such a test tells us nothing about African mentality except that it cannot be tested in this way. In all East Africa there is not one psychologist working on the problem of devising appropriate tests, and in the whole continent of Africa there are only a handful.

I cannot take time to discuss possible avenues for psychological research on African mentality. It seems clear to me, however, that we cannot merely take the instruments that we have developed for the study of people in our culture and adapt them to Africans. What the psychologist must do is immerse himself in the other culture as the anthropologist does, and in the light of his growing insight devise instruments that are appropriate to what he finds.

Of the four types of hypothesis I have mentioned I have suggested that the first, the biological-genetic, is probably not fruitful but must not be discarded until more evidence becomes available. The other three, the physiological, the psychological-genetic and the psychological-social, are all worth exploring. In each case we have a legitimate field of research, and we have suggestive facts. The physiological approach will be the easiest because the methods are better developed, but all three lines of inquiry deserve to be followed. As you have probably gathered, I have come back from Africa more than a little in love with Africa and the Africans. I am convinced that psychological research in Africa is badly needed. It is needed not merely because the psychological understanding of a mentality different from our own will enrich our understanding of people in all cultures—and this is a point that can not be too strongly emphasized. It is also needed because, as I tried to point out at the beginning of my talk, to understand the Africans is to take a first step in the direction of helping them. East Africa is being caught up in the struggle between the East and the West. East Africa is being economically exploited, and will be still further exploited. The structure of East African tribal life is beginning to weaken, and it will be only a matter of time before it collapses completely. These are facts which some may deplore, but which no one can deny. East Africa is becoming part of the larger world. If the people of East Africa are to survive, they must learn to live in the larger world. They cannot for a long time be expected to contribute leadership, or even to assume full responsibility for their own affairs, but they deserve to be treated as people, whose contribution will be appreciated and respected.

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