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# Humanizing Sociological Thought and Practice\*

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## ABSTRACT

This paper introduces a practical application of sociology. It attempts to do so as a modest effort in perceiving varied images of the human and of society. It makes available, as interventions for the treatment of individual crises and for empirical verification, a set of presuppositions about the features and consequences of human social nature. The preponderance of social scientific theories and practices found in the literature have a commonality germane to the definition and resolution of social problems - *horizontal* change. An optional theory and corresponding set of practices espousing *vertical* change focus less on the maintenance and content of the social self or ego, and more on the process and outcomes of identification with it. The latter emphasis is a version of clinical humanism not found in the rhetoric constituting sociological practice.

## Introduction

The domain of sociology called "clinical sociology" includes a circumscribed set of features that distinguish it from other sub-fields of sociology (Bruhn and Rebach 1996; Kallen 1995; Eve 1994; Glass 1991; Fein 1990; Berg and Smith 1985; Cocozzelli 1987; Fritz 1985; Freedman 1984; Strauss 1984; Swan 1984).<sup>1</sup> Jonathan A. Freedman, in a recollection of Saul

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Alinsky, refers to clinical sociology's characteristic reliance on sociological theory and concepts as essential for developing approaches to change (1984). In this vein, Melvyn Fein (1990) highlights what might be referred to as a traditionally *humanistic* aspect of clinical sociology's focus on change - that a social perspective is vital, indispensable to comprehending personal problems.<sup>2</sup> Clinical sociology continues to draw on the numerous traditions of social thought - philosophical assumptions and presuppositions - to ground its activities. Because as a sub-field, it is a relatively recent construct in the history of ideas, there is ample room for articulation of sociological principles and their implication for practice as well as for meta-theories that find consistencies between theories and applications.<sup>3</sup> This paper aims to advance our understanding of clinical sociology by introducing a particular notion of humanism in describing and explaining the relevance of sociological thought for practice.

The proposition of a version of humanism in clinical sociology, begins with and depends upon Fein's (1990) idea of the importance of society for understanding the individual - "the role of social relationships in the etiology of human distress." He reminds us that the human is a social creature with no inherent relationship to itself or to things in the phenomenal world. As Emile Durkheim (1964) theorized, individual behavior is virtually uninterpretable unless one sees the whole of which it represents or is a part; the most seemingly personal and individual behaviors have their roots in the interpersonal, in "socio-" or "association." The form or structure of individual behavior is understood strictly by seeing its contribution to the collective. Through learning, feelings and actions are linked to the role prescriptions that differentiate how persons are to associate in various ways to accomplish the tasks of group life.

Melvyn Fein's assumption about the critical nature of role identification is both a cornerstone in the clinical sociology architecture and a foundation for this extended consideration of theoretical and therapeutic options. In particular, his interests in the disruption of social role attachments as having devastating consequences led to his work on a *resocialization* perspective. His formulation, comprehensive in that it is both diagnostic and prognostic of difficulties troubling most people, acts as a springboard for this investigation in that its concerns are with the significance of human role development and maintenance. The present project shifts, however, from Fein's attention to the mechanism of *role identification and conservation* as a *horizontal* adaptive feature and attends to the *vertical* dimension of adaptation pertaining to role.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The following discussion makes available as practical interventions and for empirical verification, a set of philosophically/theoretically-derived

presuppositions about the features and consequences of human social nature. It distinguishes a *clinical humanism* approach that originates with the general concept of human societies - the macro/micro and dialectical relationship of the individual to the group (Ritzer 1988; Berger 1967) - and from clinical sociology's specialized emphasis on the significance of society for understanding and treating individual problems. The paradigm is defined through discussion of developmental capacities of human self-consciousness, namely the movement from an *exclusive* to an *inclusive* social self-consciousness. This formulation is presented first as nine presuppositions of practice: 1] Society, 2] Attend, 3] Segment, 4] Transform, 5] Sense, 6] Residual, 7] Judge, 8] Motive, and 9] Consolidation, and then as interventions applied in the treatment of individual crisis. (Refer to **Appendix** for a summary of the presuppositions and interventions.) "Society" accesses a domain of consciousness that reveals a sense of separateness between the individual and society and situates the possibility of change at the level of the individual. "Attend" presupposes two dimensions to awareness where a person is reduced to and identified with social role or is an observer to its role. "Segment" is a descriptor for a felt discrimination of the "self as not the other" in contrast to the "other as the self." "Transform" presupposes the human capacity to maintain an observer or subjective consciousness through the disciplined recognition of both dimensions of awareness. "Sense" presupposes the human capability for active versus reactive aspects of behavior. "Residual" presumes the ability of persons to prioritize states of consciousness as developmental with each stage as indispensable to total human experience. "Judge" pertains to the human capacity in consciousness to bestow worth on experience rather than to find worth in experience. "Motive" presupposes a person's capacity for contentment in being as opposed to in doing or achieving. "Consolidation" presumes a person's capability for making society a reflection of human value in contrast to a source of human value.

### **Background: Locating Another Link Between Sociological Thought and Practice**

Humanistic consciousness, then, as it is employed in this work, is a specialized rhetoric concerning the individual's relationship to society. It is a referent to a type of maturity of human development from a fragmented and exclusive attention to an inclusive attention (Thakar 1968). These two distinctions of human awareness highlight and differentiate a range of human experience and phenomena not often treated in the arena of social scientific thought, nevertheless that have potentially profound effects for individuals and society. This dimension of consciousness has been and might be characterized as *unconditioned* awareness that developmentally, follows the conditioning or socialization of consciousness. G.W.F. Hegel (1967) identifies this dimension

of consciousness: "Self-consciousness has before it another self-consciousness; it has come outside itself ... First, it has lost its own self, since it finds itself as an "other" being; secondly, it has thereby sublimated that other, for it does not regard the other as essentially real, but sees its own self in the other. It must suspend this its other self ... It must set itself to suspend the other independent being, in order thereby to become certain of itself as true being." In other words, the juxtaposition of elements in the individual's awareness of "I see you with my eyes" changes to "I see you through my eyes." In the history of social thought, a similar idea of an observer to oneself in awareness has been introduced in George Herbert Mead's (1962) "I" and "me," in Peter Berger's (1963) "outsider" to society, and in Joseph Campbell's (1990) "identifying with the still image of the mind."

To date, many of the practical applications of social scientific theory, specifically, role theory and resocialization (Fein 1990) deal effectively with what might appropriately be thought of as horizontal change. A set of practices might also be available through a concept of vertical change. Curiosity in the former is with the *content* of the social self or ego, and in the latter, with *identification* with it. Distinguishing horizontal change from vertical change humanizes sociological thought and practice by making an assumption about human nature; that it is developmental and that each level of development has peculiar and distinct features and consequences for what it means to be an individual in society.<sup>4</sup> The first stage in human development is the formation of the self as object; at this stage, the individual *is* society, is identified with it, equated with it, determined by it (Durkheim 1964). To be sociologically unrespectable, simply, leg-hair shaving, for example, is a common practice assigned to American females that is transformed from social prescription to personal feelings of disgust upon encounter with a woman with leg hair. More seriously for persons assigned the gender status, female, that includes the socially valued attribute, fertility, high levels of depression are found for those who are infertile. As a result of the social interaction process, the individual becomes an object to itself, and while this process of self-objectification, self-commodification, is a guarantee of the evolutionary achievement of the human species and the survival of society, it also is the basis for social and personal problems (Rosenberg 1988). The status/role is a social inevitability, a category representing learned ways to associate, given the absence in the human of a direct genetic determinant of its behaviors or relationship to the world. The human comes to recognize itself to itself and to others according to these societally prescribed and learned ways of associating — hence, sociology, the scientific study of association. The personal, personality or ego is thus the internalization and integration of learned ways to associate. Self-preservation in the human is the predictableness of the meanings we give to various kinds of interaction or

behavior — role relations.

Another stage in the development of human consciousness can be conceptualized as the expression of self *through* role as opposed to *as* social role. At this level of awareness, a person identifies with the observer, not with the object of what it sees. The person can now separate in awareness, an intrinsic value from a social value and will not experience depression over a felt loss of itself (its learned repertoires for behavior).

The major contribution of those like Fein (1990) to clinical practice and social change has been wrought by adapting persons to the experiential world at one level of development; few therapeutic interventions exist for facilitating the growth of persons to the self-through-role stage of self-development. Some exceptions document observed differences in human behaviors (also affecting changes in society) in relation to changes in hierarchical variables of human self-consciousness, but are speculative about the factors that enhance development from one level to another (Mulkey 1995; Sennett and Cobb 1972; Tiryakian 1968; Maslow 1962).

To extend the application of social thought to practice requires considering the importance of this humanistic articulation of the boundaries between the self and society. The following discussion objectifies this intention by setting forth several presuppositions of a clinical humanism, or for humanizing sociological practice, and then applies these concepts as interventions in the solution of an individual problem. Vertical interventions are presented alongside horizontal interventions; recall, a horizontal intervention deals with role adjustment and assumes role attachment. A vertical intervention deals with role adjustment and assumes role detachment.

### **The Case of Forest Beech: Nine Presuppositions and Crisis Interventions**

A version of clinical humanism is constituted by the following presuppositions and corresponding crisis interventions in the case of Forest Beech.<sup>5</sup> While these presuppositions are somewhat overlapping, each represents a specific and mutually exclusive aspect of experience. (Refer to Appendix for the significance of each presupposition.)

Forest Beech is a 41-year-old white American male who reports feelings of sadness, depression, despondence, rage, and hopelessness after recently losing a bitter court battle over the custody of his four-year-old daughter, Grace. He believes his life is ruined. He fears he can never be a father to Grace in the exceptional way that he was to her in the past - he was somewhat both a "mother" and a "father." As background, Forest received a Ph.D. and is currently employed as a university professor. Forest and his wife Cornell, have a four-year-old daughter, Grace. About two years ago, Cornell became board certified as a lawyer and promptly decided she no longer loved Forest

and requested a divorce from him. She packed her belongings, including Grace, and relocated to another state, miles away from Forest's residence. Forest bemoans the fact that the law pertaining to custody, favors women in that the courts adhere to traditional role definitions and the view that a child is more deprived of nurturing resources when it loses a mother than when it loses a father.

***Presupposition 1: Society***

*Society* presupposes that collective problems are individual problems. The preponderance of specifications of the individual's relationship to the group end with society as a *determining as* opposed to an *influencing* factor in the individual's behavior. Emphasis is on the content and integration of the social self or ego. To fully appreciate the domains of human experience, requires investigation of the less examined aspects of consciousness, those not reduced to identification with the ego. Such a form of humanism presumes then that a societal problem cannot exist separately from the individual. Society is a projection of individual consciousness (Berger 1967). This means we cannot separate in awareness the person from the group and perceive the individual problem as separate from the societal problem (Thakar 1968). Subsequently, we do not seek separate solutions for social problems versus individual problems. Feeding the poor does not ameliorate poverty. From this first presupposition of a humanistic approach to the definition and solution of social problems, one infers that enthusiasm or anxiety over social reform must be viewed as a problem in the individual's awareness. A societal issue is an issue of personal consciousness and change must originate at the level of the individual. Issues of racism, sexism, and ageism, become properties of our own consciousness and this is a step toward identifying solutions. Gila Hayim, in *The Existential Sociology of Jean-Paul Satré* (1980:2) states, "By refusing to separate thought from life Socrates probably represented one of the earliest forms of existentialism, that is, the philosophical view that knowledge and existence are inextricably bound together."

Consider the people at the Modello Housing Project, a poor, crime-infested neighborhood in Miami. Instead of talking about raising more money to rid the neighborhood of its prostitution and crack houses; instead of directing people to act, humanism defines the problems of deviance, school failure, truancy, delinquency, and welfare dependence as persons' habits of thought about their lives. In answer to the question of what can be done in a typical urban environment where more than 65 percent of families take or sell drugs, where 85 percent of families are headed by a single parent, where the school dropout rate is over 50 percent, and child abuse and neglect are an everyday fact, the prospect of change, to the humanist, begins with change in the way an individual thinks about the situation. Collective problems are

created by individuals as reflections of their attitudes. We do not see the world, we see only our projection of it.<sup>6</sup> The implication of this first presupposition of clinical humanism for crisis intervention is that matters of human society are matters of human development. Correcting society is not the solution to societal and individual problems.

*Intervention 1. The practitioner, from a horizontal (ego-protecting) perspective aims to make Forest aware of his problem as one emanating from the attributes of society — divorce and separation rates, the breakdown of spousal and parental loyalties and inequalities and the legal program that attempts to compensate for failing social arrangements. Society is responsible for the loss of Forest's role as father. As Forest suggests, the American legal system has deprived him, unfairly, of an identity that is vital to his sense of personhood, agency, and human value. An intervention from this perspective must encourage Forest to appeal his case and to bring change in the legal system espousing an androgynous standard for the parent's role as a remedy for Forest's feelings about the restitution of justice in his case. It follows that Forest's relief depends wholly upon changing the system; if the system does not change, Forest continues to be in crisis. From a vertical perspective, a strategic intervention is to analyze Forest's problem as a "non-problem." The practitioner would explain to Forest that he is a person who holds a role, but who is not the role. The loss of his role is not the loss of his personhood or inherent value. He can either accept the constraints of the system or, if he has an opportunity, can represent a case for more equitable role responsibility under the law. Forest's sense of well-being is contingent upon changing his understanding of the problem; through this understanding he changes the system. Because he assumes he is intrinsically whole, he represents as opposed to derives wholeness by changing society.*

### ***Presupposition 2: Attend***

*Attend* presupposes a comprehensive awareness. Emphasis in the analysis of human consciousness is heavily on the construction, substantive significance, and consequences of role and identity formation and lightly on relationship to role(s). The individual's relationship to its social roles can be thought about hypothetically in terms of types of attention: exclusionary, concentrated, and fragmented versus all-encompassing (Thakar 1968). Relationship to role is a process of development of consciousness where an exclusive attention can be distinguished from an inclusive attention.

Operationally, this means, pertaining to exclusive attention, a concentrated or fragmented segment of experience. Fragmentation refers to the individual's recognition (value) of itself to itself and to others as limited to its roles. For example, the military role achieves in the development of the ego, the ability of a person to think of the same human protoplasm as friend or



enemy. The individual comes to anticipate the action of the enemy toward it - "That person expects me to kill her." Then she strikes first by killing the enemy. A friend, she will hug. Note that in human social consciousness, the perception is not of the person but of the meaning assigned to the person. The Marine is not a person, but a fragment of valued meaning, in this situation, a friend or an enemy. The challenge to maturity then is to understand that humans do not relate to humans per se, but to fragments of the humans defined by their roles. Exclusive attention is a mental activity, a concentration that attends to one thing at the exclusion of other things, whereas an all-encompassing attention is a total awareness, emergent upon the individual's realization of itself as an observer to its role. Maturity is the challenge to the reduction of the person to fragments of behavior. The stockbroker, for example, jumped out the window when the stockmarket crashed.

Exclusive attention as a generic principle of social life applies not only to the view of a person toward itself and to others, but also to the phenomenal world, in general. While preparing my coffee today, I experienced two perceptions of some whelk shells I had picked up from the shore that were now sitting on my kitchen counter. I caught myself giving my attention to the irregularities of one of the shells, particularly a small chip on one part of the shell that I compared to the others which had no chips and were symmetrical and intact. I acknowledged that at one level of my perception, one shell was perfect and good and the other, was not. One experience finds worth in the object and the other bestows worth on the object. Applied to the shells, this distinction means I like only one shell or I can like both - two modes of human action, one more comprehensive than the other (Mulkey 1997).

The implication of this second presupposition for clinical practice is for fostering the ability of the individual to experience a stable and consistent experience of itself, that is invincible, independent of its social situation. The infertile female, for example, understands that her social value is influenced by society's strategy for population management, reproduction, and care of the young. Perhaps she comes to see that in an age of artificial insemination practices, the value of the individual according to its marital status is questionable. Peter Berger (1963) expresses a similar sentiment about the value of the person according its color and questions whether race is a legitimate social category in the first place. The defense of any category is not the defense of a person, but the person is able to define and employ its social forms as the hand is used to save or destroy a life. Role is not the person; the person is a stable entity outside of role, not a fragment of experience identified with role.

*Intervention 2. From a horizontal perspective, the stability of Forest's behavior depends upon the maintenance of his role as father. Restoration of*

*his stability would be for him to remarry and have other children, to adopt a child, or to volunteer at agencies that provide resources for disadvantaged children. From a vertical perspective, Forest's stability is retrievable through his recognition of himself as a stable entity outside of his role as father. By borrowing from the interactionist perspective, Forest would be asked to envision himself doing something — for example, driving Grace to the dance studio. In doing this, he becomes aware of two aspects of his consciousness, the subject or observer dimension and the object or social self aspect of his consciousness. In realization of this separation, the identification with the object aspect of consciousness is replaced with identification with the observer aspect of consciousness. At this level of awareness, Forest no longer experiences a loss of himself. Forest's experience of himself is all-inclusive in that his sense of agency is extrinsic to his role. He is (aware of himself as present) whether that includes or does not include fatherhood.*

### ***Presupposition 3: Segment***

Segment presupposes discrimination or differentiation. Fragmentation is an inevitability of social differentiation and order not founded directly in the genetic make-up of the species. It results, simultaneously in discriminations between persons according to their socially defined and valued attributes of age, race, gender, religion, class, and others. The human must differentiate its relations to persons in a predictable way. Self-preservation, as mentioned earlier, in the human is defense of its meanings (roles as categories of meaning). Social order is an achievement of society when society lodges itself in the person as an ego, an individual representation or part of the whole template of human relations. Mentioned earlier, the Durkheimian comprehension of society is one in which individual behavior has no inherent origins and is incomprehensible without perceiving it as a form determined by the part it plays in the system (1964). The person at the social level of its experience is fragmented; discrimination is the reduction of the self and others, in perception, to a fragment of experience. Ultimately, and of great importance, is the "other" is experienced as different than and separate from the self. Identification with role has a way of fooling the individual into a felt naturalness about who it is to itself and to others in its commitments and behaviors. For example, seemingly the intense bond formed between a mother and a child feels instinctual, but society has ordained, in the name of its ongoingness, that the human learn to regard its biological offspring, particularistically, and beyond any other person it encounters in a lifetime. The point is, however, that in the process of this styling of group relations, the individual at this level of development in consciousness, loses touch with its fundamental oneness with others. It is as if no one really matters but this one, my child. And here we find the mechanism of the hate group. Humanism

purports to encourage the awareness of the individual beyond the level of its fragmented social discriminations.

*Intervention 3. From a horizontal framework, Forest would experience himself as father, as other than daughter, or mother, etc., as a social necessity. The perception of himself is in stark contrast to other selves; correspondingly, this means the absence in awareness of the other as the self. The intervention from this angle would deal with Forest's attachment to his role as father and his need to maintain this repertoire of learned ways to associate in his interaction with Grace. This intervention recognizes Forest's reduction in experience to or his direct dependence on his role as father. The fragment of fatherly behavior is a major feature of Forest's behavior and his felt loss of his self-value is reduced to the chunk of that ego known to himself and to others as father. This understanding would motivate Forest to prioritize his efforts to restore his role of father, or to take on proxy paternal roles. A vertical solution to Forest's reduction of self value to role value would be to facilitate his awareness of himself as discriminatory. He is asked to identify the experience of some persons as more important to him than others. Personhood then becomes knowable to Forest at another level as something universally a property of all persons. He is subsequently released from his anger and despondency because he is able to experience himself and others beyond the reduced and fragmentary mental category of father or daughter. Fatherhood is a discriminating expression of who he is, not of who he is. Discrimination is an occasion for Forest's development in awareness of the energies which drive all individual action, but in a variety of expressions.*

#### ***Presupposition 4: Transform***

*Transform* presupposes the absence of reformation. Role identification presumes the social and ego organization of consciousness into conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious dimensions of the whole consciousness. These elements cannot be suppressed in their influence and are typically reformed as opposed to transformed. Reformation pertains to how persons are taught to adapt horizontally by retaining their attachment to a role rather than by shifting to expression through a role. Military personnel who have been in combat routinely experience post-traumatic stress disorder because they cannot integrate the conflicting values embedded in the military and civilian roles. The individual who experiences its value as a professional athlete and loses a limb in a car accident, is reformed by taking on a value in a new professional role. The mother whose children leave home is reformed through a new social identity as a student returning to school.

Transformation, however, is a vertical shift in adaptation. It occurs through a person's realization of a residual dimension of consciousness that

remains unconditioned (Berger 1967). Reformation relocates the person's experience of itself in another social role; transformation grounds the person's sense of itself outside of its role as an observer to its role.

The significance of transformation is for adaptation. Perhaps the hallmark of human adaptation is the ability of the individual to retain a sense of itself despite external influences. At primal levels of development, the consciousness of the individual is the group (Berdyaev 1944). This notion is found in psychologies and sociologies that assert the basic urges as ultimate determinants of behavior; a humanistic social science is preoccupied with another domain of human experience where meta-values replace primary values (Maslow 1962). Human fulfillment and identity is obtained not from self-defense, but in the so-called giving up of the self. The human will transcend the value of its physical life on the basis of another level of motivation — what Maslow called "intrinsic conscience beyond superego." In the movie production, *The Rainman*, Raymond's brother comes to recognize and feel about him beyond his physical and socially ascribed values as idiot and genius; he matures to understand idiocy and genius both as occasions for expressing the total regard and all-embracing value of another human being. One position in consciousness is life-restricting by diminishing the experience of the value of the whole human being.

*Intervention 4. A horizontal intervention presupposes reformation. Reformation relocates the person's sense of itself in another social role; transformation enhances human adaptation because it grounds the person's sense of itself outside of its role as an observer to its role. From a horizontal perspective of intervention, Forest understands that his happiness is available through reformation; that he can be resocialized to proximate roles. He can, for example, have another child, or he might learn that an ex-spouse is not an ex-parent and that he can find new and creative ways to associate with Grace as a father. A vertical intervention presupposes transformation that occurs through Forest's realization of a dimension of consciousness, one that remains unconditioned. He is asked first to observe himself as a father and then to focus, not on what he sees — father— but on himself as present as seer. As sequel, he is queried about whether he clearly experiences the sense of independence from being one or the other. Transformation is for Forest, a restoration of consciousness, a conscious acknowledgment and return to and focus on observing rather than on being the object, that thereby expands and makes otherwise unavailable, a realm of meaning of human experience.*

***Presupposition 5: Sense***

*Sense presupposes a distinction between sensory experience and the interpretation of sensory experience. Fragmentation, as designated earlier,*

refers to a partial awareness of reality by concentration. As Thakar (1968) observes, concentration directs the individual's attention to one point at the exclusion of the rest of the phenomenal world. This exclusive activity, opposed to an all-inclusive attention, concentration, represents how the mind interprets sensory perception. The interpretation of sense reflects regularities of conditioning so the same sense might be interpreted, or experienced, variously as in ethnic variations in response to pain (Zborowski 1952). The behavioral response is not directly to the sensory experience but to the calling attention to it. The meaning assigned to the experience, according to social categories such as ethnicity, age, religion, determines behavior. These behavioral orderings are lost to consciousness. They act as determinants of behavior by fragmenting the response in accordance with the meaning assigned to sense. The same mechanism of concentration constructs an association of physical attributes and sensations with various role assignments; chronology, for example, becomes socially assigned and constructed meanings attached to old, adolescent, and young. Old means worthlessness and youth means worth; infertility is associated with depression; sexuality is good or bad when it is aligned with social role (son toward mother and father toward daughter become incestuous roles and evoke guilt and shame).

A humanistic foundation of sociological practice seeks to debunk the mistaken notion and felt understanding of human action as individual action and to replace it with the notion of reaction. In this, the sociological imagination or form of consciousness, the individual has an alternative to harmful defensive behavior (Mills 1959). The initial perception results from the undeniable validity of the individual's sense of being in society, but society is so inextricably a part of the person, it forgets this predicament. Human behavior, can be understood and operative from a second vantage point, where the person has a window on itself. In the perception of its own history, it becomes comfortable with itself. The female in a hunting and gathering society might be polyandrous and comes to want or prefer six husbands; the survival of her offspring in this economy depends upon her coming to recognize herself to herself and to others in this manner. A post-industrial subsistence strategy promotes androgynous gender roles to accomplish the task of maintaining economic life. Neither the defense of the economy nor the defense of androgyny are directly salient to the well-being of the individual from this fifth presupposition of a humanistic clinical sociology.

*Intervention 5. The horizontal intervention based on this presupposition in the case of Forest is promoting an understanding of the primacy of feelings, the primacy of sense. This means that Forest is given to understand the fundamental importance of his feelings about the situation of the loss of his father role as a basis for action. A vertical intervention would focus on*

*feelings, less as a sensory reaction and more on feelings as an interpretation of sense. Forest would be asked first to consider and to become aware of his own conditioning — that the felt naturalness of his rights, as a father, are as learned as his personal tastes in food. One version of a dead animal as opposed to another will produce a reaction of appetite or regurgitation, respectively. His acknowledgment of what he senses as distinguishable from what he interprets as sense breaks his tenacious and unconscious reliance on his social role as father. From this vantage point, he is able to act, not react, to the situation.*

***Presupposition 6: Residual***

*Residual* presupposes a conscious awareness of the conditioned response. This comprehensive awareness does not snuff out conditioned behavior, but emerges through practiced observation of the conditioned response. All-expansive awareness is thus a state of no commitment, a state of no identification. To paraphrase Nicolai Berdyaev (1944), social philosopher, in primitive consciousness, the consciousness of the individual depends upon the consciousness of the group, but this is not the final condition for humans; society is a special reality, a degree of actuality. For example, the idiot and the genius are statuses or positions assigned to physical attributes that invoke a predictable sentiment or value and normative, behavioral response. Cognition becomes recognition, a residual capability of consciousness that makes the individual aware of its attachment to these properties.

*Intervention 6. The horizontal intervention assumes the final goal of human development as "oneness" of self-consciousness with social role, and repairs the self by restoring or modifying the role. A vertical intervention as it pertains to this presupposition facilitates Forest's awareness of his felt identification with his role. He is encouraged to achieve an understanding that, for example, when he is attached to his role as car owner, the social value of his car, and his ability to maintain its functioning determines his sense of happiness; he is one with the car. When Forest becomes aware of his attachment to his role as father, he is automatically consoled by the realization that whatever impedes or facilitates his fulfilling his role will determine his sense of self. He understands that his self-awareness has been directly and finally related to role maintenance. He learns to routinely and systematically distinguish in his experience his felt dependence on external role-maintenance activities as a source of fulfillment. He is asked to notice how insuring regular contact with Grace, or perhaps seeking assistance with job relocation, restores his sense of well-being. This intervention acknowledges a sequel domain of human experience that allows Forest to differentiate two modes of experience, one built on and respectful of the other.*

*Via his contemplation of how he would remain determined in his negative feelings by his inability to fulfill his fatherly responsibilities, gradually, he comes to experience a sense of wholeness not obtained from role; rather, wholeness becomes represented through role.*

***Presupposition 7: Judge***

*Judge* presupposes non-reactive attendance. The moment I attend to something, my mind has already recognized it and labeled it (values it). The label is associated with thought and feelings ascribed by social role. So before we are aware of the totality, we have approved or disapproved the object of our attendance. Here is an example (Thakar 1968). A person may address a family member. The person is looking at the image that the mind has created about the other person. Persons are viewing each other through the socially conditioned template of their judgment, or the standards and values of the mind. People are really not looking at each other. Persons are projections — a "husband," a "wife," a "child" — and if the projections are not isomorphic there is conflict between "persons," and they no longer "love each other." People are uncomfortable with the world unless it allows them to project onto it. We necessarily differentiate our relations with others in terms of feeling and action to insure a predictableness to life that is not inherently available. So we realize that when we observe a person through the mind's exclusive attention to role, we are not looking at him at all, and in that realization, a sense of the whole being becomes available in perception. The implication of this feature of humanism for the definition and solution of individual and societal problems is for a total perspective on experience. Without a total perspective on experience, the human is left to a dichotomized realm of perception; fulfillment is conditional. Some things become sacred and other things are profane (Durkheim 1964). In terms of clinical outcomes, the individual is bored with work or its spouse and its children. Nonjudgment beyond social judgment is a presupposition of humanism that highlights the capacity of the human to maintain a feeling of wonderment and euphoria in whatever it does. The person can attend without liking or disliking. Peter Berger (1963) captures the essence of wonderment in his remarks about sociology as a form of consciousness that is unrespectable, that attends to whatever everyone else ignores. What is unrespectable has potential for wonderment. Wonderment precludes the possibility of depression, suicide, and other individual/social diseases.

*Intervention 7. The horizontal approach to the problem would be to defend Forest's rights as a father and to devote his energies to restoring his role as father or to building new forms of fathering behavior. The vertical intervention here would be to ask Forest to identify from his experience his*

*ability to bestow worth on experience; not to find worth strictly in the experience (horizontal intervention). He might be asked to recall an experience of "infatuation," when consciousness looked past any learned and undesirable attributes of another person. As with the Rainman, both idiocy and genius are occasions for the expression of love, Forest can come to appreciate that being a father or fatherless are both occasions to express love. Beyond mourning the loss of his role and learning a new role, Forest can interpret his loss of Grace in his household as an opportunity to build new and creative ways of loving her or even to accept that his ability to father Grace is limited. Neither situation determines his happiness.*

### ***Presupposition 8: Motive***

*Motive presupposes the absence of motive. Humanism makes apparent the individual's reliance on its social role for developing a sense of itself as a locus of control and center of action in relation to others and things. Yet, humanism also asserts that this reliance is hierarchical and not final as a determinant of human behavior. And that the human reduced to this level of reliance becomes perverted in its capacities to function individually and in community. The individual who is identified with her role as a mother feels threatened by the separation of her offspring and her relationships with her children will be confounded, contaminated by her motive to hold on to them. She may resort to deviant modes of relationship; for example, she might demean the acceptability of her offspring's dating partners or might unconsciously become ill to insure the association with another that affirmed her. Her sense of being an organism in control of its behaviors and others' is a styled and habitual dependence.*

Humanism presupposes that a person's reliance on society is not final; the grounding of human identity outside society permits the person to imagine itself feeling and acting in particular ways, but its source of control is not dependent on others, and is self-contained. A person resting in its ability to imagine does not expect from others. The mother who needs her child cannot give to it in a manner that fosters its development. A motiveless state of awareness means persons are related to others without motives. Motive is evident in consciousness when something is perceived as a need. Instrumental orientation of consciousness results in the person's inability to feel comfortable in the present; it is continually anticipating for a sense of security (Lee 1950). A student is unhappy as a person until it achieves a grade of "A." A female is unhappy as a person until she attains a physique of less than twelve percent body fat. A motiveless level of human awareness circumvents the consequences of greed and of plundering others for self-preservation. This is a commentary on the individual consciousness that objectifies as societal attributes such as poverty and war and crime.



**Intervention 8.** The horizontal intervention of this presupposition is for goal-attainment. Forest's state of mental health obtains from his linear consciousness, his ability to achieve some end. Resolution of the problem comes through attaining some end. In this case, the quantum that would make Forest whole would be his custody of Grace. The vertical intervention of this presupposition encourages Forest's motivelessness by asking him to attend systematically to himself feeling and acting. The emergence of the observer in his consciousness provides him with a sense of invincibility that is not interrupted by or constituted by the behavior of others. Fulfillment is found in a state of just being present and this perception replaces a state of having to do something to feel meaningful. His experience of self is not predicated by his role relations. With or without Grace, Forest can find contentment without having to manipulate people to affirm his presence; others merely confirm what he can now experience as himself.

**Presupposition 9: Consolidate**

Consolidate presupposes the experience of intrinsic value. The presupposition of consolidate in humanism posits that we have never seen the world before but only our conditioned responses to it. Consolidate, like residual awareness, is a by-product of this very understanding; the individual knows beyond its conditioning. Persons are their reactions until they are exposed to their attention. Residual awareness is the ability to experience two properties of the present; fusion is the perception of both properties as one. The implication of this feature of development in consciousness is for restoration of the person's sense of full participation in life.

**Intervention 9.** A horizontal approach to Forest's loss of his father identity as it pertains to consolidate, means his understanding of his sense of loss as coloring his view of the whole of life. For the moment, the whole of life is reduced to his sense of loss; therefore, this understanding would lead to efforts that result in replacing the loss with a comparable role. The sense of all is well in life is conserved to the repair of this role loss. A vertical approach to Forest's loss of Grace is through a process of debunking the authority of role as final in determining his individual happiness. Forest is asked to consider his human value as neither sacred because he is a father nor profane when he is not. Consolidation of self-consciousness is fostered when Forest practices finding his invincibility — himself, essentially as onlooker to himself. He then conveys that his perception of himself as a father is less important and fulfilling than his ability to experience himself, fundamentally as the perceiver. He is then able to assess and respond to family law as a reflection of his intrinsic value rather than as an act to reconstitute and

*restore his value.*

## Conclusion

This paper has introduced a humanistic version of the definition and solution of individual and societal problems. In this it sets forth several presuppositions of a philosophical base that engender the distinction in the human adaptive response as identification and non-identification with social role. This brand of humanism espouses a maturity or change of consciousness, not change of society, as the solution to problems of the individual. The regularities and determinants of daily activities remain beyond the purview of normal vision and the realization of how human behavior is constrained by others through shared rules for cooperative life (social structure) moves the individual to another level of development in consciousness. The person becomes aware of society's power to confer upon it a social identity, and in that understanding is able to experience a fuller identity that can change society. Each identity has specific outcomes; the first identity, or self, equates itself with its social role, and the second self expresses itself through its social role. Socially assigned identities like "race" require less defense and are questioned as points of attention in the first place. Existence consists of the relative contributions of social-self maintenance and defense, or a stable mode of being outside of role. Dwelling on painful experiences of the past can keep people from experiencing an innate mental health all persons possess. This approach is being implemented to help poor African Americans in Miami, Native Americans in Minnesota and victims of alcohol and drug abuse nationwide. For this humanist, problems are like mirages that exist when viewed from a particular state of awareness and perhaps such a humanistic perspective, as a basis for sociological practice, is, for some clinical cases, like sound that reaches places light can never reach. The several presuppositions set forth in this paper are a theoretical basis for further conceptual specification, systematic empirical investigation and for proposed interventions for the amelioration of individual and social problems.

And to make an end is to make a beginning.

The end is where we start from.

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time.

from T. S. Eliot, *Little Giddings*

## Appendix

### Presuppositions and Interventions of a Clinical Humanism

Clinical Humanism considers what and in what manner, societal factors influence the human sense of well-being. It addresses effective interventions in the treatment of individual crisis and presumes *vertical* as opposed to *horizontal* interventions. Vertical treatment approaches highlight the individual's relationship to role; horizontal clinical approaches (presented here for contrastive purposes) highlight the person's identification with role and the significance of role maintenance.

#### 1. Society

Collective problems and social reform originate in individual problems. Society is a product and projection of individual consciousness. Matters of human society are matters of individual development. Correcting society is not the solution to individual and societal problems. For example, feeding the poor is not a solution to poverty.

*Horizontal Intervention:* Change society or the system.

*Vertical Intervention:* Change the individual's understanding of society and the system.

*Significance:* Focus on looking to the person, not to society as the source of individual and societal change.

#### 2. Attend

Attention/consciousness has properties of both *exclusive or inclusive* awareness. Exclusive awareness is in the service of human social nature, by directing the individual's behavior toward others according to fragments of valued meaning (roles). For example, while the person feels that s/he is a stockbroker, if the stock market crashes, s/he jumps out the window. Realization of this basis for behavior brings to consciousness an inclusive awareness where the individual is not identified with a role, but experiences itself as an observer to its role.

*Horizontal Intervention:* Identification with self as object of consciousness makes the person's sense of well-being dependent on its role and requires, in treatment, efforts toward role maintenance and resocialization.

*Vertical Intervention:* Establish basis for identification with self as subject or observer of self as object.

*Significance:* Making apparent and available a second grounding of human identity by specifying the dynamics of subjective and objective aspects of consciousness.

### 3. Segment

Restoration in consciousness of the experience of *the other as the self* is based on awareness of discrimination in consciousness of persons *as other than self*. For example, I care more about my "child" than all children.

*Horizontal Intervention:* Emphasis, for the practitioner, is on fostering in the client, clear interpersonal or social boundaries; people become perceived as "other" according to their roles and are more or less valued for the behavior defined by the role. The client comes to understand and to feel that persons are separate entities, who are assigned different social contributions and are fairly or unfairly stratified in their value for these behaviors. The client is encouraged to comprehend that their sense of personhood and mental health is determined by role competence.

*Vertical Intervention:* Cultivating the perception that all persons are the same, even though social differentiation is a necessary activity, provides the individual with a stable grounding for its self-perception.

For example, someone else may be hired for the job and may, in fact, be better suited for the job, but self value is not contingent on role value. Regard for the other or the self in relation to the other, is not limited by the social designation.

*Significance:* *Otherness*, the perception of the other as separate, is viewed as a functional imperative for human group life, but it is superseded by the capacity for felt appreciation of all persons — the self as the other — and in that brings an expansive satisfaction with life.

### 4. Transform

*Attend* presupposes the individual's developmental capacity for experiencing the bifurcation of consciousness into subject and object; *transform* presupposes the individual's understanding of this distinction for enhanced adaptation through the discipline required for maintaining this state of self-awareness.

*Horizontal Intervention:* Efforts are toward promoting client's discipline of role maintenance *or* reformation.

*Vertical Intervention:* Efforts are toward cultivating in the client, the practice of transformation — the shift from "I am a stockbroker" to "I have a role as a stockbroker." Role is not replaced, but is reorganized in a broader meaning context of the self.

*Significance:* *Transform* enhances adaptation by facilitating independence from external societal reinforcements as a source of self-value. *Transform* shifts the clients awareness from knowledge to praxis. Routine practice on the balance beam fosters strength of muscle, grace, and conformity to the image of what is possible, but these are the products

of discipline. Enhanced adaptation requires a conscious effort and discipline of mind, one that makes the client a vigilant onlooker to its own behaviors, and who continuously anchors its value in the seer, rather than in what it sees.

5. **Sense**

Humans, except at a very primordial level, relate less directly to the world, and more to the meanings they assign to the world. *Sense* refers to the human capacity for realization of sensory experience as conditioned reaction.

*Horizontal Intervention:* The practitioner focuses on the client's feelings in their own right, regardless of their origins.

*Vertical Intervention:* The practitioner focuses on feelings as less primordial and more as sensory reactions, interpretations of sense — impersonal. For example, a person may prefer shrimp to caviar, because of the availability of one or the other due to economic status or geographical location. These preferences certainly feel personal, but they are acquired as learned tastes in food. Or, in some cultures, persons are taught to feel heroic, stoical, indifferent, or to exude great emotion at the stimulus of pain. The human can feel grief or joy at the loss of its own life or the life of another, depending on the meaning it has learned to assign to sense for the sake of human cooperation. The human must be predictable in its behaviors toward itself and others or it becomes anxious. For example, we count on a law enforcement agent to act in a given way to others, and the person anticipates how others expect him/her to act. The practitioner fosters the realization in the client of the personal as impersonal and that action is actually reaction (a conditioned response).

*Significance:* This presupposition restores subjectivity to the actor; action replaces reaction through recognition of conditioned sensory response.

6. **Residual**

A capability of consciousness that reveals the developmental significance of role-linked learned behaviors, is the forerunner of a continuous state of wonderment.

*Horizontal Intervention:* The practitioner underscores importance of role competence as an end in itself and for well-functioning human experience.

*Vertical Intervention:* The practitioner cultivates in the client, respect for role maintenance, restoration, modification, and resocialization, strictly as developmentally significant in a larger and continuing developmental process.

**Significance:** Prioritizes states of consciousness as developmental and each stage is indispensable to total human experience.

7. **Judge**

*Judge* presupposes the realization of conditional life fulfillment as a step toward a total perspective and enjoyment of human experience. *Judge* points to the capacity of consciousness to find worth in experience versus bestowing worth on experience. *Judge* points to the movement in consciousness toward satisfaction with the way things are, rather than in as they should be and toward the assumption that the same energies drive all aspects of life.

*Horizontal Intervention:* Identity is treated as having conditional value; worth is deemed findable in experience. The client learns under what conditions, "things are good or satisfying." For example, the rain is bad because it causes colds and makes driving difficult. Contentment depends on avoiding the rain.

*Vertical Intervention:* The practitioner cultivates receptivity in the client to conditional fulfillment with occasional euphoria and in doing so illuminates the human capacity for bestowing worth on experience, for static euphoria and for enjoyment in the moment. Satisfaction is portrayed as accessible in the present state of affairs, no matter what it might be.

**Significance:** Expansive satisfaction and fulfillment is attainable in the present as opposed to in the future through infatuation with things simply as they are.

8. **Motive**

*Motive* presupposes that at one level of self-consciousness, the world and others are perceived as objects to be manipulated towards one's own self-preservation. Happiness is always dependent on something else. For example, the person who is his or her student role, as opposed to acting in the student role is unfulfilled until s/he achieves a good grade, or gets a credential. The sense of wholeness is not in the moment; persons and things are viewed as having instrumental value. *Motive* signals the realm of non-linear relationship where the person is satisfied with itself independent of its socially valued situation. In the movie, *Shawshank Redemption*, two characters represent horizontal and vertical adaptation. The prison inmate released from the penitentiary, commits suicide because he is aware of himself only in his role as inmate. The banker falsely accused of murder and incarcerated loses a highly respectable role and takes on a deviant role; neither role determines his ability to value himself. Role as social differentiation of behavior is an occasion for the

expression of intrinsic value in contrast to human value derived from role.

*Horizontal Intervention:* Focus is on an anticipatory state of security and reliance on others for self-affirmation. Instrumental orientation emphasizes gaining means to an end; linear consciousness drives an achievement/doing orientation for self-satisfaction.

*Vertical Intervention:* To cultivate a state of "is," contentment in the moment, confirmation through what a person is already, and of finding experience as intrinsically, not extrinsically of value.

*Significance:* Fosters fulfillment in *being* as opposed to *doing*. Human action is premised on the expression of inherent value rather than on seeking to obtain value from something outside of itself.

## 9. Consolidate

*Consolidate* presupposes the individual's capacity for bringing together conditioned and unconditioned knowledge of the self toward individual integrity and toward making society a reflection of human value in contrast to a sought after source of human value.

*Horizontal Intervention:* Clinical practice underscores, for the client, a defensive posture, as, for example, in an individual's attempt to insure society's equal distribution of social value/rewards. Gender and racial equality, might be sought after as an act of desperation, as if the well-being of the person depends directly on these fair allocations of value.

*Vertical Intervention:* Equality for persons according to their merits is conveyed as a reflection of intrinsic value rather than as a source of human value.

*Significance:* A person who develops the ability to integrate experience so that all things are somehow perceived as good as opposed to the enjoyment of only good things, has implication for society and its members. Such a person is disinterested enough to style society and to construct relationships and identities for the good of all because she/he is independent of all. Also, such a person might be thought of as a hero in society, perhaps even the subject of a legend, or someone who represents the extraordinary, when, actually, she/he merely represents attributes of human development potentially available in every person.

## NOTES

1. To fully appreciate clinical sociology's unique, specific, and explicit commitments, one can refer first to David J. Kallen (1995) who notes that a paradigm shift in sociology which took place before and after World War II changed the emphasis in the field to the development of theory without regard for how it was used. A consequence of this respecification was the emergence of a *sociological practice* sub-field as a way of restoring what was lost or disassociated in the de-emphasis of practical application in the discipline of sociology.

2. Clinical sociologists, in general, define their work as the use of sociological theory and method to intervene at one or more levels, of human experience, that include individual as well as group, community, or society (Eve 1990).

3. In her 1990 examination of the development of contemporary clinical sociology, Elizabeth J. Clark claimed that it had been only in the last decade that the sub-field of clinical sociology had been legitimized.

4. A stage of development should not be thought of as qualitatively better or worse than another stage; rather, each stage corresponds to a specific set of behavioral outcomes.

5. The case of Forest Beech, for the most part, is an actual account that incorporates fictitious names.

6. It is important to note, theoretically, according to Durkheim (1964) that "society" exists *sui generis* (in its own right), meaning while the individual represents, in its individual behaviors, a part of the whole (roles/statuses, institutions), the whole (like the sound of all the musicians playing in a symphony) cannot be found in the individual. Emphasizing the individual in the dialectical process of the relationship of the individual to the group has implication for social and individual change, to a greater extent when the focus is on how the individual makes society than when it is on how society makes the individual.



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