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An Arsenal of Words: Social Science and its Victims. *A REVIEW ARTICLE*

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Ronald P. Rohner, *They Love Me, They Love Me Not: A Worldwide Study of the Effects of Parental Acceptance and Rejection*, HRAF Press, 1975. 300 pp.

Hyman Rodman, *Lower-Class Families: The Culture of Poverty in Negro Trinidad*, New York, London and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1971. 242 pp.

Charles Hampden-Turner, *From Poverty to Dignity: A Strategy for Poor Americans*, Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1974. 300 pp.

At first glance the three books being reviewed here may seem an unlikely trio. Rohner's book is a cross-cultural study that addresses such questions as, 'Do humans everywhere respond uniformly to the withdrawal of parental warmth and affection? Do similar psychological, social, and environmental conditions induce parents the world over to behave toward their children in parallel ways? How is it possible methodologically, to determine if these things are true?' (Preface). Rohner asks these questions in the hope of arousing interest in the 'universalist question' of the 'nature of human nature.' Rodman's study, in contrast, presents a detailed ethnography of lower-class family life in Trinidad. However, his interests go beyond mere description; he offers an explanation of the data 'as a first step toward a general theoretical statement of lower-class family organization' (v). Hampden-Turner's concerns are of quite another kind. As a self-proclaimed 'radical,' he puzzles over the degree to which rhetoric in America has become detached from social reality. 'On the level of verbal argument the reformers always seem to be winning,' he declares, 'but nothing really happens' (xi). He is concerned with social inequality and injustice, and his book is intended as a contribution toward a restructuring of institutions so that they will be programmatically more responsive to America's emerging social consciousness. The theme of the book is that 'what is frustrating our attempts to turn rhetoric into reality is the lack of an adequate theoretical framework with which to fuse competing perspectives towards human development' (xi).

The theme that ties these books together, and the focus of this review,

centers on the implications of the language of social science for portraying groups that diverge from some presumed 'normality.' Thus Rohner is concerned with deviance from a (universal) parental norm of warmth and affection; Rodman with deviance from middle-class value norms; and Hampden-Turner with deviance from the American norms of equality and justice. The issue cuts many ways, and I will discuss each book on its own terms before turning to a more general overview in the concluding section.

They Love Me, They Love Me Not presents a strong case for the 'universal' approach to behavioral science. The approach is, in Rohner's view, committed to a search for at least two classes of verifiable generalizations or principles of human behavior: 'context free' generalizations that hold true across our species regardless of culture, physical type, sex, geographic region, or other limiting conditions; and 'context dependent' generalizations that hold true within certain contexts or under certain conditions, whenever they occur. The universalist is concerned with answering questions about the nature of human nature, or more specifically about the researchable features of human nature. Universalists are not, according to Rohner, 'interested simply in the behavior of middle-income White Americans, Black Americans, Kwakiutl Indians, or Turkish peasants, or even about a comparison between any two or more of these groupings, but rather in mankind as a whole' (p. 2). He goes on to assert that 'They must assume that all normal (i.e., nonpathological) humans are subject to the same developmental tendencies and, additionally, that at birth all normal humans share the same general capacities for thought, feeling, and action . . . any research on man's "nature" must contain at least implicitly these two assumptions' (p. 3). Rohner observes that social anthropology has had an ideographic bias, a bias that accentuates human diversity and variability, causing us at times to 'lose sight of the relative homogeneity in the behavior potential among men throughout our species—a homogeneity created by several million years of common biological ancestry' (pp. 6–7). He acknowledges that anthropologists unanimously deplore ethnocentrism and endorse the notion that behavior in one society can be evaluated from the point of view of the members of that society and not from an outsider's culture-bound viewpoint, but denounces 'radical relativism,' 'cultural particularism,' and 'extreme functionalism' because they render a nomothetic science of man impossible. Rohner concludes his well-written delineation of the universalist approach with a set of methodological prescriptions based upon a multiple research strategy geared toward avoiding the possibility of a 'method bias.' Thus,

serious universalist researchers *triangulate* their results whenever possible by employing . . . two or preferably three discrete measures (i.e. methods) or, even better, two or three independent methodologies in order to determine the extent to which the same conclusions emerge when multiple and independent measurement processes are used—

none of which shares the same weaknesses or potential for bias (pp. 30–31, italics in original).

To answer the questions he poses concerning parental acceptance or rejection, Rohner utilizes a research strategy involving three methodological components: a review of psychological research, most of which has been done in the United States and related countries, that deals with interindividual variability; a cross-cultural survey employing a worldwide sample of 101 societies representing a stratified sample of the world's known and adequately described cultural systems; and intracultural community studies, involving long-term anthropological and psychological field investigations of communities.

Fine. I applaud the goal and approve of the methods. But when I went on to read the results I became increasingly disconcerted. The substantive findings themselves are hardly surprising:

The evidence discussed in the three components of our research, using the logic of the 'triangulation of methodologies,' converges on the conclusion that parental rejection in children, as well as in adults who were rejected as children, leads to: hostility, aggression, passive aggression, or problems with the management of hostility and aggression; dependency; probably emotional unresponsiveness and negative self-evaluation (negative self-esteem and negative self-adequacy); and, probably, emotional instability as well as a negative world view. Firm evidence in one or more methodologies is yet to be marshaled for some of these characteristics, but overall, the direction of evidence is so clear and so overwhelmingly consistent that there seems to be little doubt that these personality dispositions can be elevated to the level of 'principles' of human behavior—at least at a gross level and subject to possible qualification . . . (p. 168).

Rohner concludes from these results that 'rejection has "malignant" effects throughout our species—and in terms of "personality", perhaps even in other species, such as apes and monkeys' (p. 171). He adds the qualification that 'we are not yet able to say what these "pernicious" effects are,' and that 'some children do not seem to show the expected results of rejection' (p. 172), but attributes the inconclusiveness to unrefined measures and lack of sufficient controls.

So as a result of Rohner's research efforts we are more convinced than ever that if parents beat the shit out of their children, or continually abuse them, the little tykes will grow up (if at all) to be mean and nasty, insecure sons-of-bitches. O.K.—this is a contribution and I do not mean to belittle it, but when we look a little more closely at Rohner's conclusions and the conceptualizations upon which they are built, we must raise questions. Rohner himself provides the leverage for criticizing his own work in his critique of 'evolutionary-ethological' arguments. Such theories, Rohner contends, contain many undefined concepts. 'What,' he asks, 'is meant by aggression?' (p. 22). A good question; and what is meant by 'hostility,' 'dependency,' 'emotional instability,' or for that matter by 'acceptance' or 'rejection'? I must admit to feeling somewhat uncomfortable about a

definition of 'rejection' that is based on 'opposition to acceptance on a continuous scale, with warmth and affection at one end and the absence of warmth and affection at the other' (p. 45). My suspicions are even further aroused when I am told that the absence of warmth and affection may be expressed by 'disguised hostility or aggression toward the child, or by indifference, which is often expressed by neglect,' and that 'parental hostility is an *internal* emotional reaction or anger, enmity, or resentment toward the child . . .' (p. 45, emphasis added).

One of the main difficulties is that the concepts being used are fuzzy and difficult to operationalize. The discussion of 'dependency' in Chapter 3, for example, reflects the confusion surrounding the operationalization of such concepts for research purposes. The problem is that Rohner believes it is more important to assess 'the overall quality of the social and emotional environment (in terms of warmth, aggression, and neglect) in which children are raised' (p. 49), and so is drawn to a vocabulary that is general and diffusive. But while such considerations would be sufficient for seriously questioning the scientific merit of Rohner's study, I am more concerned with the value judgements that are built into such terminology; and this is where the issues of universalism and particularism come into play.

Let us take the example of 'dependence.' Rohner makes it clear that he regards dependence as part of the 'malignancy' caused by parental rejection. It seems apparent, Rohner reports, 'that parental behavior in the form of aggression, overprotection, or neglect plays a central role in the development of dependency behavior,' and that 'warm responsive parents will generally have independent children' (p. 78). But what is the essence of this particular form of 'malignancy'? Dependence is defined as 'the *emotional* reliance of one person on another for comfort, approval, guidance, support, reassurance, or decision making' (p. 175, italics in original). Indicators of dependency include

frequent seeking of comfort, nurturance, reassurance, support, approval, or guidance from others, especially those who are important to the individual, such as friends and family members including major caretakers. The dependent person attempts to solicit sympathy, consolation, encouragement, or affection from friends when he is troubled or having difficulty. He often seeks to have others help him when he is having personal problems, and he likes to have others feel sorry for him or make a fuss over him when he is sick or hurt (p. 176).

This is malignancy? Is the independent person so obviously superior? The independent person, according to Rohner, 'does not rely heavily on others for emotional comfort, support, encouragement, or reassurance. He does not feel the need to evoke sympathy from his friends or family when he is troubled, and he does not feel often the need to seek reassurance, support, comfort, nurturance, or guidance' (p. 176).

The inherent problems of describing personality characteristics of individuals in terms like these have been admirably dealt with by Mischel (1968) and numerous others, and I will not belabor the matter here. The critical point for this essay, however, revolves around the use of such conceptualizations to describe whole groups of people. Despite my concurrence with Rohner's universalistic objectives, I would maintain that it is *impossible* to use terms like 'dependence' and 'independence' in a culture-free manner. These concepts by their very nature are context-bound, and to use them as the basis for describing some people's behavior results in gross distortions.¹ Furthermore, the kinds of distortions that result are often caricatures of pathology—verbal cartoons that present people as if they had character deformities and were in need of cultural surgery. Rohner illustrates the point very nicely by presenting two ethnographic sketches, one of the Papago Indians, who are presumably blessed with accepting parents, the other of the Alorese of Indonesia, who are subjected to parental rejection. Whereas the Papago are described in terms of 'strong feelings of warmth,' 'eagerness to help one another,' and the like, the Alorese are presented (in part by way of Rorschach analysis) as 'a people who approach human relationships with suspicion, greed, cunning, calculation, fear, and defensiveness' (p. 152). We are further told that child drawings 'reveal feelings of aloneness and self-centeredness, superficial interpersonal relationships, and an inability to come into warm, affective contact with others' (p. 152). To top off the account, Abram Kardiner's psychiatric assessment of the Alorese is cited:

... the basic personality in Alor is anxious, suspicious, mistrustful, lacking in [self] confidence, with no interest in the outer world. There is no capacity to idealize parental image or deity. The personality is devoid of enterprise, is filled with repressed hatred and free-floating aggression over which constant vigilance must be exercised. Cooperation must be at a low level and a tenuous social cohesion can be achieved only by dominance-submission attitudes, not by affection and mutual trust (Kardiner 1945, p. 170, cited in Rohner, p. 152).

It seems to me that we should have moved beyond such demeaning, one-sided characterizations by now. Haven't we had enough instances in the ethnographic literature where the same people have been depicted by one observer as a collection of saints, and by another as filled with evil? One does not have to be an extreme relativist to question the grounds for such descriptions. The language used is pseudo-scientific; it is imprecise, ethnocentric in value loadings, and ignorant of the multiplex human condition. But worst of all, it is degrading. These are the labels of insult, not of understanding. They invite preventative and therapeutic intervention by those with the power to do so. They are the clichés of soul-saving

¹ For an excellent discussion of the problems involved in using the Western concept of dependence in another culture (Japan) see Doi (1962, 1971), Lebra (1976, Ch. 4).

crusaders whose verbal swords stand poised to sever major segments of the human race from the right to fair representation. They are, in short, the weapons of intellectual imperialism.

Hyman Rodman recognizes the problem in his book *Lower-Class Families: The Culture of Poverty in Negro Trinidad*. He begins his study by posing three major questions: (1) How do lower-class conditions influence family organization? (2) How does the organization of lower-class families influence the socialization and development of children? (3) What practical steps can be taken in order to deal with the problems represented by lower-class families? 'Once we know something about the organization of lower-class families,' Rodman believes, 'it becomes possible to consider the consequences of this organization for individual development and behavior . . .' (p. 3). He initiates his discussion around the controversial 'culture of poverty' concept, which he regards as useful as a way of summarizing the characteristics of the poor, but potentially harmful 'by promoting a stereotyped view . . .' He asserts that this is particularly the case 'if the major components of the culture of poverty turn out to be merely a catalogue of undesirable traits, such as apathy, intolerance, lack of motivation, disorganization, and fatalism' (p. 4). Rodman acknowledges the fact that heterogeneity in the lower class is too great for simple characterizations, but nevertheless regards it as possible to demonstrate that certain patterns are more characteristic of the lower class than of other classes. Of central concern is the relationship between impinging conditions, particularly economic conditions, and the values held by persons affected by them.

The ethnographic picture that Rodman paints of the family life of the black Trinidad poor conforms to the familiar Caribbean pattern of shifting male-female liaisons of varying degrees of commitment, of an ideal paternal role of provider which is irregularly complied with, and a maternal role emphasizing 'care' and nurturance. But, as Rodman points out, 'even the relationship between parent and child is affected by life's hardships,' so that 'love and care become scarce commodities which are granted only on the promise of some return' (p. 91). From his analysis Rodman derives four 'structural characteristics' that underlie family relationships among lower-class Negroes in Trinidad. These are individualism, personalism, replaceability, and permissiveness.

Individualism he defines narrowly 'as the extent to which the individual remains unbound by strong ties of kinship' (p. 159). In comparison to individuals in other classes, Rodman holds, the people he studied are less controlled by bonds of kinship, which leads individuals to place their own welfare above that of their relatives. Even the social bond between parent and child 'is weak in comparison to parent-child bonds among middle-class and upper-class families' (p. 161). One consequence of

individualism is that it results in an absence of strongly organized structural units, including households, in the kinship system.

Personalism refers to 'the tendency for the normative and affective content of a relationship to grow out of the personal interaction between kinsmen' (p. 163). Although Rodman acknowledges that personal elements are present in any kinship system, he asserts that 'there is clearly a difference between a situation in which the official element is stressed and the personal element remains in the background, and one in which there are few official expectations and the individual is left to work out his behavior within a relatively unstructured relationship' (p. 163).

Replaceability refers to 'the considerable leeway that exists for changing kinship roles' (p. 166). In effect, this concept relates to a greater than usual degree of interchangeability in the kinship system and in work roles in the domestic unit.

Finally, *permissiveness* refers to 'a range of alternative patterns of behavior in a particular situation, and not merely a single prescribed pattern' (p. 169). Rodman considers permissiveness to be the most general structural characteristic, since individualism, personalism, and replaceability all involve 'permission' to treat kinship bonds in a fluid manner.

Rodman explains this structural elasticity by reference to the pressure of circumstances as being too strong and too immediate. He asserts that because of limited resources lower-class people cannot afford to be patient, and that this leads to the development of the 'circumstance-oriented man,' who is able to 'fit his behavior to the circumstances and to benefit from a flexible "accordin" culture rather than suffer from a fixed Procrustean one' (p. 173).²

Rodman's analysis bears considerable resemblance to that of John Embree's account of Thai society as 'loosely structured' (Embree 1950), and it provokes the same dilemma. Essentially such descriptions treat as problematic the way people *do not behave*. That is, a social order based upon normative rules is assumed to be the natural state of affairs; deviations from these prescriptions are cast in the role of enigmas to be explained. Rodman is explicit about his assumption that the 'values of the dominant social classes ... are promulgated to all members of the society' (p. 194), and that as a result of inadequate resources, deviance is greater in the lower classes. This leads, he asserts, to the development of alternative values that are in accord with circumstances, so that actual behavior is more likely to be rewarded. The major form taken by the system of values that consequently develops in the lower class—and this is the main thrust of Rodman's analysis—is the 'lower-class value

² The term 'accordin' refers to the frequent response Rodman received to questions indicating that different lines of behavior would be taken 'accordin' to circumstances.

stretch,' by which he means 'that the lower-class person, without abandoning the general values of the society, develops an alternative set of values' (p. 195).

Rodman concludes with an admonition against using concepts like 'promiscuous sexual relationships,' 'illegal marital unions,' 'illegitimate children,' 'unmarried mothers,' 'deserting husbands and fathers,' and 'abandoned children,' since these terms are not parts of lower-class vocabulary and are misleading ways to describe lower-class behavior. Whereas such terms are typically used by middle-class observers to designate *problems* of the lower class, according to Rodman's perspective, 'it makes better sense to see them as *solutions* of the lower class to problems that they face in the social, economic, and perhaps legal and political spheres of life' (p. 197, italics in original). As an alternative he coins terms that do not convey middle-class moral judgements, like 'marital-shifting' and 'child-shifting,' and where appropriate, Trinidadian terms such as 'friending,' 'living' (i.e. together), and 'outside children.'

Rodman's effort to avoid a demeaning description of the people he studied is noble, and he certainly is far more sensitive to the issue than Rohner. But Rodman is ensnared in a similar conceptual trap, for the kind of structural-functional model he begins with makes similar assumptions about 'normality'; only the system level is changed, from that of the individual to that of society. Both approaches result in *deficiency formulations* inasmuch as they emphasize the failures of groups of people to display 'appropriate' characteristics, then attempt to explain the deficiency. (A point of irony, by the way, is that whereas 'independence' is a positively valued characteristic for Rohner, it is essentially a negative, value-deviant characteristic for Rodman.) The point is that even sympathetic observers using such conceptual tools, and there is little doubt about Rodman's sympathy for his subjects, inadvertently end up with a depiction of people as problems. All Rodman has done is to soften the vocabulary to render it less offensive.

Hampden-Turner's book, *From Poverty to Dignity*, takes on the issue of social scientific characterizations directly. The author of *Radical Man* is here concerned with directed change, with development, or, in his phrasing, with the 'empowerment of the poor.' In the opening chapter he spells out ten principles of development, and it is clear from this discussion that the use of words and labels is to be a central theme. For example, the first principle is that of 'free existence,' which the author points out comes from the Latin *ex-istere*, to stand out. He goes on:

Although people are bombarded daily with inducements, threats, predigested 'news,' so that they learn not just about events but how to think about events, they yet retain the capacity to choose some communications in preference to others, to label and attach symbolic meanings to incoming information, and to weave this symbolic inventory into

a great number of creative combinations. Finally, they can take such self-wrought syntheses and *thrust them out* (EX-IST) into their human environment, to give themselves and their environment meaning. This is what is meant by freedom, individual or collective (p. 2, italics in original).

With regard to the application of this principle to the poor, Hampden-Turner asserts that they are denied the right to originate, in part because labels are thrust upon them by dominant group members:

If one assumes that all men need to EX-IST and do so in modest or greater proportions as their environment and development allow, then it becomes apparent that a major impediment to the self-assertion of the poor is that their environment is labeled, organized and spoon-fed to them by persons who do not share their economic, ethnic or cultural experience. Indeed, to be 'poor' is to be regarded as generally incapable of originating significant thought or action of any kind. The poor having 'failed,' therefore more 'capable' persons must decide for them (p. 3).

The remaining nine principles are likewise based upon self-conscious terminological analyses. Key concepts include 'perception,' particularly of contradictions; 'identity'; 'competence'; 'commitment'; 'suspension' (of one's assumptions) and 'risk'; 'bridging'; 'self-confirmation' and 'self-transcendence'; 'synergy'; and 'ordered feedback.'

From the standpoint of this review, the most interesting discussion is that of the concept of 'synergy,' which derives from the Greek *synergia* (a working with). Elements are synergistic when their individual action contributes to the enhancement of the other individual elements and the whole system of which they are a part. Mutuality and the dynamics of cooperative life require an understanding of synergistic processes, Hampden-Turner maintains, yet habits of Western thought, reflected in social-scientific conceptualizations, 'have crippled all but the most primitive forms of mutuality. In order to gain an understanding of *synergy* and its developmental capacity we have to break some of these habits . . .' (p. 27).

Since this accusation strikes at the heart of the issue that concerns us, I would like to quote directly from Hampden-Turner's discussion of what he thinks we must do to transcend these habits of thought:

First, we have to part with the notion that all terms, concepts and goals must be clarified by assigning to them single, discrete definitions that demarcate them from other goals, and that 'rigorous thinking' will countenance no deviation from one-dimensional ideas and objectives. Second, we must question the assumption that cooperation ensues when all persons agree upon a common goal, purged of an ambiguity which is believed to be the source of misunderstandings. Third, we have to question the whole 'possessive metaphor,' whereby people have or hold a belief as if it were a physical thing, while social scientists do their best to 'physicalize belief objects' as if they were things external to people. Fourth, we must dispute the entire polarity of conflict vs. collaboration—that is, the belief that one moves *away from conflict*, e.g., wanting something different, *towards* collaboration, wanting the same thing. Finally, we have to reconsider the idea that cooperation is achievable by simple effort of 'good will' and 'rationality' rather than

having to be initially *designed into* a system. Let me show how the concept of SYNERGY contradicts these basic assumptions.

SYNERGY is destroyed by the creation of a vocabulary of discrete meanings, because so-called ambiguous words may also be 'junction words,' that hold together a convergence of *different* needs of different participants. It is because participants *differ* in their wants and satisfactions that they can co-operate in multi-faceted objectives, wherein the objective itself is multi-dimensional. Actually, if people wanted exactly the same thing and that thing was finite and physical, the resulting scarcity would immediately drive them into competition. And this is what happens. Bourgeois society is both overwhelmingly conformist and competitive. Agonized by cutthroat competition, we beg for consensus, which triggers fresh competition. Having mostly uni-dimensional terms, everyone finds his rank ordered by these yardsticks; the very act of agreement produces winners and losers, oppression and humiliation, and endless pleas to 'reorder priorities' as if hierarchical ordering was inevitable, and there were no other way to structure the system (pp. 28-29, italics in original).

Among the propositions Hampden-Turner offers about synergy is that it is created by the resolution of opposites and social contradictions, and that the terms we use in labeling social reality have a good deal to do with the potential for resolution:

For example, 'separatism' and 'segregation' refer to voluntary and involuntary forms of differentiation *not* reconcilable with integration. Likewise, 'assimilation' and 'melting pot' are forms of integration, *not* reconcilable with cultural differentiation. Yet 'independence' and 'integration,' as terms, are apparent opposites, yet reconcilable ones. Not only are they reconcilable, they are synergistic in the sense of being more than the sum of their parts and lending each other a surplus of strength. For one can only, as Martin Buber put it, enter into a true relationship with another one set at a distance. Even Black Power cannot grasp new ideas unless it is willing, from a position of sufficient strength, to transact with the wider world. White Power can be little more than a steamroller crushing the Third World until it learns to see through the perspectives of its victims—that is, until it respects the legitimacy and rights of culturally 'differentiated others' (p. 31, italics in original).

In the following chapter Hampden-Turner uses concepts he develops to describe what he terms 'the crucifixion dilemma' of the poor. The dilemma he refers to stems from power imbalances that require the powerless to inflate certain aspects of their relationships (e.g., vigilance) and to deflate others (self-esteem) as the price for coping with potentially overwhelming anxiety. Our culture, the author asserts, bears responsibility for creating the dilemma:

The poor, as of now, are crucified between the traditional culture's habit of reducing all social phenomena to 'somebody's fault' and the social scientific habit of finding natural explanations that are 'nobody's fault.' The poor are alternately exonerated from blame by social scientists, because they are not free to behave otherwise. Or they are thoroughly condemned by politicians because they are free to behave otherwise. In other words, either their EXISTENCE or their moral COMPETENCE is subordinated, and they face the unenviable choice of being freely incompetent or blamelessly determined, of accepting punishment as willful sinners, or avoiding punishment as neutral objects (p. 44).

In the next chapter, entitled 'Social Science Against the Poor,' Hampden-Turner observes that the social sciences, in the process of becoming organized, professionalized, and bureaucratized, have developed an orthodox body of assumptions that opposes social science to 'common sense,' and so to the common-sense understandings of ordinary persons. He critiques the 'dominant creeds' of Behaviorism in experimental psychology and Structural Functionalism in sociology, as well as that 'loose assemblage of experts under the banner of Mental Health, who draw their inspiration from psychiatry and clinical psychology' (p. 72). Despite radical differences in perspective, each group periodically has been concerned with ministering to the poor. 'For the poor,' Hampden-Turner maintains, 'this is an experience somewhat akin to being preached to death by three wild curates of opposing faiths' (p. 72).

Hampden-Turner's point is a basic one: that 'what social scientists have illegitimately claimed for themselves is the unilateral right to label social reality' (p. 85). His attack is upon a brand of positivism, based upon the hypothetico-deductive method, that fails to genuinely put its basic assumptions at risk because it will not accommodate the consciously wrought and conflicting perspectives of the people being studied. For him the issue is ultimately one of inequality, in this case between social scientist and subject. The language of social science is the language of inequality, of dehumanization, by which the poor are transformed into non-persons upon whom we may freely act.

The remainder of the book provides a paradigm for development based upon the conceptual apparatus developed in the initial chapter. It is a provocative utopian quest that should be read by anyone concerned with applied social science, but I will leave it to others to comment on the merit of his argument about how to get from here to there. What concerns me most in this review is Hampden-Turner's assertion that social science has been a weapon against the poor and, more generally, against the powerless. In fact, I find it difficult to refute his argument. The *de facto* case seems as plain to me as it does to him; he simply explicates how the types of conceptualization used by Rohner and Rodman, when in the hands of social agencies, become weapons of abuse.

So where does this leave us? Must we abandon universalism for an extreme form of particularism that presents only the views of the 'natives'? Must we give up completely attempts to be objective in favor of a form of subjectivity that would accept any observer's perspective as equal to every other, regardless of how the perspective was assembled? Must we ignore the darker side of people's natures in favor of rose-colored lenses that project them as unfailingly benign, efficacious, and heroic in order to nurture their self-esteem? These are issues that plague an increasingly self-conscious social science and I would like to address them directly.

Let me start with the issue of universalism versus particularism. I have no quarrel with Rohner's criticism of 'radical relativism,' particularly if this position categorically rejects the legitimacy of cross-cultural comparisons in search of pan-human generalizations. The quest for insight into human nature deserves high priority and has, in my opinion, been a fruitful endeavor. I have no desire to see those qualities shared by all human beings ignored in favor of an overwhelming emphasis on differences. But human nature cannot be described and understood in language that is ethnocentric, value-loaded, and pejorative without demeaning major segments of mankind. We must use much more refined and culture-fair concepts than 'dependence,' 'rejection,' and 'acceptance' to arrive at an understanding of human nature. Such concepts reek with excess meaning and can be reasonably used only when the behaviors associated with them are contextualized, and even then with a great deal of qualification. When they are used to characterize general relationships between individuals, or even worse, 'typical' relationships within whole societies, they become little more than ethnocentric epithets.

Aside from the inappropriateness of such a vocabulary for cross-cultural comparisons, there is a more fundamental issue raised by Rohner's study that needs to be addressed. It has to do with the shift between universal generalizations and particular cases. Whereas universalities can legitimately be pursued with minimal regard for context, or by reducing contexts to types, the analysis of particular cases *must* consider context if ethnocentric abuses are to be avoided. The facile application of universal principles to particular cases results in verbal cartoons, as Rohner's characterizations of the Papago and Alor so aptly demonstrate. Just as glib generalizations about human nature from a single case inevitably contain distortions based upon the imposition of specific circumstances on the whole of mankind, the application of universal generalizations to a particular case generates distortions to the extent that specific context is ignored. The point is that it is precisely context, including the intentions and goals of the actors, that we use to attribute meaning to behavior, and by so doing attribute humanity—personhood—to people. When we ignore context and explain behavior strictly on the basis of universal generalizations, we deprive them of their humanity, reduce them to objects, and provide the rationale for their manipulation. We provide, as Hampden-Turner points out, a social science to be used *against* the people we portray, regardless of our sympathies.

Lest I be misunderstood, I am not saying that universal generalizations are inherently dehumanizing or that they have little to offer in the way of insights into particular cases. There is a proper interplay, a dialectic, between universalism and particularism that is enriching to both. But for this dialectic to succeed we must be fully aware of the implications of each approach for the other.

Let us shift now to the issue of objectivity versus subjectivity. Does being 'fair' to a group, depicting them in all their humanity, require an abandonment of objectivity in favor of an attempt to understand and perhaps replicate their particular form of subjective reality, or to impose our own? I see no reason why this should be so. Just as in everyday encounters we test our assumptions of what is taking place against a wide range of information—information that includes but is not limited to an assessment of other people's subjective view of reality—social scientists need not limit their data in order to endow people with the essential attributes of humanity. Rather, what is important is that *we do not remove from consideration* those subjective components of a people's lifeways that *are* essential to personhood. Hampden-Turner is correct in claiming that objectivity requires the capacity to suspend assumptions in favor of the possibility that they are unsuitable for a specific case (Chapter 3). For social scientists, assumptions have often created paradigmatic strait-jackets; bureaucratized social science, as much as bureaucratized religion, is prone to mistake orthodoxy for objectivity. The very essence of objectivity is the capacity to alter perspectives as the particular cases under observation require, to admit data for review that had not been anticipated, and to accept the tentative nature of one's conclusions. It is easy to mistake such cognitive plasticity for fuzzy-minded subjectivity if one adheres to the hard-line hypothetico-deductive position so often equated with scientific method.

Finally, I would like to turn to the issue of pathology. Must we turn our backs on impairments, disabilities, emotional and cognitive disorders, etc. in favor of presenting an image of people that feeds their collective egos? Of course not, but we ought to be extremely careful about such assessments, about the criteria being used, and about the assumptions we use both in defining the phenomena and identifying etiological antecedents. To me, one of the most disturbing tendencies in Western thought vis-à-vis this issue is the predilection for locating pathology *within* individuals; following the medical model, people who continually exhibit undesirable behavior are presumed to have character defects. This is precisely the impression left by most social science accounts of groups of people who deviate from the cultural mainstream—that they have internalized defects or deficiencies. But I, for one, am convinced that behavior can be meaningfully regarded as pathological only in the context of a system of relationships. From this perspective, pathology must be located *in the relationships* that generate and support the behavior patterns involved, not within the individual actors (Bateson *et al.* 1956).³ Pathology

³ The inherent logic of this approach is applicable to physiological pathology as well. Thus ailments can be conceived as located within the *organic* system of relationships of an individual organism. The principle remains the same; only the system referent is different.

from this standpoint is best conceived as an ailment of the (social) system, not of the component subsystems or individual components, except in extreme cases, i.e., cases in which no possible reorganization of relationships would adaptively integrate the components involved.

If we were to adopt such a position it would oblige us to portray so-called deviant populations from a perspective that does not regard the values of the dominant group as 'normal,' but almost the reverse. That is, to the extent that the values of the dominant group generate relationships that are maladaptive for component subsystems, they are part of, and significant causes of, the pathology. To imply that *people* are pathological because they deviate from such values is, from this perspective, a paradoxical absurdity.

Thus, even when a sympathetic scholar like Rodman cleans up his terminology he is still caught in a conceptual trap. By viewing lower-class behavior as an unfortunate deviation from middle-class values, he implicitly endorses those values as appropriate aspirations, *even though they have been instrumental in generating and maintaining the conditions that make a lower class inevitable*. And so the stigma of failure remains on those who deviate.

There is one additional aspect of social-scientific characterization of culturally divergent groups that requires comment. Even within the dominant paradigm (i.e., the perspective that locates pathology with component subsystems), researchers are frequently so bent on documenting adaptive failures that they ignore or treat lightly adaptive successes. The 'target populations' are portrayed as far more ineffectual and pathological than any reasonable assessment of strengths and weaknesses would project. The pragmatic effect, as Hampden-Turner points out, is to further assault their self-esteem and to provide a warrant for intervention by bureaucracies whose justification requires such a hapless clientele.

It is the responsibility of every social scientist to disarm the arsenal of words with which the victims of our research have been bombarded, lest we continue to be significant contributors to the pathology we portray.

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