The Concept of Man in Social Science: Freedom, Values and Second Nature*

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Sophocles is said to have exclaimed that "the world is full of wonders, but nothing is more wonderful than man." Alexander Pope reminded us that "the proper study of mankind is man." All of the world's great founded religions maintain that God, in some way or other, revealed Himself to mankind as the special object of His creation. This wonderful and special creature, the human being, is also reputedly the central concern of social science, but nowhere is there more confusion about the definition of man than among social scientists.

The urgency of social crises and the demands of social activists are forcing us at this time to reconsider both the presuppositions and the generalizations that social scientists are making about the nature of human beings. Liberation movements have sprung up all around us, insisting on voluntarism and freedom, while social scientists continue to explore conformity and determinism. As Glock and Stark remark (1965: 294), "the basic methodological assumption which has come to inform the social sciences is that man's behavior is determined in the same way that other natural phenomena are determined: that potentially every human act can be understood as a result of antecedent factors which operate to make the act inevitable."

As a preliminary caution we ought to realize that complete consensus can hardly be expected on this question among social scientists. Psychologist B. F. Skinner has called attention, as well as opposition, to himself with his book, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1971), where he bravely and logically draws the behavioral conclusion of determinism. If I understand him correctly he is saying that people are incapable of controlling their own conduct through free will, and only by disposing of autonomous man can we turn to the real causes of human behavior.[1]

Back in 1938, almost as an early warning against this ultimate Skinnerian determinism, Gardner Murphy, in his presidential address to the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, said that "there is surely little sense in continuing to speak as if a man could adapt himself equally to any environment. Here the concept of cultural relativism

1. Skinner's readers now know that he was serious in his science fiction story, *Walden Two* (1948).

*This is a revised version of the author's Presidential Address to the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, New York City, October, 1971.

has done immense damage, indeed as great damage, I believe, as the concept of unchanging human nature" (1939:111).[2] There have been, and continue to be, differences of opinion among social scientists, but the evidence does allow us to say that the dominant and typical image of man accepted by most contemporary Western social scientists is that of a human being whose behavior is determined mainly by the sociocultural environment.

THE SUBMERGENCE OF MAN

Perhaps a more precise observation is to say that man has been neglected, that persons have been submerged almost to the point of disappearance. This is a logical corollary of the constant focus on the influence of the sociocultural environment. More than three decades ago, in a book that deserves rereading, Robert Lynd complained that "for the most part, social scientists have lost the person below their horizon as they move along busily ploughing their respective research furrows. Most of them have not quite known what to do with individuals, dwarfed as the latter are by the magnitude and power of current institutions" (1939: 23). What appears to be needed, he said, is a "recovery of persons" by social science.

In a sense, this was also the plea of George Homans' title, "Bringing Men Back In," when he made his celebrated attack on sociological functionalism in the presidential address to the 1964 ASA convention at Montreal. He argued that the sociological functionalists must ultimately go back to psychology for the explanation of human behavior. The functionalists, he said (1964: 818), "keep psychological explanations under the table and bring them out furtively like a bottle of whiskey, for use when they really need help."[3] Homans has no sociological answer for the problem of man because he assumes that you are sociological when you study the behavior of societies, but psychological when you study the behavior of human beings.

If the psychologist is needed to "bring men back" into social studies, there are other social scientists who deem it unnecessary to deal with man, except as a kind of social derivative. To check this observation I looked at the *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* (1968). The index of this source of scholarly information has no entry under the term "man." You are referred to the articles on anthropology and evolution. The best one finds in the article on anthropology is that "culture distinguishes mankind from the rest of the animal world" (Mandelbaum, 1968: 313). In the article on evolution you read that "tasks that the human child easily masters are very difficult or impossible for non-human primates" (Washburn & Lancaster, 1968: 220).

It may be argued, of course, that the precise definition of man is a philosophical or ontological question that the social scientist bypasses when he observes and theorizes about the empirical data of social relations and group life. At the end of his textbook, Robert Bierstedt is content to say (1970: 504) that this is "a philosophical rather than

2. Murphy adds (1939: 111) that "if man is to be molded to society, society must also be molded to man." More recently Erik Erikson wrote (1962: 253) that "the social process does not mold a new being merely to housebreak him; it molds generations in order to be remolded, to be reinvigorated, by them."

3. Homans leaves no doubt of his position: "One of the great points I am trying to make is that the fundamental principles of all the social sciences are the same, and are psychological" (1971: 369).

a sociological problem, for it involves the question of values." This inference—that the study of values must be left to philosophers—is no longer widely held among sociologists today. Nevertheless, I too would ask with Bierstedt (1970: 505), "where in this welter of processes, in this structure of norms and statuses and groups, is there room for the person, what guarantees his integrity as an individual, what confers upon him the irrepressible and unrepeatable character of his own personality?"

The sociology textbooks I have examined tend to lose the individual in society (as Robert Lynd said), or ignore the problem of a basic definition of man (as Bierstedt does), or provide an implicit definition that denies the humanity of human beings (as the majority do).[4] Bernard Spilka has a similar complaint about psychologists who have dehumanized and trivialized the human being. In current psychology, he observes (1970: 171), the result has been "the study of logical constructs and/or intervening variables, not of man himself."

Sociologists seem chary of penetrating through and beneath behavior patterns to the person who behaves. Social personality is seen as a configuration of social roles, and this concept becomes useful in other areas of sociology. "The image of man as but a role-playing animal is in turn reinforced in the larger discipline by the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, and the two are linked through reference group theory" (Friedrichs, 1970: 228; see also Berger, 1961: chapter 3). In other words, sociological man is a construct once-removed from existential man. Social scientists then deal only with man's "second nature."

SECOND NATURE

In discussing the importance of comparative philosophy as an avenue to the understanding of man's essential nature, P. T. Raju points out (1960: 29) that "habit and custom, which are the basis of culture and civilization, i.e., of the achievements of man, are only second nature; human nature as such is primary even with respect to them." This second nature, as observed in the behavior of man, is analyzed as though the human being *is* its behavior. "So the behaviorists say that mind also is what mind does. Mind is its behavior, there is nothing there apart from its behavior" (1960: 30). Similarly, the focus on symbolic interaction takes attention away from the study of man himself. "Here also we have to say that symbols are not the same as the things symbolized. In symbols we may get some clues concerning human nature; but no symbol or group of symbols can give an exhaustive account of the thing they stand for" (1960: 31).

It appears that each of the sciences has exposed some aspect of this "second nature" but each has been reluctant to penetrate to the core aspect of primary human nature. Clifford Geertz pulls this all together in what he calls the "stratigraphic" approach to the study of man, but he too fails to discuss the ultimately explanatory stratum. "Man is a composite of 'levels,' each superimposed upon those beneath it and underpinning those above it. As one analyzes man, one peels layer after layer, each such layer being complete and irreducible in itself, revealing another, quite different sort of layer underneath" (1965: 98).

4. A popular text, *Sociology: Man in Society*, omits the term *man* from its subject index and relies on Mead's postulates for the "genesis of the self" (DeFleur *et al.*, 1971: 141).

This stratigraphic composite describes all except the essential layer that accounts for the humanity of human nature. The several sciences have shown that "man was a hierarchically stratified animal, a sort of evolutionary deposit, in whose definition each level —organic, psychological, social, and cultural—had an assigned and incontestable place. To see what he really was, we had to superimpose findings from the various relevant sciences—anthropology, sociology, psychology, biology—upon one another like so many patterns in a *moiré*" (Geertz, 1965: 99).

The missing layer that would humanize this composite of man's second nature is probably the "Judaic-Christian image of man" suggested some years ago by William Kolb (1961),[5] or Bernard Spilka's more recent analysis. Social scientists have resisted this kind of analysis mainly because it does not fit their metaphysical preconceptions of the nature of science. As Gibson Winter points out (1966: 4), "the model for this type of social science is the work of the physical sciences. The credo of this approach is the dogma that scientific investigation requires understanding, prediction and control—no matter what its subject matter. If the subject matter resists this kind of science, then there is not science of that subject matter."

ARTIFICIALLY HUMAN

In their research and writings most social scientists find human beings "qualitatively" different from non-human beings. Animals in the forest and barnyard do not reason and plan; they do no "paper work" from either a historical or futuristic perspective. "Men do not behave like cedars, earthworms, cats, or elephants, they behave like men" (Murphy, 1954: 629). The cultural experience that man has is "qualitatively exclusive to his own species" because "the baby, the human (or more accurately prehuman) infant, has unfocused biological needs, while in the lower orders of animal life, behavior is governed by predetermined mechanisms" (Bensman and Rosenberg, 1963: 42). Even Charles Cooley had to bring himself to say (1964: 423) that "a child comes into the world with an outfit of vague tendencies."[6]

Is it acceptably scientific to postulate these fuzzy "needs" and "tendencies" but grossly prescientific to assert that man is innately rational, volitional and social? That these basic human qualities are not simply biological or physical, that they are developed in social contact but not produced by social contact? It is these innate human qualities that have been stripped from man by successive generations of social scientists. This has been a process of dehumanization and depersonalization. The result has been a blind acceptance of this statement, widely paraphrased in introductory social science texts: "we are not automatically and inevitably human beings."

Despite protestations that the definition of man is a philosophical problem, and that the problems of freedom and values must be handled by philosophers, the sociologists do

5. See William L. Kolb (1961) and Talcott Parsons' comment on it (1961) in the first issue of the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, and the further exchange between them in the subsequent issue.

6. In this reprint (Cooley, 1964) of the revised edition of 1922, there is also reprinted a "Foreword" and article by George Herbert Mead, "Cooley's contribution to American social thought" (1930). Even before Mead, the monistic, evolutionary, organismic theory of Cooley had already contributed to a dehumanized and depersonalized concept of man.

provide an image of man, and it is not a man who exercises freedom and lives according to chosen values. Indeed, it is not a man at all; it is an individual thing that *becomes* a human person. One textbook writer asserts (Wilson, 1971: 120) that culture must be transmitted "if the organism is to be transmuted into human form." The same author writes (1971: 130) that "*imperceptibly* the individual becomes a person, behavior becomes conduct."

In other words, the human being is an artifact, a natural biological organism, not born as a human person or a human self, but artificially transmuted by the process of socialization into what we know as man. Lundberg's popular *Sociology* tells us (1968: 48) that "socialization humanizes the biological organism and transforms it into a *self* having a sense of identity, capable of disciplined and ordered behavior, and endowed with ideals, values and aspirations." Lest this be interpreted as an exaggerated metaphor, the text assures us later (1968: 270) that "the self is acquired by the individual as a result of his participation in social life."

Contemporary sociology textbooks repeat this notion as though it were a demonstrated scientific fact. Its genesis lay innocently enough in William James' speculation about man's social self,[7] which was amplified in Charles Cooley's disquisition on human nature (1964: 423).[8] These two psychologists still held to the traditional distinction between individual and social aspects of human beings. It remained for George Herbert Mead to destroy that distinction and to hypothesize (Strauss, 1956: 204) that there is only the social self which is "essentially a social structure and it arises in social experience." As Berger remarks (1961: 50), "socialization is now seen not just as the process by which the self becomes integrated into society but rather as the process in which the self is actually produced."

This metaphysical discovery—or fanciful presupposition—is now solemnly presented as scientific truth in contemporary textbooks. It leads to even more fanciful conjectures like that of Broom and Selznick, who say (1955: 96) that "language creates minds and selves," or that language creates reason in human beings. "Other animals have intelligence; but because he has language man alone has reason" (1955: 86). To say that an organism "acquires" a self is postulating an artificial creation of the human being out of, and by means of, his social experience. To postulate that language "creates" mind and self and reason is to put the thing created in the role of the thing creating.

All of this is wrapped up in the prescientific assumption that the fetus in the womb does not partake of humanity, but starts to be human at the point of birth into the social world. There is no doubt that Mead has had the greatest influence on such metaphysical aberrations among contemporary social scientists—who quote him repeatedly. Herbert Blumer underlines Mead's impact in this regard when he remarks (1966: 535) that "Mead reversed the traditional assumptions underlying philosophical, psychological and sociological thought to the effect that human beings possess minds and consciousness as original 'givens.'" In a sense, Mead simply switched causalities by conceptualizing society

7. "Properly speaking, a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind" (James, 1893: 294).
8. Cooley acknowledges (1964: 125) indebtedness to William James and invents (1964: 184) the term "looking-glass self."

as a precondition to the individual and thus made man the effect instead of the cause (Strauss, 1956: 241-245).

This could have been a useful hypothetical approach had it not eventuated in metaphysical postulates that fail to differentiate human animals from brute animals.[9] If one accepts Mead's crude metaphysics, especially his monistic, organismic, evolutionary ontology, he must abandon the concept of innate human dignity, natural rights of man, freedom, and all other values that men hold dear. One is then led to the unambiguous statement of George Lundberg in his 1943 presidential address to the American Sociological Society (1944: 3): ". . . there are no such things as *inalienable* rights. The only rights we know are those which a community from time to time chooses to grant and respect."[10]

THE PROBLEM OF DETERMINISM

In so far as social scientists restrict themselves to operational definitions of man, they tend to make a valuable contribution to our understanding of what Raju calls "second nature." At this level there can be no quarrel with Mead's "social self" or Sorokin's "sociocultural ego" or Parsons' "personality system," if these are taken as a generalized construct, or conceptualization, which is then analytically refined into an interrelated series of specific goal-oriented roles. The theory of social personality as a system of coordinated social roles seems adequate as descriptive and explanatory of the observable social behavior of man and of the manner in which man participates socially with his fellow man. But it is still dealing only with "second nature;" it is still at the level of variables intervening between man and society.

From an operational and heuristic point of view, the concept of man can be as multiple and as different as the requirements of the kind of research undertaken. This means that the hypothetical model is useful in testing out a set of propositions against probable subsequent human behavior. As Kunkel and Garrick point out (1969: 138; see also Simon, 1957), "A model of man consists of a set of propositions concerning those aspects of man which are of interest in a particular investigation." They exemplify this definition with the work of Malthus who used as his "model" a set of propositions: that man must eat to live, that man has sexual relations and does not voluntarily limit the number of his children.

There appears to be nothing metaphysical on the nature of man in these propositions, but they do contain the presupposition that man knows what he is doing and could voluntarily do otherwise. In other words, even an operational definition of man already contains assumptions about the nature of man. Even if we limit our definition of personality to a set of propositions involving an integrated system of social roles we are still faced with the question to what extent man is free in the selection and performance of his

9. "Man's behavior is such in his social group that he is able to become an object to himself, a fact which makes him a more advanced product of evolutionary development than are the lower animals. Fundamentally it is this social fact—and not his alleged possession of a soul or mind with which he, as an individual, has been mysteriously and supernaturally endowed, and with which the lower animals have not been endowed—that differentiates him from them" (Strauss, 1956: 201).

10. Lundberg is one of the few sociologists who consistently and honestly followed their metaphysical postulates to their logical conclusions. He is also responsible for "the only complete metasociological treatise in existence," said Paul Furfey (1953: 41).

social roles. We are still faced with the central problem of man's accountability for his behavior, a problem not seen in lower animals.

In an exceptional example of sociology textbooks, E. T. Hiller handles this question from the perspective of "intrinsic values of man." He writes (1947: 192) that "a person is an individual who is the object of one or all of the intrinsic valuations," which are respect, accountability and inviolability. "These are intrinsic because and to the extent that they are inseparable from the person. By these qualities the individual is made into a moral agent, a person, whose good is an end in itself."[11]

To be accountable for his actions a person must have responsibility; and to be responsible he must have freedom. Responsibility means that "meaningful choice is actually open, and that persons are answerable for the choices they make." Behavioral determinism implies that people are unfree and nonresponsible. "Freedom without responsibility and responsibility without freedom are not consonant with human nature and need, nor with the lasting well-being of society" (Cook, 1964: 181).

The experiential fact is that human beings do respond and react, as well as initiate action, and are not merely inert and pliable objects of impersonal forces. "In short, man is more than a mere player of preexisting roles; he is a meaning maker and a value-chooser" (Staude, 1971). As an agent of change, with the ability to discern and decide, the human being can and does alter his own behavior and influence his associates. If people did not have this ability to create and to produce change in their human relations, there would be no culture in the strict sense of the word, and there would be no society of acting and interacting persons. It ought to be an obvious fact that the "qualitative" difference between a human group and a bee hive derives from the inherent and initial "qualitative" difference between a man and a bee. Even the most scientific and controlled "socialization" of primates from infancy, raising them like children in the family, could not "humanize" them. Nor would a human baby, raised in a family of monkeys, become nonhuman.

The unwillingness to define man in other than deterministic terms, especially in the psychological sciences, was seen by Sidney Hook (1961: 8-9) as a threat to freedom and human responsibility.

> The apparent upshot of the acceptance of determinism is the belief that the more we learn about a man's past history, the less he seems responsible for his present behavior. This conclusion has affected thinking in law, pedagogy, and social work, and has produced something of a revolution in penology. Sometimes its proponents rather inconsistently blame us for blaming Hitler and Stalin for the crimes they voluntarily committed, on the ground that Hitler and Stalin were once babies—hard as it is to imagine—they must have inherited or acquired the complexes and obsessional drives that caused them to do what they could not help doing. Even when pruned of inconsistency, this argument threatens to produce a revolution in moral theory by asserting that the concept of moral responsibility is completely vacuous.

It seems to me that much of the unrest among younger social scientists stems from this neglect of the concept of moral responsibility, which in turn emerges logically from

11. Hiller does not provide a metaphysical definition of human nature. He says that "our mores invest each person" with these intrinsic valuations, which "are the foundation for the ethical worth of the person" (1947: 198). "The inviolability of the person is derived from religious ideas" (1947: 197).

the deterministic conception of man. There is a kind of "movement" afoot, the leaders of which are insisting that sociologists should be responsible for the improvement of society and not simply interested in the development of social science.[12] It tends to contrast pragmatic humanism with positivistic scientism. It is a pitch for social reform, but let me add that not all social reformers have an adequate image of man.

Yet there is a case against positivism. When social scientists try to imitate physical scientists, as Gibson Winter points out, there are curious contrasting effects: man's increasing control over his physical environment is accompanied by man's increasing bondage to his sociocultural environment. George Wald, the Harvard biologist, catches this notion when he says (1965: 46) that "our technology has given us dependable machines and livestock; we shall have to choose whether to turn it now to giving us more efficient, convenient and reliable men, yet at the cost of our freedom."[13]

CONSTRAINT AND FREEDOM

Despite their theoretical acceptance of today's "prevailing objective, mechanistic, behavioristic, fatalistic, reductionistic view of the nature of mind and psyche" (Sperry, 1965: 76), social scientists seem reluctant in practice to draw the logical conclusion that man is little more than an automaton. One is reminded of C. Wright Mills' cheerful robot, in whose form there arises the "ultimate problem of freedom" because it is evident "that *all* men do *not* naturally *want* to be free; that all men are not willing or not able, as the case may be, to exert themselves to acquire the reason that freedom requires" (1959: 175).[14]

Mills recognized man's capacity to be volitional and rational but questioned whether the majority would exercise those capacities. Still earlier, Reinhard Bendix saw a paradox in the sociologists' image of man, and a dilemma in the employment of a rational approach to society. The paradox: while we think that knowledge and intelligence are necessary to improve the world, we are taught by social science "to regard man as a creature of his drives, habits and social roles, in whose behavior reason and choice play no decisive part." If one opts for reason and intelligence the dilemma remains whether social scientists "should place their abiding faith in reason rather than an exclusive concern with improving the techniques of social manipulations" (1961: 36-37).[15]

Since there is—and must be—constraint in every society it appears that people must find a balance between social control and self-control. "Unless man has some power to make free decisions in his own life, he loses most of what he thinks he is when he calls

12. The general "tone" of such criticism is found in the articles contributed to *The Sociology of Sociology* (Reynolds and Reynolds, 1970). It is also one of the themes of *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (Gouldner, 1970) and of *Professing Sociology* (Horowitz, 1968).

13. Wald seems confused and even self-contradictory. Although he says that man has freedom of will and has to make choices, he adds also (1965: 46) that individuals are "perhaps wholly determined, yet to some degree unpredictable."

14. Reference is made to the "robot model of human behavior" by L. V. Bertalanffy (1968: 189), but it must be noted that Mills was emphatically opposed to dealing with human beings as though they were robots or automata.

15. "No more important task faces the social sciences today than to determine by which 'image of man' they are to be led" (Bendix, 1961: 31).

himself a man. Unless he has some control over his basic attitudes and over the actions which flow from them, the whole business of responsible living becomes a farce" (Tremmel, 1971: 17). In an orderly society—and most societies are "orderly" most of the time —the tendency is for human beings to conform widely and consistently to patterned expectations of behavior. If we know anything from research and experience we know that behavior becomes patterned both in the personality and in the culture, and that these patterns serve as both models and expectations of social conduct.

An orderly society requires constraint but it ought also to guarantee freedom to its members who can then opt for compliance or deviance. As far as I can discover, sociologists have no model to explain that man can do evil as well as good. Dennis Wrong notes this fact in his celebrated complaint about the "oversocialized" conception of man, but thinks it is "archaic" to say so (1961: 191). "The view that man is invariably pushed by internalized norms or pulled by the lure of self-validation by others ignores—to speak archaically for a moment—both the highest and lowest, both beast and angel, in his nature." He feels that sociological theorists have to make assumptions about human nature, but after his brilliant critique of current theories he offers no alternate model of the nature of man.[16]

The long historical process of civilization has been a process of rational and voluntary constraint; and man's control over himself has been more civilizing than his control over external nature. Even if one is not an evolutionist, and prefers to accept Sorokin's theory of alternating recurrence of ideational and sensate cultures, he realizes that overemphasis on social control and underemphasis on self-control pave an almost certain road to totalitarianism.

The social scientist is faced with two contrasting problems at this time in America: the pull toward freedom and the pull toward conformity. The notion seems to prevail that authentic voluntarism is a disruption of scientific prognosis, and that deterministic behavior alone is consonant with the scientific enterprise. This remains the strange academic metaphysics of research and theory and teaching, even while social scientists generally take the liberal side in any debate over freedom and self-determination. Usually, they defend the liberal stance that the environment, the conditions of modern living, should be altered for the benefit of man. Legislation and social programs to this effect win the support of social scientists. On the other hand, social scientists are generally at a loss, or in considerable disagreement, when pressed to describe the image of the free, responsible, accountable human being for whose benefit this sociocultural environment should be improved.

ADAPTATION TO MAN

This dilemma poses a value question that seems even more important than the problem of theoretical orientation; and it can be put in oversimplified terms by asking, "is

16. "I do not see how, at the level of theory, sociologists can fail to make assumptions about human nature" (Wrong, 1961: 192). Unlike Homans in his call to "bring men back" into sociology, Wrong seems reluctant to turn to psychologists for the model and definition, yet in a footnote he quotes Inkeles (1959: 250): "very little sociological analysis is ever done without using at least an implicit psychological theory."

man the measure of society, or is society the measure of man? Should man be trained and manipulated so that he fits into the existing sociocultural environment, or should this environment be manipulated so that it fits more appropriately the human condition?" As a value proposition, social scientists affirm the latter; as a theoretical proposition they choose the former. Personal values are in conflict with impersonal theories. In our conceptual schemes we have lost the perspective that the system serves man, and have spent most of our time analyzing how man becomes adapted to and serves the system.[17]

It seems to me that Malinowski was dealing with this peculiar reversal of perspective when he wrote (1959: 127) that "the true problem is not to study how human life submits to rules—it simply does not; the real problem is how the rules become adapted to life." This is the central empirical question that calls for logical conceptualization; this is the point at which social scientists appear to make an embarrassed and uncomfortable detour. If man were to become the focus of social science, we might soon find it more important to study deviant societies rather than deviant persons.

The classical observation of Ruth Benedict, that man is both the creator and the creature of his culture, cannot be repeated too often. V. Gordon Childe described human behavior in similar terms when he wrote (1951: 188) that "tradition makes the man, by circumscribing his behavior within certain bounds; but it is equally true that man makes traditions. And so, we can repeat with deeper insight, 'man makes himself.'" In a different and broader context Thomas O'Dea reminds us (1970: 172) that "man responds —he acts, he does, he makes—and in this response he impresses himself in a variety of ways on his surroundings—on other men, on nonhuman material."[18]

Cooley and Mead seem to be the revealed English-language sources for the social scientists' image of man as depersonalized and dehumanized. But Durkheim provides the "sacred scripture" for the dogma that society takes precedence over the individual. His peculiar insight—that society is the explanatory principle of man—was a radical departure from centuries of Western thought to the contrary: that man is the explanatory principle of society. Before Durkheim, man was the "given" and society had to be explained; after Durkheim, society is the "given" and man has to be explained. Thomas Luckmann reminds us (1967: 19-20) that "the radical character of this reversal and its implications for sociological theory were often overlooked; its significance for an understanding of the relation between society, religion and person is yet to be articulated."

In the light of Western history since the second World War—and quite aside from metaphysical assumptions and positivistic presuppositions—it is difficult to understand why there has been a continuing focus on man as creature and product of the culture and a continuing neglect of man as creator and producer of the culture. Many hard facts of experience should have changed this sociological focus and led to a reconceptualization of the place of the human being at the center of the sociocultural system. Robert Redfield, commenting on relativism and ethnocentrism, once remarked that it was easy to anthro-

17. There is an analogy in ecclesiological literature that emphasizes the "servant Church" adapting to the needs of its members, rather than a Church to which the members give obedient and loyal service.

18. O'Dea begins chapter 15 of *Sociology and the Study of Religion* with the above quotation from Childe. This is, of course, a cautionary reminder to sociologists of knowledge who depend on Karl Marx's dictum that "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary their social existence determines their consciousness."

pologize about remote tribes that were no great threat to us, but one gets a different perspective in the overwhelming presence of gigantic totalitarianisms like Communism, Fascism and Nazism.

What I am proposing here is not only a redefinition of man that conceptualizes him as an authentic human being, but also a radical shift in perspective that returns the human being to the center of social studies. I suppose it means that those of us who really care about the sacred dignity of man must pay more attention to C. P. Snow's humanistic culture than to the scientific culture in which we have been trained. Perhaps it is time that we take seriously, and accept, Peter Berger's "invitation" to the humanistic approach to sociology (1963). In some ways, the so-called radical sociologists, as well as the proponents of the counterculture, are groping for a reconceptualization of the proper study of man that makes the proper study of society worthwhile (see the similar reflections of Winter, 1970). As John Staude remarks (1971), "we must begin to view men as builders and users of social structures rather than simply as receivers and transmitters."

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