

## VII

### *The Nature of Society*

THE three cultures of Zuñi, of Dobu, and of the Kwakiutl are not merely heterogeneous assortments of acts and beliefs. They have each certain goals toward which their behaviour is directed and which their institutions further. They differ from one another not only because one trait is present here and absent there, and because another trait is found in two regions in two different forms. They differ still more because they are oriented as wholes in different directions. They are travelling along different roads in pursuit of different ends, and these ends and these means in one society cannot be judged in terms of those of another society, because essentially they are incommensurable.

All cultures, of course, have not shaped their thousand items of behaviour to a balanced and rhythmic pattern. Like certain individuals, certain social orders do not subordinate activities to a ruling motivation. They scatter. If at one moment they seem to be pursuing certain ends, at another they are off on some tangent apparently inconsistent with all that has gone before, which gives no clue to activity that will come after.

This lack of integration seems to be as characteristic of certain cultures as extreme integration is of others. It is not everywhere due to the same circumstances. Tribes like those of the interior of British Columbia have incorporated traits from all the surrounding civilizations. They have taken their patterns for the manipulation of wealth from one culture area, parts of their religious practices from another, contradictory bits from still another. Their mythology is a hodge-podge of unco-ordinated accounts of culture heroes out of three different myth-cycles repre-