

Wallace A F C. *Culture and personality*. New York: Random House, 1961. 213 p.
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Descriptions of "national character" and other uniformitarian psychological profiles of whole communities were shown to be misleading unless information on the range and frequency of diversity was included. Cultures are patterned not so much by the replication of uniformity as by the organization of diversity [The *Science Citation Index*® (SCI®) and the *Social Sciences Citation Index*® (SSCI®) indicate that both editions of this book have been cited in over 310 publications since 1961]

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While I was doing my doctoral dissertation in anthropology in the late 1940s under the guidance of A.I. Hallowell—one of the pioneers in the cross-cultural study of personality¹—I became increasingly annoyed by the neglect of behavioral diversity by leaders in that field such as Margaret Mead,² Ruth Benedict,³ and Abram Kardiner.⁴ Hallowell urged me to take course work in psychology, including descriptive statistics, where the analysis of diversity was inevitably the essential task.

Even an elementary grasp of statistical reasoning made it plain that much of the then-current work in the field of culture and personality was flawed by the tendency to make easy generalizations about the "national character" of exotic populations without qualifications that allowed for some individual differences within a cultural setting. Following the advice of my mentors, Hallowell and Malcolm Preston (my psycho-

logical statistics instructor), I designed my doctoral research around the idea of displaying not only the central tendency but also the diversity of personality as it was revealed in a sample of projective tests.⁵

A few years later, I was invited to contribute a chapter on culture and personality to a text in anthropology. Eventually, the chapter became a small book in itself, entitled *Culture and Personality*, first published in 1961 and in a revised edition in 1970.⁶ The central theme of this work was that anthropologists had vastly overestimated not only the psychological but also the cultural homogeneity of even small societies with simple cultures. Rather than displaying, generation after generation, a "replication of uniformity," I argued that societies are held together by an "organization of diversity." Such a view not only accorded better with observations of group and individual psychological and role differences but also allowed for more realistic interpretations of culture change, of exchange systems, and even of psychopathology.

The point has been, I think, widely accepted. While it remains convenient, as a kind of shorthand in discourse, to talk about the So-and-So as if they all share the same culture and the same personality and to dismiss those who do not so share as "deviants," few would any longer defend the notion of complete uniformity in the abstract. And for those who continue to insist that culture by definition is shared, the range of behavior included under that rubric has shrunk from its older, encyclopedic spread, to a rather narrow abstract structure of public symbols and meanings that can be reasonably attributed to most adult community members. The fact that the So-and-So are, on the average, quite different from us does not mean that they are all alike.

For a later review of culture and personality, see reference 7.

1 Hallowell A I. *Culture and experience*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955. 434 p.

2 Mead M. *From the South seas: studies of adolescence and sex in primitive societies*. New York: William Morrow, 1939.

3 Benedict R. *Patterns of culture*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934. 290 p.

4 Kardiner A. *The psychological frontiers of society*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1945. 475 p.

5 Wallace A F C. Individual differences and cultural uniformities. *Amer Sociol Rev* 17:747-50, 1952.

6 *Culture and personality*. New York: Random House, 1970. 270 p.

7 Levine R A. *Culture, behavior, and personality*. Chicago: Aldine, 1973. 319 p.