Functionalism

(B. A. /B.Sc. SEM.IV; Paper-7)

Functionalists seek to describe the different parts of a society and their relationship by means of an organic **analogy**. The organic analogy compares the different parts of a society to the organs of a living organism. The organism is able to live, reproduce and function through the organized system of its several parts and organs. Like a biological organism, a society is able to maintain its essential processes through the way that the different parts interact. Institutions such as religion, kinship and the economy were the organs and individuals were the cells in this social organism. Functionalist analyses examine the social significance of phenomena, that is, the function they serve a particular society in maintaining the whole (Jarvie 1973). Functionalism, as a school of thought in anthropology, emerged in the early twentieth century. **Bronislaw Malinowski** and **A.R. Radcliffe-Brown** had the greatest influence on the development of functionalism from their posts in Great Britain and elsewhere. Functionalism was a reaction to the perceived excesses and deficiencies of the evolutionary and diffusionist theories of the nineteenth century and the historicism of the early twentieth (Goldschmidt 1996:510). Two versions of functionalism developed between 1910 and 1930: Malinowski's **biocultural (or psychological) functionalism**; and **structural-functionalism**, the approach advanced by Radcliffe-Brown.

Malinowski suggested that individuals have physiological needs (reproduction, food, shelter) and that social institutions exist to meet these needs. There are also culturally derived needs and **four basic "instrumental needs"** (economics, social control, education, and political organization), that require institutional devices. Each institution has personnel, a charter, a set of norms or rules, activities, material apparatus (technology), and a function. Malinowski argued that uniform psychological responses are correlates of physiological needs. He argued that satisfaction of these needs transformed the cultural instrumental activity into an acquired drive through psychological reinforcement (Goldschmidt 1996:510; Voget 1996:573).

Radcliffe-Brown focused on social structure rather than biological needs. He suggested that a society is a system of relationships maintaining itself through cybernetic feedback, while institutions are orderly sets of relationships whose function is to maintain the society as a system. Radcliffe-Brown, inspired by Augustus Comte, stated that the social constituted a separate "level" of reality distinct from those of biological forms and inorganic matter. Radcliffe-Brown argued that explanations of social phenomena had to be constructed within the social level. Thus, individuals were replaceable, transient occupants of social roles. Unlike Malinowski's emphasis on individuals, Radcliffe-Brown considered individuals irrelevant (Goldschmidt 1996:510).

POINTS OF REACTION

As a new paradigm, functionalism was presented as a reaction against what was believed to be outdated ideologies. It was an attempt to move away from the evolutionism and diffusionism that dominated American and British anthropology at the turn of the century (Lesser 1935, Langness 1987). There was a shift in focus from the speculatively historical or diachronic study of customs and cultural traits as "survivals" to the ahistorical, synchronic study of social "institutions" within bounded, functioning societies (Young 1991:445).

Functionalists presented their theoretical and methodological approaches as an attempt to expand sociocultural inquiry beyond the bounds of the evolutionary conception of social history. The evolutionary approach viewed customs or cultural traits as residual artifacts of cultural history. That is, the evolutionist school postulated that "an observed cultural fact was seen not in terms of what it was at the time of observation but in terms of what it must stand for in reference to what had formerly been the case" (Lesser 1935:55). From the functionalist standpoint these earlier approaches privileged speculative theorizing over the discovery of facts. Functionalists believed the motive force of events was to be found in their manifestations in the present. Hence, if events were to be understood, it was their contemporary functioning that should be observed and recorded (Lesser 1935:55-56).

Consequently, this led some to interpret functionalism as being opposed to the study of history altogether. Radcliffe-Brown responded to this critique by stating that functionalists did not believe that useful historical information could be obtained with respect to primitive societies; it was not history, but "pseudo-history" to which functionalists objected (Harris 1968:524).

In the "primitive" societies that were assigned to social anthropology for study, there are few written historic records. For example, we have no written record of the development of social institutions among the Native Australians. Anthropologists, thinking of their study as a kind of historical study, fall back on conjecture and imagination; they invent "pseudo-historical" or "pseudo-casual" explanations. We have had innumerable and sometimes conflicting pseudo-historical accounts of the origin and development of the totemic institutions of the Native Australians. Such speculations have little place in serious anthropological discussion about institutions. This does not imply the rejection of historical explanation, but quite the contrary (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:3).

However, it is equally important to point out the criticisms of this "pseudo-history" reasoning for synchronic analysis. In light of readily available and abundant historical sources encountered in subsequent studies, it was suggested that this reasoning was a rationalization for avoiding a confrontation with the past. Such criticism may have led to efforts to combine diachronic and synchronic interests among later functionalist studies.

PRINCIPAL CONCEPTS

The primary starting points of Malinowski's theorizing included: 1) understanding behavior in terms of the motivation of individuals, including both rational, 'scientifically' validated behavior and 'irrational', ritual, magical, or religious behavior; 2) recognizing the interconnectedness of the different items which constituted a 'culture' to form some kind of system; and 3) understanding a particular item by identifying its function in the current contemporary operation of that culture (Firth 1957:55).

The inclusiveness of Malinowski's concept of culture is apparent in his statement:

"It obviously is the integral whole consisting of implements and consumers' goods, of constitutional charters for the various social groupings, of human ideas and crafts, beliefs and customs. Whether we consider a very simple or primitive culture or an extremely complex and developed one, we are confronted by a vast apparatus, partly material, partly human and partly spiritual by which man is able to cope with the concrete specific problems that face him" (Malinowski 1944:36).

Essentially, he treated culture as everything pertaining to human life and action that cannot be regarded as a property of the human organism considered as a physiological system. In other words, he treated it as a direct manifestation of biologically inherited patterns of behavior. Culture is that aspect of behavior that is learned by the individual and which may be shared by pluralities of individuals. It is transmitted to other individuals along with the physical objects associated with learned patterns and activities (Firth 1957:58).

Malinowski clearly states his view of a functionalist approach to understanding culture in his posthumously published text, *The Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays*:

1. Culture is essentially an instrumental apparatus by which man is put in a position to better cope with the concrete, specific problems that face him in his environment in the course of the satisfaction of his needs.
2. It is a system of objects, activities, and attitudes in which every part exists as a means to an end.
3. It is an integral in which the various elements are interdependent.
4. Such activities, attitudes and objects are organized around important and vital tasks into institutions such as family, the clan, the local community, the tribe, and the organized teams of economic cooperation, political, legal, and educational activity.
5. From the dynamic point of view, that is, as regards the type of activity, culture can be analyzed into a number of aspects such as education, social control, economics, systems of knowledge, belief, and morality, and also modes of creative and artistic expression" (1944:150).

Malinowski considered **institutions** to be examples of isolated (in the sense of 'bounded') organized behaviors. Since such behavior always involves a plurality of persons, an institution in this sense is therefore a social system, which is a subsystem of society. Though functionally differentiated from other institutions, an institution is a segmentary cross-section of culture that involves all the components included in Malinowski's definition of culture (Firth 1957:59). Malinowski believed that the central feature of the **charter of an institution** is "the system of values for the pursuit of which human beings organize, or enter organizations already existing" (Malinowski 1944:52). As for the concept of function, Malinowski believed it is the primary basis of differentiation of institutions within the same culture. In other words, institutions differ because they are organized to serve different functions. He argued that institutions function for continuing life and "normality" of an organism, or an aggregate of organisms as a species (Firth 1957:60). Indeed, for Malinowski, the primary reference of the concept of function was to a theory of the biological needs of the individual organism:

"It is clear, I think, that any theory of culture has to start from the organic needs of man, and if it succeeds in relating (to them) the more complex, indirect, but perhaps fully imperative needs of the type which we call spiritual or economic or social, it will supply us with a set of general laws such as we need in sound scientific theory" (Malinowski 1944:72-73).

Malinowski's basic theoretical attempt was to derive the main characteristics of the society and its social systems from a theory of the causally pre-cultural needs of the organism. He believed that **culture is always instrumental to the satisfaction of organic needs.** Therefore, he had to bridge the gap between the concept of biologically basic

needs of the organism and the facts of culturally organized behavior. His first major step was to set up the classification of basic needs which could be directly related to a classification of cultural responses which could then in turn be brought into relation to institutions. Next, he developed a second category of needs (derived needs) which he inserted between his basic needs and the institutional integrates of collective behavior (Firth 1957:63).

SYNOPTIC SURVEY OF BIOLOGICAL AND DERIVED NEEDS AND THEIR SATISFACTION IN CULTURE

Basic Needs (Individual)	Direct Responses (Organized, i.e., Collective)	Instrumental Needs	Responses to Instrumental Needs	Symbolic and Integrative Needs	Systems of Thought and Faith
Nutrition (metabolism)	Commissariat	Renewal of cultural apparatus	Economics	Transmission of experience by means of precise, consistent principles	Knowledge
Reproduction	Marriage and family				
Bodily comforts	Domicile and dress	Characters of behavior and their sanctions	Social control		
Safety	Protection and defense			Means of intellectual, emotional, and pragmatic control of destiny and chance	Magic Religion
Relaxation	Systems of play and repose	Renewal of personnel	Education		

Movement	Set activities and systems of communication				
Growth	Training and Apprenticeship	Organization of force and compulsion	Political organization	Communal rhythm of recreation, exercise and rest	Art Sports Games Ceremonial

(SOURCE: Malinowski's Basic Human Needs as presented in Langness 1987:80)

Radcliffe-Brown's emphasis on **social function** is derived from the influence of the French sociological school. This school developed in the 1890s around the work of Emile Durkheim who argued that "social phenomena constitute a domain, or order, of reality that is independent of psychological and biological facts. Social phenomena, therefore, must be explained in terms of other social phenomena, and not by reference to psychobiological needs, drives, impulses, and so forth" (Broce 1973:39-40).

Emile Durkheim argued that ethnographers should study the function of social institutions and how they function together to maintain the social whole (Broce 1973:39-40). Radcliffe-Brown shared this emphasis of studying the conditions under which social structures are maintained. He also believed that the functioning of societies, like that of other natural systems, is governed by laws that can be discovered though systematic comparison (Broce 1873:40). It is important to note here that Firth postulated the necessity of distinguishing between social structure and social organization. Social structure is the principle(s) on which the forms of social relations depend. Social organization refers to "the directional activity, to the working out of social relations in everyday life" (Watson-Gegeo 1991:198).

Radcliffe-Brown established an **analogy between social life and organic life** to explain the concept of function. He emphasized the contribution of phenomena to maintaining social order. However, Radcliffe-Brown's disregard for individual needs was apparent in this analogy. He argued that as long as a biological organism lives, it preserves the continuity of structure, but not preserve the unity of its constituent parts. That is, over a period of time, while the constituent cells do not remain the same, the structural arrangement of the constituent units remains similar. He suggested that human beings, as essential units, are connected by a set of social relations into an integrated whole. Like the biological organism, the continuity of the social structure is not destroyed by changes in the units. Although individuals may leave the society by death or other means, other individuals may enter it. Therefore, the continuity is maintained by the process of social life, which consists of the activities and interactions of individual human beings and of organized groups into which they are united. The social life of a community is the functioning of the social structure. The function of any recurrent activity is the part it plays in the social life as a whole and thereby, the contribution it makes to **structural continuity** (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:178).

<u>Structuralism</u>

Structuralism, in cultural anthropology, the school of thought developed by the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, in which cultures, viewed as systems, are analyzed in terms of the structural relations among their elements. According to Lévi-Strauss's theories, universal patterns in cultural systems are products of the invariant structure of the human mind. Structure, for Lévi-Strauss, referred exclusively to mental structure, although he found evidence of such structure in his far-ranging analyses of kinship, patterns in mythology, art, religion, ritual, and culinary traditions.

The basic framework of Lévi-Strauss's theories was derived from the work of structural linguistics. From N.S. Trubetzkoy, the founder of structural linguistics, Lévi-Strauss developed his focus on unconscious infrastructure as well as an emphasis on the relationship between terms, rather than on terms as entities in themselves. From the work of Roman Jakobson, of the same school of linguistic thought, Lévi-Strauss adopted the so-called distinctive feature method of analysis, which postulates that an unconscious "metastructure" emerges through the human mental process of pairing opposites. In Lévi-Strauss's system the human mind is viewed as a repository of a great variety of natural material, from which it selects pairs of elements that can be combined to form diverse structures. Pairs of oppositions can be separated into singular elements for use in forming new oppositions.

In analyzing kinship terminology and kinship systems, the accomplishment that first brought him to preeminence in anthropology, Lévi-Strauss suggested that the elementary structure, or unit of kinship, on which all systems are built is a set of four types of organically linked relationships: brother/sister, husband/wife, father/son, and mother's brother/sister's son. Lévi-Strauss stressed that the emphasis in structural analysis of kinship must be on human consciousness, not on objective ties of descent or consanguinity. For him, all forms of social life represent the operation of universal laws regulating the activities of the mind. His detractors argued that his theory could be neither tested nor proved and that his lack of interest in historical processes represented a fundamental oversight. Lévi-Strauss, however, believed that structural similarities underlie all cultures and that an analysis of the relationships among cultural units could provide insight into innate and universal principles of human thought.

Claude Levi-Strauss (1908 – 2009) is widely regarded as the father of structural anthropology. In the 1940s, he proposed that the proper focus of anthropological investigations is on the underlying patterns of human thought that produce the cultural categories that organize worldviews hitherto studied (McGee and Warms, 2004: 345). He believed these processes did not determine culture, but instead, operated within culture. His work was heavily influenced by Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss as well as the Prague School of structural linguistics (organized in 1926) which include Roman Jakobson (1896 – 1982), and Nikolai Troubetzkoy (1890 – 1938). From the latter, he derived the concept of binary contrasts, later referred to in his work as **binary oppositions**, which became fundamental in his theory.

In 1972, his book *Structuralism and Ecology* detailed the tenets of what would become structural anthropology. In it, he proposed that culture, like language, is composed of **hidden rules** that govern the behavior of its practitioners. What makes cultures unique and different from one another are the hidden rules participants understand but are

unable to articulate; thus, the goal of structural anthropology is to identify these rules. Levi-Strauss proposed a methodological means of discovering these rules—through the identification of binary oppositions. The structuralist paradigm in anthropology suggests that the structure of human thought processes is the same in all cultures, and that these mental processes exist in the form of binary oppositions (Winthrop 1991). Some of these oppositions include hot-cold, male-female, culture-nature, and raw-cooked. Structuralists argue that binary oppositions are reflected in various cultural institutions (Lett 1987:80). Anthropologists may discover underlying thought processes by examining such things as kinship, myth, and language. It is proposed, then, that a hidden reality exists beneath all cultural expressions. Structuralists aim to understand the underlying meaning involved in human thought as expressed in cultural expressions.

Further, the theoretical approach offered by structuralism emphasizes that elements of culture must be understood in terms of their relationship to the entire system (Rubel and Rosman 1996:1263). This notion, that the whole is greater than the parts, draws upon the Gestalt school of psychology. Essentially, elements of culture are not explanatory in and of themselves, but rather form part of a meaningful system. As an analytical model, structuralism assumes the universality of human thought processes in an effort to explain the "deep structure" or underlying meaning existing in cultural phenomena. "…[S]tructuralism is a set of principles for studying the mental superstructure" (Harris 1979:166, from Lett 1987:101).

The notion of model

The notion of model is an integral part of Lévi – Strauss´s method. With this in mind, the following lines are dedicated to the elucidation of this concept.

In the first place, the model and the structure are not at the same level. The model refers to reality whereas the structure refers to this model based on an empirical evidence. To Lévi – Strauss the construction of thus models is one the basic aims of anthropology. The model represents the description of social relations - „raw material" (Lévi – Strauss; 1963; 279) and comprises solely them. Its goal is to reduce the social interractions to the easily observable level „but the diagram does not pretend to show everything, only the functions which are recurrent in all the cases diagrammatically exemplified, and despite the fact that these functions do not manifest themselves, each time, on the same level of social reality." (Lévi – Strauss; 1960; 44) On the contrary, the social structure, which can be examined only through the medium of the model, grasps the logic of social relations.

Each model which we can identify with structure possess several features. „First, the structure exhibits the characteristics of a system. It is made up of several elements, none of which can undergo a change without effecting changes in all the other elements. Second, for any given model there should be a possibility of ordering a series of transformations resulting in a group of models of the same type. Third, the above properties make it possible to predict how the model will react if one or more of its elements are submitted to certain modifications. Finally, the model should be constituted so as to make

immediately intelligible all the observed facts." (Lévi – Strauss; 1963; 279-280)

According to Lévi – Strauss, there is more than one possible model to describe the given situation. Nevertheless, we must use the model that is the simplest and that meets two criterion: first, it is based on the empirical facts (actual) ; second, it can explain all the situations in satisfaction manner (general). Such a model is called „real" (or „true" – Lévi – Strauss; 1963; 281). After the identification of this model, the reserach continues with the second phase, the experimentation, when the model is subjected to experiments and its behaviour is observed in order to ellucidate the properties of structure.

The two phases of research mentioned above, the observation phase and the experimantation phase, constitute the structural analysis. Accordingly, the structural analysis of models serves to the detailed study and explanation of social relations (e.i.models) in the laboratory environment and uses the gained results to explain the social logic (e.i. social structure).

In order to reach the unconscious structures, the stage of detailed observation of reality is crucial. For Lévi – Strauss, the principal and perhaps only rule of observation level is the detailed description of the reality because it is the only way to be objective and without prejudice: „The biggest ambition of anthropology is to reach objectivity." (Lévi – Strauss; 22; 2011)[7] This phase of research provides the possibility of constructing the model which helps to acceed further to the structure and to show its main characteristics and patterns. That is why Lévi – Strauss determines as the first stage of his research the construction of models based on observation of reality, and as the second phase the experimentation with the model to accomplish the one and only goal – the access to structure. Thus, we can pass from the niveau of reality (models) to the unconscious one (structures).

The nature of models

Lévi – Strauss uses the Boas´s distinction of models and divided the models into two groups: conscious and unconscious models. Conscious models, for example traditions or religion, are often the models constructed by society itself, they are not explanatory and therefore they tend to be misleading. Nevertheless, they make part of social life and that is why Lévi – Strauss says that they may help to bare the structure. Lévi - Strauss calls them „norms".

On the other hand, there are unconscious models – the models that are adjusted for the subjectivity and exterior impacts, composed by the anthropologist himself. These can explain and stand for the unconscious structure.

Correspondingly, this explains Lévi – Strauss´s laud for primitive nations. *The Savage Mind* is famous for the advocacy and equalization of the savage mind with „cultural" one. Lévi – Strauss dedicates the whole oeuvre to the defence of his idea that there is only one way of thinking, and this way of thinking is same for all the people: „…in this book it is neither the mind of savages nor that of primitive or archaic humanity, but rather the mind in its untamed state as distinct from mind cultivated or

domesticated for the purpose of yielding a return." (Lévi- Strauss; 1966; 219). Granted that the basis of thinking is the same for all the people and the mind of savages is in clear untamed state, and there exist almost none external influences that would deform untamableness, Lévi – Strauss summarizes that the primitive nations and their minds offer the best opportunity for the study of human mind. „In them (primitive nations), intellectual mechanism operate relatively unaided by artificial memory and unguided by formal teaching.[…] It is that the product of natural abilities is less confused with that of artificial devices." (Sperber; 27;1979).

The other division of model is into mechanical and statistical models. When there is the model whose elements are at the same scale as the phenomena, such model is mechanical. On the contrary, when the elements of model and the phenomena are on different scale, it is statistical model. (Lévi – Strauss; 1963;283) The mechanical model is the model of structure in which the phenomena obeys some rule and therefore, the unconscious can be reached thanks to this regular repetition. On the other hand, there are structures that can not be explained on the ground of one rule because the phenomena does not obey this rule. Therefore, we must collect the data to explain the phenomena - the model is called statistic.

Structure functionalism

A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, a British social anthropologist, gave the concept of social structure a central place in his approach and connected it to the concept of function. In his view, the components of the social structure have indispensable functions for one another—the continued existence of the one component is dependent on that of the others—and for the society as a whole, which is seen as an integrated, organic entity. His comparative studies of preliterate societies demonstrated that the interdependence of institutions regulated much of social and individual life. Radcliffe-Brown defined social structure empirically as patterned, or "normal," social relations (those aspects of social activities that conform to accepted social rules or norms). These rules bind society's members to socially useful activities.

American sociologist Talcott Parsons elaborated on the work of Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown by using their insights on social structure to formulate a theory that was valid for large and complex societies. For Parsons, social structure was essentially normative—that is, consisting of "institutional patterns of normative culture." Put differently, social behaviour conforms to norms, values, and rules that direct behaviour in specific situations. These norms vary according to the positions of the individual actors: they define different roles, such as various occupational roles or the roles of husband-father and wife-mother. Moreover, these norms vary among different spheres of life and lead to the creation of social institutions—for example, property and marriage. Norms, roles, and institutions are all components of the social structure on different levels of complexity.

Contemporary sociologists criticize later definitions of social structure by scholars such as Spencer and Parsons because they believe the work (1) made improper use of analogy, (2) through its association with functionalism defended the status quo, (3) was notoriously abstract, (4) could not explain conflict and change, and (5) lacked a methodology for empirical confirmation.

Theories of Class and Power

Parsons's work has been criticized for several reasons, not least for the comparatively meagre attention he paid to inequalities of power, wealth, and other social rewards. Other social theorists, including functionalists such as American sociologist Robert K. Merton, have given these "distributional" properties a more central place in their concepts of social structure. For Merton and others, social structure consists not only of normative patterns but also of the inequalities of power, status, and material privileges, which give the members of a society widely different opportunities and alternatives.

In complex societies, these inequalities define different strata, or classes, that form the stratification system, or class structure, of the society. Both aspects of the social structure, the normative and the distributive aspect, are strongly interconnected, as may be inferred from the observation that members of different classes often have different and even conflicting norms and values.

This leads to a consideration contrary to structural functionalism: certain norms in a society may be established not because of any general consensus about their moral value but because they are forced upon the population by those who have both the interest in doing so and the power to carry it out. To take one example, the "norms" of apartheid in South Africa reflected the interests and values of only one section of the population, which had the power to enforce them upon the majority. In theories of class and power, this argument has been generalized: norms, values, and ideas are explained as the result of the inequalities of power between groups with conflicting interests.

The most influential theory of this type has been Marxism, or historical materialism. The Marxian view is succinctly summarized in Marx's phrase "The ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas." These ideas are regarded as reflections of class interests and are connected to the power structure, which is identified with the class structure. This Marxian model, which was claimed to be particularly valid for capitalist societies, has met with much criticism. One basic problem is its distinction between economic structure and spiritual superstructure, which are identified with social being and consciousness, respectively. This suggests that economic activities and relations are in themselves somehow independent of consciousness, as if they occur independently of human beings.

Nevertheless, the Marxian model became influential even among non-Marxist social scientists. The distinction between material structure and nonmaterial superstructure continues to be reflected in sociological textbooks as the distinction between social structure and culture. Social structure here refers to the ways people are interrelated or interdependent; culture refers to the ideas, knowledge, norms, customs, and capacities that they have learned and share as members of a society.

Culture and Personality

BASIC PREMISES

The Culture and Personality movement was at the core of anthropology in the first half of the 20th century. It examined the interaction between psychological and cultural forces at work on the human experience. Culture and Personality was too divided to really be considered a "school of thought." It had no orthodox viewpoint, centralized

leadership, or coherent training program (LeVine 2001); however, there were also some basic ideas with which most practitioners would agree. At a minimum, these would include:

- adult behavior is "culturally patterned,"
- childhood experiences influence the individual's personality as an adult, and
- adult personality characteristics are reflected in the cultural beliefs and social institutions, such as religion (LeVine 2001).

Most prominent culture-and-personality theorists argued that socialization practices directly shape personality patterns. The socialization process molds a person's emotions, thoughts, behaviors, cultural values and norms, allowing the person, should the process work, to fit into and function as productive members in the surrounding human society. The study of culture and personality examined how different socialization practices resulted in different personality types.

Like the Functionalist schools of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, Culture and Personality was one of the reactions against 19th century social evolutionism and diffusionism. Franz Boas and many of his students (such as Ruth Benedict) argued against the views of the early evolutionists, such as Louis Henry Morgan and Edward Tylor, who believe each culture goes through the same hierarchical evolutionary sequence.

There is some debate on exactly how the field of Culture and Personality emerged. Some believe it developed from an interaction between anthropology and Freud's psychoanalysis (Singer 1961). Robert A. LeVine (2001) puts its beginnings with the publication in 1918 of W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki 's "The Polish Peasant in Europe and America." Thomas and Zaniecki (1918) stated that "when viewed as a factor of social evolution the human personality is a ground of the causal explanation of social happenings; when viewed as a product of social evolution it is causally explicable by social happenings."

The field developed more with later work by Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict. Mead's Coming of Age in Samoa (1928) provided "the first sustained consideration of the relation between personality and culture" (Winthrop 1991:214). Culture and Personality reached a peak during the 1930s and 1940s and began to lose support in the 1950s. It was viewed as being unscholarly, and the few remaining practitioners changed the name of their approach to psychological anthropology to avoid the stigma (LeVine 2001), but also to widen its scope. Modern psychological anthropology, among other pursuits, attempts to bridge the gap between anthropology and psychology by examining the "cross-cultural study of social, political, and cultural-historical constitution of the self" (Lindholm 2001).

POINTS OF REACTION

In accounting for the lack of uniformity in the study of Culture and Personality, Robert LeVine, in Culture, Behavior and Personality (1982) argues that there are five different perspectives characterizing the field.

Perhaps the most recognizable view was used by Ruth Benedict, Margret Mead, and Geoffrey Gore. It was known as **the configuration approach** and combined the Boasian idea of cultural relativism with psychological ideas (LeVine 1982:53). It took the stance that the culture and personality were so interconnected that they could not be

viewed separately. Often this view is criticized as exaggerating the consistency of the culture and avoiding intra-cultural variation. Benedict specifically was criticized as being too humanistic and not using enough quantitative data.

A second view was that **anti-culture-personality relationship**. This view held that there was no need to discuss an individual's psyche. In this view, humans have developed adapted responses to the environmental conditions in order to survive. "Personality types or traits have a single normal distribution replicated in each human society" (LeVine 1982:45). A third view is **psychological reductionism**. This involved looking at individual psychology as the cause of social behavior. Freud and those who followed him were contenders for this view. Overall, it seems to have gotten the least amount of attention or followers in the Culture and Personality school.

According to LeVine (1982:59), the last two views, **personality mediation** and **two-systems perspective**, are the only two approaches that survived into the 1980s. Personality mediation was developed by Abram Kardiner, a psychoanalyst, with Ralph Linton, an anthropologist. It posits that the environment affects the **primary institutions**, including the subsistence and settlement patterns, of a society. These, in turn, affect the **basic personality structure** which then affects the **secondary institutions**, such as religion. Personality becomes an intervening variable. This view reconciled sociological and cultural approaches with that of psychological reductionism.

The **two-systems view** was developed by Inkeles and Levinson and Melford Spiro. It held that culture and personality interact and balance one another. Spiro specifically was interested "in the ways in which personality affects the operations of the sociocultural system" (LeVine 1981:59). Culture and personality are viewed as aspects of a total field rather than as separate systems or even as legitimate analytical abstractions from data of the same order (Kluckhohn 1954: 685). In other words, culture and personality are interdependent and track along an interconnected curve. Culture influences socialization patterns, which in turn shapes some of the variance of personality (Maccoby 2000). Because of distinctive socialization practices in different societies, each society has a unique culture and history. Based on this perspective, one should not assume universal laws govern how cultures develop.

There has been recent renewed interest in the connection between culture and personality by some psychological anthropologists (Hofstede and McCrae 2004).