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### Alan Roland. *Cultural Pluralism and Psychoanalysis: The Asian and North American Experience.*

Ashok Malhotra

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Alan Roland. *Cultural Pluralism and Psychoanalysis: The Asian and North American Experience*. New York: Routledge, 1996.

In his Preface to *Cultural Pluralism and Psychoanalysis: The Asian and North American Experience*, Alan Roland points out that during the 1970s, "Americans had to become Janus- faced, looking West across the Pacific to Asian societies, and East across the Atlantic to Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Asians assumed a greater presence in the American mind than ever before and it seemed that the global age had clearly arrived."

One of the major reasons for this dramatic Asian presence was "the Immigration Law of 1965 that opened up our shores to large numbers of Asian-Americans. For the most part, those who came were not 'your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,' but rather highly educated urban elite from cultures that strongly value disciplined learning."

Roland's *Cultural Pluralism and Psychoanalysis* is based upon his personal research on Asian communities in the USA and Asia. His clinical experiences with Asians led him to grasp more clearly the "modern Western culture of individualism, and how individualism has affected our whole psychology, and especially, psychoanalytic theory."

*Cultural Pluralism and Psychoanalysis*, which is about culture, self, and psychoanalysis, encompassing Indians, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans and North Americans, is divided into three parts.

In Part I, entitled "Comparative Psychoanalysis," Roland discusses the universality of the psychoanalytic self by presenting the "historical roots of individualism in Western culture beginning with the Reformation, through the Social Contract philosophers, the Jurists, Enlightenment philosophers, economic theorists, to Romanticism." He relates this progression of individualism to the development of psychoanalysis through the works of Freud, Klein, Erikson, Winnicott and Kohut. Furthermore, Roland reveals the difficulty of using this highly individualistic psychology -- such as psychoanalysis -- to persons from radical-

ly different cultures such as India, Japan, and China. Roland supports his view by quoting the research of Sudhir Kakar, Catherine Ewing, and Takeo Doi in terms of the theories of evolutionism, universalism, and relativism. While indicating serious difficulties in the contribution of these cross-cultural psychoanalysts, Roland presents an outline of a new psychoanalytic paradigm that takes into consideration such issues as universality, variability, and normality as well as the dimensions of the spiritual and magical.

Roland's research indicates that since the aim of psychoanalysis is to help people function normally within the culture of individualism, there are many problems associated with using this method on the Asian patients simply because they have been raised in different cultures. He reveals the dilemma of psychoanalysis in terms of the three paradigms of evolutionism, universalism, and relativism, which turn out to be totally ineffective in giving one the proper understanding of the Asian patients, because they operate with opposite views of the self.

In Part II, entitled "The Asian and American Interface," Roland delves into the Indian, Japanese, and Chinese concepts of the self. The three chapters, on "Walking the Bicultural Tightrope: Indians in the United States;" "The Japanese and American Interface;" and "Cultural Hurdles and Inscrutable Muddles," develop the Asian view in terms of the 'we-self' in contrast to the 'I-self' of the American-style individualism.

Roland argues that Indians form the most educated and affluent group in the USA. It is unique in having a radar-like ability to adapt to new situations; is able to contextualize situations; and is pliable to hierarchy and different values. But as the Indians internalize American norms and values of individualism, they undergo a great deal of inner stress. Because of cultural differences, many misunderstandings and dissonances between the Indian-Americans and other Americans develop, which are due to the "psychosocial dimensions of Indian hierarchical relationship when they encounter American-style individualism." This causes difficulties in constructing a bicultural self.

In the chapter on "Japanese and American Interface," Roland argues that though Japanese are similar to other Asian groups in terms of their emphasis on the family, their self is governed much more by the work-group hierarchical relationships. Furthermore, Japanese work-group is more vertical and pyramidal in structure than either the American or Indian group. Roland's research reveals that unlike the Indian experience where the self is deeply embedded in the extended family, the Japanese's self is rooted in their work-group. Moreover, the Japanese work-group is made impervious to infiltration from the outsiders. Furthermore, Roland discusses the Japanese interface with Americans in terms of Japanese corporations in the United States, artistic activity, and intermarriages between the Japanese and Americans.

In the chapter on "Cultural Hurdles and Inscrutable Muddles," Roland presents the Chinese view of the self, which is determined by a completely opposite world-view and a totally different language. In the Christian tradition, it is held that human beings are made in the god's image whereas in the Chinese view, they are either parasites on the creator's body or are nothing more than clay figues constructed by the creator P'an-ku. Moreover, in the past the Chinese language used the same character for "I" or "we" and it was an ancient custom where a brother, a son or the grandfather could assume the punishment of a person convicted of murder. The Chinese conceived of the self as relational or collective conscience rather than the isolated 'I-self.' In their social interaction with others, the Chinese do not show superiority; rather, they efface themselves. Emphasis is put on the other's strength and one's own weakness. Furthermore, for the Chinese, cultural harmony and interdependency are more important than independence and uniqueness, the two values highly admired by the Western individualism. It is clear then that "The cross-cultural hurdles can be formidable, particularly when we consider that one culture's two most commonly used words, 'I' and 'you', respectively, can be conveniently omitted in the other culture's discourse and when we consider how one culture's valuation of 'getting straight to the point' meets its match in the other culture's

belief that 'evil spirits travel in straight lines'."

In Part III entitled "Clinical Issues," Roland delves into the examination of "how culture enters into the space of psychoanalytic work with Asian and North Americans." Here he discusses the influence of culture on the formation of the self and relates it to the development of self psychology in Freudian psychoanalysis. Roland believes that the basic features of self psychology can be used to understand "Asian psychological makeup and relationships." Through a number of case studies, he reveals the Indian Oedipus and the relationship between Hindu spiritual culture and sexuality, and thus challenges some of the basic assumptions of Freudian psychoanalysis. Roland concludes his work with clinical studies of Chinese and Koreans living abroad.

Overall, I found *Cultural Pluralism and Psychoanalysis* a pioneering work in the field of comparative cultural psychology. Roland has condensed his 30 years of experience and research on the Asian and North American interface in this very readable book. Psychologists, cultural anthropologists, and philosophers will find something very worthwhile in this work. Roland should be congratulated for doing such a commendable job.

Ashok Malhotra