A Humanistic Science

Social Psychology and Human Values. Selected Essays. M. BREWSTER SMITH. Aldine, Chicago, 1969. x + 438 pp. $12.50.

This compilation of 26 of Brewster Smith's many published writings (to which he has added opening and closing pieces, as well as one or two others that are new) may be taken as a fairly complete representation of what an able and wide-reaching social psychologist has done in the first 30 years of his professional life. What emerges illuminates both the man and his discipline.

The breadth of Smith's work will, I think, surprise even some of those who have long followed and admired it. The reprinted papers come from journals in political science, in higher education, in psychiatry, and in public health—not to mention several "standard" psychological journals—and from edited volumes dealing with topics as diverse as politico-economic development and cognitive consistency. There is also a wide range of problem-settings in these papers: Smith discusses his own studies of Peace Corps teachers in Ghana, of foreign students in America, of prejudice in school systems, and of "the moral orientations of protesting college youth." Four papers deal with aspects of mental health.

Many of the papers derived from special settings deal with theoretical issues. Thus studies of Peace Corps teachers are used to deduce "common strands" in individual competence—a favorite theme of Smith's. "Mental health as a rubric" emerges, under his analysis, not as a theoretical concept but as a "label for an evaluative psychological perspective on personality," and provides the occasion for warning that it is not the intrusion of values but the surreptitiousness of the intrusion that is scientifically regrettable.

For Smith, the concept "personal values" is a necessary one in the developmental "study of lives" (chapter 7). Borrowing from Clyde Kluckhohn, he describes values as "a particular class of personal dispositions: conceptions of the desirable that are relevant to selective behavior. [They] are attitudes, in the sense of object-directed personal dispositions. But they are a special kind of attitude, functioning as standards by which choices are evaluated. [They] pertain . . . to the realm of the ought rather than that of 'is' or 'want'" (p. 102). The self-value, in particular, serves to link personality with society and culture. Here Smith draws more upon Heider than upon G. W. Allport (to whose memory the book is dedicated); in fact, he deplores the "lack of exact fit between the present conception and that underlying the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey *A Study of Values* [which] gets at consistent patterns of verbally expressed preferences" that are not necessarily "sustained by convictions about the preferable" (p. 103).

From the book as a whole, as well as from such passages as these, one concludes that Smith's "conception" serves as a guiding theme for the understanding in the study of lives rather than as a precise or an operational construct. Its serviceability is overarching rather than specific. One observation may serve to support this conclusion. In chapter 2, there appears a rather elaborate "conceptual map for the analysis of personality and politics." Among four panels of variables and processes that jointly contribute to political behavior, the term "value" appears but once (bracketed with motives and interests) among some dozens of concepts; the term "attitude" appears seven times. If the status of value in contemporary social psychology emerges as more overarching than undergirding, this is, I suspect, a faithful representation of the field as it is today.

The theme of "rationality" appears in the titles of almost the first and almost the last of Smith's papers and, less conspicuously, often in between. In the context of politics (chapter 2), individual decisions are rational insofar as they "are grounded in processes of object appraisal . . . in the sense that they represent a weighing of means-end relationships." If, as certain data suggest, "voters in the aggregate may look more rational than they do singly," it is because "irrational private components . . . vary unsystematically across persons." In chapter 26, individual rationality is considered as a developmental problem: How does a baby "acquire rationality and selfhood in interaction" with others? Overly severe or obscure challenges to adaptation foster irrationality, as does inadequate opportunity for social validation (although socially shared autisms may be objectively irrational). At any rate, Smith finds the crux of the developmental picture in socially transmitted rules of the game, together with "values associated with their use," all of which he labels "rational culture." Thus, "rationality is a social achievement . . . and rational thought a social process" (p. 378). G. H. Mead, Piaget, and John Dewey are duly noted as sources of "clues."

Theoretical questions of *rationality* are not explicitly discussed in the same breath with those of *values*—the theme that shares the book's title role. (I find no indexed reference to either term that is also indexed for the other.) Many social psychologists solve (or avoid) the problem simply by regarding values as objects of study, appertaining to persons being studied but not to theorists or researchers themselves. Smith is clearly not one of them, as is evidenced by his very personal and forthright introductory chapter, from which the following excerpt is relevant:

> How to fit voluntaristic choice into a deterministic science is a truly basic psychological problem. . . . Like all knowledge, social psychological understanding is, of course, two-edged. My commitment is to its use in ways that augment human freedom, but knowledge can also be used manipulatively in ways that diminish it. Again, we encounter the self-fulfilling prophecy. Social psychologists who believe in the potentiality, if not the full actuality, of human freedom are likely to treat people, in and out of research, with the respect that causally enhances their actual freedom. . . . Those who do not hold this belief are likely to treat people in ways that tend to reduce them to the quasi-machines that fit the mechanistic theory. Here lies the danger of a social psychology that is artificially divorced from human values. My hope in these essays is to advance the development of a science of social man that begins to do justice to his humanity—a science *of* man that is *for* man, too.

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British Social Anthropology

Comparative Studies in Kinship. JACK GOODY. Stanford University Press, Stanford, Calif., 1969. xviii + 262 pp. $7.50.

The author is a distinguished member of the theoretical school of British social anthropology, and in many ways his work exemplifies a way of thinking about social anthropology which emerged from the intellectual primacy