

Lesson 44  
Patterns of culture  
文化的模式

First listen and then answer the following question.  
听录音，然后回答以下问题。

What influences us from the moment of birth?

Custom has not commonly been regarded as a subject of great moment. The inner workings of our won brains we feel to be uniquely worthy of investigation, but custom, we have a way of thinking, is behaviour at its most commonplace. As a matter of fact, it is the other way around. Traditional custom, taken the world over, is a mass of detailed behaviour more astonishing than what any one person can ever evolve in individual actions, no matter how aberrant. Yet that is a rather trivial aspect of the matter. The fact of first-rate importance is the predominant role that custom plays in experience and in belief, and the very great varieties it may manifest.

No man ever looks at the world with pristine eyes. He sees it edited by a definite set of customs and institutions and ways of thinking. Even in his philosophical probing he cannot go behind these stereotypes; his very concepts of the true and the false will still have reference to his particular traditional customs. John Dewey has said in all seriousness that the part played by custom in shaping the behaviour of the individual, as against any way in which he can affect traditional custom, is as the proportion of the total vocabulary of his mother tongue against those words of his own baby talk that are taken up into the vernacular of his family. When one seriously studies the social orders that have had the opportunity to develop autonomously, the figure becomes no more than an exact and matter-of-fact observation. The life history handed down in his community. From the moment of his birth, the customs into which he is born shape his experience and behaviour. By the time he can talk, he is the little creature of his culture, and by the time he is grown and able to take part in its activities, its habits are his habits, its beliefs his beliefs, its impossibilities his impossibilities. Every child that is born into his group will share them with him, and no child born into one on the opposite side of the globe can ever achieve the thousandth part. There is no social problem it is more incumbent upon us to understand than this of the role of custom. Until we are intelligent as to its laws and varieties, the main complicating facts of human life must remain unintelligible.

The study of custom can be profitable only after certain preliminary propositions have been accepted, and some of these propositions have been violently opposed. In the first place, any scientific study requires that there be no preferential weighting of one or another of the items in the series it selects for its consideration. In all the less controversial fields, like the study of cacti or termites or the mature of nebulae, the necessary method of study is to group the relevant material and to take note of all possible variant forms and conditions. In this way, we have learned all that we know of the laws of astronomy, or of the habits of the social insects, let us say. It is only in the relevant material and to take note of all possible variant forms and conditions. In this way, we have learned all that we know of the laws of astronomy, or of the habits of the social insects, let us say. It is only in the study of man himself that the major social sciences have substituted the study of one local variation, that of Western civilization.

Anthropology was by definition impossible, as long as these distinctions between ourselves and the primitive, ourselves and the barbarian, ourselves and the pagan, held

sway over people's minds. It was necessary first to arrive at that degree of sophistication where we no longer set our own belief against our neighbour's superstition. It was necessary to recognize that these institutions which are based on the same premises, let us say the supernatural, must be considered together, our own among the rest.

RUTH BENEDICT Patterns of Culture

New words and expressions 生词和短语

- commonplace
- adj. 平凡的
- aberrant
- adj. 脱离常轨的, 异常的
- trivial
- adj. 微不足道的, 琐细的
- predominant
- adj. 占优势的, 起支配作用的
- manifest
- v. 表明
- pristine
- adj. 纯洁的, 质朴的
- stereotype
- n. 陈规
- vernacular
- n. 方言
- accommodation
- n. 适应
- incumbent
- adj. 义不容辞的, 有责任的
- preliminary
- adj. 初步的
- proposition
- n. 主张
- preferential
- adj. 优先的
- controversial
- adj. 引起争论的
- cactus
- n. 仙人掌
- termite
- n. 白蚁
- nebula
- adj. 星云
- variant
- n. 不同的
- barbarian
- n. 野蛮人
- pagan
- n. 异教徒
- sophistication
- n. 老练
- premise
- n. 前提

supernatural  
adj. 超自然的

#### 参考译文

风俗一般未被认为是什么重要的课题。我们觉得，只有我们大脑内部的活动情况才值得研究，至于风俗呢，只是些司空见惯的行为而已。事实小，情况正好相反。从世界范围来看，传统风俗是由许多细节性的习惯行为组成，它比任何一个养成的行为都更加引人注目，不管个人行为多么异常。这只是问题的一个次要的侧面。最重要的是，风俗在实践中和信仰上所起的举足轻重的作用，以及它所表现出来的极其丰富多采的形式。

没有一个人是用纯洁而无偏见的眼光看待世界。人们所看到的是一个受特定风俗习惯、制度和思想方式剪辑过的世界。甚至在哲学领域的探索中，人们也无法超越这此定型的框框。人们关于真与伪的概念依然和特定的传统风俗有关。约翰·杜威曾经非常严肃地指出：风俗在形成个人行为方面所起的作用和一个对风俗的任何影响相比，就好像他本国语言的总词汇量和自己咿呀学语时他家庭所接纳的他的词汇量之比。当一个人认真地研究自发形成的社会秩序时，杜威的比喻就是他实事求是观察得来的形象化的说法。个人的生活史首先是适应他的社团世代相传形成的生活方式和准则。从他呱呱坠地的时刻起，他所生于其中的风俗就开始塑造他的经历和行为规范。到会说话时，他就是传统文化塑造的一个小孩子；等他长大了，能做各种事了，他的社团的习惯就是他的习惯，他的社团的信仰就是他的信仰，他的社团不能做的事就是他不能做的事。每一个和他诞生在同一个社团中的孩子和他一样具有相同的风俗；而在地球的另一边。诞生在另一个社团的孩子与他就是少有相同的风俗。没有任何一个社会问题比得上风俗的作用问题更要求我们对它理解。直到我们理解了风俗的规律性和多样性，我们才能明白人为生活中主要的复杂现象。

只有在某些基本的主张被接受下来、同时有些主张被激烈反对时，对风俗的研究才是全面的，才会有收获。首先，任何科学研究都要求人们对可供考虑的诸多因素不能厚此薄彼，偏向某一方面。在一切争议较小的领域里，如对仙人掌、白蚁或星云性质的研究，应采取的研究方法是。把有关各方面的材料汇集起来，同时注意任何可能出现的异常情况和条件。例如，用这种方法，我们完全掌握了天文学的规律和昆虫群居的习性。只是在对人类自身的研究。只要我们同原始人，我们同野蛮人，我们同异教徒之间存有的区别在人的思想中占主导地位，那么人类学按其定义来说就无法存在。我们首先需要达到这样一种成熟的程度：不用自己的信仰去反对我们邻居的迷信。必须认识到，这些建立在相同前提基础上的风俗，暂且可以说是超自然的东西，必须放在一起加以考虑，我们自己的风俗和其他民族的风俗都在其中。