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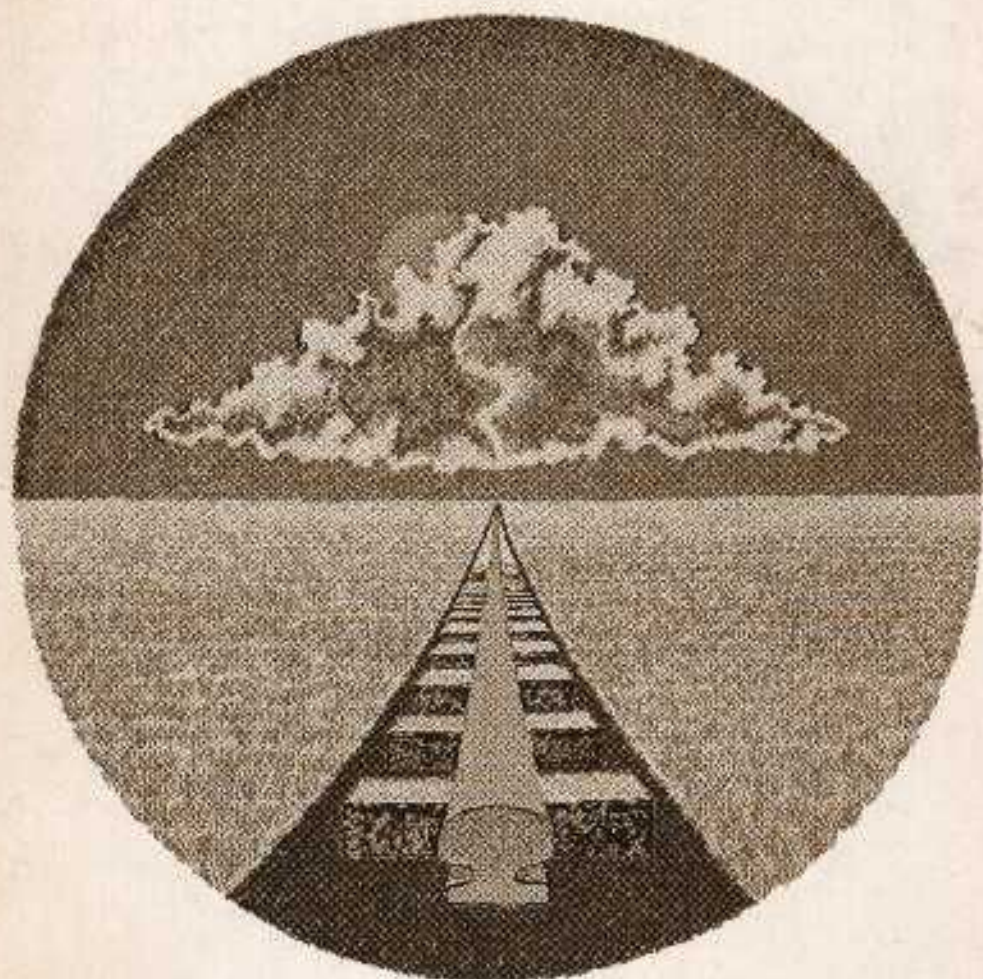# POLITICAL AND SOCIAL THEORY

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Contents/Sommaire

The Surfacing of World and Earth

ON THEORIZING HUMAN CONDUCT

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In Plato's dialogue the *Protagoras,* the sophist Protagoras recalls a story of how Zeus sent Hermes to teach men to be just to one another. The necessity for introducing justice into the world derived from the fact that while, thanks to Prometheus, men were well practiced in the life supporting skills and arts (*techne*) they lacked the political wisdom (*arete*) necessary to sustain the arts of government. As a result they began dealing unjustly with one another, were continually locked in internecine strife, and soon verged on the edge of dispersion and extinction. Fearing that the entire race would be exterminated Zeus sent Hermes to initiate human beings into the arts of civil relationships. Upon accepting his mission Hermes asked Zeus how he should impart justice and reverence among men: "Shall I distribute them as the arts are distributed; that is to say, to a few only, in accordance with a principle of specialization, or shall I give them to all?" "To all", said Zeus, "I should like them all to have a share; for cities cannot exist if a few only share in justice and reverence, as in the arts (*techne*). And further make a law by my order that he who has no part in reverence and justice shall be put to death, for he is a plague of the State." (320c-322d)

In this myth the art of civility (*arete*) and the civil condition to which it gives rise is recognized as intercourse in a language of *law* which prescribes the conditions of just conduct. It is an art unlike any other in being the concern of everyone and not being itself concerned with the satisfaction of any of the specific wants that arise in the continuous effort to serve self-interest by exploiting and enjoying the resources of the world. At the same time, it is recognized as association in terms of the assurance that the prescriptions of law will be enforced. If justice is what obtains from the learnt practice of civility, injustice is a violation of civility which necessarily invites redress or penalty. This is the condition specified in the Agamemnon (I. 183) as the grace which comes to human life when penalty is annexed to injustice and recompence to injury, a condition held to be so important that it is said to be the greatest of the blessings of Zeus. As Socrates puts it in the *Theaetetus,* in both this world and the next, the penalty you pay is the life you lead answering to the pattern you resemble.(177a)

The myth of the *Protagoras* contains all the ingredients for an account of the human condition. It is both a statement concerning what it means to *act* humanly and morally, and a statement of the conditions under which the engagements of human conduct can be confidently pursued. Justice is not simply the condition of subscribing to certain conditions *inter homines*, but the expectation and assurance that these conditions shall not be ignored with impunity. While fear of punishment supplies neither the reason nor motive for being just and acting civilly it is nevertheless a necessary condition of order. Hence the need for engagements such as "legislation" and "ruling".

The task of political theory then is clear. It is to explain first of all the meaning or postulates of the conditions of civility and human conduct, and secondly to explain the meaning or postulates of civil order. It is this challenge that Michael Oakeshott takes up in *On Human Conduct.*[1] Like Plato, he acknowledges that the condition of civilisation is the ability and willingness of men to behave civilly or justly towards one another out of respect for the idea of justice itself rather than because to do so will be profitable while not to do so will be punished. Oakeshott is less ambitious than Plato, however, and rather than attempting a systematic demonstration or proof of the superiority of justice, he sets out more modestly to describe the meaning of conduct pursued in this manner. In a collection of three lengthy and at times highly concentrated essays, entitled respectively "On the Understanding of Human Conduct", "On the Civil Condition", and "The Character of a Modern European State", Oakeshott steps aside from the main stream of Western political thought and denounces as spurious the pretensions of both "theorists", who espouse systematic "theories" of political behaviour, and "theoreticians" who attempt to apply the results of theory to action; where by action is meant the process of achieving specific satisfactions and wished for goals. For Oakeshott, theorizing is an intellectual "engagement" rather than an empirical and behavioural science, or an exercise in system building. It aims at understanding rather than explanation, and while it may enrich one's humanity to understand better the meaning of conduct and the conditions of civility, there is no guarantee or promise that it will make one either craftier, as a framer of policies, or more effective in one's practical dealings. For the tradition of Western philosophy committed to the belief that "all thought is for the sake of action", Oakeshott's claim that at best philosophical thought is for the sake of understanding what is already understood will come as unwelcome news.[2]

In keeping with the spirit of his conclusions, Oakeshott's style of writing is more like the style of a diarist than a "theorist" or "theoretician". It is the style of a thinker reporting on the outcome of his own personal adventures and

reflections in self-understanding; a phenomenological disclosure of the conditions of an understanding which although it has grown and taken shape slowly throughout the long course of human history, has somehow come to rest within the perspective of an individual historian whose intellectual biography forms the subject matter of these essays. Oakeshott himself refers to it as a "traveller's tale" which has a course to follow but no destination, "a personal but never really 'subjective' intellectual adventure recollected in tranquility", which although it may enlighten, "does not instruct". (vii)

Finally, in addition to rejecting the pretensions of philosophy, social science and social theory to provide explanations of behaviour and moral justifications for the pursuit of specific policies, Oakeshott rejects any reading of the history of Western civilisation which attempts to uncover the underlying patterns and purposes of that history. Instead of searching for a single clue to the meaning of Western civilisation, Oakeshott regards it as the outcome of a series of self-understandings, each experienced within a distinct historical context, which collectively result not in a single universal character but in something far more equivocal. The character of the modern European State, like that of its predecessors, emerges as a contingent response to a specific historic situation, and as such contains within itself a variety of diverse responses which resist assimilation into a single homogenized unity. As in the case of human conduct and the civil condition to which conduct gives rise, the attempt to force the modern state, whether in theory or practice, into conformity with a unifying, universal and homogenizing essence, is nothing short of a blasphemy.

I. Human Conduct as Self-disclosure and Self-enactment

Oakeshott's tale begins with a series of reflections or "soundings" on the meaning of being human. The first and most basic disclosure is that being human is not simply a matter of behaving in accordance with a theory or policy. It is rather an engagement or adventure that rests upon postulates, and it is only when these postulates are rendered explicit that we begin to understand the human presence as an enactment of an unique form of rationality. Accordingly, to theorize human conduct is the engagement of disclosing the rationality inherent in that conduct; an engagement which is categorially distinct from the theoretical attempt to explain conduct in terms of causes and covering laws.

The most basic postulate underlying the rationality of human conduct is the conception of "free-agency"; the perceiving and understanding of situations, recognized to be wanting, and inviting of responses through which agents both disclose and enact themselves. The agent's response is characterized by an intention to seek a wished-for satisfaction through an excercise of intelligence.

The instruments or avenues of response, the choice of *this* rather than *that* set of means, cannot be accounted for, or explained, according to a mere stimulus-response model, or as the outcome of structural factors over which the agent has no control. Where the actions of agents are concerned there is no set of internal (*i.e.* psychological, biological) or external (*i.e.*, political, economic, social) circumstances such that in these circumstances the agent will necessarily act as he does, or from which the agent's actions could be deduced. What the agent does depends not upon "genes", "human nature", "psychology", or "social process", but is the outcome of an "intelligent engagement" and depends on what he has learned in the course of deliberating, and responding to situations, over the years. This learning is the source of the agent's "character" (not to be confused with the conditioning of personality) and it is this "character" rather than some "biological", "psychological", or "socially conditioned" human nature, or externally imposed "social structure", or even, for that matter, the so-called "free-will", that comes into play in the course of deliberating the means and responding to situations. Thus, Oakeshott declares, the agent has a "history" but no "nature"; he is in conduct what he becomes, and he becomes according to how he understands himself to be. If he understands himself to be a free agent, then he will understand that the eligible alternatives in conduct are virtually unlimited, as are the meanings of the situations in which he finds himself.

According to Oakeshott, then, the relationship postulated in conduct is an understood relationship, capable of being engaged in only by virtue of having been learned. In addition to having learnt the skills associated with the satisfaction of specific wants, the agent also learns the arts of agency which make it possible for him not only to engage in instrumental conduct *inter homines,* but to engage in moral conduct *inter homines.* In the case of moral conduct *inter homines,* what is learned are the practices of civility to be observed in making substantive choices but which as practices do not determine these choices. What they determine is the quality of justice that attaches to substantive choices. The difference between man and the rest of the animal kingdom is not man's superior capacity to apply his skills to the realisation of goals. It is his capacity to pursue his wants while subscribing to the practices of civility, and to do this, moreover, for no other reason than that he recognizes the authority of the practices entailed by civility. It is by virtue of having assented to this authority that agents take on the character of what Oakeshott calls *cives.* Thus, for example, an agent may subscribe to the practice of "telling the truth" in all of his substantive dealings, not out of habit, or fear of punishment, but because he has adopted the way of life and mode of being made possible by this practice; a way of life and mode of being whose meaning can be understood and experienced as an enactment of intelligence and

8

character. Education is initiation into both orders of practices. It is initiation into the prudential arts but it is also initiation into the art of agency, the art of transmitting the results of experience and the art of experiencing oneself as a moral being. Rather than indoctrinating the young into "truth telling", "fidelity", "justice", "respect for person", education makes possible the experiencing of the world through these modes of conduct so as to render them more sensitive to the moral obligations entailed by their conduct. Oakeshott makes no such claim as Plato that a well educated citizenry guarantees a just outcome for society. His purpose is not to provide a recipe, or method or technology for becoming human, but to describe what it means to be human.

Oakeshott's account of the human condition thus rests upon a basic distinction between the "prudential arts" and the "arts of civility". Prudential arts are hypothetical instruments for the achievement of imagined and wished for satisfactions. The arts of civility, on the other hand, are moral practices concerned with the justice rather than the success of the enterprise of agents. While there may be advantages to subscribing to moral rules, the utility of a practice does not constitute a source of moral legitimation. Morality is indifferent to the outcome of performances and is therefore not to be confused with "policy". It is a relationship solely in respect of conditions to be sub-scribed to categorically in seeking the satisfaction of any want. The conditions which comprise a moral practice are instruments of self-disclosure through which agents reveal themselves to one another, and instruments of self-enactment through which they make themselves. The basic vocabulary of moral discourse are *rules* which declare what it is *right* to do. Moral rules are prescriptive-normative, to be taken into account while making choices but not designating or compelling choices. They are not commands to be obeyed but relatively precise considerations to be subscribed to. They are *used* in conduct but not *applied* to conduct and the moral reflection in which they may be brought to bear upon choosing is deliberative, not demonstrative. (68)[3]

The employment of moral rules in conduct is thus logically distinct from the operation of principles in the genesis of natural events and it would therefore be inappropriate to attempt an explanation of human conduct as if it were a species of natural phenomena. To engage in human conduct *inter homines* in the fullest sense is to subscribe to rules believed to be just, with the intention of achieving an imagined or wished-for satisfaction. Genuinely human action is motivated from a sentiment of justice as opposed to organic impulses and instincts. Accordingly, such conduct can be described, and appreciated, but not explained. The distinguishing feature of the morally authentic agent, is that while he acts with the intention of procuring wished-for substantive satisfaction, the style of his conduct, his commitment to subscribe to the rules of civility, is motivated by nothing more than a sense of loyalty to himself. In

9

short, the compunction of virtuous self-enactment concerns the character of the agent, rather than consequences, such as fear of punishment, pride, etc. The important thing is to be honest and to act in "character", rather than being able to "justify" one's actions.

What does this imply about the so-called human condition? It would seem that just as the moral integrity of the individual human agent cannot be subsumed under the abstractions of psychology, or any other "science" for that matter, neither can the human community, the inter-personal, be subsumed under abstractions such as "society", and "class". The attempt to theorize human conduct can at best be a descriptive-narrative history of individual actions. There is no "science" or psychology of society. Human conduct is continuously and decisively "social" only in respect of agents being associated in terms of their understandings and enjoyment of specific practices. Once the full meaning of being human is understood it should be clear why the so-called science of society is a blasphemy. Understanding human conduct is understanding the "arts" of agency. What constitutes a society is not the common goals pursued, but the common respect paid by individual agents, to the conditions which specify practices.

For Oakeshott the great undertaking and achievement of human self-understanding is the capacity to comprehend what it means "to be human" not as a system or process subject to "law", but as an "ideal character", an organization of dispositional capacities, the outcome of learning and education, in which the supposed organic needs, appetites, tensions, etc., of the species are wholly transformed and superseded. There is all the difference between simply exemplifying the interplay of "love" and "hate" for example, and subscribing to practices in which one enacts oneself as a "loving" agent or performer. To understand the agent as performer, however, cannot account for his choice to do *this* rather than *that*. It is precisely the inexplicable character of substantive choices that defines their status as human performances.

Oakeshott's denial of the pretensions of the social sciences to explain human conduct either in terms of psychological variables or as the outcome of social forces, is therefore an affirmation of the irreducible humanity of mankind. Whatever the variables of the so-called social sciences might be they are not terms in which the choice of an agent to do or say *this* rather than *that*, in response to a contingent situation, and in an adventure to procure an imagined and wished-for satisfaction, may be understood. My social no less than my individual "being" is a practice, that is to say, an intelligent engagement concerned with responding to an understood situation. I do not do *this* rather than *that* "because" I am neurotic, middle-class, unemployed, deprived, an immigrant, orphaned, or whatever. It is rather that I respond to situations in a middle-class etc., manner, by which is meant simply, that I subscribe to practices characteristic of persons who are middle-class etc. In the end,

however, my identity as a person depends upon recognizing myself as a free agent.

Understood in terms of the ideal character "human conduct", a substantive performance is identified as an intelligent "going-on", composed of related circumstantial occurrences: an assignable agent engaged in self-disclosure and self-enactment, the understood emergent situation in which he recognizes himself to be, the beliefs, sentiments, understanding, and imaginings in terms of which he deliberates and chooses his response to it, the conditions he acknowledges in making his choice, the actions he performs, and the reply it receives. To "theorize" is to accept it in its character as a manifold of related occurrences, to discern the identity it constitutes and thus to understand it without explaining it away. (p. 101)

While denying the pretensions of social science to be explanations of social reality, Oakeshott is not without compassion in understanding why it is that causal explanations have such a wide-spread appeal. The human condition, being human, is necessarily one of diversity in self-expression and language. This plurality cannot be resolved by being understood as so many contingent and regrettable divergences from a fancied perfect and universal language of moral intercourse, whether in the form of Hegel's cunning of reason, the laws of Providence, or the principles of evolution. It is hardly surprising, however, that such a resolution should have been attempted. Faced with plurality, human beings seek security in the monistic constructions of the muddled theorist: the ecumenical yearnings of the moralist for whom the categorical imperative or the principles of liberty are not just practices to be subscribed to, but commands to be obeyed, the behavioural engineer whose desire to control is rationalized by a belief that behaviour is lawful. In all of this we see at work the operation of a nostalgia for permanence or yearning for immortality, the attempt to ground existence in an immutable set of laws so as to relieve mankind of the burden of responsibility which derives from the encounter with nothingness.

It is the same yearning that finds expression, but more appropriately, in religion. Unlike science and metaphysics, religious faith makes no pretension to being descriptive, prescriptive or normative. It is not a cancellation but an affirmation of human freedom. Thus, Oakeshott writes, in one of his most eloquent passages:

> ... while religious faith may be recognized as a solace for
> misfortune and as a release from the fatality of wrong-
> doing, its central concern is with a less contingent
> dissonance in the human condition; namely, the
> hollowness, the futility of that condition, its character of

11

> being no more than 'un voyage au bout de la nuit'. What
> is sought in religious belief is not merely consolation for
> woe or deliverance from the burden of sin, but a recon-
> ciliation to nothingness.... Religious faith is the evocation
> of a sentiment to be added to all others as the motive of all
> motives in terms of which the fugitive adventures of
> human conduct, without being released from their mortal
> and their moral conditions, are graced with an intimation
> of immortality: the sharpness of death and the deadliness
> of doing overcome, and the transitory sweetness of a
> mortal affection, the tumult of a grief and the passing
> beauty of a May morning recognized neither as merely
> evanescent adventures nor as emblems of better things to
> come, but as *aventures,* themselves encounters with
> eternity. (83-85)

Oakeshott's characterization of the difference between science and religion as responses to the same encounter with nothingness is not intended to discredit science as a legitimate mode of rationality. What is brought into question here is the pretension of science to provide a paradigm of rationality to which all specific modes of rationality are required to conform. While many social scientists and political theorists will undoubtedly be upset with the seemingly arrogant manner in which he dismisses the credibility of a "science of conduct", whether as an explanatory device or as a policy science, there is nevertheless some merit in his characterization of human conduct as inexplicable. In the first place, it is because human conduct is inexplicable that it can be regarded as the outcome of free choice, and it is only as free agents that men can engage in the practice of justice. The most important factor in maintaining an image of man that is consistent with the practice of justice is that he conceive of himself as a being capable of learning how to be just by making just choices, as opposed to regarding his behaviour as the outcome of his nature or conditioning. Since he is not born with an innate knowledge of justice, his wisdom and character must be earned through doing. This condition is also the basis of trust. Only human agents can trust one another because only man is capable of making choices uncompelled by considerations that lie beyond the choice itself.

In the second place, if there were a science of human conduct, it would necessarily be subject to the same value system as science in general. The paradigm of scientific rationality is mathematics which is essentially an homogenizing enterprise, and while pure science lays claim to a value-free status, there is a sense, and a profoundly important one, in which the scientific

enterprise harbours a value system which is both implicit and inescapable. The foundation of this value system is the belief that "to be is to be explained". This is a variant of the Leibnitzian principle of sufficient reason: *nihil existere nisi cujus reddi ratio existentiae sufficiens* (*Monodology,* Section 32). Nothing exists unless a sufficient reason for its existence can be rendered. Causal explanation is the activity *par excellence* by which this sufficiency can be rendered. To reduce the essence of something to its cause is to affirm the value of homogeneity, which is, that to be rational is to be a member of a class united by the sharing of some definite abstract characteristic. Homogenization fosters a value system of conformity to abstractions. The danger inherent in the application of this model to human conduct is that by accepting this image of human conduct we render ourselves vulnerable to the technology of management, and we may even accept the psychology of adjustment as "normal"; it is "normal" to behave in predictable ways, and abnormal to behave idiosyncratically.

Finally, there are a number of logical points that might be considered in favour of Oakeshott's contention that science is an inappropriate model for the understanding of human conduct. The sciences are for the most part preoccupied almost exclusively with the definition of abstractions. Thus, for example, an abstraction like "aggression" may be explained as the effect of "an instinct for aggression". Or, middle-class behaviour is explained as a function of upward mobility, which in turn is defined as characteristic of middle-class behaviour. Not only are such explanations circular, but they assume that the terms appearing in the *explanandum* are behavioural instantiations of the terms appearing in the *explanans;* that hostility and aggression, for example, are behavioural instances of the instinct for aggression. The impression is thus given that social science explanations refer to the 'real world of social action or social relations. In fact, according to Oakeshott, such explanations have no relation whatsoever to the reality of human conduct.

While Oakeshott clearly rules out the social-science approach to the study of human conduct, his distinction between "substantive" and purely "civil" conduct, suggests a possible relationship between the social sciences and philosophical theorizing, in which each may be understood to play a distinctive and yet complementary role. As a study of human conduct, philosophical theorizing concentrates on what is distinctively human about that conduct. This lies in man's capacity for justice, as expressed through the conduct of subscribing to the practices of civility. It does not apparently lie in his conduct as an agent seeking the satisfaction of specific wants; but to the extent that this latter form of conduct is open to investigation, it forms the subject-matter of the social sciences, and while it is important that the study of moral conduct *inter homines*, the practice of civility, can do nothing more than describe the

postulates of that activity, no such constraint applies to the study of the satisfaction of wants. In so far as these activities are concerned, we do not rule out motives and beliefs as causal factors nor do we rule out the causal efficacy of the social context in which individuals make their substantive choices. It must, however, remain clear that causal explanation in the social sciences is categorially distinct from explanation in the natural sciences. The reason for this lies in the very nature of the subject matter itself.

To begin with, the subject of understanding in the social sciences (which should be more properly called "human" sciences) is the relationship between an agent and the "understood" situation in which he finds himself, which often includes other agents. Oakeshott characterizes such relationships as "contingencies" and the engagement or adventure of theorizing contingencies is categorially distinct from the engagement of theorizing functional relations, as in the case of science. While contingent relationships are relationships of dependency this dependency is not of the sort suggested by a mechanistic model of causality. They are dependent in the sense that they "touch", and in "touching" identify themselves as belonging together and as composing an intelligible continuity of conditionally dependent occurrences. The intelligibility of the relationship lies in the recognition of the consequent "what came after" as acknowledging, taking up, and in some manner responding to the antecedent, and of "what went before" as in some respect conducive to what came after.

If then we are to use the term causality at all with respect to the agent's substantive engagements, it can only be in the sense in which that which is "caused" is the free and deliberate act of a conscious and responsible agent, and "causing" him to do it means affording him a motive for doing it. This is what R.G. Collingwood has called the historical sense of the word cause, because it refers to a type of case in which both "cause" and "effect" or "antecedent" and "consequent" are human activities such as form the subject matter of history. A cause in this sense, according to Collingwood, is made up of two elements, a *causa quod* or efficient cause and a *causa ut* or final cause. The *causa quod* is a situation or state of things existing; the *causa ut* is a purpose or state of things to be brought about. Neither of these could be a cause if the other were absent. Thus, for example, a man who tells his stockbroker to sell a certain holding may be caused to act thus by a rumour about the financial position of that company, but this rumour would not cause him to sell out unless he wanted to avoid being involved in the affairs of an unsound business. *Per contra,* a man's desire to avoid being involved in the affairs of an unsound business would not cause him to sell his shares in a certain company unless he knew or believed that it was unsound.[4]

The principle implicit in this account is that the explanation of a human action depends upon understanding the agent's understanding of the situation in which he finds himself, so that his action is seen as a self-chosen attempt to respond to the situation in a manner appropriate to his beliefs, motives and intentions.

Understanding in terms of contingent relations is therefore contextual and historical. To understand a substantive performance in which an agent discloses and enacts himself is to get it into a story in which it is recognized to be an occurrence contingently related to other occurrences. The story or narrative has no over-all meaning or message other than the intelligibility with which the historian endows the occurrences by putting them into a story. To impart meaning and teleology to the narrative is to give up the historian story-teller's concern with the topical and transitory and to endow occurrences with a potency they cannot have without surrendering their characters as occurrences. It is not to tell a story or narrate history but to construct a myth.

For Oakeshott, then, understanding human conduct is a primarily "historical" enterprise, to be distinguished from explanations in terms of either "covering laws" or "purposes". The theoretical understanding of human conduct is, in effect, simply an extension of common sense understanding. Since human conduct is itself an exercise of "intelligence" on the part of "free" (i.e., "intelligent") agents disclosing and enacting themselves by responding to the understood, contingent, situations in which they find themselves, the understanding of this conduct must parallel the exercise of intelligence that is being understood. The a priori condition of understanding, which accounts for the fact that it is possible at all, is the fact that the theorist is also an agent responding to his understood contingent situations in chosen actions and utterances related to imagined and wished-for satisfactions in terms of practices he has learned to subscribe to. The key to understanding is the imaginative capacity to recognize and acknowledge the conditions and compunctions of the multitude of practices subscribed to in substantive conduct. Understanding thus pays tribute to and reinforces the image of man as a free agent, and is, in its own right, a mode through which that freedom is celebrated. In short, the theoretical understanding of human conduct, in its dual nature as disclosing the postulates of civility, on the one hand, and the conditions of substantive engagements on the other hand, is itself an affirmation and enactment of the postulates underlying that conduct.

While theoretical understandings of whatever sorts may be regarded as performances of "free agency", it would be Oakeshott's contention, if I understand him correctly, that the historical explanation of transactional conduct, which takes the form of the pursuit of substantive wants and in which motives, intentions and other causes are considered, is not equivalent to the understanding of moral human conduct *inter homines;* the understanding of

persons as *cives*. If, for example, we explain the economic policies of a political statesman as a deliberate attempt to court favour with the electorate, and his foreign policies as an outcome of his perception of what constitutes the national interest, what we have explained is a categorially different phenomenon from the conduct through which that same statesman both discloses and enacts himself as a human being or *cives*. If, as *cives,* the overriding concern of a statesman is for justice, then we can expect that he will pursue his substantive wants in a just manner; even though it is clear that the basis for his substantive choices lies in a host of pragmatic considerations which are appropriately considered to comprise the subject-matter of the social sciences.

There are a number of problems posed by this account of the relationship between the conditions of civility and the conditions of substantive conduct. Of paramount concern is the claim that while morality is acknowledged to determine the manner in which one enacts oneself humanly, it is not as such a conceptual source of policy. Thus, for example, a person's preference for capitalism over socialism, or for conservatism over liberalism, can never be explained as arising from strictly moral deliberations, nor does the efficacy of the policies implied by these preferences require moral justification. In any case, according to Oakeshott, what passes for moral justification is often simply ideology disguised as morality.

Whereas morality cannot as such be conceived as supplying a justification for policy, there are times, even on Oakeshott's reckoning, when it may be apparent that a particular policy conflicts with morality. Such conflicts arise whenever the actual terms of one's substantive commitments require one to be unjust. If, to cite another example, I find that in order to practise a particular religious faith I am required to be intolerant (and possibly even belligerent) towards persons of other faiths, then to behave in accordance with this faith would be inconsistent with my commitment qua *cives* to subscribe to the practices of civility. Thus, while it is clear that my civil character cannot ever serve as a ground of compulsion for me to pursue this rather than that policy, it can serve to guide me against the pursuit of specific wants, in cases where to do so entails a violation of the rights and liberties of others.

Much the same considerations apply to the pursuit of economic and political policies. The pursuit of a conserver society, for example, is motivated by prudential rather than strictly moral considerations. The only moral constraint is that it be pursued in accordance with the practice of civility. The preference of conserver society economics over the free-enterprise economics of exponential growth thus lies in its more rational use of resources rather than in any specifically moral considerations, such that it facilitates more personal autonomy, conviviality and human growth. If upon recognizing that the free-enterprise economics of growth depends upon rapidly dwindling non-

renewable resources, we decide to opt for a conserver society, it is for reasons having to do with self-interest. We do not need a moral justification for what is simply a matter of common sense. We could, however, argue that it would be morally improper to engage in the tactic of engineering a resource crisis in order to panic people into paying higher prices for allegedly scarce resources and for expensive alternate technologies, to the profit of those who monopolize those technologies. The principle here is that while our pursuit of substantive interests is causally independent of moral considerations and moral justification, there are moral justifications for establishing constraints on human actions. To repeat, I am under no moral compulsion to pursue this rather than that goal, but the manner in which I pursue my goals is subject to moral considerations.

Oakeshott's reluctance to define the pursuit of substantive goals as the outcome of moral commitments is partially understandable. It is one way of avoiding the evils of ideology and dogmatic morality, and it is consistent with his further claim that the characters of national communities or nations cannot be determined by forcing them to conform with some pre-established purpose, whether defined by tradition or by those who hold power. However, the suggestion that moral constraints apply only to cases involving an infringement of liberty is simply not acceptable. There are surely times when the pursuit of certain goals is morally indecent even if it does not entail an explicit infringement upon the liberty of others. Consider once again the economics of growth. Suppose there were no resource crisis, or that new technologies capable of sustaining such a system were within range of completion. Could we not say that there are good moral reasons for rejecting it, on the grounds that the goals of such a system are simply without ''worth''? If, conversely, there are goals which are worthy of being pursued could we not regard ourselves as under a moral obligation to pursue them?

Oakeshott's rejoinder would no doubt rest on the complaint that to set limits to the pursuit of some goals and to oblige the pursuit of others on strictly moral grounds presupposes an ability to determine a concept of ''worthiness'' for which there is simply no adequate instrument. This is precisely where Oakeshott parts company with Plato and shows himself to be more in sympathy with Protagoras. Protagoras was, of all the sophists, the most humane, and his humanism is admirable precisely because he believed that the pursuit of self-interest must not conflict with the standards of justice. Plato, however, believed that the pursuit of justice was more than a skill to be practised in such a manner that it does not infringe upon the liberty of others. In its positive aspect, according to Plato, it means the pursuit of the ''Good''. Oakeshott believes that the agent both expresses and forms his distinctively human character as *cives* through commitment to the principles of civility which are learned in the course of being taught how to behave justly. Plato insists that a human character is also formed through substantive transactions involving the

17

pursuit of goals. It is for this reason that we are obliged to pursue goals that are worthy. How do we evaluate the concept of worthiness? Plato's answer is that to pursue goals that are worthy entails knowledge of the "Good" and this in turn presupposes an encounter with divine transcendence. The primordial encounter with transcendence and its subsequent re-enactment through philosophy are the *a priori* conditions of the possibility of ordering the soul so that it is capable of philosophical insights into the nature of the "Good". The task of political theory, therefore, is to define the substantive conditions of the order of a just society as well as to describe the postulates of civility. Indeed, it could be argued, the very practise of civility itself presupposes a just social order dedicated to the pursuit of the worthy: the *agathon*, the *kalon* and the *sophon*. Thus Eric Voegelin writes, in a passage which represents an antithesis to the position so persuasively argued by Oakeshott:

> The decisive event in the establishment of *politike*
> *episteme* was the specifically philosophical realization that
> the levels of being discernible within the world are sur-
> mounted by a transcendent source of being and its order.
> And this insight was itself rooted in the real movement of
> the human spiritual soul toward divine being experienced
> as transcendent. In the experience of love for the world-
> transcendent origin of being, in *philia* toward the *sophon*
> (the wise), in eros toward the *agathon* (the good) and the
> *kalon* (the beautiful), man became a philosopher.[5]

The sentiments expressed in this passage carry the support not only of Plato but of the eighteenth century philosopher Giambattista Vico, who at the conclusion of his monumental and truly epoch-making work *The New Science* instructs his readers with the declaration that "from all that we have set forth in this work, it is to be finally concluded that this science carries inseparably with it the study of piety, and he who is not pious cannot be truly wise".

With Plato's concept of transcendence, however, we pass beyond the limits of philosophy as conceived by Oakeshott and into a realm of metaphysical-ontological speculation which leads away from "theorizing" and back to "theory". It could be argued, however, that neither transcendence nor metaphysics need be conceived in strictly ontological terms. When fully understood, Oakeshott's "theorizing" can easily be assimilated to a concept of metaphysics; such as, for example, that proposed by R.G. Collingwood. The fundamental principle of metaphysics, as defined by Collingwood is that human conduct is an historical and not a purely natural phenomenon. As history, man's activities are conditioned neither by nature itself nor by society

but by what man has been able to make of nature and society through the exercise of his own freedom of choice. Since what man makes of nature and society depends upon his own historical achievements, such as the arts of agriculture, technology, science, government, etc., the so-called conditioning of history by nature and society is in reality a conditioning of history by itself. In this process, man's choices are guided by a variety of principles which taken together comprise the world view or metaphysical outlook of a particular civilisation. Included among these principles are the postulates that make possible scientific thought as we understand it and practise it today, and the arts of "civility" as Oakeshott understands it and claims it is practised among the civilised peoples or *cives* of the world.

Oakeshott, like Collingwood, regarded the postulates of civility as essential to the fabric of our civilisation. Oakeshott does not, however, share Collingwood's conviction that their disclosure and reaffirmation through metaphysical analysis is sufficient to ensure the survival of the practices to which they give rise. Nevertheless, I suspect that he would be prepared to concede that their continuous affirmation through metaphysical analysis or "theorizing" is at least a necessary condition of the survival of civilisation, and that philosophy does after all have some role to play in the drama through which man makes himself. Collingwood declared, in a passage which Oakeshott might be imagined to agree with, that the sciences of history and metaphysics should be regarded not as luxuries, or mere amusements of minds at leisure from more pressing occupations, but prime duties, whose discharge is essential to the maintenance not only of a particular form or type of reason, but of reason itself.[6] For it is precisely through the practice of metaphysics, so defined, that the mind enjoys an encounter with transcendence through which an *a priori* concept of worthiness can be formed.

II. Civility and the Civil Condition

Oakeshott's account of the existential character of human conduct forms the basis for his even more arresting account of the civil condition, the condition in which individuals form associations for the purpose of realising common goals. Like human conduct, the civil condition is an "ideal character" to be understood by theorizing its postulates. In the course of "theorizing" the postulates of the civil condition, Oakeshott provides new and challenging insights into the character of legislation, ruling, the social contract, and politics.

To begin with, the civil condition is an association to be distinguished from other types of associations such as transactional associations, in which agents seek substantive satisfaction of their wants in their mutual responses, and collective or enterprise associations, whether in the form of industry, business,

professional activities etc., in which agents are engaged in the joint pursuit of some imagined or wished-for common satisfaction. Unlike transactional and enterprise associations, civil association consists in the mutual acknowledgement of the practices subscribed to in the course of seeking substantive satisfactions which, as practices subscribed to, help illuminate or render intelligible transactions without being themselves constitutive of the transactions. Civic association is relationship in terms of the conditions of a practice, rather than the joint pursuit of a common good or the satisfaction of substantive wants.

Oakeshott characterizes the ideal character of the civil condition as *civitas,* which consists of *cives* or persons related to each other by means of, or in terms of, *lex* (or law) within a comprehensive framework of association which is called *respublica.* While corporate or enterprise association is exclusive and voluntary and may be dependent upon skills and talents possessed by some but denied to others, civil association or *civitas* is necessary and all inclusive. Everyone is, by virtue of being a person at all, a *cives* and as such necessarily recognizes practices that provide for the possibility of other types of association involving the pursuit of substantive satisfactions. Subscription to these practices which are essentially moral is a necessary condition of the possibility of pursuing substantive goals of whatever sort. As a set of practises then the civil condition is an enactment of the language of civility; the instrument of conversation in which agents recognize and disclose themselves as *cives* and in which *cives* understand and continuously explore their relations with one another. They do this simply by subscribing to rules or prescriptions (*lex*) to which everyone falling under their authority or jurisdiction is obliged to conform. The rules of *civitas* are not hypothetical imperatives enjoining substantive actions, but moral considerations to be acknowledged and taken into account in acting in whatever manner one chooses to do so.

> A rule subsists in being understood and in being recognized as an authoritative prescription of identifiable conditions to be subscribed to in human conduct.(126)

Now since the norms of conduct do not as such include a recipe for applying them to contingent situations (in which case knowing what they are does not include knowing precisely how to embody them in practise) the condition of civil association necessarily postulates uncertainty and dispute about how the norms of *lex* relate to contingent situations and about the adequacy of circumstantial responses to these norms. This entails the postulate of an authoritative adjudicative procedure for resolving such uncertainties and

disputes. Such a procedure is not to be confused with the procedures of arbitration or compromise, and is not to be negotiated in terms of "social policy", "expediency", "the national interest", "common purpose" or "general happiness". Adjudication, in other words, is not a means for achieving certain goals or achieving specific substantive wants. The evaluation of an act as "just" is categorially different from evaluating it in terms of its "consequences".

The rationality of adjudication is therefore not a species of deductive reasoning nor does it consist in the application of rules or *lex*; *i.e.*, the subsumption of individual instances under general principles. The rationality of adjudication is concerned with the explication of the *meaning* of *lex* in a contingent situation, which is an exercise of attribution rather than deduction. Just as enterprise association is necessarily a relationship in terms of acknowledged "managerial" decisions contingently connected with a common purpose, so civil association is necessarily a relationship in terms of the accumulated meanings of *lex* which emerge in the adjudication of disputes.

The enactment of *lex* postulates, first of all, a belief that *lex* is alterable in principle and secondly, a legislative procedure for alteration. Unlike managerial opinion, or social policy analysis, legislative opinion is concerned with the composition of a system of moral not instrumental considerations and is therefore unconcerned with the claims or merits of any interest in procuring substantive satisfactions. Legislative opinion must therefore include rules specifying the jurisdiction of *lex*; rules for ascertaining the meaning of *lex* and for adjudicating disputes about its meaning in contingent situations; rules for making, repealing, or amending *lex*; rules in which offices such as those of adjudicator or legislator are set up or recognized and which specify their powers, duties and procedures; and rules for identifying and evaluating rules — all of which constitute a single system of related conditions, a practice of civil association.

The civil condition, specified as relationship in terms of a system of *lex*, prescribes conditions for the intercourse of *cives* and provides offices and procedures concerned with enacting *lex* and with settling uncertainties or disputes about its meaning in contingent situations. *Civitas* is a mode of association within which to engage in all those adventures of self-disclosure and self-enactment and· to explore all those relationships of affection, of compassion, of business, or of joint enterprise which constitute the substantive concern of human life. An overriding postulate of this possibility is the expectation and assurance that the conditions will be generally and adequately subscribed to, and this postulates procedures and offices which do not belong to the engagement of enacting *lex* or of elucidating its meaning in contingent situations but to the engagement of "ruling", an engagement which is both

21

necessary and unique to civil association.(141)

Rulers *qua* rulers are not themselves persons with substantive wants. They are not managers, arbitrators or patrols of preferred interests, or protectors of ideology. Oakeshott admits, however, that rulers may also be "Lords" and as Lords they may unavoidably seek imagined and wished-for satisfactions — not the least of which is the satisfaction of power; and for this purpose they may employ the services of employees, whose conduct they manage. Nevertheless, Oakeshott insists, the preservation of the civil condition depends absolutely upon a ruler's "Lordship" not being allowed to invade, to usurp, or even to colour his rulership, so that the relationship between ruler and subject does not devolve into a transactional relationship. Ruling is an engagement *sine ire et sine studio:*

> If ruling were itself to be understood as the deliberation, the choice, and the execution of a 'policy' in which the substantive resources of the ruled (their attention, their energy, their time, and their wealth) are compulsorily or contractually enlisted, in whole or in part, in a joint undertaking or series of such undertakings of which the rulers are the 'managers', then it could have no place whatever in civil association. It would be the substitution of 'lordship' for rulership, of demesne for realm, of role-performer for subject, and of transactional relationship for civil association.(146)

The ideal condition of *Cives* is called *"respublica"*, the public concern or consideration of *cives*. *Respublica*, however, does not define or even describe a common substantive purpose, interest, or "good". It cannot therefore serve as a vehicle for nationalism and ideology. It is a manifold of rules and rule-like pre-emptions to be subscribed to in all of the enterprises and adventures in which self-chosen satisfactions or agents may be sought, without itself being an enterprise or adventure or satisfaction.

From this account of *respublica* Oakeshott offers what might be regarded as a revisionist account of the social contract. In contrast to the usual interpretation of the social contract, Oakeshott insists that the recognition of the authority of the rules comprising the contract does not entail either "approving" or "disapproving" the conditions prescribed. It does not mean recognizing the "desirability" of subscribing to them, or even acknowledging the consequences of subscribing or not subscribing to them. Finally, Oakeshott insists, the obligation to subscribe to the terms of *lex* has nothing whatever to do with

having taken part in the deliberation in which they were determined. If there is a motive for subscribing to rules it is neither hope nor fear, but respect for rules as such.

> Rules are not rules in virtue of the sanctions attached to them or in respect of the power of rulers to exact penalties or to refuse recognitions. And to be associated in terms of expectations about the consequences of subscribing or of not subscribing to rules is not be associated in terms of the recognition of rules as rules …. What relates *cives* to one another and constitutes civil association is the acknowledgement of the authority of *respublica* and the recognition of subscription to its conditions as an obligation. Civil authority and civil obligation are the twin pillars of the civil condition. (149)

While the acknowledgement of the authority of a rule does not entail recognition of the desirability of the conditions it prescribes, Oakeshott does not rule out or forbid this as a legitimate enterprise in its own right. The obligations of *cives* in respect of *respublica* simply disallows the substitution of one for the other. As a legitimate enterprise, however, the evaluation of the desirability of the conditions of conduct prescribed in *respublica* is the business of "politics". In keeping with the concepts of adjudication, legislation and ruling, politics, too, must remain free of any considerations having to do with the satisfaction of substantive wants — this is the business of management. The proper business of politics is the consideration of what constitutes civil association as such.

> Political action or utterance is action or utterance whose imagined and wished-for outcome is not another or others responding in a wished-for performance but is a rule which prescribes conditions to be subscribed to by all alike in unspecifiable future performances. (163)

The possibility of political engagement entails a relationship to *respublica* which is at once acquiescent and critical. The ingredient of acquiescence is assent to its authority. Without this there can be no politics; for to deny it is not merely to refuse to subscribe to the conditions specified in *lex,* it is to deny civil

obligation and thus to extinguish civil intercourse and with it the possibility of reflecting upon its conditions in terms of their desirability. As a critical enterprise politics "theorizes" the postulates of civil association. As a theoretical engagement, however, politics is deliberative, persuasive and argumentative, rather than demonstrative.(173 ff.) Political theory is not a "science" which attempts to ground the authority of rules in transcendental principles, norms, laws of reason or nature. While civil rules are in principle non-deducible, neither are they merely opinions, acts of will, irrational preferences or so-called subjective judgments of civil "value" or "interest".

Finally, Oakeshott declares, politics is categorially distinguished from ruling as ruling is from managing. Ruling is a diurnal engagement, the concern of persons who occupy offices; and its utterance is authoritative and not persuasive. Deliberation and argument are not, of course, entirely absent from a civil rule, and particularly not from adjudication; but there they are concerned with the meaning of *lex* in contingent situations, not with the desirability of the conditions it prescribes. Nevertheless, just as rulers will sometimes engage in "management", so they may participate in politics. However, as in the exercise of "Lordship" they must put aside their *majestas* and thus notionally vacate their offices in order to participate. One does not rule politically, and neither ruling nor politics should be confused with managing.

> Rulers who design to purchase the assent of their subjects to the authority of *respublica* by the argumentative recommendation of the desirability of its prescriptions, by instigations to subscribe, by negotiation with those of their subjects who are disposed to disapprove, by bribes or benefactions, by cajolery, by indistinct promises of better things to come, by reproach, encouragement, dissimulation, or foreboding, in short, by the exercise of the art of persuasive leadership, have ceased to be rulers and have become managers. (168)

Under such circumstances civil association is corrupted by having imposed upon it what is appropriate only in enterprise association concerned with the satisfaction of wants; where the terms of association are agreements about what is to be done, where the recognition of the desirability of doing it is what constitutes the association, and where "leadership" is the means of sustaining this agreement. Genuine politics thus excludes "benevolent plans for the general betterment of mankind", "for diminishing the discrepancy between wants and satisfactions", or for "moral improvement". Also excluded are both

patronage and proposals for awards of benefits or advantage to ascertainable individual or corporate interests claimed on account of merit. Such claims are not merely contingently excluded from political discourse, they are necessarily excluded by the character of *respublica*. Civil rulers and legislators, whose business it is to enact changes in *respublica* cannot be patrons of powerful, preferred, or otherwise meritorious interests nor can they be advocates of social policy.

> A proposal to prescribe as a rule that a certain opinion, theorem, purported a statement of fact, doctrine, creed, dogma, or the like be believed to be true or false, or that certain conduct be believed to be morally right or wrong or be believed to be organically beneficial or harmful to human beings, cannot be a political proposal.(170)

Oakeshott's view of legislation, ruling, politics and political theory is thus clearly anti-enlightenment. While he does not invalidate the conception of a policy science as an ingredient in management and enterprise association, he is hostile to the encroachment of this science upon the enterprises of politics and ruling. To argue such a position is difficult, however, since by Oakeshott's own ruling the rules of philosophy expressly forbid complying with the demand for demonstration. Is it then self-evident that the terms of *respublica*, ruling, and politics must exclude such considerations? If so we are left with a number of perplexing issues.

In the first place, while the ideal relationship between ruler and subject is an engagement *sine ira et sine studio,* the dilemma facing modern *cives* is that as a result of irresponsibility in the pursuit of substantive goals, civil association is threatened with dissolution or destruction, and it is becoming increasingly necessary for rulers to become managers. The reason for this is that the conditions of civility as such do not guarantee sound management or sound social policies or even wisdom with respect to the selection of goals. For example, at the present rate of energy consumption, and assuming a continuous policy of environmentally hazardous exponential growth, the world population will soon face a crisis of unparalleled proportion. If we cannot trust common sense to intervene on behalf of sanity what alternative do we have but to invite intervention by rulers?

Oakeshott warns, however, that "if there is civil virtue in this response to a threat of dissolution, there is also equivocation. For rulers to become managers even of an undertaking such as this and for subjects to become partners or role-performers in a compulsory enterprise association even such as this, is itself a

suspension of the civil condition. *Inter armis silent legis*. (147) Worse still, if I may continue the argument on Oakeshott's behalf, it may be the prelude to totalitarianism. In this substitution of "Lordship" for "ruling" is the seed of the satanic vision of the happiness of man brought about through the application of management techniques. Here is the satanic vision of the happy state in which the government is operated and managed as a vast institution of accounting and control, in which "the whole of society will have become one office and one factory".[7] Add to this "policy" the power of behavioural engineering, which, in the words of B.F. Skinner, promises "to shape the behaviour of the members of a group so that they will function smoothly for the benefit of all",[8] and the suspension of the civil condition is complete and irreversible.

A second and related difficulty stems from Oakeshott's refusal to consider whether there are any circumstances that would justify the use of force to restore a society in dissolution or to effect a transfer of power by revolutionary means. As Oakeshott defines the ideal conditions of *respublica,* there is simply no basis for arguing a morally theoretical justification for revolution or even civil disobedience; "belligerence is alien to civil association". (273)

Yet it could be argued that no adequate political philosophy can presume to define the conditions of a social contract without at the same time defining the conditions under which the contract can be and indeed ought to be challenged, through such processes as protest, disobedience and revolution. If so, then, Oakeshott's adventure in political theorizing will not qualify as an adequate account of the social contract. Let us not forget, however, that there is a profound reason for this. For Oakeshott, theorizing is an adventure in understanding the conditions of civility, and there is simply no "civil" procedure whereby *cives* can engage in revolutionary action and remain *cives.* The very need for revolutionary action at all is a sign that civility has been overwhelmed by barbarism, and it is questionable whether it can be restored by resorting to further acts of barbarism. Since revolution proceeds by means of a logic of terror and must necessarily be managed, it is difficult to imagine that once successful, revolutionary leaders and terrorists will voluntarily consent to becoming "rulers" (in Oakeshott's sense), thus running the risk of re-creating the conditions of corruption all over again. At best we might expect a solution not unlike that proposed by Sartre in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason.* In the case of Sartre, his inability to provide a more "civil" means of maintaining the pledge that lies at the basis of his contract is consistent with his refusal, as a philospher, to show any confidence in the cumulative reliability of human character. Like Oakeshott, Sartre abhors the need for justifications, motives and policies, as sources of moral and political commitment and obligation, whether by *cives* or rulers. Like Sartre, Oakeshott may find that his purity of outlook

will provide nothing of relevance to the needs of those who are compelled by their circumstances to revolt. If, in such times, philosophers cannot offer wise counsel, what remains but to seek it elsewhere, from the logicians of terror? Much the same point is made by David Kettler in his perceptive review of Oakeshott's *Rationalism in Politics* published in 1962. "The interpretive enterprise of social and political theory", writes Kettler, "has been carried on by intellectuals animated by moral responsibility, and it makes no sense apart from that impetus".

> Unquestionably, that spirit has often led to grave errors: worship of illusion instead of sober appraisal of reality, intoning glib or murky moralizing slogans instead of the painstaking search for a human perspective, delusions of omnipotence instead of accepting the intellectual's place as gadfly, critic, and conscience. But the alternative to responsibility remains complicity. In postulating a radical disjunction between theory and practice, Oakeshott has misinterpreted his own task and misjudged the very considerations which lead him to argue as he does — or to argue at all ... particularly when we attend his words against the background of the great events of our time: the attempts to stave off thermonuclear devastation and the terrible efforts of suffering multitudes to obtain a decent human existence. His conception of his own activity derives primarily from the Epicurean tradition; his discourses are set in philosophical groves. Oakeshott's work dramatically raises again the question which was debated in Roman antiquity and which the Scottish moral philosophers reopened for modern thought in their violent attacks on their dear friend David Hume: how is it possible to eliminate illusion without becoming a "traitor to the cause of mankind"?[9]

The dilemma is not an easy one to resolve. For if philosophy is both the language and guardian of reason and civility, then to adopt the language of tactics, strategies and policies, turns philosophers into managers and philosophy into ideology. At the same time, however, because of the very nature of "civility" and "the civil condition", which is man's freedom from nature, philosophy necessarily grants men the freedom to submit to nature. The risk of corruption is thus permanent; and while in its moments of infinite

27

yearning, philosophy may aspire to a higher wisdom than it has hitherto been able to attain, it is a prospect whose pursuit must necessarily be suffered in fear and trembling. This is the equivocal but inescapable condition in which we are placed by Oakeshott's "well-considered intellectual adventure recollected in tranquility".

In the third and final essay, "On the Character of a Modern European State", Oakeshott rejects most of the more popular readings of the history of Western civilisation. These may be divided roughly into two approaches. The first is the somewhat romantic characterization of the growth of Western civilisation as a continuous, painful and partly successful "quest for community". According to this speculation the quest for community has been disrupted in the modern world by a type of "possessive individualism" which is said to have supervened upon the tradition of communal intimacy and warmth. The result is that the contemporary world bears witness to a profound expression of longing of peoples for their lost sense of community, combined with an effort to recover a lost sense of communal identity. One might even regard the writings of philosophers such as Rousseau as an attempt to recall, on behalf of the alienated peoples of the European states, what Comté spoke of as *la pensée de l'ensemble et le solidarité commune*. Oakeshott has no more regard for this philosophy of history than he has for the pretensions of the social sciences to disclose the underlying laws of human conduct. As in the case of the social sciences, this interpretation of history stems from the yearning to relieve ourselves from the burden of uncertainty that derives from the encounter with nothingness; the realisation that as in the case of the individual, the life of a community is also *"un voyage au bout de la nuit"*.

Nor has he much regard for the view that the dominant disposition of the modern European consciousness is for a functionally integrated solidarity and the enjoyment of uniform benefits, to be achieved, not by the recovery of a lost sense of community, but by bold initiatives undertaken by governments prepared to bring the world under technological control and management. This view, which Oakeshott calls, "teleocracy", has no more credibility than the nostalgia for the recovery of paradise lost.

In place of a teleological view of history, Oakeshott suggests what amounts to a hermeneutical approach, according to which the human character may be conceived as harbouring two contrary dispositions, neither of which is strong enough to defeat or put to flight the other. The one is a disposition to be "self-employed", in which a man recognizes himself and all others in terms of self-determination and in terms of wants rather than satisfactions. The other is to identify oneself as a partner with others in a common stock of resources and a common stock of talents with which to exploit it. In such co-operative undertakings there is a tendency to prefer outcomes to adventures and satisfac-

tions to wants. Although the self-understandings of the various states comprising the present European community are varied and manifold, it may be that they are formed within the context of a struggle between these two dispositions; with the result that the modern state has emerged as equivocal in character. For Oakeshott, it would be unwise to even attempt a resolution of this tension; to attempt, for example, to submit to the first impulse by removing all restraints to action, save the protection of liberty. This is the position of libertarianism and anarchism. Equally unacceptable is the attempt to force everything into conformity with some "common good". Indeed, Oakeshott contends, the attempt to impose upon people, by whatever means, the character of purposive associations is simply contrary to the natural order. It does not give rise to a genuine community. For, as Oakeshott declares in a reply to his critics, which serves as a fitting conclusion to his "tale":

> it is an indispensible condition of this kind of association that each and every associate shall have expressly chosen to be joined in its enterprise or shall have otherwise acknowledged its purpose as his own and that he be permitted to contract out of the association if and when he no longer wishes to be associated .... Consequently, the undertaking to impose this character upon a state whose membership is compulsory constitutes a moral enormity, and it is the attempt and not the deed which convicts it of moral enormity. And it matters not one jot whether this undertaking is that of one powerful ruler (or *coup d'étatiste*), a few, or a majority. Thus the only "animosity" I have ever entertained or expressed towards "community" or association in terms of the pursuit of a substantive purpose is concerned with the attribution of this character to a *state* or the attempt to impose it upon a *state*. And indeed, genuine purposive association can exist only when this character has *not* been imposed upon a state.[10]

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Notes

1. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975, pp. 329 + x

2. Above all, the philosopher must resist the temptation to return to the cave in order to redeem his fellow men. There is simply no room in Oakeshott's perspective for the idea of politics as *engagé* or committed to action in the relief of human suffering and injustice. Oakeshott follows Hegel in his judgment that politics is a purely philosophical enterprise, and the task

of philosophy as political science is not to teach the state what it ought to be but simply to show how the state, the ethical universe, is to be understood. For both Hegel and Oakeshott, the ideal political world is one in which the theoretical mind can be at home regardless of conditions obtaining in the real world; the world of human suffering, hunger and injustice. Engagement in politics, he writes, entails a disciplined imagination. "It is to put by for another occasion the cloudy enchantments of *Schlaraffenland,* the earth flowing with milk and honey and the sea transmuted into ginger beer, it is to forswear the large consideration of human happiness and virtue, the mysteries of human destiny, the rift that lies between the aspirations of human beings and the conditions of a human life, and even the consideration of the most profitable or least burdensome manner of satisfying current wants, and to focus attention upon civility." (164)

Oakeshott defines moral rules as practices in terms of which to think, to choose, to act, and to utter.(79) As such they may be likened to the rules of artistic endeavour, to be followed in such a way as to permit improvisation. Their authority does not depend upon any transcendental principles from which they may have been derived, nor even upon their having been chosen. Moral rules are non-deducible and there is no such experience as "moral choice" (although there are, of course, choices with respect to the pursuit of substantive wants). (79) To put it in slightly different terms, which again draws on the analogy between moral rules and the rules of artistic creativity, in authentic human conduct, moral rules are not simply observed but interpreted and every interpretation contains a moment of self-enactment as well as self-disclosure.

This view of morality may be further explicated in terms of what he says in his previously published *Rationalism and Politics* (London: Methuen, 1962). In this work Oakeshott defines rationality in general and morality in particular as knowledge of how to behave appropriately in the circumstances. There is no way in which such knowledge can be made to spring solely from a knowledge of propositions about good behaviour.(108) Knowledge of *how* to practice an activity is acquired only *in* the practice of the activity, and a person's moral integrity is nothing more and nothing less than faithfulness to the knowledge acquired in this manner. To act morally is therefore to act in such a way that the coherence of the "idiom" of the activity to which the conduct belongs is preserved and possibly enhanced. What is crucial in Oakeshott's understanding of morality is his insistence that to the extent that moral conduct involves subscription to rules and principles, this should not be confused with slavish adherence to rules and principles. As he puts it in *Rationalism and Politics,* "principles, rules and purposes are mere abridgements of the coherence of the activity, and we may easily be faithful to them while losing touch with the activity itself". (102) The faithfulness which characterizes "moral integrity" is not faithfulness to something fixed and finished (for knowledge of how to pursue an activity is always in motion): it is a faithfulness which itself contributes to and not merely illustrates the coherence of the activity. *(ibid.)*

4.   *An Essay on Metaphysics,* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1941, pp. 291-2.

5.   *Science, Politics & Gnosticism,* Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1968, p. 18.

6.   *The Idea of History,* Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1946, pp. 227-8.

7.   V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution,* Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, pp. 173-4.

8.   *Walden Two,* New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962, p. 175.

9.   "The Cheerful Discourses of Michael Oakeshott", *World Politics,* April 1964, p. 489.

10. "On Misunderstanding Human Conduct: A Reply To My Critics", *Political Theory,* Vol. 4, No. 3, August 1976, p. 367.

THE ROLE OF IDEALS IN FREUD'S
THEORY OF CIVILISATION

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In *Civilization and its Discontents* Freud takes up the problem of the status and function of ideals in human life, which he first broached in a fragmentary way in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.* It was inevitable that Freud should have addressed the issue of what makes civilisation possible and approached it in relation to the meaning of ideals, because the ideal is a peculiar product of thinking which both refers in some way to concrete and sensuous experience, and transcends that experience. For any theory such as Freud's, which attempts to derive thought, its rules, and its concepts from an experience which itself is not cognitive, some account must be given of why ideal standards arise and what function they perform. Freud was troubled by the problem of ideals because he held them to be necessary to the constitution of civilisation, but not to the nature of the individual human being. Civilisation from his viewpoint was inherently precarious because it had no essential relation to the fundamental structure of the self. Unlike Hegel, who staked his entire interpretation of history upon the necessary unfolding of the idea of freedom, Freud affirmed the contingency of ideals. Against the dogmatism of absolute idealism, he offered a sceptical theory of civilisation which is ultimately grounded in a dogmatic naturalism.

The importance of Freud's theory of civilisation for contemporary political and social philosophy lies in its attempt to defend and vindicate civilised life while avoiding the idealist assumption that ideals are immanent and necessary to history. The problem of civilisation and the speculative response to it, the philosophy of civilisation, are creations of idealist philosophy rooted in Kant's transcendental idealism, which transfers the interest in ultimate meaning from an intelligible reality set over and against concrete and imperfect existence to the world itself, particularly the cultural world created by human thought and action. From the standpoint of the philosophy of civilisation, Kant attempted to demonstrate the function that ideas which have no object in any possible experience perform in the perfection of human life. The hallmark of civilisation from the Kantian perspective, is the acknowledgment of and commitment to ideas which do not constitute but regulate human pursuits such as science, art,

and the creation of community life. In Hegel's philosophy, the regulative ideas of Kant become ideas constitutive of the development of human history. The reaction against absolute idealism in the West, which began in the nineteenth century and of which Freud is a part, generally took a sceptical form and was based on the thesis that ideals are in some way distorted expressions of specific practical interests, whether economic, vital, sexual, or other. The reduction of ideals to natural impulses throws civilisation itself into question, because it deprives it of any objective ground. Hence, Freud's attempt to defend civilisation evinces an appreciation of the dangers of scepticism and an awareness of the need to ground civilisation philosophically. Such appreciation and awareness is rare and noteworthy among partisans of the sceptical reaction, who, for the most part, were naive about the consequences of their position or were consistent foes of civilisation.

The following discussion will outline and assess Freud's effort to defend and vindicate civilisation on naturalistic grounds. The aim will be to show that civilisation is not intelligible when interpreted from the Freudian perspective, but that many of the concerns and observations which Freud brings forward provide a corrective to the dogmatic assertions of absolute idealism. The critique of Freud will be performed, from a Kantian perspective and will be based on the argument that Freud confused constitutive with regulative ideas, essentially the same mistake made by absolute idealists, but in a different form. Freud was correct in that civilisation is not historically necessitated by the development of an idea immanent to social existence, but incorrect in that the idea regulating civilisation is contingent upon an empirical balance of instincts. As a contribution to civilisation, his psychoanalytic method is only possible if it is grounded in the idea of rational freedom, which is the regulative idea of civilisation.

The Idea of Perfection

Freud's initial critique of rational ideals is performed in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* where he devotes an extended paragraph to the impulsion towards perfection. He comments that it may be difficult for many people "to abandon the belief that there is an instinct towards perfection at work in human beings, which has brought them to their present high level of intellectual and ethical sublimation and which may be expected to watch over their development into supermen". [1] He declares that he has "no faith" in the existence of such an instinct and argues that the drive towards perfection, which is manifest in a minority of individuals, "can easily be understood as a result of instinctual repression upon which is based all that is most precious in human civilization." [2] Yet the "untiring impulsion towards further perfection" differs

from the other results of repressed instincts because, "no substitutive or reactive formations and no sublimations will suffice to remove the repressed instinct's persisting tension." Freud attempts to explain this anomalous impulse by postulating a "difference in amount between the pleasure of satisfaction which is *demanded* and that which is actually *achieved*". For those who seek perfection, the "backward path that leads to complete satisfaction" of the instinct is blocked by resistances, the only alternative is "to advance in the direction in which growth is still free — though with no prospect of bringing the process to a conclusion or of being able to reach the goal".[3] Freud compares the impulse to perfection to a "neurotic phobia", which results from an attempt to flee from the satisfaction of an instinct.

Although Freud does not identify the repressed instinct of which the impulse towards perfection is a symptom or manifestation, he observes that "the efforts of Eros to combine organic substances into ever large *(sic.)* unities probably provide a substitute for this 'instinct towards perfection' " and that this "supposititious" instinct can be explained by Eros "taken in conjunction with the results of repression".[4] Freud also notes that the *dynamic* conditions for the impulse towards perfection are universally present, but that the *economic* situation favouring its appearance only occurs in rare cases.

Freud's fragmentary discussion of the impulse towards perfection provides a starting point for the critical analysis of his theory of civilisation. It must first be noted that, in sceptical fashion, Freud does not address himself to the *idea* of perfection, but to an impulse or a supposed instinct. Thus, he adopts a psychologistic line of argument, in which he does not consider what perfection means, whether it is the same as or different from any other meanings or objects towards which individuals direct their activity, or even whether it can be defined at all. Freud's notion of perfection lacks any positive meaning, not only in the sense of an end that might be actualized, but also in the sense of a criterion of judgment or critical standard. Perfection is defined negatively by Freud as a substitute for pleasure which has the characteristic of *not* being able to be specified in terms of any particular reactive formation or sublimation. It is as far as the discussion in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* goes, an empty concept or, in Kant's terms, a concept without any correlative intuition.

If, however, as Freud argues, the impulse towards perfection has helped to create "all that is most precious in human civilization", its object, perfection, cannot be empty because if it were empty, then those who are impelled to perfect culture, social relations, and themselves would have no grounds to be dissatisfied with what they had created. It does not help to explain the impulse towards perfection in terms of an imbalance between the amount of pleasure demanded and the amount of pleasure achieved, because, even in Freud's account, perfection cannot be measured and the impulse towards it is not, at least directly, an impulse towards pleasure, but, on the contrary, is often an

33

affirmation of sacrifice, suffering and, at least, deferred gratification. Even if the hidden dynamics guiding the impulse towards perfection were economic, the conscious expression of these dynamics would take the form of overcoming the pleasure principle. Freud's discussion of the impulse towards perfection in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is contradictory, because if perfection is an empty concept, then the striving for it is either a striving for nothing or a random struggle. If the impulse towards perfection aims at nothing or anything, then civilisation itself has no ground and the motive that is supposed to create it is inadequate to it.

Perhaps Freud's discussion could be improved by arguing that the concept of perfection, considered apart from any instance of perfection which appears in experience, is empty, but that the impulse towards certain orders of perfection, such as scientific theory or ethical conduct, is explicable in each case in terms of some repressed desire. Were Freud to argue in this way, however, he would contradict his definition of the impulse towards perfection, the essence of which is to be free from any reactive formation or sublimation. It is clearly perfection itself which Freud addresses, and if the concept is vacant, then the impulse itself is impossible. Yet Freud explicitly acknowledges the impulse and is troubled enough to make a special attempt to account for it within the terms of his system.

Freud's hint that Eros, taken in conjunction with the results of repression, can explain the impulse towards perfection is taken up and made the basis of a defense of civilisation in *Civilization and its Discontents*. In this work Freud again states that he has been ''careful not to fall in with the prejudice that civilization is synonymous with perfecting, that it is the road to perfection pre-ordained for men''. [5] He holds, instead, that civilisation is ''a special process, comparable to the normal maturation of the individual''. [6] He approaches the discussion of this process in three different ways, each one grounded in an idea of perfection which is not so acknowledged. Freud's unwillingness to acknowledge that his analysis of civilisation is dependent upon rational ideas renders his argument dogmatic, because instead of using the ideas as criteria and attempting to clarify and relate them to one another, he makes them constitutive of life.

Each of Freud's discussions of civilisation as a process sets up a tension between two demands, the ideal reconciliation of which is the norm of civilised conduct. Hence, the very form of his analysis presupposes ideal criteria, although his naturalistic theory of instinct denies them. The three tensions and the three consequent ideals exposed by Freud are different and contradictory, and he makes little effort to compare them and clarify their relations with one another. Yet each of the ideals is dependent upon the notion of perfection, in particular the perfection of social life, and is unintelligible without it. The

logical ground of Freud's use of ideals, although his theory denies any regulative status to them, is embedded in the notion of process itself. If civilisation is a process constituted by opposed demands, then that process must be structured by a norm prescribing the harmonization of those demands, because the notion of demand presupposes the notion of satisfaction, which is a finalistic and not a mechanistic concept. Logically, Freud's discussion is either grounded in a rational norm or is merely an expression of his repressed desires. Since Freud does not merely state that civilisation is a result of repressed desires, but inquires into the structure of civilisation, it may be assumed that he meant to offer objective claims and not merely express his personal feelings.

Freud's initial discussion of the dialectic of civilisation appears in the third section of *Civilization and its Discontents*, where he opposes freedom to justice. He notes that "the element of civilization enters on the scene" with the first attempt to regulate social relations "which affect a person as a neighbour, as a source of help, as another person's sexual object, as a member of a family and of a state". [7] Freud sets up his discussion in a classical rationalist manner, reminiscent of Hobbes's argument in *The Leviathan*, by claiming that in the absence of a collective definition of "right", social relations are determined by the "arbitrary will" of the strongest individual. The "decisive step of civilization" occurs when the individual's power is replaced by that of the community, "when a majority comes together which is stronger than any separate individual and which remains united against all separate individuals". [8]
The principle of the majority's union is justice, "the first requisite of civilization," which Freud defines as "the assurance that a law once made will not be broken in favour of an individual". [9] Freud clearly states that justice is merely a formal principle and implies "nothing as to the ethical value" of a law. Yet he concludes his discussion by arguing that the "final outcome" of civilisation "should be a rule of law to which all — except those who are not capable of entering a community — have contributed by a sacrifice of their instincts, and which leaves no one — again with the same exception — at the mercy of brute force." [10]

Just as Hobbes argued in *The Leviathan*, Freud also claims that liberty "was greatest before there was any civilization, though then, it is true, it had for the most part no value, since the individual was scarcely in a position to defend it." [11] Even after civilisation has appeared, the urge for freedom persists and may take the form of opposition "against some existing injustice" or the form of hostility to civilisation itself. Freud remarks that revolt against "particular forms or demands of civilization" may "prove favourable to a further development of civilisation," while, of course, revolt against civilisation itself destroys its object. He finally claims that "a good part of the struggles of

mankind centre round the single task of finding an expedient accommodation — one, that is, that will bring happiness — between the claim of the individual and the cultural claims of the group.'' [12] He remains uncertain about whether such an accommodation is possible.

Aside from any criticism that might be levelled against Freud's appeal to the Hobbesian argument and its implied dualism between nature and convention, Freud's discussion suffers from a serious internal defect. He derives the passage from individual liberty, which is defined as the freedom to satisfy one's desires without normative constraint, to civil society from a will of the majority. Yet, to use Rousseau's terms, the majority's will is not particular, but general. It is not the will that certain individuals be protected from certain others, but the will that all be subject to the law regardless of their particular relations to one another. However, this universal principle cannot be derived directly from its supposed origin because it presupposes the rational norm of justice that each one is entitled to protection by virtue of the sacrifice of natural liberty to the community. This universal principle of justice, the basis of social contract theory, is regulative over any specific determination of positive law with regard to particular interests. Were civilisation to be derived merely from the accidental will of a majority it would not be possible, because law would merely reflect the majority's interest at a certain time and would not create a community ''which remains united against all separate individuals''. At best, the majority would be united against the minority, but not against any of its own members, who would be united only by their own interests. Under such conditions, there would be no community but merely mob rule. Social contract theorists, particularly Rousseau, understood that the creation of a civil society presupposes a rational norm of justice which transcends any particular interests. This is not to say that actual civil societies ever realise the norm of justice, that they leave no one ''at the mercy of brute force'' or, for that matter, at the mercy of other forms of social control such as bribery, fraud, flattery, and appeals to guilt. It is, however, to argue that without the idea of justice as a regulative principle, which can be derived only from reason and not from interest, civilisation is unintelligible.

The preceding analysis reveals that the root tension in Freud's initial discussion of civilisation is not, as he claims, that between individual liberty and group will, but that between the idea of justice and particular interest, whether group or individual. There is indeed a tension between individual and group, but this has nothing to do with civilisation. If we dispense with the fiction of a state of nature and instead presume that human beings are social from the start, civilisation is not the protection of the group from the individual, but primarily the defense of the individual from coercion by the group. Under this interpretation, civilisation is a regulative idea prescribing

that each person be treated as an end, never only as a means. Freud, however, was constrained by his naturalism to deny the autonomy of reason as a source of ideals and he could not conceive of a regulative idea. Instead he argued that the "course of cultural development seems to tend towards the universal rule of law." Hence, he made civilisation a *constitutive* idea of cultural development, but had no ground for his notion but a seeming tendency. Were Freud to have begun his discussion of civilisation not from the abstract desirous individual of classical rationalism but from the fact of human sociality, he might have understood that the essential tension is between societies united by non-rational conceptions and civilised societies. Civilisation, then, is an idea towards which any empirical social processes may or may not be directed.

Freud's second and third discussions of civilisation as a process may be interpreted as attempts, of which he did not appear to be self-conscious, to rectify his initial approach to the problem. In the sixth section of *Civilization and its Discontents* he recalls his first discussion and states that he "may now add that civilization is a process in the service of Eros, whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity, the unity of mankind." [13] He notes that we do not know "why this has to happen", but that we can be sure of the purpose. Yet Eros is not free to do his work, but is opposed by Thanatos, the death instinct, which is overtly manifested as the "hostility of each against all and of all against each". Freud concludes that, "the meaning of the evolution of civilization is no longer obscure to us: It must present the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species." [14] This struggle is "probably irreconcilable".

Freud's second discussion of civilisation must be paired with his third, which appears in the eighth section of *Civilization and its Discontents,* if his full solution to the problems in his initial treatment is to be understood. He begins by reiterating the theme that in the process of civilisation "by far the most important thing is the aim of creating a unity out of the individual human beings." This aim, which is not alien to the individual's erotic instincts, runs parallel to and often conflicts with the individual's desire for happiness, to the point that "it almost seems as if the creation of a great human community would be most successful if no attention had to be paid to the happiness of the individual." [15] Yet the "urge" towards personal happiness cannot be detached from that towards union with other human beings and, so, "the two processes of individual and of cultural development must stand in hostile opposition to one another and mutually dispute the ground." [16] The new "struggle between individual and society," however, is not derivative of the contradiction between Eros and Thanatos, but is "a dispute within the economics of the

libido'' which ''does admit to an eventual accommodation in the individual, as, it may be hoped, it will also do in the future of civilization, however much that civilization may oppress the life of the individual to-day.''[17]

The second and third discussions of civilisation must be taken in conjunction because they represent a splitting of the unity which characterized the first discussion. In the first discussion the apparent opposition set up by Freud is between natural liberty and group control. Yet as the argument is developed, liberty within civilisation can be exercised against civilisation itself or against particular forms of civilised life. It appears that in the second and third discussions these two forms of the exercise of liberty are separated from one another, the first being identified with the death instinct and the second with Eros. While in the first discussion Freud was unsure whether the tension between liberty and control could be resolved in principle, in the second discussion he is certain that the conflict between Eros and Thanatos cannot be harmonized, and in the third discussion he is certain that the opposition between individual development and cultural development can be reconciled in principle.

Freud is able to separate the two forms of the exercise of liberty from one another only by drastically transforming the ideal of civilisation. No longer as in the first discussion, is universal justice the ideal of civilisation, it has been replaced by the libidinal unification of humanity. Libidinal unification, however, is not a rational idea gained from reflection on the meaning of persons as ends-in-themselves, but an impersonal dynamic characterizing life as such. It contends with an equally impersonal death instinct, which provides the grounds for Freud's proclaimed dualism. This dualism, however, is no less dogmatic than Hegel's monistic idealism, in which absolute spirit strives for self-realisation against its own negativity. Monistic idealism, however, at least had the advantage of guaranteeing an ideal of civilisation, while Freud's vitalistic metaphysics undercuts any such ideal. The struggle between Eros and Thanatos cannot be as equal as Freud seems to claim. Eros is successful only on the condition that Thanatos is repressed, but according to Freud, death is the necessary fate of life and thus can never be totally repressed. Thanatos must ultimately triumph over Eros, making the third solution of reconciling individual development with cultural development spurious, because it depends upon the victory of Eros. In his second and third discussions of civilisation, Freud destroys the grounds for civilisation—making it a futile gesture. It is futile because the most fundamental instinct of the organism is to die in its own fashion (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*). Returning to the earlier discussion of the impulse towards perfection, it is clear that the instinct which is repressed by this urge is Thanatos. This impulse, which so troubled Freud, is not expressed in reactive formations or sublimations because it is the most complete expression of the struggle of Eros against death.

Freud's second and third discussions of civilisation do not resolve the problems of his first treatment, but only transfer them to a metaphysical plane. The individualism of the first discussion is not replaced by an acknowledgement of fundamental human sociality, but by an immanent and impersonal vitalism in which the reality of the person is entirely lost within the struggle of conflicting instincts. While in the first discussion Freud at least provided a rational criterion for social relations, although he did not acknowledge it as such, in his second and third discussions he renounces reason altogether by appealing to an instinct. The opponent of Eros, Thanatos, is quite explicable: it is the tendency of the organic to return to the inorganic and mechanical.

Putting aside any of the inherent contradictions in Freud's metaphysics, the erotic ideal defined in his second and third discussions does not even refer to civilisation. Libidinal unification, when it exists at all, does not exist among members of secondary groups, whose members are linked by symbolic mediations, but among intimates within primary groups. On the basis of Freud's own theory of sexuality the libido is cathected to specific individuals with whom there is a direct physical relation. Only in a very attenuated and sentimental sense is it possible to think of libidinal ties to races, peoples, and nations, not to mention mankind. As Hegel pointed out, bonds of feeling belong to the family, not to civil society or the state. The erotic ideal is utopian, in the sense that it refers to a return to Eden, which is, perhaps, an object of individualized conscious life, but which is not the ideal of civilisation. Civilisation, as Freud acknowledged in his first discussion, is grounded in justice, not in love. By grounding it in love in his second and third discussions, he made it a utopian conception and not a regulative ideal. In summary, if large numbers of people are to relate to one another on some basis other than control grounded in particular interest, those relations must gain their principle from universal and rational norms.

Civilisation as a Regulative Idea

In his third discussion of civilisation Freud remarks with some surprise that "it almost seems as if the creation of a great human community would be most successful if no attention had to be paid to the happiness of the individual." This observation is neither surprising nor paradoxical for a philosophy of civilisation which acknowledges the autonomy of reason with regard to the creation of normative criteria for social relations. In the analysis of Freud's first discussion of civilisation some suggestions were made about the way a rational defense of civilisation might proceed.

In his first discussion of civilisation Freud defined the ideal as a "rule of law

to which all — except those who are not capable of entering a community — have contributed by a sacrifice of their instincts, and which leaves no one — again with the same exception — at the mercy of brute force.'' Here civilisation is neither a positive ideal of libidinal union nor the imposition of the majority's will over a minority, but a rational ideal of respect for the individual. The only problem with this ideal is that it is too limited, because it is based on the tacit assumption that the only way in which people are denied their dignity by one another is through the use of arbitrary force. The restriction of uncivilised treatment to the use of force results, from a theoretical viewpoint, from Freud's rejection of any positive conception of persons as ends-in-themselves. At bottom, Freud's only positive conception of the good is sheer physical survival, which might just as well apply to animals lacking civilisation. Freud assumes, for the most part and in contradiction to the primacy of Thanatos, that life is good, but not that there is a good life. Why any form of life should not be brought under ''the rule of law'' is only explicable in terms of species chauvinism, not in terms of the ability of human beings to think the concept of law.

One might argue that our entire critique of Freud's theory of civilisation, which culminates in the judgment that Freud undermines the possibility of civilisation because he has no positive conception of the good, is based on a misuse of logic. Just because Freud does not explicitly define the content of the idea of perfection or of the good life, we are not justified in claiming that he fails to imply some positive content for these conceptions. After all, Freud was a therapist who tried to help human beings live better. In his practice he was not concerned merely with sheer physical survival, but with mental health. Further, Freud might acknowledge concrete standards of perfection while claiming that these standards originated in repressed instinct. He could vindicate civilisation without claiming that its ideals are autonomous.

No doubt, Freud did have his personal ideals which led him to pursue ends beyond physical survival. However his theory had to contradict the validity of any positive normative conceptions. The root of the contradiction in Freud's theory of civilisation is his failure to conceive of the idea of persons as ends-in-themselves, or, even more deeply, his failure to conceive of any ends transcending instinctual gratification which are not substitutes for such gratification. Freud, in fact, acknowledges the absence of any positive notion of ideals in his thought at the conclusion of *Civilization and its Discontents* when he remarks that he is ''certain'' that ''man's judgements of value follow directly his wishes for happiness — that, accordingly, they are an attempt to support his illusions with arguments.'' Freud claims to be ''impartial'' about the value of civilisation and to have guarded himself against the ''enthusiastic prejudice'' that ''our civilization is the most precious thing that we possess.'' If ideals are

interpreted as illusions, they may indeed perform a function in life, but they cannot ground collective life. Yet they only perform their function of limiting aggression if they are believed to ground community. Freud's theory, then, is not impartial with regard to civilisation because by declaring its founding ideas to be illusions he destroys belief in them when such belief is a requirement of their being able to serve their function. Hence, Freud's theory undermines civilisation.

The reason why Freud, despite his intentions, must become an enemy of civilisation is his fundamental commitment to scientific rationalism which has as its counterpart moral irrationalism. For Freud, the ethical component of the self, the super-ego, is defined as a "reaction formation". In other words, the commitment to ideals is the result of repressed aggression against others which appears consciously as aggression against the self and affirmation of the rights of others. Thus, one's moral acknowledgment of the other, in the Freudian scheme of things, is never positive, but always based upon an underlying hatred. Morality is not grounded in reason, but in repressed irrational impulses, although their origins can be explained according to a mechanistic rational model. From the viewpoint of scientific rationalism the object of science must not be intrinsically purposive; final causes must be excluded from inquiry. With regard to physical nature the exclusion of final causes does not lead to irrationalism but merely to suspension of judgment. However, when an attempt is made to explain the self, which expresses purposes, through the categories of natural science, the exclusion of final causes does imply irrationalism, because apparent purposes must be reduced to efficient causes. In particular, the notion of the person as an end must be discredited by showing moral experiences, such as trust, loyalty, and sacrifice, which are meaningful only with regard to a realm of persons, to be illusions.

The existence of a moral dimension of a human being, to which such experiences as loyalty, trust, sacrifice, responsibility, and guilt apply, certifies the idea of a realm of persons who are capable of such experiences, the idea of an ethical community which is the foundation of civilisation. It is not possible to make sense of the moral dimension from the perspectives of idealism (dogmatism) and naturalism (scepticism). For absolute idealism the ethical community is already constituted in, by, and for the Absolute. Belief in idealism destroys the moral dimension by making the collaboration of human beings unnecessary to the achievement of ethical life. For the consolation of theodicy the idealist must surrender the struggle against evil which constitutes the moral life and the idea of the person as an end which regulates that life. The naturalist or, better, the scientific rationalist must claim that the moral dimension is an illusion. This claim, like that of the idealist, destroys ethical life by breaking the tension between the ideal and the actual. While the

idealist absorbs the actual into the ideal, the scientific rationalist reduces the ideal to the actual. The autonomy of the ideal is secured by the double acknowledgment that we require ethics only because we do not treat one another as ends-in-ourselves, but that we are capable of the ethical life because we are ends-in-ourselves. Were we to treat one another as ends-in-ourselves spontaneously, we would not partake of ethical experience because we would be automatically trustworthy and responsible, in which case we would not even understand the concepts of trust and responsibility. On the other hand, if we did not acknowledge ourselves and one another as intrinsically worthy, we could make no commitments to overcome our limitations. Ethical experience in a collective context, in civilisation, depends upon the struggle against the systematic use of some human beings by others. Hence, the idea of civilisation is an idea of justice based upon the forebearance from the imposition of social-control mechanisms.

The possibility of a rational idea of civilisation depends upon the broadening and enrichment of the idea of justice to include not only protection from arbitrary force but from any exercise of social control except that which hinders the domination of other human beings. Domination has many forms which are distinct from the use of force, but nonetheless do not acknowledge human beings as ends-in-themselves who are capable of defining their own situations and of acknowledging and respecting that capacity in others. Bribery, flattery, fraud, and appeals to guilt are all ways in which people are stripped of their dignity by others who attempt to use them as means to extrinsic ends. A just society, which is the content of the idea of civilisation, would be one in which each would mutually forebear from using others as means to particular ends detached from the relation itself. This idea of justice is, of course, merely regulative, because it does not define which particular ends people should pursue, but only that they pursue those ends without exploiting others. Put another way, the idea of civilisation is the imperative that persons do not take advantage of one another by concealing their ends from one another and substituting for the open declaration of those ends extrinsic influences, whether seductive or coercive. The ideal of civilisation, the transformation of social control into self-control, presupposes the freedom of each one to express a definition of the situation and to honour the same freedom in others. Practically, it means sufficient forebearance by each one to allow the others to determine their lives.

It is not the purpose of this discussion to assess the practical possibility of the achievement of civilised societies, but merely to define the rational criterion for civilisation. Previous discussions of civilisation, both idealist and naturalist, have been flawed by a failure to understand the distinctiveness of their object. For Hegel, as for Freud in his first discussion, civilisation is defined in terms of

politics and its hallmark is the state. For Freud in his second and third discussions civilisation is defined in terms of feeling and its goal is an Edenic utopia. In both cases, however, the foundation of civilisation, civil society, disappears. In Hegelian absolutism civil society is absorbed into the state while in Freudian vitalism it is absorbed into an enormous family. Yet the perfection of civilisation would be the abolition of the state and respect for particular intimacies. Were human beings to refrain from taking advantage of one another they would not need the state, and were they to honour one another's intimacies they would not need to look beyond them to pseudo-*gemeinschaft*. They would neither impose public duty on private relations nor would they displace private affect on public objects. They would neither use love as the state's instrument nor seek love in the state.

The ideal of civilisation, the treatment of persons as ends-in-themselves, never as means only, is a regulative idea of the rational perfection of social relations, grounded in the acknowledgment of each person as an autonomous source of a knowing response to life. It stands above any particular desires, prescribing the way those desires should be satisfied and prohibiting the satisfaction of those desires which contradict its principle. The ideal of civilisation is neither immanent to history nor a result of repression, but an idea of reason. Perhaps some of the discontents of civilisation are due to the failure to understand what it is. The other discontents are, of course, rooted in the reasons why the idea of civilisation is not actualized. Those reasons are bound up with the problem of evil or why human beings take advantage of one another. That problem, however, is not the problem of civilisation but the problem of society itself, for which civilisation supplies the only rational remedy.

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Notes

1.   Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. New York: Bantam Books, 1959, p. 76.

2.   *Ibid*, pp. 76-77.

3.   *Ibid*, p. 77.

4.   *Ibid*, p. 78.

5. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1962, p. 43.

6. *Ibid*, pp. 44-45.

7. *Ibid*, p. 42.

8. *Ibid*

9. *Ibid*

10. *Ibid*

11. *Ibid*

12. *Ibid*, p. 43.

13. *Ibid*, p. 69.

14. *Ibid*

15. *Ibid*, p. 87.

16. *Ibid*, p. 88.

17. *Ibid*

CLARE PENTLAND AND THE LABOUR PROCESS

Paul Phillips

"An original and independent thinker" were the terms used by a colleague to describe Clare Pentland. They are terms, also, which serve to explain why he has had such a profound influence on the recent generation of labour and economic historians; and perhaps why such recognition and influence developed slowly after the completion of his landmark thesis, *Labour and the Development of Industrial Capitalism in Canada* in 1961. Certainly, the influence of the thesis was restricted because, although it circulated widely in photocopy form, it was never published, not because of a lack of interested publishers, but because Clare did not consider the work fully completed. He was, in this regard, a perfectionist. Unfortunately, protracted illness interfered with his research plans and he died before he had the opportunity to re-work the manuscript.

That is one part of the explanation. The thesis represented just the initial chapters of what was to be a longer work. Only the insistence of his supervisors induced him to submit what he considered an incomplete work for his degree. What he had intended to do was a complete social and economic history of Canadian labour before Confederation. It is this scope which, to my mind, is the key to understanding the contribution that Clare Pentland has made, his insistence that the proper study of labour must include the whole *process* by which the working class and its pre-capitalist progenitors were propagated, shaped, molded, disciplined, skilled, allocated and rewarded; and by which working class organizations developed to fight back in the (often fruitless) attempt to control the workers' own destiny.

The making and shaping of the working class was, in Pentland's view, a dialectic process. His approach shows the influence of the Marxist tradition of scholarship (rather than the predominant staple approach of Canadian economic history as Professor Kealey notes in his article below), although, because of his independence of thought, he resisted being "typed". He had, in Baran's terms, the commitment of the intellectual, to search for understanding wherever it might lead.[1]

One prominent example of this dialectical approach can be found in the titles of two of his most widely read, earlier articles: "The Role of Capital in

45

Canadian Economic Development Before 1875'' and ''The Development of a Capitalist Labour Market in Canada''.[2] The co-dependence of labour and capital is immediately obvious. An even more explicit example occurs in his explanation of the waves of labour radicalism and quiescence that is central to his work for the Task Force on Labour Relations (the Woods' Task Force),[3] completed in 1968 but never published except in mimeographed form. (The article in this *Journal* ''The Western Canadian Labour Movement, 1897-1919'', is an extension and adaptation of a section of this study).

> Canadian experience has continually demonstrated another phenomenon observable elsewhere: that tensions in industrial relations increase or decrease as the ''real'' gap between employers and employed in capacity (as distinct from the constant gap assumed by the institutional structure) has narrowed or widened. Whenever workers have generally been advancing more rapidly than employers in sophistication — tensions have been more acute. When the real gap has widened, tensions have usually diminished.[4]

I am not yet prepared to accept this hypothesis uncritically, for in many respects it raises as many, or more, questions than it answers. (As his article in this *Journal* indicates, he never accepted my explanation either.) That is not the point. What Clare Pentland did in his work was to integrate all the components of the labour milieu — institutional, market, power, historical, technological and social — into dynamic models of conflict and change, which is the essence of the labour process. It is this that distinguishes him from the traditional school of American labour institutionalists to whom the whole *raison d'être* of institutions is to constrain and pacify conflict; and from the orthodox stream of labour economists wedded to their mechanical, depersonalized, a-historical, static equilibrium models.

Nowhere in his work is this integrative and dynamic approach more evident than in the Woods' Task Force study — indicated, not least, by its long and somewhat awkward title, ''A Study of the Changing Social, Economic, and Political Background of the Canadian System of Industrial Relations''. Its purpose was to set contemporary industrial relations on an historical stage.

> An effective industrial relations system — one that does a good job of marshalling the working population to get

the necessary work done — is among the most basic requirements of any society that hopes to flourish. The system must do several things. It must get and retain an adequate labour force. It must train the labour force to a sufficient mastery of the techniques it uses. It must co-ordinate and discipline the efforts of its labour force by a reasonably consistent and acceptable set of laws and customs, based on mores that command substantial consent. It must provide systems of rewards and punishments that produce effective motivation.[5]

In a conceptual introduction, Pentland begins with pre-market systems, societies of chronic labour shortage which produced unfree (feudal and slave) labour systems. It is this relation between labour supply and industrial relations systems that led Pentland into demographic research (which Professor Deprez surveys in his article below); and also into his studies of the Irish and other ethnic and racial immigrations. It is the process of adaptation of the working class to the emergence of the capitalistic labour market and, subsequently, to purposeful economic and technological change which is his central concern. As fits this approach, his first concern is with attitudes — in alternative ter-minology, consciousnesses — where workers and employers are conditioned "by a multitude of occupational, industrial and regional interests",[6] leading to what he characterizes as rural, urban, small-town, company town and labour views. It is Pentland's contention that the contemporary problem rests in the failure of the industrial relation institutions with their foundations in these attitudes or consciousnesses to adapt to objective change in the economy and the labour force. Since he does not accept a mechanistic or crude materialistic view of change, this reflects a failure of policy resulting from imbalance of power and lack of understanding of the nature of the objective changes. It is to the analysis of the political economy of this failure in the 20th century that the bulk of his report is directed.

The Task Force study represents a continuation of the central investigation of his thesis, the labour process; albeit with a much heavier emphasis on the development of the institutional and legal framework of industrial relations. Again, what makes the work stand apart from the main body of institutional labour history in Canada is the concentration on the dynamic interaction between the economy, the employers, the unions, the state and technological change.

Kealey suggests that Pentland makes a significant break with Innis' staple interpretation by choosing to concentrate on the development of industrial capitalism in Canada rather than on the staple trades. I confess I have never

been exersized by the strident debate between the Pentland-Ryerson adherents and the Naylor-Creighton (?) school as to the primacy of industrial *vs.* merchant capitalist origins of the national policy since it seems to me that the interests of both were complementary. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Innis' preoccupation was not staples *per se* but rather technology. Likewise, Pentland spent a considerable part of his research on issues of technological change and productivity, normally as one might expect, as related to the human adjustment problems — a vital aspect of the labour process.[7] In this sense, he is in the mainstream of Canadian economic history.

Since Pentland's study was completed, Harry Braverman published his important and seminal study of the labour process in the 20th century United States, *Labour and Monopoly Capital*,[8] and while Braverman's detailed analysis of the organizational revolution that destroyed artisanal control of work and reshaped the labour force in contemporary forms has a very different emphasis, his conclusions do not differ in substance from Pentland's:

> the early decades of the twentieth century were featured by a profound re-orientation and transformation of Canadian industry which adjusted it to the market demand and technology of the twentieth century as this applied most obviously to Canadian resources....[9]
>
> ... it seems clear that "unskilled" employments (those with indefinite skill requirements and a heavy emphasis on physical effort) expanded considerably faster than "skilled" ones (requiring journeyman skill) in the first four decades of the century.[10]

Pentland's work goes beyond the scope of Braverman's, however, by investigating the effects of these economic changes on class consciousness, social attitudes and industrial relations institutions. This de-skilling of the labour force had a major impact on widening the gap, or at least the perceived gap, between the "fitness" of labour and capital to rule. This, Pentland argues, contributed to the stagnation of labour organization in the interwar period until the debacle of the depression caused a profound disaffection with the competence of capital to manage the economy.

Thus, in the war years of the most recent period (1939-1967) and facing a national emergency, institutions and attitudes did change only to be superceded by two decades of what he terms the "directionless state", when rapid technological, economic and social changes served to create new tensions to which industrial relations institutions have not adjusted due to the heavy hand

of cultural lag or institutional inertia. As he concludes, the central problem is not in creating institutions for the future,

> but the extent to which old laws and practices have become obsolete. The adjustments most urgently needed are not those for tomorrow, but ones that might reasonably have been made (yet were not made) some decades ago. Because they were not made, the unsuitability of some practices in terms of the kind of labour force that is developing and of new social criteria have become very marked by the mid-1960's.[11]

Baran and Sweezy have noted that in their study of contemporary capitalism, *Monopoly Capital*, they neglected the subject of the labour process:

> the consequences which the particular kinds of technological change characteristic of the monopoly capitalist period have had for the nature of work, the composition (and differentiation) of the working class, the psychology of workers, the forms of working-class organization and struggle, and so on.[12]

In his life's work, Clare Pentland has attempted to do that, not only for the modern era but for the formative period of industrial capitalism and even the pre-capitalist period. I have concentrated on his Task Force Report because it was his last major synthesizing work, broad in scope yet with many penetrating insights. Whether all of it will stand the test of further investigation is problematic. Nevertheless, he has provided a foundation for all subsequent study on the labour process in Canada.

For many of us, Clare Pentland will be remembered, not only as a scholar, but as a person — colleague, teacher, student and friend; one who took to heart Alexander Pope's instruction — "the proper study of mankind is man."

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Notes

1. Paul Baran, "The Committment of the Intellectual", *Monthly Review*, May 1961.

2. *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, November 1950; November 1959.

3. *A Study of the Changing Social, Economic, and Political Background of the Canadian System of Industrial Relations*, 1968.

4.   *Ibid.*, p. 20. See also pp. 11-12.

5.   *Ibid.*, p. 1.

6.   *Ibid.*, p. 3.

7.   See for example "Productivity and the Shorter Work Week", *Trades and Labour Congress Journal*, Aug. 1951: "Physical Productivity in Canada, 1935-52", *Economic Journal*, June 1954; "Law and Automation: The Freedman Report", *Canadian Personnel and Industrial Relations Journal*, Nov. 1966; "Change in the Manitoba Economy" in *Automation and the Individual: Proceedings of the Manitoba Conference on Technological Change;* Winnipeg, March 1968: "Implications of Automation for the Employment and Training of White-Collar Workers in Manitoba", unpublished manuscript for the Manitoba Economic Consultative Board, 1965; and "Human Adjustment to Technological Change: The Case of Manitoba Rolling Mills", unpublished manuscript for the Department of Manpower and Immigration, 1968.

8.   Harry Braverman, *Labour and Monopoly Capital*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974.

9.   Pentland, *op cit.*, pp. 44-5.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 400.

12. Quoted in Braverman, *op cit.*, p. IX.

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THE WESTERN CANADIAN
LABOUR MOVEMENT, 1897-1919

H. Clare Pentland

The objective of this essay is to establish and clarify the dimensions, the character, and the significance of the remarkable labour movement that developed in western Canada in the closing decades of the nineteenth century and flourished during the great boom of the early twentieth. Within this general purpose are some particular ones: to demonstrate the rapidity of the numerical growth of unionism in the West, to suggest some reasons for it, and to show why western unionists were far more radical and militant than eastern ones.

It is a capital fact, if an obvious one, that the labour movements of western Canada and the western United States had marked similarities and inter-relationships in this period. Both displayed a radicalism, a preference for in-dustrial unionism, and a political consciousness that differentiated them sharply from their respective Easts. It seems apparent that the labour forces of the two Wests were shaped by similar western forces that need to be identified — the more so because hostile eastern craft unionists and their scholarly apologists have tended to misunderstand these forces.

However, it is no less important to remark (and this, too, has been sometimes confused) that the labour movement of western Canada was no simple offshoot or branch-plant of unionism in the western United States. In fact, the Canadian movement was clearly differentiated from its American counterpart in various ways, particularly by its (relatively) greater size, cohesion, power, and political effectiveness. Appreciation of these differences is essential to an understanding of the evolution of Canada's industrial relations in the first two decades of the twentieth century and, particularly, of the appeal of the One Big Union and the power of the 1919 general strikes..

The Precocious Rise of Western Unionism

Neither the fur trade empire that persisted until 1869 nor the placer mining boom that stimulated British Columbia after 1856 provided a basis for a modern economy in western Canada. Even after the Canadian Pacific Railway

was completed in 1885, the West for some time remained sparsely inhabited and little developed. It is true that, encouraged by railroad building and the brief boom of the 1880's, an agricultural settlement of some significance had been established in Manitoba, but it was only as agricultural prices rose after 1897 that a vigorous "wheat economy" came into being and a conclusive settlement of the Prairies took place. Only in the same period, likewise, for the same reasons, did western logging and mining expand rapidly. These extractive and agricultural activities, along with railroads, introduced a range of large-scale capitalistic activity into the West. However, it was not then usually contemplated — indeed, it is still not contemplated by a good many — that the West should develop a significant manufacturing sector and aspire to the status of a rounded industrial economy. Rather, the region was conceived as a petty bourgeois haven of farmers, fishermen, and placer miners among whom, it may be suspected, unions were expected to occupy a minor place.

The fact is, nevertheless, that unionism flourished in the Canadian West from the 1880's, as the accompanying tables are intended to show. For the nineteenth century only sketchy information is available; but Table I can leave little doubt that by 1891 (at least) union membership constituted a much higher proportion of population in British Columbia than in Canada generally.[1] Table I also indicates that the Prairies, although much less unionized than British Columbia, already in 1891 had about the same proportion of union members in its population as Canada as a whole. The situation remained much the same in 1901 and 1911: with the Prairies holding their own and British Columbia keeping far ahead, the West continued to be decidedly more unionized than the East. Tables II and III show more precisely that the West, although it contained only 11% of Canada's population in 1901 and 24% in 1911, accounted for a much larger share of the growth of unions. Hence, the less-populated West disposed of one-third of Canada's union locals after 1910. The statistics of reported union memberships (Table IV) indicate that the western unions have an even larger share in the years 1911-1914.

On the other hand, the growth of the West's share of population clearly exceeded its share of the growth of unions after 1901, and its position deteriorated further after 1911. The slump and unemployment of 1913-1915 appear to have weakened western unions more than eastern ones. At any rate, it is clear that war employment, while it gave some relief after 1916 to the West, supported a much greater growth of employment and union memberships in the East. The fact is that a great shift occurred at this time in the relative weights of eastern and western unionism as the East (only) experienced a massive expansion in the number and membership of its union locals in the years 1918 and 1919. It was a shift from which the West never recovered and, as we shall notice later, it bore significantly on the conflicting objectives of radical

western and conservative eastern unionists in 1918-1919.

This bare recital of numbers can be rounded out by some consideration of constituencies in the population on which western unionism could actually draw, and of the industrial distribution of unionists.

It is arguable that western unionism *should* have flourished exceptionally between 1880 and 1914 because an exceptional proportion of western population consisted of male adults of working age. In British Columbia, moreover, limited opportunities for agriculture propelled an exceptional share of the labour force into wage-employments in which unions might sooner or later arise.

As against this, Phillips has pointed out that in 1891 nearly half the population of British Columbia (45,000 out of 98,000) were either Indians, or Chinese, at this time less likely than others to attempt unionization.[2] Although British Columbia had a relatively small farm population and relatively large "nonfarm" rural population, it was no more urbanized than Ontario and Quebec;[3] did it, then, really have a stronger basis for forming unions? As for the Prairies, over half its people were still a farm population in 1921 (compared with a Canadian average of 35%) and only 28% were classified as urban.[4] That is, the wage-earning sector of the Prairie population, presumably the part to which unions had to look for support, was distinctly smaller than average. It seems likely, then, that in the Prairies, as in British Columbia, the propulsion to unionism provided by a high proportion of male adults was more than offset by other factors; hence, the propensity to unionize really *was* higher in the West.

Might this propensity reflect the industrial distribution of western employment? Especially in the early days, a major share of western unions consisted of the inevitable locals of railroad workers and building tradesmen, but this was also true in the East. Unions of workers employed in manufacturing were not very numerous in the West, but, they were not very numerous in the East either, where employees of manufacturing firms were often unorganized. Actually, metal working establishments (and their unions) developed fairly rapidly in the West, promoted there (as in the East) especially by railroad needs. In sum, the industrial distribution of unions in the West was not strikingly different from that of the East, except in the incidence of unions of miners and fishermen — and this does not appear by itself to provide a sufficient explanation for the vigor of western unionism. To find what was significantly different about the West, it seems necessary to look in other directions, such as the scale and capitalist acquisitiveness of employing firms, still uncommon in the East, and a ubiquity of company towns — railroad towns and mining towns — never approached in the East.

TABLE I: COMPARATIVE DISTRIBUTION, POPULATION AND UNION LOCALS,
WESTERN CANADA AND ALL CANADA, 1891-1921

Date		Canada	Prairies		British Columbia		Western Canada	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1891	Population	4,833,239	251,473	5.2	98,173	2.0	349,646	7.2
	Union locals formed before							
	1891*	192 locals	10 locals	5.0	20 locals	10.1	30 locals	15.1
1901	Population	5,371,315	419,512	7.8	178,657	3.3	598,169	11.1
	Union locals formed before							
	1901*	582 locals	34 locals	5.8	96 locals	16.5	130 locals	22.3
1911	Population	7,206,643	1,328,121	18.5	392,480	5.5	1,720,601	23.9
	Union locals reported at							
	May, 1911	1750 locals	311 locals	17.8	255 locals	12.9	536 locals	30.6
1921	Population	8,787,949	1,956,082	22.3	524,582	6.0	2,480,664	28.2
	Union locals at end 1920	2714 locals	513 locals	18.9	232 locals	8.5#	745 locals	27.4

* Shows the number of union locals formed before 1891 and 1901, respectively, of which the existence and date of formation was reported by locals that existed and replied to a *Labour Gazette* survey in July, 1902.

\# The sharp decline in British Columbia's share of Union locals dated mostly from 1919. It reflected some drop in western local unions but was brought about primarily by a sharp increase in 1918 and 1919 or locals in eastern Canada.

All percentages shown are percentages of the total for Canada.

TABLE II: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF UNION LOCALS
IN CANADA, 1902-1921

	1902 Logan	July 1903 L.G.	End 1903	End 1904	End 1905	End 1906	June 1907 L.G.	End 1907	End 1908	End 1909	End 1910	End 1911
Maritimes	138	163	130	134	140	133	199	148	182	198	207	213
Quebec	151	202	172	195	195	213	256	253	265	271	265	256
Ontario	547	853	590	587	570	583	752	644	654	669	648	680
Prairies	81	122	115	133	150	186	204	217	247	261	298	341
B.C.	161	216	148	150	146	154	175	170	191	199	207	227
TOTALS	1078	1556	1155	1199	1196	1274	1586	1432	1539	1618	1625	1717
% of total represented by four Western Provinces	22.5	21.7	22.8	23.6	24.7	26.7	24.0	27.0	28.5	29.7	31.1	33.1

	June 1912 L.G.	1912 Logan	End 1912	End 1913	End 1914	End 1915	End 1916	End 1917	End 1918	End 1919	End 1920	End 1921
Maritimes	218	228	221	219	229	204	188	205	225	289	318	286
Quebec	205	245	264	287	301	302	306	309	366	428	437	372
Ontario	700	756	743	807	805	757	753	803	926	1201	1215	1095
Prairies	355	404	399	437	427	400	393	430	492	511	513	507
B.C.	234	249	248	259	235	216	202	221	252	234	232	227
TOTALS	1712	1882	1875	2017	2003	1883	1842	1974	2274	2663	2714	2487
% of total represented by four Western Provinces	34.4	34.7	34.5	34.6	33.2	34.6	32.3	33.1	34.2	28.0	27.4	29.5

Sources: *Labour Gazette* various issues; Department of Labour, Report on Labour Organization in Canada, various issues; H.A. Logan, *The History of Trade-Union Organization in Canada,* Chicago: 1928, p. 124.

Editor's Note: Table II as in the original of Prof. Pentland's manuscript. Any apparent discrepancies of column tabulations are probably due to double-reporting by Union Locals.

TABLE III
ABSOLUTE GAIN IN LOCAL
UNIONS

	Four Western Provinces	Eastern Canada
1904	20	24
1905	13	-11
1906	44	29
1907	47	111
1908	51	56
1909	42	39
1910	25	-20
1911	63	29
1912	79	79
1913	49	85
1914	-34	22
1915	-46	-72
1916	-21	-16
1917	56	70
1918	93	200
1919	1	401
1920	12	68
1921	-11	-216
1922	-6	-100
1923	-3	-21
1924	2	-57
1925	42	11

TABLE IV: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF REPORTED UNION MEMBERSHIPS IN CANADA, 1911-1926
Members — Union memberships as reported by local unions
Locals — Numbers of locals reporting their memberships, compared with total active locals as determined by Labour Dept.

		1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1926
MARITIMES	Members	11,713	12,182	9,597	9,342	9,409	13,491	13,139	26,278	32,883	29,132	17,811	20,866
	Locals	118/226	111/228	124/219	97/229	113/204	118/188	105/205	167/225	206/289	204/319	151/288	177/249
QUEBEC	Members	13,868	23,442	25,427	14,959	17,059	26,907	28,005	48,570	61,097	58,947	44,057	52,690
	Locals	125/228	133/245	151/287	116/301	99/302	190/306	171/309	201/336	277/428	266/442	223/377	319/459
ONTARIO	Members	34,530	41,371	45,261	38,235	34,856	41,654	52,478	62,605	87,105	89,954	66,771	59,539
	Locals	419/702	427/756	470/807	396/805	427/757	524/753	550/803	670/926	821/1201	812/1221	735/1099	740/992
PRAIRIES	Members	19,974	25,806	27,005	22,906	18,912	22,232	27,184	35,659	32,724	33,439	30,786	34,789
	Locals	233/353	236/404	262/437	249/427	239/400	270/393	321/430	373/492	346/511	361/522	344/514	432/566
BRITISH	Members	22,599	18,936	21,363	13,117	10,757	11,600	21,201	27,216	21,006	18,583	16,899	21,117
COLUMBIA	Locals	162/231	144/249	157/259	122/235	120/216	143/202	165/221	182/252	156/234	170/240	159/236	192/249
CANADA 9	Members	102,684	121,737	128,652	98,559	90,993	115,884	142,007	200,328	234,815	230,055	176,324	189,001
(PROVS)	Locals	1057/1740	1051/1883	1164/2009	980/1997	988/1879	1245/1842	1313/1968	1593/2261	1806/2663	1813/2744	1612/2514	1860/2515
FOUR	°₀ Reported												
WESTERN	Members	41.6	36.8	37.6	36.6	32.3	29.2	34.1	31.4	22.9	22.6	27.0	29.6
PROVS.	°₀ Known Locals	33.1	34.7	34.6	33.2	34.6	32.3	33.1	34.2	28.0	27.4	29.5	32.4
Members per reporting western local (East in Brackets)		90(108)	118(115)	115(108)	97(103)	83(96)	82(99)	99(113)	113(132)	107(139)	98(139)	95(116)	90(108)

H. CLARE PENTLAND

Western Radicalism and Militancy

This brings us to the qualitative differences of western from eastern Canadian unionism. Far more than the East, the West was a great nursery of self-taught but keen and eloquent labour philosophers. These were complemented by union memberships responsive both to appeals to their reason as the ills of society were analyzed, and appeals to their feelings and imaginations as the better society of the future was projected. The observation and analysis of this labour movement led to an almost universal conviction that unions should be reconstructed on the more "scientific" (*i.e.* effective) basis of industrial unionism. This view was anathema, of course, to the American Federation of Labor craft unionists who controlled Canada's Trades and Labour Congress from 1902 onwards; but for a long time these were regarded by the westerners as backward men to be educated rather than as enemies to be fought. Western experience and cogitation also produced a widespread belief that labour should supplement its economic action by political support of labour and socialist candidates — another opinion opposed by most AFL unionists. This was so even though the political activity of western labour was typically of a pragmatic, pro-union type, for Samuel Gompers had become a fierce enemy of any kind of independent political action by labour.[5] Moreover, western experience did foster a significant spread of syndicalist ideas: that legislatures were tools and snares of capitalism; that only an overthrow of capitalism would produce any permanent improvement in the lot of workers; that direct action was the best and indispensable tactic; and that collective agreements for any fixed term should therefore be avoided. Those who held these views systematically were only a fringe of the western labour movement, less numerous and influential than their counterparts in the western United States. Yet the spread of syndicalist sentiments, by rhetoric and by frustrating experiences, gave western unionism a radical appearance that distinguished it sharply from the cautious eastern variety.

The predominant industrial relations system of eastern Canada derived from the commercial capitalist economy of the eighteenth century and the small-scale industrial enterprises that developed in the second half of the nineteenth. The orientation of this system was frequently paternal, and it was both morally correct and good business for an employer to display a consideration for employees which he would have resisted yielding by contract. Room had been carved out in the system for collective bargaining with units of well-behaved craftsmen. Unskilled employees typically exhibited that cheerful, unimaginative, rather childlike accommodation which seems to have been produced by the stable, heavily rural, society of eastern Canada, and to a surprising extent can still be found there. When ruthless new-style employers abused the faith of workers trained in the paternal system, new relationships would have to appear;

but it is remarkable how long and patiently, with what ingrained reverence for employers and consciousness of their own duty of obedient silence, workers put up with this treatment. The system frequently allowed employers to pay rather lower wages than competitive forces would dictate, but they were supposed to make this up by various forms of benevolence. The system rested, among other things, on the rarity of specialized qualifications and professional consciousness except among craftsmen. It rested, too, on the fact — or, at least, the belief — that employers were distinctly more fit to rule than those over whom they ruled. It was this background that dictated the conservatism of eastern Canadian unionism, accommodating it to the attitudes of the American Federation of Labor, but hindering real rapport with the workers of western Canada.[6]

To an extent the eastern system settled in the Canadian West along with eastern people — particularly in Manitoba. However, the great lesson, if it needs repetition, is that new circumstances alter men and systems. The people who went to the West, including most of those who came from eastern Canada, displayed little of that amiable submissiveness that pervaded the East. By self-selection they were hustlers — ambitious, daring, driving, relatively hard people made harder by their experiences. Until Clifford Sifton began to empty central Europe into the Prairies, the level of education, adaptability, and awareness was also very high — quite possibly the highest anywhere in the world. These people had come to improve their lot, they were willing to endure much to do so, and were not to be put off easily.

Employers in the West also had a ruthless quality, whether aggressive railway corporations, American mining operators, or the strange feudal Dunsmuir coal interests. The West was supposed to return them fortunes, and quick ones. Newness and a prevailing mobility promoted an extreme impersonality of relationships. This was heightened by a large scale of many operations, and by a good deal of absentee ownership.

These hard, sharp patterns were bound to produce a good deal of friction even between employers and craft unions. The tight labour markets and rising prices that prevailed after 1898 also made for restless movements and clashes of interest. Unlike the East, there was no tariff issue tending to unite employers and employed, while a common front of westerners against the East was made difficult by many things, including the eastern residence and connections of many employers. What really distinguished the western labour scene, however, was that here a real possibility existed of organizing non-craft workers into viable unions, The workers were alert, hardy, somewhat reckless, and certainly not overawed. Conditions of employment often built up solidarity among them, while isolating them from other society. The frequent shortage of labour made unionism of the unskilled and semiskilled much more practicable than it

was in areas overflowing with cheap and timid labour. The conditions invited an industrial form of unionism, by which the bargaining power of skilled workers lent strength to the whole, instead of hindering others. Hence, from the Knights of Labor to the One Big Union, an ardent industrial unionism characterized the West.

Employers, on the other hand, shared the general hostility of employers everywhere to unionism, and especially to the upstart unionism of non-craft workers. Much that employers did in the West seems a reflection of the campaigns against non-craft unionism that were being carried on at the same time in Britain and the United States: there was, for instance, a great flourishing of labour injunctions. As elsewhere, the intensity of employer feeling was certainly raised by the socialist proclivities of the unions involved. In addition to this, there was a special ruthlessness of western employers, perhaps appropriate to stark relationships in a land without traditions. Underlying it all was a failure of employers to command respect: an indisposition of a labour force that contained many talented persons to concede that their employers were fitted by superior capacity to exercise unquestioned authority. In many cases, the employers were not. The narrowing of the differential levels of capacity as between employer and employed which was occurring everywhere in this period reached its narrowest in the West.

This cleavage between employer and employed and between East and West was the main feature of Canadian labour relations before 1920. It was not, however, the only feature. Employers did advance in sophistication, and various among them tried new approaches. It has to be said that employer enlightenment was a good deal more evident after a thorough scare by militant labour movements with revolutionary overtones (after 1903 and after 1918) that at any other times. No matter how offensive these movements were to employers, no matter how harshly and conclusively they were put down, they accomplished more than decades of quiet persuasion, and cannot be counted as failures.

The Similarities of Western Unionism in Canada and the United States

No less apparent than the divergences in outlook and behaviour of Canada's western unionism from an eastern pattern were its similarities to the unionism of the western United States. In the West of both countries, much more than in either East, there was a prominence of industrial unionism and belief in political action and socialism and syndicalism, militancy and solidarity and direct action. We are thus presented with comparative historical cases of similar and divergent labour movements from which we may hope to draw important observations.

However, the obviousness of this evidence, and the strong implication that it reflects common causes and effects, did not protect those who came with preconceptions and incomprehensions from misinterpretation. It flourished first and most in the United States, spread by intolerant craft unionists who set the style of the American Federation of Labor and by that pioneer generation of labour historians, headed by John R. Commons and Selig Perlman, who regarded AFL unionism as the American model, or at least norm, and anything else (therefore) as an aberration. They did not understand western unionism very well and, in the cases of Gompers and his confidants, one may wonder if they wanted to. For rather than searching out the logic of the unionism of the West, the subject was buried in a mythology of unreason and un-Americanism. Only recently has the evidence been re-examined by younger labour historians.[7] What, then, do they say?

First, the fact that in the period 1890-1917 a high proportion of wage-earners in the western United States believed in radical political action, and frequently in socialism, did not signify that these workers were unbalanced, or victims of propaganda, or foreigners who had slipped into a virginal anti-socialist America. In this Populist and Progressive era, on the contrary, western radicals — both wage-earners and farmers — were in step with an army of other American reformers seeking to check the monopolies that burgeoned in the United States after the Civil War. In this age, it was not only immigrant Germans and Jews who propagated socialism: there were hundreds of thousands of other supporters, and it was only after 1920 that a ferocious anti-Communism drove American socialism not only virtually out of existence, but out of memory as well. Neither was the radicalism of the workers of the western United States something brought in by immigrants; rather, as Dubofsky makes clear, the western labour force was almost pure Anglo-Saxon and mostly native American. By the same token, the common identification of radicalism with foreignness (in Canada, too) was founded much less in fact than in the prejudices of those who made the identification. Gompers, himself, was a prime example of the human capacity to delude oneself and others; he could not conceive how a socialist could support unions, at least craft unions (although thousands of them did), and categorized all socialists as his enemies. In defiance of the majority of his own federation, he worked to weaken the Populist movement, then to emasculate it by getting the socialist public ownership plank out of its platform, then to get the Populists defeated at the polls, in order to keep in step with the trusts whose ascendancy he viewed as inevitable, and to make his belief in the uselessness of party political action self-justifying.[8]

The hostilities displayed by Gompers and his supporters were no doubt strengthened by the fact that the responsiveness of western workers to in-dustrial unionism and reformist political action had been nurtured in many

cases by the Knights of Labor. It was not only that many western workers had once belonged to the Knights, and imbibed their inclusive, uplift philosophy; besides that, assemblies of the Knights flourished in the western United States (as in Canada) long after the order was supposed to have been annihilated by the AFL.[9] That is, it was still the apolitical craft unionism of Gompers, not the broad reformist unionism of the West, that had the more questionable basis in American tradition: a sufficient reason in itself to rewrite history and picture western radicalism as an aberration.

Dubofsky rejects another attempted explanation of the violent labour conflict and presumed peculiarity of the American West: the chameleon influence of the "frontier". Turner's frontier thesis,[10] based on the steady advance of agricultural settlement westward across the United States, does seem to throw light on the kind of society that developed on the agricultural frontier, and perhaps provides that explanation of the strength and preservation of grass roots democracy that Turner attributed to it. On the other hand, there are awkward difficulties about applying the frontier thesis to areas of broken topography, such as Canada and the mountain states. If we can usefully conceive of a "mining frontier", it was a frontier that did not carry out its duty of maintaining democracy in the West for long after 1890. Neither can this frontier be blamed, as some have blamed it, for the barbarian ruthlessness that appeared in the western United States. The real and different sequence of causation is summarized by Dubofsky as follows:

> By 1893 the mining West ... had passed well beyond the frontier stage and the working class' emerging radicalism was hardly the response of pioneer individualists to frontier conditions. The W.F.M. (Western Federation of Miners) did not consist mostly of men who had been prospectors and frontiersmen; it was not 'permeated with the independent and often lawless spirit of the frontier'; nor did its radicalism result from a lack of respect for the social distinctions of a settled community, or a disregard by labour for the 'elementary amenities of civilized life', or the absence of farmers, a neutral middle class, and others who might keep matters within bounds. Perlman and Taft, and their disciples, have in fact reversed the dynamics of social change in the Mountain West. The violent conflicts which they so fully describe came, not on an undeveloped Western frontier but in a citadel of American industrialism and financial capitalism. Perlman and Taft's 'class war without a class ideology' resulted

from a process of social polarization not from an absence of middle groups, and consequently brought Marxian class consciousness. After 1910 farmers and others did not suddenly settle the area to blur sharp class distinctions and end the class war. The Ludlow Massacre occurred in 1914, Butte erupted into violent industrial warfare from 1914-17, and the bitter Colorado County coal wars developed still later — in the 1920's.

Violent conflict came not from the 'general characteristics of the frontier' or 'quick on the trigger' employers and employees but from the general nature of early industrialism. (It seems strange to seek to explain violent conflict in the Mountain West in Turnerian terms when at the same time in the 'settled, civilized' East, open warfare prevailed at Homestead, in Chicago during the Pullman Strike, and even later in Lawrence, Massachusetts and Paterson, New Jersey. It seems equally foolish to account for the creation (in the Mountain West) of private armies in frontier terms when Eastern employers and even workers did likewise. The coal and iron police appeared in Pennsylvania, not Montana; Colorado employers and workers may have utilized Western 'desperados' and gunmen but employers and workers in New York's garment industry made ample use of similar services provided by the metropolis' gun-slingers and club wielders. Such violence and conflict, wherever it erupted, seems more a characteristic of the early stages of industrialism than of any peculiar geographical environment. Western working-class history is the story not of the collapse of social polarization but of its creation. Prior to the triumph of corporate capitalism, Western workers retained numerous allies among local merchants, professionals, farmers, and party politicians. The interesting historical feature is the manner in which corporate executives separated labor from its quondam allies, and polarized society and politics to the disadvantage of the worker. The remainder of this paper will demonstrate that class war in the West created a class ideology, and that the ideology was Marxist because the Mountain West from 1890 to 1905 followed the classic Marxian pattern of development.[11]

Is Dubofsky's explanation of labour radicalism in the western United States also a correct and adequate explanation for the similar radicalism that appeared in western Canada? With some qualifications, I believe that it is. The question is complicated by the fact that the rival claims of craft and industrial unionism had a different significance in Canada from that in the United States (although it divided eastern from western labour in both countries), creating one qualification that is discussed separately. Another necessary qualification is that the institutions and attitudes of the Canadian west differed substantially from those of the American west, dictating for one thing that Canada's labour battles would be much the less spectacular in their violence; but this, also, is a topic for another section. However, I do not think that these qualifications destroy the thesis that western labour radicalism in Canada — as in the United States — was created not by the frontier, not by the foreignness or lack of civility of workers, but by the rapid rise and acquisitiveness of a large-scale corporate capitalism able to exert great influence on both markets and governments, and ready to use this power to keep "their" workers in subjection.

Even allowing that coal mining companies have scarcely ever been celebrated for their benevolence, the Dunsmuir coal empire (later Canadian Collieries) provided an "ideal-type" Canadian example of these tendencies. It would be difficult to find a firm anywhere that surpassed this one in its systematic exploitation of its employees, its implacable opposition to bargaining collectively with them, and its success in enlisting the authority and military resources of government on its side.[12] The attitude of the large railway corporations in the Canadian west, starting with the Canadian Pacific, were not much different. The railways were in frequent labour disputes because of their refusal to negotiate terms of employment with their employees, except craft unionists and craft-type running trades. There were recurrent disputes during railway construction, essentially because the employers wanted to reduce wages and conditions whenever market conditions, periodically manipulated by Oriental immigration, would allow it. The Trackmen's Strike of 1901, which launched Mackenzie King on his career as a conciliator and writer of labour legislation, was made unsolvable by the refusal of the C.P.R. to recognize non-craft unions. The large-scale disputes of 1903 between railroad companies and the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees were similarly turned into struggles to the death by the refusal of employers to deal with this industrial union which included non-craft workers.[13] Metal mining companies in Canada appear to have been generally smaller than those that were at the centre of conflict in the United States, but under the aegis of the C.P.R. a substantial consolidation was accomplished at and about Trail in 1906[14] — where a sliding scale of wages was thrust on the workers against their will in 1907.[15] Concentration in the salmon

fishing industry was brought to an advanced stage even before that.[16] On the Prairies the corporate capitalism of line elevator companies, banks, and mortgage companies was directed primarily to the exploitation of farmers; but railroads on a large scale and some manufacturers on a smaller one confronted Prairie wage-earners, too, with substantial capitalist power. Where firms were smaller the ubiquitous trade association — chiefly a device to fight unions — flourished in the early years of the twentieth century.[17] In short, in the West as in the East (but more so), in Canada as in the United States, the basic explanation of labour radicalism lies in the unrestrained aggressiveness of corporate capitalism. The significant differences of West from East are to be found, not in any substantial variation of capitalist power, but in the absence from the West of any moderating force of traditional paternalism or employer-union alliance to maintain tariff protection, and in the greater determination and capacity of western workers — aided by a more favourable balance of labour supply and demand — to resist employers.

The Differences of Western Unionism in Canada and the United States

The previous section has dwelt on the fact that, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the western labour movements of the United States and Canada had important features in common, including their marked differences from their respective Easts. It has been proposed that these similarities are attributable primarily to a single basic cause, the rapid rise of an aggressive corporate capitalism. Determined workers in any country were bound to resist it if they could.

It is important, however, in establishing that we are dealing with a logical system of social causes (anti-union employers) and social effects (radical sentiment and militant unionism) that we not fall into an opposite misconception: that the western labour movements of Canada and the United States were practically identical, or really one single movement spread across an "artifical" boundary. Writers who assume something of this sort are also apt to assume that the western Canadian labour movement was not an authentic Canadian product, but something made in the United States and exported to the passive and gullible Canadians; or, alternatively, brought into Canada by what was really an immigrant population of Americans. A certain picturesque verification of this thesis was supplied by the placer miners of the 1860's who, whatever their places of birth, displayed a common California culture and joined in advocating an American grass roots type of democracy. It was only the form of the Knights of Labor, not the membership, that Canadians imported from the United States in the 1880's; but the rapid expansion in Canada of the

Western Federation of Miners, 1895-1900, involved the introduction not only of an American union but of a large number of American miners already familiar with the union — not to mention immigrant American mining entrepreneurs who supplied the miners with reasons to organize.[18] In 1902-03 another radical American union, the United Brotherhood of Railway Employees, won the support of a large proportion of western Canada's railroad workers. A Royal Commission on Industrial Disputes in British Columbia, of which Mackenzie King was secretary, found that the W.F.M. and U.B.R.E. were not legitimate Canadian unions but (1) foreign and (2) revolutionary organizations which employers therefore had no obligation to recognize or deal with. A succession of scholars has declared these findings to be in defiance of the evidence before the commission,[19] but the commission's report certainly spread (as it reflected) the theory that radical unionism was a nasty foreign invention imposed on innocent Canadian workers by American troublemakers.

The truth lies elsewhere, nevertheless: the unionism of the Canadian west was distinct from that of the American west in a number of important respects, perhaps most obviously in its being more united and powerful.

In tracing the differences, we may start with geography. "By the American West," says Dubofsky, "I mean the metal-mining areas stretching from the northern Rockies to the Mexican border, and particularly the states of Colorado, Idaho, and Montana".[20] It happens that this mountain region relevant to metal-mining stretches much farther eastward in the United States than it does in Canada. On the other hand, Canada's mountain region, essentially British Columbia, is more variegated than Colorado, Idaho, and Montana. British Columbia is more comparable to Dubofsky's American west, not only in its metals but in its labour militancy, than other parts of Canada. Nevertheless, the West that is significant for Canadian labour history in the early twentieth century stretched from the Pacific, and not just to Lethbridge, or even across the Prairies to Winnipeg, but eastward for several hundred more miles to somewhere around North Bay. Has Dubofsky's definition, then, confined the American (labour)West too much: should it similarly include the lively labour movements of Chicago and some other prairie cities of the United States? A difficult question for which there is no indisputable answer. Yet one may suspect that Dubofsky is right in his division of the United States; that in labour matters the American midwest had more in common with the American east (or southern Ontario, for that matter), with which it had innumerable uninterrupted links, than with the mountain states. Canadians have been right, however, in defining their West differently. Canada's prairie region *was* far more definitely separated from its East — geographically and ideologically — than its American counterpart. At the same time, it was more securely attached to its mountain region to form a single Canadian (labour)West. An

obvious reason for this difference is that the Canadian Prairies (and even northern Ontario) — unlike neighboring sections of the United States — was cut off from its East by hundreds of miles of rock and bush. A wider regional unity and self-consciousness in Canada was probably also aided by the fact that metal mining did not have the same relative importance in Canada or spawn the large mining and smelting cities that served to isolate as well as to unite the workers of the western states. The effect of this geographic difference was a wider and more uniform labour radicalism, so that every centre west of Toronto displayed a strength and solidarity of labour scarcely matched even in the mountain region of the United States, and the centre of militancy in Canada in 1919 was at Winnipeg on the eastern Prairies.

Next, consider the people. Notwithstanding the celebrated ''Mingling of the Canadian and American Peoples'',[21] Canadians were different from Americans. They were different, for one thing, in that British immigrants played a more prominent part in many employments, and in the labour movement particularly, where they imposed a distinctly British aura of reformist fervor balanced by pragmatic caution. They were the more able to do so because native-born Canadians usually saw themselves as British, and shared many British attitudes, including a readier acceptance than Americans of labour political action.

No less important is a profound (although sometimes overlooked) difference between Canada and the United States in ideology, especially concerning the respective claims and duties of individuals, governments, and ''society''.

The predominant ideology of the United States has put a great emphasis on individual liberty and self-reliance, and has viewed society merely as an aggregation of individuals. This doctrine hardened after the Civil War into a ''Social Darwinism'' which perceived the survival of the fittest (usually identified with the rich and powerful) and the distress of the unfit (the poor and weak) as a natural law — both evident fact and harsh but necessary objective. This *laissez-faire* ideology, by holding that welfare is maximized by market and social competition, freed men from any moral obligation to restrain their demands in the interest of ''society''. Similarly, it called for governments of divided powers to enforce a minimum of intervention. However, this did not hinder an exploitation of governments for land grants, franchises, or other benefits, as of other market opportunities. Hence, there was a long record of governmental corruption and partisanship, not the least in the crushing of strikes and unions. No unionists had more reason than those of the West to conclude that existing governments were agents of employers and should be replaced by workers' governments. Craft unions, likewise, were taught by a long record of government partisanship against labour to be deeply suspicious of government intervention in collective bargaining. However, the craft

unionists were little disposed to join with other workers to promote more equitable government. Rather, in keeping with the prevailing ideology, they defended their own particular interests in the jungle wars but perceived no obligation to support unions of less-skilled workers — the more so as Gompers believed he could establish an accommodation with the trusts, but for craft unions only.[22] Industrial unionists, eastern and western, were the immediate victims of this policy, but it is arguable that all labour was harmed by it in the end.

The Canadian tradition and ethic has been very different. As Horowitz has put it, Canada inherited from Europe not only an ideology of "rational-egalitarian" liberalism (as the United States did), but also one of "corporate, organic, collectivist" toryism (as the United States did not), so providing for a British-type sense of responsibility for the national welfare and a readiness to accept labour political activity and socialism.[23] Canada also inherited a parliamentary form of government with a constitutionally unlimited right and obligation to maintain the general welfare. Rather than being fearful of state action, Canadians have believed firmly in the "father state" that will make all things right in the end. In Canada, similarly, order and justice have been seen to flow from the presence, not the absence, of state intervention. Reinforcing these attitudes has been a consciousness that Canada is exposed to powerful outside forces and that its economy cannot be relied upon to work and develop satisfactorily by itself. So protected, belief in intervention has generally survived, not least in Canada's labour circles, despite a substantial (but, evidently, not fatal) number of cases of gross anti-labour partiality on the part of governments and judges. Hence the remarkable orderliness of the Winnipeg General Strike; the fact that the state, although intensely hostile, refrained for several weeks from using force against it; the fact that the eventual intervention of government against labour has been the only really massive one in Canadian history; the fact that the arrested strike leaders appealed passionately at their trials to the rights of British subjects under a British constitution; and the fact that some of these men thus won acquittal, notwithstanding the extreme prejudice of the judges and prosecutors. The history of the United States leaves the greatest doubt that any of these things could have happened there.

Canada's different record and tradition also suggest that the desperate syndicalism forced on the workers of the mountain states was not a major ingredient in the labour radicalism of western Canada. That radicalism, some revolutionary resolutions of the 1919 Calgary Convention notwithstanding, rested ideologically on a British conception of social protest in the cause of social justice. It was supported by a broader labour movement than the one that supported radicalism in the United States; not the least because most Canadian unionists, although chronic division between craft and industrial unionism and

between East and West was forced on them from 1902, continued to believe in a unified labour movement and a general welfare.

Craft versus Industrial Unionism

The clash between eastern and western unionism, both in Canada and in the United States, was suffused by a rivalry between the craft and industrial forms of union. The rivalry, however, had a different basis and character in the two countries. It is therefore a complicated question which I have thought best to discuss separately.

In the United States, as in Britain, Canada, and (soon) some European countries, an industrial unionism of semi-skilled workers arose in about the 1880's to complement the already established craft unions. In every country but one this led, after an initial uneasiness of the aristocrats of labour, to an accommodation of craft and industrial unionists in a unified labour movement from which they expected mutual benefit. In the United States, however, the outcome was a fierce and perpetual opposition of the crafts to the existence of "dual" (which included industrial) unions. The arrogance of the Knights of Labor, who demanded in 1886 that craftsmen submerge their craft distinctions in this inclusive one-big-union and subordinate questions of wages to the naive goal of abolishing the wage system, provides a sufficient reason for the formation and initial hostility of the American Federation of Labor.[24] However, what explains the undiminished continuation of this intolerance of industrial unionism, decade after decade right into the middle of the twentieth century?

The answer, at any rate, is not the one by which Selig Perlman confused the issue. Perlman asserted, in the face of a mass of evidence to the contrary, that industrial unionism appealed only to semi-skilled and unskilled strata of labour, and that only the unskilled conceived of the industrial union as the "one big union."[25] The fact is, however, that the western miners who chose industrial unionism were highly-skilled men.[26] They preferred inclusive unions not only because their community of isolation encouraged this civility,[27] but because it was indispensable to their bargaining strength. The fact is, moreover, that the A.F.L. had already found it desirable, despite the suspicion of many craft unionists, to include in its ranks another industrial union built around skilled miners — the United Mine Workers.[28] The A.F.L. might have been content to continue indefinitely the brief, 1896, affiliation of the Western Federation of Miners if the W.F.M. had been willing to refrain from trying to set up a rival (industrial union) centre. How, then, did the respective claims of craft and industrial unionism become a central and permanent basis of labour division? The antagonisms aroused in 1886, the doctrine of narrow self-interest that permeated American society, the fact that usually only craft unions were

able to survive the opposition of employers in the East, the tendency of in-
dustrial unionism to become identified with a remote and radical West, all
played some part. Yet all are not a sufficient reason, even in the United States
(and much less in Canada) for the intense exclusiveness and periodic can-
nibalism of the A.F.L.

As far as Canada is concerned, there need not be much mystery about it:
labour division and conflict were imported from the United States and forcibly
imposed on Canada by the A.F.L. after its high-handed takeover of the
Canadian Trades and Labour Congress in 1902. Canadian labour has typically
been tolerant and inclusive, and its various types of unionism got along quite
well with each other until 1902, and after that whenever the A.F.L. would let
them. Industrial unionism was perhaps more prominent in Canada than in the
United States, especially in the West where support for it was practically
universal and the westerners did not hide their view that the whole labour
movement should be reorganized on industrial lines. However, they never
wished to separate from their eastern (or craft) brothers, only to convert them;
and they set up the One Big Union only when those who ran the T.L.C. proved
impervious to their frantic arguments for reorganization. Nor have Canada's
craft unionists shown much disposition to make war on others, and have only
been driven to it on a number of critical occasions by severe pressure from
American headquarters. In short, while Canadian unionists — eastern and
western, craft and industrial, French and English — often failed to see eye to
eye, there is no native explanation for an intense craft hostility to industrial
unionism and labour unity. For that explanation, we are driven straight back to
the United States.

The basic reason for the extreme divisiveness of American labour, I suggest,
has been the sharp and long-lasting ethnic divisions that have existed between
the upper and lower strata of American wage-earners. It is hard to find
anything that resembles this closely (until recently) in Europe. There are
parallels in Canada where Irish labourers were treated as a subordinate caste in
the nineteenth century, Orientals aroused intense antipathy among white
workers in British Columbia, and immigrants from central Europe in the early
twentieth century were viewed with a good deal of suspicion by the over-
whelmingly Anglo-Saxon working class. Yet ethnic antagonisms have been
kept reasonably subdued (or suppressed) in Canada, and a characteristic
sentiment has been that "foreigners" should be welcomed into assimilation —
for one thing, to establish greater labour strength by means of labour unity. In
the United States, however, influxes of Irish, Chinese, Slavs, and so forth —
who took low-paying jobs, drove native Americans out of them, then took aim
at the superior jobs — seem to have had more traumatic effects than the
analogous immigrations into Canada, and became a reason, not to strive for
labour unity, but to close ethnic ranks. A rationalization of this hostility was a

frequent — although inaccurate, identification among foreigners, low skills, socialism, and industrial unionism. This phenomenon was not invariable. Where (when) low-status immigrants were a small percentage of population, as in the mountain states (and western Canada, and the United States generally in the 1830's and maybe 1870's), a homogeneous northern European labour force could readily accept institutions committed to the general welfare, such as industrial unionism and socialism. The presence in the West of a minority of socially-untouchable Orientals only consolidated other workers the more. Where (when) conditions were less favourable, however, as they frequently were in the eastern United States, the tendency (instead) was for workers to retreat into their ethnic-status shells. The interest of high-status workmen in the general rights of labour became overshadowed, in proportion to the inflow of low-status newcomers, by fear that the craftsmen's bargaining power would be expended on benefits for low-skilled foreigners. It was even more characteristic that the waves of new immigrants, faced by coldness and insecurity, should hive off in their own ethnic communities for a generation — a practice that, in turn, encouraged more favoured groups to look to their own particular advantage.

On the other hand, the division did not have to be final. As in Canada, ethnic divisions of labour were quickly marked out in the United States and — at some cost to the general welfare — the social and cultural unity *within* ethnic groups assisted the inhabitants to build tight unions within their ethnic-occupational jurisdictions. It is arguable that the Anglo-Saxon craftsmen of the A.F.L. were only doing the same sort of thing. Furthermore, the celebrated American melting-pot, after a generation of exposing newcomers to the public schools, did tend to produce a common Americanism. At this stage, should it not have been possible to bring together these various streams and their craft and industrial unions in a single American labour organization?

The essential reason why this accommodation has been interminably delayed, I think, is the deep, continued, divisiveness of a uniquely American condition: the presence of a large population of negroes in the labour force. Unlike a second or third generation of Irish or Italians, and notwithstanding some noble efforts to achieve racial harmony and labour unity, American negroes remained perpetually unacceptable to the upper strata of labour as equals, and, usually, as allies. Feared as slave labour before 1860, they were seen as a still more dangerously mobile threat to the maintenance of wage rates and working conditions after 1865. Employers often showed a similar aversion, reinforced by their reluctance to incur the enmity of their white employees. By general agreement, then, negroes were an alien element to be kept apart physically and in (inferior) employment status. It was the lowest strata of white workers who were seriously exposed to negro competition, but the craft unions

that were at the forefront in excluding negroes from their ranks. What that seems to indicate is, not that negroes threatened the jobs of craftsmen very much, but how totally the presence of an unassimilable group poisoned the atmosphere and promoted a narrow unionism dedicated to the particular rather than general welfare. Industrial unions to counter large, ruthless employers were needed (and sometimes formed) in the East as well as the West, but such unions often faced an awkward choice: to include inferior strata, even negroes; or to face the weakening effects of their exclusion. In these circumstances, craftsmen might calculate that, even if their craft union provided less bargaining power than an industrial union could have had, it offered a margin of benefit over the social price of consorting with outcasts. Conversely, the absence of a significant negro population in the mountain states — as in Canada — made it much easier for workers to favour the instruments of a united working class, industrial unionism and labour participation in politics.

The Final Conflict

The precocious growth and militancy of the western Canadian labour movement up until 1919 distinguished it from the unionism of eastern Canada while establishing striking parallels with the unionism of the western United States. Unlike their respective Easts, the western movements shared an addiction to industrial unionism, to socialist and syndicalist philosophy, and to direct labour participation in politics. It seems clear that the two western movements were being molded by similar forces: notably, a ruthless large-scale capitalism, and a greater capacity of labour to resist it in the West conferred by its relative scarcity and, hence, better bargaining position. It is no less important, however, to notice the differences between the two western movements. The Canadian one affected a relatively larger territory and membership, was less alienated from eastern unionists, and was the more cohesive and powerful — capable in 1919 of a spectacular challenge to the established order. The geographic separateness of western Canada and the strains imposed on this region by the First World War played roles in this, but perhaps more important was a Canadian tradition, quite unlike the American, of the social responsibility of the "father state" and of working-class political action to shape and enforce it. The effects of the differences were substantial. In the United States, the Industrial Workers of the World were harried almost out of existence towards the end of the First World War and the Seattle General Strike was an isolated phenomenon condemned to a quick and not very glorious end. In Canada, in contrast, the unity and militancy, power and sense of grievance of labour culminated in 1919 in the remarkable discipline of the Winnipeg General Strike, supported by sympathy strikes — many also

massive — in about 16 other Canadian cities; and in the formation of the One Big Union dedicated to reorganizing on an industrial basis the unions of Canada, the United States, and perhaps the world: a labour protest and crusade of truly heroic proportions.

Yet this spectacular denouement leaves some vexing questions. How was it that this formidable display of solidarity could not extract so reasonable a claim as the right to collective bargaining, and was already on the way to defeat when the Canadian government staged its melodramatic midnight arrests of a number of strike leaders and proceeded to create a show of violence as preludes to the calling-off of the strike? How was it that the One Big Union, although it enjoyed an early rush of affiliations, could be quickly reduced to insignificance after 1920 by the opposition of international unions and employers? Why, although western workers showed by their intensified support of labour political candidates after 1919 that their spirits had not been broken, nor their intelligences congealed, were they no longer able in Winnipeg and some other centres to maintain more than a cautious defensive unionism? In sum, how did so remarkable a labour movement arrive at so sickly an end?

What happened can only be understood, I think, against the background of a great shift of weight, or "climacteric", that affected the western Canadian labour movement about 1913. Until that time, a strong growth in demand for labour, along with the grievance of static real wages and employer resistance to their improvement, produced a vigorous rise in the numbers and aggressiveness of western unions. While western union growth was outstripped by population growth after 1901, it was distinctly more rapid than union growth in the East, even surpassing the East in absolute numbers of locals formed in half the years between 1904 and 1912. [29] No less impressive was the labour solidarity of the West, aided by a substantial ethnic unity of the labour force. the bonds of industrial unionism, and recurring upsurges of industrial conflict (1901, 1903, 1907, 1909, 1911) in which the West had a full share. When western unionists lectured their eastern colleagues, as they sometimes did in those years, they were conscious that they were leading from strength.

This situation changed dramatically after 1913. The depression that descended at that time was felt severely throughout Canada, but most, it would appear, in the West. The substantial unemployment that developed then and persisted until 1917 was probably an important factor in the high recruiting rates for military service that characterized the West. However, the really vital factor in the climacteric was a persistent weakness in demand for labour in the West even after 1917. In contrast, a vigorous growth of employment and unions occurred in the East, especially in Ontario, presumably stimulated by war contracts. Hence, eastern unionism far exceeded western in its growth in 1918 and, still more, in 1919, advancing in those two years to constitute three-

quarters rather than the previous two-thirds of Canada's union membership.

It follows that the increasingly shrill and radical tone of western union leaders towards the end of the war was a reflection, not of their old strength, but of their new weakness. They were searching for the means to recover their lost momentum, and leaning to more drastic solutions as their problem deepened. On the other hand, the labour spokesmen of eastern Canada could speak with a new authority conferred by expanding numbers. Their cold rejection of radical western proposals at the 1918 convention of the Trades and Labour Congress was made easy by a strategic position that was much the stronger and becoming more so.

That is, the abrupt decline of the great western labour movement was not just the work of eastern union leaders, or of the employers and politicians and A.F.L. roadmen who put their hearts into breaking the Winnipeg General Strike and the One Big Union: these had their importance, but they were more consequence than cause. Neither was it the fundamental cause of decline — although important — that the exceptional generation that had built the western labour movement had been decimated by war, exhausted by struggle, and diluted by barely literate immigrants from Europe, so that the gap in capacity between bosses and workers had widened again.

There was a deeper cause: the rate of expansion of western Canada slowed down. Demand for labour became weaker whereas supply — an increasing proportion of it western-born —was abundant and not infrequently excessive relative to demand. Presumably connected with this change was a great shift of relative incomes from the West to Ontario in and about 1920. [30]

The West's share of Canadian unionism recovered a little in the 1920's — but that only spelled a slightly higher percentage of a movement that was moribund everywhere. Many western workers kept up their struggle by participation in labour politics; but this was neither new — western labour had always been politically active — nor very effective in a mindless era dominated by forces suspicious of unions and of government intervention. It cannot even be said that the industrial unonism demonstrated in the West had much to do with the revival of industrial unionism in the 1930's — the focus of that revival was in the East, *Sic transit gloria*. Yet it was a truly remarkable movement in its time.

Winnipeg
November, 1973

Notes

1. See also the quantitative and qualitiative evidence of early union organization in British Columbia in Paul Phillips, *No Power Greater*, Vancouver: 1967.

2. Phillips, *No Power Greater*, 22.

3. Isabel Anderson, "Internal Migration in Canada, 1921-1961", ECC Staff Study No. 13 (1966), 10.

4. *Loc. cit.*

5. For an informative exploration of Gompers' relations with socialists, Populists, trusts, and American imperialism, see Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Vol. 2, chs. 19 ff.

6. The paragraph above and several that follow are drawn almost verbatim from my "Background of the Canadian System of Industrial Relations", an unpublished study prepared for the Task Force on Labour Relations, 1968, 89-94.

7. See particularly Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*, Chicago: 1969, and "The Origins of Working Class Radicalism, 1890-1905", *Labor History*, Spring, 1966, 131-154 which (article) is reprinted in David Brody, ed., *The American Labor Movement*, New York: 1971, in which collection see also articles by Laslett and Rogin. For a broader background see Foner, *History of Labor in the United States*, Vols. 2, 3, 4.

8. These and similar points are set out in detail in Foner, Vol. 2.

9. Dubofsky in Brody, *op. cit.*, 89; *We Shall Be All*, 58.

10. Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* New York: 1920, contains the original pathbreaking paper delivered in 1893, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History". For a Canadian application of the frontier thesis to non-agricultural activity see H.A. Innis, *Settlement and the Mining Frontier*, with A.R.M. Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier*, Toronto: 1936.

11. Dubofsky, "The Origins of Western Working Class Radicalism" in Brody, *op. cit.*, 88-89. The section within brackets is a footnote in Dubofsky's text. The reference to Perlman and Taft is to Selig Perlman and Philip Taft, *History of Labor in the United States, 1896-1932*, New York: 1935.

12. Phillips, *op. cit.*, 6-8, 14, 23; Stuart M. Jamieson, *Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-66*, Task Force on Labour Relations, Study No. 22, Ottawa: 1971, 110-116 and *passim*.

13. Charles Lipton, *The Trade Union Movement of Canada, 1827-1959*, Montreal: 1966, 100-105; F.R. Anton, *The Role of Government in the Settlement of Industrial Disputes in Canada*, Toronto and Montreal: 1962, 66-68.

14. Margaret A. Ormsby, *British Columbia; A History*, 1958, 341.

15. *Labour Gazette*, Vol. 40, 959.

16. Ormsby, *op. cit.*, 338-339.

17. S.D. Clark, *The Canadian Manufacturers' Association*, Toronto: 1939, 41-42; *Labour Gazette*, Vol. 3, 913.

18. Themes of American immigration and Canadian susceptibility to American influence are emphasized in John T. Saywell, "Labour and Socialism in British Columbia: A Survey of Historical Development before 1903", *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, July-Oct., 1951, 129-150. Saywell also stresses, however, that British numbers and influence much exceeded American in the early days (131-2). Margaret Ormsby, on the other hand, points to the importance of Canadian influences in the growth of western radical sentiment (*op. cit.*, 389, 396).

19. Saywell, *op. cit.*, 140; Jamieson, *op. cit.*, 112-121, an extensive discussion of this Commission, especially the pressures to relate Canadian labour disputes to "foreign agitators"; Phillips, *op. cit.* 41, Lipton, *op. cit.*, 103-105. Lipton, usually on the solemn side, recognizes this Royal Commission Report as the "the first elfin note of (King's) *Industry and Humanity.*"

20. Dubofsky in Brody, *op. cit.*, 84.

21. The title of an important study by M.L. Hansen and J.B. Brebner, New Haven: 1940.

22. Foner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, 369-387 (Ch. 24, "Labor and the Trusts").

23. Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics, Toronto:* 1967.

24. Gerald Grob, "The Knights of Labor and the Trade Unions, 1878-1886", *Journal of Economic History*, June, 1958, 176-192.

25. Selig Perlman, *History of Trade Unionism in the United States*, New York: 1929, 218-221.

26. Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 24.

27. "Western mining centers shared with mining communities the world over the group solidarity and radicalism derived from the relative physical isolation and dangerous underground work." *Ibid.*, 26.

28. For the lack of pleasure of A.F.L. leaders at U.M.W. successes, see Foner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, 345-6. Yet the A.F.L. later received other industrial unions into affiliation, notably those of garment workers.

29. See Table III.

30. See Marvin McInnis, "The Trend of Regional Income Differentials in Canada", *Canadian Journal of Economics*, May, 1968, especially pp. 446-448 including Chart 2 and Table IV; also 472, a comment. The essence of McInnis' findings is that income per capita in British Columbia declined drastically from being about 85% above the Canadian average 1910-11 to a position 20-25% above by the 1920's and even below Ontario from about 1950. Similarly, prairie incomes declined from above 25% above the Canadian average in 1910-11 (and, like B.C., with a still greater differential previously), to a position about 10% above average in the 1920's and below or at the average subsequently. The beneficiary of this regional shift in Canadian incomes has been Ontario, barely above the Canadian average in 1910-11 but 20% above since the 1920's. Some scanty data on wage rates, showing the early superiority of the West and the subsequent decline (especially of Winnipeg) can be found in *Canadian Historical Statistics*, 86-7, 95.

H.C. PENTLAND AND WORKING CLASS STUDIES

Gregory S. Kealey

Clare Pentland may well have written his own best obituary in 1972 when he noted "the unusual combination of respect and neglect" which Gustavus Myers' *History of Canadian Wealth* had received. He went on to award Myers an accolade that better described himself: "A historian's historian — his work valued by Canada's most knowledgeable scholars, academic and otherwise."[1]

After any intellectual's death, the scholarly autopsy of a life's work is a discomforting examination for us all. Always disconcerting for the survivors, the consideration becomes vastly more complicated when the subject's career mirrors the commentator's own intellectual interests and political predilections.

The task transcends easy eulogy, it rapidly evolves into a search for intellectual roots which, in this case, leads inexorably to an exploration of the Canadian academic environment of the 1940's and 1950's.

H. Clare Pentland was a scholar whose work I have always greatly admired but whom I only met on two occasions — once casually at the Learneds in 1974 and more recently at a 1977 Winnipeg seminar. I suspect that many readers will share my memory of the quest in the mid to late 1960's for critical writings in the Canadian historical and political economy traditions — an all-too-often futile hunt. There were, however, a few underground classics of an unassimilated radical tradition. The two which influenced me (and other historians of the Canadian working class) the most were Pentland's unpublished 1960 Toronto Ph.D. thesis, "Labour and the Development of Industrial Capitalism in Canada", and Frank Watt's "Radicalism and English Canadian Literature Since Confederation".[2] What remains most striking about both theses are their complete and brilliant idiosyncrasy. Pentland's evident interest in class analysis and especially in the development of the Canadian working class stands out from its Toronto political economy heritage as fully as does Watt's consideration of radicalism in Canadian literature.[3]

Although Pentland's work stands apart starkly from the Toronto political economy tradition, there are no clear explanations for this in his intellectual biography. Born in Justice, Manitoba in 1914, Pentland attended the Brandon campus of the University of Manitoba and received his honours B.A. in

economics from Manitoba in 1940.[4] After receiving his M.A. from the University of Oregon, Pentland registered in the School of Graduate Studies at the University of Toronto. In the academic years 1946 through 1948 he studied economic history (H.A. Innis), economic theory (G.A. Elliott), labour economics (H.A. Logan), sociology (S.D. Clark), and industrial relations (F. Toombs). In 1949 he accepted a position in the economics department at the University of Manitoba where he taught for the rest of his life. Pentland's dissertation, defended in 1960, which had been described originally in 1946 as "The History of Labour in Canada to 1867" and then narrowed to "The Irish Labourer on the Canadian Canals and Railroads, 1830-1860", was broadened again in its final form to "Labour and the Development of Industrial Capitalism in Canada".

The value of Pentland's work is located in its break with other existing North American schools of labour studies. Not only did his work depart significantly from the predominant staples interpretation of Canadian economic history by focusing on the development of industrial capitalism in Canada, but it also showed no affiliation with the predominant modes of labour studies. The American Common's school tradition imported to Canada partially through the later (non-academic) successes of Willy King but also by the Chicago-trained Harold Logan had little impact on Pentland's work. Indeed one can think of almost no relationship whatsoever between the Pentland approach first demonstrated in his 1948 "The Lachine Strike of 1843" and the institutional approach of Logan's *Trade Unions in Canada*, published ironically that same year.[5] By the same token, Pentland showed no interest in the emerging industrial relations field developing largely in the United States in conjunction with welfare capitalism.

"The Lachine Strike", Pentland's first publication, contained the seeds of much of his later work. Anthologized as late as 1974, this article today remains not only our best over all account of the role of Irish labourers, but also represents a pioneering effort in a style of cultural analysis in ethnic studies which has only recently become popular. In addition, Pentland gave notice of his forthcoming breakthrough analysis of the genesis of industrial capitalism in Canada, for here he describes the 1840's as "a decade of transition, marking the rise of wage-labour on a large scale, and of a milieu that would forge labour into a self-conscious force."[6] Perhaps even more important, it is in this article that Pentland develops the intellectual project which he consistently pursued thereafter — the rescuing of Canadian workers from the margins of history:

> Historians have paid considerable attention to the English
> capital that made possible Canada's canal and railway
> building, in the eighteen-forties and fifties, and some

> attention too, to the Scottish contractors who supervised
> the work. But there has been almost complete neglect of
> the real builders of Canadian public works, the thousands
> of labouring men, mainly Irish, who toiled with pick and
> shovel.[7]

By placing the Irish labourer at the center of his account, Pentland almost totally broke with both the Canadian historiographic and political economy traditions. Moreover he not only allowed the labourer to stride into the middle of the historical stage but he gave him a speaking part — the labourers here speak for themselves through their letters to other labourers as well as through the historian's careful reconstruction of their behaviour, not through the lens of the biased, class and race prejudiced observers, but rather through a sharply focused analysis of their Irish cultural heritage and their encounter with the Canadian environment.

Where did Pentland find his intellectual inspiration for such work? He appears to have turned to the English Marxist tradition of historical writing. Although his debts are at best made only partially clear, a decision which undoubtedly owed more to the academic climate of cold war Canada than to any lack of gratitude on his part, there is much evidence both in his citations and in the nature of his arguments to show his familiarity with the economic history of Maurice Dobb and with the labour studies of various British communist scholars. Indeed these citations run through not only his early historical work, but are present again and again even in the later, more general reflections on the nature of the Canadian industrial relations system.

Pentland, however, added another component to the English scholarship, namely American economic history which in the post-second world war period was enjoying a lively renaissance as scholars turned to the pre-Civil War period to consider the role of the state in the development of the U.S. economy. Studies such as Hartz on Pennsylvania and the Handlins on Massachusetts stimulated Pentland to consider the North American path to industrial capitalism which stood at some variance with the classic British transformation.[8] Thus Pentland's work was, from the beginning, built from a broad comparative base. He linked this to an impressive research skill which led him to utilize the Public Archives of Canada with considerable creativity. His work in pre-confederation government collections turned up nuggets of real value in sources which had previously yielded only political and constitutional dross.

Nevertheless, Pentland must have been a rather lonely scholar in the late 1940's and especially throughout the 1950's. His two very-important articles on "The Lachine Strike" and on "The Role of Capital in Canadian Economic Development Before 1875" were followed by almost ten years of silence.[9] This

quiet was broken only by the necessity to respond to Hugh Aitken's critique of Pentland's estimates of levels of capital imports and by occasional pieces on contemporary labour relations.[10] The pressure to complete his thesis led to his next important article which in many ways summarizes its core argument. His "The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market in Canada" (1959) is perhaps his seminal contribution to Canadian working class studies and constitutes a perfect companion piece for his earlier discussion of capital formation.[11]

These two essays considered together fully elaborate an alternative view to the pervasive staples version of Canadian economic development. Here the outlines of the transformation to an industrial capitalist society sketched in "The Lachine Strike" are fully drawn. Here Pentland argues persuasively that "about the middle of the nineteenth century the Province of Canada was transformed from a raw, staple-producing area to a rounded, integrated economy that might be called metropolitan"[12] and further that the canals and railways "by integrating the Canadian market, opened the way for Canadian manufacturers to conquer it."[13] Although not written in an explicitly Marxist framework, it is obvious that these two essays pursue the crucial questions in any Marxist understanding of the genesis of industrial capitalism: the nature of the capital accumulation which allows Mr. Moneybags to seek labour in the marketplace; and the process by which workers are forced to enter that same marketplace with nothing but their labour power to offer in return for their sustenance.

"Labour and the Development of Industrial Capitalism in Canada" extends the analysis of those essays. Here Pentland has room to explain more fully the scope of his undertaking:

> In primitive societies (and also, ideally in socialist societies) the potential labour force consists of all the members of society, and the methods of production are those that these members conceive to yield the greatest mutual benefit ... production in all other societies is complicated by the division of these societies into a ruling class, which organizes the labour force in its own interest, and the ruled or working group whose satisfactions are a matter of expediency and consistency with the demands of the rulers.[14]

His study traces the evolution of European society in Canada "up to the flowering of full industrial capitalism". This involves a discussion of changes in the organization of labour from various forms of forced labour (slavery, in-

denture, convict and military) through what he terms "feudal" (paternalistic, pre-industrial) to the emergence, "shortly after 1850", of a "capitalistic labour market and a well-developed capitalistic economy".[15]

This discussion is so broad and his insights are so rich about early Canadian social and economic history that it is impossible to comment on them all. Let it simply be noted that the discussion ranges from the labour of native people in the fur trade, through the failure of slavery in New France, to an intensive consideration of labour at the St. Maurice Forges. He then considers immigration to the Canadas in the first half of the nineteenth century chronicling the cultural backgrounds of the American, English, Scottish and especially the Protestant and Catholic Irish. The Irish, however, receive the most attention. The discussion begins with Ireland as the colony "in which the English learned the art of subjecting other peoples".[16] There follows an extended consideration of the cultural attributes of the Ulster and Southern Irish migrants which traces their deep-rooted conflict which they carried to Canada. The chapter closes with an extended Appendix on the Orange Order in central Canada which places the order fully in its working class context. This represents a particularly valuable example of Pentland's constant ability to transcend the usually narrow confines of either economic or labour history. Instead his sensitivity to social and cultural factors allows him to generate intriguing synthetic comments on all aspects of Canadian life. Thus:

> Orangeism and the moderate political conservatism which it built, represented the artisan well at a time when capitalism had not advanced enough to subordinate all other divisions to the one between capitalist and proletarian. In that time, the conservatism of the workingman was a fixed point of Canadian politics and the Orange Order was its typical form of organization.[17]

The final two chapters of this brilliant thesis contain the most important contributions. "The Transformation of Canada's Economic Structure" and "The Transformation of Canadians" provide the first and perhaps still, the fullest account of Canada's industrial revolution — an economic transformation of the mid-nineteenth century:

> A paramount fact about Canada is that it did develop a national economy of an industrial type in the-nineteenth century. The Canada that existed up until 1820 needs to be described ... in terms of staple production ... But this

> language will not do to describe the Canada of 1870: what
> is required for that is the terminology of advanced in-
> dustrial societies.[18]

Pentland's analysis of Canadian industrialization shows far more concern for
ideas, policies and the role of the state than for the actual process of economic
transformation from handicraft through manufacture to modern industry.
Indeed his study focuses on the debates surrounding tariff policy and pinpoints
two amazing men, Robert Baldwin Sullivan and Isaac Buchanan, as key figures
in the politics of Canada's industrial revolution. Predictably Pentland also
examined labour's role in the great policy debates of mid-century:

> While there was a real national policy from 1850 until
> 1880, both manufacturers and their workmen believed
> that their livelihood depended upon protection, and that
> protection was always in danger from railroads and
> merchants. In consequence, employers and employees
> relied on each other for marked consideration.[19]

Although overplaying the extent to which this led to a lessening of class
conflict, Pentland develops the above insight into its political corollary:

> What labour gave in return was ... consistent support for
> protection and the Conservative Party. The wage-earners
> — not least through the Orange Order in Canada West —
> were a dependable and not insignificant partner in
> MacDonald's coalitions.[20]

Here again we can see Pentland's understanding that labour is an active social
force that demands continual historical consideration. Labour's political role
did not await the arrival of socialism.

His "Transformation of Canadians" examines "the moral conditions of
economic growth", in Karl Helleiner's phrase.[21] Here, again developing in-
sights which were very evident in British Marxist historiography, he concerns
himself with the process by which pre-industrial labour ("slothful, immediate,
anarchic and irregular in work habits, and too easily seduced by noneconomic
goals and means to goals") was transformed into "suitable material for a
modern society".[22] In suggesting the terms on which he would pursue this
question, he wrote with a penetrating realization of the complexity of historical
transformation:

> To make the material [labour] suitable required a complex
> and unknowable educative process ...Nor was the means to
> success capable of reduction to a precise dose of new
> discipline and new ambition that could be injected, once
> for all, like a coin in a machine. Success was attained rather
> by an indistinct and never-completed process of inter-
> acting stimulation and response. Human transformation
> was bound to be partial, and mostly unplanned, because
> men were remaking themselves without much com-
> prehension or consciousness of it, because deliberate
> changes sent out other ripples of subtle, unrecognized
> adjustments to preserve the tension and balance of
> existence, and because the inanimate machinery of
> production to which man had to fit himself could only
> itself be transformed bit by bit and year by year. The
> nature and extent of the changes in the ways men regarded
> themselves, conducted themselves, and dealt with each
> other, have therefore to be indicated rather than ex-
> pounded; and the direction of causation suspected rather
> than proved.[23]

One wishes all social scientists were as sensitive and as humble before the reality of the past.

   In describing man's "remaking", Pentland was concerned with the new "spirit of capitalism," a new cosmos, "built around concepts like progress, 'science', and invention."[24] He drew his readers' attention to education and to temperance — topics which only recently in Canada have begun to be placed firmly in a social history framework. After an innovative discussion of the role of mechanics' institutes and of patents, he turned to "the new labour relations" of industrial capitalism. Here he recognized the crucial division of the working class into the skilled and the unskilled. The artisan, whose strength he recognized, was "the key man who held the new technology in his hands and brain, and it was nowhere else." Anticipating the recent historiography of work process, Pentland asserted clearly, "Only the craftsmen knew how the work should be done."[25] It was the unskilled, however, who interested him most. Returning to the subject of his first article, he again examined the Irish labourers in the Canadas. They could not depend on their skill, of course, but neither were they passive:

   The final arbiter of the disputes was not abstract right but

85

> physical force, the power of the massed labourers to do
> violence against the similar power of the troops that
> employers were able to call to their assistance.[26]

After a long discussion of strike activity among canal labourers and of the state
role in providing military assistance and later in devising new modes of police
activity, Pentland concludes that by the 1850's, Irish labourers had learned "to
be increasingly judicious in their use of violence" and now "acted less like
tribesmen, and more like a nationality, or class."[27] In summary, then:

> The Irish contributed much: they did the heavy work, and
> built the canals and railways, and made the well-supplied
> market in common labour that supported industrial
> capitalism. They taught much: that there was not, after
> all, an atomistic labour market; that beyond a certain
> point of exploitation labourers would combine and revolt;
> that it was sometimes necessary to negotiate terms rather
> than dictate them. They learned much: that the rules of
> capitalism allow some discussion of wages, but none of
> employment; that unity, to be very effective, had to en-
> compass all labourers; that life in a capitalistic society
> demanded a more calculating, more informed and more
> disciplined behaviour than they had been used to.[28]

Pentland's thesis represents a remarkable excursion through the Canadian past
— a trip all the more amazing for its quite unique point of origin and for the
places where he takes us. If Pentland can be considered to be a part of the
Toronto political economy school at all, as Daniel Drache has recently claimed,
then it should be only for the penetrating insights generated by the in-
terdisciplinary method that we associate with political economy. To describe his
work only as some derivative part of the Innisian tradition is simultaneously to
distort and to belittle it.[29]

In the 1960's Pentland's work appears to have focused on European
economic history where he tried to apply some of his insights about "feudal"
labour relations, which he had developed in the Canadian context, to Europe.
Put simply, Pentland argued that the elaborate system of law and custom
surrounding the nature of labour relations built up in the Middle Ages was
based on a "perennial shortage of labour".[30] In 1965 Pentland attended the
third International Conference of Economic History in Munich and delivered a
paper on "Population and Labour Growth in Britain in the Eighteenth

Century''. Based on very recent demographic work, Pentland argued strongly that "English population growth in the eighteenth century was a response to economic conditions."[31] Debating simultaneously with those who saw demography as independent of the economy and with those who equated surplus population directly with economic growth, Pentland appears to have received a good reception. Certainly E.J. Hobsbawn was impressed and he cites Pentland's argument in *Industry and Empire*.[32]

Also in the 1960's, as the Canadian political climate began to quicken and dissent gained an audience again, Pentland began to make a few tentative, political interventions. Articles on guaranteed full employment, foreign ownership, the role of labour in Canadian economic planning, and the Freedman Report appeared in various journals.[33] His political perspective was always critical and he seemed as happy to penetrate social democratic myth-making regarding the possibilities of full employment with the N.D.P. as to attack foreign ownership since "an economic colony will also be a political colony and Canada's frequent subservience to the United States follows largely from our status as an economic subsidiary."[34] While welcoming the Freedman Report as establishing a "great social principle", Pentland sensed, correctly, that the gains would be difficult for labour to hold and to spread beyond the railways. In his commendation of Freedman, however, Pentland encapsulated very well his view of the role of the Canadian courts in labour relations:

> It is not only that most judges move in a circle dominated by employer attitudes, but that the law which they enunciate makes these attitudes their "natural" ones. And, except possibly in the highest court, they are expected to hew to precedent and dispense order, rather than justice, so that courts may march more or less in step, that lawyers may give their clients reasonable forecasts of what the courts will decide and that they will not be too often over-hauled at a cost to unhappy petitioners and their own reputations. The judges best equipped for their work, then, are those with so little imagination that a disposition different from the traditional one does not occur to them, and with so little sensitivity that they feel no qualms about the injustices they have wrought.[35]

It was also in the climate of the late 1960's and early 1970's that Pentland came to play two additional roles: one as a consultant in labour relations to both the Manitoba and federal governments and second, to a limited extent, as

a newly recognized pioneer of the study of the Canadian working class movement. The former role led to various reports for the Manitoba government and his "Study of the Changing Social, Economic and Political Background of the Canadian System of Industrial Relations" for the 1968 federal Task Force on Labour Relations.[36] The second led him to assessments of the Winnipeg General Strike on its fiftieth anniversary, to an overall consideration of the western Canadian labour movement, and to review essays on the republication of Gustavus Myers' *History of Canadian Wealth* and Gary Teeple's New Left collection of essays on *Capitalism and the National Question in Canada.*[37]

On rereading this work, Pentland's important contribution to the recent resurgence of interest in the western Canadian labour movement is especially apparent. Again, due partially to the inaccessibility of much of his work, his role in defining many of the issues in this literature has been somewhat obscured. Yet his 1969 article on the Winnipeg General Strike, "one of the great class confrontations of capitalist history", anticipates much of the more recent literature.[38] For example, consider Pentland's conclusions about Winnipeg:

> The confusion of ideology and tactics, indeed goes to the heart of the General Strike. Contrary to what the strikers imagined, a general strike (in itself) does not bring the capitalists to their knees; it only makes them close ranks and fight like jungle beasts for their class interests.[39]

Meighen and the Tory government understood this and acted accordingly. Thus "if western labour was far too militantly class-conscious from an employer's point of view, it was not nearly class-conscious enough from a syndicalist and Marxist point of view."[40] This failure resulted in the crushing of the strike which Pentland correctly viewed as a major defeat for Canadian labour. Although Pentland's analysis is couched throughout in language alien to David Bercuson's recent, *Confrontation at Winnipeg,* the congruence of their arguments is clear.[41]

Equally, Pentland's unpublished, 1973 "The Western Canadian Labour Movement, 1897-1919" which he delivered at the Toronto Learneds in 1974, prefigures much of the very recent literature on "western labour exceptionalism". His account, like his successors', suffers from an over-emphasis on the distinctiveness of Western radicalism. This over-emphasis flows partially from the contemporary strength of western regional sentiment — a sentiment that Pentland's work displayed consistently in the 1960's and 1970's — and partially from the frequently articulated sentiments of the western radical leaders themselves. They firmly believed they were distinct from workers

unfortunate enough to labour east of the Manitoba-Ontario border. It is not surprising, then, to find historians countenancing these claims. Yet the great danger in the comparative method is that it demands equivalent knowledge about both sides of the equation and neither Pentland, nor more recently, Bercuson and McCormack have sufficiently studied labour in the industrial heartland or in the East.[42] To identify all of eastern labour with Tom Moore and Gideon Robertson is an error that the western radical leaders began to recognize themselves in 1919, as Gerry Friesen has recently argued.[43] My argument with Pentland here, however, only demonstrates his importance to the field, and the consensus of western labour historians lies with his argument at the moment.

If Pentland's Manitoba loyalties were evident in his writings on western labour, his Canadian nationalism also emerges strongly in his last essays. Actually the strength of this nationalism contrasts somewhat with his earlier work. For example, in his response to Aitken's critique of his analysis of early capital accumulation, Pentland argued:

> Most merchants eschewed fixed investment not from blindness, but as creatures of a commercial system. That they were not more like American merchants is a consequence rather than a cause of differences in economic structure. It is seldom useful to explain the flow of capital in terms of patriotism or its lack, though it is useful to explain patriotism in terms of the flow of capital.[44]

Moreover in his thesis Pentland had spent considerable time demonstrating the similar role the Canadian and American states had played in nineteenth century economic development. Yet his analysis of Gustavus Myers' *History of Canadian Wealth* moved in the opposite direction. There he criticized Myers for "regarding Canada as a junior and retarded copy of the United States" and emphasized as one major difference the role of the Canadian state with its "pragmatic", "interventionist tradition". The Canadian bourgeoisie also had acted differently, although his example suggests a difference in degree only:

> When Canadians were deliberately dishonest, they — unlike American promoters — were apt to be ridden by guilt and impelled to confine their venality to what their consciences could half-justify, rather than all that could be got.[45]

His stronger nationalism was also slightly evident in his review of Teeple's *Capitalism and the National Question.* He greeted this book generously as "an important addition to our historical resources, marking the debut of a new generation of Marxist scholars."[46] His general encouragement did not prevent him, however, from pointing out that often in the collection "the application of Marxist tools is rather limited and awkward."[47] Here he gave most consideration to Tom Naylor's controversial overview of Canadian economic history. After depicting Naylor as fitting his "image of the young Karl Marx", Pentland contented himself with a summary of the argument which implies criticism but never offers it directly. His summary position is aggravating and perhaps slightly paternalistic:

> This is stimulating stuff. The dogmatism and far-fetched generalizations are exasperating, but must be balanced against the promise that when this author gets his welter of ideas sorted out, and has chiselled them into congruence with the historical evidence his contribution to scholarship can be very great.[48]

I wish Pentland had addressed Naylor's work more systematically for there can be little question that the Pentland thesis (and Stanley Ryerson's elaboration of it in *Unequal Union*) provide a rather distinct, opposite view of Canada's nineteenth century industrial capitalist development.[49]

The entire debate on the nature of Canadian industrialization has recently heated up considerably. Naylor's article and his subsequent two volume *History of Canadian Business* have generated much controversy.[50] It seems rather ironic, however, that Pentland's work is now receiving its due as it gets dragged into the controversy. Ironic not only because his views are often typified as "Ryersonian", despite the heavy debt of gratitude which Ryerson pays to Pentland's prior work, but also because he is drawn into the debate simply to have his views dismissed before the altar of Innis.[51] Thus, Mel Watkins, while recognizing that "We must enquire into the formation of the working class ... a critical matter neglected by Innis and thus far by Naylor,"[52] still warns us that Pentland "veered more to a Ryersonian than Naylorian view of industrialization, so we need to be on our guard."[53] It appears that it never occurs to Watkins that it is precisely Pentland's careful inquiry "into the formation of the working class" which inspires his so-called "Ryersonian" view of Canadian economic development. This "critical matter" is indeed crucial and Watkin's meanderings on a "dependent" working class after 1902 fails to speak to the previous sixty years of working class development in Canada.

Watkins, like Drache, only pays lip service to the importance of Pentland's work while in effect, dismissing its most important insights.[54] On the other hand recent work in nineteenth century working class history and in social reconstitution has certainly tended to support Pentland's view of industrialization.[55]

The various controversies which now swirl around Pentland's work would no doubt delight him since they suggest an intellectual and political environment which has finally caught up with the impact, insight and import of his writing. I cannot help but wonder, however, if he too would not appreciate some of the irony of these debates. Unlike Gustavus Myers, at least his work will not have to wait fifty years for recognition.

History
Dalhousie University

Notes

1. H.C. Pentland, "How the wealth was won," *Canadian Forum,* 52, September, 1972, 6-9.

2. Both unpublished University of Toronto, Ph.D. theses — Watt's completed in 1958, Pentland's in 1961.

3. Information as recorded in Judy Mills and Irene Dombra, comps., *University of Toronto Doctoral Theses, 1897-1967,* Toronto: 1968. In 1958, Watt's was only the fifth Toronto English Ph.D. on any aspect of Canadian letters.

4. This limited biographical information is drawn from conversations with W.T. Easterbrook, S.D. Clark and C.B. Macpherson. The University of Toronto political economy department also kindly allowed me to consult Pentland's student file.

5. H.C. Pentland, "The Lachine Stike of 1843," *Canadian Historical Review,* 1948, 255-277; Harold Logan, *Trade Unions in Canada,* Toronto: 1948. For brief discussions of the origins of labour studies in Canada see R.G. Hann, *et al.,* "Introduction," *Primary Sources in Canadian Working Class History,* Kitchener: 1973, and Russell G. Hann and Gregory S. Kealey, "Documenting Working Class History: North American Traditions and New Approaches," *Archivaria,* 4, 1977, 92-114.

6. Pentland, "Lachine Strike," 277.

7. *Ibid.,* 255.

8. See Oscar and Mary Handlin, *Commonwealth: A Study of the Role of Governments in the*

American Economy: Massachusetts, 1774-1861, New York: 1947, and Louis Hartz, *Economic Policy and Democratic Thought: Pennsylvania, 1776-1860*, Cambridge: 1948. For a useful discussion of this literature see Robert Lively, ''The American System: A Review Article,'' *Business History Review*, 29, 1955, 81-96.

9. H.C. Pentland, ''The Role of Capital in Canadian Economic Development Before 1875,'' *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 16, 1950, 457-474.

10. H.C. Pentland, ''Further Observations on Canadian Development,'' *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 19, 1953, 403-410.

11. H.C. Pentland, ''The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market in Canada,'' *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 25, 1959, 450-461.

12. Pentland, ''The Role of Capital'', 457.

13. *Ibid.*, 463.

14. Pentland, ''Labour and Industrial Capitalism'', 1-2.

15. *Ibid.*, 4. Pentland's use of ''feudal'' is unique. What he means by it is the ''labour organization that preceded the free labour market of industrial capitalism, that was not slavery, nor a putting-out system, nor the share system of early capitalist commerce.'' (64) Thus it is a name he uses for a pre-industrial *but* capitalist form of labour organization and should not be confused with classic European feudalism.

16. *Ibid.*, 208.

17. *Ibid.*, 259.

18. *Ibid.*, 283.

19. *Ibid.*, 357-8.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*, 384.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*, 385.

24. *Ibid.*, 392.

25. *Ibid.*, 402-3.

26. *Ibid.*, 406.

27. *Ibid.*, 421-2.

28. *Ibid.*, 424-5.

29. See Daniel Drache, ''Rediscovering Canadian Political Economy,'' *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 11, 3, August 1976, 3-18. In this essay Drache describes Pentland as a ''Post-Innisian'' ''in whose writing we find an elaboration of the Innis model in terms of super-

structural relations." (3) Later he does describe Pentland's thesis an "underground classic" (18) and credits him with "the first substantial Canadian investigation of the working class and the development of the modern industrial relations system." (11)

30. H.C. Pentland, "Feudal Europe: An Economy of Labour Scarcity", *Culture,* 21, 1960, 280-307 at 282.

31. H.C. Pentland, "Population and Labour Growth in Britain in the Eighteenth Century", in D.C. Eversley, ed., *Third International Conference of Economic History, Munich 1965,* vol. 4, Paris: 1972, 157-189 at 179.

32. E.J. Hobsbawn, *Industry and Empire,* Harmondsworth, 1969, 44, 55.

33. H.C. Pentland, "Guaranteed Full Employment: A critique of the New Democratic Party Program," *Canadian Dimension,* November-December 1964, 11-14; "Are Co-operatives the Answer to Foreign Ownership", *Canadian Dimension,* July 1965, 15, 25; "The Role of Labour in Economic Planning for Canada", *Journal of Liberal Thought,* 2, 2, Spring 1966, 85-96; "The Freedman Report", *Canadian Personnel and Industrial Relations Journal,* 13, 1966, 10-24.

34. H.C. Pentland, "Foreign Ownership", 15.

35. H.C. Pentland, "The Freedman Report", 10-12.

36. H.C. Pentland, "Change in the Manitoba Economy" in *Automation and the Individual: Proceedings of the Manitoba Conference on Technological Change,* Winnipeg: 1968.

37. H.C. Pentland, "Fifty Years After," *Canadian Dimension,* 6, 2, July 1969, 14-17; "How the Wealth was Won," *Canadian Forum,* 52, September 1972, 6-9; "Marx and the Canadian Question," *Canadian Forum,* 54, January 1974, 26-28; "The Western Canadian Labour Movement, 1897-1919", unpublished paper delivered at Canadian Economics Association meetings, Toronto: 1974.

38. Pentland, "Fifty Years After", 14.

39. *Ibid.,* 16.

40. *Ibid.*

41. David Bercuson, *Confrontation at Winnipeg,* Montreal: 1974, *passim.*

42. See Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement, 1899-1919,* Toronto: 1977 and David Bercuson, *Fools and Wise Men: The Rise and Fall of the One Big Union,* Toronto: 1978.

43. Gerald Friesen, " 'Yours in Revolt': Regionalism, Socialism and the Western Canadian Labour Movement", *Labour,* 1, 1976, 139-157.

44. Pentland, "Further Observations", 409.

45. Pentland, "How the Wealth was Won", *passim.*

46. Pentland, "Marx and the Canadian Question", 26.

47. *Ibid.,* 28.

48. *Ibid.*, 27.

49. See Stanley Ryerson, *Unequal Union*, Toronto: 1967 and Ryerson's review of Naylor, "Who's Looking After Business?" *This Magazine* 10, 5 and 6, November - December 1976, 41-46. For an excellent similar critique of Naylor, see Larry MacDonald "Merchants against Industry: An Idea and its Origins", *Canadian Historical Review*, 56, 1975, 263-281. It can be noted that MacDonald acknowledges Pentland's comments and suggestions on this paper. (263)

50. Tom Naylor, *History of Canadian Business*, 2 vols., Toronto: 1975. Much of this debate has been more amusing than enlightening. See especially the Bliss-Naylor exchange in *Social History*, 18, 1976, 446-449 and 19, 1977, 152-163, which reached a vituperative level previously unmatched in Canadian scholarship.

51. For the "Ryersonian" typification and for a general example of this tendency, see Mel Watkins, "The Staple Theory Revisited", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 12, 5, Winter 1977, 82-95.

52. *Ibid.*, 90.

53. *Ibid.*, 91.

54. *Ibid.*, 88-92. Note especially "[Pentland's thesis] still — incredibly — unpublished. Pentland deserves great credit for working within the Marxist paradigm when it was distinctly unusual to do so, and the tendency for his work to be ignored by the mainstream of Canadian economic historians — including myself [Watkins] in the 1963 article — tells us much about the limitations of orthodox economics as it impinges on economic history." Indeed! (95 n. 49)

55. Bryan Palmer, "Most Uncommon Common Men: Craft, Culture and Conflict in a Canadian Community, 1860-1914", unpublished Ph.D. thesis, State University of New York at Binghampton, 1977 and Gregory S. Kealey, "The Working Class Response to Industrial Capitalism in Toronto, 1867-1892," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Rochester, 1977. Both of these theses, on Hamilton and Toronto respectively, demonstrate the high level of industrialization attained by the early 1870's. They also are both more concerned with the details of that transformation of production than was Pentland. Another study supportive of Pentland's view is Stephen Langdon, *The Emergence of the Canadian Working Class Movement*, Toronto: 1975. Finally, Michael Katz's Hamilton project has now generated very interesting material on industrialization and on the development of class.

PENTLAND'S SCARCITY OF LABOUR AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Paul Deprez

Pentland's activities in the field of historical demography were extremely limited, and his appearance on the international scene was only a brief one. The only time he really did partake in an international exchange of views was at the Third International Conference of Economic History held in Munich in 1965. Hence, our assessment of his work will concentrate on the paper he wrote for that same conference.[1]

However, one preliminary comment is in order that one can better understand why his contribution may not have had the attention it rightly deserves. The Munich conference together with the publication by D.V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley of "Population in History"[2] marked a turning point in historical demographic research with people veering away sharply from strict demographic research and with increased attention being paid to the interrelation between population and economics. It is not out of line to state that in that year a new generation emerged, less in terms of age than in terms of similarity of views and conceptions. However, if assessed in the light of a fifteen year time gap, one regrettably comes to the conclusion that the high expectations people had in 1965 never did materialize, and the interest in the study of the interaction between population and economics subsided quite quickly. As a result, Pentland's contribution, as so many others, receded into the background. Before entering into comments on Pentland's work, one should be reminded of the fact that he was foremost a labour economist and that his "incursion" in the field of historical demography has to be viewed in that context: his main focus is on the relation between the changes in the labour force and the changes in the population growth, and their significance for the changes in the industrial organization.

The genesis of Pentland's view with respect to population growth and changes in the labour force can easily be established. In 1960 he published an article[3] dealing with what he called "a perennial shortage of labour (relative to demand) in Medieval Europe". In this article he was in fact elaborating a point of view developed earlier with regard to Canada in the 17th and 18th centuries.[4]

The basic thrust of the 1960 Pentland article can be summarized as follows. Marc Bloch had earlier argued that the decline of slavery and emergence of serfdom were in fact the result of labour scarcity; *i.e.* a scarcity of labour related to (a) the "effective" demand for labour by the ruling classes and to (b) "the land areas which these rulers wished to exploit." Pentland goes on to state the following:

> Effective demand and effective supply are not unrelated, and have to grow together. Supplies of skilled labour responsive to market demand can only stand available permanently in proportion as demand becomes coherent and dependable. Contrariwise, it is difficult for demand to develop breadth and depth unless supply conditions encourage that. The capitalistic solution to this chicken-and-egg problem rested on the appearance of a permanent surplus of labour in relation to demand — a surplus extremely congenial to the development of demand because the whole burden of adjustment fell on the labourers. However, labourers avoid so disadvantageous a market if they have any alternative, and can survive in it only if demand is stable enough to preserve them from starvation: hence, growth of the capitalistic market requires denial of alternatives and sufficient population growth to more than make up for wastage .... Still less could a capitalistic solution appear under the conditions of scarcity of labour that prevailed in early Canada, or in medieval Europe. In these cases, it was typically demand that had to appear first and guarantee stability .... If the order of causation is reversed from Pirenne's view, that capitalism arose and created the abundant labour market, to the opposite view, that the abundant labour market arose and created capitalism, the quotation says all that this paper has sought to show.[5]

The above quotation is a very long one, but it clearly reflects the argument the author was developing. As the creation of an abundant labour market was viewed by Pentland as a necessary pre-condition to capitalism, and as capitalism starts to mature in the latter part of the eighteenth century, then one should be able to demonstrate that the growth of the English population in the 18th century was in fact a response to changing economic conditions, which was

what Pentland set out to demonstrate in his paper presented to the Munich conference.

With meticulous care and awareness of the shortcomings in both data and argumentation, Pentland builds up his case. First of all he reviews past research and points out, quite accurately, that the traditional statistics used by earlier authors have contributed to an overall impression that population change was in fact a gradual process; as a result, the close relationship (or for that matter any relationship) that existed between population change and economic growth remained blurred, or at least, remained understated. In other words, as population changes were expressed in terms of trends over a longer period of time, the short term interaction between economics and population changes (and demographic behaviour) was not only overlooked but in fact, rendered impossible because of the divergence in time-perspective. Pentland thus argues that the assessment of the historical reality was seriously impeded not only because scholars put excessive emphasis on broad trends but also because inadequate attention was paid to the subtleties of population fluctuations in Britain and of the interaction between these fluctuations and economic changes and patterns.

While Pentland's criticism was mainly directed at the English example, it held equally true for other countries. He pointed out that Griffith and others left a number of fluctuations unmentioned,[6] all of which contributed to a volatility of the growth of the English population in the 18th century. That volatility resulted (based on data for Leeds and Pembrokeshire) in periods of very small additions to the labour force and periods of large additions, with the latter occurring in the 1770's and at the end of the century. Hence, and this is a very important point in Pentland's argumentation, the periods of large additions to the labour force are posterior to the growth of the domestic demand (1770's) or are coincidental with the increased demands of a war economy (1780-1800). While Pentland recognized that the population in the 18th century grew because the economy grew, he also acknowledged that population growth itself provided a further stimulation for economic growth, which indeed seems to have been the case in Britain. By the same token, and this reflects to a certain extent Pentland's uneasiness, he also points out that population growth may have been a contributing factor to economic stagnation and impoverishment. Timing, in Pentland's argumentation, is very crucial and leads in fact to one of the difficult problems he had to wrestle with, namely, that research had clearly demonstrated that English agriculture was very responsive to effective demand, and in fact, British agriculture had been able to provide a sufficient supply of food for the existing population. All the preceeding brings us gradually to his final argument that the causation moving in a direction from a surplus population causing low wages leading to economic growth is hardly

sustainable either in practise or in theory. Pentland does, however, recognize that the argument and the causation could have, in his own words, "a certain plausibility in analyzing the position of one region or industry, with an indefinitely large market assumed to exist outside, not affected significantly by the low wages within."[7] It is the latter part of the above quotation that, to an extent, invalidates his own argument. Our main criticism to his approach is that he paid insufficient attention to the existence of possible large outside markets, but we will come back to that point. He attributes the failure of the causation surplus population-low wages-economic growth to the fact that such an approach has failed to deal with the problem of aggregate demand, because such a causation does not make sense when seen in the context of aggregate demand. Because the previous causal relationship does not make sense in an aggregate context, he feels that he can argue safely that only a scarcity of labour could have contributed to the Industrial Revolution. In order to make sure that Pentland's argument is not misunderstood nor put in the wrong perspective, we have to emphasize that he views scarcity of labour only as providing the right environment in which the Industrial Revolution could take place. He also points out that scarcity of labour in itself did not guarantee the arrival of the Industrial Revolution.

Before we enter into the criticism of his work, one should realize that his failing health prevented him from expanding or refining the argument presented at the Munich conference. The criticisms one may have with regard to Pentland's thesis relate to the following points.

1.   Pentland accepts the fact that the food supply responded to effective demand. In any subsistence economy or quasi-subsistence economy, the only increase in effective demand will be as a result of population growth. It is unthinkable that improvements in the productivity in the agrarian sector would have occurred in absence of a demographic stimulus. It is therefore not altogether excluded that if, as a result of population growth, the effective supply of subsistence commodities increased, that supply may have contributed in a subsequent period with no dramatic changes in the population or even with a falling population, to falling prices thereby probably increasing the marginal propensity to consume or to purchase industrial goods.

2.   Pentland mentioned that in 18th century Britain, there may have been reserves of underemployed and badly utilized labour. With increased productivity in the agrarian sector, and given the fact that population in the typical agricultural areas tended (at least initially) to have higher fertility rates and lower mortality rates, it is not excluded that in these areas a large pool of underemployed labour emerged. That labour pool (and this has been clearly demonstrated for other countries) provided the cheap labour for the rural industrial activities, which from the last quarter of the 18th century onward

would be gradually eliminated by the new modes of production brought about by the Industrial Revolution.

3.   Pentland, as stated, has minimized the impact and significance of large outside markets. However, it cannot be denied that Britain, even in the earlier part of the 18th century, had access to outside markets in the form of its colonies and even to certain continental markets. On the other hand, that access grew considerably after 1765 with the increased size of the Asian and North American British colonies.

For Britain, the three points of criticism are not unrelated and can be put in a certain time sequence: because of population growth, improvements took place in the agricultural sector both in terms of output and productivity. As a result, the pool of underemployed increased which found employment in a rural industrial sector working in part for a domestic market, in part for outside markets; because they belong to a pool of underemployed, pushed out of the agricultural sector, they were willing to accept lower wages. These lower wages, even in spite of an increased effective domestic demand, were maintained in the 18th century when because of larger colonial markets the rural industries grew in order to meet the demand of these outside markets.

However, we have to put one serious limitation on our own criticism of Pentland's approach. Our criticism mainly relates to industrial activity in a rural setting. While admittedly it has been of considerable significance, one should not equate that phenomenon with the Industrial Revolution as a typical urban phenomenon.

Pentland himself did not make a clear distinction between the rural and the urban setting, and that may have caused the inconsistencies and the ambiguities that one detects in his argumentation. There are, in fact, clear indications (see amongst others the case of Nottingham in the 18th century) that the demographic evolution and especially the rate of natural increase showed marked differences between urban and rural settings: the rate of natural increase in the urban setting was generally much smaller than in a rural environment.

As a result, the distinct possibility still exists that while Pentland's thesis regarding scarcity of labour and its significance for the Industrial Revolution may not hold for a rural industrial setting with large markets, it may well hold for an urban setting, where industrial activity was indeed hampered by a shortage of labour mainly caused by a very low rate of natural increase; and where ultimately the growing labour force was largely made up of in-migrants coming from rural areas.

Thus, in spite of its imperfections and in spite of the fact that Pentland's ideas did not have a fair chance to mature, he did open considerable avenues

for discussion. For this alone, we should remain grateful for his intellectual contributions.

Economics
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Notes

1. H.C. Pentland, Population and Labour Growth in Britain in the Eighteenth Century, *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Economic History*, Munich: 1965, vol. 4 (ed. D.E.C. Eversley), pp. 157-189.

2. D.V. Glass and D.E.C. Eversley (eds.), *Population in History*, London: 1965.

3. H.C. Pentland, ''Feudal Europe: An Economy of Labour Scarcity'', *Culture*, 1960, pp. 280-307.

4. H.C. Pentland, ''The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market in Canada'', *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 1959, pp. 450-461.

5. H.C. Pentland, ''Feudal Europe'', pp. 283-4, 290.

6. Pentland, ''Population and Labour Growth'', p. 164.

7. *Ibidem*, p. 183.

CLARE PENTLAND - BRANDON COLLEGE, 1937-40

W. T. Easterbrook

The Brandon College of the late 1930's is best described as a hard-times college. The depression years had left their mark on the unimpressive collection of buildings on the outskirts of a town that had seen better days. The large expanse of grounds surrounding the college was a dusty, barren wasteland. Serious financial problems faced the administration in what seemed to be a hopeless struggle for survival. The dream of better days inspired by the prospect of a large bequest by Cyrus Eaton had ended with the world-wide collapse of 1929. Shortly after my arrival on the campus in the fall of 1937 an appeal was launched in a last-ditch attempt to save the college; the amount involved was the princely sum of $25,000. A favorable response by a far from prosperous populace served to assure continuity of operations for at least the time being. Affiliation with the University of Manitoba in 1938 brought the prospect of permanence, but budgetary restraints continued to limit growth.

Unreserved tribute must be paid to Dr. John Evans, president of the college who, backed by his able lieutenant Stuart Perdue, must be given full credit for the college's survival in the face of the most appalling difficulties. His lifelong, unsparing devotion to his college has few, if any parallels in academic life. Plagued as he was with the problems of raising funds in depression times, he nevertheless succeeded in building a strong and able faculty. William Morton, Desmond Pacey, J.R. Mallory, Mark Long, Marten Johns — all of these made their mark in the academic field as scholars and administrators. Association with men of this calibre went far to compensate for the physical drawbacks of inadequate space and equipment.

Another source of compensation was the quality and spirit of the students I encountered. Their willingness to make the best of limited resources is among the most pleasant memories of my years in Brandon. Some came to lectures following a night shift in Brandon's mental hospital, others had spent the night in attending the college's furnace. I recall Tommy McLeod, who later graduated with distinction, thumping vigorously on the big drum of the college band. The numerous dances and festive occasions were in the main initiated by students with the will and the courage to face up to the vicissitudes of a deep and prolonged depression.

Clare Pentland was a member of a small group of Honours students who

attended the seminars I held in a tiny cottage on the outskirts of Brandon. He impressed me from the beginning as an outstanding candidate for an academic career. A very serious, dedicated individual, he displayed a strongly creative streak in discussion and in the papers he turned in. I forwarded several of his essays to Dr. H.A. Innis of the University of Toronto in the hope that means would be found to enable Clare to proceed to more advanced studies. Unfortunately, Toronto in the 1930's had little to offer. Financial stringency, a scarcity of fellowships and a limited program of graduate studies, ruled out any prospect of assistance at that time. Nor were there any funds for the employment of graduate assistants in those days.

Other avenues of assistance were explored and finally an application to the University of Oregon was approved, enabling Clare to advance to studies at the Master's level. He had been awarded the University of Manitoba gold medal in economics at the graduation ceremonies in Brandon College and I had no doubts about his ability to make his mark in graduate studies. Later, I met him on the campus in Eugene and came away with the impression that he had experienced no difficulty in achieving high standings in his studies there. I recall that following the disaster of Pearl Harbour he faced a problem common to Canadian students studying in the United States. If not enrolled in the Canadian armed forces he was required to return to Canada in uniform. Apparently his later studies at the University of Toronto freed him from this restraint.

I regret that at this point I lost personal contact with Clare. I know, however, that in his graduate studies at the University of Toronto he maintained the high standards of his undergraduate years. As to his academic career, although I followed his progress with interest and pleasure, the pressure of teaching and administrative duties at the University of Toronto, along with frequent and prolonged bouts of travel to distant parts, prevented close acquaintance with his work. It did not surprise me that those in touch with his research held him in very high esteem. Their numerous and complimentary references to his major contributions to labour economics attest to the quality of his publications. It was fitting that he was chosen to represent Canada at several meetings of the International Economic History Association.

I treasure the memory of Clare Pentland, undergraduate. That he lived up to the promise of those years is a source of gratification to those who watched his progress. His death means the loss to Canadian scholarship of a man of exceptional quality of mind and independence of thought.

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THE ILLUSION OF A FUTURE

Jon Robert Schiller

Faith is better than knowledge if it works; but knowledge
is better if faith can only be an escape from knowledge.
Philip Reiff

Gad Horowitz, *Repression: Basic and Surplus Repression in Psychoanalytic Theory: Freud, Reich and Marcuse,* Buffalo and Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977, pp. 227.

I

The tension Freud was able to maintain between cultural, clinical, and scientific interests has, predictably, been torn asunder. Various camps participate in this work, either superficially clinging to the Freudian legacy while in fact undermining it, or disavowing its importance while paradoxically remaining obsessed with the danger it seems to pose. Needless to say, the United States has led the way in this process. Freud's depictions of culture could hardly be compelling to a social science which has only recently discovered alienation in, of all places, the voting booth; and the clinical-scientific aspects have been held in thralldom by the institutes which control the practice of psychoanalysis here. The rites of initiation; the medical training requirement which pre-selects a certain type of practioner and imposes on him a specific clinical outlook; and the theoretical re-formulations acculturating psychoanalysis to American habits of thought have trivialized its import by simultaneously narrowing and broadening the parameters of concern. Thus a psychic entity or process will be dissected so thoroughly and scientifically that it is difficult to understand it any longer as a human attribute; and surface phenomena such as cognition or motivation, which have little to do with the subject matter of psychoanalysis, are attended to as if the domain of consciousness had never been touched by Freud's research.

It is not difficult to understand why American critical thought has ignored or attacked psychoanalysis — although a minimum of reading and reflection would reveal that Freud has approximately the same relation to American psychoanalysis as Marx does to Brezhnev. Apparently in Europe, it has been easier to grasp the radical essence at the core of Freud's thought, and at long last such ideas are finally making their way to our shores: even now, one can occasionally hear the name "Adorno" or "Lacan" quietly muttered here and there.

There can be no doubt that radicalism does indeed characterize the main discoveries of psychoanalysis, but the question of its nature remains: whether this radicalism is, by virtue of being radical, a natural adjunct to left-wing political thought, or whether it is of a wholly different nature, either without leftist implications or even opposed to them. The idea of the unconscious is radical in every sense of the term, but its political meaning is by no means obvious. Adorno's celebrated comment, "in psychoanalysis *only* the exaggerations are true" tells us less about the political implications of psychoanalysis than about the ineluctable attraction of any radical idea whatsoever to a radical thinker.

On the surface, at any rate, it does seem logical that Marxists would sooner or later have to confront Freud: first, because psychoanalytic theory contained a source of insight demanding recognition, and second, owing to historical events which forced a reconsideration of the Marxist theory of change. Socialist revolution had failed to occur at those moments when it should have — when the objective conditions had seemingly prepared the way for a proletarian take-over. It was thus reasoned that subjective factors must be at fault, but that Marx's concentration on material conditions led him to assume a psychology dominated by exogenous circumstance: if the world was ready for revolution, then the mind would surely follow. Clearly this assumption could no longer be made, so that a more sophisticated model of mental functioning was called for to explain how, between reality and action, another force insinuated itself with the power to sabotage revolutionary consciousness.

The outcome of these reflections was the Frankfurt School (as it is now called) which by the late 1920's turned to Freud as a way of completing Marx. As I had occasion to hint at above, this confluence is by no means easily accounted for in the theories themselves, bound as they seemingly are to wholly different world-views: optimistic and pessimistic, individualism and collectivism, inner and outer. Was Freud chosen because Adorno, *et al.* discerned an underlying sympathy with Marxism, or were they simply drawn by the power of a theory which could not be ignored? Can psychoanalysis truly be harmonized with Marxism, or do the two indicate an irreconcilable bifurcation in the discourse of contemporary thought — and perhaps in reality as well? Does Freud

complete Marx or undermine him, or is it that each delimits a segment of existence which is irreducible to the other?

II

The most widely known attempt to resolve these matters for the American audience is Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*, first published in 1955. My reaction on reading the book several years ago, during a time when I was myself engaged in a painstaking effort to grasp the details of psychoanalytic theory, was one of disapprobation. It appeared to me that the material Marcuse had employed a posit a Marxist-Freudian utopia included little more than *Civilization and its Discontents*. A theoretical sleight-of-hand seemed to rest on a superficial comprehension of Freud, allowing Marcuse the luxury of a facile synthesis between the two theories. Gad Horowitz has come forward with a work similarly critical of Marcuse's scholarship, but in defence of a vision presumably too powerful to busy itself with details. It is these details which Horowitz now provides, finally allowing one to determine the true worth of a book which in the interim has assumed near classic proportions.

Marcuse's thesis was remarkably simple — so simple in fact that one wonders what all the fuss between psychoanalysis and Marxism was about. From Freud, Marcuse abstracted his understanding of the central psychoanalytic concept bridging subjective experience and objective circumstances: repression. If repression does indeed possess the explanatory power to encompass the realms of inner and outer, then presumably the deepest theory of psychical functioning could be wedded to the most profound understanding of social processes.

While Marcuse's exposition was simple, it was not necessarily simplistic, for he tried to push the discussion to the heartland of Freud's thought, rather than subordinating it to Marxism as others, such as Fromm, had done. He could have argued, for instance, that repression, as well as other central psychoanalytic findings, were merely the inevitable consequences of capitalist society, and left it at that. Yet Marcuse acknowledged repression as universal, and thus impervious to the vicissitudes of history. He went further and accepted other territorial gains claimed by Freud: the existence and significance of the drives, the inherent tension between drives and culture, a conflict model of socialization. Still more remarkable, he was willing to verify the existence of the death-drive as prior to the experience of social frustration. In short, Marcuse accepted the very elements of Freud's thoughts which were least historical, and incorporated them into a model of social change and ultimate socialist harmony.

His fidelity to the fundamentals of psychoanalytic theory seemingly secured, Marcuse returned to Marxism by way of several addenda to Freud's conceptual apparatus — the most important being "surplus repression". The logic proceeded as follows: while Freud was correct about the universality of repression as such (which Horowitz terms "basic repression"), he indiscriminately treated all forms of repression as basic; that is, as immutable elements of the transformation from animal to human, from infancy to adulthood, from the pleasure to the reality principle. In fact, only a certain quantum of repression is necessary for these transformations — enough, for example, to transform sex into love, and thus raise the individual from a little engine of selfish lust to a member of a community held together by libidinal ties.

Surplus repression is obviously meant to be the psychical analogue of surplus value. The Marxist notion is historical, where the meaning of value is altered in the manner indicated by the modifier only under conditions of capitalist production. Similarly, the surplus addition to repression only makes its appearance under these same conditions. In the periods prior to capitalism, a second layer of repression (*i.e.*, in addition to basic repression) was also present, but not as a superfluous feature. The struggle between culture and nature necessitated levels of repression beyond those sufficient to merely civilize humanity: humanity had to bear the additional burden of toil in order to wrest from nature the means of subsistence. A secondary (but not surplus) layer of repression was thus formed to restrain the proclivity toward pleasure.

As a result of capitalism, the struggle against nature has been won, but the additional quantity of repression subsists — a classic Marxist instance, but in the psychical realm, of a contradiction. This quantity, rendered surplus by technology, is now in the service of domination purely for the sake of domination — as distinct from previous forms of power which gained authorization from their locus at the intersection of a recalcitrant nature and a pleasure-seeking humanity. Heretofore, power of leviathinian proportions was the only means by which individuals could be made to engage in toil of relatively little immediate personal benefit, but necessary for the collective struggle against nature. If those in power could hardly resist appropriating a bit more than was called for in this struggle, *tant pis* for everyone else: historical reason justified the right to rule, and excesses in this regard did not affect the core of justification.

In the contemporary scene, the material justification has been eroded by technology, and all that remains are the excesses: domination no longer serves the struggle against nature, but only the interests of those who control the economic and political processes. The psyche is structured along similar lines, dominated by a quantity of force inconsistent with material conditions as they now exist. Marcuse drew an analogy, as well as a causal relationship, among four factors: the level of technology, the quality of work, the location of social

power, and the configuration of sexual pleasure. By means of this schema he believed he had filled in the psychological lacuna left by Marx, and thus explained why predictions of revolution had gone unfulfilled. Although technology had freed the proletariat from the need to toil, and thus from the masters who imposed it, domination nevertheless persisted as a precipitate of surplus repression, the effects of which resided beneath the level of consciousness familiar to Marx. As with toil and social power, repression remained at pre-capitalist levels. The demand for liberation — represented in its prototypal form by sexual pleasure — thus remained unconscious and inaccessible to its historical destiny. To put the matter somewhat differently: alienation would not be experienced as such if the pleasures from which one was alienated could not make their way to consciousness. Instead of the consciousness of alienation Marx envisaged as the motive force for rebellion, there appeared a highly distorted form in the guise of neurotic symptoms.

III

However cavalier Marcuse may have been about the finer points of the Freudian texts, his argument is nevertheless logical to the point of elegance. Along with Norman O. Brown, whose *Life Against Death* appeared several years later, Marcuse seemed to have liberated Freud from leftist critics who attacked him for being bourgeois — or, what presumably amounts to the same thing, conservative. Theorists on the left had misapprehended the meaning of Freud's work owing to the confusion between his personal conservatism and the radical elements implicit in the theory. By virtue of this conservatism, Freud contributed to the misapprehension, often laminating fundamental insights with the bourgeois ideology of his day. One might, in this sense, speak of a basic Freud and a surplus Freud. This, at least, is the line Horowitz now follows, arguing in effect that the judicious reader can distinguish between the two by subjecting psychoanalytic theory to an intellectual centrifugal device: the bourgeois ideology will sink to the bottom, leaving the essential truths in their pure form.[1]

Clearly, here is an important point to establish. No matter how coherent or (as in Brown's case) rigorous an argument one may make regarding the liberating essence of psychoanalysis, it is certainly difficult to attain that sense from a perusal of Freud's own work. The language of the repetition-compulsion and death-drive, of seething cauldrons and primary masochism hardly seems to connote the polymorphous perverse (Brown) or "the recon-

ciliation of man and nature in sensuous culture'' (Marcuse). Is Freud's con-
servative pessimism an extraneous element, best removed by surgical prodecure
to reveal the actual liberating essence — or is that attitude so embedded in the
theory that the surgery amounts to a lobotomization?

Although this is a complicated question to which, in effect, the whole of
Horowitz's book is devoted, it is not clarified by *assuming* the ideological status
of pessimistic conservatism. I have even heard it stated that Freud's pessimism
is ideological, whereas Marx's optimism is objective. Horowitz too identifies
the conservative aspects of Freud's theory with bourgeois ideology, a natural,
but unnecessary, attitude for a Marxist to take. This identification is by no
means obvious since one can, in principle at least, distinguish between
psychical contents which derive their meaning from social conditions (*e.g.*,
penis-envy) and psychical processes (*e.g.*, the repetition-compulsion) which are
both conservative *and* ahistorical. It is a crude Marxism which classifies every
non-revolutionary attitude as false consciousness. Nevertheless, there is no
reason to pre-judge Horowitz on this matter, and it may be that his reading of
Freud does justify the disassociation between personal sentiments and the
conceptual apparatus of psychoanalytic theory.

Horowitz's method is to break down Marcuse's argument into its constituent
parts and re-assemble it by following the intricacies of the psychoanalytic texts
in a detailed way. In so doing he hopes to rebuff those who felt that only
Marcuse's vague reading of Freud could support revolutionary conclusions.
Strength will be added to strength, the power of Marcuse's vision with the
scholarship of Horowitz's explication. Thus we learn, via a painstaking and
impressive summary of Freud's views on sexuality, the manners in which basic
and surplus repression differentially affect the fate of bisexuality — in one case
opening the possibility of mature polymorphous sensuality, and in the other,
terminating in neuortic homo- and hetero-sexuality.

Still, an uneasiness with these proceedings is aroused quite early on in the
book: where Marcuse's use of Freud was based on a promiscuous reading,
Horowitz's is dependent on aid from a foreign ally, ego-psychology. At the
beginning, Horowitz states that he has closely followed Freud's work to
ascertain whether Marcuse's argument can be substantiated, and appends the
following footnote:

> Those texts [of Freud] and some of the most eminent
> disciples, particularly the ego-psychologists Heinz Hart-
> mann and David Rapaport. These psychoanalysts are not
> 'neo-Freudian revisionists' (Marcuse, 1955, Epilogue) but
> systematizers of the final phase of Freud's research.(p. 4.)

It is not difficult to understand why Horowitz finds it necessary to solicit assistance from this quarter: Freud was seemingly unconcerned with the question of healthy functioning, only vaguely hinting at its underlying processes by shadowy references to the concept "sublimation". Some radical defenders of Freud (*e.g.*, Mitchell, Adorno, Jacoby) are not bothered by this omission, noting that Freud's unmitigated conflict model of psychical formation and development is a perfect cipher for the lived internal experience of capitalist-bourgeois culture.

It is Horowitz's intention, however, to go beyond analysis, and describe a liberated model of psychic functioning — *i.e.*, a mode of functioning marked by sublimation rather than surplus repression. He believes that Freud's penuriousness in this regard has been made good by the subsequent generation of analysts. Here Horowitz accepts, with no further discussion than the footnote, the self-definition of ego-psychology: an extension of Freud's thought into areas where he was already moving, and in no way a contradiction or dilution of psychoanalytic discoveries. We are told that Freud restricted himself to the relations amongst the various psychical agencies, and the conflicts to which these relations give rise. In particular, he was concerned with the ways in which the ego is intruded upon, and thus rendered dependent. Now that these intrusions are more or less sufficiently understood, it is possible to focus on the other aspects of ego-functioning: its capacity to achieve a measure of independence, via sublimation — literally by translating the "lower", whether in reference to somatic forces (the drives) or otherwise pathological processes, into higher, sublime activity.

A new vocabulary arose to supplement the original one: neutralization (of drive-energies); primary and secondary autonomy of the ego; conflict-free zones of the ego; the "average expectable environment"; adaptation. By 1937, the year of Hartmann's *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation*, the narcissistic blow (in Freud's term) to the ego dealt by psychoanalysis had been partially repaired.

Heretofore, ego-psychologists have been accused by leftist Freudians of ideologizing psychoanalysis, making adaptation a goal and natural proclivity of the ego, so it is rather strange to see Horowitz embrace the theory wholeheartedly. He is not insensitive to these obvious critiques, although he does not meet them head-on; instead, he deflects the question by arguing, in effect, that ego-psychology is the psychology of the future — of that time when culture will promote the potential powers of ego-autonomy and strength, and the ego will thus be able to exercise its now latent capacities for sublimation. In presenting us with an ideal of the ego, we are able to gauge the distance between it and the effects of surplus repression imposed by patriarchical, capitalist society. Horowitz notes that Freud allowed for non-surplus repressive

psychical development as well, but failed to elaborate on it. It is this allowance that justifies the work of the ego-psychologists, once the proper historical proviso attached to the notion of a healthy ego is appended.

Horowitz's line of reasoning makes formal-logical sense, and does seem to find a place for ego-psychology which is politically unobjectionable. Nevertheless, there remains the question of its internal theoretical status — that is to say, the degree to which the inner logic of psychoanalysis as conceived by Freud can be brought into harmony with the later additions. Indeed, this is the crux of the matter with the entirety of Horowitz's explication, even apart from his reliance on ego-psychology: the similitude or contrast between his logic and a true hermeneutic comprehension of Freud.

I will give an example — which I also take to be an exemplar — of the sometimes subtle, sometimes gross, shift of meaning involved in following the lines laid down by ego-psychology. The concept of health (and concomitant ideas regarding development) rely upon a sphere of functioning said to be autonomous — either initially, or as the result of the maturational process (primary and secondary autonomy respectively). Thus, the healthy ego, as well as healthy segments of the pathological ego, were said to be independent from the conflicts which mark the remainder of the psychical apparatus.

I do not consider this to be a further refinement of Freud's portrait of the ego, but a radical departure from it. The picture he sketched was thoroughly dialectical, where the healthy psyche, no less than the one subject to disease, was the resolution of pathogenetic influences in an ultimately mysterious way.[2] The ego owes everything to the conditions of its origin — conditions which implicate it in conflict with other parts of the psyche, with the limitations by necessity and specific elements in the environment, and with itself in the struggle between narcissism and the need to identify with superior others. The language of autonomy and adaptation, no matter what its application, dichotomizes the ego, separating its foundations from subsequent development, and clearing the path for the "discovery" of concepts which Freud had rejected in his struggles with Adler and Jung.

Horowitz yields to the temptation to split the ego in this way, or in an analagous one wherein he will posit an absolute demarcation between our patriarchal condition and the putative conditions of communist society. It may well be that under post-patriarchal conditions, the resources of the ego (such as they are) will luxuriate in their capacity to transform and neutralize drive-energy, turn conflict into harmony, make beneficial use of defences, and the like. Nor is there any doubt that some of these internal events are occurring in the present, but these are not, as Horowitz says in another context, "Freudian facts". Freudian facts point to limits, not possibilities. The proper Freudian question is: in a non-surplus repressive civilization, what would the sources and

nature of conflict be, and what corresponding cultural institutions would both express and alleviate it?

IV

The dichotomous logic borrowed from ego-psychology is most clearly seen in the extensive discussions on sexuality which occupy Horowitz throughout most of the work. Recent trends in psychoanalytic thought have somehow managed to avoid, ignore, or denigrate the fate of sexuality in psychological development, as have cultural critics of Freud from the very beginning. So it is to Horowitz's credit that he reminds us of the central place assigned to sexuality in Freud's work, and the social meaning attached to it. Social power is first experienced as an intrusion on sexuality, and prefigures subsequent develop-ment. It may then seem (as it did for instance to Reich) that the liberation of sexuality is a function of social liberation: remove the oppressive forces and *Mirable Dieu,* sexuality is free to develop in a natural way.

Unfortunately, there is another theme in Freud's work — authority — and although often understated, it is as pervasive as sexuality, bound up as the one is with the other. Horowitz falls prey to a series of misunderstandings con-cerning this topic, and while thereby making his task considerably easier, our comprehension is hardly advanced. In the first place, Horowitz divides the world between power which emanates from outside, and sexuality coming from within. He recognizes that social forces are internalized — hence surplus repression — but this is conceived in the oppressive mode only, as illegitimate power and domination. The second misunderstanding follows from the first: authority is reduced to internalized social domination — a mere cipher of reality — and thus has no place in the liberated psyche. Authority too becomes superfluous, once a certain level of material production is reached.

As far as I know, Marx did not have much to say about the permanent place assigned to authority in the universal scheme of things — only that it appears in capitalism as oppressive domination. Engels, however, did make a remarkable little contribution on the subject which may or may not have reflected Marx's thinking. Authority, he wrote, inheres in the logic of things natural and im-poses itself on consciousness in the organization of work. Freedom does not mean a log can be chopped with a towel — but that in the absence of artificial constraints, one will recognize which constraints are natural to the situation.

There is a certain sense in which Horowitz follows this logic: the ego, left more or less to its own devices and not externally imposed upon, will choose a salutary and harmonious course of action. He may be correct, but there is nothing either superfluous or objective about authority as Freud understood

it. Ego-psychology has, at this point, drawn Horowitz into a fatal misapprehension of the ego's own foundations — which are constituted by authority. The original ego is, in Lacan's phrase, characterized by a "lack", compensated for by identification with a superior other. I can find no possible bridge between this conception and that of autonomy. Far from being an extraneous element which waxes and wanes with the course of history, authority is synonymous with the notion of the ego (via the concept of identification). To the extent that one conceives of independent properties of the ego, one has ascended from the core of psychoanalytic thought and entered a different realm altogether.

Curiously, Horowitz does not say very much about authority in a direct way, but since the political implications of Freud's thought depend on a proper understanding of the subject, I will try to make some sense of Horowitz's ideas. He does touch on the matter in a brief discussion of *Totem and Taboo,* where one can read his characteristic form of explication.

Howoritz consults *Totem and Taboo* to ascertain if Freud equates "patriarchy, not with civilization as it has in fact evolved, but with civilization per se" (p. 119). For reasons not totally clear to me, it is important to Horowitz that the primal horde be a pre-cultural entity. This was not Freud's view on the question, as I will show in a moment. Yet Horowitz has some logical justification for his views: the horde was ordered by might rather than law, and the defining psychoanalytic elements of culture — the incest taboo and prohibition on parricide — had not yet been instituted.[3] After the father is killed, the sons make a brief go of it on their own, until they finally give in to the memory of their deed and re-institute patriarchy — albeit in a modified form. It is in this interregnum, between the primal father and his successor, that Horowitz claims to have discovered a *proton eutopia:*

> This Law [instituted after the parricide] was of course in
> one sense the Law of the Father, but in another sense it was
> the Law of the Brothers who had killed and eaten the
> father, the Law of the Revolution which had founded
> human culture by *overthrowing* patriarchal domination
> and substituting for it 'democratic equality' among males
> and among males and females. (p. 120)

Quoting Freud (from *Moses and Monotheism*), Horowitz also indicates the possibility of a matriarchy during this period: 'The power of the father was broken and the families were organized as a matriarchy.' (p. 120) [4] Hence:

> [W]omen as well as men were ... incarnations of the Law
> ..... It is the hypothetical era of the brother clan/matri-
> archy to which Freud is referring when he writes of a state
> of *civilization* in which restrictions on 'perverse' sexuality
> had not arisen .... Here polymorphous genitality and
> equality of the sexes coincide with Law and Culture. (p.
> 120)[5]

Horowitz's purpose is to show that a non-surplus-repressive (polymorphous; egalitarian) culture is allowed for explicitly by Freud, and not only by implication. Thus, Freud can be split between the superficial patriarchal ideologue and the radical liberator. Horowitz, however, is remarkably sloppy in establishing this split. In a few passages, we learn that the consequence of the parricide was (a) the Law of the Father; (b) the Law of the Brothers; (c) the Law of the Revolution; (d) democratic equality; (e) matriarchy; (f) brother clan/matriarchy. Second, we are led to believe that in consequence of one of these outcomes, polymorphous genitality results, as if this were Freud's opinion on the matter. In fact, Freud is silent on the question, and more than Horowitz's opinion is needed to discover what Freud may have thought.

Whichever of these possible social conditions held, in time patriarchy was restored, and Horowitz asks:

> Was this restoration of patriarchy, this 'great social
> revolution' [Freud], an inevitable consequence of the deep
> universal structure of the human Mind ? (p. 120)

This is the question by which, presumably, one finally ascertains the patriarchal bias in Freud's work. On the contrary, it really addresses the question of authority, not authoritarian domination. One suspects, as I mentioned earlier, that Horowitz has confused the two, indiscriminately mixing psychical structures with their social expression.

In Horowitz's version, the Primal Restoration is pre-human, "a re-assertion of the father-dominance characteristic of ape-men." (p.120) This retrograde act has really nothing to do with structures of the mind, but with *changes in conditions of life*. (p. 120)[6] In other words, the patriarchal revolution resulted from economic rather than psychological conditions — from, in Horowitz's infelicitious phrase, "ignorance-helplessness before nature". Shades of Engels are discerned in this notion: authority is the response to natural conditions; *i.e.*, to the productive capacities as they affect the struggle with nature. Even on this non-Freudian, but not unreasonable, point, Horowitz sows confusion,

since we also hear a psychological account where the Restoration indicates the failure to effect a "complete transition from primate-hominid to human society": "Patriarchal domination is a regression (return of the repressed) to the primate order within the human order." To which he adds, as a final social conclusion, that technology can now divest us of ape-ness.

Horowitz has reached this destination by emphasizing the single materialist strand in the web of Freud's discussion. If we turn to the original texts ourselves, a much different picture emerges. In the first place, Freud clearly states that the primal horde was a human group.[7] I would not want to jeopardize my professional credibility by deciding one way or the other on this matter — but since the question is only one of the fidelity to Freud, it can be easily resolved.

Whatever the case regarding the primal horde, it was disbanded by parricide, and we can assume that although Freud interchanged several different stages which followed, a democratic order of some sort prevailed. Horowitz derives from this a golden age of uninhibited (but mature) sexuality and equality between the sexes. Freud had a somewhat different notion of this democratic utopia, which he referred to as "the tumultuous mob of brothers"; and citing Atkinson with approval, he goes on:

> after the father had been disposed of, the horde would be disintegrated by a bitter struggle between the victorious sons. Thus any new permanent organization of society would be precluded: there would be 'an ever-recurring violent succession to the solitary paternal tyrant, by sons whose parricidal hands were soon again clenched in fratricidal strife'.[8]

Even these reasons are not at the center of Freud's explanation. The bulk of his discussions refer to: ambivalence, guilt, the failure of the wish to take the father's place, a childish desire for the father's "protection, care, and indulgence",[9] as well as problems of jealousy and envy attributed by Freud to any group of equals. Nor does Horowitz's reliance on the slender thread of "the conditions of life", isolated from these other reasons, make any sense. Why, after all, was it necessary — even in primitive stages of production — for the brother clan to acquiesce to patriarchy? Freud's answer is given in *Group Psychology*: it is in the very nature of groups that, without leadership, they suffer from "psychological poverty". "Ignorance-helplessness" must itself be reckoned as a subjective condition, brought into being by the psychological condition of democratic equality.

Such is the social psychology of democracy upon which our liberation is to be

founded. The Restoration was the inevitable result of this psychology, of the "persistence of an unappeased longing for the father".[10] Nevertheless, I agree with Horowitz on the most abstract and formal levels: one can disassociate *Totem and Taboo* from patriarchal conclusions, but not for reasons even vaguely like the ones Horowitz has somehow found. In the context of Freud's later contributions to the theory of ego-development (*e.g.*, "On Narcissism," "Mourning and Melancholia," *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego, The Ego and the Id, Civilization and its Discontents*), it is possible to differentiate between the role of authority in this development, and particular social manifestations, between the superego and patriarchy. Nor is it impossible to imagine, within this same context, social conditions which might mitigate the type of *Unbehagen* uncovered and described by Freud — for example by the interposition of a different kind of family structure than the nuclear one. Nevertheless, no reading of Freud — save one distorted by the motive of political wish-fulfillment — can lead one to the conclusion of an authority-less, ego-liberated state. It is authority which forces the infant out of his libidinous phantasy world; authority which constitutes the ego and acculturates it.

V

It is a curious phenomenon that writers who would add the social dimension presumably missing from Freud's thought seem inevitably to fall back on biologistic revisions. Without much trouble, Horowitz manages to succumb to this non sequitur. Basic repression, we learn, is for the most part the work of nature, a function of the natural processes of maturation. When nature takes so great a part in the matter, it is not difficult to ignore the social aspects of socialization. It is these social aspects which are surplus to a being who, left to its own devices, would routinely pass through various stages of development. We are told that, of course, some conflict results in passing from one psychosexual stage to the other, and that there is a quantum of environmental influence needed to convince the child to relinquish the joys of sucking for playing with his feces, and to give that up for the penis or clitoris, and finally onward to polymorphous genitality and object-love — but this influence is merely an inducement, encouraging nature to take its benevolent course.

Freud was hardly a disciple of Rousseau on this matter. The full thrust of his radical understanding was to state that these developments were fully unnatural under the best of circumstances — and that in those few cases where one might speak of "organic repression" (a concept repeatedly seized upon by Horowitz), the reactions were on the order of repugnance and disgust at the repressed material, rather than polymorphous pleasure. From the point of view

115

of the psyche, *repression is by its very nature surplus* — a process forcefully invoked, and in conflict with the most profound impulses of the individual.

For all the seeming erudition of Horowitz's brief for liberation, we are presented here, as elsewhere in the book, with the sense of arguments too easily made, quaint and even archaic in their logic. Horowitz disavows (in the chapter on Reich) a simplistic energetic interpretation of Freud, where pure quantities of libido struggle to release themselves from the bondage of oppressive social interdiction. Yet he does nothing to escape from an equally mechanistic logic which obscures the dialectical sense of psychical acculturation.

Again, the reader finds himself presented with categorical misrepresentations concerning the interplay of psyche and culture, now concerning confusion between the structure of psychical conflict and its particular social contents. Culturalists would like to believe that the structure of the mind undergoes a radical modification with the alteration of society, and I would hardly be able to prove they are mistaken in their faith. However, the dominant motif of the *Freudian* psyche is not the specific configuration of juxtaposed contents at any one moment in history: it is *the ubiquity of conflict*. Without the thorough recognition of this principle, modifications of psychoanalytic theory are not psychoanalytic.

Let us examine this most important substantive theme in Horowitz's book: bisexuality. Horowitz correctly emphasizes Freud's presumption of bisexuality, and argues that partiarchal norms severely restrict and inhibit the bisexual constitution, bifurcating it along rigid masculine/feminine (active/passive) lines. In this situation, castration-anxiety and penis-envy are exacerbated, until they become the exclusive sources of sexual self-consciousness and identity. Whereas bisexuality opens the way for sexual identity to be determined by many factors, partiarchal culture reduces the possibilities to two, thus gathering all the possibilities of sensuous living and condensing them into envy or fear as total determinants of the personality.

No right-thinking opponent of patriarchy could disagree with this analysis, and there is nothing in Freud to dispute it. Yet the leap Horowitz makes from bisexual constitution to polymorphous genitality is a different matter. Freud's analysis was meant to show that the transitions from one libidinal epoch to another were marked by traumas inhering in the very nature of the process. The social factor does indeed affect content (*e.g.*, the exacerbation of penis-envy), but in no way touches the form (trauma, *angst,* conflict). If anything, the bisexuality thesis implies the inevitability of trauma, not its historical relativity: first, because gender-identity must be *learned*, implying a restriction of sexual expression; and second, because the bisexual child must eventually confront the presence or absence of a penis as a traumatic shock to its previous self-misrecognitions. By this standard, penis-envy and castration-anxiety continue

to hold pride of place in the psychological development of the child whatever the forms of cultural organization that are present. Culture affects the quantitative strength of these constituent ideas; the reward system attached to them (*i.e.*, the relative advantages and disadvantages accruing from the boy's castration-fears or the girl's penis-envy, respectively) and thus the social equality between the sexes; and the amount of repression to which homosexual and bisexual impulses are subjected. These are important matters, and without Freud's guidance we would still be in the dark — but they are far from pointing to conflict-free zones within the psyche, or between psyche and culture.

The libidinal model, directing attention to neatly drawn categories of time and space (stages and zones) naturally lends itself to a mechanistic interpretation, so it is not suprising that Horowitz, like so many others working in this genre, simplifies psychoanalysis beyond recognition. It would be more difficult for him to argue from modifications in culture to modifications in the psyche had he incorporated the hermeneutic model into his analysis, thereby giving recognition to the peculiar nature of unconscious thought processes. It is on the battleground of the unconscious that the war of socialization takes place, upsetting our precious notions of time, space, and causality.[11]

The relationship between the two models — between *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* — is extraordinarily complex, and only now in the work of Lacan, Ricouer and others are serious efforts being made to fathom it. This much can be said however: it is the influence of primary-process (unconscious) thought which gives meaning to the various dispositions of libido: meaning does not inhere in the libido itself, as the wish to be free, or to express itself in a mature, genital fashion. Nor does culture act *directly* to determine these meanings: they are first formulated into mental representations; that is, ideas mediating for the mind in what ways self and reality will be understood. This re-formulation takes place in accordance with *permanent* attributes of unconscious ideation, each of which brings mind into conflict with culture. By way of summary three such attributes can be specified: concerning the subject, the unconscious is narcissistic; concerning the object, it is marked by "Desire";[12] and the bridge between subject and object is exotically constructed by the primary processes themselves (displacement, condensation, considerations of representability, and secondary revision).

A single thematic thus joins texts as seemingly disparate as *The Interpretation of Dreams, Three Essays,* and *Civilization and its Discontents*: the struggle between the independent properties of mental life and the equally discrete exigencies of the *res publica*. Culture may be able to strike a bargain with narcissism and desire, and allow the primary processes an avenue of expression, but the compromise would still fall far short of the sensuous play envisaged by Horowitz and Marcuse before him. Nor can the ideal of love

117

between two people be any less subject to disruption by the insatiable quality of the unconscious. The bourgeois program of liberated sensuality put forward in *Eros and Civilization*, and revived in *Repression* is Freudian in one aspect only: the revelation of a wish that it must remain for the oneiric to fulfill.

VI

Horowitz picks and chooses among the various segments of psychoanalytic theory as if they are so many dishes at a buffet, leaving us to struggle with a main course he has found indigestible. Still, my criticisms would be pedantic if despite his misreading, essential features of our condition were laid open to view. It would not be the first time that willful, if unwitting, misinterpretations formed the groundwork of critical social analysis. The concept "surplus repression" might be one of those fortunate errors leading us to the truth, a critical instrument exposing the internal and external forces that govern contemporary existence. If this were the case, who would care that Horowitz (and Marcuse) was wrong about Freud — as long as he was right about reality?

It seems, however, that reality fares no better than Freud. Neither clinical nor social analyses confirm a state of affairs deserving the diagnosis "surplus repression", nor the quaint Marxist analogue of "patriarchal domination shaping persons who renounce their claim to happiness and resign themselves to a life of toil". (p. 122)

Where are these people? Far from being subject to surplus repression the characteristic psychological types of our day may not even be subject to *basic* repression, an unthinkable occurrence in Horowitz's biologistic account. Repression, as is now well-known, is a rather advanced defensive strategy preceded by the more primitive ones of splitting, denial, etc., instituted during pre-Oedipal stages. Clinicians are increasingly faced with patients in whom these mechanisms, rather than the one favored by Horowitz, are predominant. It has been hypothesized that certain cultural conditions, reflected in the family, are conducive to pre-Oedipal fixations and the attendant defences.[13] In this situation, it would be far more accurate to speak of *deficit* repression.

Almost every detail of Horowitz's account is undermined by this evidence. It is hardly the case any longer that typical symptomologies are marked by excessive sexual repression and a concomitant narrowing of ego-functions such that toil is taken for granted. It is particularly astonishing to read that sexuality is limited to genital, procreative forms, and further restricted by the general de-erotization of the body, when in fact prodigious sexuality and perversity highlight the erotic careers of the contemporary patient. An individual's fear of homosexuality still persists in much the same way Horowitz describes it, but this factor must be viewed in its social context where new sexual identities are

everywhere being forged. The rigid heterosexual morality forming the basis of Horowitz's analysis is on the decline — in the deepest recesses of the psyche, no less than on the streets of urban centers.

These matters are touched on at one point: when Horowitz summarizes Marcuse's later description of "repressive de-sublimation":[14] "counter-phobic pseudo-sexuality with little or no consideration for the partner", "perversion rather than neurosis as the characteristic pathology", "compulsive separation of affection from physical pleasure". (pp. 78-80) Nevertheless, no further effort is made to ascertain whether this syndrome is in any way related to the book's predominant psycho-social themes.

This syndrome has, in fact, been the object of close scrutiny in recent years under the name "pathological narcissism". The disorder differs in every way — genetically, dynamically, structurally, and libidinally — from the classic neuroses analyzed by Freud, and used by Horowitiz to form the basis of his work. More important, pathological narcissism points to a different type of social order altogether — one not so readily described as patriarchal; where self-imposed toil is hardly the problem; and where the question of alienation seems far murkier than the formal Marxist model would allow. In short, neither the original Freudian nor Marxist descriptions apply.

I must confine myself here to one facet of the narcissistic character: its pre-Oedipal determinants. Pre-Oedipal pathologies typically arise in the context of the mother-infant dyad. To state the matter briefly, the defensive structures erected at this stage are pre repressive, and act as buffers against the later development of Oedipal phantasies. I think it is fair in this regard to speak of a psychological matriarchy as long as it is understood that the defences act in part as reaction-formations against this state of affairs. Further, the classic internal representative of the patriarchal order — the superego — takes on a decidedly attenuated and primitive cast. On the one hand, it is a shrunken vestige, its former space now filled by a "grandiose self". On the other hand, it never goes beyond its original primitive nature, and thus gives rise to experiences of rage rather than guilt.

Thus the internalization of the father as an authority figure — the *sine qua non* of patriarchy — is lacking. The situation, as it presents itself psychologically, forms a perfect analogue to features of advanced capitalism where authority is formal, legal-rational, instrumental, and external. One obeys because it is in his interest to do so, not because the law is experienced as a moral imperative. The characteristic attitude of estrangement is not alienation, since there is no vision of infantile perfection to be alienated from — but rage, *ressentiment*, envy and anomie.

As far as character goes, the narcissist is, in Rieff's language, transgressive, incapable of delimiting aggressive and libidinal urges except in the service of

gratification. He is often quite successful socially, not because he is enslaved to toil or the "performance principle", but owing to immense needs for approval. Vocations, institutions, libidinal objects, ideals — none have the power to compel belief where the sole source of reference is the self. In the older forms of neurosis, repression created a nucleus of unconscious mental representations which found their way back to consciousness through association with objects in the external world. This may have been the mechanism lying behind false-consciousness: the individual was psychologically bound to elements of reality in spite of their effect on his objective conditions. In the representative pathologies of our own day, reality-testing functions remain unimpaired for the most part, and the individual is free to pick and choose among those objects which are able to provide gratification.

It is this situation which calls for our understanding. A truly Freudian analysis would pay close heed to the clinical evidence, as a Marxist one would to altered social conditions. The same state of affairs decried by Horowitz is now even being hailed by some thinkers as "the good old days".[15] That, however, is a value judgement and, as one subject to those old days, I am not certain that I subscribe to it. In any case, the empirical facts remain in contrast to those described in *Repression*.

VII

The achievement of a synthesis between Freud and Marx remains undone. Worse, it is not even clear whether Horowitz's book has put a definitive end to hopes of discovering a Freud who can guide us toward liberation. Is the book misconceived because of Horowitz's carelessness, or is there something in the nature of the material itself which defies the conclusions wished for it? The accounts of Marcuse and Brown are flawed in many of the same ways — and one begins to wonder why the need is felt to push Freud beyond the parameters he defended with such conviction.

Philip Rieff has addressed himself to the limits Freud imposed. He locates Freud's work at a moment in Western civilization when "communities of authority" have disintegrated, leaving the individual to care for his own psyche. Psychoanalysis is concerned only with this care, through what Rieff terms the "analytic attitude", an instrument of knowledge alone, without any power or intent to provide salvation: "[Freud] will not help those who suffer from residual beliefs to find new beliefs; he can only help us in our unbelief." 'Consolation', Rieff quotes Freud as saying, '... at bottom this is what they are demanding ... the wildest revolutionaries no less passionately than the most virtuous believers'.[16]

Rieff is probably correct, and psychoanalysis should not be called upon to

instruct us in a faith that it has set out to undermine. Still, the analytic attitude need not stop at the couch, and if that attitude cannot be assimilated to Marxist passion, it can at least assist passion with insight. Whatever liberating potential exists in the shadows of the present will only be known — as Marx taught — by the most thorough understanding of the conditions determining social consciousness. Now we are aware that such conditions include psychological states, and that the social world as it is lived internally can be brought to light with psychoanalysis.

After this point, psychoanalysis and Marxism must part ways, the former to remind us of boundaries, the latter to reveal possibilities. It is not for the Marxists to claim that the revolution will put an end to dreaming, since reality will fulfill all wishes; nor for psychoanalysis to reply that after Lenin comes Stalin.

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Notes

1. Russel Jacoby (in *Social Amnesia: A Critique of Conformist Psychology from Adler to Laing*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1975) and Juliet Mitchell (in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: Freud, Reich, Laing and Women*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1974) make a different argument: Freud's concepts reveal the inner truth of bourgeois culture. Thus he was, at once, an ideologue and critic. This is essentially the same line taken by Adorno and Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School. It was Marcuse who departed from his former colleagues by discovering the liberating element in Freud's thought. (For an excellent summary of the Frankfurt School's relation to psychoanalysis, see Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*, Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1973, pp. 86 - 112.)

2. See especially, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood* (1910c), *S.E. XI*, pp. 59 - 137. *(The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, London: The Hogarth Press.) Here Freud makes his most complete use of the term "sublimation" — which consists of little more than including it in a descriptive typology. It is clear from this text that "sublimation" cannot do the kind of work the ego-psychologists, Marcuse and Horowitz want. Nothing separated Leonardo from neurosis except for his art — which itself was anything but free from the pathological strains in Leonardo's character. The idea of sublimation as a distinct form of mental functioning is not Freudian: it is rather an idealized reification which revives the dichotomy between the healthy and the diseased.

3. Still, it is only a logical justification. The point is that the incest taboo and prohibition on parricide had yet to be internalized — rather than that they did not govern the primal horde. The organization of the primal horde derived from the power of the father who imposed human restrictions. Freud is drawing on the analogy of infantile development, detailing in mythohistorical terms the processes by which power is transmuted into authority. The early stage is

not pre-social, but the historical foundation of society, violent and based on might. The intent of Horowitz's misreading here is to move this foundation forward to the *proton eutopia* he has discovered subsequent to the parricide (see text below).

4.   S. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism: Three Essays* (1939a [1937-39]), *S.E. XXIII*, p. 131.

5.   The idea of a matriarchal society, preceding patriarchy, was a popular one in German intellectual circles during the later 19th and early 20th centuries. Horowitz does not repeat the logic for idealizing matriarchy — so it is not clear why a matriarchy would be any less patriarchal (*i.e.*, authoritarian) than a patriarchy — unless one assumes that, by nature, women are superior to men. As a cultural symbolic, the *vagina dentata* is hardly a more comforting signifier of power than the phallus. In any case, it is not enough to simply invoke the term ''matriarchy'' without explanation, and expect the reader to naturally connote polymorphous sexuality and equality.

6.   Freud, *ibid.*, p. 133. The passage is not italicized in the original and Horowitz does not mention that he has added the emphasis.

7.   In *Moses* Freud states, ''in primeval time primitive man lived in small groups'' and that these ''human creatures'' had developed rudimentary forms of speech (p. 81). Similarly in *Totem and Taboo*, he refers to the ''social state of primitive men''. ([1912-13], *S.E. XIII*, p. 125) I briefly noted above Horowitz's concern that the primal horde be pre-human. It is still not clear to me why he risks being so careless with Freud to make this point: the silly idea that patriarchy signifies primate-hominid regression is hardly worth it.

8.   *Ibid.*, p. 142*n*. A few pages later Freud does mention the ''social fraternal feelings'' which Horowitz must have in mind. Freud, however, goes on to say:

> ''Society was now based on complicity in the common crime; religion was based on the sense of guilt and the remorse attaching to it; while morality was based partly on the penance demanded by the sense of guilt''. (p. 146)

I can find no inference of either polymorphous genitality or sexual equality — not to mention autonomous ego-functioning — in even this toned-down version of the brother-clan.

9.   *Ibid.*, pp. 142-146.

10.   *Ibid.*, p. 148

11.   The European Marxist Louis Althusser has noted that the singular object of psychoanalytic research is the unconscious, and he goes on to state, apropos socialization:

> ''Humanity only inscribes its official deaths on its war memorials: those who were able to die on time, i.e. late, as men, in human wars in which only *human* wolves and gods tear and sacrifice one another. In its sole survivors, psycho-analysis is concerned with another struggle, with the only war without memoirs of memorials, the war humanity pretends it has never declared, the war it always thinks it has won in advance, simply because humanity is nothing but surviving this war, living and bearing children as culture in human culture: a war which is declared in each of its sons, who, projected, deformed and rejected, are required, each by himself in solitude and against death, to take the long forced march which makes mammiferous larvae into human children, *masculine feminine subjects.*
> This object is no business of the biologists: this story is certainly not biological!'' (L. Althusser, ''Freud and Lacan'' in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971, pp. 204, 205-206.)

THE ILLUSION OF A FUTURE

12. In Lacan's sense of the term, the unbridgeable, inevitable abyss separating the insatiable character of the subject's wish for "recognition", and the recalcitrance of the object.

13. See, for example, Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Beseiged,* New York: Basic Books Inc., 1977; and *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations,* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978; Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise,* New York: Harper & Row Publishers/Harper Colophon Books, 1977; J.R. Schiller, "The Political Psychology of Narcissism"., 1978, xerox.

14. The term itself is a total misnomer. First, because the symptoms Marcuse and Horowitz refer to arise from the absence of repression; and second, because, one of the charcteristic problems of the pathology is the incapacity to sublimate in the first place, so there is no question of a "de-sublimation". Marcuse used the term (in *One-Dimensional Man*) to denote a situation where sexuality was allowed expression by the state as a means of diverting energy which might otherwise be directed toward rebellion. Still, one hardly needs psychoanalytic terminology or conceptualization to understand what is, in fact, a mode of oppression: give the people circuses and they won't complain about domination.

15. See Lasch, *ibid.* and Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: The Uses of Faith After Freud,* New York and Evanston: Harper & Row Publishers/Harper Torchbooks, 1968.

16. Rieff, *ibid.,* pp. 38, 29.

ABSTRACTIONS AND POLITICAL THEORY

Kenneth R. Minogue

C.B. Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy*,
Oxford University Press, 1977, pp. 120.

The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy is Professor Macpherson's best
book since *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*. The eccentricity of
its title covers a short, lucid and sometimes persuasive account of his main
tenets about democracy. These tenets have placed Macpherson in a central
position in contemporary political theory. The centrality depends less on the
fact that Macpherson has persuaded a great number of people than on his
singleminded exploration of a theory of democracy which touches on many
important issues and provides a strikingly bold outline with which to deal.
   The attractively firm structure of the book rests upon Macpherson's two
favourite ways of grasping the world: firstly, his use of "models" consisting of a
few propositions and some assumptions detectable behind them; and secondly,
the framing of these "models" in terms of modern British political thought. In
the *Life and Times,* we are invited to consider four ideas about democracy as it
has been discussed since the late eighteenth century to the present day.
Bentham and James Mill appear as the founders of liberal democracy since they
advocated a democratic franchise within an existing liberal constitution. The
"model" of democracy they produced was based upon the familiar assump-
tions Macpherson attributes to capitalism, namely, that each human being is a
competitive maximiser of his own desires, and that these desires are potentially
infinite. The desire is for power, particularly over others; therefore men must
be protected against each other by the laws that governments enforce.
However, the government will itself become a wolf to man unless it, too, is
circumscribed and dismissable. Thus democracy in Model 1 appears as a way of
protecting men against oppression not only by each other, but also by the very
governments they have set up for this purpose.
   As any experienced reader of Professor Macpherson knows, democracy is not
to be taken merely as a constitutional doctrine about legitimacy. He believes
that democracy can be (p. 43) a "morally transformative force". It is this
particular junction between the moral and the political which accounts for the

124

attractiveness of Macpherson's argument. As he says of John Stuart Mill's view of man, which he takes as the second of his democratic models:

> Man is a being capable of developing his powers or
> capacities. The human essence is to exert and develop
> them. Man is essentially not a consumer and appropriator
> (as he was in Model 1) but an exerter and developer and
> enjoyer of his capacities. The good society is one which
> permits and encourages everyone to act as exerter,
> developer, and enjoyer of the exertion and development,
> of his or her own capacities. So Mill's model of the
> desirable society was very different from the model of
> society to which Model 1 of democracy was fitted. (p. 48)

Mill appears as a Macphersonite hero by virtue of his concern with moral development, but he fails to be a true egalitarian democrat because he has absorbed too many of the assumptions of market society. Nevertheless, his heritage led on to later versions of Model 2 (known as Model 2 B) which were dominated by a "neo-idealist pluralism". (p. 70) The general defect common to all versions of the second model is that it fails to understands the consequences of class division resulting from the capitalist market.

Macpherson's third model embraces modern behavioural political science which realistically understands democracy as a competition between competing elites all seeking to influence the government.[1] There is here no question of democracy as a moral idea, nor does the model incorporate any propositions about the desirability of citizens energetically exercising their political rights. On the contrary one of the common theses of this model is that democracy could not possibly work if every citizen wanted to have his say on every question. This belief has sometimes been elaborated as the paradoxical theory that "apathy" is a necessary condition of democracy. Macpherson takes this as a moral Achilles heel of Model 3, and it is the point to which he directs his analytical probes.

The fourth model is, if judged critically in terms of its elaboration and coherence, the least satisfactory since it largely consists of a gleam in the eye of Macpherson himself and of a variety of critics of modern civilisation over the last decade. Its essence is participation, and it draws together the desirabilities of the previous three models into a conception — dream, or vision, might be better terms — of a society in which the populace, while continuing to enjoy the liberties of the present Western world, also participates directly and enthusiastically in discussing the decisions which determine their lives. How this

would work is admittedly difficult to foresee. Macpherson sketches out a pyramidal system of representation which he thinks would at least facilitate participation more effectively than the present competition of parties. There are glances at worker-participation in Yugoslavia, and there is a firm insistence that Model 4 will be a relatively egalitarian world without capitalists. What we are dealing with, then, is a water colour sketch of social democracy as it might be were it released from the common charge made against it by Marxists, namely that it is merely a device for propping up capitalism.

Macpherson's *Life and Times* is, then, a complex argument. Part of it deals with the intellectual history of the idea of democracy since Bentham and James Mill. Part of it is an academic exercise in political theory, probing the logical relations among assumptions about man and society. And part of it is simply an argument for socialism, replete with all the current symbols and references, such as viewing modern Western life in terms of loaded generalisations such as "consumerism", and wistful salutes to Allende's Chile and the "Prague Spring". There is a great deal one might say about each of these almost inseparable elements, but perhaps the shortest way into the heart of the matter is to consider the relation between Macpherson's vocabulary of abstractions on the one hand, and the realities of modern life on the other.

In discussing Model 3, Macpherson criticises political scientists for borrowing from economists the idea of "consumer sovereignty". "For", he writes, "in the mid-twentieth century, when it still did not seem too naive to talk about consumers' sovereignty in the economic market, it was easy to see a parallel in the political market: the political consumers were sovereign because they had a choice between the purveyors of packages of political goods." Now one might think, in reflecting upon this passage, that the borrowing had been in the reverse direction. The term "sovereignty" is a political word which had been taken over by economists, somewhat pretentiously, to describe an important fact of the economies they studied. That fact is that, by contrast with the situation of a soldier in an army, or the citizen of a communist state subject to rationing, the citizen of a capitalist economy may determine whether he will buy a lettuce or a cabbage, this or that brand of beer (or perhaps a home-brewing kit) or indeed, whether he will not simply save most of his money. What is produced, and the price at which it is produced, depends fundamentally upon that fact. Now Macpherson, like Galbraith, does not believe this account corresponds with the facts. More than that, his use of the word "naive" suggests not merely that he thinks it an error, but an error that could only be entertained by a particularly simple sort of person. Just why Macpherson is so confident that it is an error is not at all clear, apart from one or two glancing references to oligopoly. Others who take this view are greatly given to emphasising advertising, which no doubt influences some aspects of

126

what people buy; but it is not an argument that can be carried too far without tumbling into the opinion that the mass of mankind, consistently and day by day, are a set of gullible fools incapable of making a judgement for themselves. No cynic goes quite that far. In any case, the confident view that the consumer these days is but putty in the hands of vast corporations who mould his mind and ravage his purse is plausibly contested by a great number of economists.[2] They may be wrong, but they cannot be summarily dismissed as "naive". Each reader should perhaps ask himself whether he feels weak and helpless in the disposal of his own money before the psychic pressures of business.

The comparison between a product being marketed and a political party "in the market" (as we say) for the votes of the electorate was thus not merely an obvious borrowing from economics, but also a retrieval of what was originally political. The retrieval was no doubt facilitated by the kind of confusion about democracy introduced into political theory by Rousseau. Sovereignty in Hobbes is the final power of decision in a State. That the Sovereign was defined as a "representative" did not satisfy the many critics of Hobbes who thought that the element of absolutism he described in government was much too close to the kind of despotic rule they all feared. The common eighteenth century solution to this problem is to talk of the Sovereignty of the people, a high-sounding but largely nonsensical expression, of great use to demagogues. The realist political scientists criticised by Macpherson were using and criticising this set of *political* (as much as economic) ideas, and interpreting them in a way that covered some, though obviously not all, of the realities of a modern democracy. "The pluralism of Model 2," Macpherson tell us, taking the economic metaphor more seriously than the longstanding political argument behind it, "... treats citizens as simply political consumers, and political society as simply a market-like relation between them and the suppliers of political commodities." (p. 80)[3]

The reason why Model 3 leaves out the ethical component is, of course, that Robert Dahl and the other exponents of pluralist realism were self-conscious political scientists. For the most part, they wanted nothing to do with such a thing as an "ethical component". They were in a different line of business. The problem here is not merely that Macpherson does not recognise this as a different line of business; he does not quite understand what kind of business it is. In saying that this brand of modern political science "treats citizens as simply political consumers" he is mistaking the function of abstraction in science. He ignores the fact that it is the business of scientists to deal with manageable abstractions; and therefore he chides them with (what is actually his own mistake) confusing abstraction with reality. Dahl and the rest are no less capable than Macpherson of understanding that each of these political consumers is *also* an exerter and developer of his human essence, loving parent,

immortal soul or whatever else. Macpherson, like Marx, sometimes writes as if he thinks that because economists, for their own very special purposes, construe human beings under some circumstances, as "factors of production", they are by that very manner of speaking dehumanising them.

It seems to me that at the root of what is unsatisfactory about Macpherson's theory of democracy lies a mistake about the place of abstractions in a scientific and philosophical argument, and what I have said so far is designed to bring into focus the weight he places upon two abstractions that feature prominently in *The Life and Times*.

The first of these is the idea of "consumerism", which has as harsh and negative a ring in Macpherson's work as the idea of production correspondingly has a positive ring in the work of Marx. The capitalist view of the world is "based on the assumption that man is an infinite consumer, that his overriding motivation is to maximise the flow of satisfactions, or utilities, to himself from society, and that a national society is simply a collection of such individuals." (p. 43) The idea of consumption in socialist thought has two important senses that resonate through Macpherson's writing. The first, which was worked out with great gusto by Georges Sorel,[4] is of greedy passivity contrasted with the productiveness and creativity of workers. The second has much more diffuse origins and is a picture (rather than a theory) of modern men frenetically seeking to buy a great variety of worthless things in imitation of and in competition with each other. People who engage in this activity are understandably thought to be leading dreadful lives of frustration and emptiness. Hence consumerism is a pointless passion for possessions, or (as Macpherson puts it) preferring "affluence to community". (p. 91)

Now there need be no doubt that modern men often spend their money on paltry plastic gewgaws; and that quadraphonic sound is often used to amplify the wailings of punk rock; and that electric drills or expensive cameras often lie unused after the first image-boosted enthusiasm of purchase has waned. These phenomena, however, are the inevitable consequences of allowing people the freedom to do what they like with their own money. Freedom is the ability to make mistakes. To discover one's propensity for this kind of folly is part of the moral education of modern man; and the other side of this coin is the enormous capacity for developing their human powers which very large numbers of our contemporaries do in fact actively enjoy, as a result of technological abundance. They certainly show very little sign of wanting to give it up. It is possible to regard this from a highly moral and spiritual point of view and deplore the amount of empty dissatisfaction in modern life, but if one seriously wishes to explore this aspect of modern life, one will find that it is the poets and philosophers rather than the political theorists who have the most to say about it. They can do so because they are not in thrall to so thin an abstraction as the idea of consumerism.

Macpherson further places great emphasis upon the idea of man as an *"infinite* consumer". He finds this assumption clearly presented in Bentham, for whom each want satisfied is just the beginning of another want. (p. 28) The great source for this opinion was Hobbes, and it was elaborately discussed by Macpherson in *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*. The same view of man can be found, of course, in Machiavelli,[5] and in many others. In spite of its ubiquity, it is, as Macpherson presents it, a distinctly odd view. Even in the capitalist market society of the present, most people do not in fact go on "consuming" infinitely. Most have a bit less than they think they need, but seem to behave as if they had taken *Candide* to heart. They cultivate their gardens. It may well be doubted, then, that this proposition, in the various forms in which it may be found in the history of political thought, is actually meant as a description of what people are in fact like.

If not a description, what can this proposition be? It is, I think, a constitutive proposition of the activity of politics. It points to the fact that people do in fact want things, that they often want them so much that they will behave criminally or unjustly in order to get them, and that there is no natural limit at which a constitution maker can be sure that this often competitive pressure on the social order will cease. The proposition means, in fact, that there is no *natural* limit to human desiring, and that whoever constructs a constitution must take this fact into account.[6] It does *not* mean that every human being is thought to be continuously rapacious and demanding in his everyday behaviour. Like the similar proposition which is prominent in Machiavelli, that all men are knaves, it is to be interpreted as saying that unbridled desire (or knavishness) is likely to crop up at unpredictable moments, and that no constitution should assume its absence. It is indeed curious, as David Hume remarked, "that a maxim should be true in *politics* which is false in *fact*."[7] That, however, is no reason for taking it as being "true in *fact*" when a great deal of experience runs to the contrary.

To analyse to any extent the place of the idea of "consumerism" in Macpherson's argument is, then, to be brought up against the fact that the "models" he uses are not only static and unhistorical, but that they rest in certain places upon misinterpreting operative assumptions as if they were descriptions. Bentham was peculiarly someone of powerful practical bent, whose interest was in what one may safely assume rather than in the complexities of what is actually true. Indeed, in the discussions of Model 1 we find Macpherson noting Bentham's awareness of this very point. In advancing an egalitarian argument based on the theory of diminishing returns, Bentham puts aside the point that individuals vary greatly in their sensibility, for without setting such complexities aside, "it will be impossible to announce any general proposition."[8] The point to be decided, then, is whether Bentham (and also

his contemporaries, for he is taken as a typical figure) actually thought of human beings as the kind of greedy and insatiable consumers that they are when transposed into the Macphersonite model.

The answer is undoubtedly that this is not a complete account of how nineteenth century Englishmen thought of human nature. The mistake Macpherson makes is the same as that of Marx in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts:*

> Society, says Adam Smith, is a *commercial society.* Each of its members is a *merchant.*
> It is seen that political economy *defines* the *estranged* form of social intercourse as the *essential* and *original* form corresponding to man's nature.[9]

However, to describe the commercial, or the social, or the religious, or any other aspect of human activities, is not at all the same thing as to say that human nature is nothing else but the aspect which has been isolated. This caution is all the more relevant when we are dealing with the operative assumptions of some human activity.

The whole idea of man as a "consumer", thus employed, falls into incoherence; it is a parody of the realities of modern life. Similar considerations apply if we consider another of the abstractions prominent in Macpherson's argument, namely, the idea of apathy.

It may be noted as an irony in the history of ethics that *apartheia* was the great object of Stoic striving, the condition of passionless understanding of the world allows our reason full sway, and which protects us from the disappointment and griefs of involvement or participation. Apathy, as a modern word however, pejoratively suggests a dull, flabby condition of unfeeling, a deplorable lifelessness and lack of enthusiasm. We would be unwise, however, to take this rather medical image too seriously. Anyone who has had any connection with universities will immediately recognise the term "apathy" as a rhetorical device by which student politicians in search of an audience castigate those who have better things to do with their time than go to political meetings.

The Macphersonite use of the idea of apathy is to suggest that each citizen ought to participate in all the political processes that might affect him. It is at once a concealed moral argument, and an echo of the classical belief that to participate in politics is the fullest expression of one's human character. In Macpherson's view, something is wrong if this does not happen, and the faults he proceeds to diagnose are the frustrations of a competitive society and the

remoteness of the political system. This argument is reinforced by emphasising that apathy, or abstinence from politics, is greater among the lower classes than in the rest of the community. The difficulty of the argument is that lack of interest in politics is an effect for which there are a great number of different causes. It may well be the case that some people feel frustrated and alienated and therefore take no interest in politics. It is certainly the case that a great number of people are bored by politics, particularly the ordinary business of organising things, and much prefer to spend their time in other ways. A university is, in many ways, the very model of a participatory community as it has been envisaged by reformers in recent decades. It is full of committees on which people may have their say, but except for exciting conflicts, or some particularly close and intimate issue, university politics generate interest only for the few who like committees and have a taste for the work. To call everyone else "apathetic" is nothing more than a dogmatic moral argument which insists that everyone must do the same as everyone else. Hence when Macpherson writes, as a condition of arriving at his Model 4, that people must have "thrown off their political apathy" (p. 111) the very notion of apathy as a weakness to be transcended is a piece of moral dogmatism.

These remarks on Macpherson's vocabulary are designed to loosen the tight structure of his thought; and while *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* is an admirably clear statement of his political theory, the tightness of the intellectual structure prevents the opening up of any new ground. He has at various points some useful remarks on the extent to which, in politics, it is the politicians and the parties who determine not so much the answers, as the very questions themselves. The same point, ironically, applies to his own thought. He himself chooses the questions, and he chooses to discuss them in a close and opaque vocabulary of abstractions which cannot bear too much the light of criticism. His work illustrates the point that it is always a great tactical advantage in political theory to choose as one's battleground some single concept on which all the rest hinges. Rawls has done this with justice, Berlin with freedom, and Macpherson with democracy. None of these ideas can be elaborated without soon running into the major ideas which constitute the abstract structure of political understanding, but in each case the theorist has a home base within which he can always move with confidence and security. Macpherson's natural base is the idea of socialism, but he has chosen to transpose virtually the entire content of the idea of socialism, into an extended idea of democracy. This means that he has also taken on board all the ambiguities which have always weakened socialism as an ideal, and we may conclude by considering how these relate to Macpherson's work.

Socialism is both a political project and a moral aspiration. As a political project, it seeks to replace the existing state with a society which, being largely

homogeneous in terms of the way men live, will be without the conflicts and divisions which currently necessitate strong government, police, prisons and all the nastier side of life. The moral aspiration is toward a greater sense of brotherhood and community, a life in which men help and cooperate with one another. One of the problems of this combination is where to start. The new society will not work unless men behave differently from the way they do now. Without new men, in other words, no new society. Socialists are usually tempted to believe that a society gets the men it deserves; and hence the first priority must be to overthrow the state, if necessary by revolution, in order to allow the new man to emerge. This priority has already been tried in a large number of countries in the world, and it has invariably issued in vicious and petty-minded despotisms. For the most part, Macpherson recognises this, and consequently he looks to spontaneous changes within existing society, while his own theory is designed to give a push to the advancement of the cause. He also has moods of tough-minded realism in which he dismisses the idea of goodwill or spontaneous attraction as a motor of socialism. He tends to believe — as for example when he explains the supposed market assumptions Mill makes in terms of the fact that Mill is living in a market society — that men think largely in terms of the social life they live.

Therefore, he is caught in a classic reforming fork, of the kind William Godwin was aware of in the late eighteenth century. There can be no change in society without better education (thought Godwin), but there can be no change in education without a change in society.[10] Such is the box in which those who are simultaneously social *dirigistes* and at the same time determinists (however inconsistently) must always find themselves; and it is this box which would seem to account for the weakness of the Macphersonite account of Model 4. It is a collection of thoughts, hopes and suggestions rather than a model having the same relation to political reality as could plausibly be found in the earlier liberal writing discussed.

Perhaps we may push the weakness of the Macphersonite socialist position one stage further. Socialism in this form is not the sort of moral movement which demands that its adherents should live better lives right now; rather, it demands that the power of the state shall be seized so that we may impose better lives upon ourselves. For although socialists believe strongly in a kind of moral improvement, they also believe that men are morally the victims of their circumstances; and therefore the muscular vitality of such a spiritual movement as Christianity, in its early days, which insisted on abstinence and asceticism here and now, is neither necessary nor possible. The socialist belief is that men *are* good, and all they need is a decent society to allow them to be what they fundamentally are as human beings. There is no need for moral effort, no endogenous evil; all that is needed for a happier world is the exercise of state power.

Given a change in the system, men will become "developers and exerters of their human capacities". The word "human" has a lot of sentimental work to do in Macpherson's thought; but when it comes to how we actually live, words are not enough, and it is difficult to believe that the moral problems of human life will yield to political, or politically induced, changes.

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Notes

1. Joseph Schumpeter in *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* is cited on p. 78 as the father of this view which was elaborated in such more recent works as Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld and William N. McPhee, *Voting*, Chicago: 1954; Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, Chicago: 1956; Dahl, *Who Governs?*, New Haven: 1961; Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J: 1963; Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture*, Princeton: 1963. James Burnham in *The Machiavellians*, London: 1943 traces realism of a similar kind back to Machiavelli.

2. See for example Milton Friedman, *From Galbraith to Economic Freedom*, Institute of Economic Affairs, Occasional Papers, 49, London: 1977.

3. One might note in passing Macpherson's penchant for terms like "political goods" and "political commodities". These might be highly abstract metaphors, but they tend to suggest that political questions are about the distribution of actual benefits. This is certainly what they would be in a planned economy (which is hardly an economy at all, in the ordinary sense of the word) but it is not what they usually are in current politics. Canadians deciding on the future of the federation, or on linguistic policy, or Britons deciding whether to go metric, are not deciding on the allocation of "goods" or "commodities" in any obvious sense.

4. See *Reflections sur la Violence*, Paris: 1912.

5. Thus we learn in *Discourses* I, 5, that "men do not believe themselves sure of what they already possess except by acquiring still more ..." .

6. In a great deal of socialist thought the concept of need functions as a natural limit to man's desiring. If men could be taught to limit their desires in terms of their needs, many conflicts in the political life would disappear.

7. "Of the Independence of Parliaments" in *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary*, London: 1903.

8. *Life and Times* p. 29. citing *Principles of the Civil Code*, Part 1, Ch. 6.

9. Comments on James Mill, in *Collected Works*, London: 1975, Vol. 3. p. 216.

10. Macpherson would no doubt have agreed with Godwin that "The only method according to which social improvement can be carried on, with sufficient prospect of an auspicious event, is, when the improvement of our institution advances in a just proposition to the illumination of human understanding." *Everything Concerning Political Justice*, IV 2.

BY INNIS OUT OF MARX: THE REVIVAL OF CANADIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

C.B. Macpherson

Leo Panitch (ed.), *The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power*, University of Toronto Press, 1977, pp. 475.

Evidence of a revival of the tradition of political economy in Canada is piling up. It has already produced some excellent works by a new wave of young Canadian scholars. The drawing power of the sessions on political economy at the last several Canadian Political Science Association annual meetings attests to a growing interest in the manifold relations between the state and economic life.

That this is a renaissance rather than a steady continuation of the tradition is clear, at least in the political science field. It is true that Canada has a long tradition of political economy, both in the sense that the Canadian state has from its beginning been unusually closely linked with capitalist economic enterprise, and in the sense that this interrelation has been seen pretty steadily for the last 50 years by a significant number of historians and economists (although not by very many political scientists), and made central to their analyses. Historians and economists, and especially economic historians, could handle this more or less effectively, starting from their received theoretical frameworks and professional methods. Political scientists and theorists, on the whole, could not, perhaps because they had no such clear general theory as the economists but only a diffuse pluralist vision. This was the picture until about a decade ago.

One or two economists and economic historians, notably Veblen and Innis, had indeed gone beyond the received theoretical frameworks and struck out in new directions. Veblen was rejected during his lifetime, although taken up years later. Innis was honoured in his lifetime, for many of his qualities — as a Canadian nationalist, as an academic defender and asserter of the claims of pure scholarship, and as an outstanding Canadian scholar. In his lifetime, however, many of those who honoured him did not seem to have had any clear comprehension of what he was doing to reinstate and broaden the tradition of political economy.

The Innis tradition seemed to have petered out within a few years after his death in 1953. Now it is back with a vengeance. It may seem ironical that the

Canadian political economy tradition is now, in the 1970s, being rebuilt mainly by a new generation of Canadian scholars whose orientation is Marxist. Those who knew Innis will remember his sardonic view of Marxism. Innis' springboard was Veblen, not Marx; and Veblen's brilliance as a scoffer and underminer of "the price system" may have led Innis to accept, or take for granted, Veblen's jejeune and misleading reading of Marx, and so to write Marx off and go on his own way, first as a painstaking economic historian, then as an analyst of communication and empire. The further he went on his own, the closer (unconsciously, or certainly not explicitly) he moved towards a Marxian analysis. If his life had not been cut short so early, this might have become more apparent. So it is not surprising, after all, to find that the resurgence of the political economy tradition comes from a new generation of Canadian scholars who start from Marxist rather than Veblenian assumptions.

Nothing might have changed since Innis' death had there not recently arisen, in Western Europe, England and the U.S. a new interest in, and lively controversy about, Marx's (incomplete) theory of the state. In the last decade, however, a remarkable literature on that has been produced, to mention only the debates between Ralph Miliband and Nicos Poulantzas, and the contributions of Habermas, Clause Offe, James O'Connor and Alan Wolfe. They have put forward some substantial hypotheses about the nature of the modern capitalist state and about the most fruitful ways of analysing it.

These have had a striking impact on the new Canadian political economy. Surely no one would say that it is colonialist for Canadian scholars to see their job as developing, in the Canadian federal context, the hypotheses and conclusions of an analysis based mainly on more unitary European states. This is what has been done, with seminal effect, in the volume under review. This remarkable volume is at once a record and a guidepost: a record of the strides made in recent years by the political economy approach to problems of understanding Canadian political society, and a guidepost pointing to avenues that should be further explored.

For the political theorist, its greatest merit is that it rescues us from what had become the standard pattern of North American political science. Until a few years ago, Canadian political science seemed to be sunk in a morass of pluralist equilibrium models of the political process, which were oblivious to the class dimension of the state in any capitalist society. There were some exceptions, notably those, such as Stanley Ryerson, who sought to come to terms with the bi-national character of Canadian society; but on the whole, Canadian theorists were content to work with the American, or the even earlier British Idealist, pluralist models.

Now we have a new paradigm. It builds on Western European experience, and this brings us closer to the reality of the late 20th century state. The European states have been compelled to face the imperatives of the late 20th century sooner than we have had to: class issues there have surfaced earlier than here, but they are in the offing here. The merit of the Panitch volume is that it explores this in detail, and over a very wide range of political problems.

C.B. MACPHERSON

No matter how well-informed a Canadian student or professional scholar is about Canadian political and social institutions as a whole, he will have something to learn from the studies in this volume. The scholar who knows a lot about Quebec or Alberta or federalism is rarely as well-informed about, say, Canadian health care; the student of elites about the structure of Canadian employment patterns; the student of provincial governments about the pattern of representation in the formation of federal public policy; the student of the welfare state about the role of the Canadian state in the arts, or the roots of Canadian educational policy; and so on. All of us have something worthwhile to learn from this volume, which deals with all these matters.

Perhaps the most important thing, however, is that the reader is now, for the first time, given substantial material on which to make a judgment of the Marxist approach to a wide range of Canadian problems. Opinions about the value of that approach will of course differ, but it will no longer be plausible, as it was until recently, for anyone to plead ignorance or lack of evidence for forming such a judgment.

Western Marxist theory has made considerable strides in the last decade, especially in its analysis of the state. Marx had left only fragments of a theory of the state: subsequent official Marxist doctrine had not added much to it, being generally content to treat the state as a superstructure whose nature was determined by the economic base. That treatment appeared increasingly unrealistic as the 20th century state expanded its activity into all spheres of society, including the economy. The response by those Western Marxists, who have come to be known as neo-Marxists, was to take a fresh look at the role of the state in capitalist society, in an attempt to produce a full-fledged Marxist theory of the state. They are not unanimous, as witness the vigorous controversy between Miliband and Poulantzas and the different emphases of Habermas and O'Connor, but some guiding concepts have emerged.

The most important of these, and the most frequently used by the authors of *The Canadian State*, are the concepts of the accumulation function and the legitimation function. These are held to be functions which must be performed continuously by the state in a capitalist society, over and above the coercive function of protecting person and property which must be performed by the state in any society. The accumulation function is the provision of means to ensure the continuing accumulation of capital, without which a capitalist economy cannot maintain itself. This requires, in an advanced capitalist society, a wide range of state activities, *e.g.* monetary and fiscal measures to limit damaging swings in the economy, direct and indirect subsidies to some areas of the economy, regulation of labour/capital relations, imposition of orderly marketing boards, some control of natural resource exploitation, expenditure on research and development and education, and of course provision or support of an infrastructure of transportation and communications facilities. All of these are required in the interests of capital as a whole, but some of them are resisted by some sections of capital, or even at times by capital as a whole. The performance of this function therefore requires that the state have a

relative autonomy from capital, the more so in that all of this activity is expensive and (to the extent that the share of labour in the national income cannot be reduced) must be funded at the expense of profits, *i.e.* at the expense of the accumulation of capital.

The other necessary function of the state, in any class-divided society, is to legitimate its rule to the under-class. This presented comparatively little problem in pre-capitalist and early capitalist societies, but in advanced capitalist societies, which normally have a democratic franchise, it becomes a serious problem for the state. The problem is reduced by the party system, which tends to obscure class issues and to discourage popular participation in the political process. It has, however, required, and will presumably continue to require, an increasing level of welfare-state activity. This is also expensive, and together with the cost of performing the accumulation function, creates a constant dilemma for those who operate the state. In effect they must carry on a continuous balancing act between the demands of the two functions, a task of extreme difficulty whenever the economy falters or its rate of growth declines.

The neo-Marxist theory is a good deal more intricate than this sketch indicates. For instance, it also deals with the disparities of influence and power *vis-a-vis* the state as between capital (and labour) in the monopolistic, the competitive, and the public sectors, and with changes and rates of change in these and other factors. It is not an infallible framework of analysis. Some of the content can be quantified but many of the judgments must be qualitative and speculative. Nevertheless it has produced a valuable body of scholarly work which throws quite a new light on the modern state.

This new theoretical framework, which has been developed mainly from the experience of unitary European states, cannot be mechanically applied to a federal, bi-national and economically semi-colonial country such as Canada. The authors of *The Canadian State* are well aware of this. The great interest of the volume is that the authors have tried, successfully on the whole, to enlarge and extend the framework to deal with such things as the federal division of state power in Canada, the bi-national problem, the roles of indigenous and branch-plant capitals (and of commercial/financial *vs.* industrial capitals) in relation to the state. Another feature of interest is the collaborative nature of the volume: as the editor remarks, it is not simply a collection of original essays on a central theme. For while the authors have never sacrificed their independent points of view, they had seen many of each other's drafts and had profited by each other's criticisms. So while it is (fortunately) not the work of a "collective", it has more coherence than one usually finds in a collected volume.

I shall not attempt an appraisal of each of the fifteen essays that make up *The Canadian State*. It seems much more important to signal, as I have tried to do, the value of the work as a whole. If it did no more than alert Canadian scholars and students in the social sciences to the existence of a new body of theory, of which many of them were scarcely aware, it would have made a worthwhile contribution, but it does much more. In extending the theory to deal with

Canada as a special case it demonstrates that the neo-Marxist theoretical framework is a highly effective instrument for disclosing the realities of the Canadian state.

As the second volume sponsored by SPEC (Studies in the Political Economy of Canada), it is more than a worthy successor to the first such volume *(Capitalism and the National Question in Canada*, edited by Gary Teeple, 1972), for it opens up a wider vista. It comprises, as the authors would acknowledge, only first steps towards a full theory of the Canadian state, but the authors are young, and show every promise of filling out that theory with more sustained works. Not since Innis have the prospects of Canadian political economy been so bright.

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A SECOND LOOK AT *SAVAGE FIELDS*

Leah Bradshaw

> Master and Lord, there was a
> measure once.
> There was a time when men could say
> my life, my job, my home
> and still feel clean.
> The poets spoke of earth and heaven.
> There were no symbols.

<div align="right">Dennis Lee, <i>Civil Elegies</i></div>

In his *Savage Fields: An Essay in Literature and Cosmology*[1] Dennis Lee has attempted a novel analysis of Canadian literature. Employing a theoretical model of the modern world that he terms the "cosmology of savage fields", Lee has tried to show how this model is reflected in Michael Ondaatje's *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid,*[2] and Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers.*[3] More generally, Lee has used the model to make sense of the modern world. In this paper I argue that, while Lee has accurately identified the *malaise* of contemporary thought, his model does not go far enough towards an inquiry into the process of human understanding. Consequently, he places too much hope in the possibility of a recovery of "meaningful" existence. The paper is divided into three sections, each of which is designed to deal with a specific inquiry. The first is a brief synopsis of Lee's theoretical viewpoint, as it has been elaborated in *Savage Fields*. In the second section, I pose an alternative model of understanding, which will shed quite a different light on the state of affairs in the modern world, and finally, this alternative model is applied to the *Collected Works* and *Beautiful Losers*, and compared with Lee's application of the model of "savage fields" to these same works.

I

As Dennis Lee views the cosmology of savage fields, it is the conflict between "earth" and "world", world being defined as "the ensemble of beings which are either conscious, or manipulated by consciousness for its own purposes",

and earth being defined as the manifold of that which is "material, alive, and powered by instinct". (*S.F.*, pp. 4-5.) Another manner of expressing these two constituent elements would be to describe world as that which is moved by reason, and earth as that which is natural, and non-manipulative. Lee tells us that the relationship between the conscious world and the natural earth is one of both complementarity and friction. It is difficult to distinguish theoretically between the two since we can speak of earth only in terms of our consciousness of it; hence, to know earth, is to project the influences of consciousness onto it. As creatures of world, we can never know earth except as it is mediated through our use of it.

Despite the indeterminate character of either earth or world, Lee would like to maintain a distinction between the two because he seems to say that earth does exist in itself as the stable support of life, without which world could not survive. Moreover, he argues, it is fully evident in the modern era that the strife between earth and world far outweighs the complementarity of the two. The action of savage fields is the perpetual assault of world and earth on each other, each vying for domination. World "attacks and destroys" earth through the imposition of technology when it masters, but is incapable of knowing it, and earth retaliates, "frustrates consciousness" and "destroys individual life", through its constant reminder that man is always bound to his natural origins (*S.F.*, p. 9). Lee is disturbed by the thought that this struggle is no longer a fair battle, and that world is fast approaching a victory over earth. The *raison d'être* of world seems to be nothing more than the violent subjugation of earth. As Lee portrays the modern man, he is a creature whose drive is concentrated in the mastery over nature. His efforts are directed toward the improvement of skills whereby he can achieve this end, and the justification for his existence is located in the technique of mastery. Lee comments that "the only authentic I in the modern world is the one driven by technique, which must compulsively create new I-systems". (*S.F.*, p. 101)

The perpetual creations of new "I-systems" is what can be properly called the drive to mastery, and ultimately it is self-destructive. In the total, *i.e.*, non-dialectical, overcoming of nature, man finds that he can no longer identify himself within the order of the cosmos. If nature has been totally appropriated, and if it is the case that nature is nature only because it resists world, then, with the total subjugation of nature, the *distinctiveness* of nature as non-conscious material ceases to exist. Likewise, the distinctiveness of world, or consciousness, ends, for world no longer has any force against which it can measure its own essence. The man who has perfected technique to the point where all the natural world is his, is no longer different from, or related to, anything. He is eternally identical to himself and, as such, he has simply "collapse[d] back into the chaos of his frenzied world-space". (*S.F.*, p. 102)

In the final outcome of the interplay of savage fields, world completely dominates earth, absorbs it for its own purposes, and consequently suffers the emptiness of a world without meaningful action. The world is meaningless because man has conquered all; having conquered all, man is absolutely free;

free to do anything or nothing. Freedom means nothing, just as the utterance of the word "I" means nothing. Consequently, as Lee remarks, "there is no longer such a thing as I in the modern world. Or rather, that there is nothing *but* I's in the modern world, teeming and various and concocted, like a convention of window-dressed dummies". (*S.F.*, p. 101)

Lee has given a perceptive account of the vacuousness of modern existence as it has emerged from the conquest of technology, but he does not stop with a description. The book is full of references to a tentative solution to the problem that he has outlined, but the solution never materializes. The closing comments of the book are desultory thoughts of one who desires something new in the cosmos, but who can find no tools with which to create it. Lee says that it may be possible that we shall continue to live in a "frenzied world space", that, indeed, we may have to, because it may be impossible for us, as world-creatures, to offer any genuine alternative that would not be simply dragged "into our own orbit as another power technique". (*S.F.,* p. 108) Nevertheless, Lee postulates that the first step toward recovery is the recognition of the world as it really is, or rather, the identification of one's native space as hell (*S.F.*, p. 111). He adds that there has to be something we can do besides collate maps to trace its path.

Of the many questions that could be posed, the most important is: by what standard does one judge the modern world a hell? If the only authentic existence we know is one of various and teeming I-concoctions, there is no ground upon which we can judge the quality of life. For one who inhabits the savage field, his world is the *only* world, and as such, is neither good nor bad, neither heavenly nor hellish. There is only total lunacy, or its inverse, total joy. Both can be drawn from Lee's depiction of the savage field. Indeed, there is a good case for arguing that the modern world offers most of its citizens an unprecedented happiness. Choices in one's style or way of life are virtually unlimited; if one I-system is unsatisfctory, one proceeds to another. There are no moral limitations upon choice, and there are no standards that could be employed to judge the moral worth of one life, over another. Everyone does his own thing, and each thing has as much sanction under the umbrella of the state, as another.

Why, then has Lee chosen to describe his world as hell? Hell surely belongs to those who have been severed from the source of their being, and who have committed an injustice to that source. Lee obviously finds no solace in the argument that history has worked out its course in such a way that the result is the savage field. History, or the work of man, according to Lee, is not sufficient as a justification for just any state of affairs. What he is suggesting is that we reach out beyond ourselves as world-creatures and embrace the pre-conceptual source of our being: earth. Lee seems to envisage a reconcilation between world and earth that would entail an almost mystical act of forgiveness on the part of earth.[4] Justice requires that we, as world, extend ourselves beyond our experience of phenomena, of what appears, in order to experience the whole within which we are merely one part. Even Lee is unsure of the practicality of

such a suggestion. He asks: "Can a man think his earth-belonging without merely possessing it conceptually, thus re-making it, un-selving it?" (*S.F.*, p. 110) Still, he is hopeful that such a thing can be accomplished.

II

Lee's question is directed toward the possibility of overcoming the radical distinction between world and earth, so that each can be seen to be intrinsically dependent upon the existence of the other, as willing participants in the openness of being. That is to say, he imagines the overcoming of the liberal, dualistic ontology in which man and nature are pitted against one another. The savage field can be regarded as a product of liberalism, "that cosy, stoic delusion of a *manageably* bleak universe, out there, in which you could at least count on greed and the lust for power to see you through". (*S.F.*, p. 111) However, the universe is no longer manageable, for reasons that have been elaborated above, and thus, Lee states: "What is called for, clearly, is a post-liberal way of articulating a planet" (*S.F.*, p. 122) by which he means that "consciousness is trying to think the whole of which it is itself a part". (*S.F.*, p. 121) Yet Lee has confirmed the fact that thought is a function of world, existing in the interplay of savage fields: "The act of thinking manifests the very symptoms which it purports to be diagnosing." (*S.F.*, p. 111) The realization that thought, including Lee's own, is necessarily a manifestation of the dominating power of world would seem to call into question the entire enterprise.

If the act of thinking presupposes the bifurcation of planet into earth and world, and if thinking declares its intentions through the mediation of earth for its own purposes, how can it be possible to unite earth and world in a common force without thereby destroying thought? Surely, if earth and world are reconciled, thought no longer has any substance to *think about*. The world beyond savage fields may not have the ills of egoism and technological madness, but mute inarticulateness seems equally undesirable. Once man is "at home" in nature, he will construct his works of art as birds build their nests, perform his music after the pattern of frogs and cicadas, play like animals and communicate like beasts. The annihilation of the dualism between man and nature ultimately seems to suggest the disappearance of human discourse.[5]

If it is desirable to preserve the significance of thought (and Lee seems to think it is), then it is necessary to preserve the antagonism between earth and world in some form. To recognize anything as being meaningful, it is necessary to see it as something that is distinct from the totality in which it is enveloped, and this implies a human consciousness that is radically different from that which is being revealed. Historically, it has been the case that world has maintained its distinctiveness from earth by negating earth for its own uses. Man's history, his creativity, and his freedom have been attained through his dialectical transformation, as it has been performed upon a non-dialectical, static, nature. Man has always transformed the earth to suit his own needs. As

Lee has said, earth may have "retaliated" by recalling to man his mortality: by claiming his body, nature also claims his mind. Yet, man's essential activity has been to negate the given, to overcome nature not only through physical mastery, but through the creation of imagery to carry men beyond the grave. In order to *be*, world has had to negate earth. Therefore, it seems unlikely that consciousness could be preserved in a situation where the pre-conditions for its existence have been removed.

Lee's proposed reconciliation of earth and world does not help us to get beyond the frenzied world-space of savage fields. He laments the subjugation of earth in world, and concludes that this absorption destroys both the significance of man and of nature. Yet he is advocating absorption through another means: mutual surrender rather than subjugation of one by another. Nevertheless, absorption, however attained, has the same consequence: through surrender or submission, the result is a nihilistic world. In both instances, history, as it has been experienced through man's negation of natural being, is brought to a close. As Alexandre Kojève expressed this end: "What disappears is Man properly so-called - that is, Action negating the given, and Error, or in general, the subject *opposed* to the Object".[6] Nature has been conclusively mastered, that is, *harmonized* with man.

If it is desirable to preserve man — that is, historical man — it seems necessary to preserve a dualistic structure of being, and not, as Lee suggests, abandon it. However, it must be possible to preserve such a dualism in a way that is not self-destructive. If, as Lee has said, earth has been thoroughly manipulated by world so that it no longer provides a substantial resistance to world's mastery, then another source must be defined, against which world can identify itself. Kojève's argument provides the basis for such a source. Like Lee, Kojève thinks it is no longer possible to act meaningfully in the modern world, within the structure of the interplay of savage fields. He is in full agreement with Lee with respect to the conclusion that the negation of nature is no longer purposeful. Yet, unlike Lee, Kojève does not despair at this realisation. For Kojève, the very possibility of experiencing a sense of loss in the modern world is contingent upon a recollection of what was meaningful in the past. The wise man of the modern era understands his history, why it has ended, and he accepts the fact that he can no longer act meaningfully within the polarization of world and earth. To Kojève, "it is clear that all possible questions-answers have been exhausted".[7] Yet, as he explains, the wise man is nevertheless a human being. In order to escape being re-integrated into nature as an animal, or becoming a "jaunty old Dionysiac"[8] experiencing a sequence of equally senseless diversions, it is necessary that man remain as "Subject opposed to the Object, even if action negating the given Error disappears".[9] This "formal" perservation of opposites is fundamental to our post-historical existence, if we are neither to go mad, nor quietly and "naturally" vanish into peace.

This means that while man speaks of everything that is, and knows that he can create nothing new in the cosmos, nonetheless he will continue to view

himself as a being that is formally detached from an abstract "otherness". In this way, he can still act, not to change, but merely to preserve. Modern man can retain this formal recreation of the interplay of savage fields, because his wisdom constitutes a phenomenological understanding of what it is to be a human being. Therefore, he has a calculated awareness of the necessity of preserving an ideal dualism between man as a dialectical being, and something other. It is *only* in this preservation, at least in principle, of an ideal dualism, that man can avoid the plunge into nihilism and silence.

The maintaining of an "ideal dualism" certainly can not involve a re-vitalization of the interplay between earth and world since, as both Kojève and Lee concede, earth has been subsumed into world. However, the dualism can be preserved in recognition of its abstract reality. That is, world is capable of constructing a meaningful existence on the basis of memory, and it is equally capable of imposing that reality on those whose memory has been "misplaced". Here, one must interject that Lee has omitted an important dimension of the interplay of savage fields: the assault of world upon world. If the action of savage fields is regarded primarily as the friction between earth and world, the disappearance of either one of the contestants constitutes a cosmic catastrophe. Yet while the negative relationship of man to nature is significant, the fact remains that it is significant *only* because the relationship is perceived by world. This suggests still another consideration: that world has the capacity to confirm its stature, a feature that earth is lacking. World can not know itself except where and when it has its identity confirmed. This seems obvious enough, for if men are different from nature, it is because they know they are different, and knowledge presupposes revelation through discourse, and discourse entails mutual recognition among a manifold of individual discussants. The history of men can be seen, in this light, to be the history of man's desire to be absolutely sure of his knowledge. It is true that men have acted in history, and violently subdued nature to create a world in their own image, but this transformation has not been the sole aim of their efforts. The subjugation of nature was a means to the end of recognition. However, once that subjugation has been accomplished, it does not follow that all men have the recognition they feel they deserve. In fact, men will willingly and gratuitously die in order to achieve recognition. The domination of the natural world is not the end of man's struggle. In the bid for universal recognition, men are willing to give up their lives for freedom, honour and prestige, and no other living creature would sacrifice its natural life for such a content-less ideal.

It is quite possible that men should oppose themselves ceaselessly to other members of "world", who do not hold the same abstract principles as they. Men, as negators, oppose themselves to a state of affairs or a political system, that is purely a product of world. In a world that no longer bears the necessity of subjugating nature, there still exists the compulsion to subjugate man. The interplay of savage fields can be seen as a purely political struggle where men derive meaning by gaining the maximum recognition for their political platforms. Marxists oppose themselves to the "false consciousness" of the

bourgeoisie, the champions of modernization oppose themselves to the under-developed or traditional nation, and so on. Opposition is no longer directed toward the transformation of nature, but fully toward the transformation of one part of "world" in accordance with the ideals of another part of world.[10]

From Lee's perspective, the modern situation demands an immediate re-appraisal of the structure of thought. According to his analysis, planet "worlds" in full control of the cosmos, yet world continues to deny the fact that its "worlding" is actually a combination-in-strife of a "world mode" and an "earth mode". (*S.F.*, p. 58) Lee's minimum demand is for honesty: that world admit its dependence upon the "earth mode". Yet, he comments that because the cosmology of savage fields is predicated upon the domination of earth by world, "*Savage Fields* reaches the limit of its speculative resources at the point where it attempts to think earth in earth's own terms". (*S.F.*, p. 58) Furthermore, he contends that we cannot go beyond the model of savage fields, until we can accomplish this task. In sum then: the situation is desperate, but there are no adequate theoretical alternatives.

If the focus of the problem is directed away from the conflict between world and earth, and aimed at the conflict between *members* of world, it is possible to avoid the "crisis of ontology" depicted in Lee's book. Indeed, as Lee has stated, "planet worlds" in the modern era, and this has created a whole new set of problems in the form of competing ideologies. The kind of strife that emerges from the savage field is barely mentioned by Lee, and I suggest that it is precisely this area that needs more analysis. The effort to think earth in earth's own terms seems to be fruitless, since those terms have already been eradicated already by technology. On the other hand, it is inconceivable that the struggle of world against world should subside in the near future. Its resolution would demand the effective subjugation of each and every in-dividual to the universal recognition of a universal idea, and from all evidence, men are more effective than nature in resisting the efforts of other men. For every idea or technique presented in the cosmos, there is another to challenge it; each demands recognition from the greatest number. This problem of domination and recognition among men transfers the solution from an epistemological level to a political one, from theory to practice; if, as it has been argued here, an ideal dualism is mandatory for a meaningful human existence, then this dualism must be perserved. That is, the dualism requires political sanction. Lee is correct when he states that "The coming decades hold undreamed-of forms of tyranny", in which men will try to impose their techniques and expertise upon unwilling participants, but we are hardly going to escape that tyranny by apologizing to earth for the gratuitous harvest of her dignity. If we escape at all, it shall be through a calculated administration of the various activities of the conflicting members of the world. That is, while the fight for recognition is respected by all, the game is constrained by the rule that no one has the right to win.

The moment of world's assault on world runs through both the works that Lee considered in *Savage Fields*, although Lee concentrated primarily on the

moment of world's assault on earth. In the next section the former moment will be examined, as it is portrayed in *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* and *Beautiful Losers*. The conclusions derived from this analysis contrast sharply with Lee's resolutions in *Savage Fields*.

III

The struggle for recognition is central to the theme of *Savage Fields*, although Lee has not referred explicitly to it. In Michael Ondaatje's book, we see the striving for recognition operating co-extensively with the world-impulse to subdue earth. It is not enough for Billy the Kid to ravage the natural world; what he foremostly wants to do is ravage the *human* world. He constantly lived under the threat of death, and he did nothing to eliminate that threat. On the contrary, he fostered it by moving from one fight to the other, acquiring greater notoriety, until the struggle for recognition finally concluded, perhaps inevitably, in his death. The unspoken message of *The Collected Works* is that man's violent subjugation of nature, and his assault upon other members of world, end only in death.

The moment of "earth assault" in Ondaatje's work is what Lee terms a human consciousness "pummelled and nearly demolished by instinctual energy" (*S.F.*, p. 16). The moment is prevalent in the book, since we are constantly reminded of the awesomeness of the western landscape during the frontier years. Everywhere, nature is threatening with its dry winds and its miles and miles of desert.[11] Yet in contrast to the initial moment of earth assault, which is merely man's awareness of his differentiation from nature, Lee has formulated the moment of "world assault", whose distinctive characteristic is man's affirmation of his self-consciousness. The moment of world assault constitutes a conversion of the awe before nature, into the impulse to dominate it. Man assumes an image of himself that is separate from, and master of, his natural being, or as Lee expresses it, "World assault depends on men living out a particular image of themselves and adopting a particular ideology." (*S.F.*, p.18) World assault can be seen as the general defiance of natural existence, but it is manifested in many distinctive ways.

In one respect, as Lee mentions, "World exists in order to control earth, usually by violence. And earth is neutral, value-free like a bunch of 'paper flowers'.". (*S.F.*, p. 19) In *The Collected Works,* we witness this violent control exercised by Billy, in a scene where he lies ill, in a barn, surrounded only by animals and desert. In à moment of fury, he tries to annihilate everything around him. He shoots "... until my hand was black and the gun was hot and no other animal of any kind remained in that room but the boy in the blue shirt, sitting there coughing at the dust".[12] The passage is revealing, for while Billy has succeeded in his desire to master his surroundings, he is still little more than a natural being — an animal in a blue shirt. Since no other member of world has recognized his victory, it has no significance.

The third moment in *The Collected Works* that Lee discusses is the moment of "earth-in-world", the reconciliatory moment when man discovers that he cannot deny his natural existence. "[A] member of world is forced to accept his citizenship in earth" (*S.F.*, p. 21). Ironically, the moment can occur only in Billy's death. As Ondaatje describes Billy's thoughts at the moment of death, they are a curious mixture of animal sensibility and self-reflection. Finally, in death, world and earth are subsumed in one another and Billy can no longer tell where his body ends and his self-consciousness begins. Ondaatje writes through the character of Billy:

> ...oranges reeling across the room and I KNOW, I KNOW
> it is my brain coming out like red grass this breaking where
> red things wade.[13]

It is not surprising that this fusion of earth and world can occur only at Billy's death. It takes the moment of death to provide a reconciliation, for as long as man lives, and insofar as he exists as a creature of world, he must necessarily oppose himself to nature, to given-being. This is precisely why Billy died fighting: there were no other options. Lee comments that Billy the Kid had to "kill earth again and again, even if what he kills is himself" (*S.F.*, p. 23), but this is not entirely accurate. Billy did not have to kill earth, although he may well have done that. What he did have to kill again and again were other men who were a threat to his individuality. The heroic image attached to the mythical drama of Billy the Kid is intrinsically tied to his fearlessness before the threat of death induced by his enemies.

Ultimately, there is no actualization of the moment of "earth-in-world", for the moment can occur only in death. Billy's existence was predicated on his relentless pursuit of mastery, both over the Western terrain, and the men who ruled it. Lee is aware of the finality of the realisation of "earth-in-world", since he writes that the final stage in Ondaatje's book is the skeletal moment, the moment of death in which "infatuation with the power that decimates earth reveals itself, finally, as infatuation with death" (*S.F.*, p. 27). Lee is distraught with the consequences of this position: if the reconciliation of earth and world can come about only in death, which is the annihilation of all life, whether that life be conscious or not, then the reconciliation really matters very little. Pushing the implications even further, he concludes that world's drive is always aimed toward its own destruction, "its makeup is finally predicated on suicide" (*S.F.*, p. 41). This conclusion is "disturbing in the extreme", for the outcome appears to be "destructive madness, lobotomy, suicide, in short, nihilism".

Do we have to look upon death or suicide as evidence of madness? Suppose one saw death as the ultimate expression of freedom, then the assault in natural life to the point of risking one's own life would not be "lobotomy" or "madness", but the rightful victory of self-consciousness over bare existence.

In contrast, the reconciliation of earth and world *within* life would be madness and nihilism, since it would effectively transcend and obliterate the human condition of desire and negation. If Lee is seeking to preserve freedom and purpose in the world, he should be attempting to understand the implications of the dualistic ontology. He should be praising Billy the Kid as the hero of the savage field, not lamenting him as its victim. After all, the Kid's death was hardly tragic:

> Poor young William's dead with blood planets in his head
> with a fish stare, with a giggle like he said.[14]

Billy did not inhabit a nihilistic world. We know that history continues, after his death, as the history of men just like him who are willing to die in the name of a *particular* image of themselves. From this point of view, *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* is an affirmation of the determination of men to avoid absorption into the anonymity of natural space.

Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers*, the second literary work that Lee dealt with in *Savage Fields*, has quite a different outcome from Ondaatje's book: it clearly captures the spirit of a nihilistic world. Rather than describing a struggle between man and man, or man and nature, it is representative of a world where the interplay of savage fields has dissolved and there are no longer any meaningful distinctions. The cosmos of *Beautiful Losers* is located in a genuinely post-historical setting. Throughout the book, Cohen tries to imagine a return to a state of existence antecedent to the violent and conflict-ridden stage of "historical" human being. He imagines a world where man is merely part of a continuum of nature, or what Lee terms "carnal participation in unified being" (*S.F.*, p. 64). The harmonious continuum of nature is portrayed by Cohen as an idyllic state, devoid of the tension, guilt, and strife that are associated with man's fallen state. The primary aim of the book is to restore the "ordinary eternity" that preceded this historical nightmare. As Lee says: "Episode after episode, speech after speech turns out to have been instruction in the nature of fallen history, and exhortation to burst free of it by ecstasy." (*S.F.*, p. 69)

It appears that the futility of regaining a harmonious equilibrium is the main anxiety experienced by the characters in *Beautiful Losers*: they are compelled always by their own "world" natures, to act as men. The principal character, F., is struggling to achieve a moment of dionysiac celebration, which Lee calls the "Isis continuum" (*S.F.*, p. 76). Yet the fact that F. pursues (*i.e.*, desires) this state of being, rather than living, or being, it, indicates that there is action, and hence negation, going on. His efforts to regain the Isis continuum wrench him back into the very condition that he is attempting to escape. As Lee states:

> Each cosmology — savage fields and the Isis continuum —
> subsumes and cancels the other. Yet neither manages to
> win out. The book consists, from this angle, of a series of
> attempts to get from the fallen reality of the savage field to
> the ecstatic reality of the Isis continuum. And the result is
> a nerve-grinding oscillation between the two.
> (*S.F.*, p. 76)

It is obvious that F. cannot escape the essence of his own acting and knowing process, and hence, an achievement of any sort can only be an achievement, a victory, *for* man. As such, it would not represent the return to the Garden of Eden, but rather, the venture into a new world that bears the burden of a history of negation. The world that F. (and perhaps, Cohen) inhabits is one that Lee calls "the inception of radical freedom" (*S.F.*, p. 100), that is, a world where there is no experience of absolute standards, and where man is "unselved of all but the will to create itself" (*S.F.*, p. 100). His world is the system of "I-systems" to which I referred earlier in this paper.

Neither Cohen nor F. seems to realize the difficulty of transcending the historical being of man. It is F.'s intention to relieve man of the "final burden" of history under which men "suffer in such confusion".[15] He advises: "Let it be our skill to create new legends out of the disposition of the stars, but let it be our glory to fight the legends and watch the night emptily."[16] The book is littered with such images of "forgotteness", and Cohen's central difficulty in realistically dealing with the modern world is tied to this effort to forget. His reluctance to come to terms with his past is what makes him such a desperate nihilist.[17] Ultimately, F. fails in his attempts to overcome himself, and as Lee views it, the conclusion of the book is at worst a "cop-out" (*S.F.*, p. 94). After Cohen had succeeded in the "demolition of his hubris", he found that he had done it so thoroughly that he no longer had any bearings, either in the savage field, or in the Isis continuum. He had utterly destroyed himself as being.

Lee's reaction to *Beautiful Losers* was anger. He was disappointed with Cohen for having raised his "hopes for redemption in the savage field", but then concluding with a "terrible closure of those hopes" (*S.F.*, p. 95). Lee did not, however, consider the possibility that the outcome of *Beautiful Losers* may have been inevitable. How could F. possibily have been redeemed, when there is no source in the modern world that could perform such a miracle? Grace and redemption seem inapproprate within the context of savage fields. F. abandoned his "world-stance" in the hopes that he could attain a higher reality in the mystical reunion of earth and world. He found that his hope could not sustain him, and moreover, that in the process of inquiry, he had destroyed himself. Unlike Billy the Kid, who died with a smile on his face, F. died as a heap of drugged, scatological matter.

LEAH BRADSHAW

Beautiful Losers possibly contains a lesson on the benefits of moderation. If one understands oneself only as an active negator, as has been argued, then it is folly to try to venture beyond the limits of self-understanding. In enduring the savage field, perhaps there are only two options: either one responds with dread and nausea (like F.), or one confronts it with courage (like Billy the Kid). Even Lee admits that any reaction beyond these choices implied the capacity ''to think more deeply than thought'' (*S.F.*, pp. 112) — and this seems impossible.

Savage Fields does give us an insight into the potential destructiveness of a dualistic ontology. However, the conclusion we may well be intended to draw is that the best one can do is avoid the worst, and that, through good management. As Lee said at the close of his book,''[T]here are times when thinking can be faithful to its situation only by sitting still, and unclenching, and waiting to see what will happen''. (*S.F.*, p. 112) I am suggesting that the modern technological world is such a time, and therefore, that even our best efforts are bound to be frustrated by thought. As a certain school of political thought would contend, what we need now is real *praxis*. When all original thought is exhausted, and all possible questions have been answered, it seems that little remains but to re-arrange the world in accordance with final principles, an outcome as melancholy as it is inevitable.

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Notes

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1. Toronto: Anansi Publishing House, 1977. Further references will be indicated by *S.F.*

2. Toronto: Anansi Publishing House, 1970.

3. New York: Viking Press, 1966.

4. Lee's formulation of the relationship between world and earth is more complex than this, and is, as he states, bound up with some of Heidegger's conceptualizations. In a lengthy footnote, Lee expounds his agreements with, and departures from, Heidegger's thought.

5. The images of reconciliation are drawn directly from Kojève's description of the post-historical world. See *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, ed. Allan Bloom, trans. James H. Nichols Jr., New York: Basic Books, 1969, pp. 159, 160.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

8.   *S.F.*, p. 84.

9.   Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, p. 162

10. In Kojève's words: "While henceforth speaking in an *adequate* fashion of everything that is given to him, post-historical Man must continue to *detach* 'form' from 'content', doing so no longer in order actively to transform himself, but so that he may *oppose* himself as a pure 'form' to himself, and to others taken as 'content' of any sort." Note to the 2nd Edition, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, p. 162.

11. Michael Ondaatje, *The Collected Works*, p. 70.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

15. Leonard Cohen, *Beautiful Losers*, p. 237.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

17. Stanley Rosen has well expressed the relationship between nihilism and "forgottenness". He states: "Nihilism is fundamentally an attempt to overcome or to repudiate the past on behalf of an unknown and unknowable yet hoped-for future. The danger implicit in this attempt is that it seems necessarily to entail a negation of the present, or to remove the ground upon which man must stand in order to carry out, or even merely to witness, the process of historical transformation... the attempt to overcome the past is necessarily rooted in a judgement upon the past." *Nihilism: A Philosophic Essay*, 1976, Yale University.

ON *SAVAGE FIELDS* AND THE ACT OF CRITICISM

David Godfrey

Savage Fields does not even look like criticism. Shaped and formed, more so than many modern works of art, it deals with two difficult books that themselves examine the edges between art and non-art. Dennis Lee's important role in the manifestations of the 1960's has ensured what passes for critical attention in these disco-days, but of some two dozen reviews I have examined, only two have dared (or been able) to come to terms with what it is that the book says or with its validity.

What Lee says in *Savage Fields* is not really that difficult. Honestly enough, he begins in doubt (but does not end there):

> Several years ago I became aware that 'nature and civilisation' loomed very large in works of fiction by some of my contemporaries. In most cases I felt at home with the theme. But I was obscurely stymied by a couple of these books, because their accounts of a person, a pop song, a death, a walk in the country implied a different kind of relationship between the two domains than I was accustomed to. Moreover, it was no longer merely a 'theme'; the books seemed to treat it as the context of everything that occurred. 'Nature and civilisation' had become virtually a cosmology in its own right, in the books that puzzled me, and it followed a logic of its own. (Page 3)

His honest doubt leads him to an elaborate system designed to reduce that doubt, or to at least soften its dangers by means of metaphor. A human enough occupation, for poet or critic.

In Lee's savage field, two modes of planet act, coterminously but in strife. That is, planet is, " 'everything that is (including the rest of space), as it affects or can be known or imagined by inhabitants of our planet.' " Yet while planet is "seamless with itself," for Lee it "obliges us to derive two exhaustive, contradictory models of itself: world and earth. Not only that, it behaves as though both models were simultaneously true, and determined its [planet's] history and structure by their interaction."

World, for Lee, is more than civilisation, although it includes that. "World is the ensemble of beings which are either conscious, or manipulated by

consciousness for its own purposes."(p. 4) Similarly, " 'Earth' includes 'nature'," but, "Earth appears to world as the ensemble of beings which are some or all of: material, alive, and powered by un-self-conscious instinct." (p. 4)

Both world and earth, for Lee, function as opposing patterns of behaviour of planet; it is this structural model of planet as strife between world and earth that he terms savage fields (drawing on a metaphor from physics for clarification: two opposing and fluctuating electromagnetic fields occupying the same space).

The flaw in thought is fairly obvious; the question is whether Lee's metaphor is helpful in explaining the intention and form of Ondaatje's and Cohen's art.

For Ondaatje, the answer is presumably yes; through these infra-red lenses Lee can see elements of *Billy the Kid* which one assumes were not visible to him before. Treating the book as a "concrete model of the savage field" allows Lee to discern three major moments and three minor moments as its underlying structure. "[V]irtually every episode assimilates itself to one or another of these paradigms of strife." (p. 16)

In the moments of earth assault, a human consciousness is pummelled by instinctual energy, either literally or perceptually. In the complementary moments of world assault, men torment and slaughter the creatures of instinct. By adopting a conquest ideology, as world must, "the moral of newspapers or gun"., Billy can totally separate world and earth, making earth neutral and value-free, and letting earth, thus defined, include the unreal, unreally suffering bodies of other men he has murdered.

There is a third moment, however, which denies that belief in separation, the moment of earth-in-world. For Lee, the most horrific moment occurs during Billy's sunstroke when, "[t]he earth which Billy has been assaulting recoils and shows him, on his own nerve-ends, that he himself *is a body,* is creature of earth". (pp. 76-77)

The three minor moments, stasis, union and skeletal, are self-explanatory — representing truce, reconciliation and the loss of consciousness, the reduction of world to earth.

The presence of these six moments seems to please Lee, allowing him to resolve his initial doubt. The six moments become a "syntax" of strife, rhyming with one another despite differing presentations while the orchestration of these variations on six moments makes the book feel coherent and firmly ordered.

So far, so good. The logical flaw in the theory has not led Lee into a false interpretation of the book and who is to say that simpler ways of clarifying the book's form and content would be simpler for all potential readers? Later, we shall examine Lee's discussion of the purpose (or lack thereof) of *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid.*

Lee's participation in *Billy the Kid,* both before and after his development of a terminology, remains pleasurable. So he can say, "Though I loath modernity (while being a product of it), I can only applaud Ondaatje for the clarity,

courage and verve with which he depicts it".(p. 41) It always seems easier for critics to retain the personal qualification when approving. If I like it, there's no need to say that the world will gobble it up. If it doesn't, *tant pis*.

Yet when critics condemn, a different need arises. A personal negation must be confirmed by creating the support of others. Lee cannot participate in all of *Beautiful Losers*. Therefore, *Beautiful Losers* fails:

> [T]he third movement is suddenly stumbly and out of synch with itself .... I make the assumption, in fact, that Cohen became genuinely zonked as he was trying to finish *Beautiful Losers*, capable of blunders he would never have made earlier in the book. Whatever the reason, the governing consciousness had already shot its bolt before the third movement began, by the point where it composed the interlude on drug addiction. ... The best that can be said for Book Three is that it fails to find a satisfactory voice and form. ... It is finally a waste of time to read *Beautiful Losers* right through, clucking in disapproval at the final seventy pages .... The authentic action of *Beautiful Losers* is incomplete, but unforgettable. (pp. 94-95)

If the logical flaw in his theory supports Lee's arrival at such a hopelessly invalid conclusion, then one must state serious reservations about the use of the book as well as the foundation of its theory.

What does he think Cohen is trying to do? According to Lee:

> [T]he overall action of *Beautiful Losers* ... is a psychomacheia, a struggle within the consciousness of one person .... In the course of the psychic drama it enacts, both F. and the narrator embody a succession of contradictory stances in the central consciousness .... That consciousness inhabits a planet defined by world's repression of earth, where carnal joy is taboo and spiritual joy is a travesty .... What is the nature of things? And what must a man, imprisoned in savage fields, do or be to be saved? The central motive of the novel is to answer these life-questions. And in each movement of the book Cohen's governing consciousness deploys F. and the narrator differently, as it pursues the ontological quest through another stage. (p. 92)

There are other interpretations, to say the least. Let us present one that seems to me to be far more useful. What fascinates Cohen? The boundary between the natural and the supernatural; the gateways between the two; the roles of death, sex and torture; speech versus print; and repression versus excess in different societies. A comparativist at heart, he takes four societies (Indian, Catholic, Protestant and Banal) and examines these forces at work in them. The suspense of sexuality is matched by a suspense of participation, but there is no more justification for saying that Cohen is any of these characters than that Ondaatje is Billy the Kid — nor, any less.

The examination of the four societies and of these forces at work within them provide a coherent structure for *Beautiful Losers* (if one needs that), but applying Lévi-Strauss and Harold Innis to *Beautiful Losers* reveals far more than applying Lee's terminology. One might say that where Lee (like the narrator), is attempting to find a pattern to collect experience within, Cohen is comparing some of the patterns which men have created to trap their experience. If the brain's structure is organic, then there might be patterns in apparent diversity. For Cohen, part of that pattern is excess: the excess of curative sexuality in the Indian way, of bodily torture in the Catholic, of mind-repression in the Protestant, of machine-orgasm in the Banal. Lee seems to think that Cohen demolished F. only in mid-stream. Nonsense; he had "demolished" him from the beginning, but he is still interested in the ways in which an F., a Banal John the Baptist, would live out the older patterns: not head-piercing; not recreating Gesthemene; not playing hide-and-seek with Calvinistic interviews with God in the flesh; but still searching for salvation, for a gateway to the supernatural through excess. Seen in this context, there is no sudden break in the middle of Part Two and it is not a waste to read nor even a waste to teach *Beautiful Losers* as a clever example of form. (And I make no claims for this as the "exclusive" interpretation of intent and form in the book.)

The last part of *Beautiful Losers* is funny. It is not serious, nor is it intended to be. The Banal mode of seeking salvation is comic, but so are all the others. Of course, perhaps without knowing it, Cohen retreats to a New Englandish transcendentalism in attempting to find a suitable way of showing the Banal's mode of seeking the supernatural:

> And that point where he was most absent, that's when the
> gasps started, because the future streams through that
> point, going both ways. That is the beautiful waist of the
> hourglass! That is the point of Clear Light! ... For all the
> time that it takes to launch a sigh he allowed the spectators
> a vision of All Chances at Once!
>
> (*Beautiful Losers* pp. 241-242)

So what? What are the limitations that any writer works within? Language in

its human context; myth in its human context. He *can* create either of those, but the more he creates the more of his audience he loses.

All criticism is subjective and therefore the critic should remain skeptical about his judgments. A truly scientific criticism would recognize that the proper object of its study was work plus response. There is precious little of such criticism around, but it could make statements. It could say that 57% of Caucasians trained at the University of Toronto lost interest in *Beautiful Losers* halfway through part II. Lee's position might then have some validity, at least for a certain group. At the moment, all one need say is that I, a single intelligent reader who enjoys irony and Lévi-Strauss, disagree with Lee; therefore, his argument is invalid since he presents no other proof than his own interpretation of the book, and his own emotional response rooted in that interpretation, for the "failure" of the book.

One belabours the point only because so many literary critics use the same flawed process of reaching a judgment. It does not do this (to me); if it does not do this (to me), it cannot be good. I know nothing about what it does to anyone else, but since it must do the same to any intelligent sensitive person as it does to me, it must be bad.

If one lets *Savage Fields* be seen as narrative, or narrative autobiography — this is what happened to me, Dennis Lee, reading and re-reading this pair of books — then of course it ought to be criticized in the same terms. I enjoyed seeing Lee wrestle with these books, I enjoyed the story he made out of his reading of them, I would recommend them to anyone as one of a number of readings. "[B]etter to close the book at page 237, having witnessed a singular raising of hopes for redemption in the savage field, and a terrible closure of those hopes", is this an absolute statement and single interpretation?

Why does the I always disappear when the judgment is negative? That is one central question for any critic to ask at the close of a review.

If, on the other hand, one lets *Savage Fields* be seen not as narrative but as argument, then one must attack the logic. Does Lee create a cosmology (a science of the universe, a way of perceiving the cosmos, a social mythology), or simply a terminology? I fail to see that Lee is describing anything that cannot more simply be described in terms of matter, process, and mind. One can describe process as strife whether or not mind is involved. As absolute zero is approached (via machines and conceptualization), there surely is "strife" among the gases that are turned to conductive solids. If that is "strife", is there not also "strife" as glaciers move, untouched, unconceived or unseen by human mind? Being squashed by a wind-struck oak would be no less unpleasant than being run down by a vicious snowplow operator.

What happens solely in the mind does not happen in reality, although that process of thought happens in reality. No matter how hard I think of Ray Charles ascending into heaven, he is likely to show up in some nightclub tomorrow night. At the social level, it is true, a process begun in the mind can come into reality. Religious leaders can dream of religious kingdoms and soldiers can shoot civilians in subways. Still, as far as we know, there is a process

involved. Lee's metaphor is a false analogy. If the world in process is seen as a fluctuating electromagnetic field, that is fine, but the world of consciousness is *not* an opposing field. However much I think of the conflict in Iran, however much I know of it, however much I feel of it, I do not project anything into it until I take some action. At that moment I become part of that process.

Consciousness is itself a process, but it does not necessarily affect the world of matter in process. If and when it does, it does so according to the rules of matter in process. Consciousness may or may not have an understanding of those rules of process. That we can fly a man to the moon indicates we have knowledge of some rules of process; that we can create and live in cities like Toronto indicates we lack knowledge of some other kinds of processes. Consciousness can never have full knowledge of itself for no matter how detailed our knowledge of the matter and processes of the brain becomes, the knower will never know the final moment of knowing.

Strife is a subjective attribute which Lee applies to process when human beings are involved. If one has watched thirty cows scapegoat a thirty-first cow and attempt to bully her into starvation, one is far less certain about the dividing line between that "ensemble whose members are conscious" and that "whose members are characterized by un-self-conscious material energy, powered by instinct." From the human point of view, of course, no action is value-free and Lee has always followed Grant firmly and properly in attacking that fallacy of the social sciences. Yet in order to attack that fallacy, there is no need to create a second fallacy. That which is material does not become conscious by means of mere involvement with consciousness. A man who is struck by a building toppled by an earthquake dies no differently from a man struck by the same building toppled by a terrorist's blast. One cannot say that the first is earth and the second somehow "world". This remains true no matter how deeply technology and the artifacts of technology invade the imagery of poets.

Let us return to Lee's original quandary. Out of what does the apparent strangeness of these works by Cohen and Ondaatje really arise? Nothing more strange, it seems to me, than the notions of texts, social mythologies, and the annonymous author. I have touched briefly on comparative mythologies in Cohen, let us look at the notion of texts in Ondaatje and in Cohen (Ondaatje's mentor, let us not forget, in a great deal of this technique and philosophy). One way of looking at the connection between the works would be to say that whereas Cohen tracks down the antecedents and parallels of a Ray Charles saint, Ondaatje deals with that figure, as Billy or as Buddy Bolen, in and of himself, retaining only as miasma that historical swamp which Cohen has comically deliminated. The dead point in *Beautiful Losers* occurs on page 180, where the inserted text is a page of phrases from a translation handbook for use AT THE DRUG-SHOP. In structuralist terms, Cohen is saying that his entire novel is nothing more, and nothing less, than can be found in this list of phrases: "I shall be waiting./How must I take this medicine?/before the meal/after the meal/something for the headache/something for the throat/something for my stomach/please, nurse this wound/how much does

all cost? ten shillings. Thanks." Rather than creating his own language, his own "voice" as they used to say in the 1950's, a poet can use the texts of others. Cohen and Ondaatje both do this, Ondaatje perhaps more formally, concentrating on the way in which Billy's myth has been seen by different eyes of the society. Cohen's conceitful use of texts tends to be more abstract, but he never strays far from fairly clear themes and variations on Indian, Catholic, Protestant and Banal myths. The closer we get to our own time, the less likely we are to see these as myths and the more likely we are to want to see them as answers or as failed answers. Where Lee sees *Beautiful Loser* as a failed answer, Cohen would see *Savage Fields* as material of a myth.

As for Ondaatje, does he really fit so neatly into Lee's new terminology and avoid the underlying myths of the tribe? What about the crucial scene in *Billy the Kid,* the one Lee has described as earth claiming its dominion over world? The sunstroke episode can be just as validly described, it seems to me, as one more version of the Protestant self's quest for encounter with godhead. Lee says it is the sun, but Billy is more to the point: "I've been fucked by Christ almighty god I've been good and fucked by Christ .... but the chain held my legs to the horse and I was dragged picking up dust on my wet skin as I travelled in between his four trotting legs at last thank the fucking christ, in the shade of his stomach." If the roots of that are not in Bunyan and Luther, then I am a flat-worlder. This is the 1970's Christ/man confrontation: direct, but visceral; intense, but tortuous; liberating, but ironically; mystic, but sexual; religious, but vulgar. There is no way that a writer can get beyond the myths of his audience and still retain an audience.

Like Cohen, Ondaatje is a romantic of individualism. Like Cohen, Ondaatje creates annonymous author/heroes. As the times become more ironic, terser, more punky, he follows them; but, as with Cohen, it is the single life, on the edge, which fascinates him. Where Cohen jokes with descriptions of the conceptualized creation of the Banal saint, the new Jew, Ondaatje jokes with his actual existence in the form of "our" Billy the Kid, chosen by the people to represent their failed revolt against, and their suffering within, a particular historical society. The strife of technology and human viciousness that is there, does not need a cosmology to explain it. Ondaatje's use of structuralism, of "texts", does not need a cosmology to explain it. The human mind is quite capable of creating modes of human organization that lead to reasonably peaceful societies or to tense, competitive ones, full of strife; but we don't need a new cosmology to explain that lesson of history.

In short, then, Lee loses on three counts. His argument regarding Cohen can only be described as wrong, since it is invalid and yet stated as an absolute. His interpretation of Ondaatje is interesting, but explains nothing that could not be explained using other approaches. His own theory is exciting as a metaphor, but invalid as an argument because it attempts to re-describe nature and civilisation (two terms), but is really dealing at all times with three terms: matter, mind or consciousness, and process.

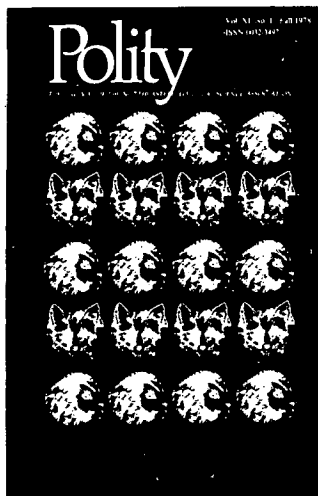Does it fail? Comparing the book and the critical reactions to it, one can only

regret the hard logic of this critique. As criticism, *Savage Fields* is poten-tentially dangerous, but given that the majority of reviewers seem to praise it without seeing any of the flaws, one can't imagine it actually doing any harm. As art, it is fascinating; one can project a new text based on a combination of parts of *Savage Fields* and parts of *Beautiful Losers*. Given the state of reviewing in Canada, especially of fiction, where the writers are so many miles ahead of the critics that they are in great danger of totally isolating themselves, one can only respect the intensity of mind which Lee has brought to this task. Like the best of his work, it forces the mind out onto strange roadways and even con-tradiction becomes a pleasure.

The lasting conclusions of my own text, I would hope, are two-fold. One, never take Ondaatje or Cohen too seriously; they are tricksters; their purposes are those of trickster disc-jockeys. Two, criticism is not and cannot be objective because it has not yet found its proper object of study: the work plus the readings of the work. The proper object of study is, however, beyond full observation in any case. So, whether or not its methodology is objective, criticism's conclusions must remain subjective. All critics should accept that premise or prove it invalid.

A Proper Review

I liked *Savage Fields*, even though I disagreed with ninety percent of it. As they say in the country, a good mind dancing on water is worth twenty dullards shooting ducks in a swamp.

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READING *SAVAGE FIELDS*

Dennis Lee

It is much easier, I have discovered, to read *Savage Fields* as five or six books which it is not, than as the book it's trying to be. Rather than responding to Bradshaw's and Godfrey's critiques in detail, I'd find it more constructive to speak to that problem. And I'll ask the reader to join me in taking the content of the book for granted; the discussion will try to clarify, not what is in *Savage Fields*, but how to read the book as itself.

A. The Difficulty of Reading *Savage Fields*

The lowest-level confusions have arisen because *Savage Fields* gives a reading of two Canadian books. Doesn't this mean it must be a study of Canlit? or the Canadian identity? or modern literature at large? Read in this way, of course, it is an altogether weird book, which veers from detailed textual analysis of a scanty two novels to sudden, irrelevant generalizations about neurobiology and the planet earth — with hardly a word about Canada, and in fact with no real logic at all in its zigzag course.

But this is a banal misreading. The book uses Canadian examples because I happen to be a Canadian, and it uses literary examples because I happen to be interested in literature. But the subject it is broaching is not reducible to either of those areas of enquiry.

* * *

The project which *Savage Fields* does pursue is more ambitious, and less familiar. The book tries to think through a new paradigm of order. In fact, it attempts to re-conceive the character of rational coherence — to imagine a different *logos*. This is something like doing a gestalt puzzle: it is a matter, not just of re-arranging the same parts into a different whole, but of re-seeing the basic relationship of 'parts and whole' altogether. It entails identifying a cosmology which embodies the new mode of coherence (that of 'savage fields'), and also contesting the cosmology which has been the matrix of meaningful order for several centuries (the 'liberal' cosmology of objective facts and subjective values).

This programme, of tracing/inciting a shift in paradigms of order, is bound to cause difficulty for a reader. And the reason is interesting: the liberal categories which *Savage Fields* is trying to subvert are also, inevitably, the very categories through which a reader will apprehend its argument. For they are the unself-conscious terms of discourse with which our era organizes its thought.

Putting it the other way round: to draw on categories such as 'man and nature', 'fact and value', 'subject and object' in analyzing *Savage Fields* is to refuse — by that very act — to hear what *Savage Fields* is saying. It is a 'refusal' because those categories already express the cosmology which the book is calling in question. So they must be set in brackets while reading the book; to use them to interpret the argument simply prevents one from grasping the force of the enquiry at all.

But if a reader accepts that his basic mental categories are being called in question — in fact *are* 'the question' — then he enters a zone where there seem to be no paths and no rules. How can we think at all, if we relinquish the fundamental syntax of thought with which our era furnishes us?

Exactly .... How can we? ... That is the guiding question of *Savage Fields*. And if a reader reaches a point of puzzlement, vexation and discomfort at that prospect, he has arrived at the starting-point of the book's exploration.

To proceed further, he must have a certain capacity for kinetic passivity, a taste for scouting new terrain without too restless a craving for pre-validated maps. The goal is, precisely, to let one's sense of structure be re-shaped — not by whatever *Savage Fields* may say, but by that which emerges as there-to-be-thought.

Relinquishing our basic categories is an unnerving step to take, however, and it is understandable that so few people have been willing to take it — or even discerned that it is there for the taking. Unfortunately, this makes the book impossible to read as the project it is. And that is the first difficulty confronting a reader.

* * *

There is a second difficulty, which is the result of a misjudgment in the book's approach. It is not intrinsic to the subject of cosmology. But it makes my presentation of the subject more obscure than it needed to be.

Savage Fields assumes that its preoccupations will be shared *a priori* by anyone who considers an ''essay in literature and cosmology'' worth reading in the first place. So the book refrains from spelling out its aims at the beginning, and tries instead to explain them by actively exemplifying them.

But why expect readers to twig so readily? *Savage Fields* was trying to accomplish something that was not defined elsewhere as a thing-to-do. And without making its aims explicit, it was naive to expect it to be recognized as a

quest for new reflexes of reasoning. In Chapter V (pages 47-49), the ground-plan of the book is finally supplied. But it comes too late. I now think the book should have explained its novel trajectory at the beginning — in a preface — as well as defining that trajectory by where it goes and what it does.

This problem, of recognizing what *Savage Fields* is up to, is compounded because the book still retains traces of its successive drafts. It began as a basically literary study, and it was only as I pursued it through several versions that I realized what the trajectory of enquiry actually was. The book is somewhat awkwardly-proportioned as a result, and that too makes it harder for a reader to bring the whole thing into focus.

All that said, I am both bemused and impressed by the generosity of spirit with which many people have applied themselves to the book, making what sense they can of its parts while the drift of the whole stays opaque for them. But it also chafes me, to realize how much easier it could have been to connect with the book I actually wrote.

B. A New Paradigm of Coherence (Chapter I)

The difficulty of grasping the first chapter, which sets out the paradigm of savage fields, is distinct from the problem of assimilating the main body of the book. Here I will discuss only Chapter I.

How are we to think the coherence of what-is, the logos of the cosmos? Chapter I defines 'world' and 'earth', and proposes the unusual model in which they are identical at every point, yet are at war with one another at every point.

This model gives a different account of planet-order from the liberal. And more than that, the model itself constitutes an alternative matrix of coherence, which would conceivably (if one could pursue it) generate a form of rational thought, possibly even of logic, quite unlike those of the last few centuries.

Now, no difficulty arises with this model so long as one merely tries to understand it. Keeping the model at arm's length, as an 'object of knowledge', any moderately sophisticated person can grasp the notion of two antagonistic fields coinciding in the same space. To apply that paradigm to the planet at large is a bit more unconventional, to be sure; but while one may or may not consider it a useful exercise, there is no great difficulty in understanding what the paradigm consists of.

What is vastly more difficult, however — and what transforms one's clear and distinct understanding of a model into tongue-tied perplexity about the very nature of thought — is to take the paradigm seriously, and step inside it. For once one flirts, even tentatively, with the possibility that planet actually *is* configured as in the paradigm — that the model is not just something to

dandle mentally — then one's categories of 'understanding' swim completely out of focus, become useless.

All planet is instinctual energy, is earth; *all* planet is held in the sway of consciousness, is world. Two mutually exclusive domains are living out their necessities simultaneously, each co-extensive with the entire planet-space that surrounds and permeates us, configuring the very same trees and streets and minds in their warring fields. And oneself is an event in the strife; there is no purchase outside it for the mind, for there *is* no 'outside it'.

At this point, the recognition surfaces: the words that are now bred into the very reflexes of our articulacy all distort that intuition of order, wrench it back into the shapes of the liberal paradigm. But the liberal paradigm will not do; and so familiar projects of thought, particular concepts, even individual words — all the categories which shape our minds' response come to feel inadequate, alien, bizarre. The whole liberal credo, that 'consciousness' 'perceives' and 'describes' an 'objective universe' 'outside itself', begins to sound like a strange dream, almost a sequence of nonsense syllables. And eventually there are no mental reflexes by which to navigate — for none of them flows with the grain of this new matrix of coherence.

The first result of trying out the model from the inside, then, is to render one inarticulate. The process is matter-of-fact, even impersonal; certainly there is nothing hysterical about it. It is simply very perplexing, to find the whole language gone mute as a means of articulating order.

* * *

Chapter I sets down this intuition of savage fields. The rest of the book, necessarily, will take the muteness which ensues as its starting-point. And once it does, there can be no question of developing a completed system of thought; to begin to think at all is a titanic ambition.

A reader starts to understand *Savage Fields,* in any authentic sense, only when he too enters this silence of mind, and accepts that he may not be able to tidy up and organize this zone of cosmological pre-definition in a matter of hours — nor even days or weeks. Indeed, the task may not be to organize the mental space of cosmos at all, but to sit still until *it* begins to declare the terms of its structure, and to re-make one's mind.

C.   A Strategy for Thought: 'Mapping a Possible Enquiry'

So. How are we to think rationally outside the liberal paradigm? How can we reason so as to honour the still-undeclared logos of savage fields?

The next three Parts of the book (Chapters II through VIII) will seem very arbitrary, as an overall trajectory of thought, unless one senses the way they

dwell in uncertainty and attending. For their author had no pre-conceived idea how to proceed with the task of thinking within this new mode of coherence — nor where it would lead. Or, more accurately, the ideas and reflexes he brought to the task all had to be un-learned as he went. So it was a matter of trial and error, of improvising, groping in the dark. There were often months and years between the emergence of the most rudimentary reflexes and insights; and the smallest step forward seemed like epochal progress. These things are not said to elicit any personal response, but to convey the scale of expectation that is appropriate to the scope of the book's achievement — which by normal standards is minimal.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

Faced with the question of how to think, the book improvises an approach which may take a little while to assimilate. Namely, it sketches a certain *possible* (that is, beckoning but unclaimed) trajectory of enquiry. In effect it says, "Suppose it were feasible to think fruitfully from within this paradigm. If such an enquiry were actually underway, what would it look like?" It then attempts to imagine, and selectively demonstrate, that possible enquiry.

The book does not try to achieve the whole enquiry it is blocking out; far from it. That would be the work of several lifetimes. Rather, it projects its shape and fills in a few of the segments. It maps out possible questions, as a way of asking whether such a gesture of questioning can be carried through at all from within this new matrix of coherence. The goal is to open enough vistas that one begins to see what it would be, to think within the paradigm of savage fields. What are the real questions? how would one handle them? where might they lead?

The project is speculative, then — yet in a peculiar off-and-on way. For the mapping is also accomplished concretely at times. There are three stages in the hypothetical enquiry, and at each stage the book makes enough assumptions that it has somewhere to start from — and then settles down to a specific task of thinking, to see whether it can be achieved. The aim of this procedure is to find out, and demonstrate, what it might be like to pursue *this* stage of the enquiry.

The flow of the book has an oddly patchy texture as a result. It alternates between long sections of close reasoning about relatively limited matters, and short speculative passages which race ahead full tilt and carry the enquiry into the next stage — where the process starts again. The bunchy, leap-frog effect is not the result of absentmindedness in the text; it is a direct expression of the strategy it is following.

It should be clear that such a strategy cannot hope to discover many things with certainty. (When it does, they are likely to be particular difficulties which crop up with enough regularity that they become landmarks.) To 'map a

possible enquiry' is to limit one's scope from the beginning, then, for there will not be a broad enough range of thorough investigation to permit much generalization. Nevertheless, this was the only way I could find of making a beginning at all. The book aims to accomplish at least a preparatory reconnaissance of its new terrain. And the dead ends and points of confusion will be as informative as the stretches of straightaway.

Until a reader senses the logic and trajectory of these three stages, he is unlikely to discern the book's genuine limitations, flaws of presentation, and errors of thinking — let alone take the measure of its achievement. The sections which follow will provide more detailed notes on those stages.

D.   An Example of Finding Examples: Reading *Billy the Kid* (Chapters II-IV)

In what form would one find the intuition of savage fields in literature, or architecture, or microbiology? *Savage Fields* imagines an enquiry which would begin by asking this question. And it demonstrates how it might proceed by itself looking at a literary work. Examining the sense of planet-order which informs *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, it finds the cosmology of strife implicit there.

As a reading of *Billy the Kid*, this part of the book has whatever value it may have. Simultaneously, however, it demonstrates the first stage of the enquiry — the search for widespread examples. And that in turn prepares the book for its first major leap of assumptions.

Let us presume that one has read these three chapters, and concluded that they seem reasonable. They are now to be taken, in the book's overall project, as a demonstration that one could indeed uncover a broad range of examples — in further works of literature, but equally in other disciplines. It would take some years to verify the supposition, and meanwhile I cannot imagine how the paradigm would be expressed in painting, say, or economic theory (if indeed it is). The book simply assumes, by a jump of faith, that construing a single case demonstrates that one could uncover many more. It is now ready to map out the second stage of its hypothetical enquiry.

But why push ahead so abruptly? Why not take the time and find more examples?

On the face of it, this is a fair reservation. And one could envision settling into a lifework of explicating instances of the paradigm (as well as noting cases where it was not in evidence). Indeed, much of the force of the argument would collapse if one could not discover such examples. It would be a demanding search, which might or might not be fruitful.

Nevertheless, it seemed to me that in this originating essay it would be sterile and almost careerist to settle for that. The questions at stake involve more than

just the opportunity to carve out a piece of intellectual property, to claim a role as cataloguer of the paradigm's various embodiments.

Unless one pushed deeper, moreover, it would be hard not to pursue examples in the spirit of liberal research, where the subject of enquiry (here, the model itself) is objectified and devalorized and treated as one more neutral specimen. That epistemology of conscious subjects and factual objects is cast in a new light in the cosmology of savage fields, where it is seen as an ideology, part of world's technique for dominating earth. But the relation of thinker and to-be-thought has still to be reconceived within the new terms of order. And meanwhile, simply trundling laterally from discipline to discipline, finding and analyzing fresh examples of the paradigm, would not in itself allow one to overcome the liberal assumptions and method. It could, in fact, become a way of evading most of the challenges raised by the new paradigm.

Once the intuition of savage fields has been uncovered in *Billy the Kid*, then, the book continues with blocking out such an overall enquiry. It simply assumes that the first stage of such an enquiry — the discovery of widespread examples — has now been shown to be feasible.

E. An Example of Testing the Paradigm: The Neurobiological Paradox (Chapter V)

We come now to the most gnarled, condensed, and speculative stage of the hypothetical enquiry.

The next question is this: Does the paradigm make sense of our planet, or does it not? The second stage of the enquiry is projected as an attempt to validate or falsify the new cosmology, by referring it directly to experience. Thus the book now has to imagine some test being applied, which would result in the paradigm being shown to be true or false.

That is more easily said than done. The first possible demonstration that came to mind was to take some phenomenon and 'situate' it mentally in the strife of world and earth, to see whether a reading of it as an event in the savage field would be illuminating. The phenomenon could be any thing, in principle — from an incident in one's life, to an everyday object, to a large-scale historical occurrence or trend.

That approach was inadequate; the problem was, it wasn't clear what it would prove. For it is a commonplace that any system of interpretation will permit one to find significance in the most unlikely data; the world is full of people who can explain everything in sight, to their own satisfaction, in terms of numerological principles, or the Book of Revelations, or the history of the extensions of the senses. While their conclusions may strike everyone else as dippy, there is no denying that once one steps within their framework of

coherence, the conclusions make sense. But I had no desire simply to create one more self-contained system, which fed its own assumptions in at one end and plucked them out at the other, taking them to be somehow proven in between. Some test was needed which would offer a more rigorous challenge to the paradigm.

At this point, the strategy suggested itself of taking a phenomenon and imbedding it both within the cosmology of savage fields, and also within the cosmology of facts and values. That would provide a cross check, rough and ready though it might be; the method at least would be respectable. Which paradigm would accommodate it more convincingly? Within which logos would it make more sense? And that is in fact the basic strategy for this second stage of the hypothetical enquiry.

The strategy itself may or may not be finally useful; I am not sure myself. But while this is an important question, what matters most at this point is to exemplify the task at hand, of trying to see whether or not the paradigm stands up. If a reader saw something wrong with this particular method, I thought, he would at least get the gist of what was being attempted.

* * *

The sample phenomenon which Chapter V chooses is at once misleading, and informative, and unsatisfactory. It is the recently-developed science of neurobiology — or at least the fact of its existence. What would happen, the book asks, if we were to situate a rigorous science of the brain within the liberal cosmology, and then within that of savage fields?

As the reader will recall, the result is twofold. The liberal cosmology appears to self-destruct in consequence, to develop internal contradictions which are too fundamental to ignore. But although the paradigm of savage fields seems able to include a science of mind without self-contradiction, the attempt to describe that science as both a world-activity and an earth-activity bogs down. That is, the book does not have adequate resources of thought to carry the demonstration through.

This does not falsify the paradigm, as far as I can see. But it does indicate that it needs to be deepened before it would be analytically usable, or even fully testable. (The same thing would have emerged, I believe, with any other example; it is not merely a function of the neurobiological case.) This task of thought is something the book bequeaths to author and reader, to be taken up after the book is finished; it is carried no further within *Savage Fields*. And the discovery of the difficulty is the main, if negative accomplishment of this section of the demonstration.

Let us go back a step. The example of neurobiology is misleading, in that it provides more dramatic results — the collapse of liberal epistemology — than

one need necessarily expect. Many phenomena might fit with equal ease into both cosmologies; if the liberal cosmology is indeed inadequate or wrong, there is no reason to expect it to be revealed as such by every example. Hence this demonstration case may not be representative.

The example is informative because, if the reasoning of the chapter stands up (and I believe it does, though I have yet to read a serious critique of it), then it is a matter of some interest that the liberal paradigm is susceptible of a *reductio ad absurdum* from within.

And the example is unsatisfactory because it does not permit a full-fledged comparison of the two cosmologies, due to the relative primitiveness of the model of strife. It is like testing a stereo set in a house with congenitally faulty wiring (where it clearly will not work), and then in a house which is not fully built yet (where one can get it plugged in, but can't test the sound properly). One is left certain that the first house is defective, but uncertain whether the second house will ever be finished, and how the stereo will work if it is.

* * *

The book now changes gears again. It makes a fresh assumption: that the paradigm could be tested further by situating more phenomena within it and the liberal model; and — in a much greater leap of faith — that the paradigm of savage fields would prove to articulate the structure of what-is in a trust-worthy way. (This depends, in turn, on assuming that some adequate way of thinking world and earth simultaneously could be found.) The book does not achieve the thought which would make those assumptions good; in fact, it would be well to describe them as profound challenges to be mulled on further, rather than as assumptions the book makes lightly. In any event, it now moves past these matters so that an equally pressing question can be mapped.

F. An Example of Raising the Question of Nihilism: Examining the Quest of *Beautiful Losers* (Chapters VI-VIII)

The final stage of the hypothetical enquiry starts from the question, What is the effect of thinking the paradigm of savage fields? The book has examined (on pages 50-54) the nihilism latent in the liberal paradigm, which severs the valuative dimension from an objectified cosmos. Eventually that whole dimension of quality and value becomes a kind of ghostly after-image, lingering epiphenomenally after its substance has vanished, though still in-voked for ritual comfort by less-than-hardy minds. But to actually *think* 'good' or 'evil' (as anything but historically-determined 'values', which are themselves value-free objects of study) is not possible within the liberal cosmology.

But does the new syntax of order, any more than the liberal, permit one to comprehend that which men once named 'justice' (for example), 'evil', 'the numinous'? It is not a question of trying to resurrect those pre-liberal verities within the logos men then shared; their language of order is one we no longer speak. But does the mere act of thinking from within the field of strife, in categories which strive to honour its terms of existing, mean that we cannot hold in mind 'holy and secular', 'just and unjust', 'evil and good' as primal attributes of what-is? however that would be done? To speak less subjectively: if the cosmos is indeed structured as this model declares, is anything now real but the amoral process of strife? Considering what that process actually includes, and what it does not, this would be a vision of hell.

Until this fundamental quandary is faced, much of the earlier exploration of the paradigm seems naive, virtually myopic. And so one must ask, Is there any way, without indulging in wishful thinking, to honour this intuition of planet-structure without surrendering to nihilism? The task of the third stage of enquiry is to demonstrate how that question might be addressed.

* * *

The strategy the book finds for demonstrating it is to explicate a novel in which the questions are raised, Leonard Cohen's *Beautiful Losers*.

In terms of method, I do not believe this was the most helpful demonstration to give. For there is no reason to imply that the normative approach to the issue of nihilism would be to explicate literary texts — rather than, say, to discuss the issue directly.

In the first stage of the enquiry, of course, one must by definition look for the paradigm in existing works of reason or the imagination. But this case is different; to examine such works is in no way intrinsic to the task of this final stage — even if they might turn out to be useful reference-points. The basic strategy of these chapters is misleading, then, since it may suggest that the overall enquiry is basically one of literary criticism. And that is not the case.

* * *

However, that problem is one of presentational strategy, not one of substance. The effect of examining *Beautiful Losers* at this point is to make *its* quest the demonstration case, the example which figures how one might pursue the third stage of the enquiry. And the quest of *Beautiful Losers* is directly germane to the enquiry. Cohen's novel wrestles with the crucial issue: can the field of cosmos be experienced, without dishonesty, as anything other than strife? Raising the question — and arriving at the terrible answer — constitutes the central action of *Beautiful Losers*.

170

The quest of the novel is generated by an imagination trapped in the savage field, striving to come to terms with its own experience and the order of what-is. Structurally (to use the analytic terms of *Savage Fields*), planet is intuited as a strife of world and earth. But that is only a beginning. What if that field-structure configured a meaning wholly other than 'strife'? Might the agony of enacting the warfare in one's own being not in fact be purgative, an incitement to ecstatic enlightenment? Mightn't the savage field be an 'Isis continuum'? Yet finally, the novel concludes, this attempt to see with transformed eyes is itself one more expression of world's will to mastery through technique — in this case, the technique of ecstasy. Within the authentic action of *Beautiful Losers*, every attempt by world to transform the savage field, or to leave it behind, becomes an even bleaker confirmation of world's fate — which is to inhabit the field and recreate it forever.

This reading of the novel has aroused some controversy. But while it continues to seem conclusive to me, pursuing a critical debate is less important (in this context) than the larger goal, of glimpsing what the issue of nihilism would look and feel like from within the paradigm of strife. Reading *Beautiful Losers* is a good way of getting such a glimpse.

For that matter, one would not have to raise the question of nihilism exactly as the novel does. But that too is immaterial here. *Beautiful Losers* scouts real questions, and runs into real difficulties. It is an exploration to be grateful for, and learn from, and regroup after.

G. Taking Stock: Some Problems in the Paradigm (Chapter IX)

With this, the mapping of the hypothetical enquiry is done. Any firm results are very fragmentary; but the more provisional aim of reconnoitering an un-charted terrain, and improvising means of thinking within it, has sometimes succeeded. Now the final chapter tries to specify areas in which more thought is needed — to identify the quandaries of analysis and being into which it has strayed, and in which it is preparing to pitch camp as the book ends.

This should have been the most energizing chapter in the book in some respects, for the proper harvest of an essay such as this is not firm answers, but a deepening of its central questions. But the attempt in Chapter IX is not satisfactory; I'll try to refocus it here. These are problems which demand further thought.

(1) The paradigm of savage fields is based on the intuition that world and earth coincide at every point in planet. In principle, the particular *mode* of their coincidence is not important; it could be play, for example, or strife, or union, or mutual quiescence. Or planet could keep changing from one mode to another. In formal terms, the paradigm is not reducible to any single one of the possible modes of coincidence.

Yet the book appears to recognize only one such mode, that of strife. It's true that it explicates six moments in *Billy the Kid*, and acknowledges the Isis mode in *Beautiful Losers*. Yet the book itself is a good deal less flexible than are the two novels it examines; it tends to assume, in its own explorations, that 'the coincidence of world and earth' means always and only 'the strife of world and earth'.

In formal terms, at least, this impoverishes the paradigm greatly. Whether or not it also skews the argument of the book, forces it to interpret things as manifestations of strife when they should be construed differently, is a question I have not yet gotten into focus. It could be that the generative structure of modern planet *is* indeed the *strife* of world and earth — that the field is essentially savage in our era. But it begs a very large question to assume that from the beginning, excluding all other possibilities without discussion.

The basic intuition of a non-liberal logos, of course, is in no way affected if one allows the possibility of other modes of coincidence. The structure of the matrix would be constant, from one to another of the various models it generates. Recognizing this might also make it easier to discuss planet historically — to discuss pre-technological eras within the structural language of the paradigm, without having to force them improperly into the sole mode of strife.

(2) In the second footnote to Chapter I, the following remarks occur:

> ...earth cannot be known by consciousness in the terms in which earth itself exists.... We are citizens of both domains. But we speak of earth only in terms of world's knowledge of it, because to speak at all is to assert our world-nature. (114)

This is a mixture of clear and muddled thinking, which re-surfaces repeatedly in the more general sections of the book. That reflects the degree to which my thinking remained dependent on the liberal dichotomy of nature and consciousness, even while trying to struggle free of it.

It is accurate to insist that earth is inscrutable to world — at least within the mode of *savage* fields. But there is no reason not to insist, simultaneously, that the purposes of world are equally discontinuous with those of earth, equally incommensurate. The two domains are *mutually* inscrutable.

Otherwise, the speaker who is finding earth inscrutable is trying to locate himself exclusively in world, from which he looks across a great divide at earth. But this is simply to recreate the knife-cut dichotomy of man and nature — refusing the whole logos of coincident fields. It is also to acquiesce in all the dead ends of liberal epistemology: ''What does the inscrutable 'thing-itself ',

which stands behind the object known by men, actually look like? can we know it at all? does it even exist? etc. etc.'' Hence, if one wishes to speak of inscrutability, it is just as important to specify world's inscrutability to one's earth-mode as to do the opposite.

(3) The statement, ''To speak at all is to assert our world-nature'', is an even more blatant example of this one-sided replication of the liberal view of man. Speech, like every other thing, must be understood as simultaneously a world-activity *and* an earth-activity. Otherwise the whole challenge of the new paradigm is evaded.

This error of one-sidedness crops up whenever the matter of thinking the field becomes thematic. If it were not corrected, it would throw subsequent thinking more and more out of kilter. Much of the agonizing of Chapter IX, in particular, is based on disregarding this fundamental aspect of the paradigm; it assumes that thought is solely an expression of world-mastery. But while it *is* that, and should be analyzed as such, it is equally an expression of earth-energy — and should be analyzed as such. The fact that I cannot yet specify it as both simultaneously is no reason to retreat to the liberal model, in which consciousness is the sole and hemmed-in seat of being-human.

(4) To recast the same point: I can now see no reason why speech should not articulate earth as earth, just as much (or as little) as it articulates world as world. Indeed, that is the only reasonable expectation from within this paradigm. This represents a fairly serious revison of the notion of Heidegger to which I refer at the beginning of the book. (It speaks particularly to the cul-de-sac encountered on page 58, and in footnote 7 of Chapter V, pages 121-122.)

It is one thing for speech to be both world-act and earth-act, of course, and it is another for it to articulate both world and earth. I am not sure that the second flows automatically from the first. But in any case, language will have to understand its potence and impotence in a different way from that now found in *Savage Fields*, if it is to honour its own double situation in the field. This means, of course, that any further thought in this area also depends upon such a deepening of self-understanding.

(5) The most far-reaching conclusion I have come to, reflecting on the project of *Savage Fields*, is that it cannot be carried much further within the mode of logic we are familiar with, and which can be labelled 'aristotelian'. I do not pretend to more than a layman's knowledge in this area. But it seems to me that the form of a rigorous logical statement needs to be dramatically different, if it speaks permanently from within a situation in which two things are always simultaneously true; both must be affirmed; yet each is false or inscrutable from within the frame of meaning of the other.

What such a logic would look like, I do not know. I am not even clear that the mind would be capable of functioning easily within it. But until it is

developed, the primal syntax of one's thinking remains radically at odds with the terms of existing of that which one is seeking to articulate.

Developing such a logic might be comparable to developing one of the non-euclidean geometries. Or it might be a matter of reaching a more general logic, of which the aristotelian was a special case. This would mean seeking a logos of possible logics.

* * *

Savage Fields maps an enquiry which might follow from the intuition of savage fields. And it is reasonable to ask: After blocking out that enquiry and pondering the results, do the routes and priorities which it enunciates still seem valid?

For what it's worth, I am now inclined to envision the possible enquiry somewhat differently. One priority would be the substance of (1) above: the inadvisability of collapsing 'coincident fields' into 'savage fields' prematurely. A second priority would be the substance of (5) above, which in fact underlies (2), (3) and (4): the necessity of devising a logic which enables one to make two statements simultaneously, from within each of which the other is false or inscrutable. And a third priority would be the substance of section F above: the question of nihilism.

Several of these problems, the reader will notice, throw the basic assumptions and working methods of *Savage Fields* into question. That may seem a bit surprising, but it is merely part of the exploration which *Savage Fields* initiates and (haltingly) is. There is no need to cover for the book, at points where its improvisations were not adequate; if this leads to reconceiving its project in more adequate terms, so much the better. At the same time, of course, it is still not helpful to praise or criticize the book without understanding what it is trying to do.

These problems do not call for a series of patchwork repairs to the book, but for a quantum leap of thought. If they are at all promising, it is because of the possibility that they will someday generate it.

H.   Bradshaw's Critique

I enjoyed Leah Bradshaw's reflections. Unfortunately, as the preceding discussion will make clear, they do not connect with the substance of *Savage Fields*.

In her fourth footnote, Bradshaw remarks that the paradigm of savage fields is "more complex" than her account of it would indicate. This is true. In fact, her article does not seem even to have noticed that the paradigm differs from the liberal model of 'man and nature', on which her explication relies. This

unconscious conversion of the paradigm into the very categories of order it rejects is understandable, for reasons I have discussed. But it means that the critique does not succeed at any point in being about the model I proposed.

Neither is there any similarity between the overall project of *Savage Fields* and the version Bradshaw gives of it. But here the misreading is more eccentric. As far as I can tell, she has taken from Kojève the account of an escapist stance — the desire to abrogate civilization, and sink back into the processes of nature — and projected that stance, at every point in her reading, onto the intent of *Savage Fields*. But this is a perverse exercise.

Savage Fields does not recommend ''the annihilation of the dualism between man and nature''. There is no ''proposed reconciliation of earth and world'' in it. I am not ''advocating absorption through another means: mutual surrender rather than subjugation of one by another''. And I do not propose that we ''abandon... a dualistic structure of being''.

What the book does recommend is that we replace the liberal model of dualism with a better model of dualism, one that affords a more accurate structural account of what-is. To think that new dualism through is not to lapse into the comatose absorption in natural energies which Bradshaw, in a triumph of sustained misreading, finds advocated throughout the book. (I would hasten to say that I support almost all her strictures against primitivism, except that it would be beside the point to do so.) And since this misinterpretation forms the basis of her whole critique, the article simply fails to intersect with the book.

There are local misreadings which startled me as well; Bradshaw's account of what the book is saying about *Billy the Kid* and *Beautiful Losers* is an inventive one at times. But that is a secondary matter. *Savage Fields* rejects one model of dualism, but not in order to escape from dualism *per se*. It is not pursuing the project of primitivist 'reconciliation' characterized by Kojève, and assailed by Bradshaw; it is engaged in a different project altogether.

Whatever its merits as an attempt to assimilate Kojève, then, this is not a helpful reading or critique of *Savage Fields*.

I. Godfrey's Critique

There is so much going on at once, in Dave Godfrey's spirited, self-confident critique, that it is hard to know where to begin. The article does not connect with the overall project of *Savage Fields* either, but its local criticisms should be valuable nonetheless, for the strenuousness of their challenge. Since his attack on the reading of *Beautiful Losers* is the most extensive part of the article, and apparently the most damning, let me turn to it first.

* * *

Virtually all serious readings of *Beautiful Losers* recognize, with Godfrey, that it is a modernist work which operates on principles of discontinuous form. Hence they do not look for a linear progression in it — a beginning, middle and end — but rather see the work as 'spread out in space'. And they concentrate on the motifs — myths, symbols, image-clusters, thematic concerns and the like — which organize the novel across many pages by the patterns of their congruence. There is no one privileged version of any of these, of course; a typical motif occurs as a series of rhyming variations which are exciting both because they rhyme, and because they vary. The formal ironies which flicker back and forth across the work become its basic structural language, as well as the substance of its vision.

Godfrey's reading is particularly strong in that he sees the act of modernist formalizing as integral to the novel's way of being itself, rather than as merely a critical strategy for making sense of the novel. For him, to read *Beautiful Losers* at all is to enter the play of a structuralist wit which enjoys comparing and juggling imaginative syntaxes.

This ironic/relativistic approach is so basic to Cohen criticism, indeed to modernist criticism in general, that I have simply taken it for granted in *Savage Fields*. Godfrey announces his belief in structuralism, and tells over its critical terms; and that school is one worthy recent expression of the approach. But critics, however, have been demonstrating this cast of mind, and explicating it in literature, for over 50 years; think of *The Waste Land*, and the New Criticism. It is part of the landscape of twentieth century thought and art.

Now, it happens to be true that I oppose this commitment to formalism, with its conviction that the ultimate use of reason is to map transformations between value-free structural grammars. I do not accept that this *is* the ultimate use of reason. But contesting that approach does not mean becoming an ostrich. The approach exists. It works. It is everywhere. In the century of Einstein, Jung, Joyce, Lévi-Strauss, Chomsky, a man would have to be a fool not to recognize it as the dominant rational technique of the age, the most recent and most potent liberal strategy. And only a lobotomized reader could fail to notice that *Beautiful Losers* participates in the structuralist cast of mind; that Leonard Cohen compares mythologies. *Savage Fields* makes a point of that fact only when there is some special reason to do so (on pages 87-90, for example). Earlier drafts of the book, I might say, explicated it almost *ad nauseam*.

So modernist form is simply not the stop-press news that Dave Godfrey seems to find it. But if it will allow the discussion to proceed more sensibly, let me say something out loud. *Beautiful Losers* is indeed a structuralist novel. I accept the general drift of Godfrey's reading without question, and I accept most of its detail. For that matter, I accept many of the numerous comparable readings which are current.

And I regret that my taking the whole approach for granted has been construed as ignorance of the approach, which must be vigorously rectified. That has turned the discussion into an absurd excursion in irrelevance, as the reader will see .... The only thing I do not accept is that any of this was necessary. Does Dave Godfrey also plan to notify us that the earth moves 'round the sun?

* * *

If we can assume that no reasonable person would dispute Godfrey's reading of *Beautiful Losers*, in its broad outline at least, perhaps we can move on to the reading proposed by *Savage Fields*. And the book makes a heretical suggestion: that *Beautiful Losers* should also be read as having a beginning, a middle, and an end. Whatever else it may be, the novel is simultaneously a 'complete action' — a movement-of-spirit externalized in an organic sequence of fiction, unfolding from page 1 to page 307. This does not seem like an obvious way to read the novel, on first glance at least. Yet a good many things begin to make sense when one does, and none of the structuralist readings are cancelled out, though their context shifts.

The 'story' is not just the sum of the discontinuous incidents involving F., the narrator, Edith and Catherine. The 'story' is the actual writing of the novel. The act of imagining Book One is the beginning; the act of imagining Book Two (up to page 237) is the middle; and the act of imagining the final 70 pages is the end. *Savage Fields* seeks to clarify this 'action' — to discern the movement of spirit which that progression enacts.

Now, the cosmos Cohen depicts has the structure of savage fields (although with a different configuration than *Billy the Kid* proposes). And the burden of the action is to investigate whether enlightenment, or salvation, is possible in such a cosmos.

Book One affirms that sensual excess can lead to enlightenment; excess reveals the savage field to be an 'Isis continuum', which illuminates men through ecstasy. The novel makes this affirmation by imagining a dionysiac guru, F., and imagining the progressive enlightenment of a man embedded in the field, his friend the narrator. 'Positing' F. and the narrator's enlightenment, then, is the initial step in the novel's action.

Book Two then undercuts that Isis-possibility, chastising the act of imagining it as an expression of world's power-mania. Within the novel's whole trajectory, creating F.'s long letter from prison enacts this recoil from the affirmation of Book One. Finally, the last 70 pages try out various responses to the consequent blockage in the novel's project; those responses do not succeed. By 'do not succeed' I mean that they neither win through to enlightenment, in a way that convincingly overcomes the obstacles raised by Book Two, nor enact the failure to do so in an artistically resonant way.

An aside: I do not argue that one option is right and the other wrong — getting enlightened or failing resonantly. I do not have a programme for the novel. I do, however, argue that Cohen has to do one or the other, after what has come before, if the novel is not to seem dilettantish. The courage and stature of his own quest in the first 237 pages make that incumbent upon him. Of course he is free to do other things at the same time.

This is a summary of 40 closely-written pages, perhaps abbreviated beyond the point of comprehensibility. I have to ask the reader to accept that, in *Savage Fields,* the argument is anchored firmly in the text of *Beautiful Losers.* But even on the evidence of this précis he may notice that Godfrey does not deal with the reading in its own terms at all. He does present a pot-pourri of quotations from *Savage Fields* at one point, which a reader who knows the book might recognize as encapsulating my argument. (Anyone else, I am sure, will be thoroughly bewildered by it.) Yet what is his own interpretation and assessment of the reading? After all, there is nothing in the three Cohen chapters *but* this reading; it is not an easy thing to miss.

Let me quote his treatment in full: "There are other interpretations, to say the least."

That summarizes Godfrey's critique of the reading; that *is* Godfrey's critique of the reading. He does not ask whether *Beautiful Losers* is indeed this kind of novel (one which enacts a movement-of-spirit). Nor does he evaluate specific details of this account of the novel-as-unfolding-action. For that matter, he seems not to have properly noticed that the novel has been presented as an unfolding action at all. Nowhere the question "Is any of this stuff Lee talks about actually there on the page?" As for the possibility that there might be some integrity to the novel's quest for enlightenment; that the quest might actually matter; or that it might be a genuine, painful defeat when the novel has to settle for *merely* tracing congruences among various salvation myths (as opposed to tracing congruences while also seeking salvation with conviction) — about the whole set of human possibilities which the reading opens up, Godfrey stays totally mute. In fact, he evades the reading in its entirety. He does not fail to refute it; he does not even *try* to refute it.

It is true that he challenges my judgement on the book's conclusion.[1] That judgement, however, is shorn of its whole rationale, which lies in the specific account of the novel's action from which it derives. Perhaps a reader who does not know *Savage Fields* will be impressed. But this is simply not a responsible way to argue, to silently slip around nine-tenths of the case one is professing to rebut.

Beyond that, Godfrey's way of dealing with the reading in *Savage Fields* is to ignore it and elaborate his own. Despite its considerable merit, however, sketching that interpretation does nothing to rebut the reading of *Savage Fields.* So the debate between book and critique could be epitomized thus:

Lee: John Smith is six feet tall. [*He proves it.*]
Godfrey: Nonsense! John Smith weighs 180 pounds.
And he has red hair! And he used to drive hack
in Flin Flon! [*He proves it.*]

If a reader is reluctant to believe Dave Godfrey is capable of such logic, I invite him to re-read the critique.

The effect is not to confirm *Savage Fields'* account of the novel, of course; since Godfrey never discusses it in the first place, the irrelevance of his 'refutation' proves nothing about the reading itself. The effect is simply to leave the reader back at square one, having to make up his own mind about *Savage Fields'* "argument *re* Cohen." As a contribution to that assessment, Godfrey's critique flaps its arms strenuously but never leaves the ground. He has proven nothing whatsoever about the book's reading of *Beautiful Losers.*

* * *

If Godfrey's 'refutation' collapses, however, his own reading points the way to a worthwhile task of thinking.

Savage Fields discusses the way *Billy the Kid* operates in two formal logics at once; the book shows (on pages 32-34) how "traditional and modern structural canons trace out their differing necessities simultaneously." The book does not attempt to analyze *Beautiful Losers* in the same way, since articulating the novel-as-action reading took all my concentration, and then some. It is true that it examines the way the novel takes refuge in 'mere' structuralism, at the point where its initial quest has become paralyzed. But though this responds to the central action of *Beautiful Losers*, it would be inadequate, in a more complete reading of the novel, to concentrate on its formalist virtuosity only when it emerges as part of the underlying action. For *Beautiful Losers* is formalist from beginning to end, as Godfrey properly insists.

I cannot begin the task here. But it would be intriguing to read through *Beautiful Losers*, responding to the formalist romp that Godfrey concentrates on, with its non-linear and comparativist sense of structure, and responding simultaneously to the unfolding action which *Savage Fields* discerns. Do those formal logics operate on the same page throughout, or do they emerge in successive sections (as in fact they do in *Billy the Kid*), appearing 'simultaneous' only in retrospect? Do they squabble? travel in parallel? or enrich one another? I would expect to find that the novel is at its best when Cohen can honour both impulses fully, proceed both spatially and linearly at the same time, be playful and dead serious at once. But that may just be my preconception.

In any case, seeing how these formal aspects of the novel complement one another (and how they contradict one another) would be more interesting than

prolonging a huffy or point-scoring debate. I am more convinced than ever that *Beautiful Losers* enacts an (incomplete) movement of spirit, and that reading the book adequately involves perceiving that movement, and joining in. But such a reading does not exhaust the novel's resources by any means, and an approach which does justice to other aspects is equally to the point.

* * *

I do not want to linger over Godfrey's two other areas of controversy, which are the book's reading of *Billy the Kid*, and the validity of the paradigm of savage fields.

With the Ondaatje reading, the same thing applies as with the Cohen. Godfrey's comments are very much to the point vis-a-vis *Billy the Kid*, and very little to the point vis-a-vis *Savage Fields*. Everything he says about Christ and texts and tricksters may be true, but having all the right answers does not guarantee that you are supplying them for the right questions. After one has noted Godfrey's answers, gratefully, there is no reason not to return to the question at hand: "What structure does *Billy the Kid* intuit in what-is?" Godfrey insists on the answer, "It intuits 'structure' by collating existing texts, observing the structure of previous imaginative structures." And that is one good answer — to other questions, and perhaps also to this one. But so, perhaps, is mine.

* * *

When it comes to Godfrey's criticism of the model of savage fields, I do not have a lot more to say of a systematic nature. He has not grasped the meaning of 'world' ; it is emphatically not to be understood as the agglomeration of all the 'minds' or 'consciousnesses' attached to human bodies. Hence (for example) his injunction to *praxis*, worthy as it undoubtedly is, is not to the point.

By the same token Godfrey is accurate, if not unusually profound, when he observes that, "That which is material does not become conscious by means of mere involvement with consciousness." The observation, however, is irrelevant; I never made any such claim. I simply said that planet as controlled, manipulated and deployed by modern human beings, planet as raw material, has a radically different character from planet as vital material energy; and that everything that is, now, is configured by the strife of those two coinciding domains.

Perhaps a valid point (which Godfrey does not make) would be to observe that I have ''decomposed'' the composite field, which is all we can in fact experience, into two *hypothetical* fields, by whose interaction I wish to account for the behaviour of the composite field, planet. Methodologically, I believe this is sound. But Godfrey would be right if he insisted that I cannot bring

forth and present 'world' for separate inspection, or for pure and direct experience; it nowhere exists as I describe it. All I can present is planet *per se*, along with the conviction that understanding it as the savage composite field of planet-which-earths and planet-which-worlds makes better sense of it than does the liberal paradigm of objective facts and subjective values. (The latter is no less hypothetical a model, of course, although it does not *seem* to be, so long as one continues to think unreflectingly within its assumptions; then it seems to be the way things self-evidently are.) This, however, is not a criticism but merely an observation.

As an outgrowth of this, the fact that being eaten by a shark is no less fatal than being crushed by a Ford is also true, and also has nothing to do with the case. I am trying to find a way to talk about the structure of being, in an era when both shark and Ford are wholly members of earth, which incorporates everything; *and* wholly members of world, which incorporates everything; and must each live out both sides of the conflict which those domains are waging. How do you *think* that situation, without just getting a headache? Not, for sure, by converting the paradigm to its familiar liberal opposite, with birds and bees and sharks on one side and brains and bombs and Fords on the other. All Godfrey's example manages to prove is that he has not listened to what I am saying.

And you don't think our situation, lord save us, by trotting out 'mind' and 'matter' once again — with or without a 'process'. Perhaps Godfrey has spotted a flaw in my demolition of the liberal model, from which those terms, as cosmological building-blocks, are drawn. If so, I wish he would give me a clue — or even some indication that he read Chapter Five at all. Meanwhile, it is weird to carry on one more of the non-discussions which *Savage Fields* seems to provoke. Is it really so hard to try this way of seeing things — even on spec?

Those are scattered thoughts on Godfrey's criticism of the paradigm — which does not appear to accomplish anything more than his criticism of the Cohen reading and his criticism of the Ondaatje reading: that is, nothing at all. I am at a disadvantage, however, in responding to the section on cosmology, because I am unable to understand a fair amount of what it says, or to see why Godfrey thought it was worth saying in the parts I *can* understand. I know what all the words mean, but when I try to follow the train of thought I come a cropper. To cite two of several dozen examples: Godfrey keeps referring to the "logical flaw" in my theory, which is "fairly obvious" to anyone. Fair enough. But is there some point in this section on cosmology where he actually explains what the flaw is? I do recognize that he is criticizing the model, at many points, but what *is* this "logical flaw" which vitiates it? Again, what does it mean to say that "strife is a subjective attribute" — and then to 'prove' this by referring to strife among animals, which presumably began long before human 'subjects' even existed? Am I missing the point?... But these examples trivialize my confusion, since it is far more complete than they imply. I am

simply at sea for whole paragraphs at a time.

I am sure this section of Godfrey's critique does not do justice to the cosmology he is trying to articulate. Perhaps it will come clear another time, or maybe my mind just does not work that way. Meanwhile, however, I have to reserve judgement on much of Godfrey's argument about cosmology, since I cannot make sense of it in this form.

* * *

What does this add up to?

Dave Godfrey has not grasped the overall project of *Savage Fields*, so his critique can contribute nothing to an assessment of it. His criticism of the paradigm of world and earth, at the points where it is comprehensible, is based on a misunderstanding of the paradigm, and an unreflecting reliance on the very categories it calls into question.

In the more limited area of literary criticism, he has not perceived the legitimacy, perhaps even the nature, of what the book is doing. (This is possibly because he believes that I consider my approach the only legitimate one — I don't.) His counter-readings of *Beautiful Losers* and *Billy the Kid*, worthwhile though they are, do not invalidate my own in any way. Effectively, the assessment of those readings has not yet begun in his critique.

At the same time, his insistence on a structuralist interpretation of such works would be a useful corrective, if I or anyone else felt tempted to approach them solely from within the concerns of *Savage Fields*. This is the one solid achievement of his critique.

Notes

1. Despite the prominence Godfrey gives it, my criticism of the last 70 pages of *Beautiful Losers* is the least important part of the reading.

    I subscribe to its argument as firmly as ever. However, I now think it should be phrased as follows. The second half of Book Two (pages 240-279), in which F. recounts the last days of Catherine, is an almost unqualified artistic failure: long-winded, flat-footed, perfunctory, source-bound, and boring. A reader who is not connecting with the 'complete action' of the book will find these 40 pages a drag. A reader who *is* following that action will too — and will not be surprised that this artistic tailspin occurs at precisely the point where Cohen chooses (or is obliged) to abandon the wrestle with enlightenment, and has nothing left to do but trace parallels between enlightenment-systems. Both readers will be united, well before they have *thought* about the novel, in their immediate response to the line-by-line writing.

    On the other hand, the last 19 pages of the novel (Book Three) may strike these readers differently. For the reader engaged with the overall action, it will likely seem just as evasive and unsatisfactory as the 40 pages on Catherine's last days, and even more sophomorically obscurantist. But at least it will seem livelier line by line. A reader who does not perceive any unfolding action, however, may find Book Three roughly comparable in quality to the first 237 pages. He has missed some of the deepest satisfactions of the novel's first three-quarters; but he is now spared the subsequent disappointment during these 19 pages.

    The claim that Cohen has tried to sneak out of his own novel, then, applies equally across the last 70 pages. However, the claim that this results in an unmistakable drop in the quality of the writing applies unequivocally only to the first stretch of that section, pages 240-279.

REVIEWS IN CRISIS THEORY

John Keane

CRISIS IN THE INDUSTRIAL WORLD?

This review section seeks to bring some rigour to the growing discussion about some quandaries currently besetting the whole of the industrial world. These difficulties of social reproduction are without precedent in the history of modernity, if only because the concept of "crisis", through which they are signified, has become internalized within the self-understanding of society itself. A chorus of commentators swears by it, all the evidence is seen to add up to it: this *is* a decade of crisis. Not without confusion, "crisis" comes to connote a thousand events. There is a crisis of overpopulation in the peripheries, energy crises in the metropoles; the crisis of western sociology is debated within scholarly seminars as others issue stern warnings of imminent crisis in the whole of western civilization; Bette Midler sings tunes for the New Depression and many on the left take heart, convinced that the collapse of capitalism is just around the corner; while the culture industry engages audiences with apocalyptic visions of cosmic crises, it is said that adolescent, mid-life and old age crises haunt our earthly lives. "Crisis" is definitely front-page material; it is as if our thoughts and senses are mesmerized by its dramatic connotations, over-powering our potential for self-reflection on its richer and more classical meaning.

This befuddling of the image of crisis cannot be dismissed as mere bureaucratic trickery. It is not simply another aspect of plastic, "artificial negativity" generated through the cunning designs of an omniscient and omnipotent ruling group, whose world-conquering intentions cease to be constrained by the objective structures it inhabits. Certainly, this popular talk of "crisis" can easily become valuable material in the hands of the political technicians — but this is no different from almost any other mass *Phantasie*. Far from being deceptive, manipulable images, whose function is the anaesthetization of the masses and the consequent postponement of revolution forever, the widespread talk of crisis also has its utopian dimension. It is ideological, to invoke the classical metaphor: this "crisis-ridden" discourse both obfuscates a critical, explanatory account of objective social processes and is *suggestive* of

"deeper" contradictions and breakdowns of the reproduction patterns of those processes and the subjective possibilities they present. The proliferation of images of tension, conflict and catastrophe may even serve to subvert the myth of "Happy Consciousness", the simple-minded belief that the system which delivers the goods really is rational. Thus, images of "crisis" are intermeshed inextricably with a daily life which tends to produce apathy, fear, meaninglessness *and* hopes and desires for a better world.

This insight becomes the justification for recollecting the more classical meaning of the concept of crisis which, transferred to the level of society, presupposed two interrelated notions. First, a crisis-ridden process connotes a fateful phase in its reproduction, a turning point during which its self-reproductive capacities are severely reduced. The point is reached where even the subjectivity of the "agents" of this social formation in crisis is imperilled. Seemingly taking on its own life, the objective crisis process unfolds ruthlessly behind the backs of its constituents; their "natural attitudes" tend to be subverted, their normal powers of judgement and action paralyzed, at least temporarily. This syndrome is spelled out clearly in the medical genealogy of the concept. Goethe's famous, "All transitions are crises; and is a crisis not a sickness?", merely retrieved an old theme among the Greek physicians. Hippocrates' insight that a crisis occurs in diseases whenever they increase in intensity, change into another disease, or end altogether exerted wide influence. This can be seen in Thucydides. His analysis of the Corcyraean revolution and, above all, his well-known characterization of the crisis of the fateful plague of Athens during its seventh or ninth days connoted an objective, seemingly contagious process which generates symptoms within the afflicted, whose identities are disturbed and normal active powers robbed.

Yet moments of crisis are not entirely fateful. Kuhn's recent historiographical appropriation of the concept "crisis" rightly stresses its signification of a process of destruction *and* construction, challenge *and* response, of unsettling anomaly *and* nascent attempts to proliferate interpretive responses which subvert the old normality. The classical concept connotes a second meaning which is implicit in its medical usage: disruptions of the hitherto existing familiar continuity of a process, crises are *Dämmerung* (dusk, dawn), signals of the end of a phase of reproduction and the possibility of its renewal, or of breakthrough to the unfamiliar. With reference to social processes, this means, above all, that the disintegration of the natural attitudes of those who have become objects of system paralysis promises a self-consciousness of this objective paralysis and perhaps active attempts to overcome it. The dialectical, discontinuous quality of a crisis produces its own "otherness" and hence, the condition of its resolution — potential subjects. The tradition of tragic theatre, in which the perilous moment of crisis is central,

exemplifies this sense of crises as moments which present rich possibilites for the regaining of free subjectivity against the pseudo-power of Fate. A crisis (*kpiśis,* from *kpiñein,* to decide, to sort through) is therefore a moment during which it becomes possible, even necessary to decide upon possible courses of action. In the modern world, this sense is regathered powerfully by Rousseau. His conviction that the rulers of Europe were blindly working in concert to hasten the fateful coming of revolution was the ground of his hope that society could be re-made through political intervention. "You reckon on the present order of society, without considering that this order is itself subject to in-scrutable changes .... Does fate strike so seldom that you can count on im-munity from her blows? The crisis is approaching, and we are on the edge of a revolution. Who can answer for your fate? What man has made, man may destroy. Nature's characters alone are ineffaceable, and nature makes neither the prince, the rich man, nor the nobleman." The universal triumph of exchange relations which mould men into commodities, things, "tools to be used", has reached its systematic limit, according to Rousseau. The coming crisis threatens the self-confident objectification of the subjects of civil society and, with that, raises the possibility that men can be re-made in the image of their true selves. Insofar as crises are moments of discontinuity wherein trapped subjects can foresee their emancipation, the overcoming of crisis is inescapably a normative process. Rousseau's insistence that reason is partisan in this process still stands: there can be no "value-neutral" crisis interpretation in the cruder (non-Weberian) sense. To analyze crisis tendencies is to adopt the role of advocate, to analyze the likelihood of their successful overcoming or avoidance. Techno-bureaucratic versions of crisis analysis are in accord with this formula. The repressive intentions of Wiener and Kahn's *Crisis and Arms Control* is exemplary: crises are said to be turning points in an unfolding sequence of events and actions, whose "uncertainties" precipitate a reduction of "control" over "events" and their "effects". An emancipatory theory of crisis tendencies is diametrically opposed to this technocratic formulation — it seeks to foster the construction of new historical possibilites through an interpretation of the structural limits to social integration, and of the need to overcome those ob-jective, structural antagonisms which block the chances of the emancipation of speaking, labouring and acting subjects.

It is in these two interrelated senses that we speak of the Marxian theory of crises (of tendential decline of the average rate of profit, underconsumption, disproportionality) in the middle of the nineteenth century. Korsch's ap-proximate periodization of the writings of Marx in accordance with the rise and fall of the prospects for European revolution is insightful in this respect. Prior to the defeat of the 1848 revolutions the Marxian formulations expressed the real possibility that the proletariat-in-formation would subjectively intervene to revolutionize European capitalism beyond recognition. The theoretical apogee

of this phase is the well-known *Manifesto* adage: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." History is subjectivity, a process of the transformation of humanity and nature through labouring struggle. Beyond this phase, and commencing with *Wage Labour and Capital*, the theoretical emphases shift to the logic of objective historical processes. The critique of political economy protests the dominion of things over the weakened proletariat, by probing the objective pre-conditions of self-conscious intervention. Revolution is now seen as only possible through crises of the objective institutional framework of capitalist society — crises whose certainty is no less than the coming revolution itself. The warning of *The Critique of Political Economy* becomes the ensign of this phase and its objectivist retrospect on the past. "The history of society is the history of material production and the contradiction between the material forces of production and the productive relations." It is as if the present is a natural process whereby the "sum-total of social relations" develops in accordance with definite laws. Under the conditions of liberal capitalist production, the producers become personifications of reified economic categories, created objects of those laws of motion which operate under the sign of "iron necessity" and the imminence of communist revolution. According to the last of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* the subjectivist formulations of the *Manifesto* must be re-worked and supplemented. "In view of the general prosperity which now prevails ... there can be no question of any real revolution. A new revolution will be made possible only as the result of a new crisis, but it is just as certain as the coming crisis itself."

Whether this Marxian crisis theorem, consequent upon the theoretical conviction that the greatest hindrance to production in capitalist society is capital itself, remains operative today, is very much an open question. Indeed, the attempt to recover these theorems in an abstract-formal manner (*cf.* Poulantzas' 'A propos du concept de crise' in his *La crise de l'Etat*) or even more literally (as in the German *'Staatsableitung'* debate) is outwitted by three novel, empirical developments. First, the massive post-war wave of capital investment and accumulation has clearly come to an abrupt end. This phase of capital expansion had been induced by war, domestic repression, the American accession to world dominance and state counter-cyclical stabilization and growth policies. The consequences of their demise are strange and unfamiliar. The deepening failure of macroeconomic stabilization policy is pressed by a combination of unresolved dilemmas and deep-seated tensions. Above all, these include (a) threats to the rate of profit — in large measure due to organized labour's struggle for higher wages and oligopoly capital's attempt at recouping these gains through its price-making powers — whose investment-disturbing consequences are synonymous with increases in the rates of inflation

and unemployment; and (b) the failure, until now, of satisfying the need which has been created for a "political Keynesianism" (*i.e.* state-global coordination of corporate investment) in an increasingly interdependent and rationalized world economy still mediated through the anachronistic policies of competing nation states and no longer able to rely on the central coordinating role of the United States.

Secondly, within the centres of the advanced capitalist world, the state has become so interwoven with the accumulation and cultural reproduction processes that the latter tend to become functions of organized political/labour struggle *and* bureaucratic forms of state crisis-management. Therewith the political victories of the old industrial proletariat turn into losses. The class's militant thrusts into the sphere of the political (*e.g.*, through unionization and the formation of political parties), the consequent instrusion of the state into the sphere of civil society, sacks the objective, crisis-ridden foundations of the proletariat's own revolutionary dynamism. Yet this development has its unintended consequences. Isolated and naive corporate-taxpayer attempts to turn back the clock against all this notwithstanding, talk of "fiscal crisis", "ungovernability" and "overload" suggests correctly that any equilibrium between the state's "legitimation" and "accumulation" functions (O'Connor) is not attainable. Novel disruptive tendencies and patterns of conflict appear in the political system and its manifold functions, which are directly embroiled. Concerning this besieged state, the classic formulations of historical materialism obfuscate questions about the "internal anatomy" of political power and authority, its crisis-tendencies, and its drastically expanded role in the reproduction of domination. The continuing theoretical reliance on deriving accounts of the state from the "external", capital/labour logic of the mode of production ignores the fact that these "capital/labour" struggles are not simply "fought out" at the "level" of the state, but are already mediated and modified by this state.

Finally, state-corporate attempts to create a world after their own image have qualitatively increased since the time of Marx. Our world has become systematically written through and through with mass-produced systems of signs. It is true, this colonization of the symbolic interaction of everyday life with the imaginary (*e.g.*, through corporate and electoral advertising) tends to transfigure the historical and cultural into the natural, the connotative into the denotative. Significations, whose function (intended or not) is the legitimation of a system of sexual and class domination in political form, are presented and repeated as "the way things are", as impenetrable common sense. This development cannot be apprehended through the classical Marxian categories and its crisis theorems. This is no less true of certain important countervailing trends in the form of demystifying challenges to this imposed ensemble of

"collective representations". Symptomatic of these challenges, the talk of "crisis" (mentioned at the outset) correctly grasps that there are serious disruptions within the existing totality of institutions and significations. The "compactness" of the symbolic tissues tends to be torn by their own contradictory logic and structural problems within the political economy. Ambiguity, confusion and above all, the inability and refusal of speaking actors to recognize themselves through these manufactured images threaten this order's legitimacy. A novel tendency haunts the industrial world: a falling rate of the production and reproduction of meaning, and artistic-political attempts at its reconstitution.

Whether this widening sense of the difficulties of reproduction within the economic, political and cultural spheres of the industrial world is symptomatic of either dilemmas easily overcome or of deep-seated impediments which allow us to speak of a crisis tendency in the more classical sense remains an unresolved issue. Indeed, the aforegoing suffers from the serious weaknesses of many other similar acccounts of the contemporary situation. Their language either relies too much on generic, abstractly universal propositions, or the complex mediations between the reproduction and breakdown of the political economy and culture tend to be lost in the simple, nominalistic language of factorial accounts of the systems of production ("the economy"), political power ("the state") and cultural meaning ("ideology"). Even so, the truth of the old crisis theorem remains, the renewal of subjectivity continues to depend on the decay of this system's objective structures and significations. On this score, the nagging difficulties within the industrial world are encouraging to an opposition which has so far been outwitted by an objective system of domination. Yet, the darker side of this truth should also not be hidden away in rosy prognostications and rash extrapolations. In the absence of widespread subjectivity, crisis tendencies are most often a condition of renewal of the existing order. As both Marx and Burckhardt forcefully pointed out in the nineteenth century, crises may allow the unilateral, authoritarian abolition of a host of practices from which it is deemed life has long since departed, and which could not have been swept away in any other fashion. Under no circumstances should this insight be forgotten. Our rightful concern with investment, employment, political and legitimation difficulties in the industrial countries may well obscure their more alarming fate — a more fully rationalized world, whose behemoth-like domination amidst plenty would bid farewell forever to the emancipatory dreams of its liberal-democratic heritage.

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CRISIS THEORY

Erik Olin Wright, *Class Crisis and the State*, London: NLB, 1978.

In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, the bourgeoisie is portrayed as a sorcerer whose magic has escaped his control. The development of the productive forces, conjured up by the sorcerer for his benefit, have a power of their own; taking control of the historical process, these productive forces (embodied in the proletariat) sweep away the sorcerer with their greater powers. The analogy is ironic: today the bourgeoisie has not been swept away, while Marxism threatens to succumb to a magical self-understanding.

Magical Marxism is a symptom of thought in decline; the revival of "true marxism" is a talisman that keeps up revolutionary hope, but excludes critical re-examination. Wright never tires of incantation; mere repetition, apparently, convinces him of its power. "Marxism ... is not a theory of class structure; it is above all a theory of class struggle" (98). In addition to mere chanting, however, *legerdemain* is intended; magic is concealed as a "marxist science". Wright seeks a science that can causally explain and predict human action nomologically. The illusion of science itself conceals scientism, the naive assumption that a natural science of human action is possible. Despite the disclaimer of "marxist science" this is a variant of positivist thought; as in positivism, the moment of critical reflection is conjured away.

Wright's science takes as its point of departure the notion of structural causality (suggested by Althusser in *Reading Capital*), interpreted in the framework of a cybernetic systems analysis. Science becomes hocus-pocus as dialectical reflection is reduced to a bewildering array of flow charts, diagrams and operational definitions. To wit: "A mediation process can be viewed as a 'contextual variable': processes of mediation determine the terrain on which other modes of determination operate" (23). Even as "scientific method", this procedure has the function of a totem: the objection that social systems analysis cannot be conceived in causal-explanatory fashion (*cf.* Habermas' debate with Luhmann) has been tabooed.

Undaunted by his clumsy sleight of hand, Wright casts another spell. Bewitched by the aura of identitarian thought, the object of the theory disappears within its theoretical concept. Behind the model of structural causality lies a Lukácsian totality. Wright designates three structures (economic systems, class struggle and the state) which form a logical system, a "structured totality". The totality exerts priority over history; it represents "real processes", a substratum, in relation to which historical phenomena are appearances. Historical phenomena "constitute 'effects' of structural relations" (14). Historical investigation merely describes; only the totality explains.

Reliance upon the explicit metaphysics of system and history allows Wright to posit an unchangeable set of relations which underlie history: the class struggle. Class struggle is no mere historical accident; given in the structure of the real it has objective status. As in Lúkacs, each class has objective interests (the bourgeois capitalism, the proletariat socialism). These are not actually existing interests, but imputed ones, interests classes objectively should have.

189

Here concept and object are magically united, for history can never change the possibility of the class struggle: the world takes the form of explanation this struggle dictates.

Wright's notion of crises is therefore curious. If they are a result of invariable laws, independent of subjects, crises possess a causal necessity. They become automatic. Crises become a kind of system restructuring whose occurrence or absence can be wholly explained within this objectified framework. Yet crises are also dramas in the lives of individuals; they possess a different sort of necessity which takes its character from the relation of freedom and constraint. Individuals' actions may be determined by forces which operate "behind their backs" (as a result of domination or of the constraints of nature) but they may also act freely. In either case, it is the subject who must choose to rebel or conform, albeit under conditions of imperfect knowledge, internal and external constraints. Wright's identitarian logic reduces the complex relations between knowledge and action, and the fear, guilt anxiety and doubt that accompany it, to the happy consciousness of the uninvolved spectator: revolution will occur when the proletariat "scientifically" know their fundamental (real) interests.

The best moments in this book are those in which Wright abandons the magical chants of orthodoxy. The chapter on the "Historical Transformation of Capitalist Crisis Tendencies" argues that none of the traditional Marxist theories of economic crisis (*e.g.* rising organic composition of capital, underconsumption, profit squeeze) constitutes a total explanation of possible crisis tendencies in contemporary capitalism. Rather, each must be viewed as a dominant crisis mechanism during a particular historical phase. Monopoly capitalism has employed a variety of strategies for coping with traditional crises. As Wright notes, the possibility of the rising organic composition of capital is contained through its slower rate of growth under monopoly conditions, but more importantly, through the development of a labour-intensive service sector. In different ways, Keynesian policies of intervention in the economy also prevent crises through supporting accumulation, encouraging consumption and co-opting working class demands through welfare measures. However, according to Wright, the Keynesian trade-off between unemployment and inflation is no longer sufficiently effective, and demands a restructuring of crisis controls. Wright predicts this restructuring will be in the direction of a further state rationalization of the economy. This will have two important consequences. First, the economic sphere will become thoroughly repoliticized; and more crucially, a deep-seated antagonism will emerge in state-directed monopoly capitalism. The reproduction of commodity production will only be possible through de-commodifed state activity (178).

Here Wright comes close to the positions stated by critical theorists such as Habermas and Offe, but he quickly grasps the amulet of orthodoxy. The repoliticization of the economic sphere is said to produce new opportunities for

class struggle, and is viewed within a problematic which sees all social relations as part of the reproduction of the relations of production. A more thoroughgoing analysis would have to ask whether advanced capitalism has in fact changed the relation of the economic sphere to social life and has thus called into question the project of class analysis. Faced with these questions, Wright begs a hasty retreat into the safe world of magic spells. The chapter on the state, for example, is infuriating and ludicrous; Weber and Lenin are considered as complementary theorists of the state (Weber is concerned with formal rationality and Lenin with substantive rationality!). Ultimately, this book is the work of a sorcerer's apprentice, mainly for those already spellbound by the masters.

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Alan Wolfe, *The Limits of Legitimacy: Political Contradictions of Contemporary Capitalism,* New York: The Free Press, 1977.

Alan Wolfe explores the dimensions of the problematic which haunts late capitalist society: how can the tension, if not the absolute contradiction, between the needs of democracy and the demands of liberalism be resolved? According to Wolfe, the conflict between democracy and liberalism has not only come to be internalised in the principal state functions of legitimation and accumulation, but has also been the driving force behind the creation of six different epochs in the history of the capitalist state.

During each of these epochs, the state has assumed a specific form in an attempt to resolve the central tension or contradiction, thereby preserving capitalist hegemony. Yet, in turn, each of these historic forms has failed: the pressure from below for democracy and majoritarian rights has thus far proved (like the state itself) to be too resilient to wither away or be neatly contained.

Wolfe argues that the history of the state in capitalism has moved successively through the Accumulative, Harmonious, Expansionist, Franchise, Dual and Transnational phases. The appropriateness of each of these categories to the historical period to which Wolfe refers is sometimes less than convincing. As well, the argument is overly detailed in places, even if insightful. While anecdotes are often effectively used to drive home a point, Wolfe occasionally (*e.g.,* when he compares the failure of the Franchise state to successfully appease the poor to the predicament of an American hamburger outlet without customers) overdoes it.

His concern with the historical background is but a prelude to a discussion of the current "crisis of legitimacy" which confronts late capitalist society. This is the heart of Wolfe's thesis:

> [T]he arrival of late capitalism has corresponded with what I will call ... the exhaustion of political alternatives. By this phrase I mean that each of the six major forms of the capitalist state created to resolve the tensions between accumulation and legitimation within the framework of liberal democracy has been found wanting. To suggest that alternatives have been exhausted is therefore to suggest that the inherent tensions within liberal democracy will increasingly come to the surface ... resolutions may be sought in an authoritarian direction (toward the primacy of accumulation over legitimation) or in a democratic direction (the assertion of legitimation over accumulation). It is impossible to predict what will happen but it is not impossible to predict that one or the other will happen.

This exhaustion of political alternatives has been accompanied by a growing depoliticization of the citizenry and a parallel politicization of the bureaucratic apparatus. Depoliticization has been an essential tool of the accumulation process since the entry of the working class majority into political life in the last half of the nineteenth century. The energizing force of this entry confronted the Expansionist state of that period with a clear challenge to its hegemony. As such, the instrumentalization of politics, in effect, the depoliticization of public life, became a necessity. This politicization process was instituted precisely at that historical juncture when the autonomy of the craft worker was in decline. Thus, the reduction of work to abstract labour was paralleled by the reduction of the citizen to the abstract member of the mass.

This "alienated politics" of the contemporary epoch has been central to the drive toward the totally administered society upon which late capitalism has placed all of its bets. Drawing upon the work of Habermas and Offe, Wolfe argues that a kind of political schizophrenia characterizes both private and bureaucratic relations within late capitalism. On the one hand, depoliticization is both required and strongly reinforced. Yet, on the other hand, the system is paralysed without some level of minimal politicization. Clearly rejecting the "artificial negativity" position recently proposed by Paul Piccone, Wolfe argues that there is a continuing deep-felt need on the part of citizens to express themselves in a politically authentic way. At the same time, the depoliticizing agencies of the state bureaucracy are increasingly forced to assume the role of the principal legitimating body. These contradictory ten-

dencies cannot help but narrow the options of the ruling class and force a major crisis of legitimation.

While Wolfe does not commit himself to deciding the eventual outcome of this crisis tendency, from his extensive discussion of the delegitimating impact of the Watergate era in the U.S., it would seem that he leans in a more or less optimistic direction. Recent political events in Canada give little cause for similar optimism. As Wolfe correctly points out, notwithstanding all the perverse aspects of the welfare state, the present assault on it by the business sector is ultimately a full scale attack upon democracy itself. The apparent popularity of this offensive in Canada, as well as the wide-spread indifference to the revelations of the degree of R.C.M.P. police-state activities, are surely not signs of a deeply rooted need for democratic political expression. Far from indicating a positive hoarding of political power from the ruling class, voter apathy, in Canada at least, may indicate something less positive. Simply, if the need for democratic expression and an authentic politics is not widely felt, then the central problematic discussed in this book may be far removed, for the time being at least, from a situation of real crisis.

In servitude, our citizenry has felt the discipline of work for too long. Even our fear of death is still unknown, banished by the massive instrumentalization of the death instinct itself. As such, our rebellion, our self-conscious urge for life, remains silenced.

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Robert Heilbroner, *Business Civilization in Decline*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1976.

This is an essay in futurology. Concerned with the "stresses and strains" which will almost certainly assault contemporary capitalism, Heilbroner predicts the future of capitalism: the inevitable rise of the political "super-structure" of this society to a position of prominence over its economic mechanisms, thereby ironically subverting their capitalist logic. The designated scenario consists of three phases: the "immediate future", the "middle range" (25 to 50 years hence), and the longer run of a full century.

Within the immediate future, Heilbroner points to an inescapable drift into

state planning and, if needed, the "forceful suppression of economic activity". This is seen as a necessary defensive reaction of a system now under serious pressure from the "generalized disorders" of inflation and depression, grave "localized disorders", and impending environmental challenges. Yet this immediate spectre of an increasingly planned capitalism, characterized by a business-government state, merely constitutes a period of transition from the still business-dominated system of the present to the state-dominated system of the future. Because of three interrelated "strains" state planning seems inevitable in the next 25 to 50 years. First, the extension of political authority will be encouraged by the rise of social affluence, the problem of persistent inflation, and by the need to provide a labour supply to perform the "more distasteful jobs of society". Secondly, Heilbroner mentions the growing contest for power between capital and the "scientific-technical elite"; this is seen to be a struggle lying in the political, and not the economic, arena of capitalism. Finally, there is the need to establish effective social controls over the unrestrained growth of science and technology. Heilbroner draws the important conclusion that these three problems of the "middle future" are fundamentally political, and not "capitalist" or economic, in nature. Structurally different from the old (economic) contradiction between capital and wage-labour, these coming stresses are rooted in the nature of "industrial society" as much as in the capitalism proper.

Heilbroner also hints that advanced capitalist society may be faced with a crisis of legitimation in this middle period. As in the analysis of Habermas, the "crisis" will be rooted within serious problems of motivation. According to Heilbroner, such phenomena as "the cry for participatory democracy", and "the skepticism and lack of commitment of youth" will tend to be "destructive of those attitudes and behavior patterns on which a business civilization has traditionally rested". Yet Heilbroner merely broaches this crucial point; his failure to deepen their analysis and implications makes his critique weaker than it might otherwise be. For example, Heilbroner fails to trace the "skepticism" of our youth to the increased activities of the state itself. For it is the state which has increasingly assumed responsibility for providing education and training, just as it has assumed responsibility for creating the conditions of "full employment". It is the state's active involvement in these areas which has the unintended side-effect of promoting the expectation that it is the *function* of the state to provide education for the young, and to secure employment for them when that education has been completed. The consequence, of course, is that the state will immediately run into legitimation problems when the "right" to a job is no longer reliably safeguarded. This is but one example of the many cases in which the state's intrusion into areas formerly regulated by tradition and the market serves to increase its need for legitimacy. Schooling, the family, and provision for old-age are other cases in point which Heilbroner would do well to examine more thoroughly.

194

Moreover, Heilbroner's analysis of the drift and heightened drive toward a statist society is plagued by a major weakness, namely, an inadequate formulation at the theoretical level of the relationship between political power and capital accumulation. True, his prognosis correctly presupposes that the precedence of the economic over the "political machinery" no longer holds true under the conditions of advanced capitalism. While acknowledging the obsolescence of the old "base-superstructure" model, Heilbroner in effect resurrects the old dichotomy he seeks to abolish. He simply reverses the dominant power relationships between the two; "the indispensable but essentially passive support that is today rendered to the business community by the functions of government" will, in the immediate future, be replaced by the business community's passive support to the state. Such "either-or" conceptions are far too descriptive and simplistic. A host of questions remain unasked: What role does the dominant class now play in the "unholy alliance" of business and the state? What will its role be in the future? In what sense is state power external to class power? Indeed, upon which resources does the state draw to guarantee its specificity?

It is within the long-run of a century that Heilbroner predicts the demise of capitalist civilisation. The ultimate cause of the decline of business civilisation will not be found in any sudden rupture or crisis incident but, rather, will be due to the long-term cessation of economic growth. Given the two environmental constraints of resource exhaustion and pollution, the exponential character of the process of industrial growth will finally reach its limit, bringing with it a progressive elimination of the profits that have been both the means and the end of capital accumulation. Together with these environmental constraints, the "extension of planning into every corner of economic life" will finally reach proportions which become incompatible with either the prerogatives of property or the machinery of the market. This will coincide with the final decay of capitalism's value system, whose essential "hollowness" will finally be revealed for what it really is: a civilisation which celebrated the values of material output while merely calculating those of human input, a civilisation that perpetuated itself through the generation of "a ceaseless flow of half-truths and careful deceptions". With the vitiation of the "spirit" of capitalism, business civilisation will be faced with a thorough-going crisis of legitimation. The traditional self-justificatory systems of private property and the market mechanism will have lost their claims to popular support.

The new "civilization" projected by Heilbroner is that of a tightly controlled society, wherein the traditional pillars of capitalism — the legitimacy of private property and the operation of the market mechanism — have been wholly superseded by state property and state directives. With the transformation of the institutional forms of business civilisation will come a corresponding new system of beliefs and attitudes, oriented toward "statism" and "scientism". As Heilbroner grudgingly acknowledges, the new "deification of the state" will in all likelihood lead to the erosion of political and intellectual liberties, to the intensification of overt authoritarianism.

Heilbroner mentions this development, but simultaneously brushes it aside. Like all thinkers in the "liberal humanist" tradition, his final appeal is to that individualism which continues to be cultivated, however shallowly, by contemporary capitalist society. Those with similiar commitments to authentic individualism will find comfort in sharing Heilbroner's conviction that there does indeed exist a uniqueness, a "final autonomy" within each person, however obliquely that autonomy is rendered under capitalist civilisation, and however likely the possibility that this autonomy may be obliterated entirely within the civilisation of the future.

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James O'Conner, *The Fiscal Crisis of the State,* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973.

In the relatively short time since its publication, this work has rightly become a classic in the crisis theory literature and benchmark for current Marxist analyses of the capitalist state. Through his consideration of the United States, O'Connor develops a general analysis of the advanced capitalist economy which gives sufficient theoretical emphasis to the greatly enlarged and transformed role of the state. While forcefully arguing that an analysis of the capitalist state must be grounded at the level of economic contradiction, O'Connor contends that in monopoly capitalism the state necessarily assumes an increasingly decisive role in exporting this contradiction to the political level, where it assumes the form of a budgetary or "fiscal crisis". In doing so, he succeeds in *initiating* this much needed politico-economic analysis and brings to the fore two most significant advances within contemporary Marxist debate: the denial of reductivism (and hence the conception of the state as simply a direct organ of the bourgeoisie) and the question of the state's possibly problematical role in capitalist accumulation.

O'Connor seeks to explain the necessarily symbiotic relationship between the monopolized accumulation process of advanced capitalism and its increasing reliance upon the sphere of state activity, while simultaneously indicating the potential for crisis inherent in this relationship. Unfortunately, he continually subverts the force of his thesis by attempting this within what amounts to a Galbraithian understanding of the U.S. economic structure. Within this schema, the major contradiction appears at the *market* level, among the sectors of monopoly, competitive and state capital. In fact, he even goes so far as to place this trichotomy at the centre of the political struggle. In bringing

Galbraith to Marxism, O'Connor often loses sight of the fact that the essence of the crisis is to be found at the level of production, that is, in the state's structural inability to underwrite successfully the production of surplus value. At times, the primacy of the (indirect) productivity of state action is lost in this market analysis of the imbalanced distribution within and between the private and public sectors. This leads to a fruitless formulation of class relations, upon which his revolutionary hopes are placed for a sectoral class alliance between the relative surplus population and the disaffected state employees. Ultimately, this formulation reduces his political prescription to a dream of "spontaneous consciousness-raising" reminiscent of the 1960's.

In spite of his rather time-bound political prescriptions and his overemphasis on a market-level, sectoral analysis, the strength of O'Connor's work lies in its investigation of the nature of economic crises and the state's role in the displacement, management, and yet exacerbation of such crises. Here the analysis relies on a distinction between two essential functions of the state: accumulation and legitimation. The state must maintain or create the conditions in which profitable capital accumulation is both possible and necessary for social harmony to exist. These functions are directly reflected in the two forms of state expenditure: *social capital* (*e.g.*, state R & D and transportation) which is required for profitable accumulation and indirectly expands surplus value and *social expenses* (*e.g.*, welfare) which are necessary for the state's "legitimation" function but do not expand surplus value.

With regard to accumulation, it is through the state's absorption of social capital expenses that private capital is able to have the state "socialize" the costs of *its* accumulation process. This "socialization" process proceeds either in the form of the provision of constant social capital ("social investment") which increases the productivity of labour power, or of variable social capital ("social consumption") which lowers the reproductive costs of labour.

However, because of its high organic composition, the growth of monopoly capital results in the generation of a surplus productive capacity and a surplus population. Together with the attendant environmental damage, this development leads to increased state social expenses. O'Connor thus presents a scenario wherein the state must increasingly engage in social investment and consumption spending to protect accumulation (and therefore its own revenues) which results, however, in the *private* accumulation of social surplus and the creation of a further need for a growing state allocation of social expenses and social capital. Thus, it is the increasing "socialization of costs" by the state, in conjunction with the continued private accumulation of profits, which creates a "structural gap between expenditures and revenues". This gap reveals that the state is caught within a circular and paradoxical trap from which it cannot escape. For in order to expand its revenues, the state must enhance productivity in the dynamic monopoly sector via social capital expenditures. However, it is this productivity which itself multiplies the need for expenditures covering social costs, most notably those required to maintain the surplus population, thus indirectly undermining general productivity. Hence,

197

the very response necessary for the state's attempt to close the structural gap itself generates the vicious cycle of a "fiscal crisis".

By uncovering the necessarily paradoxical role of the state in this way, O'Connor underscores the relatively autonomous nature of the state's attempt to resolve the economic crisis at the political level; while on the other hand, he recognizes that political resolution is ultimately accountable to the economic logic of the system. Although demonstrating the structural importance of state autonomy, O'Connor continually minimizes its full implications. This is evident in his superficial presentation of "legitimation" as simply the allocation of social expenditures, rather than as the functioning of the full political and ideological apparatuses of the state. The extent of O'Connor's oversight becomes evident when contrasted with Habermas' rather extreme position of interpreting the crisis almost exclusively on the ideological level, in the form of a "legitimation crisis". In this respect, O'Connor's thesis has engendered an increasingly polemical debate centred upon the autonomous role and legitimizing function of the state.

O'Connor's examination of the "fiscal crisis" concludes with what amounts to a very confused application of a theoretical approach whose grasp of the economic foundations of the crisis is insightful. Since the state's fiscal crisis consists of its inability to absorb externalities (*i.e.*, surplus population and surplus capacity), the state must systematically attempt to create conditions under which these externalities can function as commodities, a strategy of "administrative recommodification" to use Offe's term. Unfortunately, O'Connor provides only a vague and poor formulation of this strategy leading to a "social-industrial complex", wherein the state somehow aligns itself with the forces of efficiency and pursues a program resembling a Marshall Plan for the cities and marginalized. This hazy prescription, like that of his ill-conceived program for possible radicalization, should be seen as a reflection of his (at times) purely market formulation of political and economic structures, a weakness which contradicts his otherwise crucial grounding of the fiscal crisis in the economic contradictions of monopoly capitalism.

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Santiago Carrillo, *Eurocommunism and the State,* Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1978.

The revival of serious Marxist interest in the state flows from the perceived inadequacies of an inherited political theory which is no longer capable of charting a relevant socialist practise. At the theoretical level it has become apparent that the role and nature of the democratic capitalist state cannot be understood in terms of the instrumental reductionism of the classical tradition. The working class is no longer external to the democratic polity; it now has a significant presence within, and impact upon, the political structures which contingently secure not only the continued accumulation and reproduction of capital, but also the legitimation of class society. As Carrillo maintains, the state remains capitalist by virtue of its structural subordination to the dictates of a capitalist economy and the close inter-penetration of some of its branches with the dominant class. Even so, its heightened economic role within monopoly capitalism stands in contradiction to the democratic foundations of "a state of all the people". Self-contradictory forms of intervention and cleavages between state institutions therefore derive from a "state monopoly capitalist" political economy which must increasingly recognize, mediate and incorporate subordinate class interests.

Carrillo's analysis attempts to reformulate European communist strategy in light of these considerations. It is argued that the privileged position of monopoly capital within the state can be effectively challenged by the working class and its allies, who will ultimately win political hegemony through the use and defence of democratic political structures. There is no radical rupture or discontinuity between the capitalist and the socialist state. Democracy permits the working class and its parties to cement alliances with all "democratic forces" on the basis of a socialist transformation, to struggle for ideological and political hegemony both inside and outside the state, to increasingly isolate and detach the dominant fraction of the ruling-class from its social supports, and to ultimately construct a genuinely democratic political economy. Power flows from one class to another by degrees as the democratic state sheds its capitalist integument.

All of this is reminiscent of social-democracy; Carrillo is not afraid to discard the eternal verities of Marxism-Leninism. His analysis is recognizably Marxist in inspiration, although it stands at the right pole of the Eurocommunist continuum. He continuously underscores the class character of the existing state, the structural and class obstacles faced by communists in Spain and the difficulties imposed by the context of global imperialism. The transition to socialism is grasped as one of class struggle which is not reducible to electoral politics. The complex picture drawn is of a combination of different levels of struggle — economic and ideological no less than political — whereby the subordinate classes progressively appropriate both state and society. Less prone to talk of "ruptures" and "decisive breaks" than left Eurocommunists such as Poulantzas and more willing to stress the possibilities and continuities afforded

by democracy, Carrillo's work stands as an important contribution to the search for a democratic Marxism.

The central weakness of the analysis is its grounding within an immanent critique of Stalinism. While Carrillo rightly denounces such "errors" as the substitution of party for class rule and the undervaluation of democracy with genuine conviction and passion, the critique is ultimately partial and self-serving because it fails to make any reference to the theory and history of the non-communist left. Eurocommunists were hardly the first to advance a socialist critique of Stalinism and it is notable that Carrillo feels no need to delve into the fratricidal history of the Spanish left. The P.O.U.M. were, after all, Marxists who died for their opposition to Comintern orthodoxy on the streets of Republican Barcelona, while other socialist currents in Spain have long advocated forms of democratic socialism.

The neglect of social-democracy is a more significant lacuna because the history of this other product of the great schism within classical Marxism is surely germane to a consideration of the prospects for a democratic socialism. The degeneration of revolutionary socialism into the nightmare of orthodox state communism certainly commends democracy to us, but the alternative trajectory of social-democracy suggests a lesson of equal significance. Given the real constraints of winning and exercising governmental power within bourgeois democracies, it is at best a partial truth that social democrats have never been "real" socialists: democratic means in and of themselves partially determine the nature of ultimate objectives. Thus Labour in Britain abandoned socialism in favour of incremental reforms and a "managed" capitalism precisely because it accepted and accomodated itself to certain definite limits inscribed within the structures and practices of bourgeois democratic states. There is little in Carrillo's analysis to suggest that Eurocommunists face problems of a qualitatively different order. Any potential communist government would have to make a choice between "responsibility" in managing the sharpening crises of advanced capitalism (consequently attacking at least the immediate interests of the working-class) or advancing a decisive socialist alternative. The former path can only ultimately weaken the left — socialism is not a day closer if a communist government imposes the burden of austerity. The latter route must presuppose the hostility of capital, a high degree of political polarisation, intensified economic crisis, and the possibility of foreign intervention.

Revolutionaries would maintain that there are decisive moments of crisis in history when the question of state power is sharply posed and, of necessity, abruptly resolved. While this may not be true under all circumstances, it is certainly arguable that the adherence of socialists to democratic political practices, as defined within the existing state system, contributed in no small way to the historical defeats of democracy in Germany, Italy and Chile. Certainly, an adequate theorisation of democratic socialism demands close attention to the achievements and limitations of social democracy. There may be no easy or abstract syntheses of democracy and socialism, but Carrillo tends to

This new social formation, a veritable caste of technocrats, would hold sway over the "post-industrial" future. It would do so because of the functional superiority of its "social structure". Its victory was to be the result of the working out of the logic of the "axial principle" of technical decision-making — a logic immune, or nearly so, to fundamental social conflict, disruption, and crisis. And now, with the publication of *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, Bell seems to have discovered that all is not well with his brave new world.

What Bell discovers is that the "cultural" realm is not in harmony with the "social structure" of "post-industrial" society. Indeed, the "cultural" realm is in fundamental conflict with the imperatives of a rationalized techno-economic order. Modern culture, dominated by "modernism", is hostile to the sober, ascetic, disciplined spirit required for the smooth functioning of the "social structure". Modernism, with its celebration of the self, its hedonism, its cult of impulse and immediate gratification, undermines the very motivational foundations of a productive, rationalized social order. The contradiction, then, is between a "social structure" demanding discipline, deferred gratification, and sobriety, and a "culture" celebrating release, instinct, and the unrestrained self.

This is the central thesis of the book, and much of what follows is an elaboration and documentation of this fundamental "cultural contradiction". Bell traces the rise of modernism, the decline of the Protestant ethic, the triumph of a hedonistic consumer culture, and the consequent erosion of the moral and motivational basis of bourgeois society. He laments the loss of a transcendent, unifying culture and calls, in the end, for a return to religion — for the restoration of the "sacred" as a source of meaning and social cohesion.

discount the validity of insights to be drawn from both Lenin and Berstein by understressing the strength and solidity of the state and its manifest ability to either repress or incorporate those who would go beyond incremental change.

If one lesson can be drawn from the question of reform and revolution as opposed strategies of overcoming crises, it is that until now both have ultimately strengthened the domination of the state over society. Eurocommunism offers a way beyond this impasse by stressing the irreducibility of socialist politics to the electoral arena alone. Meanwhile, the path to a genuinely democratic socialism remains uncharted.

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Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, New York: Basic Books, 1978.

This book is a lament for another nation: a decaying "post-industrial" America. According to Bell's previous prognoses, this "post-industrial" society was supposed to have been the child of an unplanned change in the direction of contemporary society, a product of the more or less smooth working out of the logic of socio-economic organization and knowledge. The pre-eminence of this new social formation was to be insured by the strengths of its "social structure" — its economy, technology, and superior occupational system. Post-industrialism was to feature an expanded service economy, and was to be ruled by a professional and technical class obsessed with creating a new "intellectual technology". The "axial principle" of this society was to be "theoretical knowledge", the divine source of innovation and public policy formation for a smoothly functioning society. In this vision, Bell was at one with Brzezinski's wonderous technetronic scenario: a world shaped culturally, psychologically, and politically by the revolutionary impact of communications technology and electronics. Not only America, but the whole of Western society was seen to be in the midst of a vast historical change. Old property relations, existing elitist power structures, and ascetic bourgeois culture were all being swept away. The key vision of *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* is no different from that of his *End of Ideology* — the wonderful dream of the exhaustion of old political passions and the rise and triumph of predictable and reliable technical decision making.

In this new work, Bell has come to realize (even if obliquely) that the ability of this "post-industrial" society to technically iron out all indeterminacies of the future has fallen flat. Dreams about the happy and powerful world of Wall Street, American democracy, Hollywood, and the dollar have soured. According to Bell there is a widening "disjunction" between the "social structure" (*i.e.*, the economy) and the culture (the symbolic expression of meanings) of this order. Post-industrial society mutates, as the social structure rooted in functional rationality and efficiency begins to conflict with a culture obsessed with a hedonistic way of life. The Promethean spirit of the modern world subdivides and turns against itself. Bell insists that the social structure of "post-industrial" society is shaped by the ruling principle of calculation. The effort to master nature by technics entails the rationalization of work and of time, the living of a linear sense of progress. In the past, this bureaucratic planning was blended with a model personality type which accepted the idea of delayed gratification, compulsive work, frugality and sobriety. This is no longer the case. Technocratic society is not seen as ennobling. Its religion of science and technology lacks the power of persuasion enjoyed by early bourgeois justifications. "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" becomes the cry against the planned production of material goods, the attempt to administer every nook and cranny of social life. The lack of a rooted moral belief system is the cultural contradiction of this once great society, the deepest challenge to its survival. Ironically, all this was brought about by developments within post-industrial society. Through mass production and consumption, science and technology, the old Protestant ethic is being destroyed by the zealous promotion of a hedonistic way of life. Post-war American capitalism is Bell's model. Seeking to justify its goodness through its status, badges of affluence and by the promotion of industrialized pleasures, a new ethic of relaxed morals and affluent, individual freedom emerges. The "axial principle" of the subversive counter-culture of post-industrial America is the desire of the fulfillment and enhancement of the self. This "counter-culture" feeds upon the anti-bourgeois character of modernist movements in art. Baudelaire, Rimbaud and other champions of the "authentic" self are responsible for reinforcing the liberation of all dimensions of human experience and impulses. In all this, according to Bell, there is unavoidable irony. The America of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries embodied individualism in the political economy and a regulation of morals; today, there is strict regulation of the political economy and individualism in morals. Thus, the location of industry is checked bureaucratically, the design of Fords depends upon government-imposed safety standards, and the hiring of labour is subject to government guidelines and penalties. Yet, in the cultural domain, nudity becomes common in the movies, group sex is a subject for media discussion, and cocaine is the aphrodisiac that ensures good times. Almost everything goes. This hostile hedonistic culture is in fundamental contradiction to economic growth and rationalization.

Bell does not adequately consider whether this "fun morality" is often quite in accord with the logic of advanced capitalism. Indeed, the more mainstream,

depoliticized versions of this narcissistic "fun morality" can be seen as a new ideology through which the lords of the culture and political economy try to ensure their shaky predominance. Expressed differently, Bell's well-founded fear of the emerging disjunction of culture and political economy severely underestimates the continuing attempts to bring about the ever-tighter interdependence of the two domains. Economic life, as Bell himself observes, is more and more linked directly with political life; but this symbiotic relationship also extends to the sphere of cultural production. Bell's assumption that the past (nineteenth century bourgeois society?) was an integrated, smoothly functioning economic, cultural and political whole is not only short on memory, but also has an apologetic function. His longing is for a past cultural epoch — for the world of long-haired "high art". This conservative-elitist view of cultural ideals is devoid of arguments for social transformation and the potentially progressive role which art can play in this process. Ultimately, Daniel Bell's conservatism in matters "cultural" resembles that of Edmund Burke at the end of the eighteenth century: it is an attempt to appeal to the past to re-enchant the power structures of a pressured, topsy-turvy world.

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Henri Lefebvre, *De l'Etat,* 4 volumes, Paris: U.G.E., 1976-8; Nicos Poulantzas (ed.)., *La Crise de l'Etat,* Paris: P.U.F., 1976; Nicos Poulantzas, *L'Etat, le Pouvoir, le Socialisme,* Paris: P.U.F., 1978.

French Marxism, like so much of French intellectual life, is notoriously addicted to fashions. Five years ago structuralism was all the rage, ten years ago in the post-May 1968 period, theories of the new working class were definitely in vogue, today the accent has shifted to works on the state — not that the state is an ill-chosen subject, or that Marxism, French or other, has been particularly successful in hitherto developing a theory of the state. Yet one cannot help being a trifle sceptical about a "mode of intellectual production" that will almost surely have gone onto something different before the ink of all these galley-proofs has quite dried.

Henri Lefebvre's four tome opus is in some ways the most ambitious of the recent efforts. His first volume sets out to describe the state in the modern world, the second Marxist theory of the state from Hegel to Mao, the third the so-called statist mode of production, and the fourth the contradictions of the modern state. The result is over 1500 pages of often interesting analysis, un-

burdened by both the dogmatism and "sociologese" that characterizes his more structuralist rivals, but not without its problems.

The heart of Lefebvre's thesis, presented in vol. 3, is that the development of productive forces in the twentieth century has made the state, both east and west, the primary motor of economic policy, leading to the emergence of a new "statist mode of production". Lefebvre's is not simply a latter-day version of convergence theory. His methodology is too rigorously Marxist, not Weberian, for that. Nor does he ignore the different origins of statist societies, and the effects these origins have on their subsequent development:

> The new mode of production only takes form slowly, through conflicts; specific capitalist interests enter into conflict with the state and state interests .... Capitalism survives as the previous mode of production (feudalism) long survived. (111, 223)

> The Soviet revolutionaries, in all sincerity, hoped to replace the market with state planning, despite the historical heritage of Tsarism, the low productivity and weakness of the working class. The superstructures were to lead the productive forces into an accelerated transition to communism. In practice, the absolute state was the off-shoot of this mixture of utopia, ideology, official truth and critique of the past. (111, 278)

Yet he is convinced the process of accumulation in the twentieth century has made of the nation-state, whatever masks it may assume, the central form of domination.

> When every member of civil society, every individual, group and class has the state as its partner, when the latter permeates every relationship, the statist mode of production has emerged. (111, 248)

There are, to be sure, contradictions in this pattern of domination. There are the transnational corporations (here Lefebvre borrows heavily from Kari Levitt's *Silent Surrender*) which subvert particular state policies. There is the phenemenon of regionalism. There is the movement to "autogestion" or worker's control. There are urban and ecological crises, and the economic contradictions of both the Soviet-style statist mode of production and of its capitalist counterparts. Yet Lefebvre, utopian communist that he is, remains faithful to his earlier inspiration, looking to a non-statist form of socialism yet to be created.

Is Lefebvre's larger theme altogether convincing? Inevitably, the *opus* would have gained from having been presented in one tightly-argued volume. Lefebvre's meandering style sacrifices rigorous argumentation, while his at-

tempt to settle philosophical, sociological and political scores with various of his contemporaries seldom helps. The ground is not really prepared for the grand leap into a new mode of production trumpeted forth in volume 3. Has capitalism really run its course? Does Lefebvre's analysis of Soviet-style "socialism" represent any real advance over the theories of a new bureaucracy à la Trotsky and Rizzi, the formulations of Souvarine in his masterful 1935 biography of Stalin, or Bettelheim's new bourgeoisie?

This does not suggest that Lefebvre is not on the right track. The dichotomy Marx suggested between base and superstructure, with the state confined to the latter, has broken down; a new conceptualization is definitely necessary. It does not, therefore, follow that the state has itself become the base in *all* twentieth century societies, nor that the beast now slouching towards Bethlehem is a new mode of production. Can it not be that political domination is not always *directly* linked with the productive forces, and that an important kernel of any would-be theory of the state is contained outside of the *corpus* of Marxism itself?

From Lefebvre's grand philosophizing, let me turn briefly to two works edited or written by the *enfant terrible* of Althusserian structuralism, Nicos Poulantzas. In the first, *La crise de l'état,* a number of Marxist intellectuals try to come to grips with the current economic crisis and the problems this poses for France and other capitalist states. Poulantzas sets the tone, relating the economic crisis to the decline in the rate of profit, and arguing that the state, with no independent power of its own, can best be understood as "the material condensation of (class) relationships". There is an essay by the West German theorist, Joachim Hirsch, relating problems of state economic policy in the 1970's to those of capital reproduction, a view echoed in the essay by Suzanne de Brunhoff. Others deal with the fiscal crisis of cities, with the biases of the senior civil service and legal system, and with the problems the Atlantic Alliance poses for any hypothetical government of the left in France. Overall, the collection was meant to serve the cause of just such a government, widely expected in the still heady days of the Common Programme when the book came out. Those expectations proved still-born, and the same can be said for much of the book. The term "crisis" is greatly over-played, while there is no particular coherence between the CP-oriented views of some of the collaborators, the neo-Marxist and/or more Socialist Party-oriented views of others. Certainly, various articles (particularly Hirsch's) merit reading, although the book as a whole does not live up to its grandiloquent claims to analyze "the crisis of the state".

What then of Poulantzas' most recent work, *L'Etat, le pouvoir, le socialisme?* With uncharacteristic modesty the author tells us at the beginning that no general theory of the state is possible (p. 22), only to promise us in the next breath (p. 23) a theory of the capitalist state. What follows is a patchwork of themes and chapters, from law to nationalism to the states' economic functions, all meant to point to a materialist definition of the state. Ironically, Poulantzas, who is often cited as a proponent of the relative autonomy of the

state, ends up with a definition which is crudely reductionist: the state is dissolved in the larger matrix of class relations. "The state", he tells us, "is the strategic arena for organization of the dominant class in its relationship to the dominated class. It is a *place* and *centre* for the exercize of power, but one which has no power of its own." (p. 162)

While the state is by no means the actor *par excellence* in the real world, I have little use for a theory which denies *institutional* autonomy to the state in its own right. To be sure, one can expect little better from a writer who earlier reduced the phenomenon of Nazism and Hitler to the play of political or ideological instances and who seldom allows the names of real-life leaders (quite unlike the Marx of *The 18th Brumaire)* to cloud the perfect logic of his syllogisms. How helpful to know that de Gaulle, in the making of French foreign policy, was doing nothing but articulating the relationship between the French dominant class and the dominated, and that the state, in the person of its leaders, has no power of its own. Fortunately, Thucydides and Aristotle, Machiavelli and Rousseau never learned their statecraft at Poulantzas' fount.

To be fair to Poulantzas, he does make some efforts to trim his dogmatic stand of earlier years on a number of scores. He is more cognizant of the importance of individual rights as possible barriers to state power, especially in the East, and in his concluding chapter espouses Rosa Luxemburg's critique of Lenin and the Russian revolution. He is a trifle more prepared to ground his arguments on empirical evidence (usually someone else's) than on theoretical *ad homines.* At the same time, indigestable formulations like "material condensation of relations of class forces" are slightly less frequent than before. In the end, however, Poulantzas has not greatly increased our understanding of the modern state. His capitalist state lacks institutional specificity, while his occasional forays into concrete analysis suggest that the model he has in mind is much more the centralized French state than that of West Germany or the United States. His criticisms of the Soviet state are in no way original and, more tellingly, his reflections on the problem of democracy and socialism, a crucial one facing socialists and Marxists in the late twentieth century, are scarcely developed. We are left with a vintage piece of abstract intellectualism, not untypical of French intellectual life in 1978. We shall have to look elsewhere for our salvation.

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CRISIS THEORY

Andrew Gamble and Paul Walton, *Capitalism in Crisis: Inflation and the State*, London: Macmillan, 1976.

The generalized recession which has plagued the international capitalist economy during the past decade has thrown the prevailing wisdom of the economics profession into chaotic disarray. The vaunted neo-classical synthesis of Paul Samuelson and others, a synthesis which successfully re-integrated the heretical views of John Maynard Keynes into the mainstream of economic theory, has collapsed in the face of the prolonged experience of simultaneous high rates of unemployment and inflation. The inadequacy of neo-classical policy prescriptions for resolving present economic problems has cast the "dismal science" back into the wilderness through which it wandered for most of the Great Depression. The resurrection of such ancient economic skeletons as the quantity theory of money, long since believed to have been laid to rest, and the prevailing levels of disagreement among the proliferating varieties of Keynesians, are both signs of the current state of confusion. It is in the midst of this collapse of neo-classical economics that Marxist economics such as that presented by Gamble and Walton has enjoyed a revival in both general interest and a quality of new writing that is unparalleled since the 1930's.

Gamble and Walton present a cogent and articulate argument on behalf of the utility of conventional Marxist concepts (the labour theory of value and the tendency for the rate of profit to fall) in analysing the contemporary crisis of world capitalism. They attempt to cast this argument in a framework that is cognizant of the qualitiative changes that have occurred in the advanced capitalist economies. At the same time, they are also concerned to distinguish a Marxist explanation of the concurrent dilemma of inflation and unemployment from prevailing economic explanations of the same phenomenon.

In so doing, they provide, for the uninitiated, what is undoubtedly one of the most comprehensible surveys of the current debates in economic theory. In a sense, this is the truly valuable contribution which the book makes. They trace through the origins of the Keynesian revolution in economic theory in the 1930's and its significant ideological contribution to the sustained and massive level of state intervention which has marked the postwar period. The Keynesian revolution in economic theory restored the practical relevance of economics as a discipline, rescuing it from the ethereal realms of abstraction in which marginalist economics had languished since the end of the nineteenth century. The sustained period of postwar prosperity in turn provided the material basis for the triumph of Keynesian ideology. However, the slow but steady trend towards a persistent increase in the general level of prices and a recalcitrance on the part of that trend in responding to the conventional tools of demand management opened the first crack in the Keynesian edifice. The continuing failure of most economic policy tools to contain the spreading inflationary phenomenon has resulted in the virtual collapse of the Keynesian paradigm and a proliferation of competing explanations and theories: demand pull theories, cost push theories, monetary theory and radical Keynesian

theories. Gamble and Walton are at their best in tracing through this tangled web of competing economic theories.

Within this context of the rise and demise of Keynesianism, they locate what they term the most popular and most significant Marxist contribution to the analysis of advanced capitalism, the theory of monopoly capitalism of Baran and Sweezy. Once again, their explanation and vigorous critique is lucid and comprehensible. Because Baran and Sweezy focus their analysis of the problems of monopoly capitalism on the sphere of circulation and not that of production, they are compelled to incorporate the advanced capitalist state into their analysis as a *deus ex machina* which rescues modern capitalism from its underconsumptionist tendencies. In contrast to Baran and Sweezy, Gamble and Walton insist that an understanding of the role played by the advanced capitalist state in sustaining the postwar level of prosperity must necessarily be based on the Marxian concepts of the labour theory of value and the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.

They argue that the Marxian concept of economic crisis operates at two separate levels of analysis: the level of circulation, where the crisis appears as a dramatic fluctuation in the trade cycle and in the size of the reserve army of labour, and at the level of production, where the crisis consists in the tendential fall in the rate of profit due to the rising organic composition of capital. They insist that the error made by many Marxists has been to confuse the crisis which appears at an empirically observable level (the crisis of the trade cycle in the sphere of circulation) with the real crisis of the capitalist accumulation process. Accordingly, the growth of state intervention in the postwar economy is interpreted as one (unsuccessful) attempt to counteract the tendency of the rate of profit to fall by "preventing a drastic rise in the organic composition of capital by taking away from individual capitalists most of the cost of infrastructure, research and development, and the training and maintaining of an efficient labour force" and by simultaneously maintaining "a high level of effective demand, so enabling surplus value to be realised, by ensuring that goods produced are sold." They conclude that the growth of government expenditure in postwar capitalism is not planned but necessary; this "necessity derives not from political considerations or the inadequacy of markets but from the nature of capitalist accumulation itself." (p. 135) This analysis of the role of the state is contrasted with that of the so-called neo-Ricardian writers such as Glyn, Sutcliffe and Gough, whose interpretation of the current economic crisis eschews the theory of the tendential fall of the rate of profit. Gamble and Walton conclude with a consideration of the various ways out of the present condition. While both right and left wing solutions to the current crisis of accumulation are possible, one thing is seen to be clear: the limits of the mixed economy as an answer to problems of capital accumulation seem to have been reached.

This book suffers from the same shortcomings of most contemporary orthodox Marxist economic analyses: ultimately, the validity of the concepts of the rising organic composition of capital and the tendential fall of the rate of

profit must be accepted through an act of faith. Their criticism of the "empty and anchorless empiricism" of those Marxists who have sought alternative explanations for the current economic crisis is misguided, for these are in fact efforts to ground a comtemporary Marxist economics in the objective social relations of advanced capitalism. While Gamble and Walton reach their most creative levels of analysis in attempting to discuss empirical economic phenomena in the more abstract terms of value analysis, this creativity has not necessarily been channelled in the most productive directions. Furthermore, their insistence on the validity of orthodox value analysis repeatedly reduces class conflicts and political struggles around the various issues of economic policy to manifestations of the rising organic composition of capital and the tendential fall of the rate of profit. In so doing, they come dangerously close to falling back into the automatic Marxism characteristic of the Second International, which reduced all aspects of the Marxist concept of crisis to various manifestations of the iron laws of capital accumulation. Neo-Ricardian writers such as Glyn, Sutcliffe and Gough may also be criticized for an excessive tendency to define the concept of crisis in economic terms. Yet they have also been concerned with elucidating the effects of political class struggles on the development of postwar capitalism and with clarifying the political dimensions of class relations underlying the current economic crisis. Their understanding of the importance of the contradiction between the political institutions of liberal democracy and the economic imperatives of capitalist accumulation constitutes an important advance for Marxist analysis which their more orthodox colleagues have yet to note.

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