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# Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter-Proposals

by Charles A. Valentine

With the agreement of author and publisher, *Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter-Proposals*, by Charles A. Valentine (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1968) was sent for review, along with a copy of the précis printed below, to 20 Associates. The following responded with reviews: Catherine H. Berndt, Ethel Boissevain, John H. Bushnell, Peter Carstens, Thomas Gladwin, Ulf Hannerz, V. K. Kochar, Eleanor Leacock, Oscar Lewis, William Mangin, David Matza, Margaret Mead, Walter B. Miller, and Daniel P. Moynihan. Their reviews appear below, followed by a reply from the author.

## Author's Précis

This is a critical study of ideas about poverty and the poor. Written from an anthropological viewpoint, it focuses on prominent contemporary writings about poverty by social scientists. Examination of crucial issues in this literature leads to proposals in four interdependent areas: (1) the theory of poverty; (2) research methods for validating the theory; (3) public policy to deal with the social problems of poverty; and (4) philosophical positions consistent with these proposals.

The discussion opens by clarifying the central concepts of culture and poverty as used throughout the book. The idea of culture is identified with the consensus that has grown up within anthropology as to the meaning of this term: The whole way of life created, followed, and passed on by human groups. Implications of this concept are briefly explored, including its relationship to ethnographic methodology, to humanist philosophy, and to humanitarian ideology. The essence of poverty is shown to be social inequality and relative deprivation in terms of culturally recognized values. The relevance of this definition of poverty for stratified complex societies with egalitarian ideologies is made explicit. The assertion is made that the twin concepts "culture of poverty" and "lower-class culture" constitute misunderstandings of the poor and contradictions of the idea of culture. Most of the book is devoted to supporting this assertion and proposing

alternative ideas that are more useful or constructive.

An influential source of the sociological conception of "lower-class culture" in America is E. Franklin Frazier's several works portraying the urban Negro poor as utterly disorganized (Frazier 1932, 1939, 1957, 1966). From this background has grown a pejorative, moralistic tradition that has been cultivated by Nathan Glazer, Daniel P. Moynihan, and others (Glazer 1966; Glazer and Moynihan 1963; Moynihan 1965, 1966, 1967*a*, *b*). Weak in method and static in theory, this approach prominently displays the contention or implication that poverty is perpetuated primarily by defects in the lifeways of the poor. There is an associated tendency to confuse the ethnic group "Negro" with the stratification category "lower class". This school of thought produces policy which stresses "self-help" and offers for the most part token assistance. In effect, the position is taken that the poor cannot enjoy equality unless they adopt middle-class conventions. To solve associated social problems it is the poor who must be changed, not the society as a whole. The ideological implications of this tradition amount to a lightly veiled Social Darwinism.

The idea of a "culture of poverty" comes from the well-known work of Oscar Lewis, though it has been endlessly popularized and applied by others (Lewis 1959, 1961, 1966*a*, *b*; cf. CA 8: 480-500). These writings present serious and thoughtful attempts to develop new ethnographic methods and to adapt the culture concept to elucidating certain

kinds of modern poverty. Moreover, Lewis is an avowed humanist with an explicitly humanitarian interest in the people he studies. His abstractions of the life of the poor are contradicted, however, by his own data, and his methods are inadequate to support his theory. While he describes his own work as an indictment of society—not of the poor—his policy proposals indicate that it is primarily the lifeways of poor people which he believes must be reformed. Focusing on disorganization and pathology in the ways of the poor, he insistently assigns first priority to doing away with the "culture of poverty," not poverty itself.

Thus, in effect and in implications, the notions of "lower-class culture" and "culture of poverty" are much the same. Along with a host of minor variants under different labels (e.g., "cultural deprivation"), these conceptions dominate virtually all public attention to the problems of poverty and clearly guide most governmental policies and programs dealing with the poor, pre-eminently the "war on poverty."

A few social scientists are pursuing a different line of thought. Clark (1965; also HARYOU 1964) points out that the "cult of cultural deprivation" serves to rationalize discrimination against the poor. Gladwin, beginning with early doubts about the scientific validity of the "culture of poverty" (1961), has come to believe (1967) that the "war on poverty," founded on that very conception, is a failure. Liebow (1967) documents the assertion that street-corner men—far from representing a separate culture—strive to live by standard American values but are continually met by externally imposed failure.

Working in part from clues in these and other sources, the author suggests a series of key methodological and con-

ceptual clarifications (e.g., with regard to subculture and subsociety, ethnic group and social class). It is argued that we must build upon the developing anthropology of complex societies (Banton 1966; Eisenstadt 1961; Steward 1965, 1967) to revitalize ethnography as the prime instrument for delineating the cultures of the poor.

Three prominent formulations of poverty subcultures (Lewis 1966*a, b*; Miller 1958; Gans 1962, 1965) are presented as outlines of concrete propositions, together with alternative hypotheses, which can be tested by ethnographic fieldwork. A methodological appendix covers specific procedures for such research.

Three broad models are presented to summarize alternative views of the struc-

tural position of the poor in our society, the culture patterns associated with poverty, and related orientations with respect to public policy and social action. The model representing the tentative conclusions of the author portrays the poor as a heterogeneous series of subsocieties with variable and adaptable subcultures that are only partially and relatively distinct from American culture as a whole and locates the chief sources of the deprivations suffered by poor people in their structural position in the wider social system and in the actions and attitudes of the non-poor. The presentation of the models is followed by some imaginative projections of the immediate future, including attention to the part anthropology may play in understanding and dealing with poverty.

Finally, a postscript is devoted to a detailed plan for a federally sponsored and financed program to combat poverty by reducing inequality. The central purpose of this plan is to change radically the distribution of prime sociocultural resources (money, jobs, education) to serve directly the interests of the poor. The main operating principle of this program is to grant real, democratically managed power to the poor in order that they may enforce compulsory positive discrimination in favor of presently disadvantaged groups. It is suggested that only by peacefully instituting such a radical egalitarianism can we resolve the national crisis surrounding poverty without ever increasing bloodshed and destruction, probably accompanied by increasing totalitarianism.

## Reviews

by CATHERINE H. BERNDT

*Nedlands, Australia.* 20 VII 68

If reports of the "race" situation in the U.S. are even 50% accurate, it is understandable that an anthropologist interested in civic affairs should feel impelled to write about it and point to possible solutions. The plea of urgency is a disarming one.

The focus is primarily on the U.S. and its domestic problems; but the implications are far wider, explicitly and otherwise, if only because of the influence of (and opposition to) the U.S. in other parts of the world. In Australia, e.g., "culture of poverty" has been seized on almost as an explanatory concept in relation to city-dwellers of Aboriginal descent, just as some efforts have been made to identify Australian Aborigines with American Negroes as "oppressed coloured people," even though their respective circumstances are, in the main, very different indeed.

Valentine's discussion of "poverty" and "culture" is useful, and so is his closer look at Lewis' original formulation in the light of Lewis' own material—including the jump from family studies to generalizations on a near-national scale. The action programme Valentine proposes seems reasonable in essence, e.g., in its claim that "formulas of equal rights and opportunities" are not enough to meet the needs of severely disadvantaged people—that they need more positive help. (This "favorable discrimination" was the principle underlying earlier government policies toward Aborigines in Australia; these are in dispute today because of their "paternalistic" and "overprotective" attitudes, but possibly the principle itself is on its way back.)

Also, probably few anthropologists would contest the view, repeatedly urged, that ethnographic studies of the people concerned, variously defined, are vitally necessary, to provide material not only on their actual living conditions but also on their ("inside") point(s) of view as against others.

Given all this, and granted that the volume is designed as an appeal to action, to take up smaller issues may seem like fiddling while Rome burns or splitting hairs on the edge of a precipice. But, to single out only a few, recognition (pp. 13–14) that poverty is a relative concept, an important point, is blurred in constant references to "the poor," and especially "the lower-class poor" as contrasted with the "working class"; despite the author's assertion (p. 14) that he need not "go into the complex technical question of how social classes are defined," this last contrast is a tricky one and should have been clarified. His treatment of social anthropology (p. 4) is misleadingly cursory. It is undeniable that "social statistics" do not in themselves provide information on "cultural patterns" (p. 6); but the examples on pp. 6–7 point to residence, etc. patterns which a *thorough* demographic study would show up—i.e., the author is not sufficiently well informed on modern demography. Although he refers elsewhere to Whyte's (1943) study, *Street Corner Society*, he ignores it in discussing (p. 175) the problem of organization-or-disorganization in "lower-class neighborhoods," despite the fact that it has long been regarded as a classic in this respect. One need not quibble, perhaps, about the use of the terms "model" (e.g., pp. 141–47) or "theoretical themes" (e.g., p. 144); but talking about "new anthropologists like Oscar Lewis," "the old anthropology," "yesterday's fieldwork problems," (p. 148), and "the new ethnographer" (p. 149) is going a bit far.

Urging more anthropologists to study this field is one thing; labeling other problems and other anthropologists as old-fashioned is quite another.

The appeal-to-anthropologists, and presumably to other social scientists too, is evidenced in the Appendix, rather pretentiously entitled "Toward an Ethnographic Research Design," but sliding over a number of practical issues (of personal involvement, e.g., in some aspects of such a situation) with the broad reminder "that problems must be resolved by each fieldworker in terms of his own personality, individual values, and particular field experience" (p. 189). Perhaps this wasn't the place for more than broad exhortation, anyway; but it does seem to highlight the question of whom the volume is really addressed to, and who is likely to read it—"not only academic or other specialists but fellow citizens as well" (p. vii). Much of the writing, perhaps inevitably in view of its *raison d'être*, is colourful and dramatic—the final paragraph (p. 153) of the main text very much so (e.g., "Perhaps there will be no new anthropology, no creative resynthesis by the oppressed, but only another long night of blood and pain."). My own view is that the mixture of rather long-winded and ponderous writing, repetitious at times, and "purple passages" such as the last quotation, will discourage quite a number of possible readers, including other anthropologists; and this is a pity, when the subject is topical and important and the author is evidently sincere and earnest in trying to put his message across. Maybe what is needed here is a combination of Valentine and the anonymous author of a review of Lewis' *La Vida* in the *Times Literary Supplement* (1967): sincerity is not enough, even (or even more so) when the message is labelled "urgent."

Hoboken, N.J., U.S.A. 29 vii 68

As the author himself states in the first sentence of his preface, "This is an ambitious essay." It is ambitious not so much in its exhaustive evaluation of the writings that have appeared recently on the subject of poverty as in the author's willingness to put before the public an actual plan or blueprint for the alleviation of poverty. For this Valentine is to be congratulated. Far too many anthropologists and sociologists are willing to criticize plans, proposals, and projects put forward by people in action positions and to theorize about them; few ever propose detailed or concrete plans for action.

The author has made three principal contributions in this book: (1) a critique of theories of poverty, including "culture of poverty" and "lower-class culture"; (2) suggestions for fieldwork methods for studying poor people, especially the urban poor; and (3) a proposal for empowering the poor to reduce inequality.

In Valentine's criticism of previous theories, his thesis is that poverty is not basically the result of a special set of values and behavior patterns of the poor, but rather the result of inequality in the social structure of the larger society. Thus he disagrees with E. Franklin Frazier, Nathan Glazer, and Oscar Lewis. He questions the thesis of Lewis and others that if poverty-culture values are altered, poverty will disappear. His own proposal—that the eradication of poverty will be followed by something like middle-class behavior or at least an end to the self-perpetuation of poverty—is, however, equally speculative. Such debate belongs in the ivory tower.

Valentine criticizes the fieldwork methods of Oscar Lewis, Kenneth Clark, Charles Keil, and Thomas Gladwin, finding their selection of subjects for study too limited to yield a picture of the total poverty society. He points out in particular that Lewis' family-study method has given rise to contradictions in his conclusions and that the normative evaluations expressed by Clark and Gladwin are middle-class ethnocentrism. His own model research method consists of a "flexible blend" of observation, interview, and participation, to be implemented by a "small and closely knit team." I cannot help but invoke the Heisenberg principle in relation to the aspects of his method that call for involvement and participation: In what way could researchers, who obviously do not "belong" and who do not seem to share the problems and values of those whom they are studying, become involved in a family or small community other than as investigators? and does not the presence

of an investigator alter the behavior and the degree and kind of information that the investigatee will display or divulge? On the whole, however, the outline is an important and positive contribution to the study of the subject of poverty—indeed, much more important than its lowly status of Appendix would suggest.

In "A Proposal for Empowering the Poor to Reduce Inequality" (again, inexplicably relegated to the status of Postscript, the author transcends the on-going theoretical argument and offers a concrete plan. He advocates "positive discrimination" as a key. The unemployed or those who earn less than \$3,000 per year must be given "realistic good-faith opportunities for employment or advancement as soon as possible"; job opportunities must be opened up "regardless of applicants' existing qualifications as traditionally defined" and should pay no less than \$3,000 a year to household heads and no less than the national minimum wage for other employees. The hiring priority would be assigned to heads of households "who are members of the non-white ethnic group which has the highest rate of unemployment in each local area." Employers should be required and enabled to establish on-the-job training. Further, programs of training must be changed to give first priority to the unemployed and the poor.

To implement this, the author suggests a national office and local units "fully controlled by a board of overseers," at least  $\frac{2}{3}$  of whom should be unemployed or poor elected by their socioeconomic peers and should receive compensation no less than \$3,000 a year or the minimum national wage. The remaining  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the board should be made up of nominees from unions, churches, local government, private employers, etc. This program must have the force of law, and the burden of proof that the high-priority, i.e., otherwise unemployed, applicants would seriously impair the business of the concern if placed in a technical or advanced opening would rest on the employer. Appeals against orders or judgments of the local boards should be to the U.S. Court of Appeals, then to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The rationale for this program is that it would bring the "most disadvantaged and least qualified directly into a meaningful and rewarding relationship with the real world of employment and remuneration" (p. 165), and put responsibility for managerial action and decision-making into the hands of the poor. It can be seen that this type of program implements Valentine's thesis that change in the social and economic structure, not in the values of the poor, is the primary

key to the eradication of poverty. Implicit in the program is the expectation that employed workers or managers of employment will thereby free themselves from poverty.

It is not hard to foresee reluctance or outright refusal to accept some aspects of his proposal, not so much on the part of employers as on the part of the rivals of the beneficiaries of his "positive discrimination." Reward for productivity is an ideology as important in our society as egalitarianism, and it has been institutionalized in the network of union regulations and union management contracts in the form of wage incentives, job evaluations, merit systems, seniority prerogatives, on-the-job training programs partially based on seniority, and impartial arbitration of disputes. These are benefits, hard-won over many years, that the worker with "qualifications as traditionally defined" will surely defend with the advent of "positive discrimination." If the board of overseers as described has the employing and placement rights outlined, it will be fulfilling in part the role of management, i.e., the employer. Why, therefore, does Valentine omit the role of the impartial arbitrator in settling labor-management disputes?

The weakness of Valentine's proposal is that it attacks the problem of poverty from one angle and offers a one-sided solution: the employment of the unemployed and the very poor, with the participation of their peers. In this way it resembles a number of other proposals that have appeared recently in the press, such as the negative income tax plan. I should like to suggest as an alternative a *systems approach* to the problem of poverty. This method of problem-solving has been increasingly put to use in such diversified, complex goal-oriented challenges as traffic management in and around large cities, water management, big business, and the military (see Magee 1964, McKean 1966, Quade 1967). The key to a successful systems approach to a complex problem is that the objective should be broad enough so as not to predetermine the solution. Thus, in the case of poverty, any one objective—e.g., guaranteed annual income, negative income tax, employment of the hitherto unemployed, changes in some behavior patterns of the poor—is too narrow; each may predetermine the outcome. A broader working objective of, say, adequate income for all members of the society would eradicate outright poverty and bring about a more hopeful attitude among poverty habituees, and yet the final outcome would not be limited by the confines of the economic status quo. Also, the systems approach is not bound to any one theoretical diagnosis of the "cause" of

poverty; a variety of diagnoses and cures may be accommodated simultaneously.

by JOHN H. BUSHNELL

*New York, N.Y., U.S.A.* 22 VII 68

When a difficult social problem is projected into the public arena, it frequently seems to generate a "blame complex" which in essence says, "Someone is at fault, and it is they, not we."

I recall the time that the press reported on a paper I had delivered on the disabling consequences, e.g., low level of aspiration, of certain persisting aboriginal Hupa Indian traits acting in combination with situational factors linked to a reservation existence. There were outcries, first from members of the tribe who assumed that I was putting them in a second-rate category vis-à-vis the world of whites while neglecting to condemn the real culprit, the government; and, second, from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which strenuously denied through its press releases that federal policy had operated to the detriment of its wards. When the smoke had cleared, the fundamental problem still remained: the tribe, facing termination at that time, would have been decidedly disadvantaged by the long-run effects of both the cultural and bureaucratic determinants I had reported if precipitously merged into the larger society.

We seem to be confronted by a similar situation with respect to the poor of our cities. If we describe the dysfunctional and pathogenic aspects of ghetto life, we are seen as ascribing blame to people who are better characterized as victims of a larger system. If we focus on the middle and upper classes of white America as the perpetrators of a discriminatory social order which segregates and subjugates the Negro, the Puerto Rican, or the Indian, among others, we are open to the charge of ignoring crippling features contained within, and perpetuated by, the ethnic subculture.

Valentine writes from a deep concern about those who live in poverty, particularly the Negro in our slums. He does not hesitate to indict those scholars whom he regards as having contributed to a misleading, essentially condemnatory image of the poor and consequently to the creation of public policies which are of dubious value at best. He argues that the alleged defects in the subcultures of the impoverished have been emphasized to the virtual exclusion of the healthy and the positive. The propositions which he posits for future validation in the field constitute primarily a search for viable, functional cultural features at the poverty level.

Valentine's position is commendable for the emphasis it places on the creative and adaptive within the lower socio-economic strata, which have sometimes

been unrecognized or understated in the past. His effort to shift the onus of poverty from the poor themselves to the non-poor is particularly meaningful coming as it does at a time when few can deny the restrictive limitations imposed by a society which (as the report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders dramatically documents and so states) is racist in many respects. But however understandable Valentine's partisanship may be, his preoccupation with the problems of image tends to obscure the importance of other levels of investigation and analysis, particularly where negative qualities are involved. For example, the cumulative effect of decades of discrimination and poverty becomes ingrained not only at the level of culture but also in the personality, mental and physical health, and mode of functioning of the individual. An assessment of the creativity or adaptability of a given cultural adaptation to subordinate status is valid only when balanced against the human cost involved. Also not to be bypassed is the crucial issue of the differential degree and nature of maladaptation which apparently characterizes the "fit" of many subcultures to the national supraculture.

As I see it, it is not through the application of the culture concept that the poor have been maligned, but rather through its insufficient use. The persistence of the Frazierian interpretation of lower-class Negro life or the effectiveness of a Moynihan Report can be directly related to the absence of countervailing views deriving from the cultural context that the anthropologist is in a position to provide. As for the "culture of poverty," the concept is of course open to criticism and refinement. Thus Lewis' model seems to be less a culture in the traditional sense than a summation of the characteristics common to the urban poor of various cultural or subcultural entities. On the basis of my own work in rural Mexico, I am struck by the sensitivity and validity of his ethnographic data but also by the apparent overlap of pan-national and poverty-specific features. Possibly a clearer delineation of the culture of poverty will be forthcoming as Lewis shifts his focus from Latin America to black America. In any case, Valentine's repeated indictments of Lewis' formulation seem unwarranted. First, the conceptualization has been applied in this country only to Puerto Ricans of New York City, who comprise but a fraction of the nation's poor. Second, it is unlikely that Lewis has been instrumental in shaping either public policy—which, unfortunately, seems to have been formulated on a piecemeal basis, with little or no regard for the findings of the social or behavioral scientist—or the popular image of the poor.

by PETER CARSTENS

*Toronto, Canada.* 29 VII 68

If we agree with Braithwaite (1953) that the study of man and his lifeways, like all natural science, is concerned with an empirical subject matter, there should never be any resistance to examining in depth from time to time the theoretical, methodological, and ideological foundations of anthropology and sociology. Valentine has now given us the opportunity to evaluate that part of our discipline which is concerned with inequality.

Although its title places emphasis on the concept of culture, this is not the central issue in Valentine's book. Rather, his work is concerned with: (1) the poverty of ethnography in complex societies, (2) an attack on the American "Establishment," including those anthropologists and sociologists whose interpretation of human behaviour has been influenced disproportionately by their societal position; and (3) an implicit overview of social stratification, forming the basis for a demonstration of the necessity for redistributing power as a major step towards the eradication of poverty.

Valentine's work is therefore a challenge to anthropologists and others to adopt new approaches in both the pure and the applied areas of their science. In short, the eradication of poverty in the United States should be seen within a broad moral and intellectual framework wherein hypotheses can be both formulated and tested. Valentine is probably at his best when he explains why recent attempts to reduce poverty cannot succeed. In his criticism of the work of the persons behind these attempts, the following categorization seems implicit: (a) Unredeemable Bad Guys (e.g., Frazier, Glazer, and Moynihan); (b) Redeemable Bad Guys (e.g., Miller, Oscar Lewis, and Matza); (c) Good Guys with Some Weaknesses (e.g., Clark, Gladwin, and Gans); (d) Enlightened Good Guys (e.g. Valentine, Liebow, and all or the potential members of the club). Readers of *Culture and Poverty* will discover various ways of interpreting and evaluating its multiplex facets, and the battle between good guys and bad guys will not end with this issue of CA.

I have been unable to identify the frame of reference from which the author views the concepts of class, status, and power. Had the term *culture* not been introduced in *Major Alternative 3* to Gans's *Ruling Hypothesis 3* (p. 138) this problem might have been solved in my mind. Perhaps some clarification from Valentine would be of value, especially since writers like Dahrendorf (1959) and Ossowski (1956) present points of view that seem to be in line with his own. I wish also to question

the theoretical (or ethnographic) justification for enforcing proposals to reduce poverty (p. 163). Does he mean that all change must be generated from outside the internal subsystem? I do not think that any program of applied anthropology (planned change) can begin until the processual mechanisms of class and status relationships have been adequately isolated. Valentine does give us plenty of reason to suppose that he intends these to be solved by the detailed ethnographies of the "new anthropology"; yet there is a strong suggestion in his topical guide (pp. 178-80), as in the "old" ethnographies focused on preindustrial societies, that class and status differentiation have been left out. This is difficult to understand, because many of the ramifications of social inequality are discussed in the main text.

Coupled with this almost predictable anthropological sin of omission is a disappointment to non-American readers, namely the overwhelming American focus of *Culture and Poverty*. Some detailed comparisons with anti-poverty movements in other parts of the world would not have been out of place, e.g., the solution of the "poor white" problem in South Africa and the social survey movement in Britain. Moreover, Zweig's *The Planning of Free Societies* (1942), although out of date, is still of relevance to U.S. planning as presented to us by Valentine.

I hope that these apparently negative criticisms will stimulate further discussion. *Culture and Poverty* is a highly commendable work, the first crystallization of a new tradition in anthropology.

by THOMAS GLADWIN

*Oxon Hill, Md., U.S.A.* 12 vii 68

More than half of this book is devoted to a critical review of the work of a number of anthropologists and sociologists who have written about poverty or about poor Negroes in the United States. The entire analysis is focused upon a single theoretical dimension, the degree to which any distinguishably separate component in a large complex society should or should not be treated as a self-perpetuating subculture with an autonomous dynamic of its own. Although this may appear at first glance a rather recondite methodological issue around which to build an entire book, this is not so. As Valentine points out, both the social philosophy and the strategy of intervention to help a problem population, in this case poor people, become radically different depending on whether their maladaptive behavior is seen as determined by cultural transmission within the group (the group thus comprising a true culture or subculture) or whether this behavior is recognized to be generated or at least

sustained in response to forces intrusive from the larger society. In the first instance, the problem becomes one solely of modifying the behavior of the poor people themselves, while in the second the solution must be sought in reform of the society as a whole.

Not surprisingly, the author concludes later in the book that both forces are almost always operative. This conclusion is less important, however, than is his insistence throughout upon constant attention to discriminating between the two alternative premises and determining which is being relied upon in any given context. Because of a failure to do this, the war on poverty came to be designed almost exclusively upon the first premise, that of a self-perpetuating "culture of poverty," not because its planners deliberately ignored the impact of the outside world on poor people, but rather because no one raised the issue strongly enough or made the distinction with sufficient clarity that the responsible people were forced to look at it. Much of the tragic ineffectiveness of poverty programs today might have been avoided had this book been published a few years ago. But who was wise enough to write it then?

Valentine's long critique is by and large well done. He suffers, though, from the occupational failing of many reviewers in savoring more richly the demolishing stroke than the discovery of essential wisdom in a man's work. He delights to pounce upon the inadvertent phrase, seldom giving an author the benefit of the doubt. Sometimes he goes too far. Granted that Moynihan perhaps deserved to be the principal whipping boy of critics of the Great Society, it is hardly appropriate to find him accused in this book (all in a single paragraph following a quotation in which Moynihan's "veil falls away") of an "expedient attitude toward the powerless," "callous expression of middle-class willfulness, lying beneath pious and pretentious words," "cold-blooded assertions of the power of privilege," and (almost an anti-climax) of being a "middle-class moralist."

My own work is treated far more gently, but here again Valentine shows the same disinclination to give an author the benefit of the doubt. Thus an early article of mine receives several pages of essentially justified criticism without any mention that in a later book (also reviewed) I cited that very article as an example of how we social scientists misled the architects of the war on poverty by putting forth notions which turned out to be spurious. Valentine is not the only one to whom is allowed the wisdom of hindsight.

The only substantive failure of the author's critique is the omission of

several writers certainly of equal importance to those he had included. There is only passing mention of Lee Rainwater, a colleague of Valentine's at Washington University, and of Hylan Lewis, the first social scientist to raise the crucial issue of the validity of the concept of a culture of poverty, the central theme of the present book. Worst of all, he ignores completely Cloward and Ohlin, whose 1960 book *Delinquency and Opportunity* was caught up in the same issues yet provided the theoretical underpinning for the entire War on Poverty. However, inclusion of these men would only have served the cause of completeness. The critique as it stands brings out compellingly the pervasive importance of dealing explicitly with the theoretical implications of the concept of a culture of poverty, and the magnitude of the disaster which can ensue when this theoretical issue, seemingly of interest only to the specialist, is ignored. If the book receives the attention it deserves it will therefore make a major contribution to both theoretical and applied anthropology, and indeed to social philosophy and social action.

The remainder of the book requires only brief mention. Along with some methodological discussion which is not in itself very new, the author presents a useful exploration of the implications, both scientific and practical, of alternative ways of viewing the relationship between a subgroup and the larger society. Finally, as a gratuitous "post-script," Valentine offers a grandiose scheme for nationwide positive discrimination in hiring and training of the poor. It is something which the author has been pushing for some time and regardless of its merits or faults does not build directly upon or contribute to the argument of the rest of the book. As such it can be considered simply intrusive and outside the scope of this review.

by ULF HANNERZ

*Washington, D.C., U.S.A.* 27 v 68

Valentine has performed a valuable service in taking a critical anthropologist's look at the writings on poverty and culture. In particular I agree with his criticisms of the Frazier tradition in Negro family studies and with his emphasis on the need for ethnographic field studies of the poor. There is little reason to go on registering areas of agreement here, however; instead, I will dwell on some issues which I think may be profitably discussed further.

Basically, Valentine fights a two-front battle, on the one hand against cultural authoritarianism, on the other against a possible overextension of the culture concept. The two battles tend at times to

contradict each other. His relativist position is that a culture of poverty must be respected and understood in its own terms, but he also argues that the life style of the poor is largely an adaptation to the environment, *not* a cultural tradition. Admittedly, there are points at which he states the third alternative of a culture adapted to its environment, but repeatedly he poses the false dichotomy of tradition versus adaptation in a manner which is common in the rhetoric of poverty politics but which should be quite distressing to anthropologists aware of something called cultural ecology.

Perhaps the particular notion of culture which has prevailed in the poverty debate has fostered the development of this dichotomy. Apparently the conception of culture which is in fact used by Valentine and other critics of the "culture of poverty" concept is *not* that of "a whole way of life created, followed, and passed on" but one of a system of strongly held values passed on by formal instruction. This is obviously a much narrower notion, facilitating the rejection of a proposition that certain modes of behavior among the poor are cultural. Thus Valentine writes (p. 113) that

lower-class life does not actually constitute a distinct sub-culture in the sense often used by poverty analysts, because it does not embody any design for living to which people give sufficient allegiance or emotional investment to pass it on to their children.

I believe, however, that anthropologists have usually seen learning by role-modeling and through exposure to imageries and expectations as major modes of cultural transmission. It then seems obvious that once adaptations have occurred in one generation, the following generations living in the same opportunity structure do not make their adaptations in a cultural vacuum; they are at least implicitly socialized into those of their predecessors, regardless of what value the latter attach to their way of life. Such socialization can easily be observed in the present, at least in the black ghetto.

This conception of cultural transmission certainly does not preclude an acceptance of mainstream values and a transmission of these within the poverty community. I believe Valentine could usefully have given more attention to developing the idea of a bicultural situation among the poor. My own experience of fieldwork in a black ghetto neighborhood—along lines similar to those suggested by Valentine—is that a bicultural model is the most adequate one; a parallel with the "conscious models" of the Chinese fisherman minority as described by Ward (1965, 1966) easily comes to mind.

A note on "viewing a culture in its own terms": today's Harlemites are not like

the Tikopians of yesterday, unaware of outside standards. They continuously compare their own life to that of their contemporaries in the wider society, thereby introducing their own comparisons into the discussion. It certainly makes a difference whether it is they or the anthropologist who raise the point, but the latter cannot always be blamed when external behavioral standards make their way into the ethnography.

A few minor points:

It is quite possible to write pejoratively about the lives and personalities of the poor while dismissing the "culture of poverty" idea—note how Roach and Gursllin (1967) use the stereotypes in such a fashion.

I still doubt the necessity of giving as much weight to the mapping of cultural similarities as to that of cultural differences between majority and minority groups, unless there is a myth of difference or the similarity itself is a cause of conflict, as in competition. In the interest of suggesting policies for social change, one might well take areas of togetherness for granted and move on to areas of structural and cultural pluralism, where conflict and injustice are more easily generated.

Valentine might have found it profitable to discuss some of the recent writings on juvenile delinquency, which refer to the same or similar phenomena as those on "the culture of poverty." While not necessarily correct in their conclusions, they are often more theoretically sophisticated than some of the studies he refers to and might have proven more useful in suggesting models (cf. Cohen 1955, Cloward and Ohlin 1960, Matza 1964; Short and Strodtbeck 1965).

by V. K. KOCHAR

*New Delhi, India.* 15 vii 68

The focal point of Valentine's theoretical and methodological commentary and formulations regarding the culture of the poor is the recent studies of multi-problem families by Oscar Lewis. On the basis of the somewhat repetitive, exaggerated, and involved arguments advanced in the course of the review of various works, he builds up a set of antithetical formulations within the frame of a research design which he believes can be carried to the field. Although the author claims to have studied "the effects of poverty and relative deprivation on native peoples in highly stratified plural society of a colonial dependency," no such experience is reflected in the book. There is a heavy undercurrent of ideological and political mission behind the book that completely skews the review, the critical arguments, and the conclusions. It often carries Valentine away from the academic relevance of his arguments and beyond

the actual context and textual limits of the works he discusses.

Valentine presents two models of poverty culture, the logical extremes of the two viewpoints he discerns in relation to the culture of the poor. With missionary zeal, he exposes the alleged logical, theoretical, and ideological incongruencies of one particular model as revealed in the writings of the majority of authors on poverty or lower-class culture. Then he identifies a promising emerging model, the antithesis of the first model, which he himself endorses. Throughout the book he is engaged in a dialectical argument, attacking the premises of Model 1 by the presumptions of Model 2. His finding is that the basic premises of Model 1 are theoretically and methodologically untenable (Chapter 3).

Strangely enough, however, he concludes with Model 3, in which he virtually accepts the very premises of Model 1 that he has been so vigorously contesting throughout the book, and, indeed, considers them fully compatible with the basic premises of Model 2. He writes (p. 144; italics mine):

While there are many important inconsistencies between the first two [models], one of the intentions behind Model 3 obviously is to reconcile some of these differences by providing a framework to accommodate certain items from both of the other formulations. Thus the third model is, in part, an eclectic synthesis involving the contention that *major propositions* from the first two may be *simultaneously valid*.

Unexplainably, however, he still considers that

the main weight and prevailing direction of available evidence are inconsistent with it [Model 1] . . . this portrayal is absurd . . . it is little more than a middle-class intellectual rationale for blaming poverty on the poor.

Again, a few paragraphs later (p. 146) he writes,

In my opinion, Model 2 is another inadequate formulation, by virtue of incompleteness.

The synthesis idea seems to be an afterthought, because a few pages earlier (pp. 129–40) he has offered, item by item, alternatives to the hypotheses and corollaries of Model 1, insisting that a choice will have to be made "between the above hypothesis and alternative on the basis of ethnographic research" (p. 129).

Valentine makes a series of presumptions about the views of Lewis regarding the culture of poverty. He does this, not by examining the exact context and import of Lewis' research aims or by studying his explicit statements, but by pointing out presumed implications, logically or illogically derived, and by imputing imagined political or ideological motives or values. These presumptions are:

1. Lewis puts the blame of poverty on the poor and argues that it is the culture of poverty that should *first* be abolished, rather than poverty itself.

2. Lewis overlooks the responsibility of society as a whole in imposing or in removing institutional handicaps and limiting conditions forced on the poor.

3. Lewis denies revolution or other forms of working-class movements and supports the futile social-work-cum-psycho-therapy policy.

4. Lewis characterizes poverty culture as self-generating and self-perpetuating, as if the culture of the poor had nothing to do with the conditions imposed by the society around them.

5. Lewis holds that the style of life characterized in his formulation of the culture of poverty is valid for all kinds and degrees of poor.

These presumptions are the basis of discussions in the book. In my view, they are sheer distortions, derived by stretching beyond recognition the original brief, tentative statements of Lewis and by overlooking what Lewis has clearly indicated or partially reported in his writings.

None of Lewis' studies was designed either to be a well-rounded anthropological study of the poor or to test any hypotheses or set of ideas about the poor. His formulations about the culture of poverty constitute a small part of his publications, generally in the form of cryptic, impressionistic formulations. Lewis has not yet had occasion to fully utilize his data for theoretical analysis. He has made no attempt to state or to systematically validate his basic propositions about the culture of poverty. The conceptual scheme of the culture of poverty is evidently in a stage of tentative, exploratory formulation. More evidence and analysis has been promised. In his introductory précis for the CA☆ Book Review (CA 8:480-83) covering three of his recent books, Lewis does not even present his conceptual model of culture of poverty, nor does he refer to his recent paper in *Scientific American* on the issue. This probably indicates the weight Lewis himself assigns to his tentative formulations. His main contribution and major theoretical and methodological concern has been the development of the family-study approach.

Even in his tentative formulations, Lewis delimits the parameters of his conceptual model of culture of poverty, which he conceives as a very specific type or level of the culture of the poor. Lewis identifies a number of criteria or characteristics which he considers as core, typical or symbolic of the culture of poverty. His model represents a very specific style of life among specific highly disoriented poor in urban slums. It is not *de toto* applicable to the wide variety of

poor and their culture. He doubts the existence of this typical culture of poverty, as he conceives, in caste societies like India, in tribal societies of Africa and elsewhere, in socialist states and in highly capitalist countries like the U.S. (Lewis 1966b: xlviii; Valentine, p. 59). With such a clear distinction available, Valentine has erred in trying to judge the validity of Lewis' model on the basis of what he knows, or a priori expects to find out, about the many kinds of poor in America—particularly the Negro minority in urban slums. The very fact of the race, colour, and ethnic identification of the poor, so consciously seized upon by black and white alike in maintaining or accentuating sociocultural boundaries, overrules the applicability of Lewis' model. Even with reference to the poor peasants in urban slums portrayed in *The Children of Sánchez*, Lewis refers to his concept of culture of poverty only in passing.

Valentine's main line of criticism and his arguments are therefore clearly not to the point. The propositions and hypotheses which he advances about the poor or lower-class or underprivileged ethnic minorities in the U.S., if correct, are therefore not necessarily inconsistent with Lewis' model and do not necessarily invalidate his propositions. The reference groups for these alternative characterizations are not identical or comparable with the reference group behind Lewis' model. Lewis does not deny the possibility of a higher level of organization and group consciousness, community life, participation and identification with the larger society, etc., among other types of poor in the U.S. or elsewhere. Clearly, then, "culture of poverty" is a static model—a fact that has been overlooked by Lewis as well. The first requirement of a cross-cultural model for the culture of the poor is that it should reconcile and accommodate variation in the styles of life of the poor.

As to Valentine's other presumptions about Lewis' work, leaving aside the numerous direct and indirect hints spread through the writings of Lewis, mostly quoted by Valentine, we may refer to a recent statement by Lewis (CA 8: 499) which has apparently escaped Valentine's attention. The last three paragraphs of this statement are sufficient to nullify most of the above-mentioned presumptions. Had Valentine seriously followed his own sobering advice "not to read too much into a few brief passages," had he started with the aim of synthesis, and had he confined himself to an academic discussion of pertinent scientific issues, he would have perhaps provided the groundwork for an intercultural research frame for the anthropological study of the poor.

Sifting through the unnecessary argumentation one picks up some theoretical and methodological hints which deserve attention:

As noted above, the "culture of poverty" concept refers to a highly polarized and localized style of life and cannot be the basis for a cross-cultural formulation. Lewis' attempts to generalize the subculture of poverty are premature. More exploratory work on other styles of life that possibly exist among the great variety of poor in different contexts is necessary.

The methodology adopted by Lewis in his family studies is unsuitable *alone* either for formulating a cross-cultural model or for testing, or even precisely expounding, all the parameters of a subculture in a complex society. For a balanced formulation, the inside or microcosmic view will have to be matched with a detailed macrocosmic view from the top. Few would disagree with Valentine that more systematic information is necessary.

Even within the limits of Lewis' present framework there is room for clarification and elaboration. Valentine's suggestion that a more careful search would reveal more positive traits of the subculture of poverty seems plausible. Systematic content analysis of the verbatim family biographies would put Lewis' formulations on surer ground. Contradictory evidence, some of which is indicated by Valentine, will have to be resolved. Some parts of the concept, especially those pertaining to socialization and incapacitating psychopathic influence, will have to be carefully worked out, if necessary with additional field investigations.

Even if one does not accept Valentine's alleged dichotomy between inherent, ingrained subcultural values or habits and the values or traits which are mere "responses to the experience of their socio-economic environment and [as] adaptation to this environment," there is some merit in his suggestion that the culture of the poor, seen as a subculture of a complex society under the stress of poverty conditions, will reveal some new dimensions of the culture of poverty. After all, the poor are drawn from a certain sociocultural milieu and can be expected to embody some cultural as well as subcultural continuities. What styles of life they eventually develop under stress depends largely upon the value orientation and structure of the society and the subculture within it.

A good many of the characteristics of the poor seem to be dynamic and variable and are perhaps best considered as points on a continuum. One can, for example, conceive of various degrees of integration of the poor into the larger society. The orientation of these traits within the

value system of the larger society may also vary from one society to another. Formulation of a general set of ideas about the culture of the poor in cross-cultural perspective would require precise definition and description of these variables. This precision can be achieved either by quantification or by detailed description in depth such that qualitative differences in the respective traits can be identified and compared.

In this context, the ethnographic research design suggested by Valentine is not fully workable. It does help to indicate how the total society can be brought within the frame of investigation; but it has, at the same time, serious limitations, especially in its rejection of Lewis' methodology. Those who have worked in urban areas will testify that large units are not manageable by traditional ethnographic techniques alone. Here anthropologists will have to depend upon other techniques, including the valuable family-study method developed by Lewis, to gain insight and recover data of the richness and depth necessary for precise description of variable traits.

One important question that will have to be resolved is in what sense (if any) poverty culture is a subculture. In complex plural societies such as India, there are so many levels and dimensions of sub-cultural and sub-subcultural differentiation, and they are so varying exposed to poverty conditions, that simply labeling poverty culture a subculture will not be meaningful. In India, for example, there are (a) regional subcultures, broadly coterminous with language and dialect areas; (b) north-south differences; (c) rural-urban differences; (d) religious communities—Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, etc.—each with its specific subcultural load; among these, the Hindus are further subdivided into a large number of more or less distinctive sects; (e) castes; (f) tribes, related in various ways to the caste society around them; and (g) broad class differences, cutting across all the above. There are poor at practically all levels. Of what, then, do the poor constitute a subculture?

Beyond this, there is the question of the role of poverty and the culture of the poor in the local context, on the one hand, and in the context of the culture as a whole, on the other. These are only a few of the many issues that must be resolved before the "subculture of poverty" can be considered cross-culturally applicable.

Another important question which Valentine hints at, but does not dwell upon, is the use of the term "culture" to refer to an entity described mainly in terms of non-organizational, non-integrational, negative, and psychopathic attributes. The "subculture of poverty" is com-

parable to a highly disoriented individual or a small group under extreme stress and isolation. Until some positive aspects of the culture of the poor are established, the use of the term "culture" remains open to question. To apply it to an entity which in fact represents "poverty of culture" betrays the basic presumptions of culture theory.

by ELEANOR LEACOCK

New York, N.Y., U.S.A. 23 VII 68

Valentine's analysis of writings on the "culture of poverty" exemplifies the interdependence of the so-called pure and applied aspects of social science. He points out that the net effect of poverty-culture writings is, in good Social Darwinist tradition, to blame poverty on the poor, and he demonstrates the ways in which the supposed responsibility of the poor for their condition follows from stressing presumed defects in their mentality or behavior, an emphasis dependent in turn upon a distortion of the culture concept itself and upon a lack of rigor in the collection and analysis of field data.

On the whole, as Valentine makes clear, scholars responsible for the culture of poverty concept see "subcultures" as internally consistent and virtually autonomous ways of life. They ignore the articulation of various social groupings within the cultural whole, and they forget—here Valentine cites a stricture of Kroeber's—"the complementarity of sub-cultural distinctness and total-culture coherence" (p. 108). Thus they fail to take into account possible external sources of "distinguishing structural characteristics" (p. 110).

Valentine discusses the strong and persistent ethnocentrism which characterizes interpretations of life among the poor—"the now seemingly well-nigh tyrannical power of the association between poverty and pathology in the minds of social scientists" (p. 120). One form through which this ethnocentrism is expressed (here Valentine is referring to the early formulations of E. Franklin Frazier) is "a direct logical leap from social statistics, which are deviant in terms of middle-class norms, to a model of disorder and instability" (p. 23). This leap is based upon the assumption that the values which give motivational impetus to given behaviors can be inferred from the behavior itself, or from "the surface aspect" of life (p. 8). I might add that further problems are caused by the unfortunately common tendencies in contemporary social science to overgeneralize from a variation or trend and to transform moderate differences into the absolutes of polarized opposites. For example, since recorded separation and divorce rates are higher and the occurrence of female-headed households more frequent among

lower- than middle-class groups, matri-focality and family instability are said to be characteristic of the lower class, by implied contrast with patrifocality and family stability in the middle class. Middle-class people delay gratification and plan for the future while lower-class people are unable to delay gratification and have a "fatalistic," non-planning attitude. And so forth. (Who among the culture-of-poverty theoreticians cares to test the assumption of "fatalism" by studying, for example, poor Mexican-Americans organizing for a strike?) Not only are the enormous variations in the behavior and attitudes within any group lost sight of, but so is the range of behavior drawn upon by any one individual in different situations, not to mention the conflicting ideological commitments and internally contradictory drives that lie behind any significant individual act.

Valentine refers to the failure to document current hypotheses about life styles of the poor with adequate and well-rounded fieldwork and suggests that such research would render many of them obsolete. My own experience studying elementary school classrooms in middle- as compared with low-income neighborhoods and in black neighborhoods as compared with white (Leacock 1967, 1968, 1969) has revealed the inadequacy of many standard formulations about educational failure among poor children as caused primarily by out-of-school "cultural deprivation." School classrooms, instead of meeting different groups of children equally, showed themselves to be settings in which children of different groups are treated differently. Education in a formal sense is only part of the total school function, *which is to socialize children for different positions in society*, middle-class and working-class, relatively secure in their status if white, marginal if black. Such socialization is effected through the demographic structuring of a double-track system in keeping with patterns of class and color segregation by neighborhoods, and carried out by teachers, many of them well-meaning and hard-working, but conveying to lower-class children generally and non-white poor children in particular the message also contained in the texts and materials being used—you do not now and probably will not ever amount to anything worthwhile. A few are allowed to succeed, however. Children in school are not simply being poured into monistic "middle-class" or "lower-class," black or white molds. Instead they are being presented with *patterned alternatives for behavior and corollary attitudes*—with a series of roles to be filled according to individual abilities and inclinations, but differentially structured for middle- as compared with lower-income children. (For example, a bright and curious boy in

a lower-income classroom is more likely to be channeled into a "trouble-maker" role than he would be in a middle-income classroom.)

The irony is that while teachers attend workshops to learn the reasons for the seeming apathy of ghetto children, black parents are beginning to beat down the doors of the schools to gain some say in the educational process! The fact that the emphasis of the workshops is now shifting from poverty culture to "black" culture and history raises a final point in relation to culture-of-poverty writings. This is their lack of historical orientation. All too uncritically, they have been applying an outmoded monistic view of culture to explain persisting difficulties of the non-white and the poor, without reference to the historically evolved and historically evolving socioeconomic structure of which these groups are a part.

by OSCAR LEWIS

*Urbana, Ill., U.S.A. 5 VIII 68*

In the preface to his book, Valentine characterizes his work as "ambitious" and "presumptuous." This is not an idle disclaimer, but a candid and accurate appraisal which, I suspect, he arrived at belatedly after finishing his book. This interpretation is suggested by the difference in quality between the early portion of the book, where he is the overzealous critic, and the latter portion, where he tries to be constructive and presents his own rather uninspired views of what should be done about the poor. It is exasperating to find that some of his most belabored criticism in the early parts of the book is negated in the latter part, where he quietly incorporates as his own the very point of view he has earlier decried. It is at the same time reassuring, because it suggests some flexibility and capacity for growth. The ideas he has borrowed improve the quality of the book. Thus, his "Postscript: A Proposal for Empowering the Poor to Reduce Inequality" is a worthwhile and important statement. (On the other hand, his "Appendix: Toward an Ethnographic Research Design," is unexciting and reads like a graduate student's research outline.)

Valentine warns us that he has done no firsthand, systematic research among the poor and that his knowledge is based essentially on his reading and library research. He writes as an anthropologist and as a citizen concerned with problems of social justice and with the persistence of poverty. He also writes as a self-appointed defender of the image of the poor, whom he tends to idealize in a Rousseauian fashion.

Valentine believes that those of us who have some professional expertise in the study of poverty have had a "pre-

dominantly pernicious influence." He is critical of the work of most of the people he discusses. He examines, with varying degrees of superficiality, the writings of E. Franklin Frazier, Nathan Glazer, Daniel P. Moynihan, Walter Miller, David Matza, Oscar Lewis, Kenneth Clark, Charles Keil, Thomas Gladwin, Elliott Liebow, and Herbert Gans. Only Gans and Liebow come off relatively unscathed.

On the whole, I find Valentine's book tendentious, self-righteous, pedestrian, and downright irresponsible in its distortion of the views of others. Some of the criticism has a horsefly quality about it: it buzzes and irritates, but is lightweight and poses no serious threat. Nor does Valentine offer any new solutions. For all his aggressive rhetoric, he seems opposed to revolutionary solutions to the problems of the poor. He suggests no fundamental changes in the structure of the social and economic system beyond that of providing better jobs for the unemployed by a national policy of compensatory hiring. His own contribution to the subject consists essentially in saying that we need well-rounded, intensive anthropological studies of slum life, based upon the traditional methods of participation, observation, etc. While I would certainly agree that we need more studies of many kinds, this is hardly an original contribution.

Because so much of his criticism is directed to my own work, I should like to reply to some of the issues he raises, even though I find most of them spurious and unenlightening.<sup>1</sup> Valentine criticizes me for using the expression "culture of poverty" instead of "subculture of poverty." It should have been evident to any careful reader, but especially to an anthropologist, that I was describing a model of a subculture and not of a culture. I made this clear on several occasions:

Poverty becomes a dynamic factor which affects participation in the larger national culture and *creates a subculture of its own* (1959: 2; italics added).

The culture of poverty . . . is a dynamic factor which affects participation in the larger national culture and becomes a subculture of its own (1961: xxiv).

The culture or subculture of poverty comes into being in a variety of historical contexts (1961: xxv).

While the term "subculture of poverty" is technically more accurate, I have used "culture of poverty" as a shorter form (1966b: xxxix).

<sup>1</sup> For examples of more creative criticism, see Gans (1968) and Rainwater (1966).

The subculture of poverty, as defined by these traits, is a statistical profile; that is, the frequency of distribution of the traits both singly and in clusters will be greater than in the rest of the population (1968: 11).

I decided to use the term culture of poverty because my books were intended for a wide audience. I believed that the concept of a subculture, difficult even for social scientists, would confuse the average reader and, like the term subhuman, might suggest inferiority. I hoped that the term "culture" would convey a sense of worth, dignity, and the existence of pattern in the lives of the poor despite the miserable conditions under which they live.

I believe that most of my colleagues understood my intention. For example, Herzog in her article, "Some assumptions about the poor," wrote (1963: 395):

To the extent that the word "culture" is appropriate, the culture of poverty should be thought of as a subculture rather than as a culture in itself—a distinction made, in fact, by Oscar Lewis. . . .

Actually, Valentine, too, understood my position. Unfortunately, this does not become apparent until late in the volume when he discusses some of the problems inherent in the conceptions of subsocieties and subcultures.

Valentine insistently attributes to me the idea that the people I am describing have a self-contained and self-sufficient way of life. This is absurd. I never suggested that people with a subculture of poverty are totally isolated from the institutions and values of the larger society. The marginality I described is obviously a relative matter and involves not isolation but the degree of effective participation (Lewis 1966b: xlv). If we were to devise a scale of participation, individuals and families with a subculture of poverty would receive lower scores than the rest of the population.

Valentine misunderstands the relationship between the autobiographical material in my recent books and the theoretical model of a subculture of poverty, and he is disturbed by the difficulties in relating these two distinct levels. This problem is inherent in all social science models, and the lack of perfect fit is in itself no proof of the inadequacy of the model, especially when it is an ideal-type model. However, I should like to make a few clarifications.

The idea of the model of the subculture of poverty did not grow out of my study of the Sánchez family alone. Rather, it developed out of my comparative analysis of two Mexican *vecindades*, one a large *vecindad* of 157 families, the other a small one of 14 families. In reviewing the

findings on these 171 families and in comparing it with data on slums published by social scientists (and also with data from novels), I noted certain persistent patterned associations of traits among families with the lowest income level and the least education. It was the configuration of these traits which, for lack of a better term, I called the subculture of poverty.

I have recently explained in more detail some aspects of the subculture of poverty model (1968: 11-12):

... (1) The traits fall into a number of clusters and are functionally related within each cluster. (2) Many, but not all, of the traits of different clusters are also functionally related. For example, men who have low wages and suffer chronic unemployment develop a poor self-image, become irresponsible, abandon their wives and children, and take up with other women more frequently than do men with high incomes and steady jobs. (3) None of the traits, taken individually, is distinctive per se of the subculture of poverty. It is their conjunction, their function, and their patterning that define the subculture. (4) The subculture of poverty, as defined by these traits, is a statistical profile; that is, the frequency of distribution of the traits both singly and in clusters will be greater than in the rest of the population. In other words, more of the traits will occur in combination in families with a subculture of poverty than in stable working-class, middle-class, or upper-class families. Even within a single slum there will probably be a gradient from culture of poverty families to families without a culture of poverty. (5) The profiles of the subculture of poverty will probably differ in systematic ways with the difference in the national cultural contexts of which they are a part. It is expected that some new traits will become apparent with research in different nations.

I have not yet worked out a system of weighting each of the traits, but this could probably be done and a scale could be set up for many of the traits. Traits that reflect lack of participation in the institutions of the larger society or an outright rejection—in practice, if not in theory—would be the crucial traits; for example, illiteracy, provincialism, free unions, abandonment of women and children, lack of membership in voluntary associations beyond the extended family.

I had no intention of equating an entire slum settlement with the subculture of poverty as Valentine erroneously does. In my experience, the people who live in slums, even in small ones, show a great deal of heterogeneity in income, literacy, education, political sentiments, and life styles. Indeed, I claimed that for some characteristics my sample of 100 families from four San Juan slums was a good sample of the island as a whole (Lewis 1968: 21-23).

It should be clear to anyone who has read the Introduction to *La Vida* that the Ríos family was not intended to be an ideal representative of the subculture of poverty model. The income of the

various members of the Ríos family living in separate households was well in the middle group of the La Esmeralda slum. Had I intended to illustrate the model in its purest form, I would have published a volume on a family with an annual income of less than \$500.00 a year; 22% of the families in the slum were in this category in 1960. In his efforts to show that some of the characters in *La Vida* were less provincial and isolated than one might have expected from the ideal type, Valentine stacked the cards against the model by selecting as his examples individuals who had lived for many years in New York City and who had incomes many times higher than their relatives in San Juan! For example, Benedicto and Soledad together earned over \$8,000 a year and Simplicio and his wife earned over \$5,000. Moreover, Benedicto was a bilingual, literate, and sophisticated merchant seaman who had seen the world. Again, the Sánchez family was not presented as an ideal example of the subculture of poverty model. It seemed to me that the very wide range of types in this family would make that self-evident. Furthermore, I made it clear that they were in the middle-income group of the Casa Grande *vecindad*. Manuel Sánchez was relatively sophisticated, literate, and well-traveled compared to his younger sister Marta, and the contrast between Consuelo and Aunt Guadalupe was even more marked. Had my primary objective been to illustrate the model, I would have published an entire volume on Guadalupe and her husband, two minor characters in *The Children of Sánchez*.<sup>2</sup>

Since the model of the subculture of poverty was not derived from the Sánchez and Ríos families alone, it is pointless to seek a one-to-one correspondence between the model and the characters in these books. It would be more helpful to think of the subculture of poverty as the zero point on a continuum which leads to the working class and middle class; the various characters in *The Children of Sánchez* and in *La Vida* would then fall at different points on the continuum.

Many of the "contradictions" between the model and the data cited by Valentine are not contradictions at all. For example, he sees a contradiction between my statement about low level of organization and my description of La Esmeralda (and also of Casa Grande) as little communities. Simply to state that there is a community does not describe the level of organization. Furthermore, in the model I stipulated a range of level of organization for the subculture of poverty. In this connection I wrote (1966b: xlvi):

<sup>2</sup> See my forthcoming book, *A Death in the Sánchez Family* (New York: Random House, September 1969).

In spite of the generally low level of organization there may be a sense of community and *esprit de corps* in urban slums and in slum neighborhoods. This can vary within a single city or from region to region or country to country. The major factors that influence this variation are the size of the slum, its location and physical characteristics, length of residence, incidence of homeownership and landownership (versus squatter rights), rentals, ethnicity, kinship ties, and freedom or lack of freedom of movement. When slums are separated from the surrounding area by enclosing walls or other physical barriers, when rents are low and fixed and stability of residence is great (twenty or thirty years), when the population constitutes a distinct ethnic, racial or language group or is bound by ties of kinship or *compadrazgo*, and when there are some internal voluntary associations, then the sense of local community approaches that of a village community. In many cases this combination of favorable conditions does not exist. However, even where internal organization and *esprit de corps* are at a bare minimum and people move around a great deal, a sense of territoriality develops that sets off the slum neighborhoods from the rest of the city. In Mexico City and San Juan this sense of territoriality results from the unavailability of low income housing outside of the slum areas. In South Africa the sense of territoriality grows out of the segregation enforced by the government, which confines the rural migrants to specific locations.

In his critique of my subculture of poverty model, Valentine manages to distort my position by omitting my discussion of the causes of the phenomenon, the conditions under which it arises, its adaptive functions, and the conditions under which it will probably disappear. He misses the significance of the difference between poverty and the subculture of poverty. In making this distinction I have tried to illustrate a broader generalization; namely, that it is a serious mistake to lump all poor people together, because the causes, the meaning, and the consequences of poverty vary considerably in different sociocultural contexts.

Valentine sometimes denies the existence of the subculture of poverty and at other times reluctantly accepts it. The issue is whether the way of life described in my books is simply an adaptation of the poor to the total social system (an adaptation which supposedly begins from scratch with each new generation!), or whether the very process of adaptation of the poor develops a set of values and norms which justify calling it a subculture. At one point he writes (p. 117),

Evidence presented in the literature surveyed here seems to provide little basis for a clear choice between these interpretations. To conclude that the two formulations are both valid but not mutually exclusive—that the two causal sequences may be coexistent and perhaps mutually reinforcing—is a position that may ultimately prove well founded.

In the light of this admission, one wonders why he attacks my proposition that once the subculture of poverty comes into existence as a result of the total social system, it is also in some measure internally self-perpetuating.

More serious is Valentine's insistence that I have given highest priority to the elimination of the culture of poverty as a way of life rather than to the elimination of poverty per se, and the related charge that I have put the onus of poverty on the character of the people rather than upon the larger society. This is patently false and flies in the face of my published statements, in which I have consistently considered it most urgent to eliminate economic poverty in the United States by creating new jobs, by paying people higher wages, by training unskilled workers, and by guaranteeing people a decent minimum annual income. My point, however, was that even if all this were done, there would still remain a large number of families with many social and psychological problems. It was in this connection that I have suggested special services in addition to income improvement. I mentioned this problem in my dialogue with the late Senator Robert Kennedy, published in *Redbook* (1967). For example, in response to Kennedy's question about the importance of better jobs and higher income, I replied (p.104),

Yes, it would make a difference and it should receive the highest priority in any case. Every American citizen deserves that as a minimum. How they run their lives is their business, if it doesn't hurt society as a whole. But we oversimplify the solution if we think it's just a question of money.

At one point Valentine charges that my concept of a culture of poverty was a guiding principle of the war against poverty and must, therefore, bear some responsibility for its failure. What a naïve and absurd conception of the power of social science in our society! It is not the concept of a culture or subculture of poverty which is responsible for the lack of success of the anti-poverty program, but rather (1) the failure of the President and the Congress of the United States to understand the degree of national commitment necessary to cope with the problem; and (2) the Vietnam war, which has been draining our economic and human resources.

Having attended Moynihan's year-long seminar on poverty and having heard some of the men who were directly responsible for formulating, organizing, and carrying out the war against poverty, I can testify that most of them had only the vaguest conception of the difference between poverty and the subculture of poverty. The anti-poverty program was correctly directed at economic poverty and not at the subculture of poverty

(which, I believe, is found only in approximately 20% of the families who live below the poverty level).

What I find most disappointing in Valentine's treatment of my recent work is his failure to respond with sympathy and warmth to the people who tell of their lives in *Five Families*, *The Children of Sánchez*, *Pedro Martínez*, and *La Vida*. This is surprising in the light of his statement of his objectives (p. 148):

If we can really regain the art of living with the natives [i.e., urban slum dwellers], . . . we should be able to see the world as it is from within the alien subsociety . . . for we shall know the people ourselves at firsthand. . . . It seems probable that the future ethnographer of the poor will have clear knowledge of what lower-class people want. . . .

This is what I have tried to do in my studies of slums in Mexico City, San Juan, and New York, and I have said so explicitly in each of the volumes discussed (e.g., Lewis 1961: xii; 1966b: xii). Valentine does not analyze the meaning of poverty and its political implications as seen in the rich data provided by the people themselves in these volumes. Instead, he brushes this data aside as "raw material" and concentrates on the more abstract issue of theoretical models and the culture of poverty, issues which were quite incidental to the major objectives of the books. As far as I am concerned, my formulation of a subculture of poverty is simply a challenging hypothesis which should be widely tested by empirical research.

I suspect that one of Valentine's problems is that he is so enamoured of traditional ethnography and community studies that he has developed resistance to data derived from any approach which tries to go beyond the traditional. He ignores the valuable insights one can get about the nature of institutions from the way in which they are experienced and reflected in the lives of individuals and families. His belief that a few good old-fashioned ethnographies of urban slums will open up entirely new horizons and almost automatically push ahead the war against poverty is naïve. To my knowledge, the many studies of tribal and peasant societies have rarely led to any marked improvement in the conditions under which these people live. Moreover, he fails to recognize some of the serious limitations of traditional ethnography and community studies. As an old practitioner of the art, I am sensitive to these limitations and have described them at various times.

Too often the generalizations which appear in ethnographic monographs about culture patterns are no more than good guesses based upon the reports of a few informants who may not represent

the total range and variety of custom and behavior. Having done both community studies and family studies, I am convinced (and at some later time shall try to demonstrate) that, for all of my editing, selection, and organization, the data in my family studies is more precise, more valid, and more reliable than many generalizations in traditional ethnographic monographs.

I should like to make it clear for the record, however, that: (1) I have not abandoned community studies. (2) I consider them one of the basic research designs of anthropology. (3) It is certainly feasible to do community-like ethnographic studies of the kind Valentine yearns for in urban slums and shanty towns. Indeed, a number of such studies have already been done in Africa and in Latin America.<sup>3</sup> (4) I have never stated that "poor people living in cities cannot be studied by focusing on neighborhoods, localities, wards, or other sizeable social units within the urban complex," as is falsely charged by Valentine (p. 175). (He knows better, because he has cited my data on Casa Grande and La Esmeralda.) (5) I have never intended my family studies as a substitute for community studies, but rather as a complement to them. My last four books all began as part of community studies, and my decision to publish the family studies first was simply a matter of publication strategy. Indeed, *Pedro Martínez* (1964) combines a description of a community with full-length individual biographies. In the light of his criticism of my work, Valentine's failure to even mention this book reflects upon his sincerity and reliability as a scholar. Opler (1964), in his review of the book, has written:

There are some who have argued that the autobiography is too personal and idiosyncratic to tell us much about a way of life. Others are just as sure that the usual ethnography or anthropological account of a culture is too divorced from specific human activity to be convincing. It is the merit of Lewis' effort to present both of these approaches together and, by providing a historical setting, to give a sense of direction to them as well.

Valentine misrepresents my work when he suggests that my focus on the family as a unit of study has led me to neglect or eliminate "evidence of life beyond the confines of the household" (p. 63). Can it be that he didn't read or doesn't remember the descriptions in *The Children of Sánchez* of jail scenes, police brutality, Army life, gang activities in the *vecindad*,

<sup>3</sup> I am now preparing a work on "The Social Organization and Material Culture of a Mexico City Slum," as well as a series of volumes on La Esmeralda in San Juan.

work in the market, work in shops and factories, work in the fields as a *bracero* in California, impressions of life in the United States, etc.?

Throughout most of the early and middle portion of the book, Valentine consistently complains about the unduly negative images of the poor which emerge from the studies of professional social scientists. Speaking for myself, I should like to take sharp exception to his implication that I have exaggerated the pathology and weaknesses of the poor. It is curious and ironical that he should even make this charge. Some critics have complained that I have glorified the poor and that I have improved their language to give more beauty and profundity to it than they are capable of expressing. My own evaluation of the people in my books belies Valentine's charges (Lewis 1961: xii; 1966b: xxvii, xxviii).

Belatedly, Valentine acknowledges the relationship between culture and personality and, if I understand him correctly, affirms the self-perpetuating element in the subculture of poverty, an idea which had been anathema to him earlier in the book. He writes (p. 145),

... there is certainly empirical evidence of pathology, incompetence, and other kinds of inadequacy among the people of the ghettos and slums, as there is in the rest of society. There can be no doubt that living in poverty has its own destructive effect on human capacities and that these impairments become part of the whole process perpetuating deprivation.

The crucial question from both the scientific and the political point of view is: How much weight is to be given to the internal, self-perpetuating factors in the subculture of poverty as compared to the external, societal factors? My own position is that in the long run the self-perpetuating factors are relatively minor and unimportant as compared to the basic structure of the larger society. However, to achieve rapid change and improvement with the minimum amount of trauma one must work on both the "external" and "internal" conditions. To ignore the internal factors is to ignore and distort the reality of people with a subculture of poverty. In effect, this is harmful to their interests because it plays down the extent of their special needs and the special programs which are necessary to make up for the deprivations and damage which they have suffered over many generations.

by WILLIAM MANGIN

*Syracuse, N.Y., U.S.A. 17 VII 68*

Valentine's political prejudices seem to be much like my own. I can't help but sympathize with his critiques of Frazier, Glazer, Moynihan, Matza, and to a

lesser extent, Miller. I was particularly impressed with his critique of the culture-of-poverty concept and with his important distinction between the high quality of Lewis' ethnographic work and the dubious nature of the extension of the behaviour of one or two families to an explanation of national and world-wide "cultures." The popular "vicious circle" explanations of poverty and slow economic development are of a piece with Social Darwinism and allow the economically powerful to blame poverty on the poor. Through no intention of the originator, the idea of the culture of poverty provides a ready-made justification for such explanations. Valentine does well to show the weaknesses in Lewis' misuse of culture and subculture.

The Moynihan Report falls into the same category by focusing on the responsibility of the black lower class for staying black lower class. I do think that Valentine is unfair to the Moynihan "establishment liberal" position when he attributes sinister motives. To Moynihan, the present system could be a lot worse, and he sees no possibility of revolution. He says to Negroes, "Shape up and be like us," and to Whites, "You had better let them." Both messages show a lack of understanding of American culture, black and white, and of the most important political and economic forces in U.S. society, but they are probably no less fantastic than the Black Power, separate-state rhetoric. Moynihan's call for action from state and local governments is no more unlikely than Valentine's own call for "enactment of the necessary program into law by Congress."

Valentine admires Clark's work but says that it suffers from inappropriate methods and inadequate data. What doesn't? He also admires the excellent work of Gans and Liebow. It seems to me that the crucial distinction between the works cited favorably and those cited unfavorably is that the former emphasize social conditions that can be changed by altering power and wealth balances through legal action and political pressure and the latter emphasize cultural and personality factors that can be changed by altering the internal states of individuals through psychiatry, revelation, or old-time social work. U.S. history of the last 100 years shows that assimilation and profound cultural and personality changes are more or less irrelevant to social structure as long as the group, or individual, is white and maintains an income over the poverty level. Ethnic nationalism has been—and, as any observer of recent elections can testify, continues to be—important in voting.

A crucial difference between the white ethnic groups and the blacks, however, is the opportunity whites have to pass out of their group. Poles, Irish, Italians,

Germans, Ukrainians, and other descendants of European immigrants have a large element of choice in their identification or lack of identification with their group. Variety in social class, occupation, and religion and legal and illegal routes to success are available, at least in ideal terms, both within the ethnic community and in the general society, to an infinitely greater degree than among blacks. Prejudice exists among whites, and class mobility is difficult, but there is no racial factor that continues to make the members visible if they move socially. This allows a separation of class and ethnicity that is not possible for Negroes. It may be picking, because I think *Culture and Poverty* is a very useful book, but I think his Model 3 unnecessarily complicated. If lower-class people have the opportunity to advance economically without prejudice, they automatically become less vulnerable and have much more choice about ethnic cultural patterns. Perhaps Valentine is correct that the needed political change can be hurried by increased ethnic nationalism.

Finally, as to his call for more research on the poor, I guess I have to be for more research on anything or I would be drummed out of academia. I do think, however, that maybe the poor should be given a rest from research. In reading Hersey's (1968) account of a shooting by the police during the 1967 Detroit fighting I found, as I suspect many of my colleagues would find, that the lives of the young, black men were relatively familiar. The strange and, thereby, "dangerous" people were the three policemen and the National Guard warrant officer. If we need more research, maybe it should be on the U.S. middle class. Who are they—or maybe, who are we?

by DAVID MATZA

*Berkeley, Calif., U.S.A. 24 VII 68*

In *Culture and Poverty*, Valentine develops a perspective on the phenomenon of poverty. His view differs sharply from that of most writers, and thus the main part of the volume is devoted to an assault on the literature. Being a minor exemplar of the perspective criticized by Valentine, I suppose I ought to provide a defense and counter-attack. I intend to. But how defend a perspective against so wild a misreading; how attack a writer so steeped in unreality?

Valentine purports to an anthropological perspective. Mainly, this means he embraces the idea of cultural relativism with an avidity professors find refreshing when manifested by bright, suburban sophomores. Additionally, he seems to conceive himself a (C. W.) Millsian.

Mainly, this means he proclaims empathy with the poor and a concern for solutions. Morally armed with such admirable postures, Valentine considers the question of poverty. Throughout, he seems guided by the premise that virtually everyone who has written on the subject is an enemy of the poor, misled by ethnocentric judgments, ordinary bigotry, or (Lord spare us!) plain old middle-class bias. To the list of recent writers considered by Valentine—all of whom agree that life among the poor generally speaking stinks—could be added such notable enemies of the working class as Engels, Marx, DuBois, and Bukharin. All have made the same mistake. Unaware, perhaps, of the revolutionary discoveries in cultural anthropology, writers from E. Franklin Frazier to Oscar Lewis have continued to conceive the poor as if in many ways they shared the general presumptions of American life—as if they actually were affected by some of the beliefs and aspirations existing all around them. Because of that basic misunderstanding, recent writers harbor a reactionary tendency, according to Valentine. Seeing only the negative side of being poor, they are led to hold the poor responsible for their own conditions.

I will come to the issue of perspective in a moment, but, first, I want to consider the simpler question: whether stressing the negative side of poverty implies holding the poor responsible for their condition. I would have thought such an association self-evidently absurd, but apparently it is not. Valentine's zeal in locating the reactionary tendency to hold the poor responsible is great. Thus, even when a writer tries to convey the view that property and its agencies—and not the poor—produce the oppressive conditions of poverty, Valentine can still find a way to glimpse reaction. He says (p. 47): Matza's historical interpretations clearly imply that masses of poor people were pauperized by the economic and political behavior of the non-poor. Yet he gives no hint that the privileged strata of today's society bear any responsibility for relieving the plight of the poor.

I must confess that after reading those two sentences, I felt a sudden sympathy with residents of mental institutions. Trapped, looped, I could see that there was no way of avoiding a self-assured accusation of error, sin, or worse. I am confident that most of the other authors considered by Valentine will have much the same feeling. Only Frazier—who is looped two or three times—will escape it, but that is because he is dead.

As it happens, my interpretation of pauperization does not just "imply" that the main agency for its foul achievement is what Valentine rather blandly calls the "non-poor." That pauperization is the work of property and the state is explicitly

a main point of the essay. The thesis is hardly novel—certainly not since Marx. Many writers—including most of those assaulted by Valentine—have held that the demoralization of being poor is created and produced by the oppressive weight of historical circumstance. Even those who have too greatly stressed the "culture" of poverty see it as resulting from an oppressive set of historical circumstances. More pertinent, however, than the genuine issue of whether a "culture" may reify the product of historical circumstance is the more immediate question: if one holds privilege responsible for creating the condition of poverty, should one address requests and plans for "relief" to it? I happen to think not—unless, of course, it's a dole Valentine is after. For genuine relief, something a bit more forceful is generally required—as the history of worker's organizations surely testifies.

It is for that reason that Valentine's recommendations for massive employment opportunities with compensatory training and hiring seem largely beside the point, worthy as they may be. To entertain the expectation that the current military and political economy in America will permit even the watered-down version of the A. Philip Randolph program promulgated by Valentine seems to me misleading. The meaningful question is not whether anyone's plan is intelligent, rational, or feasible, but, instead, whether black rebellion will become organized, whether the alliance between students and blacks can ever materialize, and, most of all, whether organized labor can conceivably be shaken from its established lethargy to ally with an unemployed underclass and return to its occasional militancy. If these things, or something like them, should happen, a program will be devised. If not, privilege will not be responsive—however "responsible" it may be. Instead of providing genuine relief, it will continue in its current response; the good citizens will shriek "law and order," further arm their police, and somnambulistically await a summer in which America's world mission of crushing revolution is finally brought home.

Finally, as to the perspective on poverty, the basic point at issue: here too, I am afraid, Valentine's radicalism and relativism prove disappointing. Wishing ardently to avoid giving offense to the poor, he falls heir to a charming infantilism. For him, despite the oppression of historic circumstance—for which we are to hold the "non-poor" responsible—the organization of social life among the poor remains largely undaunted and intact. Far from seeing the poor as stupefied or disorganized until they have

mobilized and achieved consciousness—the classic view of writers since Marx—Valentine follows the romantic tradition in which the poor are merely different in their customs and arrangements. Family life is not threatened, despite its shaky survival, but simply pursued in a different and equally laudable way. Solidarity and organization are not thwarted by the surroundings, but simply defined differently. Being poor does not lead to a degradation and debasement of the potentialities of human personality; this is just something that is wrongly construed in that way by ethnocentric outsiders. One wonders, in light of such a perspective, why black Americans desperately risk their lives putting the torch to a ghetto that represents their "way of life." Is it perhaps, because—like Orientals—they place a different value on life than Caucasians; or is it a form of potlatch?

Parts of Valentine's unmitigated relativism read like a cruel joke. Perhaps the presentation of one glaring example is the best way to conclude. Valentine wishes to contrast the sweet fruits of relativism with the sour, judgmental conclusions of someone like Oscar Lewis. To do this, he frames some of Lewis' allegations in propositional form and suggests alternative formulations. Thus, for instance, "Proposition 1a" (p. 130) represents Lewis' perspective:

Patterned lack of participation in important aspects of the wider society is an internally perpetuated characteristic of the culture of the poor.

Valentine's "Alternative 1a" is designed to rescue the poor from their judgmental detractors and to straighten the anthropological account. It releases the poor from a responsibility Lewis hardly assigned them and, then, goes on to the more important matter of transforming conditions that are worse into those that are different:

Socioeconomically disadvantaged groups show strikingly differential participation in various specific institutional areas of the wider society; these contrasting patterns are imposed and perpetuated externally through institutional structures and processes, particularly recruitment avenues that are beyond local control.

So far, so good—but now comes the punch line. What are the specific institutional areas in which the poor are high and low participants? Valentine tells us:

High participation: police-courts-prison complex, armed services, welfare system, primary public education. Low participation: stable employment, property ownership, political parties, labor unions, higher education.

When Anatole France made a similar point about a different sort of equality

between rich and poor, his intention was to occasion bitter laughter. That remains my reaction to the cultural equality less humorously conjured by Charles Valentine.

by MARGARET MEAD

*New York, N.Y., U.S.A. 25 VII 68*

This polemical review of a small part of the work that has been done on poverty may be useful in focusing anthropologists' attention on the significance of work among the poor of industrializing and industrialized countries. The arguments it advances, however, are confusing. Whether or not the phrase "the culture of poverty" advanced by Oscar Lewis was as wise a choice as some such phrase as "the poverty version of modern cultures" might have been is open to argument. But Oscar Lewis has never made the mistakes about culture which have informed the work of sociologists and social psychologists, who have treated cultural character as the main intractable factor in the improvement of the condition of the poor. Almost alone, Oscar Lewis has focused attention upon some of the recurrent cultural features of the state of poverty within national cultures, on the basis of intensive ethnological methods in which the familial approach was used as method of exposition and not as a sole method of research.

Valentine's discussion of the importance of seeing culture as a holistic phenomenon does not really deal with the problem of cross-cultural similarities in subcultures, part-cultures, or versions of national cultures which can be attributed to similar conditions, e.g., fishing, mining, trading as strangers, hereditary aristocracy, etc. Lewis has merely extended this type of cross-cultural comparison to include a special condition, endemic in industrial societies and possibly most acute in capitalistic societies. On the basis of present imperfect data, it may well be suggested that in addition to changes in the wider socioeconomic environment through city planning, education, and employment, other forms of change—revolutionary zeal, sect membership, and movements of self-help—may serve to interrupt the cycle which traps generation after generation within a condition of despair. Anthropologists should certainly be involved in analyzing the poverty version of particular cultures, and should be ready to criticize the lack of perspective involved, for example, in blaming poverty on the state of the family, or in sociopolitical measures which ask Americans to declare themselves as members of "the poor" in order to vote on economic questions.

Valentine's plea for participatory research suffers from a false premise. The anthropologist who lives with a primitive

people adds his respect for their way of life to that of the people he studies. The poverty version of a modern culture contains many elements which require repudiation rather than respect; shared repudiation becomes inevitably partisan and requires involvement, an application of anthropology rather than pure research. Where primitive people's dignity is enhanced by objective research, "the poor" often feel further demeaned.

by WALTER B. MILLER

*Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A. 25 VII 68*

*Culture and Poverty* is a passionate missionary tract by a true believer engaged in the classic exercise of attacking heresy and defending orthodoxy. Valentine blunders into a nest of long-debated issues with the breathless innocence and arrogant self-righteousness of the new convert. As a contribution to knowledge or clarification of conceptual issues respecting the circumstances of American low-skilled laboring populations, this essay is of negligible value; as a textbook example of what I have elsewhere called "The ideology of The Poverty Movement of the 1960's" (Miller 1968), it provides much of value to the historian of cult movements. Currently fashionable slogans of The Movement ("The Poor," "Relative Deprivation," "The Black Ghetto," "The Socially Disadvantaged," "Injustice," "Powerlessness") prescribe the thrust of the essay. It is suffused with inconsistency and contradiction; Valentine repeatedly violates the principles he articulates in early sections; one gains the impression of a troubled man desperately seeking affirmation of the true faith. As one consequence of the fact that the organization of this work is dictated by ideological dogma rather than concern for conceptual adequacy, a series of fundamental issues with respect to low-status populations and their relation to the rest of society are never identified or isolated, let alone clarified. This review will be able to select only a few of these and discuss them very briefly.

*Definition of the population at issue.* Valentine follows orthodox Movement practice in using "The Poor" as his primary term of reference. A critical deficiency which renders much of his discussion meaningless is his failure to define with any precision the sector of the population referred to (in contrast, for example, with his careful attention to the definition of "culture"). "The Poor" is used as a code word for at least three entities: (1) all Americans with annual incomes below variously designated "poverty-lines"; (2) the urban portion thereof; (3) the Negro portion thereof. These code-referents of the term shift continually according to different pur-

poses and in different contexts. This elasticity of definition contributes directly to the impossible confusion between race and class which pervades this essay; in some contexts "The Poor" is exactly equivalent to "The Black Masses"; in others it refers to all low-income persons. Valentine's argument ignores the central fact, which he cites in passing at one point, that the bulk of the "low-income" population is white (65% to 85%, depending on income definitions and localities). This is because the Movement's "explanation" of the conditions of low-status populations (see below) is geared almost exclusively to low-status blacks, failing badly to "account for" the circumstances of the white majority.

*Defining characteristics of low-status populations.* A standard anthropological device for defining a population is the designation of a set of its major characteristics. In conformity with the definitional evasiveness of The Movement, Valentine chooses instead to put the burden of definition on a single characteristic, "poverty," which one would then expect to be defined precisely and in detail. Instead, he offers the incredible definition "poverty is a condition of being in want of something that is needed, desired, or generally recognized as having value." Alas for humanity; we are all impoverished. Having thus rendered his definition virtually useless by its universal applicability, Valentine administers the coup de grâce by adding "the essence of poverty is inequality . . . the basic meaning of poverty is relative deprivation." The Movement's use of "inequality" as a device for substituting ideology for explanation is discussed below, and the deficiencies of "relative deprivation" as a central justifying concept of The Movement in Miller (1963).

*Common versus differentiated societal standards.* The complex issue of the degree of commonality and differentiation in what is loosely called the "value system" of the United States has been treated in an extensive literature, which Valentine ignores. Few serious scholars would dispute the proposition that in important respects all Americans share similar standards, ideals, and concerns, and that in important respects various subsectors (men-women; adolescents-aged) differ significantly both in the character of their standards and concerns and the weightings accorded similar concerns (e.g., mating activity). As an obedient follower of The Movement, Valentine takes as an axiom the simplistic and partisan position that all Americans—old and young, rich and poor, southern rural whites and northern urban blacks—share common national values. The obvious fact that people at different social status levels customarily manifest different forms of behavior is accommodated by the Move-

ment tenet that "The Poor" are impeded by "external constraints" or "situational stresses" from actualizing their commonly held ideals. This follows from the ritualized causal formula of The Movement—"The Poor are In Poverty because they are Deprived by The Power Structure"—a classic thesis of conspiratorial exclusionism (see Miller 1968). Of central relevance here is the position taken by The Movement with respect to the universal phenomenon of discrepancy between ideal and practice. When expressed sentiment (adolescent expresses desire to be doctor) conflicts with observed practice (same adolescent leaves school at 16), the incentives underlying the expression of the sentiment are granted the status of reality and those underlying the practice conceived as "restraints" imposed by malign external forces.

*Explanational models.* As an evangelical tract, it is not the purpose of this work to provide a well-conceived explanation for the circumstances of low-status populations, nor even to clarify divergent formulations, but rather to attribute blame and blamelessness, villainy and virtue. This approach, discussed elsewhere as the "blame frame of reference," dictates the organization of the essay. First, hopeless heretics beyond salvation must be immolated (Moynihan, Glazer); next, near-believers must be disabused of their remaining errors as a condition of salvation (Clark, Gladwin). This devils-angels dichotomy reflects and derives from a model whereby The Movement portrays the nation as divided into two irreconcilable camps—poor and non-poor; black and white; exploited and exploiter. The Movement derives the circumstances of low-status populations from the direct operation of a single and simple process—injustice. "Injustice" in Movement parlance means the deliberate and concerted exclusion and exploitation of The Poor by a bigoted and defensively self-protective Power Structure. Explanations which take as a starting point the division of labor in society, which conceive the functioning of large complex societies as involving multiple occupational classes wherein essential and complementary roles are played by those at both higher and lower skill levels, and which derive social status differentiation from the operating requirement of large social systems, are anathema. The merest suggestion that low-skilled laborers might be performing a useful or valuable social role is perceived as a justification of continued exploitation of The Disadvantaged by The Power Structure.

*Influence of values.* Valentine follows traditional anthropological practice in using the accusation of "ethnocentrism" (in the form "influenced by middle-class values") to bludgeon the evil. His own

formulations, however, are profoundly influenced by a source of bias far more telling—the highly distinctive, cult-like political philosophy of The Poverty Movement. Its special slogans are everywhere in evidence ("powerlessness of the poor"; "relative deprivation"; "Black Power for the black masses"), and its rigid tenets strait-jacket the entire formulation. Valentine bitterly impugns the validity of formulations influenced by class-derived values at the same time as he grants unlimited sovereignty to politically derived values. But even more. As is so often the case, the zealot is abundantly guilty of precisely the sins for which he castigates the evil. Valentine's essay teems with judgments based on middle-class values. He calls mother-father child-rearing arrangements "conventional" and female-based arrangements "unconventional" (whose conventions?). The absence of middle-class forms is "deprivation." His reform program revives the classic proposal for middle-classifying the "disadvantaged" by "revitalizing" and "reinvigorating" them by "sweeping away subcultural patterns which are merely static adjustments to deprivation." As in a projective test, Valentine perceives formally neutral characterizations as "pejorative" by projecting on them his own subjectively experienced contempt for lower-class life. Furthermore, he exhibits a blatant hostility to the middle class, calling it "ruthless" and "authoritarian" and making withering allusions to selfish class interests and "comfortable lives." The rules for being a non-value-laden anthropologist would thus appear to be: (1) attempt to conceal one's negative evaluations with respect to the lower class; (2) flaunt one's negative evaluations with respect to the middle class; (3) use positive and negative evaluations derived from one's political philosophy as the principal basis of theoretical formulation.

Lest I be suspected of simulating detachment with respect to *Culture and Poverty*, let me hasten to register a few of the customary complaints of the misused and underused author. A series of papers I wrote between 1957 and 1959, based on field research in an urban lower-class community, played a major role in setting the terms of discourse for the "new" concern with low-status populations of the 1960's. Major usages and concepts of these papers (e.g., "focal concern"; "female-based household") were adopted directly by later writers (e.g., Gans 1962) and influenced others (e.g., Rodman 1963; Rainwater 1966). Of these papers (three are cited in full in Liebow 1967), Valentine apparently did not read a single one in its entirety. Instead, he based his characterizations of my findings

on an edited excerpt from a single paper published in a collection (Ferman *et al.* 1965; Valentine's citations refer confusedly sometimes to the original and sometimes to the excerpt). Particularly noteworthy is his failure to utilize my 1959 paper, which articulates an explicitly anthropological perspective with respect to issues such as the influence of class-derived bias (p. 232), inadequacies of the "disorganization-pathology" frame of reference (p. 224), subtypes of, and differentiation among, low-status populations (p. 225; also in Miller 1958), the "adaptive" nature of lower-class practices (p. 232), and other issues discussed by Valentine either without credit or by attributing to me a position opposite to the one appearing in print.

It is refreshing to find my work categorized under "the pejorative tradition" after ten years of being criticized on precisely the opposite grounds—as an apology for and defense of the lower class, as inaccurately representing the subculture of low-skilled laboring populations as no less "organized" and no less "healthy" than that of middle-class populations and as performing a useful and important social function. Valentine's bizarre perception can, however, be understood as a manifestation of what may be called "reverse valuation"—a phenomenon whereby a relatively neutral or non-partisan formulation is perceived simultaneously by partisans at opposite extremes as representing a position opposite to their own. This perception, a sure mark of the extremist, is manifested by Valentine in classic form.

With respect to the issue of the social-class distribution of violative behavior, Valentine dredges up two worn clichés familiar to all criminologists. The overwhelming body of empirical evidence showing striking differences between higher- and lower-status populations in the volume of officially recorded crime is explained away by two speculative theories—the "white-collar crime" argument (higher-status people are just as criminal, but their crime takes forms less likely to be acted on) and the "hidden delinquency" or "influence" argument (higher-status people commit just as many crimes, but they control sources of influence which keep them from appearing in official records). Both these propositions have considerable surface plausibility; the trouble is that they are unsupported by empirical evidence. On the basis of over ten years of intensive empirical research in crime and delinquency utilizing a wide range of indexes to violative behavior (field-recorded offenses [Miller 1962, 1966], police-radio-reported offenses, police records, court records) I have been unable to discover any evi-

dence which would significantly weaken the conclusion that lower-status populations do in fact engage in more crime, and in more serious crime, than higher-status populations. It is particularly in areas like this that Valentine's lack of experience in empirical research in the United States appears as so glaring a defect, although it is abundantly obvious throughout the essay that his formulations are products of highly selective library research by an ardent partisan and not those of extended anthropological field study.

The conclusion that Valentine is not to be trusted is evidenced in a specific instance in his utilization of my writing for purposes of rebuttal. In forwarding the "common-values" argument—that differences among U.S. social status levels simply reflect different formal manifestations of the same values—Valentine (p. 135) quotes a passage from my 1958 paper. The original reads:

The [focal concerns] cited here, while by no means confined to the lower classes, represent a distinctive patterning of concerns which differs significantly, both in rank order and weighting, from that of American middle class culture.

In quoting this sentence Valentine expunges the phrase "while by no means confined to the American lower classes," replaces it with dots, and proceeds to refute the statement by arguing that these concerns are by no means confined to the American lower classes. This is simple dishonesty. I do not know how frequently Valentine used this trick in the case of other authors, but even one instance is enough to cast into serious doubt the scholarship of the entire work.

A final comment: The circumstances of low-status populations in the United States and related conceptual issues of class, subculture, race, and policy are currently of critical national importance. These issues are enormously complex and difficult, and sophisticated formulations require the very best efforts of the best anthropological minds. It is a pity that they must be treated in so angry an atmosphere, with acrimony breeding acrimony and partisan polemics breeding opposing polemics. Although anthropologists have struggled for decades with the issue of values and knowledge, they have been singularly unsuccessful in achieving any substantial degree of balance or objectivity in these areas—I no less than others, here no less than elsewhere. Someday perhaps the academic dialogue will be conducted in a calmer atmosphere with maximum possible objectivity an explicit aim. That time is not now. The reason, in my view, is that the impulse behind formulations in this area springs from deep-seated political philosophies which arise from

the same source as the impulse to anthropological endeavor itself. Anthropology will be unable to produce sound and balanced formulations in this area until it has developed non-partisan perspectives for viewing political and social processes.

by DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN

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Valentine attacks me rather extensively in his book *Culture and Poverty*. This is never a pleasant experience, but it need not always be an unsettling one. As a political scientist, knowing my own reading habits, I have little fear that any great number of my colleagues will come upon his criticism. As a sometime political activist in the sense of a politically appointed government official, I have taken my share of abuse in that arena, and have seen such far better men treated so much more harshly as to think it no more than an unavoidable occupational risk. Them what gets the apple gets the worm, goes the Negro saying.

Something else does worry me, however, and that is the matter of misrepresentation. Valentine does not meet the standards of accurate presentation of facts that all persons associated with universities can and do expect of all other such persons. In his own critique of the book, Walter B. Miller charges Valentine with "simple dishonesty." I should imagine that is one of the very few times in Miller's career that he has ever had occasion to make such a charge. I have nothing quite so serious to raise, but misrepresentation is grave enough. Even so, I would not write as I do save for two facts. The first is that *Culture and Poverty* is published by the University of Chicago Press, which would warrant anyone's assuming that its data are correct. The second is that this is not my first encounter with Valentine's work, and I begin to fear there may be a pattern to his aberrations.

In the July–August 1968 issue of *Transaction*, I was surprised to find the following statement attributed to Valentine (Whitten and Szwed 1968: 56):

The built-in bias of ethnography may lead anthropologists (and others) to attribute certain features to Negro part-societies without adequately exploring the possible occurrence of the same culture patterns in non-Negro communities. Perhaps the most striking movement in this direction is the notion of the "mother-centered family" as an exclusively Negro phenomenon. Such prejudicial biases have recently reached major policy levels, as evidenced by the Moynihan Report.

This apparently was given at a symposium growing out of the 1966 American Anthropological Association meetings, at which 12 anthropologists considered post-1941 studies of New World Negroes, with

Charles A. Valentine invited to make a critique of the papers. The problem is that the view ascribed to me is precisely the opposite of that which I hold. I happen to believe, rightly or wrongly, that the present Negro experience in the cities is largely a replication of the experience of other peasant groups that preceded them there. I stated this position first in a well-attended lecture at the University of Chicago in the Spring of 1966, when I tried to draw parallels between the experience of the Irish in 19th-century New York and that of the Negroes in the 20th century in the same city.

I also read in this new book, with respect to the policy paper on the Negro family prepared in the Department of Labor in the early months of 1965, and President Johnson's speech at Howard University in June, 1965, that "neither this document, nor the resultant Presidential speech, contained any proposal for a concrete program of action to implement the declared objectives." Not until 1967, writes Valentine, did I "finally" come up with any plan to strengthen the family, namely a family allowance, which seems weak tea indeed to him.

This is really quite startling. It is a matter of record that what I have been pleading for, within and without the government, over the past five years has been a system of guaranteed full employment. This concept was first specifically broached as a policy proposal by the Presidential Commission on Automation and Technology appointed in August, 1963, and "housed" in the Department of Labor. (I was Assistant Secretary of Labor for Policy Planning and Research at the time.) I raised the issue of family stability in the first place, not to discuss any question of culture or poverty, on which I had few strong views, but primarily to show the correlations between employment and these other, more general, social conditions. I have published these correlations in professional journals and endlessly reaffirmed my probably exaggerated faith in full employment. The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders quotes me to this effect, in a passage taken from an article "Employment, Income, and the Ordeal of the Negro Family" (Moynihan 1965):

The principal measure of progress toward equality will be that of employment. It is the primary source of individual or group identity. In America what you do is what you are: to do nothing is to be nothing; to do little is to be little. The equations are implacable and blunt, and ruthlessly public.

For the Negro American it is already, and will continue to be, the master problem. It is the measure of white bona fides. It is the measure of Negro competence, and also of

the competence of American society. Most importantly, the linkage between problems of employment and the range of social pathology that afflicts the Negro community is unmistakable. Employment not only controls the present for the Negro American but, in a most profound way, it is creating the future as well.

In their book *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy*, to which Valentine refers, Rainwater and Yancey (1967) state the reasons no policy recommendations were included in the *Negro Family* report itself and specifically discuss the recommendations which *did* accompany the document to the White House (where, in any event, the Department's views were already known all too well). It simply is not good enough to confine me to the belated advocacy of a family allowance. It misrepresents the facts, to what purpose I cannot imagine.

Valentine accuses Walter Miller of a pejorative attitude toward the lower classes—poor Miller, who has suffered for a decade from the repeated charge of heartless indifference to suffering because of his insouciant insistence that maybe

those folk aren't suffering at all, maybe they know something about life that college professors do not. Bordua (1961) has put the matter in a fairminded way that I would think anyone could agree with:

Miller seems so concerned that the features of lower class culture, especially the female-based household, not be seen as the disorganization of the more conventional system or as signs of social pathology that he seems to overdo it rather drastically.

I will be blunt. I take it Valentine is a white middle-class academic. Has his desire to identify with black suffering led him to distort the work of others? I sincerely hope not, but I fear it may be so, and this is a serious matter.

A final point on rhetoric: Valentine quotes Ralph Ellison citing me and Glazer, among others, as "new apologists for segregation," and being quite critical of the *Negro Family* report. Yet Ellison, in the same article—same paragraph—in which he denounced the *Commentary* writers, spoke of the Howard University

speech, which Godwin and I wrote, in quite different terms:

[President Johnson] is far ahead of most of the intellectuals—especially those Northern liberals who have become, in the name of the highest motives, the new apologists for segregation. Some of the *Commentary* writers, for instance. Let's put it this way. President Johnson's speech at Howard University spelled out the meaning of full integration for Negroes in a way that no one, no President, not Lincoln nor Roosevelt, no matter how much we love and respected them, has ever done before. There was no hedging in it, no escape clauses.

So you see, life is complicated. *But does Valentine know that?*

A small detail: Valentine speaks of data in the *Negro Family* report showing the decline of "Negro family income in relation to white income during the years in question." My reference, so stated, was to *non-white* family income. A specifically Negro series only began in 1964. It has so far been one to three points lower than the non-white figure (although of late both have been rising).

## Reply

by CHARLES A. VALENTINE

First, let me briefly express my appreciation of those critics who understood my book and took it seriously enough to make constructive suggestions for correction or extension of my arguments (Berndt, Boissevain, Bushnell, Carstens, Gladwin, Hannerz, Leacock, Mangin). Thanks to these reviewers, especially, for unintentionally but effectively answering some of the more hostile and destructive commentary by others dealt with below. Here Bushnell's recognition that I emphasize "the creative and adaptive within the lower socioeconomic strata" deserves particular attention from those critics who claim to find a hidden contempt for the poor in my work.

Berndt, Carstens, and others are right to call for further clarification on class, status, and power. An abbreviated response: The essence of poverty is inequality. Classes are the main structural manifestation of inequality with respect to both status and power. The poor are by definition a social stratum at the bottom of the structure. Ethnic stratification is an important part of the problem in the U.S. and other European-dominated plural societies; yet it is not the whole story, if only because of the commonly neglected fact that most poor people in the U.S. are white. Internal stratification within poor communities is also important. I hope to write more

about all this soon on the basis of current research (Valentine and Valentine 1969a, b).

Appreciation to Boissevain and Carstens for specifying the relationship between my plan for dealing with poverty and the rest of the book, a relationship missed by others. More is said about this in responses to Lewis and Matza below.

Special thanks to Gladwin for being more gentle to me than I was to him, and for an excellent summary of major issues in the book. As for his suggestion that I have gone "too far" on Moynihan: my strictures are comments on the writings quoted and cited; I go "too far" only if that evidence does not support the commentary; evidence and commentary are placed together so that the reader may judge for himself. The "passing mention" of Hylan Lewis and Rainwater was intended as positive recognition of useful contributions by these writers; I give credit to both as sources of some of my own ideas and each is mentioned in several places in the book. Gladwin, Hannerz, and others are right that the literature on delinquency should be covered if ever the book is expanded.

Hannerz and Mangin are most helpful in their emphasis on the crucial importance of the racial factor in differential degrees of victimization by poverty, the suggestion of a bicultural model for ethnic groups among the poor, the need to focus study on structural and cultural pluralism, and the related significance of ethnic nationalism as a probable source of

powerful revitalization movements. Today I would emphasize all these considerations more than I did in the book.

Thanks also to Leacock for several pertinent additions: the useful point that poverty-culture concepts tend to make moderate or relative differences into absolute opposites, relevant experience in educational research (consistent with some current findings of my own), and the final point that culture-of-poverty formulations are weakened by lacking historical orientation.

Turning now to the more negative critics (Kochar, Lewis, Matza, Mead, Miller, Moynihan), I am sorry that Kochar doesn't like my ideological orientation. I might not like his either, if I made the necessary effort to identify it, but at least I am candid about mine. Yes, my book is a "dialectical argument." No, the notion of synthesis is not an afterthought. Presentation of a synthesis makes explicit the probability that empirical tests will confirm some propositions from one side of the dialectical opposition and others from the other side. This by no means implies that the author of the synthesis "accepts the very premises of Model 1." Kochar's argument seems to blur the distinction between abstract disputation and empirical testing. What he chooses to call "presumptions" or "presumed implications" in my analysis of Lewis' work are based directly upon Lewis' own words quoted at length. We may disagree about the meaning of Lewis' formu-

lations, but if we are to have a meaningful discussion the disagreement must be more concrete. Some of Kochar's points, such as Lewis' own limiting remarks about the distribution of poverty culture, are dealt with at length in my book. I do agree with Kochar that the poverty culture idea is a static model, and I regret that I did not give more attention to this point in my book. I also appreciate his discussion of varying degrees of integration of the poor within complex societies. His succinct indication of the many levels and dimensions of sub-cultural variation in India is both pertinent and sobering for those of us who take seriously the complexity of differentiation in contemporary societies.

Perhaps the basic difficulty between Oscar Lewis and myself is a failure of communication. I do not question his motives; rather, I declare my sympathy and respect for his intentions; yet he accuses me of insincerity and misrepresentation. I thought I was giving the people in Lewis' books more credit for their capacities and greater empathy with their situation than he did; yet what he finds "most disappointing" in my work is a "failure to respond with sympathy and warmth." I intended my analysis of his work to convey respect as well as criticism; this obviously did not get through to Lewis. Wherever I am responsible for these misunderstandings I apologize; I hope the communication failure will end here.

Lewis' remark that I have done "no firsthand, systematic research among the poor" directly contradicts the facts presented in my Preface and documented in the Bibliography. Characterizing my thoughts as "opposed to revolutionary solutions" is completely inconsistent with my discussion of Models 2 and 3 (pp. 142-47) as well as the Postscript, the latter being much more than a scheme for "compensatory hiring." Nor was my proposal "borrowed" from anywhere (see reply to Matza below).

On culture and subculture, the major issue is that, regardless of terminology, Lewis often writes about the subject as if he had a full culture in mind. This begins with his definition, "a culture in the traditional anthropological sense" (quoted more fully on p. 129), and continues throughout much theoretical discussion. Whether or not people are "totally isolated from... the larger society" is not the issue. Lewis says that "disengagement," "non-integration," "is a crucial element in the culture of poverty." This is what I question. We also disagree about "lack of fit." Lack of fit with the facts is *exactly* what makes a model unsatisfactory. "Perfect fit" is not the issue. The point is that Lewis' model, like all others, can be improved by posing alternatives and testing them empirically.

This is the essence of what my book suggests on this topic.

The quotation from Lewis' new book on *Slum Culture* is certainly welcome. As he knows, of course, this was not available when I was writing. (I have since commented on it [Valentine 1968].) In any case, it does not change the essentials of the debate between us. If one has "no intention of equating an entire slum settlement" with a definite (sub)cultural design, why call it "slum culture"? If one does not believe certain (sub)cultural patterns typify most populations living in poverty, why use the phrase "culture of poverty"? A major question remains unanswered: How representative—and of what—are Lewis' family studies? If the presentation of data in these volumes did not have as the "primary objective... to illustrate the model," then what was the purpose? The very labels with which the books are titled or subtitled seem to me to contradict their author's disclaimers.

Lewis still sees no contradiction between his model and his description of La Esmeralda. His rebuttal on this point rests on "sense of community," "esprit de corps," and "sense of territoriality." This does not clear up the contradiction between "minimum of organization" in the model and the many structural or institutional features in the descriptive data. He feels I have distorted his position by "omitting" his discussion of causes, functions, and conditions for the disappearance of poverty. He should reread my book (especially pp. 67-77). I am confident he will find no omission and no distortion. As for his distinction between poverty and poverty culture, this is considered at more than one place in my book. It was not entirely clear earlier, and his present addition does not seem to me to clarify it any further.

On the issue of priorities for policy, I am most happy to have Lewis' clear, definite statement that doing away with poverty as such is more urgent than attacking the culture of the poor. I cannot agree, however, that my contention about his theory guiding the war on poverty is "naïve and absurd." In a forthcoming publication (Valentine 1969) this thesis is further developed and documented, using sources ranging from the direct link of Harrington's work (1962) to the insightful commentary of Gladwin (1967) and Rodman (1968). My point is not that there is any "special power of social science in our society," but rather that the idea of a poverty culture appealed to many powerful people who appropriated and developed it for their own purposes, using it to justify a series of pernicious policies. Bluntly stated, Lewis' ideas have been used for purposes which have nothing in common with his aims, particularly as

he now states them. Obviously this happens to many of us and could happen to anyone, but we cannot evade some measure of responsibility for what others do with ideas we have made public property.

As for the failure of the war on poverty, my point is that anti-poverty programs based on widely current versions of the culture of poverty were bound to fail even without such immense additional handicaps as the irresponsibilities of the President and Congress, including the Viet Nam war. The basic failure was not the scale of the effort but rather the conceptions that underlay it, the nature of the resulting programs, and probably the real intentions of the most significant decision-makers. Thus Lewis' statement that "the anti-poverty program was correctly directed at economic poverty and not at the subculture of poverty" seems to me to fly in the face of the facts (cf., e.g., Gladwin 1967, Rodman 1968).

Lewis ascribes to me a "belief that [urban ethnography will] almost automatically push ahead the war against poverty." I don't believe this, nor did I say anything like it. He is quite right that generalizations in some ethnographies are "no more than good guesses based upon the reports of a few informants." If he read my sections on methodology, however, he knows that I am not the least bit interested in that kind of ethnography. I am glad we now agree on the need for and feasibility of community-oriented urban ethnography. Nevertheless, my remarks about his earlier stand on this issue are not a false charge. He will remember that he wrote: "city dwellers cannot be studied as members of little communities" (Lewis 1959:17, quoted in my book, p. 49).

Lewis accuses me of "misrepresentation" and casts doubt on my "sincerity and reliability" because I don't give as much attention as he would like to all of his works, especially early ones. Actually I do cite much of his earlier work and comment on contrasts with later books. Nevertheless, my main concern is obviously with his recent works on the subculture of poverty. Here I think my strictures hold good. I claim no more than this, either here or in my book.

I am sorry that Lewis seems to have misunderstood me again as to my position on the alleged self-perpetuating quality of a poverty culture. I have said before and now repeat that this hypothesis must be examined and tested, not just proclaimed. When Lewis now says that the "self-perpetuating factors are relatively minor and unimportant compared to the basic structure of the larger society," I am glad we are closer to agreement than we were before. Again I hope Lewis will join me in ending our

misunderstandings. If so, debate can prosper constructively.

My next critic, Matza, says writers from Frazier to Lewis "conceive the poor as if in many ways they shared the general presumptions of American life." On the contrary, this is one of the more important propositions about poor people which the relevant authors most often neglect, minimize, or deny. Much of my book is devoted to documenting and exploring this very point. Matza seems to misunderstand grossly both the book and the literature it criticizes.

Nowhere in my book is there anything resembling Matza's statement that "stressing the negative side of poverty implies holding the poor responsible for their condition." I do say that over-emphasizing negative qualities of poor *people* often goes with blaming poverty on the poor—a quite different point. In either case, however, when the paired orientations appear together the combination has been constructed by individual thinkers. There is obviously no inherent logical connection between negative views either of poverty or of the poor and any particular belief about causes or responsibility.

Matza is entitled to his preference for such abstractions as "property" and "the state." I am equally entitled to translate these into more concrete terms of reference. I think that "economic and political behavior of the non-poor," though stylistically lackluster, is otherwise not a bad translation. Perhaps Matza's main objection to my translation is that it carries implications of ethical responsibility as distinct from the amoral casualty of his more abstract formulations. This objection has no force for me, because I do not pretend to be a value-free scholar. I believe that value-free social science is a myth.

Nothing in my book should convey the impression mentioned by Matza that I harbor an "expectation" that "relief" will be freely or easily granted by holders of power and privilege. That is why my several discussions of solutions are coupled with the contention that a radical and powerful social movement, launched by the poor themselves, will be necessary to eradicate poverty. The plan I proposed was intended to make available one utopian but concrete model of necessary changes. This was offered as an aid in the ongoing process of thinking through what kind of society should be built if a revolutionary social movement should emerge successfully. The proposal was deliberately designed to be an extension of already current reformist ideas, going beyond available plans but growing out of widespread notions. Today, only a few months after publication of the book, I would be inclined to revise that proposal in a more radical

direction. It is an insulting travesty, however, to describe it as a "watered-down version of the A. Philip Randolph program." The principal contrast with the Randolph Freedom Budget is that my proposal demands a significant transfer of power to poor people. Because this is an inherently revolutionary demand, it may well require changes that cannot be accommodated within the existing political structure and processes of our society.

Matza judges me guilty of "romanticism" and "infantilism" with respect to the poor. Assuming misunderstanding rather than deliberate distortion, I ask the critic to read the book carefully and seriously. My book says nothing to the effect that the poor are "not threatened" or "not thwarted." I do feel, even more strongly today after further experience with poor people, that "being poor is not a degradation and debasement of the potentialities of human personality." Perhaps this is the nub of the disagreement. In contrast with some of my critics, I believe the poor have shown that their potentialities (and their achievements) are very great—precisely because they are not debased in spite of all oppression. As for black Americans taking great risks to burn down ghettos, I believe they do this precisely because the ghetto does *not* "represent their way of life." What they are burning down was imposed on them by external forces. More and more of them are declaring their total resistance to this imposed structure by risking their own destruction in trying to destroy what they experience as oppression.

Mead's statements that Lewis has not fallen into certain mistakes do not automatically make it so. A seriously argued critique commands respect; mere pronouncements, even when they come from deservedly eminent people, should not. My discussion of holism is not, of course, intended to deal with problems of part-societies and subcultures. These problems are dealt with in other parts of my book, and I would have welcomed attention to these sections. This is one of the problem areas in which my own work, as well as that of others, is most noticeably incomplete. It is disappointing that none of the more negative critics chose to respond constructively to the challenge of these problems.

In Mead's final point there is material for a real and important debate, which regrettably cannot be developed at length here. Nevertheless, I must disagree briefly. I have now worked with both "primitive people" overseas and poor people in our own society. As an anthropologist I find that I not only can, but must, feel "respect for their way of life" in both settings. For me, this by no

means rules out "repudiation." I repudiate the oppressive impositions on the poor at home in much the same way (and for much the same reasons) as I repudiate the colonial exploitation that operates through ethnic stratification in New Guinea. Nor does this mean that one must give positive valuation to all patterns that might have an internal origin within urban ghettos—any more than an ethnographer must admire all aspects of traditional Melanesian culture. Moreover, I see no necessary antithesis between "involvement" and "objective" research. On the contrary, the two may often be mutually strengthening, assuming adequate safeguards as to intellectual and ethical integrity.

For these reasons, as well as others, I do not expect poor Americans to feel "demeaned" by my objective research, any more than my friends in New Guinea did. Why does Mead feel that what she has done so well in Melanesia and elsewhere would be impossible in the U.S.? Is it because here she would have to confront the problems of her own society, which are her (my, your) problems? These difficulties may pose significant limitations for ethnography at home; they certainly are real problems to which we should address ourselves. Perhaps Mead will address herself to them elsewhere. It is disappointing that here she did not go beyond the level of unsupported pronouncement. One of the major points of my book is that anthropology has unique potential for overcoming these very problems. Some further thoughts on all this will soon be available in forthcoming publications (e.g. Valentine and Valentine 1969a, b).

Since Miller and Moynihan seem to have worked together on their contributions to this debate, I will deal with them together. Their favorite charge is that I am "not to be trusted" because I am guilty of "dishonesty," "misrepresentation," etc. Most of this self-righteous furor is generated around three dots which I inserted in a quotation to reduce the redundancy of one of Miller's more long-winded sentences. If the critics will reread the quotation, they will see that nothing of any significance is left out. The critics say I should have preserved in the quote a clause about lower-class concerns not being confined to the lower classes; yet the meaning of this clause is perfectly well represented by the lines I *did* quote about lower-class concerns differing "*in rank order and weighting*" from preoccupations of the middle class. Miller and Moynihan say I distorted the original by falsely implying that Miller said the relevant concerns do not exist among middle-class people. This is nonsense. If the difference between the

two class patterns is one of "order and weighting," as the quotation says, then obviously the same concerns are being said to exist in both social contexts. The quotation, ellipsis included, faithfully renders all essentials of the original. Beyond this, Miller and Moynihan completely miss the point of my critique on this topic, but space is not available to re-explain it here. With respect to the charge of misrepresentation, however, what might possibly be misunderstanding by Miller becomes a mere smear when it is repeated without substantiation by Moynihan.

The same charge is revived by Moynihan, irrelevantly, in his references to some comments of mine which were paraphrased in *Trans-action* (Whitten and Szwed 1968). Those comments clearly referred to the Moynihan Report, which was published in 1965. I know nothing of Moynihan's 1966 lecture in which he now says he changed his earlier position. If there is any misrepresentation going on here, it lies in the suggestion that my critique of the Report is dishonest or distorted because Moynihan has since said something different from what he wrote in the Report.

Moynihan resorts to further rhetorical tactics of the same sort in continuing his defense of Miller. This defense is entirely beside the point. Over-all evaluation of Miller's career as a whole is neither relevant nor useful for the purposes of my book. I cite and quote specific propositions offered by Miller in two publications, suggest reasons for skepticism about these points, and put forward alternative hypotheses for empirical test. Neither Miller nor Moynihan answers this critique. Here as elsewhere, their ad hominem arguments are evasions of the intellectual issues raised in my book. Their failure to address the *issues* as such leads me to the conclusion that they have no answers on this level. The charges offered in place of genuine rebuttal are without substance. Though I am willing to be convinced, it is difficult for me to believe that they did not know these charges to be empty when they made them.

The question of how accurately a critic represents the work of others must now be asked of these two reviewers. I leave it to readers to evaluate Miller's attempt to ridicule my book with labels calculated to excite contempt among academics, e.g., "missionary tract . . . of the Poverty Movement," "cult-like political philosophy," etc. I must submit, however, that such name-calling is no substitute for serious disputation.

Miller suggests that I provide no definition of the poor; I discuss this whole matter in the first chapter and give solid reasons for the position taken there. He says that I use "The Poor" as a "code word" for three conceptions that I discuss but explicitly reject. He claims to find in my work an "impossible confusion between race and class," even though much of the book is devoted to documenting that very confusion in the work of others (including his friend Moynihan) and to clarifying various relationships between ethnic grouping and social stratification. This is followed by an allegation that the problem of common versus differentiated values is "ignored" in my book which must be placed against the fact that a large part of the book is focused on precisely that problem. In his section on "explanational models," Miller attributes a series of judgments to me that I cannot find in my book.

Next comes a passage on the alleged "influence of values" on my work. Let me repeat that I do not claim to be a "non-value-laden anthropologist"; indeed, I seriously doubt that there is any such thing. In any case, I have no need to hide my values. I use terminology reflecting middle-class values because these values are dominant in American society as a whole, they permeate the discourse of professors, and reference to them is therefore useful in communicating with social scientists who are often more straightforward, even if not more enlightened, than Miller and Moynihan. To accuse me of "contempt for lower-class life," however, is baseless innuendo. In this connection, I hope Miller reads Bushnell's more constructive criticism of my book, since he apparently cannot, or will not, pay serious attention to the book itself.

Miller says that he feels not only misused but underused as an author. I do not pretend to use his entire output, nor do I see any reason why I should. I cite only that part of his work which I did use. Moreover, I just don't happen to agree with other commentators on Miller's work who are quoted by him and Moynihan; this does not make my perceptions "bizarre." With respect to "violative behavior," I merely offered some alternative hypotheses. I did not say that either Miller's hypothesis or my alternatives had yet been empirically demonstrated. At the same time, however, I do reject the kind of evidence cited in this connection by Miller, and I do so for reasons given at some length in

my book. Miller ends his peroration with a reference to "non-partisan perspectives." I do not believe that there is any genuinely non-partisan perspective on problems that are bringing our society to the brink—perhaps by now over the brink—of civil war. It is my considered judgment that "non-partisans" in this situation are engaged in either a delusion or a fake. A slogan from "the movement" that fits this situation is: There are no innocent bystanders. In contrast to the many "movement" sayings that Miller and Moynihan attribute to me for their own purposes, this is one for which I have considerable sympathy.

Moynihan claims that he found it "startling" to read my statement that he had made no public proposal for a concrete program to deal with poverty until 1967. Far from denying that Moynihan has called for increased employment, I specifically mention this in my book (p. 37). As I said there, the outworn old slogan of "full employment" is not a concrete program. We have no way of knowing what Moynihan may have been "pleading for" within the government since 1963. We do know that no administration from that year forward, not to mention earlier, has been committed to full employment in any practical sense that would be meaningful to poor people. As for his "correlations" between family stability and employment, why doesn't he reply to my critique of his analysis of this problem?

Finally, if Moynihan is so concerned about the distinction between Negro statistics and non-white figures, why did he not title his report "The Non-white Family"? This might have made the racial and cultural absurdity of his whole enterprise sufficiently obvious to render tedious debate unnecessary. It might also have alerted American Indians, Chinese, Japanese, perhaps even Puerto Ricans and Chicanos, who are not overly impressed by census categories, to the dangers of the Moynihan Report that were initially perceived by Afro-Americans and their allies. As the answers to rhetorical questions flow so easily from the queries themselves, it occurs to me that debate might be worthwhile even with Miller and Moynihan. When I first read their reactions to my book I was tempted to protest to editor Tax that such screeds have no justifiable place in CA, but the more I think about it the more it seems to me that, given a little rope, they are quite capable of hanging themselves.

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