



Radical Man: The Process of Psycho-Social Development

by Charles Hampden-Turner.
Cambridge, Massachusetts:
Schenkman.

1970

Reviewed by Kevin Franklin

Karen Horney (1885-1952), J. L. Moreno (1889-1974) and Charles Hampden-Turner in *Radical Man* stand on common ground. They highlight *anxiety* in human functioning; the cause of neurosis according to Horney, for Moreno anxiety is *nothing* but spontaneity-lost, and for Hampden-Turner it is cause of anomie. He writes (p. 392) "... insofar as any single problem holds other problems in its thrall, I would say that the central issue is our individual capacity to tolerate the fires of existential anxiety."

My world view as an isolated young man was challenged when I read *Radical Man*: I painfully recognised myself in this writing. My life was eventually turned around. What follows is a mature reflection and guide for those contemplating taking the tour.

Hampden-Turner draws on ample research evidence to describe Radical Man. And *Radical Man* requires a 'new' process of psychosocial development described in Chapter III: *A Model of Psycho-Social Development*. Radical Man is an enabled solution to existential angst, and then in contrast is Man's restrictive solution in Chapter IV (*Anomie — The Failure of Existence*). Anomic Man, to coin a term, is Every Man.

In a *theory of role* perspective — from absent spontaneity in the *role-taking* Every Man to spontaneous creativity in integrative *role-playing* — Anomic Man and Radical Man are polarisations of a theoretical continuum of spontaneity. In Hampden-Turner's theoretical dissertation at the Harvard Business School he has, albeit unwittingly, gathered a vast body of evidence to support and describe this theoretical expression of the psychodrama paradigm. Central to his thesis is the failure of Every Man to challenge and transcend his reactive-fear via *integration*. And from that continuing failure, and spontaneity-lost, instead instituting a restrictive reaction of *phobia* (p. 297). With 2013 hindsight we can better see how a survivalist mentality of coping can lead from anxiety to depression, to pre-emptive suicide and alternatively in reaction to 'shoot-em up' radicalisation.

Polarisation in everyday living, sexism for instance, is expressed in theory as complementary versus symmetrical relationship. Radical Man is freedom oriented because he or she enters into collaborative dialectic with others to

transcend their outrage sense of male and female as opposites. Why the outside observer role of Anomic Man? He writes (p. 263) “we nearly all become authoritarian in situations of sufficient danger and perplexity, like being locked up in a ward with paranoid schizophrenics.”

Hampden-Turner's *Radical Man* is not on fire with opposition; instead radical men and women identify with and are on fire *with the plight* of the paranoid schizophrenic. Implicitly, *role reversal* with sociometrically distant others is a goal to be achieved; *not* avoiding, *not* terrorising and *not* subjugating. Like Karen Horney he writes that *not* transcending is the vicious cycle. He addresses a familiar existential question: *To be or not to be?*

He describes a process. *Radical Man* is about experience but is not experience; Logos, *not* Eros. Potentially, this content orientation without also living the resistance experienced in role-playing can become further fodder for the anomic-dogmatism of intellectualism or the anti-intellect reaction of oppositional shoot-em up radicalism.

In *How to Read This Book* (p. xii) he gives good advice. This book is dangerous to a world view of fixity such as I had in the mid-1970s. For example he writes: “If you already object to the basic premises of traditional social science you may omit Chapter I which will only provide you with extra ammunition.” In retrospect — in my then “pitiless moralizer” of *Every Man* — I should have taken his advice. In the mid-1970s I was beginning psychodrama training, reading Morenean method and Hampden-Turner's process. My mother died suddenly. I was teaching science and Human Biology. I was a *Coming Out* gay-man in a homophobic government educational system with its phobic demand characteristic of “control”. My disturbing wish and reactive fear creating an overwhelming existential crisis. My internalised ‘parent’ was inadequate to the task of fixing ‘the fix’. Ask yourself: *Do I really want to read this book?* Today I'm glad that I did.

If you do you'll find a book in 12-chapters. Chapter I characterises Conserved Man and Chapter II describes Radical Man as his dialectical twin. This description personifying the role-taker — role-player continuum, is the psychodrama paradigm: and for *Every Man* the existential angst of paradox and confusion that is Man and his Shadow. Paradox and confusion are implicit in psychodramatic production. These are backgrounding chapters; interesting, challenging and confirming if you harbour disappointment in the modern social sciences. Now, as in the 1970s, ‘social’ sciences stubbornly excluding a humane expression of *social*, from Latin *socius* meaning *companion*.

In Chapter III Hampden-Turner also presents his thesis: *Man exists freely* (p. 31). This is followed by nine elements of his dialectic model of learning. These are presented as a learning cycle which spirals up or down (p. 33). A dynamic-model of learning is familiar to us in AANZPA as forward to health or backward to fragmentation: these are from the ‘socially’ constructed coping that is Anomic Man's *shadow*-personality.

A reader might not understand Hegelian dialectic used in this learning model of thesis writing. A dictionary search shows Hegelian dialectic to be *an interpretive method, originally used to relate specific entities or events to the absolute idea, in which some assertable proposition (thesis) is necessarily opposed by an equally assertable and apparently contradictory proposition (antithesis), the mutual contradiction being reconciled on a higher level of truth by a third proposition (synthesis).*

He writes (p. xii) of Chapters III and IV that these “should be read by anyone seeking to get the most out of this book.” Hampden-Turner assumes a psychosocial model of reality with its inherent push-factor of creativity. Missing from his thesis-book is the third and higher Hegelian proposition, for instance, an integrated whole *Universal Man*. All theory has limits including the current psychosocial models of Man. Radical Man exhausts the psychosocial paradigm: Creativity without spontaneity is that limit.

Exemplars are given in Chapters V-XII. Psychologists could profitably read Chapter V: *Dissent and Rebellion in the Laboratory*. Chapter VI: *Development and the Social Structure of Formal Systems*, speaks to everyone. Trainers would benefit from Chapter VII: *Rebellion, Growth and Regression in Training Groups*.

Moreno gave us a method-plus account; a *how* of psychosocial development. *Radical Man* is descriptive of development but without method it lacks the *how* of personal-professional practice. Though psychosocial-oriented work is generally blind to Universal Man's integration, psychodramatists will find these complementary. He comprehensively describes anomie — people fallen into coping with spontaneity-lost. This work mirrors the psychosocial paradigm with its unresolvable existential angst from fear of creating without spontaneity; this paradigm creating Disorder.

This book is dangerous to a cold at heart pitiless moralizer and to anomic men and women needing a warm response in a world dominated by fixity. To finish this review I quote Hampden-Turner's conclusive words (p. 381):

The point is to act spontaneously from the deepest ethical and human impulse and to discover yourself in a fervent embrace with the complementary human impulse touched off in others. The basic dichotomy of individuality and intimacy is transcended when the lonely act calls forth a warm response.



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