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# CULTURE PATTERN AND ADOLESCENT BEHAVIOUR\*

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THE attention focused on adolescence in this country during the past decade and a half is probably without parallel in human history. The psychiatrist, the educator, the juvenile court officer, the business man, the newspaper reporter and, frequently, bewildered parents have all contributed to this emphasis on teenage problems and behaviour. The increased concern with every facet of adolescent life is apparent from the many conferences, including those in the White House, on juvenile problems and by counting the number of articles related to teenagers in the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature*. From 1955 to 1957 there were fifty-one articles on the subject, as compared with sixteen in the years 1941-43, and only three in 1919-21.

Although much of the emphasis on this transitional period between childhood and maturity lies in the realm of sensationalism related to pathological behaviour—to the 5 per cent or so of deviant adolescents who are “acting out” their frustrations in an unhealthy manner—the increasing trend in the U.S. towards juvenile violence, with concomitant emotional disturbance, is a matter of realistic concern to social scientists. Psychologists and sociologists generally assume that adolescent stresses stem from major biological and social adjustments, which seem to be an unavoidable part of the transitional period. Cultural anthropologists, on the other hand, are less pessimistic. They have been interested in certain cultural factors which may be linked with relatively low incidence of violence among adolescents, as well as those cultural factors which appear to make the process of growing-up less traumatic than others.

## I. THE RORSCHACH FINDINGS

In 1949 one of the co-authors of this article carried out a seven-month period of field work among the Chinese in Hawaii (Note 1†). Part of this field research was to collect Rorschach protocols. Of the 115 Chinese tested, the records of 28 boys and girls, aged 14 to 19 years (mean age 16.03 years), are examined. These individuals, selected on a random basis from two high schools,

\* The Rorschach tests were administered in 1949 by Francis L. K. Hsu as part of a more inclusive field-work project among the Chinese in Hawaii. The 28 protocols were first scored and analysed by Edith Lord. Later they were reanalysed and in part rescored by Blanche Watrous according to Beck to facilitate comparison with a study of Chicago adolescents. Hsu and Watrous are responsible for the writing and final interpretation of the Rorschach findings.

† See Notes prior to Bibliography.

one public and one private, were estimated by their teachers to be "fairly good" students of average to high average intelligence with no outstanding academic or emotional problems.

The records were first scored, according to Klopfer, and analysed by Edith Lord (Note II). To facilitate comparison with the Thetford, Molish and Beck study of personality structure in normal American adolescents,<sup>(23)</sup> they were re-scored by Watrous, according to Beck's system, to determine the amount of organizing activity (total Z score) and the incidence of autistic fantasy (M-) (Note III).

Hawaii Adolescents Males 19, Females 9

Total Na. of subjects.. 28  
 Age range ..... 14-19  
 Mean range ..... 16.0  
 Total R..... 84.3  
 Mean R..... 30.1

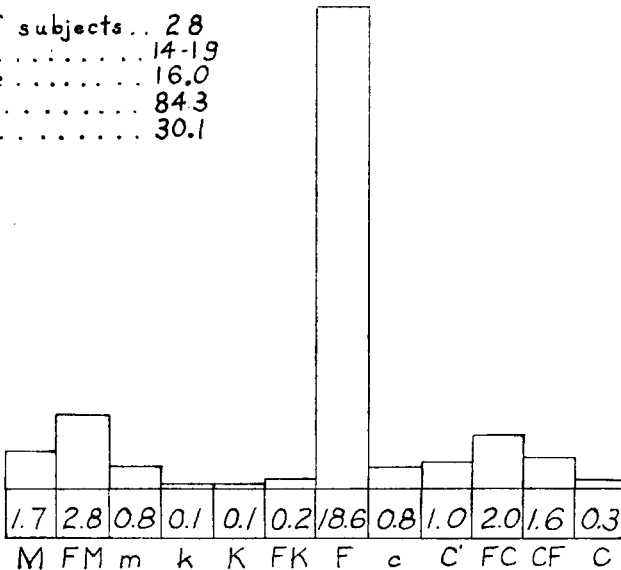


Figure 1

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TABLE A

Mean W	= 8.4; W% 28
„ D	= 14.3; D% 47
„ d	= 2.9; d% 10
„ Dd	= 3.8; Dd% 13
„ S	= 0.3; S% 1
„ Dd + S	= 4.1; Dd + S% 14

TABLE B

Mean F%	62
„ A%	40
„ εC	3.1
„ M:εC	1.7:3.1
„ W:M	8.4:1.7
„ P	12 (actual No., 3.8)

The composite psychogram (Fig. 1) gives the immediate impression of a predominantly healthy personality structure. The number of responses is within the average range (30.1), the intellectual approach (W-D-d-Dd+S%) suggests

that these adolescents have good ability to integrate experience and to evaluate their environment with common-sense judgment and sensitivity. The Hawaiian Chinese adolescents have a healthy respect for reality with a slight tendency to over-rationalization (F%). Their greater response to external than to internal stimuli (M:Sum of C) might indicate that they are “doers” rather than “dreamers”. At the same time their emotions seem smoothly integrated into their total personality functioning. Adaptivity (A%) and conventional conformity (P) are again within normal range. This psychogram compares favourably with Beck’s Spiegel sample for “normal” American adults (Fig. 2).

Chicago Adults and Hawaii Adolescents

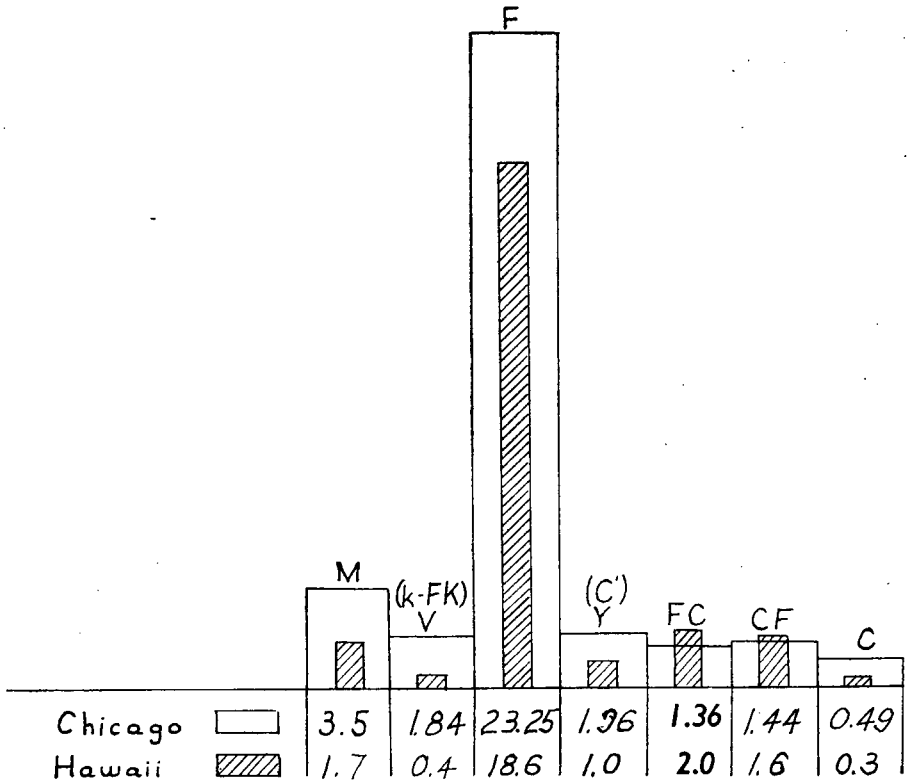


Figure 2

F. Bao

Lord, who analysed the adolescent records before, observes: “We therefore may state . . . that the healthy emotionality . . . is not a function of youth or age but is a part of the Chinese personality. Chinese, including adults, have in their personalities a considerable portion of animal-spirit; they tend to retain the habit of problem-solving—associated with youthfulness in the Western world—by action rather than by fantasizing. The tendency towards over-rationalization persists but is less intense among the adults. . . . There is a slight increase in the

amount of internal living. Also, intellectual life slightly outweighs emotional life with the adult population" (Edith Lord: personal communication). This observation is seemingly not shared by Richards, who says that "it would be close to impossible to pick up a Rorschach record and identify the subject as belonging to a group designated by Dr. Hsu as Hawaiian Chinese". (T. W. Richards analysed 35 Rorschach protocols of Hawaiian Chinese adults from the same 115 collected by Hsu.<sup>(19)</sup>)

We agree with Richards to the extent that psychograms alone are not an infallible means of distinguishing his Hawaiian Chinese adults from white American adults. But when our adolescent records are compared with those in the Thetford, Molish and Beck study,<sup>(24)</sup> certain significant differences as well as similarities stand out. In the following pages, for the sake of brevity, the subjects in the Thetford, Molish and Beck study will be designated as "Chicago" group or "Chicagoans", and the subjects in the Hsu study as "Hawaii" group or "Hawaiians". The 24 adolescents in the former study are among 155 Chicago public school children selected with the same criteria used by Hsu: "normal intelligence, freedom from overt behaviour problems discernible by their teachers, and an average academic achievement". Even the ages of the two groups of subjects are nearly identical, as shown by Table 1.

TABLE 1  
AGE OF ADOLESCENTS

		Total	Boys	Girls	Age Range	Mean C.A.
		No.				
Hawaii	... ..	28	19	9	14-19 yrs. <sup>(25)</sup>	16.03 yrs.
Chicago	... ..	24	14	10	14-17 yrs. 11 mos.	15 yrs. 8 mos.

Let us now compare the characteristics of the two sets of records. In total productivity (R), the Chicago youngster possesses a considerably greater amount of intellectual energy than do the Hawaiians:

TABLE 2  
PRODUCTIVITY (R)

			N	Mean	SD
Hawaii	... ..	...	28	30.10	19.80
Chicago	... ..	...	24	41.35	15.00 <sup>(25)</sup>

The Hawaiian adolescents seem to be typically cautious, constricted, and conventional when faced with a new and threatening situation. On the first Rorschach card, more than half the Hawaiian adolescents gave only 1 or 2 associations and almost one-half showed marked rigidity (F% 100).

#### (a) Intellectual approach

Intellectually, the Hawaiians exhibit a fairly well-rounded approach (Fig. 1) with W% 28, D% 47, d% 10, Dd S% 14. This percentage of whole, large detail and small detail responses conforms to Klopfer's optimum—with a slightly greater per cent of tiny detail and white space percepts than is considered desirable. The average number of S, 0.84, for the group is low; only 7 boys and 2 girls used white space for the location of percepts. The Hawaiians, therefore, seem conspicuously lacking in oppositional tendencies or in feelings of self-assertiveness.

Although the Hawaiians cannot be compared directly with the Chicago adolescents in terms of intellectual approach, because of differences in the Beck

and Klopfer scoring of location areas (Note III), the degree of organizing activity ( $Z$ ) sheds some light on the similarities of the two groups with respect to intellectual functioning. Beck has advanced the  $Z$  score "as an index to the organizational aspects of intellectual functioning as revealed by the Rorschach test",<sup>(26)</sup> postulating that "drive and intellectual level are the two personality components most closely related to this ability". The ability to organize meaningful environmental elements is similar to the ability to produce whole responses. As noted below, the Hawaiian adolescents show slightly greater organizing activity than the mainland groups:

TABLE 3  
ORGANIZING ACTIVITY  
Z SCORE TOTAL

			<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Hawaiians	...	...	28	31.60	22.10
Chicagoans	...	...	24	28.90	23.00

Thus, while the Chicago group shows greater quantity of intellectual energy ( $R$ ), the Hawaiians may use their drive more constructively. The large Standard Deviations in both groups indicate, of course, in statistical terms, that the intra-group variation is greater than inter-group variation. This fact does not, however, negate the importance of the overall inter-group differences.

A striking difference between the two groups lies in the high ratio of  $W$  to  $M$  (whole responses to human movement percepts) given by the Hawaiians. Twenty-seven of the 28 tested gave a higher ratio of  $W:M$  with only one male showing a ratio of  $W:M$ , 1:2, whereas another male gave a ratio of  $W:M$ , 17:1, while others gave ratios of 22:2, 9:0, 8:0, 8:1.<sup>(7)</sup>

### (b) *Fantasy*

The average quantity of fantasy production, as noted above, is 1.7  $M$ . Although this average is too high to suggest marked repressive emphasis, there is some reluctance among the Hawaiian adolescents to use fantasy as a personality defence. Twenty-five per cent of the subjects tested gave no  $M$  response, and only one subject (with an extremely high Sum  $C$ ) gave 5  $M$  associations or 8 per cent of his total output. The quality of the fantasy is particularly significant in assessing Hawaiian personality. Only one-fourth of the total number of 47 fantasy percepts are extensor—connoting active, striving imagination or suggesting an unconscious effort on the part of the subject to free himself from restraints (Note IV); no subject had more than 1 extensor  $M$ . The predominant adolescent-fantasy, on the other hand, is flector  $M$ , related to the need to submit to the stresses of the environment, to accept passively, to be submissively resigned to one's difficulties. It is also interesting to note, in terms of this passive adjustment, that the infrequent extensor  $M$  occurred only in records containing flector or static  $M$ . Typical expressions of Hawaiian fantasy appeared in card III. They are ones such as "two people trying to carry something", "two persons struggling to lift . . .", etc., which are clearly flector in quality, or the Hawaiians use static fantasy, with people "talking", "standing", or "looking". Thus, the Hawaiian adolescents do not appear "ambition-ridden". Their goals are probably those which are realistic of attainment. They do not fight against their environment but accept environmental stresses passively—as suggested by both the low incidence of oppositional tendencies ( $S$ ) together with the submissive quality of the fantasy.

The re-scoring of Hawaiian M responses according to Beck (Note III) shows the near absence of autistic or highly personal fantasy (M-) among these adolescents. Beck has related this finding in anxious, non-schizophrenic adolescents to "the loss of a parent for purposes of support to the child"<sup>(3)</sup>; the parent is failing to provide the needed warmth of feeling. Beck has also noted these Rorschach test associations in schizophrenics of all ages.

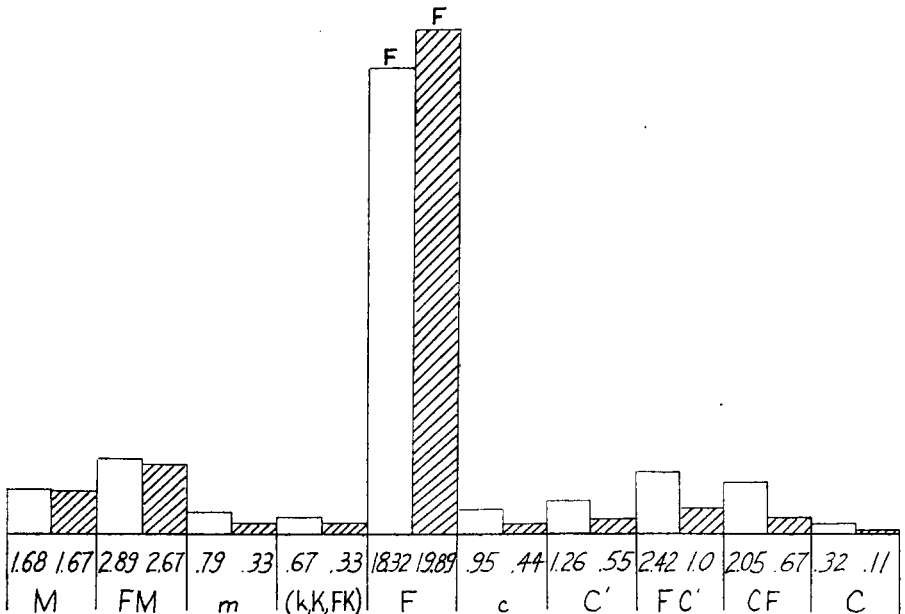
TABLE 4  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF M-

Number of Responses	Hawaiian Adolescent %	Chicago Adolescent %
3 (or more) ... ..	0	0
2 ... ..	0	4
1 ... ..	10	25
0 ... ..	90	71
Mean ... ..	0.10	0.33
SD ... ..	0.39	0.56

In absolute number, only one Hawaiian gave one M-. Thus, the Hawaiian adolescents would appear, only minimally, to resort to this potentially pathological personality defence as compared to the greater incidence of such behaviour in the Chicago group.

Male Adolescents ; N=19 ; Age 14-19 ; Mean Age 15.84

Female Adolescents ; N=9 ; Age 15-19 ; Mean Age 16.22



Male  
Female

Figure 3

7. Bar

In terms of purely formal control, the Hawaiians could be considered somewhat constricted (F% 62). But the males with a mean of 59% appear to be more relaxed and less cautious when compared with the females with a mean of 71% F (see Fig. 3). Likewise the males show more ability to engage in generalized thinking whereas the females show more practical judgment.

TABLE A

*Male Adolescents*

	N	19	(H + A) :	(Hd + Ad)
Mean R		31.6	3.26 + 10 :	2.26 + 3.67
" F%		59	13.26 :	5.93
" A%		40	(Fm + m) :	(Fc + c + C')
" εC		3.74	(2.89 + 0.79) :	(0.95 + 1.26)
" M:εC		1.68:3.74	13 :	6.93
" W:M		9.26:1.68		
" P		3.7		
Mean W =	9.26 W%	3.0		
" D =	14.0 D%	45		
" d =	3.26 d%	11		
" Dd =	3.58 Dd%	11		
" S =	0.84 S%	3		
Dd + S =	4.42%	14		

TABLE B

*Female Adolescents*

	N	9	(H + A) :	(Hd + Ad)
Mean R		28	(3.0 + 8.67) :	(2.55 + 3.78)
" F%		71	11.67 :	6.33
" A%		40	(Fm + m) :	(Fc + c + C')
" εC		1.34	(2.67 + 0.67) :	(0.44 + 0.055)
" M:εC		1.67:1.34	3.34 :	0.99 X
" W:M		6.67:1.67		
" P		3.9		
Mean W =	6.67%	24		
" D =	14.89%	53		
" d =	2.11%	8		
" Dd =	4.22%	15		
" S =	0.11%	0.4		
Dd + S =	4.33%	15		

A rough comparison of Beck's vista response (FV) among the Chicago adolescents, whose mean FV is 1.87, with the Hawaiian adolescents, whose mean is 0.2 FV (FK), points up the fact that the latter have fewer self-appraisal tendencies and less self-consciousness than the former. Similarly, despite the fact that Hsu specifically inquired for shading responses (C'), the Hawaiian mean in this category is much less than Beck's mean, 1.0 FY (C') versus 2.50 FY. Thus, the Chinese seem to have not only fewer feelings of intellectual inadequacy than the American adolescents but possibly fewer dysphoric feelings as well, although these interpretations should be considered with caution because of the limited nature of the research.

(c) *Emotionality*

The total response of the Chinese adolescents to bright colour, as noted below, is strikingly similar to that in the Chicago group:

TABLE 5  
SUM OF COLOUR (SUM OF C) RESPONSES

	N	Mean	SD
Hawaiians	28	3.10	1.64
Chicagoans	24	3.03	3.02



The Sum of Colour is considered an index to the amount of affective energy available for coping with the external environment. Among the Chinese adolescents only 3 subjects, all girls, gave no associations with bright colour determinants (10%). When the colour responses are differentiated as to form-colour (FC), colour-form (CF), and pure colour (C), there are certain interesting contrasts between the Chinese and American adolescents:

TABLE 6  
FC RESPONSES

			<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Hawaiians	...	...	28	2.0	3.14
Chicagoans	...	...	24	1.13	1.67

TABLE 7  
CF RESPONSES

			<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Hawaiians	...	...	28	1.67	0.94
Chicagoans	...	...	24	1.92	2.08

TABLE 8  
C RESPONSES

			<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Hawaiians	...	...	28	0.30	0.82
Chicagoans	...	...	24	0.33	0.62

When the ratios FC:CF of the Hawaiians and Chicagoans are compared, the former's ratio of 2.0:1.67 suggests a more mature emotional rapport than the latter's ratio of 1.67:1.92. This greater degree of identification with others and greater responsiveness to the needs of others again are both consistent, as we shall see later, with the varying childhood emphases of the two groups. On this basis it could be predicted that the Hawaiian adolescents would not temporarily regress into emotional outbursts and stormy explosions as frequently as would teenagers in Chicago.

#### (d) Content

There are other significant differences between the Hawaiians and the Chicagoans. The animal response (A) is considered an index of adaptability. According to Beck the mean A% of his control group is 46.87, and its standard deviation, 17.58.<sup>(4)</sup> The mean A of the Hawaii adolescents and that of the Chicago group are both similar to Beck's control group, except that the Hawaii group is slightly more flexible and less stereotyped than the Chicago group, the figures being 40.0% for the former and 44.50% for the latter.

The ability to perceive whole human associations (H) is interpreted as an index of empathy with other people. Beck speculates that perception of H varies directly with intelligence: the greater the number of H, the greater the degree of intellectual liberation. The perception of the part human or human detail (Hd) suggests less liberation of this kind of energy. The mean H response of the Hawaiian and Chicago groups is almost identical:

TABLE 9  
H RESPONSES

			<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Hawaii	...	...	28	3.43	3.35
Chicago	...	...	24	3.50	3.06

There are, however, differences in the Hd responses:

TABLE 10  
Hd RESPONSES

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Hawaii ... ..	28	2.25	3.18
Chicago ... ..	24	4.16	3.98

The higher Hd than H mean of the Chicago group as compared with the Hawaiian sample raises several questions. Thetford, Molish and Beck,<sup>(27)</sup> comparing their Chicago children's findings with the adult (Spiegl) findings, reported in the literature that the adults show higher whole human than part human (H:Hd). They also found that among the Chicago children the mean Hd increased at each of the three developmental stages investigated, leading them to speculate as to whether inhibitory processes were operating in childhood and adolescence. When the H and Hd of the adult and Hawaiian adolescents are compared, the same ratio of higher H than Hd obtains:

TABLE 11  
HAWAIIAN H AND Hd RESPONSES

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i> <i>H</i>	<i>Mean</i> <i>Hd</i>
Adults ... ..	39	4.56	2.18
Adolescents ... ..	28	3.43	2.25

These findings lead us to suggest that while among the Hawaiians as among the Chicagoans the number of H responses varies directly with intelligence, the ratio of higher H than Hd responses among the Hawaiian adolescents indicates a greater degree of mental freedom.

Acculturation among the adolescent Hawaiian Chinese apparently proceeds far more smoothly than among many groups subjected to the influence of alien cultures. That this process is achieved without disruption of pre-existing goals and ideals is apparent in the similarity of "normal" American and Hawaiian psychograms, and by the absence of conspicuous psycho-neurotic behaviour. These youngsters show neither autistic fantasy activity nor uncontrolled emotionality. There is no serious imbalance between their inner living and their response to the external environment. Although the adolescents are sensitive to their social environment, they do not appear hypercritical or suspicious. Their degree of wariness appears normal ( $H+A:Hd+Ad=12.33:6.13$ ). They are certainly not overly concerned with bodily anxiety (low mean At [anatomy] response). The general range of their content is healthy. Most significantly, their reality testing is at a healthy level, and their occasional uncritical thinking seems benign in nature.

From Rorschach findings the overwhelming feature in the personality pattern of the adolescent Hawaiians appears to be the retention of the Chinese traditional psychological orientation in alien soil. The traditional respect for the father figure, acceptance of authority symbols and, inferentially, of paternal traditions remain—particularly among the males. There is little rebellion on the surface and there are few rebellious strivings within. The conflict of generations is not superficially apparent. These adolescents are socially adaptive, for the most part emotionally unperturbed. The boys do not seem overly anxious about their masculine rôle, and the girls do not seem to reject their femininity. These youngsters have apparently no passionate wish to change; no felt need

to alter their environment. They tend to accept their rôles and they seek goals within their grasp. It is doubtful if they will become "big achievers", or will be flamboyantly successful by American standards. It is equally doubtful that they will become "discontents" or that their ego organization will become disruptive. A more detailed comparison of the Hawaiian adolescents with the Thetford, Molish and Beck study of 24 normal Chicago adolescents yields the following similarities and differences:

(1) The intellectual approach of the two groups is roughly similar, with the Chicago youth having a greater amount of intellectual energy at their disposal, but with the Hawaiians exploiting their mental resources in a somewhat more constructive, ambitious manner.

(2) Both quantity and quality of Hawaiian fantasy depart from the white American pattern. The Chicago youth show greater dependence upon inner living, with the Hawaiian adolescent more reluctant to internalize stresses; Hawaiian fantasy, when expressed, is predominantly passive in nature, suggesting submissive acceptance of the environment. The incidence of creative imagination among the Hawaiians is, however, optimally proportionate to their level of drive. Also significantly, the Hawaiians show a lower incidence of autistic, pathological fantasy than the American youth.

(3) The Hawaiian Chinese seem to have fewer self-appraisal tendencies and fewer dysphoric reactions than the Chicago group.

(4) The two groups show a surprisingly similar quantity of affective energy. However, the Hawaiians exhibit less emotional immaturity, more empathy and greater sensitivity to the needs of others. The affect expressed is less egocentric than among the Chicago group.

(5) Both groups show healthy intellectual adaptivity. However, the Chicago sample suggests more inhibitory, more wary behaviour with respect to other individuals than the Hawaiians.

## II. THE WIDER CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Margaret Mead was the anthropological pioneer who first pointed out that adolescent turbulence, regarded as universal by the Westerners, was absent in Samoa.<sup>(15)</sup> The Chinese in Hawaii are also rarely troubled by adolescent difficulties. In racial composition the Chinese make up a little less than 6 per cent of the total population in Hawaii. The majority of the original Chinese migrated to the islands during the latter half of the 19th century. Today most of the Chinese in Hawaii are second, third and fourth generation Americans, spreading over the entire economic and social ladder of the state. Even by 1930, 50 per cent of the males and 70 per cent of the females were engaged in "preferred" occupations. In 1949 there were no Chinese hand laundry establishments in the islands. Instead there were Chinese banks, department stores, and a wide variety of business and industrial establishments. A majority of the Chinese live outside the bounds of "Chinatown" in Honolulu. By 1949, the Chinese had a greater percentage of school attendance than all other racial groups. Most Chinese speak excellent English and live in American style. According to the usual standards, the Chinese of Hawaii, except for physical type, seem very American. Certain cultural differences from the average American are, however, apparent:

though most present-day Chinese in Hawaii have become Catholics or Protestants, there are also Chinese Mormons, Chinese Bahaians and Chinese Buddhists. As a rule, rather than the exception, members of the same family have different religious affiliations: for example, there may be a Catholic father, a Methodist son, an Episcopalian daughter, while the mother continues to worship at Chinese temples. Differences in religion do not seem to affect family solidarity, and Christian children frequently go with their elders to Chinese temples—seeing no inconsistency in this behaviour. The relationships between marriage partners and between parents and children appear more casual and less intense than among white Americans. But their adolescents are family oriented to a much greater degree than the average teenager on the mainland of the U.S. It is not that the Chinese boys and girls in Hawaii do not desire independence. They do, but, at the same time, they accept parental injunction and control in general. For example, the adolescents prefer to choose their own mates, set up their independent households, name their children and themselves according to prevailing fashion. However, if parental wishes are opposed, they tend to be less insistent upon these prerogatives than would most young white Americans. They seem to be less sensitive about parental interference. They are more inclined to accept a compromise situation, reconciling the wishes of their parents with their own preferences, even in the matter of mate selection. The most striking difference, in fact, between the Chinese American adolescents in Hawaii and white American adolescents on the mainland is the absence of overt rebellion against authority. The “big fight” with parents is lacking. The Chinese in Hawaii are simply not troubled by adolescent difficulties. Both police files and interviews with parents and social workers suggest that the “problem adolescent”, when found, is an exception. It is a common fact among Chinese parents in Hawaii that, while white Americans anticipate more problems as their children approach adolescence, they expect less and less problems as their children progress in age (Note V).

All these observations bear out our Rorschach findings. We must ask, then, what are the factors which make for a relative lack of adolescent turbulence among Chinese Americans and a relative abundance of it among white Americans?

Our hypothesis is that the Chinese way of life is situation-centred and that of the Americans is individual-centred. (The hypothesis and its application which follow were developed by Hsu, with which Watrous and Lord do not necessarily concur.) The situation-centred way of life encourages the individual to find a satisfactory adjustment with the external environment of men and things, while the individual centred pattern enjoins the individual to find means of fulfilling his own desires and ambitions. The individual-centred man tends not only to view the world in absolutist terms, but also to insist on standing or falling alone. As a result he is likely to experience much emotional conflict. His triumphs are moments of effusive and public ecstasy, and his failures are moments of deep and secret misery. In neither can he really share with others, especially the latter. Never being sure of his human relations, he has a perpetual fear of failure, though he jealously guards his privacy, however dear that privacy costs. The situation-centred man tends not only to view the world in relativistic terms, but also consciously to seek mutual dependence with circles of fellow men. As a result he enjoys a great deal of mental ease. His triumphs are never solely a

vindication of his own noble qualities, for his parents, relatives and departed ancestors have all generously contributed. Similarly, his failures are never a complete proof of his own inability to make the grade, for his parents, relatives and departed ancestors share the blame. Securely anchored in his primary groups, he is always protected from being a complete failure, though often he suffers from too many relatives. (A complete statement of this hypothesis and extensive qualitative documentation of it are given in the work by Francis L. K. Hsu.<sup>(9)</sup>)

In order to show how this hypothesis can help us to explain the psychological contrasts between our Hawaii and Chicago adolescents we propose to examine four factors bearing on the life of the adolescent: (a) childhood experiences; (b) parental attitudes; (c) the rôle of the peer group; and (d) the demands of the wider society.

#### (a) *Childhood Experiences*

Before two years of age Chinese children have, as a rule, a secure environment. Among both the wealthy and the poor the customary Chinese practice is to feed the baby, or heed it in some other way, whenever it cries. The wealthy parents do so with the aid of wet nurses and servants. The poor mothers carry their young ones on their backs when they go to the fields. As soon as the child is weaned the picture is, however, somewhat different. In matters of food and clothing, the basic pattern remains one of complete and nearly unregulated satisfaction. The children of the poor may be forced to undergo uncertainty and want by necessity, but that is not the intention of their parents and the little ones can see it for themselves. The children of the rich can get anything they want. They are constantly spoiled by servants. But in social and ceremonial matters the attitudes of the Chinese parents are less tolerant. In the first place, children are praised and rewarded, or rebuked and punished, in direct proportion to their ability to measure up to adult behaviour standards. Chinese parents do not seem to worry about frustration or security in their children. They are much more concerned with the question of social and ritual propriety. While in every society it is the wealthy families who try to conform to the culturally upheld ideal, the weight of this Chinese pattern was often even felt by the children of the comparatively poor. There is a widely circulated and dramatized folk-tale which, though extreme, is nevertheless revealing. Once upon a time there lived a man with his sickly mother, a wife and son. The family being poor, he soon found that he could not support all four. With the consent of his wife he decided to bury his son alive. But as soon as he dug into the ground, quantities of gold came up with his spade. Heaven was moved by his filial feelings, so that a would-be tragedy concluded happily for all. In real life, whenever warranted by economic necessity, it is not unusual for grandparents to be served at the expense of grandchildren.

In the second place, infantile or childish behaviour, though often providing amusement for adults, is not emphasized, nor idealized, nor played up through research. Up to the time of World War II there were few toys, and little academic effort at understanding the psychology of children. In fact, Chinese parents do not seem to assume the existence of a children's world qualitatively different from that of the adults. Children are regarded as little adults who will become adults after adult models. The traditional Chinese terms for education,

when translated into English, approximate the words "instruction", "restraint", "learning".

In the third place, the maturing Chinese child will experience a good deal of inconsistency in his social relationship. Chinese, especially the mothers, are not too concerned about consistency in discipline. Even if the mother wants such consistency, various relatives will make her discipline inconsistent. The child's grandmother is always there ready to go over his mother's head. Aunts, uncles, older cousins and grandfather will all be unconcerned about giving the child some forbidden articles while his mother is not looking. The customary family ideal is such that even if parents object to such interferences it would appear socially unreasonable for them to make an issue of it. In other words, Chinese parents are seldom the absolute and exclusive masters within the four walls of their homes.

Fourth, and above all, the growing Chinese male is initiated into the adult world imperceptibly. The inconsistency in his early experiences would have already given him a head start in this direction. Then he begins to participate in adult activities as early as he can manage it. By accompanying his father to business meetings, temple fairs and on social calls he becomes almost effortlessly, and at an early stage of his development, acquainted with his place in society. Except in matters pertaining to sex, parents make little effort in keeping their own affairs from the male child. If the family has just suffered a major catastrophe the parents do not discuss among themselves whether they should let Johnny know. Johnny suffers with them right away.

From ten or twelve years of age onwards, Chinese males do not experience any sudden change of status. The same gradual initiation into their adult rôles continues.

Like the Chinese children, American children also suffer from few significant frustrations before weaning. But between the time of weaning and the legal age of 18 or 21, the circumstances surrounding the average American child tend to be drastically different from those within the experience of the average Chinese child. Like Chinese parents, American parents emphasize adequate satisfaction in food and clothing for their children. But while the lots of the wealthy children and the poor differ widely in China because of necessity, there is less discrepancy of this sort in America. There are few American parents who have to starve their children because of dire want. But in other matters the differences are more intensive and far-reaching.

First, with the possible exception of the very poor, or fresh immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, Americans from middle classes upward tend to apply themselves diligently toward giving their children a qualitatively different world from that of themselves. Nearly ideal conditions prevail in this world of the young. It is further buttressed by Santa Claus, tales about the love and sorrow of animals, a nearly complete correlation between reward and good conduct on the one hand and between punishment and bad conduct on the other. In time of family distress artificial behaviour on the part of the parents keeps the children away from the shock of reality. Many parents send their children to Sunday schools when they have doubts, in order to bring their children up "right". In time of want children are more likely to be served than



parents. The many arms of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in America, when contrasted with the many societies "for Saving Papers With Written Characters On" or societies "for Giving Away Free Coffins" in China, make the differences of the two cultures very apparent.

Secondly, infantile and childish behaviour is endorsed by American parents, constantly boosted by American business and permanently played up by American research. One of the major duties of the American parents is to enable their children to play and see that they do. The over \$800 million a year toy industry, the myriad of commercialized juvenile literature, and the variety of occasions and days during the year on which gifts are expected and given are all strong evidence indicating who are centres of the society.

Thirdly, American parents as a whole emphasize consistency in discipline to an extent unknown among Chinese parents. It is not supposed, of course, that in their actual day-to-day life American parents can be as consistent as they wish to be. But their difference from the Chinese comes first from the ideal they emphasize (and which their family counsellors and child psychologists tell them to emphasize), and secondly from the fact that they live in individual families where few occasions for interference of grandparents or other in-laws exist. Furthermore, even when grandmothers take over during an emergency the older lady is only supposed to administer things according to laws laid down by the younger woman. This consistency tends to suppose a complete or nearly complete correlation between reward and good conduct on the one hand, and punishment and bad conduct on the other.

Lastly, from an early date American parents encourage their children to be self-reliant. When they are a little older, the label of "sissy" or "cry-baby" will shame most youngsters into reacting promptly. Here again we are aware of the fact that many American children do in fact fall back on their parents when the going is tough and the hands of their parents, especially those of their mothers, are very heavy. In fact, Irene M. Josselyn, a practising psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, describes vividly how difficult this struggle for independence is for many youngsters and how one young 14-year-old girl resents her mother for dictating what she should wear and for letting her choose what she desires to wear. In other words, independence is both desired and feared.<sup>(11)</sup> Clinical psychologists can usually confirm the impression that they see an inordinate number of cases in which the problems of children are rooted in the heavy hands of their mothers. It is to be expected, in a culture where self-reliance is equivalent to self-respect, most of those individuals who are in need of clinical help to be those who have failed in some way to measure up to the accepted pattern of self-reliance. The reason why some American mothers' hands are heavy will be discussed in the next section. In three years of work, first as a medical social worker and later as a psychiatric social worker in Peking Union Medical College Hospital between 1934 and 1937, Hsu did not find the type of mother-child problem known to American clinicians. From Hsu's experiences in China, both as an individual and as an anthropological field worker, he can state that, among Chinese children, the type of struggle for independence described by Josselyn was rare.

All these are understandable once we appreciate the high American premium on self-reliance as contrasted to its low esteem in the Chinese situation. Further-

more, American parents foster this sense of self-reliance by separating their children from the adult world. In this culture, children have no social rôles in the adult world except for being children. Besides family visits to grandmothers or aunts or during vacations, children are not involved with affairs of the parents. Parents frequently see their friends after having put their children to bed and in the charge of a sitter. Youngsters have their own playmates, whom the parents may not know, and their own jargons, which often take the adults by surprise.

The results of these differing childhood experiences are far-reaching. A majority of Chinese youngsters grow up equipped with a much more realistic view of life and the world around them than their American counterparts. Theirs is a world in which basic satisfactions often intertwine with frustrations, in which principles are frequently affected by compromises, in which hypocrisies and circuitous means of getting out of trouble are not uncommon. Adolescence is a time when the Chinese youngsters have already become acquainted with, and in many cases initiated into, their rôles in society. The shortcomings of the greater world do not give Chinese adolescents any sudden emotional trauma; they have sampled many of them before. The intricacies of the adult society fail to cause them confusion and bewilderment. They have long known differences between what adults do and what they say, and have nearly perfected the art themselves.

The majority of American youngsters grow up, in contrast to the Chinese, equipped with an idealistic attitude towards life and the world around them. Theirs is a world in which light and shadow in human affairs are crystal clear, in which God invariably punishes the bad and rewards the deserving, and in which hypocrisies are banished and frustrations at a minimum. The imperfect world of which American youngsters become aware at adolescence is therefore full of sudden emotional shocks. They are confused because the rules they have been used to often no longer apply. They may refuse to heed their parents at this time simply because they are disillusioned by what they had been told thus far and what they have now found.

#### *(b) Parental Attitudes*

The Chinese parents, having never been complete masters of their children in the first place, do not feel especially rejected as the youngsters become more independent. Furthermore, the nature of the Chinese way of life has been such that age, far from being a liability, is a premium. To the Chinese parents, maturity and independence of the children mean only an assurance of a more permanent place in life for themselves.

The American adolescent is a person who has physically grown into the adult world, but with his social and cultural development lagging behind. Having been taught to be self-reliant and aggressive, he is now ready to explore on his own. Facing this, the American parents' attitude towards their children is a seeming paradox. When they say they want Johnny to be independent they mean he can wash his own hands, turn on the light or take the bus by himself, but they decidedly do not mean that Johnny can refuse to eat of his own choice. So when the adolescent is physically ready to explore this confusing world on his own, the parents, accustomed to being complete masters of their children, suddenly find themselves incapable of control. American parents feel the danger of rejection more vividly than the Chinese parents because, in America, once the



children become independent parents will have few honoured places in the scheme of things. They therefore want to retain their parental power as long as they can. This is why, as we saw above, the hands of American parents on their children, especially those of American mothers, tend to be heavy. To the American adolescent this is often unbearable. The infant at birth can be satisfied with a bottle. At three or four he gets excited about being dressed like Daddy. He will demand to be thrilled by more and bigger things as his physical power grows. According to psychologists children are most suggestible at the age of eight or nine, after which the suggestibility decreases. Seen from the present analysis, this climax of suggestibility is probably a time when American children find their best adjustment between parental restraint and their own physical capability, after which the latter has outgrown the former.

In this way the Chinese adolescent has less desire to rebel against parental authority not only because his process of initiation into the wider society has begun much earlier in life but also because his parents have little psychological need to hold on to him. The American adolescent experiences more difficulties not only because his life so far has had little reference to the wider society but also because his parents have the strong urge to hold on to him.

### (c) *The Rôle of the Peer Group*

It is a foregone conclusion that human beings, in order to be human, must lead their existence in a human group, not only for food, sex and language but also for a sense of affiliation and importance. Elsewhere Hsu has classified these latter needs into sociability, security and status and examined how this classification is preferable to that of some others and can help to explain the qualitative and quantitative differences in human behaviour in different societies.<sup>(10)</sup> But whether scholars agree on these categories, we do not believe that there is any doubt that all human beings, in one manner or another, seek group affiliations. However, while the Chinese situation-centred orientation of life stresses mutual dependence between the generations, the American individual-centred orientation of life emphasizes reliance upon the self. The Chinese, with their ideals of filial piety and reverence to tradition, authority and the past, enjoin their youngsters never to sever their relations with their elders. The Americans, with their ideals of freedom, equality, and drive for creativity and for future, encourage their youngsters to be independent of the adults almost from the beginning of life. In the last section we saw how this independence on the part of the young affects the thinking and behaviour of parents when their children really grow up. The same independence affects the young as soon as they go to school. Independence from parents simply means that they must seek affiliation with peer groups. The greater the sense of independence from parents, the more urgent the need for affiliation with peer groups. In other words, the Chinese youngsters have greater relationship along the vertical line with their elders, but the American youngsters are more deeply involved along the horizontal line with their peers. The resulting psychological difference is significant. The individual who has chiefly to maintain horizontal relationships, must make greater exertions than those who have mainly to deal with vertical relationships. For, from the children's point of view, parents, whether in China or the U.S., can almost be taken for granted but peers cannot. In fact, while parents in all societies tend to express their affection for their children and, in most societies, work hard to make sure their children are affectionate towards

them even when harshly treated in return, peers nowhere have any great love for each other. In fact, peers, whether in highly individualistic societies or not, always compete with each other, and therefore one must be continuously on the look-out for trouble with them, trouble which might lead to rejection.

The American adolescent is therefore likely to be far more under the tyranny of his peers than his Chinese counterpart. This gives the former far greater reason for anxiety, for conformity, for violent gestures, including immoral acts and even murder and mayhem, if these are dictated by his needs for retaining or improving his status in his peer group (Note VI).

Among those who operate within the legal bounds, the extent to which American youngsters are tied to their peers may be gauged from a "Cornell Study of Student Values", which covers a total of 2,760 undergraduate men and women attending Cornell and 4,585 undergraduate men and women attending ten universities (U.C.L.A., Dartmouth, Fisk, Harvard, Michigan, North Carolina, Texas, Wayne, Wesleyan and Yale). Suchman, in a summary report on this study, concludes that "much of the student's development during four years in colleges does *not* take place in classrooms. The conformity, contentment and self-centred confidence of the present-day American students are not academic values inculcated by the faculty, but rather the result of a highly organized and efficiently functioning extracurricular social system".<sup>(21)</sup> We do not have a comparative inquiry conducted among the Chinese in China or in Hawaii. However, it is well known that, even as late as 1949, Chinese high schools rarely had any kind of intra-school organizations besides athletic ones, and in Chinese colleges and universities there mostly flourished "native place" organizations, each composed of youngsters from the same province. A recurrent complaint by many observers was that all such voluntary associations did not last, for the students lacked lasting interest in them. In fact it has often been said, by Chinese and Westerners, that the Chinese were like loose sands which do not stick together. In the light of our analysis here, the Chinese youngsters lacked the urge to cohere with their peer groups because they had a far more tenacious relationship with their elders on the vertical plane. Hawaii's high school and college in 1949 had more American type of peer organizations. In the University of Hawaii there are even Chinese fraternities and sororities. But, as reported elsewhere,<sup>(8)</sup> they entered into the affairs of their elders in a manner and to an extent unknown among Americans to the U.S.

#### (d) *The Demands of the Wider Society*

Adolescence, particularly later adolescence, is a time when the individual is well within range of the adult in physical capabilities. We have seen that in the Chinese situation the adolescent's physical growth is accompanied by a corresponding process of his gradual entry into adult society, while in the American situation it is not. However, regardless of whether he is or is not initiated into adult society the adolescent, with his increased mobility, contact and perception, cannot help but be influenced by the dominant patterns of culture governing the society. In America the most desired position of the individual is a combination of (a) economic and social independence and (b) success to this end with speed. Economic independence means to find a job and that one must no longer live on an allowance. That achievement in turn helps him to establish social independence which includes, among other things, full control of one's

own hours, movements and activities. As to success with speed, nothing expresses the sentiment better than the recent proposal by Grayson Kirk, President of Columbia University, to shorten our college education from four years to three years, and the enthusiastic and favourable comments this proposal has received so far.<sup>(12)</sup> The increasingly lowered age of dating is an indication of the same thing. Coupled with these is the fact that individualistic competitiveness has increasingly driven adults to indiscriminate and irresponsible use of any means to pursue their own selfish ends, the high ethical standards preached in the society becoming increasingly a mockery both to the adults but especially to the youngsters (Note VII).

The American adolescent, confronted with these forces in adult society, often does not know how to cope with them. He may try to take social independence first, or he may seize upon the idea of speed first. When easy outlets are not available he may be driven to unusual ones such as those of the criminal, or to express himself in quarrelsomeness, family explosions, hostility and sulkiness against parents and other adults. These same forces in adult society tend to affect the Chinese adolescent far less than they would the American, even though the two live in the same society and are subject to the same demands of that society. In the first place, at adolescence the Chinese is likely to have become wise in adult ways because of his gradual transition from childhood to adulthood. In the second place, being more oriented towards vertical relationships, he is less involved in and affected by forces prevailing in the wider society than is his horizontal-relationship-bound American counterpart.

In every culture individuals vary, so that not all Chinese adolescents are free from difficulties and not all American adolescents present problems. But forces current in each culture tend to dispose the youths of that culture in one or another direction, so that we are in a better position to appreciate why adolescence presents far less of a problem to the Chinese than to the Americans. In fact, before contact with the West the Chinese had no term meaning adolescence. The individual went from childhood and puberty straight to adulthood. But there are more concrete evidences which we can briefly examine. In inter-societal comparisons we are, of course, limited by the availability of data and by the comparability of the data if found. But a comparison of adolescent crime during the best years of the Nationalist administration in China with that of a corresponding period in the U.S. yields the following interesting points (the Chinese data are taken from police files of fourteen capital cities—*Ministry of the Interior Year Book, 1936*.<sup>(16)</sup> The American statistics are taken from *Uniform Crime Reports*.<sup>(28)</sup> Both sets of facts pertain to the years 1931, 1932 and 1933):

- (a) American males between 16 and 21 committed more felonies than misdemeanours; Chinese males between 13 and 20 committed more misdemeanours than felonies.
- (b) American males between 16 and 21 committed more crimes than all other seven-year groups under 51; Chinese males of 13 to 20 committed fewer crimes than all other seven-year groups under 51.

These contrasts are startling when we realize that both Chinese and Americans are subject to the same biological changes, but that during the first half of the century Chinese youth lived in an environment far less socially,

politically and economically secure than the Americans. These contrasts become understandable, however, when seen in the light of our hypothesis and analysis so far.

Theoretically, as the Chinese in America become more integrated with the host society and more acculturated to its way of life, they are likely to experience the same sort of adolescent difficulties which seem to form part of the American way of life. This expectation is a logical sequence of our view that adolescent turbulence is basically a function of culture pattern and not heredity or poverty or lack of playgrounds. But the Chinese in Hawaii have up to date been able to keep some of the essential content of their culture pattern alive among them. This is due probably to two reasons. First, their family system, which as among all peoples is the cradle of their culture from generation to generation, is of prodigious strength which exerts a strong centripetal influence on the individual. Secondly, being on an insular island of small size, they tend to keep close touch with each other through their associational and other activities, though they mix freely with persons of other ethnic stocks. (Over 80 per cent of the total population of Hawaii are found on the island of Oahu, where Honolulu is located.)

### III. CULTURE PATTERN AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY

We can now see how our Rorschach findings fit in with the wider cultural perspective. We can understand the reason why, psychologically, and compared with the Chicago adolescents, the Hawaii adolescents have a smoother transition from childhood to adulthood, less rebellious strivings on the surface and within, fewer signs of autistic fantasy, less uncontrolled emotionality and bodily anxiety, more empathy, greater sensitivity to the needs of others and more submissive acceptance of their rôles.

However, adolescent difficulties generated by American culture are not altogether a disadvantage, just as their relative absence in Chinese culture is not altogether an advantage. At the end of Section I of this paper we noted that the Hawaiian adolescents have no passionate wish to change, no felt need to alter environment, and that they are unlikely to become "discontents". Put differently, this means they are not often stirred by issues and not easily moved enough so as to strive for reform.

The white American youth, because of discontinuity between their early and later experiences, sometimes come to the position of responsibility with an idealism far less known among their counterparts in China. American youths tend to go out to improve things, to fight towards a better living, or at least to do things differently from their parents and to explore unknown possibilities. This is one of the secrets of strength of American culture. The Chinese youths, because of their early initiation into the world of their elders, cross the threshold of adulthood like old rogues who know all the ropes. They tend to follow well-beaten paths, to talk wisely and to compromise. This is one of the reasons why for the last twenty centuries Chinese social and political institutions and technology, while remarkable in their own right, have shown little change.

The evolution of a culture may come about by way of internal forces or external pressure. External pressure for change is exemplified by contact between different nations. Internal pressure for change is present when there are differences in outlook between successive generations. The greater the latter differences, the greater will be the tendency to change.

However we look at it, adolescent unrest is simply one of the prices of the American type of culture. By wise manipulation we shall be able to reduce the price, but we cannot eradicate it. To eradicate the price means to eradicate much of the potentialities of the culture.

#### NOTES

I. The field work was undertaken by F. L. K. Hsu, under the auspices of the S.S.R.C. and Northwestern University's Graduate Committee on Research, between May and December 1949. For some aspects of the Chinese in Hawaii, see F. L. K. Hsu, 1951.<sup>(8)</sup>

II. Lord points out that some possible sources of error may occur when records are obtained by one examiner and scored by another. For example, Hsu, the administrator of the tests, inquired of each subject specifically for C' (black), sex responses and the absence of C', whereas he tended not to inquire for texture (c). This may have led to spuriously high C' and sex responses. It should also be pointed out that when these records are compared with Beck's "normals",<sup>(23)</sup> the M responses may seem low because certain FM responses would have been scored as M responses in the Beck scoring system.

III. Beck's criteria for scoring W are somewhat more restrictive than those of Klopfer, who scores the cut-off W or incomplete W as a whole response. The Z score includes W and adjacent or distant details seen in relation to each other. Beck's scoring of M to include movement found only in human content and animals in anthropomorphic stances is sufficiently different from Klopfer's scoring of M to necessitate re-scoring in order to compare M— response. Beck's scoring of M includes movement found only in human content and animals in anthropomorphic stance, but excludes movement of human body parts (for example, "a finger pointing"). This varies sufficiently from Klopfer's to necessitate re-scoring according to Beck to compare M—. The minus scoring derives from perception of form.

IV. M is scored extensor when the direction of the human activity is centrifugal, or away from the centre, as contrasted with flexor M where the direction is centripetal or towards the centre.<sup>(2)</sup>

V. During the last ten years there have appeared in the newspapers (last one to come to my notice: The *Washington Post*, April 17th, 1960) and some magazines (such as *Look*<sup>(14)</sup>) reports indicating the absence of juvenile delinquency in Chinatowns in the U.S.A. Such reports, though interesting, are not scientific evidence for the conclusion they draw. Rose Hum Lee pointed out rightly<sup>(13)</sup> that the picture of Chinese delinquency in the San Francisco Bay region remains unclear because of the small size of the juvenile in proportion to the total adult population, due to U.S. immigration restrictions up to 1940. Up to about that time the Chinese population in the San Francisco Bay area and elsewhere had a drastically unbalanced sex ratio, in some instances over ten males to one female. But the Chinese population in Hawaii has exhibited relatively normal ratios for many decades.

VI. In 1952 an adolescent in Michigan assaulted one nurse and killed another. Subsequent investigations showed no "obvious" motive for the crime. A whole series of articles on this crime was written by John Bartlow Martin in the *Saturday Evening Post*.<sup>(12)</sup> It turned out that the boy in question wanted to prove to his gang that he was "good" enough to belong. A recurrent finding in adolescent crimes has been the absence of "obvious" motives—"obvious", that is, to the investigators and writers.

VII. Studied analyses of these conditions are available: see L. K. Frank<sup>(6)</sup> and Edwin Sutherland.<sup>(22)</sup> It will have been evident to the reader, however, that the interpretation of adolescent crime and difficulties we have presented in this paper is very different from that given by Sutherland. The crux of Sutherland's theory of crime is differential association. "Criminal behaviour is learned in association with those who define such behaviour favourably and in isolation from those who define it unfavourably, and that a person in an appropriate situation engages in such criminal behaviour if, and only if, the weight of the favourable definitions exceeds the weight of the unfavourable definitions" (*ibid.*, p. 234). What this theory says is that the social context of the individual determines his tendency to criminality or otherwise. This view agrees with findings in modern social sciences but it does not go far enough. What we have tried to show in this paper is the forces which propel the youngsters in the Chinese culture pattern to give greater weight to their vertical associations and which, in turn, lead to lesser adolescent difficulties and criminality, and those which propel the youngsters in the American culture pattern to be more tied to the horizontal associations which in turn lead to greater adolescent difficulties and criminality.



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