

ARASTEH

A. REZA ARASTEH

Final  
Integration  
in the  
Adult  
Personality

# Final Integration in the Adult Personality



LEIDEN  
E. J. BRILL

I have named this study *Final Integration in the Adult Personality*, for in the last stage of maturity man's vertical growth ceases to exist while his oceanic creativity unfolds horizontally toward infinity.

A. R. ARASTEH

It deals with a problem almost totally neglected in Western thought, viz., the most comprehensive of attitude levels. How fragmented are most of our Western approaches! We look at bits and pieces of human nature, never at the final intention that marks many lives.

Professor Gordon ALLPORT  
Harvard University

This, in my estimation, is the missing aspect in the study of psychology. So many people feel that mastering facts automatically bridges the gap to understanding and satisfaction. As you know, this is a debatable point.

Orville C. SCHOMBERG  
Professor Psychology  
Troy State College

... You have a very insightful and limpedly clear style which shows that you truly understand that which you write about.

Manuel J. VARGAS, Ph.D.  
Chief Psychologist  
Adult Psychiatry Center  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

A. REZA ARASTEH

FINAL INTEGRATION IN THE  
ADULT PERSONALITY



For TOM.

This work my soul displays; Though  
humble yet a gift It is not the  
work of sweat but of joy. May it bring  
you many creative moments.

1950

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FINAL INTEGRATION IN THE  
ADULT PERSONALITY

A MEASURE FOR HEALTH,  
SOCIAL CHANGE, AND LEADERSHIP

BY

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements . . . . .	XIII
Prologue . . . . .	1

### SECTION I

#### A CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE ON DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

I. <i>Introduction</i> . . . . .	7
----------------------------------	---

Some visionary experiences and scientific experiments which in the last decade have led me to the study of final integration in the adult personality. Insight into the relationship of this study to an integrated theory of man, a more comprehensive theory of culture, and to the scope of developmental psychology.

II. <i>Some Problems of Developmental Psychology: A Critique of the Literature</i> . . . . .	14
--	----

Relative value of experimental, behavioristic and analytic ways of studying man's state. Problem of identity and the state of final integration. Fragmented research by psychoanalysts and psychologists. Analysis of almost 300 articles listed in *Index Medicus and Psychological Abstracts* on the subject. Review of the concepts of Erikson, Sullivan, Strauss, Soddy, Fingarette, and Russell and Russell as a basis of the present study.

III. <i>Some Problems of Developmental Psychology: An Analysis of Theoretical Assumptions</i> . . . . .	38
---	----

Re-examination of the theoretical bases for the discovery of an *Unterbau* (infra-structure), a common denominator for the

interpretation of culture and man's state of being. Max Scheler's observations. Relationship of present-day fragmented research to a fragmented theory of man. Toward an integrated theory of man. Various stages of man: natural, cultural, and trans-cultural and their laws of behavior: natural impulse, ego, and creative insight, respectively. Developmental succession of identities. Significance of a theory of value as it relates to the study of final integration in the adult personality.

## SECTION II

### PSYCHOLOGICAL LAWS AND MECHANISMS OF FINAL INTEGRATION IN THE ADULT PERSONALITY

IV. *Final Integration in the Adult Personality: An Explanation . . . . .* 73

The West and objectivization of the ego. The East and liberation of the ego. Zen Buddhism, Taoism, Sufism, and recent Western psychoanalytic concepts and their recognition of the state of final integration. Psychological laws of the state of final integration as related to historical evidences of the cultural development of the West, Near East, and Far East. Universal mechanisms of existential moratorium and various ways of arriving at the trans-cultural state.

V. *Further Characteristics and Creative Media in the Fully-integrated Personality . . . . .* 113

Marked awareness of various realities as expressed in modern psychoanalysis, in Far Eastern Buddhism, Taoism, and Near Eastern Sufism. Two types of thought, two types of intelligence—instruction and intuition; intellect and feeling as manifested in peak experiences, receptivity, openness, physical creativity, creative attitude, creative deeds, conduct, spontaneity, creative living, happiness, and relatedness to all including the non-human environment. Birth of "I am," that "I" which is not under the influence of drives or social values. Insight into the process of happiness without drugs.

VI. *Mechanisms and General Psychological Laws of Final Integration in the Adult Personality* . . . 150

Detachment from the cultural state of being, awareness, anxiety, striving in the existential moratoria. Rebirth in totality. Art of rebirth in totality of Near Eastern culture. Art of liberation of Far Eastern culture. The humanistic way of liberation of Erich Fromm. Logotherapy of Victor Frankl: the will to meaning. Common features of all.

VII. *Principles of Psycho-cultural Analysis: A New Technique for Developing Fully-integrated Individuals* . . . . . 187

Synthesis of the East-West approach. Discovery of contradictory principles of outer metamorphosis and their resolution in man, society, and culture. Discovery of contradictory principles in inner metamorphosis and their resolution in man, place, and time.

SECTION III

THE APPLICATION OF PSYCHO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS TO THE REBIRTH OF INDIVIDUALS

VIII. *An Analysis of Rumi: the Universal Man of the East* . . . . . 205

Inadequacy of philosophical, religious, and literary approaches to an analysis of Rumi. Psycho-cultural analysis as a more comprehensive technique. Quest for final integration. Further insight into the trans-cultural state. Outward conflict of selves: the conventional versus the universal self. Inward conflict of selves. Union of souls: identification with Shams (the Master). Rebirth in love and creativity.

- IX. *An Analysis of Goethe: the Universal Man of the West* . . . . . 254

"Libido currency" and the interpretation of Goethe: a critique of Eissler's study. Goethe's early identification and maturity. Birth in sentimentalism and his psycho-social moratorium at Leipzig. Further psycho-social moratorium at Weimar and Goethe's maturity as a social self. Objectivization of the social self and the rise of existential moratorium. Resolution of conflict through insight into nature and history, and rebirth in universality. Living through creativity.

- X. *An Analysis of Kamal: the Case of Two Cultures* 303

Early development. Identification with his father's expectations. Actualization of that image. Conflict with the father's image. Years of wandering and search for a new meaning. Resolution of conflict through reorientation. Discovery of a new meaning of life, a new occupation, and a deeper insight into human history and the cosmos.

#### SECTION IV

### APPLICATION OF THE TRANS-CULTURAL STATE TO HEALTH, SOCIAL CHANGE, AND LEADERSHIP

- XI. *The Trans-cultural State as a Measure for Mental Health and Peace* . . . . . 315

Religious, cultural, and scientific definitions of health. Relative and dynamic concepts of health and the cultural state of man's development. Constant quality of health in the creative state and its contribution to a measure of individual and social health.

- XII. *Trans-cultural Qualities as a Measure for Social Change* . . . . . 322

Concept of change as defined by modern social scientists. Change in terms of social and economic development versus

change in terms of the development of a healthy and peaceful character. Application of a new theory of social change to technically less-developed nations; application to technically advanced nations.

XIII. *Application of the Trans-cultural State to Intellectual and Social Leadership Training* . . . 348

1. Modern life and the separation of feeling and intellect. The varieties of intellectual leaders: the intellectual dependent, the imitative, the self-conceited, the fragmented analytic intellectual, and the well-integrated individual. 2. Non-intellectual but fragmented social, national, and international leaders. 3. An important contribution of the theory to mediators of disputes.

XIV. *Conclusion* . . . . . 360

Further contributions of the theory to education: the child as a totality and the process of gradual awareness—identification. Why children lose their visionary experiences and spontaneity, which the adult can regain only in the state of final integration.

Index . . . . . 382

In other words, this experience convinced me that although certain thinkers of the West and East have identified and spoken of certain qualities of the well-integrated man, the psychological theories and techniques of the process await formulation. To become certain of this psychological vision I sought to become relatively familiar with the bases of various schools of psychology: behaviorist, analytic, experimental, psychological, social, and developmental. I found them all partially true when applied to the right subject of investigation, yet fragmented when applied to the whole of human phenomena or when applied to unsuitable subject matter. For instance in the natural state (very early childhood), physiological theory is a correct tool of research, but for the cultural state (after socialization) it is inadequate. Social psychology and psychoanalytic techniques are appropriate for the study of social man and the socially maladjusted but inadequate for the study of the state of individuation — the existential level. Therefore, in order to find a psychological theory of final integration in the adult personality it is not only enough to analyze the fragmented research projects of a particular area, but it is also necessary to analyze the fragmented theories supporting it if one is to develop an integrated theory of man which will define the scope of developmental psychology and whose apex will be a theory of final integration in the adult personality.

My professional experience, that is, my experimental studies conducted in 1955—57 as well as my teaching at the University of Tehran reinforced my belief, for every objective study that I completed I felt that in order to give it some meaning I needed a highly perceptive insight into Persian culture. Thus, a new problem arose in my mind, that is: a psychological theory of final integration is not only related to the

scope of developmental psychology — to an integrated theory of man — but it must also be related to a theory of culture. In seeking a psychological theory of integrated personality, I had to digress from a theory of man to a theory of culture. There was another basic problem related to all of these: that is, I had just become a social man myself by becoming in turn, an associate professor, husband, father, and subsequently losing a dear father. Although my vision often told me that neither animal life nor social living is the highest accomplishment of men, I was twenty-seven and needed further experience in my own integration. However, my interest was drawn toward this study and day by day it deepened. On one occasion after analyzing the background of 610 official Iranian leaders and teachers who had studied in Europe and America between 1928—1933, I became convinced that the gap between their Westernized mind (ego) and their native superego made it impossible for them to contribute to their own enlightenment or to their society without first undergoing an elevating life experience. They lacked an insight into a theory of culture and had no measure for evaluating their own and Western cultural contributions, which in turn was related to a lack of integration in personality development.

This evaluation of the state of the problem convinced me that the task, though it would be difficult, would be worthy, significant, and eventually rewarding. Thus, to reformulate the problem, I was seeking a psychological theory of final integration in the adult personality which required an insight into a theory of man and a theory of culture. All of this demanded confidence in my own integration. Several times I introspected on my own being and each time I was certain of my own persistence, endurance, and visionary experience; but these seemed self-conceited or imaginary. Yet certain unknown

factors led me to believe that if I could find some basis of understanding Persian culture and its interpersonal relatedness in historical perspective, it would help me understand myself in relation to my heritage and my community.

With this belief I began to read whatever the outstanding Persian scholars in modern times had written about their own cultural heritage, but instinctively I found them inadequate, fragmented, and based on personal opinion. Having accumulated enough facts, I felt a need to separate myself from my society in order to give myself a chance to see it as a panorama and objectify it. A limited opportunity took me to Princeton University where I taught for two years and used my time in searching for a basis for understanding Persian culture. Again, a sudden vision made me aware that if I answered the questions, "Why did man make culture? What was his motive for doing so?" I would be able to give a meaning to Persian culture and perhaps decipher it.

Therefore, I stopped reading material on Persian culture when I had examined all the sources and tried to find a suitable theory of culture. The view that culture is the result of sublimation (Freud) did not seem satisfactory, for that concept deals with a pathological culture, and I was seeking a theory of culture for healthy individuals; culture as a reaction to basic needs (Malinowski) seemed inadequate also, for I was convinced that man before becoming human truly satisfied his physiological and sexual needs. There was a third factor which I found after almost six months of continuous reading, and simultaneously thinking about man's nature and his work (culture). I came to believe that any interpretation of a culture presupposes a thorough understanding of the motives of that culture.

In general, motives spring from man's situation in his

environment. Both environment and man as sources of motives are complex, diverse, and capable of producing opposing motives. Most Western anthropologists assert that a theory of culture must be based on biological motives, for they consider culture a response to basic needs. Thus culture, as they interpret it, fulfills man's continual demands for sustenance and protection. Moreover, every culture must produce the necessary implements and develop techniques for regulating values and the social system. Although these concepts undoubtedly explain much of culture they do not give a complete picture. I found that a more significant source of motives arises from man's psychic situation, which in turn has resulted from man's separation from nature, his loss of unconscious harmony with the world, or more metamorphically, man's banishment from paradise. Having lost this relationship, man has since been seeking a substitute, that is, another object of love or orientation: a process which may reunite him with nature and end his discontent. This is only possible through cultural development, then becoming aware of the artificiality of culture, and de-embedding it in order to become sensitive, receptive to life, and creative.

Later, my acquaintance with Erich Fromm and his writings as well as a re-examination of Rumi's *Mathnawi* confirmed my view. This discovery increased my own awareness and inner experience and brought me up into a more transcendental level of life. This is not the place to reminisce on personal experiences but the same discovery contributed to two of the basic problems I have stated before: firstly, it made me perceive mankind's history from its state of unawareness to total awareness such that I concluded that man has always had the same illness, but has rarely faced it, for he has found it easier to live with the illness than to cure