

A vintage-style map of the Americas is the background, with a brass compass resting on it. The map shows North and South America with various geographical labels and a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The compass is positioned in the upper right quadrant, showing its internal mechanism and the cardinal directions.

Charles Hampden-Taylor
Fons Trompenaars

BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE

How to create wealth from
conflicting values

 WILEY

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HOW TO CREATE WEALTH
FROM CONFLICTING VALUES

Charles M. Hampden-Turner
and Fons Trompenaars

Illustrations by
David Lewis

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Appendix I Dilemma Theory and Its Origins

Intellectual Origins

Dilemma theory has taken some thirty years to work out. It derives from many sources. We have borrowed widely yet selectively and do not accept in their entirety the theories from which we have borrowed.

1. *From classic Greek tragedy* we borrow the idea that values get personified and endowed with god-like powers. The more these are vaunted, the more likely they are to turn into their opposites and clash destructively. The antidotes to such excess are comedy and, if you fail to share the fun, tragedy. The ideal is *harmonia*, or *symphronasis*, in which conflicts are reconciled.
2. *From Sigmund Freud and neo-Freudians* Jung, Adler, Reich, Rank, and Fromm, all of whom were much influenced by classic mythology, we have borrowed both the drama of forces in psyche struggling against each other and the idea that some of these forces are denied conscious awareness. We see the “unconscious” not as a repository, but as the consequence of Aristotelian logic, which has made it difficult for Westerners to entertain two opposing propositions. Hence one “horn” of each dilemma tends to be repressed from conscious awareness in favor of the other.
3. *From cognitive consistency theorists*—especially George Kelly, Prescott Lecky, and Leon Festinger—we have derived the notion that persons struggle for consistency among their personal constructs and that how such consistency is achieved has fateful consequences.
4. *From structural anthropologists*—especially Frances Densmore, Clyde Kluckhohn, Ruth Benedict, Gregory Bateson, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Edmund Leach—we got the idea of values as binary and as differences on a continuum. Hence values are contrasting pairs of attributes, and cultures repre-

- sent the mind writ large. Values are *corybantic* (i.e., they dance to and fro on these continua).
5. *From humanistic psychologists*—especially Abraham Maslow (who credited Ruth Benedict)—we get the concept of synergy. Similar ideas are found in the work of Rollo May and Carl Rogers. People develop through the reconciliation of opposite endowments, as do groups, organizations, and cultures. The downside is well captured in the catastrophe theory of René Thom and Christopher Zeeman. (From the “down turn,” *catastrophe*, in Greek tragic drama.)
 6. *From brain researchers*—especially those studying the split brain, such as Roger Sperry, Michael Gazzaniga and John E. Bogen—we get the notion of lateral functions coordinated between brain hemispheres. The work of Karl Pribram and the Papez-Maclean theory propose similar specializations and integrations.
 7. *From systems theorists*—particularly Ludwig von Bertalanffy, Geoffrey Vickers, West Churchman, Magorah Maruyama, Francisco Varela, and Humberto Maturana—we derive the idea of self-organizing systems which spontaneously seek higher levels of development and complexity. These are governed by positive and negative feedback, which may seek to reduce deviance or elaborate it.
 8. *From the field of organizational behavior*, we have built on problems identified by Fritz Roethlisberger (formal versus informal systems), Douglas McGregor (Theory X or Y), Robert Blake and Jane Mouton (concern with task or people), Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch (differentiation versus integration of subsystems), Eric Trist and Fred Emery (socio-technical systems), Chris Argyris and Donald Schön (Model I versus Model II behaviors), Michael Porter (low costs versus premium strategy), Henry Mintzberg (designed versus emerging strategy), and many others.
 9. *From political science, sociology and cultural studies*, we have borrowed many insights into American society. We are especially indebted to Talcott Parsons, Seymour Martin Lipset, Daniel Bell, Christopher Jencks, Richard Hofstadter, Robert Bellah, David Halberstam, Robert B. Reich, Richard Sennett, George C. Lodge, and Lester Thurow.
 10. *From East Asian studies* we are indebted to Ezra Vogel, James Abegglen and George Stalk, Ikujiro Nonaka and Hirotaka Takeuchi, Akio Morita, Takie Sugiyama Lebra, Rosalie L. Tung, Shotaro Ishinomori, and Kisho Kurokawa. Most have shown that East Asian value preferences are the mirror image of our own.
 11. *From epistemology and the philosophy of science* we are indebted to Floyd Mat-

- son's critique of Newtonian science, T. S. Kuhn's insight into scientific revolutions, and the seminal epistemologies of Henri Bergson, Kisho Kurokawa, Alfred Schutz, Russ Ackoff, and Hannah Arendt, along with the marvelous elucidations of inquiry by Abraham Kaplan.
12. *From studies in creativity* we are grateful for the work of Arthur Koestler on janus phenomena, holons, and bisociation. We have learned much from Frank Barron on creative resilience and from Liam Hudson, Jacob Getzel, and Philip Jackson on the dynamics of divergence-convergence.
 13. *From moral development studies* we have learned the necessity of creating a mini-crisis or dilemma in the respondent's mind, a practice followed by Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. More serious crises were simulated by Richard Crutchfield and Stanley Milgram with studies on conformity and obedience.
 14. *From architecture and design*, we owe a debt to Buckminster Fuller and his demonstrations of synergy—also to Kisho Kurokawa and his metabolism movement.
 15. *From chaos theory and the patterns of fractals* our debt is to James Gleick and John Briggs for their different expositions and to Benoit Mandelbrot, Paul Rapp, Ilya Prigogine, Mitchell Feigenbaum, and many others.

Experiential Origins

The British author of this book quit Harvard in 1972 and moved into a halfway house for ex-convicts in San Francisco, called the Delancey Street Foundation, about which he sought to write a book, *Sane Asylum* (New York, William Morrow, 1974). This proved quite a culture shock for his privileged and academic background, yet the rehabilitation process was undoubtedly successful and he was obliged to account for this.

The ethos of this organization was a curious hybrid of left- and right-wing doctrines. In its public face, Delancey Street was quite liberal in exposing the excesses of the penal system and pleading for a second chance. In its private face, it was highly familial and conservative, stressing hard work, self-reliance, and tough love. It taught both that society generates criminality and that change can come only from cutting the strings of that causality and taking personal responsibility.

It stressed that right- versus left-wing debates are a pathological discourse with poor Americans as footballs in a contrived game. In three-day, sleepless sessions of psychodrama, elaborate comedy and satire of criminal pretentiousness was climaxed by tragic reenactments of wasted lives. The author encoun-

tered not simply persons from a different world but emotions of excruciating intensity, with rehabilitation achieved against all odds.

Dilemma theory is an attempt to pick up the pieces of those extraordinary and moving experiences of a genuine community.

Dilemma Theory: A Summary

We thus describe dilemma theory as follows:

1. Values deemed virtuous, god-like, and personified by heroes inevitably conflict and must achieve harmony if protagonists are not to clash tragically.
2. Among conflicting values, one is often consciously and culturally preferred to the other which is buried and repressed.
3. The personality constantly struggles for consistency and may successfully integrate opposing values or repress and deny one side.
4. These values, properly conceived, are differences on an often tacit continuum and thereby structure the patterns of a culture and the minds of its members.
5. These combinations of values may grow synergistically and humanistically, or regress with catastrophic consequences.
6. Much of this inherent opposition and unity has been found in contrasting brain functions.
7. Values form open systems which spontaneously self-organize and steer by getting feedback from their environment.
8. Many of the tensions within living systems have been found in organization behavior. Industries and workplaces confront dilemmas which they must resolve to generate wealth.
9. Similar dilemmas pattern the politics and sociology of American and other societies and must be resolved if those societies are to continue developing.
10. The ways Americans resolve dilemmas are often the mirror image of the ways East Asians resolve theirs, leading to considerable misunderstandings and culture shock.
11. Searching into and resolving dilemmas is a form of human and organizational learning.
12. It requires creativity and innovation.
13. May involve moral development.
14. Is reflected in architecture and design.
15. And enables us to bring order to chaotic events and manage the fractal patterns which arise.