

the human "smile."* Without recognizing my own preconceptions, I had been attracted to a simplistic theory which saw "verbal" communication as subject to (and responsible for) human diversification while "nonverbal" communication provided a primitive and underlying base for (and was the resultant of) human unity. Smiling, it seemed to me, provided the perfect example of a behavior bit which in every culture expressed pleasure (in the jargon which I was using then, "positive response") on the part of the actor. Almost as soon as I started to study "smiling" I found myself in a mass of contradictions. From the outset, the signal value of the smile proved debatable. Even the most preliminary procedures provided data which were difficult to rationalize. For example, not only did I find that a number of my subjects "smiled" when they were subjected to what seemed to be a positive environment, but some "smiled" in an aversive one. My psychiatric friends provided me with a variety of psychological explanations for this apparent contradiction, but I was determined to develop social data without recourse to such explanations. Yet, inevitably, these ideas shaped my early research.

As I enlarged my observational survey, it became evident that there was little constancy to the phenomenon. It was almost immediately clear that the frequency of smiling varied from one part of the United States to another. Middle-class individuals from Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, as counted on the street, smiled more often than did New Englanders with a comparable background from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. Moreover, these latter subjects smiled with a higher frequency than did western New Yorkers. At the other extreme, the highest incidence of smiling was observed in Atlanta, Louisville, Memphis, and Nashville. Closer study indicated that even within Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee there were systematic differences in the frequency of smiling; subjects from tidewater Georgia, the Bluegrass of Kentucky and western Tennessee were much more likely to be observed smiling than were their compatriots from the Appalachian sections of their states. If I could have maintained my faith in the smile as a "natural" gesture of expression, an automatic neuromuscular reaction to an underlying and "pleasurable" endocrine or neural state, I would have had a sure measure to establish isoglosses of pleasure with which to map the United States. Unfortunately, data continued to come in.

Almost as soon as I attempted to isolate contexts of propriety for smiling, data emerged which made it clear that while it was perfectly appropriate (as measured by social response) for a young female to smile among strangers on Peachtree Street in Atlanta, Georgia, such behavior would be highly inappropriate on Main Street in Buffalo, New York. In one part of the country, an unsmiling individual might be queried as to whether he was "angry about something," while in another, the smiling individual might be asked, "What's funny?" In one area, an apology required an accompanying smile; in another, the smile elicited the response that the apology was not "serious." That is to say, the presence of a smile in particular contexts indicated "pleasure," in another "humor," in others "ridicule," and, in still others, "friendliness" or "good manners." Smiles have been seen to indicate "doubt" and "acceptance," "equality" and "superordination" or "subordination." They occur in situations where insult is intended and in others as a denial of insult. Except with the most elastic conception of "pleasure," charts of smile frequency clearly were not going to be very reliable as maps for the location of happy Americans.

But what about the "natural" smile of the "happy" infant? (Twenty-five years ago, we believed that babies were not only more "natural" than grownups but also more like grown animals and more "primitive." By the time we were ready to forego the term primitive as applicable to non-Western people, we were not ready to give it up as descriptive of Western and non-Western children.) Friends who were studying child development said that as the infant matured past the point where his smiles were grimaces from gas pains he had a natural smile which some felt provided a naturally seductive stance with which to involve adults in care and protection. Others insisted that this infantile smile was a natural expression of pleasure and that, until the adult and peer world converted or suppressed it, the child would continue to smile "naturally" in response to his own euphoria or to situations of social euphoria. Others insisted that while there was a "natural tendency" to smile, this tendency was constrained as the child was conditioned to use the smile as a symbolic cue. That is, the infantile smile, as an organic or physiological and automatic reflex of pleasure, with maturation comes under voluntary control and becomes utilizable as a unit of the communication system. At the other extreme were those who, believing that the fetus resists birth and is born angry, see the infantile smile as descendent from the teeth-baring of an animal ancestry and thus signifying threat. The threat is mediated and the child subju-

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