

Canadian Journal
of Political and Social Theory
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de théorie politique et sociale

Dallas W. Smythe

COMMUNICATIONS: BLINDSPOT OF
WESTERN MARXISM

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ARENDT ON POLITICS
AND TRUTH

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**Canadian Journal
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The editors deeply regret to learn of the death of Professor Katherine George, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Winnipeg. As an advisory editor of the *Journal*, Professor George made an invaluable contribution to the early intellectual development of the review.

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COMMUNICATIONS: BLINDSPOT OF WESTERN MARXISM

Dallas W. Smythe

The argument presented here — that western Marxist analyses have neglected the economic and political significance of mass communications systems — is an attempt to start a debate, not to conclude one. Frequently, Marxists and those radical social critics who use Marxist terminology locate the significance of mass communications systems in their capacity to produce "ideology" which is held to act as a sort of invisible glue that holds together the capitalist system. This subjective substance, divorced from historical materiality, is similar to such previous concepts as "ether"; that is to say, the proof of its existence is found by such writers to be the necessity for it to exist so that certain other phenomena may be explained. It is thus an idealist, *pre-scientific* rather than a *non-scientific* explanation.

But for Marxists, such an explanatory notion should be unsatisfactory. The first question that historical materialists should ask about mass communications systems is *what economic function for capital do they serve*, attempting to understand their role in the reproduction of capitalist relations of production. This article, then, poses this question and attempts to frame some answers to it. Much of what follows is contentious because it raises questions not only about changes in capitalism since Marx's death but also, in some instances, about the adequacy of certain generally accepted Marxist categories to account properly for these developments. However, as Lenin remarked in a different context, one cannot make an omelette without breaking the eggs.

The mass media of communications and related institutions concerned with advertising, market research, public relations and product and package design represent a blindspot in Marxist theory in the European and Atlantic basin cultures. The activities of these institutions are intimately connected with consumer consciousness, needs, leisure time use, commodity fetishism, work and alienation. As we will see, when these institutions are examined from a materialist point of view, the labour theory of value, the expenses of circulation, the value of the "peculiar commodity" (labour power), the form of the proletariat and the class struggle under monopoly capitalist conditions are also deeply involved. The literature of Marxism is conspicuously lacking in materialist analysis of the functions of the complex of institutions called the "consciousness industry".¹

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The blockage in recognizing the role of the consciousness industry traces back to a failure to take a materialist approach to communications. Both economic goods in general and communications goods in particular existed long before capitalism and monopoly capitalism. While *specialized* institutions for the mass production of communications (i.e. newspapers and magazines) appeared in capitalism in the eighteenth century, these institutions did not reach their mature form until monopoly capitalism shifted their principal economic base to advertising in the late nineteenth century. By a grave cultural lag, Marxist theory has not taken account of mass communications. This lag in considering the product of the mass media is more understandable in European (including Eastern European) countries than in North America. There the rise to ascendancy of advertising in dominating the policy of newspapers and periodicals was delayed by custom and by law. Even in the radio-TV broadcast media, the role of the state (through ORTF, BBC, ITV, East European state monopolies, etc.) has been resistant to the inroads of monopoly capitalism — as compared with the United States and Canada. But the evidence accumulates (recent developments in British, French, West German and Italian mass media, for example) that such traditional resistance is giving way under the onslaught of pressures from the centre of the monopoly capitalist system. Europeans reading this essay should try to perceive it as reflecting the North American scene today, and perhaps theirs soon.

At the root of a Marxist view of capitalism is the necessity to seek an objective reality which means in this case an objective definition of the *commodity* produced by capitalism. What is the commodity form of mass-produced, advertiser-supported communications? This is the threshold question. The bourgeois idealist view of the reality of the communication commodity is "messages", "information", "images", "meaning", "entertainment", "orientation", "education", and "manipulation". All of these concepts are subjective mental entities and all deal with *superficial* appearances. Nowhere do the theorists who adopt this worldview deal with the commodity form of mass communications under monopoly capitalism on which exist parasitically a host of sub-markets dealing with cultural industry, e.g., the markets for "news" and "entertainment". Tacitly, this idealist theory of the communications commodity appears to have been held by most western Marxists after Marx as well as by bourgeois theorists: Lenin², Veblen, Marcuse, Adorno, Baran and Sweezy, for example, as well as Galbraith and orthodox economists. So too for those who take a more or less Marxist view of communications (Nordenstreng, Enzensberger, Hamelink, Schiller³, Burdock and Golding⁴ and me until now) as well as the conventional writers exemplified in the *Sage Annual Review of Communications Research*⁵. Also included in the idealist camp are those apologists who dissolve the reality of communications under

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the *appearance* of the "medium", such as Marshall McLuhan.⁶ No wonder, as Livant says, that "the field of communications is a jungle of idealism".⁷

I submit that the materialist answer to the question — What is the commodity form of mass-produced, advertiser-supported communications under monopoly capitalism? — is audiences and readerships (hereafter referred to for simplicity as audiences). The material reality under monopoly capitalism is that all non-sleeping time of most of the population is work time. This work time is devoted to the production of commodities-in-general (both where people get paid for their work and as members of audiences) and in the production and reproduction of labour power (the pay for which is subsumed in their income). Of the off-the-job work time, the largest single block is time of the audiences which is sold to advertisers. It is not sold by workers but by the mass media of communications. Who produces this commodity? The mass media of communications do by the mix of explicit and hidden advertising and "programme" material, the markets for which preoccupy the bourgeois communication theorists.⁸ But although the mass media play the leading role on the production side of the consciousness industry, the people in the audiences pay directly much more for the privilege of being in those audiences than do the mass media. In Canada in 1975 audience members bore directly about three times as large a cost as did the broadcasters and cable TV operators, combined.⁹

In "their" time which is sold to advertisers workers (a) perform essential marketing functions for the producers of consumers' goods, and (b) work at the production and reproduction of labour power. This joint process, as shall be noted, embodies a principal contradiction. If this analytical sketch is valid, serious problems for Marxist theory emerge. Among them is the apparent fact that while the superstructure is not ordinarily thought of as being itself engaged in infrastructural productive activity, the mass media of communications are *simultaneously* in the superstructure *and* engaged indispensably in the last stage of infrastructural production where demand is produced and satisfied by purchases of consumer goods. Chairman Mao Tse-Tung provided the Marxist theoretical basis for such a development as that which created the contemporary capitalist mass media when he said:

When the superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become *principal and decisive*.¹⁰

The basic entry to the analysis of the commodity form of communications is acceptance of the significance of the concept of monopoly in monopoly

capitalism. Baran and Sweezy's *Monopoly Capitalism*¹¹ demonstrated how monopoly rather than competition rules contemporary capitalism, and it may be taken as the reference point from which to address this issue. Like J.K. Galbraith¹², Baran and Sweezy emphasize the role of management of demand by the oligopolies which dominate monopoly capitalism. Both civilian and military demand are managed to provide the consumption and investment outlets required for the realization of a rising surplus. The process of demand management begins and ends with the market for the commodity — first as “test markets”, and, when product and package production have been suitably designed and executed, as mass advertising-marketing. But Baran and Sweezy fail to pursue in an historical materialist way the obvious issues which are raised by demand-management-via-advertising under monopoly capitalism.

What happens when a monopoly capitalist system advertises? Baran and Sweezy answer, as does Galbraith, *psychological* manipulation. They cite Chamberlin as providing in 1931 the authoritative definition of contemporary advertising.¹³ Moreover, they somewhat prematurely foreclose further investigation by stating flatly: “The immediate commercial purposes and effects of advertising have been thoroughly analyzed in economic literature and are readily grasped.”¹⁴ The mass media of communications possess no black box from which the magic of psychological manipulation is dispensed. Neither bourgeois nor Marxist economists have considered it worthwhile to ask the following questions which an historical materialist approach would seem to indicate:

(a) What do advertisers buy with their advertising expenditures? As hard-nosed businessmen they are not paying for advertising for nothing, nor from altruism. I suggest that what they buy are the services of audiences with predictable specifications who will pay attention in predictable numbers and at particular times to particular means of communication (TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, billboards, and third-class mail).¹⁵ As collectivities these audiences are commodities. As commodities they are dealt with in markets by producers and buyers (the latter being advertisers). Such markets establish prices in the familiar mode of monopoly capitalism. Both these markets and the audience commodities traded in are specialized. The audience commodities bear specifications known in the business as “the demographics”. The specifications for the audience commodities include age, sex, income level, family composition, urban or rural location, ethnic character, ownership of home, automobile, credit card status, social class and, in the case of hobby and fan magazines, a dedication to photography, model electric trains, sports cars, philately, do-it-yourself crafts, foreign travel, kinky sex, etc.

(b) How are advertisers assured that they are getting what they pay for when they buy audiences? A sub-industry sector of the consciousness industry checks to determine. The socio-economic characteristics of the delivered

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audience/readership *and* its size are the business of A.C. Nielsen and a host of competitors who specialize in rapid assessment of the delivered audience commodity. The behaviour of the members of the audience product under the impact of advertising and the "editorial" content is the object of market research by a large number of independent market research agencies as well as by similar staffs located in advertising agencies, the advertising corporation and in media enterprises.¹⁶

(c) What institutions produce the commodity which advertisers buy with their advertising expenditures? The owners of TV and radio stations and networks, newspapers, magazines and enterprises which specialize in providing billboard and third class advertising are the principal producers. This array of producers is interlocked in many ways with advertising agencies, talent agencies, package programme producers, film producers, news "services" (e.g., AP, UPI, Reuters), "syndicators" of news "columns", writers' agents, book publishers, motion picture producers and distributors. Last but by no means least in the array of institutions which produce the audience commodity is the family. The most important *resource* employed in producing the audience commodity are the individuals and families in the nations which permit advertising.

(d) What is the nature of the content of the mass media in economic terms under monopoly capitalism? The information, entertainment and "educational" material transmitted to the audience is an inducement (gift, bribe or "free lunch") to recruit potential members of the audience and to maintain their loyal attention. The appropriateness of the analogy to the free lunch in the old-time saloon or cocktail bar is manifest: the free lunch consists of materials which whet the prospective audience members' appetites and thus (1) attract and keep them attending to the programme, newspaper or magazine, and (2) cultivate a mood conducive to favourable reaction to the explicit and implicit advertisers' messages.¹⁷ To say this is not to obscure the agenda-setting function of the "editorial" content and advertising for the populations which depend on the mass media to find out what is happening in the world, nor is it to denigrate the technical virtuosity with which the free lunch is prepared and served. Great skill, talent and much expense goes into such production, though less per unit of content than in the production of overt advertisements. Only a monstrous misdirection of attention obscures the real nature of the commodities involved. Thus with no reference to the "Sales Effort", Baran and Sweezy can say:

There is not only serious question as to the value of artistic offerings carried by the mass communications media and serving directly or indirectly as vehicles of advertising; it is

beyond dispute that all of them could be provided at a cost to consumers incomparably lower than they are forced to pay through commercial advertising.¹⁸

Under monopoly capitalism TV-radio programs are provided "free" and the newspapers and magazines are provided at prices which cover delivery (but not production) costs to the media enterprise. In the case of newspapers and some magazines, some readers characteristically buy the media product *because* they want the advertisements. This is especially the practice with classified advertisements and display advertising of products and prices by local merchants in newspapers and with product information in advertisements in certain magazines (e.g. hobby magazines). Regardless of these variations, the central purpose of the information, entertainment and "educational" material (including that in the advertisements themselves) transmitted to the audience is to ensure attention to the products and services being advertised. Competition among media enterprises produces intricate strategies governing the placement of programmes in terms of types of products advertised and types of "free lunch" provided in different time segments of the week (e.g. children's hours, daytime housewives' hours, etc.): all this in order to optimize the "flow" of particular types of audiences to one programme from its immediate predecessors and to its immediate successors with regard to the strategies of rival networks.¹⁹

(e) What is the nature of the service performed for the advertiser by the members of the purchased audiences? In economic terms, the audience commodity is a non-durable producers' good which is bought and used in the marketing of the advertiser's product. The work which audience members perform for the advertiser to whom they have been sold is to learn to buy particular "brands" of consumer goods, and to spend their income accordingly. In short, they work to create the demand for advertised goods which is the purpose of the monopoly capitalist advertisers. While doing this, audience members are simultaneously reproducing their own labour power. In this regard, it is appropriate to avoid the trap of a manipulation-explanation by noting that if such labour power is, in fact, loyally attached to the monopoly capitalist system, this would be welcome to the advertisers whose existence depends on the maintenance of that system. But in reproducing their labour power workers respond to other realistic conditions which may on occasion surprise and disappoint the advertisers. It seems, however, that when workers under monopoly capitalist conditions serve advertisers to complete the production process of consumer goods by performing the ultimate marketing service for them, these workers are making decisive material decisions which will affect how they will produce and reproduce their labour power. As the Chinese

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emphasized during the Cultural Revolution, if people are spending their time catering to their individual interests and sensitivities, they cannot be using the *same* time also to overthrow capitalist influence and to build socialism.

(f) How does demand-management by monopoly capitalism, by means of advertising, relate to the labour theory of value, to "leisure" and to "free time"? As William Livant puts it, the power of the concept of surplus value "... rests wholly on the way Marx solved the great value problem of classical political economy, by *splitting the notion of labour in two*, into labour in productive use and labour power (the capacity to labour)".²⁰ Labour in productive use in the production of commodities-in-general was Marx's concern in the three volumes of *Capital*, except for Vol. 1, chapter 6 and scattered passages in the *Grundrisse*. It is clear from these passages that Marx assumed that labour power is produced by the labourer and by his or her immediate family, i.e., under the conditions of handicraft production. In a word, labour power was "home-made" in the absence of dominant brand-name commodities, mass advertising, and the mass media (which had not yet been invented by monopoly capitalism). In Marx's period and in his analysis, the principal aspect of capitalist production was the alienation of workers from the means of producing commodities-in-general. Now the principal aspect of capitalist production has become the alienation of workers from the means of producing and reproducing themselves. The prevailing western Marxist view today still holds the incorrect assumption that the labourer is an independent commodity producer of labour power which is his to sell. Livant says it well:

What often escapes attention is that just because the labourer sells it (his or her labour power) does not mean that he or she produces it. We are misled by fixating on the true fact that a human must eat and sleep into thinking that therefore the seller of labour power must also be the producer. Again the error of two combines into one.²¹

We need a dialectical materialist description of the production of labour power, of the capacity and incapacity to labour and of the relationship of the production of labour power to our ability to live as human beings.²²

Am I correct in assuming that all non-sleeping time under capitalism is work time?²³ William Livant in commenting on a draft of this article, points out that the assumption should be plainly stated. As he puts it, a Marxist view

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. . . sees leisure time correctly as time of production, reproduction and repair of labour power. This production, reproduction and repair are activities. They are things people must do. As such, they also require labour power. To be sure, this latter labour power you do not have to sell directly to capital. But you do have to use it to produce labour power in the form you do have to sell.

Why was this hard to see? I think we can find the answer if we look at 'non-work' time. Marx points out many times (e.g. *Capital*, Vol. I, Ch. 6) that wage labour only becomes possible if your labour power becomes a *personal possession*, which it is possible for you to sell. You can do what you 'want' with it . . . Non-work time is labour power which is *yours not-to-sell*. Hence it seems to be doubly your personal possession . . .

When we see this, we can fit it within what Marx called the 'false appearance' of wage labour (citing *Wages, Prices and Profit*, Peking, 1973, pp. 50-1) . . . I think this false appearance has its other side. Just as it appears, at work, that you *are* paid for all the labour time you *do* sell, so it appears, off-work, that the labour time you *are not paid for is not sold* . . .

Work and non-work time bear interesting relations that need examination, to see beneath the false appearances. They in fact *divide* the whole world of commodities in *two*. For at work it is principally commodities-in-general that are made and distributed. Those who make and distribute these commodities do not sell them. But off-work, we find something else. What is being produced there is primarily the peculiar commodity, labour power. And off-work, those who make this commodity, also do not sell it. But it is sold, as surely as commodities-in-general made at the workplace.²⁴

It should be clear that for at least several generations labour power in advanced monopoly capitalist countries has been produced primarily by institutions other than the individual and his/her family. The mass media of communications and advertising play a large and probably dominant role

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through the process of consumption (by guiding the making of the shopping list) as well as through the ideological teaching which permeates both the advertising and ostensibly non-advertising material with which they produce the audience commodity.²⁵ When cosmetic counters in department stores display "Boxed Ego" (Vancouver, December, 1975), the dialectical relation of the material and consciousness aspects of the production of labour power should be evident.

What has happened to the time available to workers and the way it is used in the past century? In 1850 under conditions of cottage industry, i.e. unbranded consumer goods, the average work week was about 70 hours per week (and the work force was predominantly male).²⁶ At about the time when Marx was writing the *Grundrisse*, workers' savings, under the most favourable conditions of exploitation, could make possible

. . . the worker's participation in the higher, even cultural satisfactions, the agitation of his own interests, newspaper subscriptions, attending lectures, educating his children, developing his taste, etc., his only share of civilization which distinguishes him from the slave . . .²⁷

In that simple stage of capitalist development, Marx could see that the relentless accumulative process would proliferate commodities:

Capital's ceaseless striving towards the general form of wealth drives labour beyond the limits of its natural paltriness (*Naturbedurftigkeit*), and thus creates the material elements for the development of the rich individuality which is as all-sided in its production as in its consumption . . .²⁸

Many other references may be cited from the *Grundrisse* to similar effect. But all this assumed that consumer goods were not monopolized by brand names and that workers could dispose of their non-work time subject only to class and customary (i.e. traditional) considerations. In 1850, the average American worker could devote about 42 hours per week (168 hours minus 70 hours on the job and 56 hours of sleep) to such "cottage industry" type of production of labour power.

By 1960, the average time spent on the job was about 39.5 hours per week — an apparent reduction in work time of almost 30 hours per week (to which should be added 2.5 hours as a generous estimate of the weekly equivalent of annual vacations). Capitalist apologists equated this ostensible reduction in work time with a corresponding increase in “free” or “leisure” time. The reality was quite different. Two transformations were being effected by monopoly capitalism in the nature of work, leisure and consumer behaviour. On the one hand, huge chunks of workers’ time were being removed from their discretion by the phenomenon of metropolitan sprawl and by the nature of unpaid work which workers were obligated to perform. For example, in the contemporary period travel time to and from the job can be estimated at 8.5 hours per week; “moonlighting” employment at a minimum of one hour per week; repair work around the home, at another five hours per week; and men’s work on household chores and shopping at another 2.3 hours per week. A total of 16.8 hours per week of the roughly 32 hours of time supposedly “freed” as a result of capitalist industrialization is thus anything but “free”. A further seven hours of the 32 hours of “freed” time disappears when the correction for part-time female employment is made in the reported hours-per-week.²⁹ Three-fourths of the so-called “freed” time has thus vanished.

The second transformation involves the pressure placed by the system on the remaining hours of the week. If sleeping is estimated at eight hours a day, the remainder of the 168 hours in the week after subtracting sleeping and the unfree work time thus far identified was 42 hours in 1850 and 49 hours in 1960. We lack systematic information about the use of this “free time” for both dates. We do know that certain types of activities were common to both dates: personal care, making love, visiting with relatives and friends, preparing and eating meals, attending union, church and other associative institutions, including saloons. We also know that in 1960 (but not in 1850) there was a vast array of *branded* consumer goods and services pressed on the workers through advertising, point-of-sale displays, and peer group influence. Attendance at spectator sports and participation in such activities as bowling, camping, and “pleasure driving” of the automobile or snowmobile — all promoted for the sake of equipment sales by the consciousness industry — now take time that was devoted to non-commercial activities in 1850. In-house time must now be devoted to deciding whether or not to buy and then to use (by whom, where, under what conditions, and why) an endless proliferation of goods for personal care, household furnishing, clothing, music reproduction equipment, etc. Guiding the worker today in all income and time expenditures are the mass media — through the blend of advertisements and programme content.

How do Baran and Sweezy deal with the use made of this illusory increase in free time? Deploying Veblen’s concept of conspicuous consumption and

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thereby emphasizing the status-seeking character of workers' consumption decisions, they treat leisure time (without quotation marks) in psychoanalytic terms as time spent willfully in passivity and idleness:

This propensity to do nothing has had a decisive part in determining the kinds of entertainment which are supplied to fill the leisure hours — in the evening, on weekends and holidays, during vacations. The basic principle is that whatever is presented — reading matter, movies, radio and TV programs — must not make undue demands on the intellectual and emotional resources of the recipients: the purpose is to provide 'fun', 'relaxation', a 'good time' — in short, passively absorbable amusement.³⁰

What is wrong with this partial truth is: (1) it ignores the relationship of monopoly capitalism's Sales Effort, particularly advertising, to the problem; and (2) it substitutes casual bourgeois observations³¹ for an historical materialist attack on the problem.

As against the seven hours per week of apparent "non-work" time gained by the average worker between 1850 and 1960, how much time does he now spend as part of the audience product of the mass media — time sold to the advertisers? Here the audience-measurement sub-industry gives us some information. David Blank, economist for the Columbia Broadcasting System, in 1970 found that the average person watched TV for 3.3 hours per day (23 hours *per week*) on an annual basis, listened to radio for 2.5 hours per day (18 hours *per week*), and read newspapers and magazines one hour per day (7 hours *per week*).³² If we look at the audience product in terms of families rather than individuals, we find that in 1973, advertisers in the U.S. purchased TV audiences for an average of a little more than 43 hours per home per week.³³ By industry usage, this lumps together specialized audience commodities sold independently as "housewives", "children" and "families". In the "prime time" evening hours (7:00 to 11:00 p.m.), the TV audience commodity consisted of a daily average of 83.8 million people, with an average of two persons viewing per home. Women were a significantly larger proportion of this prime time audience than men (42 percent as against 32 percent, while children were 16 percent and teenagers, 10 percent).

We do not know even approximately how the worker's exposure to the mass media articulates with the other components in his/her use of "free time". It is relatively easy to determine how much radio listening and newspaper and

magazine reading takes place while travelling to and from work. But much TV and radio programming is attended to incidentally while engaged in other activities such as performing household chores, visiting with friends, reading, and now even while attending spectator sports.³⁴

This is the context in which we may pursue the question, how demand management by means of advertising in monopoly capitalism relates to the labour theory of value, to "leisure" and to "free time". It should now be possible to obtain some clues to the nature of work which workers perform in relation to advertising. If freedom is the act of resisting necessity, what is the nature of the process by which workers react to advertising, and why is it profitable for advertisers to advertise? An advertising theorist, Professor T.N. Levitt, says, "Customers don't buy things. They buy tools to solve problems."³⁵ It appears that the purpose of advertising, from the perspective of the advertising corporation, is to establish in the worker's consciousness (1) the existence of a "problem" facing the worker (acne, security from burglars, sleeplessness), (2) the existence of a class of commodities which will solve that problem, and (3) the motivation to give top priority to purchasing brand X of that class of commodities in order to "solve" that "problem". Given this situation, the realistic process of audience-members' work can be best understood in terms of the ever-increasing number of decisions forced on him/her by "new" commodities and by their related advertising. Unfortunately, while workers are faced with millions of possible comparative choices among thousands of "new" commodities, they lack scientifically objective bases on which to evaluate either the "problem" to be solved by buying the proffered "tool" or the efficacy of the "tool" as a solution to the "problem". In this situation, they constantly struggle to develop a rational shopping list out of an irrational situation.³⁶ As Linder puts it, the most important way by which consumers can cope with commodities and advertising is to limit the time spent in thinking about what to buy.

Reduced time for reflection previous to a decision would apparently entail a growing irrationality. However, since it is extremely rational to consider less and less per decision there exists a rationale of irrationality.³⁷

Monopoly capitalist marketing practice has a sort of seismic, systemic drift towards "impulse purchasing". Increasingly, the work done by audience members is cued towards impulse purchasing. Again, Linder is insightful:

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To begin with advertising is a means of making factual knowledge more accessible than otherwise. Second, it serves to provide quasi-information for people who lack time to acquire the genuine insights. They get the surrogate information they want to have, in order to feel that they are making the right decisions . . . The advertiser helps to close the information gap, at the same time exploiting the information gap that is bound to remain.³⁸

As the scarcity of time increases, the emphasis in advertising will be displaced in the direction of ersatz information. The object will be to provide a motive for an action for which no solid grounds exist . . . Brand loyalty must be built up among people who have no possibility of deciding how to act on objective grounds. As routine purchasing procedures gain in importance as a means of reducing decision-making time, it will become increasingly important to capture those who have not yet developed their routines.³⁹

In this connection, the new and sophisticated interest of market researchers in the relationship of advertising to children is very significant. According to the publisher of one recent study:

As the authors see it, consumption is a perfectly legitimate and unavoidable activity for children. Consequently they reject a strategy directed at protecting kids from marketing stimuli. What is necessary, then, is to acknowledge that children are going to watch television commercials and to prepare them to be selective consumers.

How Children Learn to Buy provides evidence to confront existing theories in the emerging field of consumer socialization. The work is essential to everyone concerned with the effects of advertising: sponsors, ad agencies, the television industry, educators, governmental regulators, consumer researchers, and parents.⁴⁰

Constrained by the ideology of monopoly capitalism, the bourgeois notion of free time and leisure is only available to those who have no disposable income

(and for whom it is, of course, a bitter mockery) and to those who are so rich that, as Linder says, for them, "the ultimate luxury is to be liberated from the hardships of having to do one's own buying."⁴¹ For everyone else, "free time" and "leisure" belong only in the monopoly capitalist lexicon alongside "free world", "free enterprise", "free elections", "free speech", and "free flow" of information.

What has happened to the time workers spend off-the-job while not sleeping is that enormous pressures on this time have been imposed by all consumer goods and service branches of monopoly capitalism. Individual, familial and other associative needs must be dealt with, but in a real context of products and advertising which, taken together, make the task of the individual and family basically one of *coping* while being constantly on the verge of being overwhelmed by these pressures. In this context, the work of the audience members which advertisers find productive for them is one of learning cues which are used when the audience member makes up his/her mental shopping list and spends his/her income.

(g) Does the audience commodity perform an essential economic function? Baran and Sweezy state that "advertising constitutes as much an integral part of the system as the giant corporation itself"⁴² and that "advertising has turned into an indispensable tool for a large sector of corporate business."⁴³ In this they go as far as Galbraith who said "... the marginal utility of present aggregate output, ex-advertising and salesmanship is zero."⁴⁴

But is the production and consumption of the audience commodity for advertisers a "productive" activity in Marxian terms? Baran and Sweezy are contradictory in answering this question. They tell us that advertising expenses "... since they are manifestly unrelated to necessary costs of production — however broadly defined — (they) can only be counted as part of aggregate surplus."⁴⁵ But after some agonizing over whether finance, insurance and real estate (which account for about twice the volume of national income as represented by advertising) are productive, they abandon their theoretical footing for rejecting expenses of circulation as unproductive of surplus:

Just as advertising, product differentiation, artificial obsolescence, model changing, and all the other devices of the sales effort do in fact promote and increase sales, and thus act as indispensable props to the level of income and employment, so the entire apparatus of 'finance, insurance, and real estate' is essential to the normal functioning of the corporate system and another no less indispensable prop to the level of income and employment.

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The prodigious volume of resources absorbed in all these activities does in fact constitute necessary costs of capitalist production. What should be crystal clear is that an economic system in which *such* costs are socially necessary has long ceased to be a socially necessary system.⁴⁶

I am aware that *Capital* can be and has been read frequently as denying the productivity of the expenses of middlemen in general. As I read the work, however, it seems to me that in *Capital* Marx was concerned to analyze the operation of capitalism under the then realistic conditions of competition and the organization of industry as being generally *unintegrated* from raw material processing through exchange to the consumption process.⁴⁷ Marx also clearly did not assume the predominance of branded commodities or the prevalence of advertising. If one turns to Marx's "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy", however, it seems probable that his analysis of monopoly capitalism, had such been possible in his time, would have answered the question of the productivity of advertising differently. Indeed the following passage accommodates the phenomena of advertising, branded merchandise, and monopoly capitalism in managing demands.

Consumption produces production in a double way . . . because consumption creates the need for *new* production, that is it creates the ideal, internally impelling cause for production, which is its presupposition. Consumption creates the motive for production; it also creates the object which is active in production as its determinant aim . . . No production without a need. But consumption reproduces the need . . . Production not only supplies a material for the need, but it also supplies a need for the material. As soon as consumption emerges from its initial state of natural crudity and immediacy — and, if it remained at that stage, this would be because production itself had been arrested there — it becomes itself mediated as a drive by the object. The need which consumption feels for the object is created by the perception of it. The object of art — like every other product — creates a public which is sensitive to art and enjoys beauty. Production thus not only creates an object for the subject, but also a subject for the object. *Thus production produces consumption (1) by*

*creating the material for it; (2) by determining the manner of consumption; and (3) by creating the products initially posited by it as objects, in the form of a need felt by the consumer. It thus produces the object of consumption, the manner of consumption and the motive of consumption. Consumption likewise produces the producer's inclination by beckoning to him as an aim-determining need.*⁴⁸

It is clear, firstly, that the exchange of activities and abilities which takes place within production itself belongs directly to production and essentially constitutes it. The same holds, secondly, for the exchange of products, in so far as that exchange is the means of finishing the product and making it fit for direct consumption. To that extent, exchange is an act comprised within production itself. Thirdly, the so-called exchange between dealers and dealers is by its very organization entirely determined by production, as being itself a producing activity. Exchange appears as independent and indifferent to production only in the final phase where the product is exchanged directly for consumption.⁴⁹

On such a footing it is possible to develop a Marxist theory of advertising and of branded commodities under monopoly capitalist conditions. When the president of the Revlon corporation says: "We manufacture lipsticks. But we sell hope", he is referring to the creation of products initially posited by it as objects in the form of a need felt by the consumer — similarly with Contac-C, the proprietary cold remedy which so disturbed Baran and Sweezy.⁵⁰ The denial of the productivity of advertising is unnecessary and diversionary: a *cul de sac* derived from the pre-monopoly-capitalist stage of development, a dutiful but unsuccessful and inappropriate attempt at reconciliation with *Capital*.

(h) Why have Marxist economists been indifferent to the historical process by which advertising, brand-name merchandise, and the mass media of communications have developed in monopoly capitalism over the past century? Why do they continue to regard the press, TV and radio media as having the prime function of producing news, entertainment and editorial opinion and not audiences for sale to advertisers? The evidence for the latter is all around us.

Baran and Sweezy do indeed indicate how much advertising has grown and when, i.e., by a factor of ten between 1890 and 1929.⁵¹ *But not why, how and with what connections.*

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In the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, newspapers and magazines in the countries going through the Industrial Revolution were characterized by: (a) diversity of support as between readers' payments, subsidies from political parties, and advertising (most of the latter being information about commodity availability and prices and not about branded merchandise); and (b) a cyclical process of technological improvement with consequent larger printing capacity, lower unit costs, lower unit prices of publications, larger profits, capital accumulation and reinvestment in new and more productive plants, etc.⁵² In that period, marketing of consumer goods was characterized by: (a) predominance of unbranded merchandise; (b) unintegrated distribution of commodities with the middleman being the most powerful link in the production-to-consumer chain; and (c) consequently, lack of massive advertising as a means of managing demand.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, capitalism faced a crisis. The first stage of the development of the factory system under conditions of competition between relatively small capitalists had succeeded in mobilizing labour supply and exploiting it crudely under conditions documented so ably by Marx in *Capital*. The very success of the system bred grave threats to it. Politically conscious labour unions posed revolutionary threats to capitalism.⁵³ Moreover, capitalist manufacturers were vulnerable to the power of the workers because the highly skilled workers possessed more knowledge about the production process than did their employers.⁵⁴ Manufacturers were thus blocked from ready control of their work force and from innovating the new and increasingly sophisticated machine processes of mass production which the rapid progress in physical sciences and engineering made possible. When they looked at their marketing methods, manufacturers were also beset by chronic insecurities. The periodic business cycles in their crisis and liquidation phases forced manufacturers into cut-throat pricing (of unbranded merchandise, typically) because of the pressure of overhead costs. The result was a short life expectancy for competitive industrialists.

In sum, a watershed in the development of capitalism had been reached. As M.M. Knight said, "Down to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, commerce dominated industry; after it industry dominated commerce."⁵⁵

Capitalism's systemic solution to the contradiction between its enormous potential for expanding production of consumer goods (and the profits to be thus realized) and the systemic insecurities posed by people as workers and people as consumers was to move to large scale rationalization of industrial organization (through vertical, horizontal and conglomerate integration).⁵⁶ This conferred control over supplies and prices in the factor markets, and in the marketing of end-products. But to make such giant integrated corporations viable, their operations had to address directly the problem of people (1) as workers at the job where they were paid, and (2) as buyers of the end prod-

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ucts of industry. The systemic solution was a textbook example of the transformation of a contradiction on the principle "one goes into two". This was an ideological task and it was solved by capitalizing on the deeply held ideological reverence for scientific rationality in the pursuit of possessive individualistic material goals.

After militant unions had been crushed by force between 1890 and 1910, scientific management was applied to people as workers. Knowledge about the work process was expropriated from skilled workers to management. The work process was reduced to "ladders" of dead-end "tasks" to complement which ever more sophisticated generations of mass production machines were innovated. And through varieties of "incentive" wage plans, linked with promotion-from-within on the basis of seniority, supported by company welfare plans (and later social insurance through government), the workplace where people got paid was transformed ideologically.⁵⁷ People learned there that work under monopoly capitalism involves competition between individuals whose possessive needs necessarily set them in conflict with each other rather than with the owners of the means of their (concealed) cooperative production. The carrot which systemically motivated them was the pursuit of commodities, which joined this half of the ideological exercise with the next.

Simultaneously the system dealt with its problem of people as buyers of end products. As on the job front, science was invoked. The objective was personal satisfaction, and the rationale was efficiency. The term "consumer" was invented to describe the desired object. Advertising and the creation of mass produced communications (press, radio and TV principally) were developed as the specialized means to this systemic end. Even if a seeming "over-production" of consumer goods threatened the profitability of an industry the ability of a company to distinguish its products from unbranded similar products allowed its sales and profits to grow in security. If studies are done — I have been able to locate none — of the history of brand names, it will be found that this was how brand name loyalty became an essential weapon in industry when the trusts which produced the present oligopolistic empires of monopoly capitalist industry became dominant features of the industrial landscape. Certainly the Baran and Sweezy thesis that monopoly capitalism manages demand through market controls and advertising would seem to carry as its corollary the hypothesis that something like the *suction* of commodities from the material production line to the oligopolistic end-product markets has replaced the atomistic *circulation* of commodities typical of Marx's time as the model of monopoly capitalist marketing. While historical scholarship in marketing seems conspicuously undeveloped, fragmentary evidence from studies of marketing history tend to confirm the outline of the process here sketched.⁵⁸

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For example, Joseph Palamountain says, "Great increases in the size of manufacturers or retailers have changed much of the distribution from a flow through a series of largely autonomous markets to a single movement dominated by either manufacturer or retailer."⁵⁹ Simultaneously, the newspaper and magazine industries found themselves in a position to vastly increase the productivity of the printing trades in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Technical advances in typesetting, printing (including colour), photographic reproduction, etc., could be financed if someone would foot the bill. The newspaper and magazine entrepreneurs (the William Randolph Hearsts and their rivals) invented the "yellow journalism" which took advantage of this situation. The cycle of capital expansion ensued in accelerated speed and scope. Production and circulation were multiplied, while prices paid by the readers were held constant or decreased. And the "mass media" characteristic of monopoly capitalism were created in the 1890's. It was these mass media, increasingly financed by advertising, that drew together the "melting pot" working class from diverse ethnic groups which were flooding in as migrants to the United States into saleable audiences for the advertisers.⁶⁰

The advent of radio-telephony in the first two decades of this century made possible the use of the same principle which had been proven in the print media. And so commercial radio broadcasting became a systemic innovation of, by, and for monopoly capitalism. When the pent-up civilian demand at the end of World War II, and the generous capital subventions of a government intent on winning that war had provided electronics manufacturers with shell-loading and other war plants easily convertible into TV set manufacturing, and when a complaisant FCC could be manipulated into favouring TV over FM broadcasting,⁶¹ TV was approved and largely financed out of capital accumulated from commercial radio broadcasting's profits.⁶²

Why was this media complex rather than some other mode of marketing developed by monopoly capitalism to create and control "consumers"? Because it offered a cheaper and more efficient mode of demand management than the alternatives which could be devised. What alternatives? The obvious alternative was "more of the same" methods previously used in marketing: heavier reliance on travelling salesmen to push goods to retailers, heavier use of door-to-door salesmen. To calculate the opportunity cost with a hypothetical elaboration of a marketing system designed to sell branded commodities without advertising was and is a horrendous prospect. Moreover, it would be pointless because mass production of (branded) consumer goods and services under capitalism would not have happened, absent advertising. An indication of the efficiency of the audience commodity as a producers' good used in the production of consumer goods (and a clue to a possible measure of surplus value created by people working in audiences) is provided when we compare

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advertising expenditures with "value added" by retailing of consumer goods and services. In 1973 in the U.S. some \$25 billion was spent in advertising while personal consumption expenditures were about \$800 billion. Three percent of the sales price as the cost of creating and managing demand seems very cheap — and profitable. The system also accrued valuable side-benefits. Institutional advertising and the merchandising of political candidates and ideological points of view in the guise of the free lunch and advertising messages were only appreciated and exploited systematically after World War I when propaganda and its associated public opinion polling were developed for war promotion purposes.

To summarize: the mass media institutions in monopoly capitalism developed the equipment, workers and organization to produce audiences for the purposes of the system between about 1875 and 1950. The prime purpose of the mass media complex is to produce people in audiences who work at learning the theory and practice of consumerism for civilian goods and who support (with taxes and votes) the military demand management system. The second principal purpose is to produce audiences whose theory and practice confirms the ideology of monopoly capitalism (possessive individualism in an authoritarian political system). The third principal purpose is to produce public opinion supportive of the strategic and tactical policies of the state (e.g. presidential candidates, support of Indochinese military adventures, space race, détente with the Soviet Union, rapprochement with China and ethnic and youth dissent). Necessarily in the monopoly capitalist system, the fourth purpose of the mass media complex is to operate itself so profitably as to ensure unrivalled respect for its economic importance in the system. It has been quite successful in achieving all four purposes.

If we recognize the reality of monopoly capitalism buying audiences to complete the mass marketing of mass produced consumer goods and services much further analysis is needed of the implications of this "principal and decisive" integration of superstructure and base which reality presents. First, the contradictions produced within the audience commodity should be understood more clearly. I refer to the contradiction as between audience members serving as producers' goods in the marketing of mass produced consumer goods and their work in producing and reproducing labour power. I think that the consciousness industry through advertising-supported mass media produces three kinds of alienation for the members of the audience commodity: (1) alienation from the result of their work "on the job"; (2) alienation from the commodities-in-general which they participate in marketing to themselves; and (3) alienation from the labour power they produce and reproduce in themselves and their children. It would seem that the theory of work needs reconsideration.

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Then connections to other areas need to be examined. Among such connections there come to mind those to Marxist theory about social consciousness (and false consciousness), to theory about the nature of the class struggle, the nature of the proletariat under monopoly capitalism and sex chauvinism, and to theories of the state. The last of these seems obvious if this analysis is considered in connection with the recent articles by Gold, Lo, and Wright.⁶³ The role of the mass media and the consciousness industry in producing the audience commodity both as commodity-in-general and peculiar commodity might provide the real sinews to the structural-Marxist model of the state of Poulantzas and to the theoretical initiatives of Claus Offe in seeking the processes within the state which "guarantee" its class character. The connection to the work of de Bord ⁶⁴ regarding consciousness is proximate. The relation of industrially produced images to the "real" world of nutrition, clothing, housing, birth and death is dialectical. The mass media are the focus of production of images of popular culture under monopoly capitalism, both through the explicit advertising and the "free lunch" which hook and hold people in audiences. Because the consciousness industry produces consumable, saleable spectacles, its product treats both past and future like the present — as blended in the eternal present of a system which was never created and will never end. The society of the spectacle, however, cannot be abstractly contrasted with the "real" world of actual people and things. The two interact. The spectacle inverts the real and is itself produced and is real. Hence, as de Bord says, objective reality is present on both sides. But because the society of the spectacle is a system which stands the world really on its head, the truth in it is a moment of the false. Because the spectacle monopolizes the power to make mass appearance, it demands and gets passive acceptance by the "real" world. And because it is undeniably real (as well as false) it has the persuasive power of the most effective propaganda.⁶⁵

Finally, another example of necessary connections is that to the theory of imperialism and socialism in the present stage of monopoly capitalism. There are many ways by which a theory of commodity production through mass communications would strengthen the analysis, for example, of Samir Amin.⁶⁶ The cocacolonisation of the dependent and peripheral countries cannot be grounded in Marxist theory without attention to the production of audience commodities in the interest of multi-national corporations. It would link Amin's theory to Herbert Schiller's work on the relation of the mass media to the American empire.⁶⁷ And, when linked with analysis of the ideological aspects of science and "technology", it could strengthen the development of a non-economistic, non-positive, non-Eurocentered Marxism. Analysis of such connections is inviting but beyond the scope of the present essay.

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Notes

1. To demonstrate this in detail would require a lengthy analysis which would deflect the present article from its affirmative purpose. Gramsci, the Frankfurt School writers (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Lowenthal), Raymond Williams, Poulantzas, Althusser, and Marxists concerned with the problems of developing nations (e.g. Samir Amin, Clive Y. Thomas) — none of them address the consciousness industry from the standpoint of its historical materialist role in making monopoly capitalist imperialism function through demand management (concretely through the economic processes of advertising and mass communications). This is precisely the blindspot of recent Western Marxism. In the developing debate it would be useful to have studies bearing on whether and why such writers have or have not dealt with this aspect of monopoly capitalism. Reality imposes a burden of proof on them as well as on me.
2. Lenin held a manipulative theory of the mass media and admitted naiveté in this respect. "What was the fate of the decree establishing a state monopoly of private advertising issued in the first weeks of the Soviet government? . . . It is amusing to think how naive we were . . . The enemy i.e., the capitalist class, retaliated to this decree of the state power by completely repudiating that state power." "Report on the New Economic Policy", Seventh Moscow Gubernia Conference of the Russian Communist Party, October 21, 1921, in *Lenin About the Press*, Prague, International Organization of Journalists, 1972, p. 203. Lenin's *Imperialism* is devoid of recognition of the relation of advertising to monopoly capitalism and imperialism.
3. *The Mind Managers*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1973.
4. "For a Political Economy of Mass Communications", *The Socialist Register*, 1973.
5. Sage Publications, Beverly Hills.
6. Cf. Finkelstein, Sidney, *Sense and Nonsense of McLuhan*, N.Y. International Publishers, 1968; Theall, Donald, *The Medium is the Rear View Mirror*, Montreal, McGill/Queen's University Press, 1971; and my review of the latter in *Queen's Quarterly*, Summer, 1971.
7. I am indebted to Professor William Livant, University of Regina, for much hard criticism which he formulated in a critique of a draft of this paper in December, 1975.
8. The objective reality is that the ostensible advertisements and the material which comes between them, whether in the print or electronic media, have a common purpose of producing the audience. It is an interesting consequence of the idealist perspective that in most liberal analysis the "advertising" is considered to be separate from the "news", "entertainment", "educational material" which is interlarded *between* the advertisements.
9. The annual cost to audience members of providing their own broadcast receivers (and paying for Cable TV), consisting of depreciation, interest on investment, maintenance and electric power, amounted to slightly more than \$1.8 billion, while the over-the-air broadcasters' (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation plus private broadcasters) and Cable TV operators' costs were about \$631 million.

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10. "On Contradictions", *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung*, Vol. 1, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1967, p. 336. Emphasis added.
11. New York, Monthly Review Press, 1966.
12. *The New Industrial State*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1967.
13. Chamberlin, E.H., *The Theory of Monopolistic Competition*, Cambridge, Mass., 1931.
14. *Monopoly Capitalism*, p. 116.
15. It is argued by one of my critics that a better term for what advertisers buy would be "attention". At our present naive stage concerning the matter, it does *seem* as if attention is indeed what is bought. But where people are paid for working on the job, should Marxists say that what the employer buys is "labour power" or "the manual dexterity and attention necessary for tending machines"? Where I refer to audiences as being produced, purchased and used, let it be understood that I mean "audience-power"; however it may turn out upon further realistic analysis to be exercised.
16. The pages of *Variety* report on cases where the ostensibly non-advertising matter in the media, which I call the "free lunch", attracted an audience which had propensities incongruous with the particular product or service being advertised; in such cases the program is cancelled and the audience discarded.
17. The "free lunch" concept of the mass media was first stated by Liebling A.J., *The Press*, N.Y. Ballantine, 1961.
18. *Loc. cit.* 121. Or for elaborate obfuscation, see Machlup, Fritz, *The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1962.
19. See Brown, Les, *Television: The Business Behind the Box*, N.Y. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971.
20. Livant, William, "Notes on the Development of the Production of Labour Power", 22 March, 1975 (dittoed).
21. Livant, William, "More on the Production of Damaged Labour Power", 1 April, 1975 (dittoed), p. 2.
22. In arguing that all non-sleeping time under capitalism is work time, I go beyond Samir Amin who says "Social time is split into non-working time and working time. But here too the former exists only to serve the latter. It is not leisure time, as it is called in the false consciousness of alienated men, but recuperation time. It is functional recuperation that is

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socially organized and not left up to the individual despite certain appearances", ("In Praise of Socialism", *Monthly Review*, September, 1974, p. 8). Amin also has the blind spot which does not recognize the audience commodity which mass media have produced.

23. I am perhaps wrong to exclude sleeping time from work. The dividing line between recreation of the ability to work while awake and sleeping may be illusory. It may be that the head coach of the Washington, D.C. "Redskin" professional football team, George Allen, is closer to the mark than most economists when he tells his players, "Nobody should work all the time. Leisure time is the five or six hours you sleep at night. You can combine two good things at once, sleep and leisure." Quoted in Terkel, Louis, *Working*, N.Y. Pantheon, 1974, p. 389.
24. Livant, William, "The Communications Commodity", (Xerox, University of Regina, 25 December, 1975), p. 7.
25. For present purposes I ignore the ancillary and interactive processes which contribute to the production of labour power involving also the educational institutions, the churches, labour unions, and a host of voluntary associations (e.g. YMCA, Girl Scouts).
26. The following analysis draws on the de Grazia, Sebastian, *Of Time, Work and Leisure*, N.Y., Anchor, 1964.
27. Marx, Karl, *Grundrisse*, London, Pelican, 1973, p. 287.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
29. Part-time workers (probably more female than male) amounted in 1960 to nineteen percent of the employed labour force in the United States and worked an average of 19 hours weekly. If we exclude such workers in order to get a figure comparable to the 70 hours in 1850, we consider the weekly hours worked by the average American male who worked at least 35 hours per week and find that they averaged 46.4 (as against 39.5 for all workers). For the sake of brevity, I omit the counterpart calculation of "free time" for women. No sexist implications are intended.
30. *Loc. cit.*, p. 346.
31. "... the manufacturers of paper and ink and TV sets whose products are used to control and poison the minds of the people ..." (*Ibid.*, p. 344).
32. Blank, David M., "Pleasurable Pursuits — The Changing Structure of Leisure-Time Spectator Activities", National Association of Business Economists, Annual Meeting, September, 1970 (ditto).
33. *Broadcasting Yearbook*, 1974, p. 69.

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34. For many years patrons at professional baseball and football games have been listening to portable radios broadcasting the same game. In 1975 I observed that patrons at professional football games are beginning to watch the same game on portable TV sets for the "instant replays".
35. Levitt, T.N., "The Industrialization of Service", *Harvard Business Review*, September, 1976, pp. 63-74, 73.
36. I use the term "rational" here in the common sense usage, that the result should be one which can be "lived with", is "the right decision", which "makes sense". I imply no Benthamist calculus of utilities or pleasure or pain.
37. Linder, Staffen B., *The Harried Leisure Class*, N.Y. Columbia University Press, 1970, p. 59.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
40. Publisher's blurb for Ward, Scott, Wackman, Daniel B., and Wartella, Ellen, *How Children Learn to Buy: The Development of Consumer Information-Processing Skills*, Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1977.
41. Linder, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
42. *Ibid.*, *Monopoly Capitalism*, p. 122.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
44. Galbraith, J.K., *The Affluent Society*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1958, p. 160.
45. *Ibid.*, *Monopoly Capitalism*, p. 125.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
47. At the outset of Volume II, *Capital*, Marx says: "It is therefore taken for granted here not only that the commodities are sold at their values but also that this takes place under the same conditions throughout. Likewise disregarded therefore are any changes of value which might occur during the movement in circuits." (Marx, Karl, *Capital*, Vol. II, Book II, p. 26. Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1967.)
48. Marx, Karl, *Grundrisse*. London, Pelican Books, 1973, p. 91-2. Emphasis added.

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49. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
50. Referring to a reported \$13 million advertising budget which produced \$16 million in drug store sales, expressed in wholesale prices, they say: "Allowing for a handsome profit margin, which of course is added to selling as well as production cost, it seems clear that the cost of production can hardly be more than a minute proportion of even the wholesale price." (*Op. cit.*, p. 119).
51. *Ibid.*, *Monopoly Capitalism*, p. 118.
52. Cf. Aspinall, A., *Politics and the Press*, 1949.
53. The young and conservative Richard T. Ely, writing in 1886 presented a sympathetic and respectful account of the radicalism of the existing union movement in the United States. Ely, Richard T., *The Labour Movement in America*, N.Y., T.Y. Crowell & Co. 1886.
54. Stone, Catherine, "The Origins of Job Structures in the Steel Industry", *Review of Radical Political Economy*, Summer, 1974, p. 113-173.
55. Knight, M.M., Barnes, H.E. and Flugel, F., *Economic History of Europe*, N.Y., Houghton Mifflin, 1928.
56. Brady, Robert A., *The Rationalization Movement in German Industry*. Berkeley, Univ. of Calif. Press, 1933, and his *Business as a System of Power*, N.Y., Columbia University Press, 1943. Also Veblen, T., *The Theory of Business Enterprise*, N.Y., Viking Press, 1964.
57. Jeremy Bentham and Charles Babbage had publicized the ideas; Taylor and his successors were the experts who applied them. See Braverman, Harry, *Labour and Monopoly Capital*. N.Y., Monthly Review Press, 1974; Stone, Catherine, "The Origins of Job Structures in the Steel Industry", *op. cit.*, and Palmer, Bryan, "Class, Conception and Conflict: The Thrust for Efficiency, Managerial Views of Labour and the Working Class Rebellion, 1903-1922.", *Review of Radical Political Economy*, Summer, 1974, p. 31 - 49.
58. Edwin H. Lewis argues that: "Prior to Civil War, in the United States, the wholesaler was typically the dominant factor in the channel. Small retailers and frequently small manufacturers as well, depended on the wholesaler to carry stocks and to give credit or financial support. Following the Civil War, large scale retailers became the dominant element in the distribution of convenience goods and certain shopping goods. As manufacturers have grown larger and as oligopolistic conditions have prevailed in many industries, the manufacturer has held a position of strength in the channel." Lewis, Edwin H., *Marketing Channels*, N.Y. McGraw Hill, 1968, p. 163.
According to Philip Kotler: "A change began in the 1890's with the growth of national firms and national advertising media. The growth of brand names has been so dramatic that today, in the United States, hardly anything is sold unbranded. Salt is packaged in distinctive manufacturers' containers, oranges are stamped, common nuts and bolts are packaged in cellophane with a distributor's label, and various parts of an automobile — spark plugs, tires, filters — bear visible brand names different from that of the automobile." Kotler, Philip. *Marketing Management*, 2nd ed., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1972, p. 446.

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59. Palamountain, Joseph C. Jr., "Vertical Conflict" in Stern, Louis W., *Distribution Channels: Behavioral Dimensions*, N.Y., Houghton Mifflin, 1969, p. 138.
60. Stuart Ewen, in *Captains of Consciousness* (N.Y., McGraw-Hill, 1976) provides abundant documentation of the purposiveness with which monopoly capitalism used advertising and the infant mass media for this purpose in the period around and following World War I.
61. Lessing, L.P. *Man of High Fidelity*. E.A. Armstrong.
62. Why did the cinema, generally conceded to be part of the mass media, not become producers of audience products as part of the systemic bulge of the consciousness industry after 1875? To this, there are several obvious answers. The cinema requires an audience assembled outside the home. It is in the ancient traditional mode of the theatre, arena, assembly, etc. As such it had its own momentum and defined its prime product as the sale of a seat at a particular location and time in relation to the exhibited film. What the advertisers needed — and what capitalism developed as a specialized part of the process of mass producing and mass marketing consumer goods — was a method of mobilizing people to work at being consumers in their alienated separate homes. This advertising supported media made possible. The motion picture industry is not so isolated from the marketing process as this explanation might suggest. "Tie-ins" for consumer goods are a normal part of the planning and receipts (often unreported for tax purposes) of the producers, directors, writers and star performers in theatrical films.
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INFINITY AND FINALITY:
HANNAH ARENDT ON
POLITICS AND TRUTH

F. Mechner Barnard

The crisis of the present world is primarily political.¹ Its gravity lies not in particular shortcomings or imperfections of political practices or modes of political thinking. Modernity is plagued not so much by the existence of a defective politics as it is marked by its virtual non-existence. For what it takes for politics is a fake; and by not recognizing the fake for what it is, it bids fair to render the crisis unresolvable. Through its almost total misconception of itself modern politics beclouds its very reality and thus existentially defies its own remedy.

This, in essence, is Hannah Arendt's diagnosis of our times. Her disdain for modern man's incapacity to perceive the true nature of politics is matched only by amazement over the enormity of his capacity for self-deception. Yet despite her disdain and her amazement she does not altogether falter. If only man could be made to see that he worships idols, that he mistakes a fabricated substitute for authentic reality, genuine politics might still be recoverable.

Authentic reality, or genuine politics, is not, however, something given, waiting to be discovered.² Neither is it made or made up; for a reality or a politics that is the product of making — whether it involves wilful deceit or not — is a fabricated reality or a fabricated politics.³ Reality and politics, if they are to embody or convey intelligible and valid meaning, have to be enacted, not made. The tragedy of our age consists in confusing acting with making. This confusion is so deep-rooted that it has warped modern man's political sensibility. This is the heart of the matter, the prime source of our crisis, the malaise of our times.⁴

Not surprisingly, therefore, the confusion between making and acting is the cardinal theme of Arendt's principal work, *The Human Condition*, and a subject to which she repeatedly returns in subsequent writings. My concern in this article is twofold. In the first place, I wish to explore the major categories and distinctions Arendt invokes in the course of elaborating her position. Beyond this I am anxious to reflect and comment on the position itself as I see

it. Clearly, the significance of a political thinker's normative position does not hinge wholly, or even decidedly, on the intrinsic meaning of any single claim made, nor, indeed, on the logical consistency of all the claims. Some of the most profoundly imaginative insights in political thought have lost little of their merit by not forming part of a coherent or comprehensive system or body of thought. My second concern, then — which, however, is not altogether separable from the first — is to evaluate Arendt's insights, their expressed or implied meanings and their possible impact, intended or otherwise. In particular I wish to focus on her polarization of political action in its boundless infinity, and truth, in its unchanging finality. Though strangely myopic and disturbingly ambivalent, her political vision strikes me as profoundly exciting; its redemptive thrust is unmistakable; what is less unequivocal is the redemption it envisages.

I shall draw, in varying degrees, on Arendt's published writings, but there is one work which merits special consideration, the highly seminal essay on "Truth and Politics". For the latter essay not only discloses her most pervasive anxieties, it also remarkably typifies the paradoxical tensions in her conceptual approach. And it certainly raises issues of pivotal importance to the central concerns of this article.

I

Manifestations of discontent with political reality have a long tradition. Janus-like, they frequently do two things simultaneously: they give vent to disenchantment over unfulfilled expectations and they sound a clarion call for a society's soul-searching, for its quest toward a better understanding of itself. No less frequently, a highly polarized terminology is used in order to sharpen awareness of, and concern for, the presumed decline of politics, the deterioration or loss of its avowed dignity. Hannah Arendt's work is a fitting contemporary example of this tradition. Its major theme, the lament over the passing of the Greek *polis* and, with it, the loss of the distinctiveness and dignity of political action, finds eloquent expression in *The Human Condition*. There she sees the profound difference between the modern and the ancient Greek understanding of politics in the disappearance of the gulf that the ancients perceived as a deep hiatus separating the political from the non-political domain. In the modern world politics has become subservient to economic and social interests; as a result of this "functionalization" of politics, the distinction between labour, work and action (Arendt's threefold division of human activity), has been blurred, and the uniqueness, greatness and integrity of the political realm almost forgotten. No more is it possible "to perceive any serious gulf between the two realms", they "constantly flow into each other like the waves in the never-ending stream of the life process itself."

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Acute uneasiness over this ceaseless inter-penetration of the political and the non-political realms is the most pervasive impulse of Arendt's political thought. To her the loss of a clear realization of their separateness is both the source and the symptom of a general blunting of modern man's sensibility for distinctiveness and meaning. Her fear is that modern theories of behaviourism could well be accurate in depicting modern trends, the trends of "sterile passivity" and purely routine behaviour.⁶ For just as the social has swallowed the political, so the ordinary has devoured the extraordinary; the drab and commonplace has ousted the great and unexpected. Behaviour, in short, has come to replace action, depriving, as it did, individuality and spontaneity of the space and scope they need for inserting themselves in the public realm.⁷ What is more, the social itself has, in enveloping the political, lost its own distinctiveness, as it simultaneously destroyed the distinctiveness of the private and the public. If the public has ceased to have a life and integrity of its own, so has the private. Gone is the privacy of family life, of fraternity and friendship, of the "intimacy of the heart."⁸ What we witness, according to Arendt, is a drastic reversal of existential meanings, a virtual metamorphosis of reality itself. What is meant to be hidden is now exposed, and what is meant to reveal and illuminate human greatness is condemned to darkness and obscurity.⁹ Speech, which confers upon the public realm the hallmark of the political — for speech is what makes man a political being — is degraded to "idle talk".¹⁰ Freedom, originally identifiable with politics, and solely with politics, is now almost totally located outside the political realm and indeed opposed to politics.¹¹ Force or violence, originally confined to the private household, now emerges as the defining characteristic, as the sole monopoly, of politics.¹² Incapable of facing the inherent uncertainty of action, and the unpredictability of its consequences, modern man substitutes making (where he knows the outcome or end-product) for acting, and "reckoning with consequences" for reasoning.¹³ Thus reality and human reason come to part company; modern realism is no more rational than modern rationalism real.¹⁴ The flight from infinity, uncertainty, and spontaneity generates another reversal: the denigration of death and daring and the adoration of life and security. Taking care of life's necessities, together with labouring activity, wholly foreign to the *polis*, now usurp the primacy of honourable deeds.¹⁵ This preoccupation with biological requirements, with social needs and economic wants, is, in Arendt's view, at the base of the deformation of politics, perverting a plurality of equals, acting and speaking together, for the sake of intrinsic principles, into the "pull and pressure and the tricks of cliques", motivated by greed, lust for domination, group and class interest, and factionalism of every sort.¹⁶ Thus a politics of diversity turns into a politics of divisiveness, the "judicious exchange of opinion" gives way to inveterate party strife, loyalty to one's fellows and commitment to principle debases itself to implacable partisanship and violent

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militancy.¹⁷ Even the relation between politics and truth, inherently antinomic though it (according to Arendt) necessarily is, deteriorates in the course of this transformation, the nature of their opposition evidently being determined by the character of human relationships in which the clash occurs. Thus, in a world of partial, conflicting interests, where nothing counts but pleasure and profit, truth clashes with the political only on the lowest level of human affairs, whereas Plato's philosophical truth clashed with the political "on the considerably higher level of opinion and agreement."¹⁸

Now, it is of lesser moment to our purpose whether Arendt's portrayal of the modern world, or, for that matter, of the Greek *polis* — her model of genuine politics — is accurate or not; for what we are chiefly interested in are the meanings which her principal concepts are intended to carry and the extent to which these meanings illuminate her vision of political redemption in which politics and truth come to confront each other at a level compatible with human excellence and dignity. Consequently, in subsequent sections, we shall look more closely at Arendt's contradistinction of making and acting, basic to her theory of political action, and to her polarization of politics and truth, which is equally basic to her conception of a politics of freedom and plurality.

II

Arendt traces the modern confusion of acting with making to Plato who, she maintains, was the first to provide a rationalization for the retreat from the infinity of genuine politics and from the "exasperation with the threefold frustration" attending it, its unpredictability, irreversibility and the anonymity of the authors of its processes.¹⁹ The Platonic rationalization was the first major attempt to replace the haphazardness and irresponsibility inherent in a situation in which a plurality of agents is enacting something new whose outcome is unforeseeable in its infinite boundlessness. Intended to shore up arguments against the frailty and fickleness of democracy, it actually spelled the doom of politics itself.²⁰ For it transmuted the meaning of political action: in place of acting in the sense of taking an initiative, of starting something new, of causing, together with others, things to happen in the public realm, the Platonic rationalization substituted ruling, the issuing of commands; and in place of plurality and diversity it put forward the monarchic idea of a philosopher - king.²¹ Henceforth the paradigmatic actor in politics came to be viewed as the master-craftsman, the architect, the expert, who knew what was to be done and why.²² To Arendt this change of conception constitutes the transfer of the organizational ethic of the household and private business into the sphere of politics and is the source of its virtual assimilation by the social, as it also signals the extinction of the private household itself as a distinct and

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distinctive entity.²³ Henceforth public business becomes indistinguishable from private business in that means-ends relationships apply equally to both. The notion that he who wills the end must also will the means thus becomes ubiquitous, a commonplace. Implicit in this notion and the means-ends relationship underlying it Arendt sees the Platonic separation of knowing and doing.²⁴ In the light of this separation knowledge comes to be associated with giving orders, issuing commands and rulership generally, while action comes to be associated with taking orders, obeying commands, and being ruled, with executing a plan or blueprint rather than designing it.²⁵ For Arendt the separation between knowing and doing is tantamount to the destruction of action in its innermost meaning; not surprisingly, therefore, she is distressed that it is this mutilated or perverted meaning of action, in terms of knowing without doing or doing without knowing, which "overruled all earlier experiences and articulations in the political realm and became authoritative for the whole tradition of political thought."²⁶ For what the separation typifies is not action but fabrication; it is in fabrication that processes "obviously" fall into a prior cognition or perception of the end-product and a subsequent organizing of its execution. And that affairs in politics generally came to be so intimately linked with violence is wholly attributable to the warped understanding of action in terms of making; for no fabrication could ever come to pass without violence.²⁷

Further elaborations soon make it evident, however, that in her critique of Plato, and to a lesser degree of Aristotle, for handling political matters in the mode of fabrication, she has in mind not *knowing* and doing, but *thinking* and doing. In the very same passage in which she discusses the division between knowing and doing, she suddenly switches from "knowledge" to "thought": action now loses its validity and meaning "the moment *thought* and action part company."²⁸ Presumably Arendt herself became aware that only the latter formulation is compatible with two essential characteristics of action as she conceives it. Since, on her view, no other human performance requires speech to the same extent as action, and since thought is expressed in speech; thought, speech and action are one and the same thing, and hence the notion of action being devoid of thought is simply incomprehensible.²⁹ But the same cannot be said of *knowledge* and action; for while thought being constitutive of action forms one essential characteristic of action, and, one might qualify further, a positive requirement, the necessary *absence* of knowledge from action forms the second essential characteristic of action, albeit a negative requirement. Indeed one would probably not be wrong in regarding knowing and acting as inherently opposed notions in Arendt's scheme of things, at any rate in her conception of acting in the public realm. Law-making, for example, which since Plato and Aristotle has been considered as the highest form of political activity, involving precisely the sort of superior knowledge the Platonic ruler is

supposed to possess, is judged by Arendt as a type of fabrication, laws being the products of making and not the result of acting, for what the legislator does is to devise a plan or design a blueprint, the execution of which is the very negation of acting, for what is to be done is not unknown and unpredictable, but fixed and certain.³⁰

That Arendt denies rather than affirms the linkage between knowledge and action is even more apparent from another work in which the closest analogue to action is seen in the occurrence of a *miracle*.³¹ Now, clearly, we do not speak of events as miracles when we know why and how they occurred. Arendt *deliberately* chooses the analogue of a miracle *because* she sees in *not* knowing one of the most disclosing qualities of action proper. She says so explicitly enough herself: men do not, and cannot, in acting, as distinct from making, *know* what they are doing, and thus can never be masters of their own destiny.³² Marx is sharply taken to task for having applied Vico's idea that history was made by man to political action; to her this is a telling illustration of an all-too-frequent conceptual switch from history to politics. To derive politics from history, or to apply to politics the vantage point of the historian, is to confuse, once again, acting with making. For to view action from the vantage point of the historian is to look upon it as a completed process; it is a sort of mirror image of Plato's blueprint. Hence Marx's conception of political action, no less than Plato's is dismissed by Arendt as just another attempt to rationalize the escape from the frustrations and the fragility of human action, as another exercise in "construing action in the image of making."³³ Action — in contrast to fabrication which has a definite beginning and a definite, predictable end — though it has a definite beginning, never has a predictable end.³⁴ In a very real sense, therefore, action is infinite — it has no end. "The process of a single deed can quite literally endure throughout time until mankind itself has come to an end."³⁵ From this Arendt deduces, logically enough, that man, never quite knowing what he is doing, may easily be "guilty" of consequences he never quite intended or foresaw, and thus should be looked upon much more as the "victim and sufferer" than the author of his action.³⁶ But, surely, if this is so, if man plunging into action scarcely knows what he is accomplishing, the separation between doing and knowing is in Arendt's portrayal of action as severe as in Plato's, in spite of profound differences in their conceptions of "doing".

If action, however, has no end, or, at any rate, no end knowable to the actor, what is the source, motivation, or point of acting, wherefrom does it derive its validity or meaning? Arendt is bent on showing that here, too, there is a radical difference between acting and any other human activity. While labour is bound up with biological needs and the satisfaction of material wants, which constitute both its motivation and its goal, and fabrication is governed by means-ends relationships and thus clearly delimited processes, action is free

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from internal (physical or psychological) motivation as it is free from the determination of set ends or common standards of ordinary (private or moral) behaviour.³⁷ In other words, action, unlike labour or work, is in a certain sense motive-less as well as aim-less, and it is also amoral in terms of ordinary codes of morality. Admittedly — and Arendt fully concedes this — action, like any other form of conscious human behaviour, has motives and aims, as it is also constrained by external reality, including its norms of conduct, but its defining characteristic lies beyond and transcends these determining and limiting factors. Arendt calls this “non-determining” characteristic a *principle*, by which she understands a distinctive but highly diffuse or general ethos or sentiment, whose validity, meaning, or worth, lies wholly in itself, and is neither derivable from, nor reducible to, anything else. She mentions such principles as honour, glory, love, or equality, and likens them to Montesquieu’s “virtue”, “distinction” or “excellence”, though she also adds fear, distrust, and hatred, that is, dispositions which, to my mind, are scarcely distinguishable from “motives” in the usually accepted sense. Arendt seems to think otherwise; she takes great pains to set principles sharply apart from motives, and for her the crucial difference lies in their mode of operation. Motives, in the form of dispositions, feelings, states of mind, intentions, aims, or reasons (the “because of” and “in order to” types of motivation), issue from “within the self”, whereas principles are sentiments which “inspire from without”. To actualize such principles is to *act*, and to act *freely*; not because of this or that personal motive or in order to produce this or that result, but for its own sake.³⁸ Action, thus conceived, in other words, carries its value and justification within the performance itself; indeed, action *is* performance, and it is an activity which is, as to its meaning and validity wholly self-sustaining. The political actor resembles, therefore, on Arendt’s view, the performing artist, the virtuoso, rather than the creative artist, the latter being much closer to the *modus operandi* of the fabricator.³⁹ The *raison d’être* of the political is to establish and maintain a space where “freedom as virtuosity” can make its appearance, where it finds a tangible reality in “words which can be heard, in deeds which can be seen, and in events which are talked about, remembered, and turned into stories.”⁴⁰

The defining characteristic or the distinguishing criterion of action as performance is “greatness”. Unlike ordinary human behaviour, action cannot and must not be judged according to standards and rules applicable to every-day affairs, because it is in its nature “to break through the commonly accepted and reach into the extra-ordinary, where whatever is true in common and everyday life no longer applies because everything that exists is unique and *sui generis*.”⁴¹ But greatness and glory, like the performance which they characterize, have nothing whatsoever to do with motives, intentions, or consequences; what matters, and what solely matters, is that the act is performed in

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public and is inspired by principles. Feats, thus performed, so shine in their radiance as to be worthy of remembrance.⁴²

A number of puzzling questions come to mind concerning Arendt's sharp distinctions between acting and making, acting and knowing (as distinct from thinking), and motives and principles. One cannot help feeling that she deliberately overdraws the contrasts in order to hammer in her eloquent plea for the unique distinctiveness of political action. And, likewise, one cannot help wondering whether her intense didactic impulse is not somewhat self-defeating. For while the didactic effectiveness of her choice of sharply polarized categories is undeniable, and the suggestiveness of her insights profoundly stimulating, the content of her categories, despite — and at times because of — painstaking elaborations remain irritatingly obscure or unreal or provokingly odd. What is more, she herself seems to realize at times that she is simply overdoing it. Thus she is clearly reluctant to face the full implications of her amoral conception of "greatness". She would like to suggest that somehow things need not get out of hand. Somehow political actions that are truly great *would* avoid brutality, words uttered in the public space *would not* be used to deceive;⁴³ but she stipulates no moral restraints within the conception itself that would lend support to such assumptions. Here, as elsewhere (as I shall argue) Arendt reveals a disturbingly selective moralism which verges on what I would call a form of moral separatism. One may formally distinguish between acting in accordance with, or for the sake of, an external principle, and acting out of personal feelings or in order to promote a particular end; but one can hardly speak of *judging* actions by only taking into account their inspiring principles and not caring where these could or did lead or why or how they came to exercise their inspiring influence.

Moreover, the matter goes deeper than this. *Should* one act as if one had no image of the end in mind, as if the outcome of actions were unknowable, as if personal feelings counted for nothing and *the principle* counted for everything? Or are such questions, puzzling and troublesome though they are, wholly beside the point when greatness is at stake? To be sure, Arendt is fully aware of these frustrating puzzles; time and again she acknowledges the depressingly frustrating predicament of being seen and being heard in public, of acting *politically*, yet every attempt to resolve or reduce the problematical, if not paradoxical, tensions, represents to her a retreat from acting, an escape from greatness. But this inevitably raises the most fundamental question, the question that touches the core of the matter: why should man aim at greatness, why should he embark upon action so pregnant with futility and frustration; why should he shun being a worker or a fabricator if, in so doing, he achieves results that are wholly intangible, uncontrollable, and unfathomable, where he is groping in the dark, not knowing whether he be the author or victim of his deeds? What, in short, would he miss by not acting, by not performing in

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public, by avoiding greatness and glory? Arendt's reply is as starkly simple as it is devastatingly complex: man, by not acting robs himself of himself, he annihilates his distinctive identity as a human being. For to act means to reveal oneself as an individual human entity, as a *person*.⁴⁴ It is *this* reply which compels us to take the redemptive thrust of Arendt's political thought seriously, however circumspect we might feel about her conceptual approach, about her passion for polarities and paradoxes, about her poetic allusions, about her provoking oddity.

Unfortunately, it is not clear how or why — hence the complexity of Arendt's reply — the greatness or glory of an action is to disclose the personal identity of the actor, the "who" as distinct from the "what" a person is. For it is by no means evident that the nature of the performance is necessarily identifiable with the nature of the performer, with the kind of person he is. Admittedly, it is only through famous deeds that one can acquire immortal fame.⁴⁵ But why or how should the principle for the sake of which the deed was performed self-evidently reveal the character of the person who acted upon it? Could not, putting it simply, a timid man perform feats by word or deed that others judge to be bold and courageous? Arendt concedes as much: the hero the story discloses needs no heroic qualities; an action is no less great, "and may even be greater", if the "hero" happens to be a coward.⁴⁶ But if this is so, if men do not do what they do because they are who they are, it is hard to grasp in what revelatory manner their actions disclose their "personal qualities", their distinctive individual identities as persons, as Arendt claims. Her distinction between the "who" and the "what" of a person does not, I fear, make the task any easier. For how does she envisage the dissociation of the "who" — his personal qualities, from the "what" — "the qualities an individual possesses"?⁴⁷ That she has more in mind than the difference between actualized and latent qualities is perfectly obvious, for she distinguishes not only between kinds of individual qualities but also between phases of an action in which these different qualities surface and reveal themselves. Thus only the story of the performance itself discloses *who* a person was, everything else we know of him, "including the work he may have produced and left behind", only discloses *what* he was.⁴⁸ Moreover, the "who" to be revealed is not simply the person *qua* man, but the person *qua* citizen, and hence, notwithstanding Arendt's distinction, the "what" is not really entirely detachable from the "who"; only the free man qualifies as citizen, and not the slave or the labourer who is subject to coercion by others or driven and urged on by the necessities of life.⁴⁹ Evidently, it does matter *what* the who is; and, what is more, on Arendt's own showing, it is the "what" rather than the "who" that the actor himself is capable of having at least some knowledge of. He would, that is, most likely be aware of his status as labourer or slave and he would most pro-

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bably have a fair idea where his own strength and weaknesses lie. But he could only very inadequately know *who* he is, for the disclosure that action is meant to yield is of no direct cognitive benefit to the actor himself. It is only to the others that he discloses himself, not to himself. Man can never know himself as a direct result of plunging into action; he can only know of himself what others think of him.³⁰

Perhaps one could interpret Arendt to mean that what matters in politics is not the character qualities of a person but the manner in which he plays a role or wears a mask. The analogy she draws between politics and the theatre might lend support to such an interpretation.³¹ Yet this does not dispose of the problem of whether a role is identifiable with the *who* of a person rather than with the *what*. Possibly, this unclearness concerning the relationship between an action and the "who" and "what" of its performer stems again from an essentially ambivalent stance on Arendt's part. She appears as reluctant to derive greatness from internal personality traits, as she is loath to deprive the actor of his distinctive individuality and to view him as a mere cog that is pushed and pulled from the outside.

Be that as it may, one thing is made unequivocally manifest: human greatness can be achieved solely by acting publicly, by taking part in *arche*, by starting new things in the political realm, by being a citizen. In viewing the connection between human excellence and political action so inextricably tight, as Hannah Arendt does, she markedly departs from the tradition that spans from the age of the Greek *polis* to the present day. Indeed, it is her opposition to this intervening tradition which decisively typifies her political thinking. Although she is manifestly far from indifferent to the moral content of political action, the gravity of her intellectual energies centres on the uniqueness and intrinsic meaning of politics *per se*, apparently, even at the risk of moral separatism. What she laments above all is the passing of an era in which politics was valued as the most distinctive human activity and taken seriously on its own terms.

No other single work reveals more strikingly the extent to which Arendt is prepared to uphold the distinctiveness and autonomy of the political realm than her essay on "Truth and Politics". For the saliency of its juxtaposition of truth and politics lies in presenting truth as not only outside politics but as potentially hostile to it. The externality of truth is as much a condition for the autonomy of politics as it is the basis of its own inherent validity. Neither can preserve its integrity if invaded by the other. The dignity of the political realm rests, therefore, on its intrinsic autonomy, on the underivative character of the principles sustaining it.³²

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III

Disregarding the question of the ontological meaning of truth, Arendt makes that much clear: truth is not of one piece; it has at least two faces which she distinguishes as "rational" and "factual". Rational truth, whether produced or disclosed by the human mind, comprises mathematical, scientific, and philosophical concerns, concerns pursued "in solitude and remoteness", while factual truth chiefly refers to the "outcome of men living and acting together."⁵³ Although both varieties of truth are external to politics, factual truth shares with politics, as a matter of necessity, a common involvement with man in the plural.⁵⁴ This shared characteristic accounts for one reason why facts are often mistaken for opinions; the other derives from the "annoying contingency" of facts.⁵⁵ Things could always have occurred otherwise than they actually did, so that what in retrospect appears as inexorable necessity is a sort of illusion.⁵⁶ The possibility of mistaken identity clearly harbours the risk of facts being deliberately discredited, manipulated or indeed destroyed, in that events or individuals are utterly wiped out from the historical record.⁵⁷

But the risk of encroachment by the political powers that be upon the domain of factual truth is not the only danger to guard against. It is not only truth that needs saving from the designs of politics, politics itself needs saving from the onslaught of truth. For all forms of truth contain, in Arendt's view, a coercive, if not tyrannical propensity which threatens the very existence of politics.⁵⁸ Factual truth, through its closer proximity to the political realm, is the most likely to clash with political action, and hence needs watching in particular. It is, therefore, factual truth that Arendt claims to be chiefly concerned with in her treatise on "Truth and Politics".⁵⁹

What precisely does she mean, however, by factual truth? This is not altogether clear; for she tends to run together at least three distinct meanings: (i) what actually is, that is, the objectively given in any situation; (ii) what, in point of fact, is said about it, by witnesses and others; and (iii) what, by way of reaction, is thought and felt about it. Thus, if factual truth is coercive in any one of these senses, it is so quite differently from that of any of the others. Judging by the only example she cites as typifying "factual truth", one would infer that it is the first meaning, the objectively given, that she has principally in mind. At the same time she makes it perfectly clear that she considers personal truthfulness as the hallmark of factual truth,⁶⁰ which suggests that she is thinking in terms of the second or third meaning given above.

The example of "factual truth" repeatedly cited throughout the essay on "Truth and Politics" is the invasion of Belgium by Germany during the First World War. Whatever interpretation we may construct upon "brutally elementary data of this kind" cannot alter their existential finality, their bedrock of inescapable factness.⁶¹ It could be objected that simple observation

statements, such as "Germany invaded Belgium in August 1914", true though they are as descriptions of events, imply no justification or explanation for action; that, stripped of a context of meanings, such truths have no compelling force whatsoever. There is, of course, soundness in the objection, but I doubt if it really hits the mark. Arendt is quite aware that facts need interpretation to disclose intelligible meaning.⁶² Her point is, if I understand her correctly, that, unless there is something we can take to be true in the unequivocal sense in which we accept the factness of the German invasion of Belgium in 1914, we have no way of knowing how anything could be false.

Perhaps a phrase Arendt uses in another essay, "Lying in Politics", may help to clarify this point. In it she takes the American Administration to task for not having been able "to confront reality [in Vietnam] on its own terms because it had always some parallels in mind that 'helped' it to understand those terms."⁶³ Because of this failure to realize that we cannot readily apply criteria or perspectives to a new situation that may have served us well in a previous situation, lying had been resorted to. Yet Arendt's principal worry here, despite the title of the essay, is not so much lying as a total loss of a sense of reality, which is far more disastrous in so far as it renders us utterly helpless. It is a condition which negates all judgment, truth-telling or lying.

A familiar predicament of human action reveals "reality", however, as having both a passive and an active quality: man sees himself, in any situation, constrained by facts which exist independently of his own designs and desires, while at the same time he is conscious of his capacity to choose between alternative courses of action. On the one hand, he is confronted by reality as an inescapable given; on the other, he acts upon it. His world, therefore, is a field of tension between a realm of factual givens, the domain of "finality", and a realm of potential deeds, the domain of "infinity". For Arendt, action in politics revolves around initiating processes designed to "change the world".⁶⁴ Factual truth — in the sense of the objectively given — thus confronts man, bent on changing the world, as inescapable reality, as something he has to come to terms with. Arendt sees this confrontation as a clash between "what is" and what is to be, and derives from this meeting of opposites her coercion theory of truth as well as her theory of lying in politics. Lying enables the political actor to overcome the coerciveness of "what is". He says "what is not so because he wants things to be different from what they are."⁶⁵ Lying is one response to the challenge of factual truth, one way of bridging the gap between facts and deeds, between finality and infinity; it is one way of "reconciling" compulsion with freedom. Arendt speaks of our ability to lie as one of "the few obvious, demonstrable data that confirm human freedom."⁶⁶ From this perspective, factual truth presents a potential threat to politics as a free activity, just as rational truth, with its zealous hankering for changeless finality is liable to imperil its boundless infinity.

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This, however, as Arendt realizes and indeed stresses, is only one side of the coin. Granted that factual truth in its existential coerciveness and stubborn resilience inhibits political action — in view of which Arendt calls factual truth non-political or even anti-political,⁶⁷ can we therefore ignore it and turn a blind eye to its existence? In other words, can we dismiss reality as though it were otiose? Arendt's reply is that we cannot; for if we refuse to face reality, or at least that part of reality which directly impinges upon acting in the public realm, we have no benchmark, no point of reference from which to start something new. Not knowing "what is", we can hardly strive for "what is not". We are adrift, having lost the ground on which to stand.⁶⁸ It is precisely for having lost its bearings that the American Administration is taken to task in Arendt's essay on "Lying in Politics".

Arendt's position, then, on the relation of truth to politics is undeniably ambivalent. But while disturbing in some of its implications, it is not contradictory so long as factual truth is identified with the first of the three meanings mentioned earlier. As soon, however, as the other meanings are brought into play, the cognitive content of "factual truth" becomes blurred; the category can no longer sustain the weight put upon it. Arendt's elaboration of her position threatens, as we shall see, its own viability, its very ground on which to stand.

IV

To reinforce her argument in support of the distinctiveness of political action Arendt introduces a further juxtaposition. Although she insists that the only real opposite to factual truth is the fabrication of deliberate falsehoods, she finds Plato's distinction (in the Line allegory) between knowledge and opinion useful for contrasting factual truth with "opinion". (Unfortunately, she misleadingly suggests that Plato equates opinion with illusion.⁶⁹ Plato does not oppose opinion to knowledge as something non-existent or necessarily false; opinion can be true or false, for one can have "correct beliefs without knowledge". [*Republic*, 506 c] Curiously enough, Arendt herself subsequently refers to Plato's concept of "right opinion";⁷⁰ could one have "right illusions"?) Whereas truth, as an absolute, or as a self-evident fact, entails an "indisputable" claim to validity, opinion stakes no such claim. Axioms, or facts, are "beyond agreement"; opinions, by contrast, are inherently discussable; if the former preclude debate, the latter invite it, and hence are the very "hallmark of all strictly political thinking."⁷¹ While self-evidence confers upon truth a coercive propensity, the lack of self-evidence to be found in opinion defines its distinctly persuasive character.⁷² It follows that opinion,

necessarily involving numbers, differs drastically from truth, which is independent of numbers, in the "mode of asserting validity".⁷³

Arendt's presentation here remarkably echoes Aristotle's reasoning in the *Rhetoric*, in particular his distinction between "things about which we deliberate" and things which are beyond the scope of deliberation.⁷⁴ Once again the "finality" of truth is contrasted with the "infinity" of politics, the former being beyond agreement, the latter forever seeking agreement through discussion and deliberation, through persuasion and argument. And once again the blurring of the distinction is sadly deplored. Modern man is said to confuse truth and opinion as easily as he confuses acting with making, and this makes it so much more plausible to present opinion as truth or to dismiss truth as mere opinion.⁷⁵

But having drawn the line separating truth from opinion, Arendt herself succeeds — albeit unwittingly — in blurring it by elevating opinion to a degree of universality which makes it scarcely distinguishable from truth. The confusion which this qualitative leap produces is made complete by her use of the term "impartiality" — the hallmark of truth — to characterize opinion "at its best".⁷⁶ But this is not merely confusing; it seriously imperils the very foundations of Arendt's theory of political action. For what is at issue here is no longer a matter of adhering to a formal distinction, or of blurring it, but a question of political substance of the first order. It will be necessary, therefore, to trace briefly the steps by means of which Arendt, starting from a pluralistic and diversitarian base, shunning unanimity in the best Millian tradition, arrives at consensual unity strangely reminiscent of Rousseau's general will — I say "strangely", because Rousseau's notion of the general will is anathema to Arendt.

Political thought is representative — that is her major premise. The more people's standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given point in dispute, the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking and the more valid my final conclusions, my opinion.⁷⁷ That representative thinking is disinterested, in that it excludes consideration of one's own private interests, constitutes her minor premise.⁷⁸ From these premises it is supposed to follow that, however diverse opinions might be to start with, and however strongly they might conflict over particularities, they are bound to "ascend to some impartial generality", by being publicly discussed from all sides.⁷⁸

Since there is no suggestion that this eventual common understanding or agreement would ensue through the assistance of physical force or the exercise of group pressures, Arendt must assume, as Rousseau did, that conflicts are not real or fundamental or permanent if individuals think as citizens and not as private persons, and if they think exclusively as individual citizens and not as members of sectional groups. Having liberated themselves from their subjective

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idiosyncracies and private conditions, men, evidently *must* attain agreement.⁸⁰ Yet, what warrants this belief? Why should it be taken for granted that there is but one single conception of the common or general good? Is it not conceivable that even in the absence of "private interests" there could be disagreement not only over "particularities" but over general ends? And, if so, who is to judge between different conceptions of the general good? Arendt does not suggest an equivalent of, or substitute for, Rousseau's Legislator, so there is no way of knowing how she proposes to resolve such differences. Presumably, she rules out such a possibility; presumably, she holds that individuals — unlike parties, classes, or interest groups — would differ only over particularities which are invariably resolvable through discussion, through a process of disinterested reasoning. Stalemate, anarchy, or permanent conflict, evidently could not occur.

Moreover, Arendt's position on representative thinking in politics seems oddly ambivalent. On the one hand she approvingly cites Aristotle's warning that men who are unconcerned with "what is good for themselves" cannot very well be trusted with representing the down-to-earth interests of the community.⁸¹ On the other hand, however, she regards disinterestedness, the "liberation from one's private interests", as the defining quality of representative opinion.⁸² Admittedly, a cynic could argue that there is no necessary inconsistency involved here, since politicians know very well "what is good for themselves" by not *appearing* to be motivated by their private interests. But this is not Arendt's argument. On the contrary, she makes it perfectly plain that representative thinking must be sharply distinguished from representative *government* (for opinions, unlike interests, cannot be represented), or from trimming one's sail, or from counting noses, or from joining majorities; and she certainly does not mean identifying with the interests of the group to which one happens to belong.⁸³ Nor is representative thinking contingent on deliberating with others in common assembly. Even when completely alone "can I make myself the representative of everybody else."⁸⁴ Adopting Kant's notion of an enlarged mentality and his concept of universality of *intent* (not to be confused with actual universality), Arendt is combining here aesthetic and moral criteria for judging and acting. Thus, when she is invoking Aristotle in this context, she obviously is not identifying the "down-to-earth interests of the community" with Bentham's aggregate of private interests. The man not to be trusted in politics is not one who is incapable of "representing" private or group interests, but one who is incapable of taking into account diverse — albeit down-to-earth — opinions of those with whom he shares a common interest as a fellow citizen. However, — and here lies the apparent ambivalence — men should also be concerned with "what is good for themselves". How is this requirement to be reconciled with disinterestedness? The only interpretation of this phrase which seems compatible with Arendt's position is a tautological and

"moralistic" one, namely, one which implies that only those capable of representative thinking also reveal, in so doing, a proper concern for what is truly good for themselves. It is they who are the paradigmatic opinion holders.

Clearly, nothing could be further removed from Plato's view (or, for that matter, the most current view) of political opinion than this highly universalist and moralist understanding of opinion. When, in the *Republic* (vi, 493) Plato poses the (to him insoluble) problem of combining "representative thinking" (in terms of what an assembly of men think or would approve of) with doing what ought to be done, he brings into sharp relief what Arendt oddly fails to recognize or accept, namely, that "opinion" in politics is what people do think and not what they ought to think. I advisedly say "oddly fails to recognize", because in the light of the universalist and moralist flavour of her notion of political opinion the juxtaposition of truth and opinion becomes practically forceless. With so much emphasis on universality and impartiality we no longer know a political opinion when we see one.

The central point of the didactic enterprise, therefore, the sharpening of our awareness of the distinctiveness of politics as a realm of plurality and diversity seems utterly lost in this virtually apolitical vision of consensual unity. One finds it hard to resist the suspicion that, for Hannah Arendt, political opinions are indistinguishable from discussion points. Clashes of views are presented not as confrontations between settled positions or commitments but as multiple dialogues in a debate in which impartial reasoning cannot but attain consensus, if not unanimity. Even if it is conceded that political positions are changeable, that convictions are rarely so firmly held that they are wholly impervious to persuasive counter-arguments, this is still far from saying that political opinions are fluid to a degree that would totally negate a sense of abiding antagonism or opposition. Clearly, an image of political redemption that did so, that issued in the negation of dissent, would empty the concept of plurality of all meaning.

V

Since Arendt claims to be concerned with truthfulness rather than truth, *per se*,⁸⁵ it is surprising that this distinction is constantly lost sight of in her essay on "Truth and Politics". For throughout her discussion it seems that truthfulness as well as truth is made contingent on disinterestedness, impartiality, and non-commitment.⁸⁶ No doubt, partisanship, the allegiance to causes and organizations, will entail a higher premium being put on loyalty to one's fellows and on steadfastness of purpose than on truth. This, indeed, is one important reason why Arendt values human fellowship (*humanitas*) above truth.⁸⁷ All the same, can we not be perfectly *truthful* when we are explaining

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or defending purposes or principles that we cherish or interests that we consider vital to others or to ourselves? Personal truthfulness by itself, admittedly, is no guarantee for the truth content of a proposition. For the only cognitive test of a truth claim is its challengability on grounds recognized as intrinsic or non-special-pleading. Whatever be the ontological status of truth, it is essential that we hold that there are criteria for discerning truth which are self-sustaining and do not derive from our likes and dislikes, our class or group interests or personal advantage. But it seems to me that Arendt is confusing (in "Truth and Politics") two quite distinct sets of criteria, those of a man's personal attributes, and those which apply to impersonal propositions.

To establish the truthfulness of first-order observation statements of the kind Arendt cites — the German invasion of Belgium — we refer to objective reality for verification (as witnessed and recorded by impartial observers). When, however, we are presented with second-order statements which embrace interpretations, evaluations, and explanations of, or personal responses to, first-order observation statements, we can no longer simply refer to the objective "elementary data" (as Arendt calls them) to form a judgment of their validity as truth claims. In other words, the criteria we apply to "what is said" about what is or was, and to "what is being thought or felt about it" (the second and third possible meanings of "factual truth", mentioned earlier), involve judgmental considerations of a kind that do not arise in examining the correspondence of first-order truth claims to elementary facts. Attitudes, assessments, and specific action responses entail in varying degrees subjective commitments which are either non-existent in first-order truth claims or easily discountable.

There is no need to dwell at length on the rather unproblematic way in which the notion of commitment is used in "Truth and Politics". But even in the very general sense in which Arendt speaks of commitment, equating it with partisanship, or one-sided dedication to a cause or interest, one may wonder whether "non-commitment" is necessarily synonymous with impartiality, as she seems to hold. For, while there are, no doubt, commitments which militate against impartiality, non-commitment could do so likewise, since it may simply mean indifference; and indifference clearly is not the same as impartiality. When we are indifferent we do not care one way or the other about moral, aesthetic, factual, or any other considerations or values. But to be impartial, we have to care for such values as objectivity, fairness, or justice. Should we not, therefore, regard impartiality itself as a form of commitment rather than as a form of non-commitment? Arendt does not explore this question; it is evident, however, that but for one occasion where she speaks of a "commitment to truth",⁸⁸ truth and commitment are, for her, inherently opposed categories.

The polarization of truth and commitment does prove, nonetheless, of heuristic merit when we consider each as constituting the end of a continuum

which comprises variants of either or combinations of both. Thus we might think on the one extreme of those who at all times feel compelled to proclaim the truth (or what they conceive to be the truth) regardless of consequences, and on the other extreme of those so committed to causes or interests that they feel compelled to suppress the truth or have recourse to downright lying. Indeed, we could speak here of two rival absolutist ethics, the ethic of unconditional veracity, and the ethic of unconditional commitment. In any politics, but particularly in a politics of public controversy, the viability of both absolutist ethics will be highly precarious, not only because they are likely to breed intolerance or impair credibility, or both, but also because political action, unlike moral action, is commonly not evaluated — as Arendt wholly acknowledges and indeed insists — by its motives or intentions, but by its outcomes — notwithstanding Arendt's dismissal of "consequences". The conflict in politics, therefore, is not between non-partisan truth and partisan commitment (although it frequently is one between private conscience and public posture), but between weighing the responsibility for the action itself against strict adherence to truth or set commitments. When Robert Stanfield, previous leader of the Progressive Conservatives, reportedly stated, after the last Canadian Federal election, that "being truthful was more important than being a leader", he poignantly captured the essential difference between moral thinking and political thinking. No doubt, what is right and wrong in political terms can never be strictly known in advance — in view of which Arendt speaks of an action's boundless unpredictability — but this does not alter the fact that we hold men engaged in public affairs responsible for what they say or do in light of the consequences we attribute to their words or deeds.

If speaking the truth in public would invariably prove to be the best policy there would clearly be no problem. Likewise, if lying invariably achieved desirable results in public life there would be no problem either. Yet, clearly, neither alternative is the most likely one in politics; for both the wholly "irresponsible" truth-teller and the wholly committed liar will find their absolutized ethic counter-productive to their political ends. All this is obvious enough, and I am not suggesting for a moment that Arendt would deny it. But I *am* wondering whether, by so pointedly focusing on the polarized extremes, she does not unwittingly obscure what throughout her writings she has persistently been determined to maintain, namely, the inherently absurd, or tragic, nature of the predicament that acting publicly involves. For, clearly, the choice is not simply between truth and politics, or, as Plato and Machiavelli saw it, between clean hands and soiled hands;⁸⁹ nor is it a matter of thinking impartially or of being committed or not. The potentially agonizing problem is rather that of acting responsibly, or merely successfully, in a sphere where outcomes are incalculable, and where moral and political imperatives conflict.

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This problem may indeed be insoluble in principle, yet action demands that it be mounted by the incessant balancing of diverse, conflicting and, at times, irreconcilable ends or purposes. We may be deceived about our ends, but we would scarcely act at all on the principle of endlessness.

VI

Perhaps the most intriguing part of Hannah Arendt's essay on truth and politics is that devoted to the problem of self-deception in politics. Self-deception, she maintains, should be treated as far more serious a problem in politics than lying to others. For, while in lying to others the existence of truth is not in jeopardy, since the liar knows the truth which he is wilfully distorting, in the case of self-deception truth itself is lost.⁹⁰ This is an interesting and unusual way of viewing self-deception, which, generally, is considered as a mitigating factor. I must admit, however, that I do not find Arendt's reasoning in support of her thesis very convincing.

First of all, although self-deception may indeed be recognized as a potentially serious source of political misjudgment, "lying to oneself", the phrase Arendt uses for self-deception, is a rather problematical way of speaking, since it inevitably raises the question of who is relating to whom when I am lying to myself. Admittedly, we often use such figures of speech as "debating with myself", or being "angry with myself", or "pulling myself up". Yet what we thus express are circumlocutions for states of indecision, conflict, unhappiness, resolution, and so on, within ourselves. We feel torn, or uncertain, or under some illusion, but none of these states or feelings involve wilful deceit tantamount to the deliberate fabrication of untruths which we present to ourselves as truths. Lying, no less than veracity, is a moral category; being the victim of an illusion, whatever else it is, is not, and hence being deluded about oneself or about others is not a variant of lying.

Secondly, there may be occasions when I am not fully informed, or actually ill-informed, or plainly mistaken and, realizing this *ex post facto*, I conclude that, in this unintended sense I have been deceiving myself. But, once again, this is not "lying to myself", for we commonly assume that lying is an intentional effort to deceive and not a case of ignorance, superstition, or inflexibility of thinking. Of course, I may pretend to believe what in fact I do not hold to be true, or no longer hold to be true (out of loyalty, a sense of commitment, opportunism, or sheer stubbornness), but then I am not lying to *myself*, I am simply lying. Putting it differently, I can have false beliefs, but I cannot believe falsely. Just as truth is distinguishable from truthfulness, beliefs are distinguishable from believing. For, whereas beliefs are propositions that can be true or false, believing is an activity or a state of mind which can exist or

not exist, but which cannot be true or false. Although I may feel profoundly contrite realizing that I upheld beliefs which I now find to have been false, I can hardly accuse myself, or be accused by others, of having lied to myself, or having destroyed truth, in the problematic *moral* sense Arendt talks about.

Finally, though I may be induced, by what Arendt calls "organized lying", for example, to believe what is patently untrue, I cannot be said to be deceiving myself. For if I accept as true whatever I am told, I am neither lying, nor lying to myself, but believing. Such a possibility is indeed not to be ruled out and, with it, the danger of truth being "lost". And perhaps this is what Arendt has in mind. Only I fail to see that this danger emerges from lying to myself rather than from being lied to by others.

In her *Origins of Totalitarianism* Hannah Arendt denies (quite properly) that concern for consistency, which she regards as the hallmark of ideology, is the same as concern for truth.⁹¹ But it does not follow from this that adherents of an ideology are not truthful about their convictions. Nor does it follow that those who have no ideological convictions are necessarily more truthful or more determined seekers after truth. Indeed, Arendt herself suggests that the very opposite could well be the case, at any rate under a totalitarian regime of terror, where "the ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction . . . and the distinction between true and false . . . no longer exists."⁹² Similarly, is the ideologically convinced not likely to be more truthful in genuinely believing what he professes to believe than one who merely pays lip-service to an ideology, out of fear, or for personal advantage, or for both reasons? To be sure, he may well be judged to be deceiving himself, either because all ideological thinking is by definition held to be illusory or false, or because his particular ideology is considered illusory or false; but in neither case is the ideologically convinced lying to others or lying to himself.

No doubt Arendt's close linkage of ideology with terror and totalitarianism leads her to maintain that adherents of a political ideology quite openly proclaim it to be a political weapon and, apparently, for this reason, "consider the whole question of truth and truthfulness irrelevant."⁹³ It is perfectly true, of course, that exponents of an ideology may not themselves believe what they are propagating or that they may be indifferent to its truth content. It is equally true that citizens living in countries where ideology is sanctioned by terror often adopt a cynical attitude toward an ideology which, though backed by force, carries no conviction. But this does not alter the fact that even totalitarian power holders can scarcely afford to be unconcerned over the degree to which the official ideology is conducive to their political ends. Even if it is granted that they rely on terror rather than persuasion, they presumably wish their persuasive efforts to *ring* true.

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By the same token, does it necessarily follow, as Arendt implies, that the prevalence of official lying, sanctioned by terror, leads to an impaired understanding of truth in the factual sense? If people find it imprudent or hazardous to tell the truth publicly, are they thereby rendered incapable of knowing or discerning the true facts in a given situation? Here again, it seems to me, a distinction is clearly called for, namely, the distinction between *knowing* the truth and *telling* the truth. Widely shared knowledge of factual truth is perfectly consistent with officially disseminated lies and officially backed terror, for truths do not necessarily cease to be known by not being aired in public. Terror frequently destroys trust among men, but factual truth may well be less vulnerable than mutual trust, and those meant to be deceived may defy being deceived.

An anecdote, circulating in one of the Eastern European countries, illustrates this point rather well. A man, so the story goes, compares at some leisure two cars parked next to one another, one being a Rolls Royce, the other a Moskvitch. A bystander approaches him. "Which of the two cars do you consider the best?" Before replying the man looks at the bystander, looks again at the cars, and finally says: "I think the Moskvitch". "Man, don't you know your cars?" the bystander says in astonishment. "Oh, I know my cars all right," comes the reply, "but I don't know you." Sagging trust evidently affects truth-telling, but not necessarily truth-knowing; and while mutual deception frequently follows in the wake of terror, it does not necessarily generate self-deception.

VII

According to Arendt, the diverse juxtapositions in "Truth and Politics" are designed merely to shore up her plea for delimiting the political sphere.⁹⁴ This seems a rather formidable understatement, for the impression that the essay provokes goes some distance beyond this modest claim. Without wishing to dispute that the impression provoked in the reader is unintended by Arendt, I cannot help feeling that it is but another version of what I earlier referred to as "moral separatism". For the image it projects is that of a Manichean-like world, of lying in politics and of truth-telling outside politics. Evidently, reporters, professors, judges, or churchmen, who are allegedly outside the political realm, have a concern for truth which is conspicuously absent among politicians, statesmen, or administrators, presumably because the latter depend on opinions and numbers, while the former, being self-authenticating, do not. Surely, however, there are other forms of dependence than dependence on popular support. What is more, personal independence is not in itself a sufficient warrant for impartiality or honesty. In any event, the appearance of moral separatism which this sharp disjunction so easily conveys, bears rather

disturbing similarities to the "friend-foe, we-they" syndrome found in ideologies which few despised more intensely than Hannah Arendt herself.

The separation and opposition between the political domain and the non-political domain also suggests that the boundary between the two domains which, in principle, is indeed to be insisted upon, is unalterably fixed and thus once and for all definable.⁹⁵ Even if these domains were identifiable with "the public" and "the private" — as Arendt at times, though, I believe, mistakenly, urges — the notorious difficulty of comprehending the private in terms of self-regarding actions would render the distinction highly problematical. But the problem is compounded still further by Arendt's extension of the private or non-political to what she calls "life's necessities", for we are then confronted with the no less notorious difficulty of determining what constitutes a life's necessity, and who rightfully is to judge. More seriously still, if all "life's necessities" were removed from the public domain, what indeed would remain? Arendt has no illusions about the answer: "there would be no political realm at all if we were not bound to take care of life's necessities."⁹⁶

Yet it is precisely this preoccupation with taking care of life's necessities which, for Arendt, corrupts the political realm and causes its deformation. To it she attributes the dominance in modern politics of parties, interest groups, bureaucracies, ideologies, class-conflict, and factionalism of every sort, which, in turn, create a climate of strife and greed, of partisanship and the lust for domination, in which truth and politics clash on the lowest level of human existence. Arendt repudiates the idea of a politics that is little more than a tool of wealth, trade, labour, or welfare. Recurring to the ideals of the ancient world, she adopts without reserve Aristotle's maxim that the *polis* exists for the sake of honourable deeds, not for the sake of joint livelihood.

Tempting though it is to speculate how far Arendt's diverse proposals for some kind of direct and fragmented democracy, or her ideas on selective participation and voting rights, or the banishing of social, economic, and educational concerns from the political sphere, would succeed in effecting a redemption of modern politics, it is clearly beyond the scope of this article even to attempt to do so. Suffice it to say, therefore, that her vision of politics is at once more restrictive and more comprehensive than its modern conception. More restrictive, in that it excludes practically all the concerns that loom so large in the "policy sciences" of our day; more comprehensive, in that it massively reinforces the vigour, exhilaration and nobility of acting in the pursuit of public deeds.

Both this vision and Arendt's disaffection not merely with "totalitarianism" but with the very institutions commonly regarded as the mainstay of freedom and democracy, at any rate in the West, enjoin us to re-open questions held to be settled and to reflect upon possible alternatives. The prospect of men acting

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together as a plurality, combining equality and distinction, begetting memorable deeds, free from domination of any kind, in a climate of spontaneity, understanding, and forgiveness, is an appealing one; that it enshrines a drastic redefinition of the political, as it is commonly understood, scarcely needs saying. Notwithstanding the loftiness of the vision, there is, however, (as the previous sections sought to indicate) cause also for circumspection concerning both its conceptual underpinnings and its normative implications. Among the latter, three worries in particular bear reiterating. Neither the more specific treatment of opinion in "Truth and Politics" nor the more general glimpses elsewhere (notably in *On Revolution*)⁹⁷ of the envisioned polity inspire sanguine confidence in "plurality" as a modality through which dissent is assured secure political expression. Diversity without divisiveness, disagreement without confrontation, may be desirable modes of "acting together", but to insist on the absence of divisiveness and confrontation as a prerequisite for political redemption raises serious doubts about its *political* content. Secondly, while infinity may indeed be inescapably constitutive of human action, should it absolve political actors of the responsibility to those whose lives (or interests) are palpably affected by the consequences of their words and deeds? Does not a redemptive doctrine which thus invokes the postulate of infinity ominously smack of attempting to rationalize political irresponsibility? Finally, although the loftiness of a vision in which men, by inserting themselves into the public realm, acquire and sustain their true personal identity, is surely beyond dispute, it is less certain that a politics that soars to heights from which the needs, tribulations, and follies of ordinary men are no longer within sight, could offer gratification to any but the few while denying comfort to the many. Who or what will take care of their lives' necessities? Men fear finality, but they despair over infinity. Hannah Arendt knew this well.

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Notes

1. Hannah Arendt, "What is Authority?" in *Between Past and Future* (New York: Viking, 1968), p. 140.
2. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958, Doubleday Anchor edition), p. 250.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 204-6.
4. Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Culture" in *Between Past and Future*, p. 217; see also *The Human Condition*, p. 295.
5. *The Human Condition*, p. 31.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 295.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 36; see also p. 61.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 186 and p. 4.
11. Hannah Arendt, "What is Freedom" in *Between Past and Future*, pp. 148-50.
12. *The Human Condition*, p. 29.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 257.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 274.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 286-92; see also Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking, 1962), p. 58.
16. *The Human Condition*, p. 182; see also "What is Freedom?", *op. cit.*, pp. 151-52, and Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Politics", p. 263.

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17. "The Crisis in Culture", *op. cit.*, p. 223, and "Truth and Politics", p. 263.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *The Human Condition*, p. 197.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 197-203 and p. 157.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 198; see also "What is Authority?", *op. cit.*, pp. 112-14.
23. *The Human Condition*, p. 200.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
26. *Ibid.*, and p. 202.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 202-204.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 202.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 173-74; it may be recalled here that Rousseau also thought of the Legislator as a non-political "authority"; he had, of course, expressly Lycurgus in mind who left the political realm before making laws for the Spartans.
31. "What is Freedom?", *op. cit.*, p. 169; see also *The Human Condition*, pp. 222 and 290.
32. *The Human Condition*, pp. 209 and 215-19.
33. Hannah Arendt, "The Concept of History" in *Between Past and Future*, p. 79.
34. *The Human Condition*, pp. 125-26.

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35. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 209-10.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 125, and "What is Freedom?", *op. cit.*, pp. 151-2; see also *On Revolution*, p. 137.
38. "What is Freedom?", *op. cit.*, pp. 152-53.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 154-55.
41. *The Human Condition*, p. 184.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 184-85.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
44. "The Crisis in Culture", *op. cit.*, p. 223.
45. "The Concept of History", *op. cit.*, p. 71.
46. *The Human Condition*, p. 166.
47. "The Crisis in Culture", *op. cit.*, p. 223.
48. *The Human Condition*, p. 166 and "The Crisis in Culture", *op. cit.*, p. 223.
49. "What is Freedom?", *op. cit.*, p. 154; see also *On Revolution*, pp. 38-39.
50. *The Human Condition*, pp. 159, 171, and 209; see also "The Crisis in Culture", *op. cit.*, p. 223.
51. *The Human Condition*, p. 167.
52. cf. Arendt's reference to Machiavelli's view that contact between religion and politics corrupts both. ("What is Authority?", *op. cit.*, p. 138.) For an elaboration of the notion of un-derivative purpose, see my "Growth, Purpose, and Political Development", *Proceedings*, International Political Science Association, Edinburgh, 1976.

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53. Hannah Arendt, "Truth and Politics", in *Between Past and Future*, p. 231, and "What is Authority?", *op. cit.*, p. 115.
54. "Truth and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 238.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 241; see also "The Crisis in Culture", *op. cit.*, p. 225.
59. "Truth and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 231.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
63. Hannah Arendt, "Lying in Politics", in *Crises of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1972), p. 40.
64. "Truth and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 250.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

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71. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
74. Aristotle, *The "Art" of Rhetoric*, trans. J.H. Freese (New York: Loeb Classical Library, n.d.), pp. 25, 39.
75. "Truth and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 243.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
79. *Ibid.*, see also "The Crisis in Culture", *op. cit.*, pp. 219-222.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 220.
81. "Truth and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 245.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 241; see also *On Revolution*, p. 229.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 242; In "The Crisis of Culture", however, Arendt denies that representative thinking can function in strict isolation or solitude; it needs the presence of others. (*op. cit.*, p. 220)
85. *The Human Condition*, pp. 253-54.
86. "Truth and Politics", *op. cit.*, pp. 242, 250, 262.
87. "The Crisis in Culture", *op. cit.*, p. 224.
88. "Truth and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 239.

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89. Plato, *Republic*, vi, 496, trans. F.M. Cornford (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), p. 204; Machiavelli, *The Prince* (London: Penguin Books, n.d.), p. 101.
90. "Truth and Politics", *op. cit.*, pp. 253-54. For an interesting discussion of the problematic nature of self-deception as a psychological, as distinct from a moral phenomenon, see Frank Cioffi, "Was Freud a Liar?", *The Listener* (London: February 7, 1974), pp. 172-74.
91. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1958), p. 477.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 474.
93. "Truth and Politics", *op. cit.*, pp. 235-36.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 263.
95. Once again there is a suspicious suggestion of homogeneity rather than "plurality" as a feature characterizing the political domain, for does not the sharp separation between the political and non-political imply that the political domain itself is a homogeneous entity? Arendt may rightly question the nature of plurality in modern pluralistic politics, but she can scarcely deny its existence in one form or another. In the case of Watergate as also in the case of the Pentagon Papers, for example, the initiative of "truth-telling" did by no means originate *outside* politics. Indeed, the deliberate "leaks" from the political sector to the press, illustrate rather tellingly the plurality within the political domain, including its administrative agencies, such as dissident members of the F.B.I. and the Department of Justice in the United States who systematically divulged information to the newspapers, presumably in an attempt to resist White House domination. (On this point see the perceptive article by Edward Jay Epstein, "Journalism and Truth", *Commentary*, 57, No. 4 (1974), 36-40.) For a comparable situation in a Communist country, see my "Between Opposition and Political Opposition", *Can. J. of Pol. Sci.*, 5, No. 4 (1972), 533-51 and *Socialism with a Human Face: Slogan and Substance* (Saskatoon, 1973), pp. 4-14. In Czechoslovakia during the late sixties the disclosure of truth also originated from inside the political realm.
96. "Truth and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 263.
97. *On Revolution*, pp. 269-72; see also "On Violence", in *Crises of the Republic*, p. 181, and "Thoughts on Politics and Revolution", *ibid.*, pp. 232-33. For a brilliant discussion of the moral implications of Arendt's political thought, see George Kateb, "Freedom and Worldliness in the Thought of Hannah Arendt", *Political Theory*, vol. 5, No. 2 (1977), 141-82. Professor Kateb's article unfortunately reached me too late for making more detailed reference to it in the text.

THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE*

Alkis Kontos

When you start on your journey to Ithaca,
then pray that the road is long,
full of adventure, full of knowledge.

.....

And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not defrauded you.

C. Cavafy

Neither its origins nor its genesis are known to us. Both remain veiled in impenetrable anonymity and obscurity. Though its existence has always been precarious, its perpetuation, from epoch to epoch, is taken for granted; yet neither sovereign command nor rituals secure its continuity. Its history, in oracular fashion, discloses a myriad of visions and revisions without ever permitting them to crystallize in a single, precise, harmonious totality. Without ever lapsing into incoherence, it retains its enigmatic aura. Perhaps by nature, or force of circumstance, it is paradoxical, contradictory, elusive; a peculiarly unique way of life.

It is a life whose oceanic scope engulfs the silenced dreams, fears and prophecies of the past; it arches into the unborn future remaining firmly anchored into the demands of the present. Its continuity yields no uniformity, no convenient slogan. It evinces meaning, but no messages. Its past does not bind with the authority of tradition. Its temperament and mode of being cryptically allude to its hidden grandeur and potential heroism. Its fiercely intense, solitary individualism with a passion for the public space and a melancholy propensity toward the tranquility of contemplation reveals its inner, contradictory dimensions. Society, when convenient, celebrates, admittedly with a

* For Alexis and Pia, that they might experience the proud silence and the courage of the poetry of Ithaca.

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touch of discomfort and anxiety, its devotees; occasionally they are persecuted, mocked, ridiculed, killed; mostly, society ignores them with that absolute indifference reserved only for complete irrelevancies. They, at times, bow to society's visible power and honours. More frequently, they are lured and seduced by the tangible effectiveness of political power and the fabulous fetishism of the market place. They happily surrender. But mostly, they shroud themselves in paralyzing doubt and despair. Also, they do become, without shame, intoxicated with their self-centred importance and, in self-adoration, they seek the political and social instrumentalities by which to implement their visions which are easily translatable into schemes of fanatical righteousness and excessive narcissism.

Such are the adventures, dangers, temptations, illusions and delusions of those who pursue the intellectual life.

The historical stage admits the intellectual life into its drama relatively late. War heroes had arrived already, followed by poets who immortalized their deeds in the field of violence. Only then did the intellectuals emerge in the guise of philosophers.¹ Of course, the merchants were there from the beginning, supreme rulers of the market place. Historical documentation registers the momentous entry of this new *dramatis persona*. The founding act of the intellectual life as philosophy, in the West, is identical with the strange phenomenon of Socrates: a bizarre figure in the market place.

The Socratic enigma is rooted in the dualism of a proclaimed radical ignorance and the avowed commitment to pursue knowledge. Socrates' radical ignorance would not have been problematic had it been cured by his desire for knowledge. But this was not the case. His radical and profound ignorance persisted, rendering difficult, if not impossible, the meaning of wisdom.

Socrates, in essence, has no philosophic doctrine to enunciate, no theoretical perspective to proclaim. He writes nothing, he advocates no set of ideas, no system of thought. He is loyal to his quest for truth as much as he is to his self-knowledge of total ignorance. His insistence to engage and consume his life in a dialogical quest for knowledge inverts from the beginning the image of the intellectual as the knower and shatters any possibility of locating the official sources of knowledge: no institutional, educational structure of truth exists. Socrates is thrown into the everyday life, having exhausted, in utter dissatisfaction, the authoritative route to knowledge. No guru, no teacher, no book does he find. The quest never ends, never does it become a conquest. The philosopher's experience of the quest transforms it into an exhilarating odyssey, an end in itself. Yet nowhere do we hear Socrates say that the so cherished and treasured truth does not exist.

A careful and systematic study of the historical Socrates, even if it were to resolve conflicting evidence — Plato, Xenophon, Aristophanes — and identify Socrates' inner motive and meaning, cannot erase the problematic character,

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the paradoxical features and episodes of his whole life and, finally, his last public performance, his death. The relentless questioning, the profound, conscious denial and avoidance of an articulated position, cannot but fascinate and irritate. Here we have Socrates the teacher without a teaching, the extraordinary in the most ordinary. Socrates' concrete simplicity and great complexity are disturbing to the intellectuals. They cannot renounce him or ignore him; neither can they nor are they willing to emulate him.

Perhaps it is the nemesis of Socratic irony that the founding act of the intellectual life, by the very personality of its founder, did not consolidate its future performance under the aegis of an explicit testament. Intellectuals have as their beginning a dilemma. No patron saint guides their thoughts and choices. The demonic and the divine agonize them from the start.

It is this deeply haunting, disturbing and intriguing beginning, this paradoxical and enigmatic Socratic image that some tend to romanticize, exaggerate, distort and, lending it, incorrectly, Plato's authoritative approval they project it as the archetype of the intellectual life: contemplative purism.

Contemplative purism affirms, quite erroneously, the intellectual life as an endless voyage in the boundless sea of eternity. Intellectuals are seen as detached from external reality. The world of the mind gains a privileged status, as if all else is false. Lucidly mystical, the intellectuals' world resides outside history and its violence. Essence, fully spiritualized, is pitted against the whole of appearance. The intellectuals' mind is faithfully fixed upon other worlds, worlds of beauty and order, without history, struggle and anguish. Intellectuals are urged, in this view, to think like true believers and not to succumb to the temptations of the world, to remain pure, untouched by the horror of the suffering children of time.

The intellectuals are imagined as trans-worldly creatures whose beautiful souls are immune to, and distant from the real world. Their minds and thoughts are autonomous and self-sufficient. Thought and action are absolutely severed. They become antagonistic, irreconcilable and truly antinomic. The intellectual life offers a privileged escape from the pressures and demands of the world; it becomes the perfect refuge and grand rationalization. Ascetic mystics are more in touch with the world than these so grotesque, irrelevant creatures of intangible thoughts and passive minds, hearts and bodies.

This is one scenario of intellectual men and women in bad faith, worshipping a false Socrates under the presumed priesthood of Plato, oblivious to the vibrant, sensual transparency of the Greek sun under which no such insult to the world could have been conceived.

The central point of the Socratic experience that concerns us here is this: Socrates did introduce a dimension in the intellectual life which cannot constitute, in its significance, the totality of its meaning. The Socratic example has injected in the image of the intellectual life a paradox by its noble but perverse

consistency, its inversions and reversions stabilized only in the specific personality that acted them out.

The Socratic way of life and fate are the source of a mood in intellectual life from which a serious, fascinating and, at times, confusing ambiguity emanates.

Plato struggled successfully with the Socratic dimension. He comprehended Socrates' unique and immense talent for mid-wifery, but he also sensed his ultimate limitation and sterility. With Plato, the intellectual is situated in a tense, potentially dangerous interaction with the polis. For Plato the tension between knowledge and power, truth and opinion, is embodied in the philosopher's voyage *in* the world. These tense, antagonistic but inescapable dualisms constitute the core of Plato's political philosophy.

Plato's unique and historic contribution to the meaning and significance of the intellectual life is that he totalized existential and intellectual features of Greece previously thriving only in disparity. He realized that they could not be unified. He located them in his brilliant totalization and liberated himself from the fascinating yoke of Socrates. Now, in Plato, the intellectual is the articulator of a world view, a cosmology. The intellectual life becomes a state of being, an orientation. Theorizing is open to the indeterminacy of experience and meaning; but a solid centre exists. The vast oceans of time are navigated with elegance and purpose, with creative discrimination. These new navigators, the philosophers, could transmit part of their visions, adventures and experience in the discourse of lucid minds. Other parts must be uttered in poetic allegories and metaphors in order to be experienced vicariously by others, until they, in their turn, by inspiration or of necessity, will come to navigate the vast oceans of the polis. The intellectual now passionately engages in the public space. The contemplative mood, that intelligent and so necessary solitary hour, is situated in the most individualistic, private recesses of the thinker; it is not extinguished. Yet it neither exhausts nor does it determine the whole of the intellectual life. It only constitutes an aspect, indispensable, enriching, of the intellectual's life.

The intellectual armed with the vision of the imagination, the penetrating, comprehensive totalizations of theory and the poetic articulation is now, in Plato's cosmos, simultaneously, the hero, the poet, the philosopher, who declares war on the merchants. This is an unprecedented war: it constitutes the life of the allegory of the cave. The intellectuals must maintain their integrity and dignity. Their solitary being could easily succumb to loneliness. The temptations of power and luxury are strong. The futility of the effort can be overwhelming. Plato the intellectual, who has now politely refuted and in essence transcended the sterility of the otherwise inspiring Socratic image, has reinterpreted and transvaluated the past as well as his existential predicament, becomes the new educator of Greece. Plato appropriates and transforms Homer's meaning and lesson. Only then is he self-enthroned as the educator of

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educators. Now the intellectuals have a precise and immense task: to educate the unphilosophic city. But also to continue educating themselves. Their philosophy cannot be allowed to become an ossified system. The Socratic odyssey is now given structure and substance of public significance, even though its innermost essence remains highly individualistic and solitary.

The intellectual, according to the thematic interpretation I give to the Platonic paradigm, situated in the specificity of an existential predicament, does not seek a comprehensive, once and for all answer to his/her condition. If this were the case, intellectuals would be nothing else but religious believers who seek and find the true answers at the feet of their benevolent god.

Intellectuals do not open their eyes only in order to close them again blissfully under the auspices of the thoughtless murmur of mechanized doctrines. The proselytized do not theorize, interpret, interrogate, think, develop and assert a perspective on the world. The intellectuals do.

Plato's insistence that the intellectual-philosopher is the educator par excellence, profound as it is, cannot be taken literally today. Plato is correct in asserting the dangers of political office and power — the programmatic non-dialectical implementation of thought — but the philosophers' educational task — the Academy — as their public role has been tarnished drastically in modern culture. Its transfigurations and monstrous deformations constitute the tragedy of modern times.

The difference between Plato's Academy and the modern university is as great as that between Plato's genius and the mediocrity of that modern functionary, that merchant of ideas, the professor.² The university ought to be the appropriate milieu for the nourishment of intellectuals. It is not. The contemporary university is a bureaucratic institution structurally tied to the established order of society. The university, it is true, is not identical to any other bureaucratic institution. It is incorrect to compare it to a factory where products are processed. It is less oppressive than the atmosphere of a factory. Its monotony is less destructive. But being less dehumanizing does not render it human or creative. It fails in its historic mission.

Though still, at particular times and in certain areas, universities allow the fleeting emergence of creative intellectual discourse, they do so by default. The prevailing, intentional policies and attitudes are those appropriate to academic mediocrity and parasitic scholarship. Footnotes, that panoply of scholarship, become the emblem of academic "creativity". Universities are fundamentally not so much, as the radicals think, the puppets of the establishment that lend respectability to various "objective" scholarly endeavours; rather, they are the grand refuge of the "educated philistines" — Nietzsche's phrase — who pretend to be the guardians of our cultural achievements and mental development.

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Obviously, not every member of Plato's Academy was a brilliant, original mind. Nor each original, great mind was instantly acknowledged as such and given its due respect. After Plato's death an insignificant relative of his takes over the Academy; Aristotle departs. The most crucial difference between then and now is that now, the exceptional scholar is lost, obscured in the sea of mediocrity, in the market of opinions. Furthermore, the modern university suffers from its size and the confusion between teaching either as an activity meant to initiate the young to great ideas and to critical thinking, or as proselytizing, rendering them meek echoes of one's self. It is the exaggerated, fetishistic attachment to books and libraries that mystifies the academic life. There is greater truth in the caricature of the academic than we suspect or we are willing to admit. The unreality of the academic realm of ideas and the irrelevancy of the effete academic who, in essence, is the modern bureaucrat of ideas, ideas which belong to others, which were the creative, lived experience of others constitute a pantomime, a mimicry of genuine intellectual activity.

When Plato warned us that the intellectuals' worse enemy is not the un-philosophical polis — yes, the polis can be their mortal enemy — but themselves, he prophesied the fate of intellectual life in the hands of modern academics.

Plato also warned us of the unholy alliance between wisdom and power which can only foster tyranny. Such would be another scenario of intellectual bad faith: the violent, forceful, artificial creation of what can only be voluntary, individualistic, self-determined. As the intellectual betrays his/her task when passively abstaining from the affairs and destiny of the world so does he/she when the meaning of the intellectual life is treated as tantamount to a fierce, frantic crusade to intellectualize the whole universe.

The tension and ambivalence of the intellectuals regarding their impact on the world is central to Plato's political philosophy and his resolution to this anguished predicament stands as a corrective to the Socratic example and experience. It also, cryptically, intimates a hidden, tragic dimension: the lucid conviction that indeed the scheme of things could be otherwise. Underneath Plato's philosophic tranquility exists the restless passion for an absolute reorganization, a tempting madness for total change.. This is contained by reason and metaphor. Like a wild beast it is caged but never politicized.

Of all great thinkers since Plato, Hegel is the one who, in his historiosophy, exorcizes this possibility completely. Action, the making of history, precedes its understanding. The philosopher arrives at the scene to interpret, to bestow meaning, to decipher the oracle of History. Minerva's owl spreads its wings not like reckless, impatient young Icarus against the luminous sun. Only when the day's creation has been completed do the springs of wisdom begin to flow. After the creation, unlike god who rests, the activity of the logos commences to grace chaos and incoherence with unity and order.

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Plato managed to keep in abeyance the desire to create *ab initio* and thus transform thought, the Idea, completely into action without residue and without regret. He knew of the danger; he sensed the adventure. The perfect circle could be visualized but could not be realized. The contemplative mood provided a silent catharsis of the twilight of the cave-polis as much as the poetic expression offered, in its logos, a catharsis of the secret, all too human, dream of the imagination: to create a totally other world. Contemplation and poetry constitute for Plato the completely private and the public modes of the therapeutic exorcising of the intellectual life. The latter, in perfect reciprocity, playfully civilizes contemplation and poetry so that the polis could receive them never fully knowing or suspecting their true educator: the authentic philosophic intellect.

With Hegel thought and action are chronologically inverted. Theorizing, the expression of thinking, becomes, after the fact, a philosophy of history. The intellectual, unlike the non-intellectual, understands the motion of the world, the meaning of which is put into a philosophic narrative. The world is not re-created but rather re-discovered through the active mind. Hegel is the idealist-purist, not Plato.

If education for Plato was a dynamic form of action, of creation, for Hegel the philosophic narrative was a restorative mode of comprehending the meaning of the fragmented whole, history's true movement, a veritable phenomenology, the bacchanalian glory of the mind.

The panoramic observation of the mind after the battle of the day, as posited by Hegel suffered a Promethean onslaught by the impatient, political Marx. The famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach reopens Plato's cryptic tension and seeks a new, more satisfactory relation between thought and action. Neither the Hegelian narrative nor Plato's therapeutic satisfy Marx. The world offers itself to be moulded, if only properly understood.

The mind's understanding of the world is inadequate when executed from afar. A new, dialectical unity is advocated. Thought is invited to enter the world, to escape its confinement and seclusion.

In a single, momentous, magical gesture, Marx imposes a specific, tangible and measurable task on both, the workers of the hands and the workers of the head. The intellectuals' tasks are no longer abstract, distant and unhealthily autonomous. The new imperative is to achieve a transformative interpretation of the world, one which by its very truth can be fully substantiated and validated in praxis.

That Marx occasionally was more ambiguous and indeterminate about thought and action, about voluntarism and mechanistic action we should have no doubt. But it is also certain that the tenor of his whole thought asserts a rigid politicization of the mind. The old, classical dilemmas are now transformed into problems. And for Marx problems have solutions.

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With Marx the intellectuals have the touch of secular prophets; theory leads into action, formulating the channels of transformation and social change. As much as Machiavelli loathed contemplative, effeminate minds, tormented by self-imposed indecision which wasted historic opportunities, so did Marx despise that mortification of the mind, that nightmare of the phantoms of the mind which obscured and mystified the concrete, scientifically lucid, humanist intervention in the real world.

The intellectuals must, now, become revolutionaries. Theorizing and the dynamics of reality are as intimately connected as scientific knowledge is connected to the laws of Nature. It is in Marx that we find the prototype of the intellectual as radical ideological activist, the opposite of the contemplative purist. The intellectual becomes an ideologue. Intellectualism is mechanized. A fixed truth is appropriated which can be programmatically implemented. The realm of thought now has specific boundaries and a mapped out route. It is a closed system.

The intellectual life is propaedeutic to the discovery of a method of acting which springs from the subscription to a certain doctrine. The intellectual life is viewed as needing the gravitational pull toward action in order to complete itself, to humanize it. The intellectual life, in itself, is an inadequate life devoid of redeeming qualities. Without its practical counterpart it remains sealed in its lifeless abstraction, a fragment, a form of dehumanized existence.

Similar to the radical view and the tangible demands that it imposes upon the intellectual life is the view of the intellectual as the liberal civic activist. The intellectuals' role is that appropriate to the intelligent, well-informed, privileged citizen. The intellectual life becomes identical with the life of the active, concerned citizen epitomized in the active, civic humanist. Intellectuals are the active advocates of honourable, noble causes. Signing petitions and manifestoes exhausts their energy and appeases their conscience.

The other-worldliness of the contemplative purist leaves the status quo unchallenged. The structure of the society does not concern such purists. It is not that the purists believe that nothing can be done to ameliorate human suffering. They are not defeatists. They simply do not see it within their intellectual province to act.

The radical activist substitutes energy for thought. Immediate, direct action, mobilization, organization are the primary tasks. The radical believes that plunging into the ocean is the best practice in learning how to swim. Preliminary thinking and learning are manifest signs of procrastination. Of course the polar opposite is equally pathetic. The individual who assumes that he/she can become a swimmer without ever setting foot in water.

The humanist activists function within the limits of legal protest. They are philanthropists with causes. They emulate the frenzy of the activist and rejoice in the rationalized wisdom of their compromise. They transform the in-

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lectual life into sophisticated social work. They even lack the courage of the true missionary. They safeguard their security. After all, they are reasonable people.

Perhaps the fate of the intellectuals will remain that of the high priest or court jester; of the effete aesthete or crude crusader as long as intellectuals themselves suffer from a severe confusion about their identity — their omnipotence and impotence — and as long as intellectuals and non-intellectuals tend to identify intelligence and sophistication devoid of expertise with the essence of the intellectual life. So far, in this essay, I have attempted to disentangle the intellectual life from a certain web of confusion and inauthenticity. Though I rejected directly and explicitly some images of the intellectual life, I have only suggested obliquely aspects of its authenticity. Now I turn to a more explicit statement regarding what the intellectual life is.

The intellectual life defies any precise, exhaustive definition. It is a state of being, a lived experience injected with meaning from within; it is not a tangible object bound by its clear, visible, exterior form. But unlike other states of being, worlds of the interior, the intellectual life is inherently ambiguous and its manifestations are frequently conditioned by its socio-historical times and circumstances. Certainly it is amenable to clarification.

The intellectual life is the state of being of particular individuals, of a certain personality, temperament and mode of thinking. The intellectual like all other individuals, is rooted in a particularity: an historical era, a specific society, a culture, a language. Like some other individuals, the intellectuals proceed to question the world, to wonder about it and their particularity in terms of meaning. But the intellectuals, unlike others, are intensely individualistic, existential, whose lived experience is a constant, continuous mediational theorizing between the particular and the universal. The intellectual demands a meaningful existential totality, not a systemic whole or a mere set of answers. The intellectual differs from the scientist, the religious believer, and the artist, though there are great affinities between intellectuals and artists.

The scientific quest for understanding and explanation and the religious quest for theodicy are alien to the intellectual life's interpretive performance. The intellectual's particular predicament, existential space and time, is never assimilated in a larger unit, in a universal category or law. The particular is never subsumed or fully transcended. There is no unity between the particular and the universal; there can be between them only a precarious affinity.

The intellectual affirms, negates, rejects. The intellectual's interpretive voyage is, in its most strict existential sense, a voyage in the interior, an individualistic odyssey, a self-reflective establishment of the ground upon which to found personal identity and an entry into the world.

This is the most esoteric, privatized, contemplative moment of the intellectual life, not an end in itself but the beginning. Here the intellectuals

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simultaneously, passionately engage in their worldly existence but also restlessly rebel against its structure. Attracted to the facticity of vibrant life, they rebel against denied possibilities of freedom. This is the root of their ambiguity as well as their difference from the artists. The latter counter-create. Their rebellion is exhausted in the objectification-exteriorization of the artistic expression. The scientist cannot rebel under the enslaving light of the facts of discovery. The believers cannot rebel without sinning. The intellectuals cannot think without rebelling.

The essence of the intellectual life is not then an exploration of or mystical encounter with the world. Nor is it a withdrawal from it. It is a reconstruction, recreation of the meaning of a concrete particular, an individual life, affirmed and asserted in the world as such, against the actual, historical condition of the world.

The intellectual's predisposition is not simply a proclivity toward thought and abstraction, but a vital engagement with the world's actuality. Intellectuals do not live in a vacuum. Their active, lucid minds interact with an external, real world. This interaction combines the imaginative dimension of the artistic creation, the rigour of the scientific inquiry and reasoning with the clarity, comprehensiveness, and adventure of self-knowledge and active creation of our condition of existence — the interpretation of the human drama and the merciless interrogation of history.

The intellectual, unlike the romantic dreamer-thinker, bookish individual who trembles in fear and terror at the sheer sound and sight of life, desires life in its concreteness and in its totality. The intellectual is not the individual who never had any experience of life, who like a virgin mind engages in substitutes and fantasies. The intellectual life is the life of actual, lived, vital experiences raised to full consciousness under the luminous auspices of the imagination and the theoretical dynamism of the mind. Such is the way in which sensuality, intelligence and insight are given meaning and elegance. Flesh and concreteness are not renounced and spiritualized but are blessed with eloquence and comprehensive universality in order to tell the human story in its full depth.

The intellectual begins from a highly personal, individualistic predicament and perspective. Just as aspects of existence must in private self-reflection be interpreted and integrated into a meaningful totality, so must the past of the intellectual life, of that unique passion, be interpreted. The mind and life thought of the luminaries of the past must be studied, articulated and experienced.

Just as Collingwood insisted that historical knowledge is self-knowledge, knowledge of the limits of human potential and a measure of its greatness, so it is with the past of the intellectual life.

But unlike the diligent, faithful student of history or the meticulous archaeologist, the intellectual's past is buried in the silence of the dead without

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testament or explicit directives; only mere fragments, obscure voices are available. The intellectual must plunge into the ocean of the past in a creative gesture of interpretation. In a monumental, imaginative monologue³ the meaning and truth of the past must be re-created and then united with time present and the promise of the future. This monologue founds and discloses the structure of the intellectual life: its rebellion and critical spirit, its wisdom, its ambiguity and passionate commitment.

The existential and experiential self-interpretation of the intellectual is a totally solitary, private, individualistic act. The archetypes of the past, their voices, their re-created story, permit a constructive rupture of the silence of the past and of the intellectual's privatized, utter solitude. With this rupture the intellectual completes the metaphysical grounding of the self. The intellectual remains immensely individualistic and genuinely ambiguous: private and public, contemplative and active. Intellectuals are so adamantly individualistic that even among themselves they cannot form a cohesive group. Perhaps Malraux was correct when he indicated the irreconcilability of intellectuals and authority (*Man's Fate*). Anarchistic, rebellious in temperament they can serve the public but they will obey none.

The monological exploration-re-creation of the past provides the intellectuals with the symbols of their articulation. Personages of the past are signs, ideas, characters in a drama. It is not so much that the intellectuals cannot function without reference to them but that it is convenient and meaningful to refer to them be it in praise or critique.

The intellectual life possesses no immediate, direct relevance to the practical affairs of the world. Its essence is the lucidity of the mind; the intelligent allegiance to the truth; the courageous, wise rebellion against the inertia of society. It bears witness, past and present, and judges the inhumanity of history.

The intellectuals speak out as the guardians of the logos of the imagination, the conscience of the polis, the castigators of its dormant consciousness and its damaged life.

The intellectuals' passion for freedom and truth, their alertness of mind, engage them with the world in an active, constant interaction. The intellectuals have a responsibility toward the world, but they are not responsible for the world's woes. Nietzsche told us that it takes an ocean to absorb a dirty river. The intellectuals cannot be that ocean. No one alone can, except mythic heroes and non-existing gods. But the intellectuals can be a clean, lucid river flowing into the dirty, cruel ocean of History. Many would say: this is not enough. It does not feed the hungry, it does not liberate the oppressed. The intellectuals know this already.

The intellectual life cannot be either fully private or fully public. It is uniquely marginal: it exists in two universes. Their common root is the in-

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tellectual's experience. The significance of both is the meaningful, poetic utterance of truth, its affirmative universality.

This constitutes the very soul of the intellectual life. That it is impotent against the oppressive structure of society is a well known fact. But whatever force can penetrate and overthrow such structure warrants the enlightening alliance of the intellectual life, its guidance. Otherwise, brute force would be challenging brute force. One form of oppression would succeed another. Darkness shall prevail.

Uttering the truth does not destroy the world of lies. It does prevent its total supremacy. And this is a good beginning. This indispensable beginning is the authentic task of those committed to the ambiguous blessing of the intellectual life, the Archimedean point of a non-intellectual world.

Political Economy
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Notes

1. I treat philosophers and intellectuals as identical. Any sophisticated, erudite, cultured individual who can think is not an intellectual. Not anyone who can run is an athlete.
2. Exceptions exist. Ironically, the greatest philosopher of this century, Heidegger, was an academic.
3. Some would like us to believe in a dialogue. Animosities among intellectuals are quite common and fierce. Unanimity is absent among them. Friendships do not stem from the mere fact of intellectualism. Think of these encounters: Plato and Homer, Weber and Marx, Marx and Hegel, Nietzsche and Plato. No conversation would take place. Consider these broken associations: Sartre-Camus, Sartre-Merleau-Ponty. It is the monological aspect that allows the creative articulation.

CONFRONTATIONS

THE STATE AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

*Harold Chorney, Wallace Clement,
Leo Panitch and Paul Phillips*

With this issue, the *Journal* introduces a new section, titled *Confrontations*. Our first confrontation has a dual purpose: first, to assess recent developments in the theory of the state and their relevance to the Canadian situation; and, second, to appraise in a somewhat more discursive fashion the implications of the new interest in political economy for the development of Marxist theory in Canada.

Our hope in creating this section is to provide a flexible forum through which the *Journal* can respond, in a slightly less formal fashion, to new tendencies in social theory and practice.

For our first confrontation we have experimented with a telephone conference which took place on Thursday evening, September 15, 1977. The moderator, Charles Rachlis, is a Ph.D. candidate in political economy at the University of Toronto and is the author of an article "Marcuse and the Problem of Happiness", to be published in the winter issue of the *Journal*. Harold Chorney has studied at the University of Manitoba and the London School of Economics and has taught at the University of Manitoba. Currently, he works for the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation. He has contributed an article exploring the relation between regional underdevelopment and cultural decay, in a soon to be released collection of essays on Canadian nationalism and American imperialism. Wallace Clement, whose path-breaking study *The Canadian Corporate Elite* appeared in 1975, currently teaches sociology at McMaster University. He is also the author of a forthcoming title *Continental Corporate Power*. Leo Panitch, a professor of political science at Carleton University, is the author of *Social Democracy and Industrial Militancy*, a study of the British Labour Party, and he has edited a soon to be released collection of essays on the nature of the Canadian state. Paul Phillips is a professor of economics at the University of Manitoba and is, among other things, the author of *No Power Greater*, a history of the labour movement in British Columbia.

The editors have been assisted in carrying through this first confrontation by Kenneth J. Hughes, a professor of Canadian literature at St. John's College, University of Manitoba and a member of the editorial board of *Canadian Dimension* and by David Wolfe, a member of the Political Science Faculty, Glendon College, York University.

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RACHLIS: *There has been a resurgence of interest in political economy in Canada. It could be argued that this resurgence arises in part out of a dissatisfaction, on the one hand, with a traditional political science which equates the state with political parties and administrative functions — all operating under the tenets of pluralism — and, on the other hand, a dissatisfaction with an orthodox Marxist tradition which reduces the state to the function of an executive committee of the ruling class. One striking thing behind this resurgent interest in political economy, and thereby, behind the renewed interest in the theory of the state, is the new prominence of the actual state itself now.*

Once we have noted the obvious factor of the continuous expansion of the state in the post-World War II period, what other factors would you consider most important in explaining this concentrated interest in the theory of the state and what are the theoretical and practical implications of such factors?

PANITCH: Well, I think some of the factors are specific to Canada, some of them are more general to capitalist or advanced capitalist bourgeois democracies. One factor is the increasing role of the state, the increasing visibility of the state vis-a-vis the economy. Another, very important one, I think, is the general recognition of the failure of social democracy. Social democratic parties have been elected to make changes, but they have failed to make fundamental changes after being elected. Increasingly, we have been forced to ask questions about differences between government and the state and about the focus of power within the state. Moreover, the resurgence of industrial class conflict within the last decade has given the lie to the "end of ideology" argument, an essentially consensus oriented and pluralist theory of the state.

These kinds of factors, I think, have produced interest in the question of the state. Given the specific Canadian case, all of these factors are important, but obviously the crucial additional one is the need for a theory of the state that will somehow explain the relationship of Canada's dependent economy to the centre of imperialism in the United States. Many Canadians got interested in the theory of the state because not enough work has been done, and certainly the least progress has been made to this stage, on the question of the state generally and on the question of its location in relationships between the United States and Canada in particular.

CHORNEY: I would agree with many of the points Leo has made. Certainly, the changing character of contemporary capitalism has made the state much

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more important, more obvious, but, it seems to me, one of the elements that has not been sufficiently appreciated in Canada is the way in which bureaucratic relations within the state are really central to capitalism itself.

Now, what I am basically arguing is that capitalism has created an obviously bureaucratic system. Yet, since the corporate sectors have failed to come to terms adequately with the problems of social control, the state has moved into the area of social control, and thus bureaucratic control has become a pervasive feature of modern life. People are now constantly exposed to bureaucratic pressures, and the way in which their lives are organized find a reflection in the state's character.

Now the state, the Canadian state, is in many ways a kind of half-baked state, I suppose. This gets us to the questions of how much independence Canada has from the United States, and what the role of the American corporations is in Canada. In some ways, the Canadian state has not thoroughly developed the features necessary for a modern capitalist state. I think that what is happening now, why there is such a renewed interest in the state in Canada, is that we are entering a period in which the crises of capitalism at the world level appear by coincidence, by historical coincidence, along with a series of other crises which have occurred at the level of national integration, at a time when we are trying to form an economy that functions, an economy that *actually* does accumulate. These national crises have overlapped with the general crises of world capitalism, so we find the Canadian state to be at a particularly critical moment of its history. This is why the state now occupies the interest of more and more people at the present time.

CLEMENT: I would argue that, in large part, what has happened in practice is a broadening of the definition of the state through the expansion of theories of the state into hitherto untouched realms. Our problem, therefore, is not simply one of developing a theory of the state, but one of creating a theory of society. The state does not function in a vacuum, but is wedded to the social and economic make-up of society, and is a reflection of that society. What we need, therefore, is a theory of *society* in order to understand exactly what the *state* is doing, what the essence of state actions is.

Marxism has come to the fore in the theory of the state precisely because it has always been a theory of society. However the debate over the notion of the relative autonomy of the state proceeds, Marxism has continued to root its theory of the state in the fundamental nature of the society, and it has all along seen that the forces that society generates become reflected in the state.

To add something to Leo's statement: I would argue that some of the unique features of the Canadian state stem from the foreign presence in Canada. Developments in Québec also play a prominent role in the resurgence of in-

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terest in the state; the political and national crisis centering on Québec has focused attention explicitly on the role of the state. Here we must note, of course, the question of the rise of provincial powers in general, and we must remember that we have a federal structure within which governments are fighting it out with one another, often over the interests of different fractions of the capitalist class.

I would agree with Harold as well with respect to the need for the state within the capitalist society to contain a great deal of class pressure and antagonism. While it is commonly acknowledged that the state has entered the economy in many, many ways, we must not forget its restraining role at attempting to contain the class pressures that have been rising.

PHILLIPS: It seems to me that we cannot understand the nature of the present state without realizing that throughout history the nation-state has evolved to provide the rules of the game by which the capitalist economy can work. If one wants to look at Canadian history, the first state really in Canada was the Hudson's Bay Company which, in fact, performed all of the functions of a state. It set the rules in such a way that their kind of economic exploitation could take place.

I tend to agree with Creighton that the creation of the Canadian state was, indeed, a response to a changing economic crisis in the world capitalist economic order. In contemporary terms and from an economic perspective, Anthony Waterman has described the state in much the same way, as the Canadian fallacy. He says that in an economic sense there is no such thing as a Canadian nation-state. In my view, what we have, very simply, is the changing of rules to accommodate the changing economic order which is dominated by the multinational corporation. Although this economic order is largely American, it is not totally American. Most of the behaviour of the Canadian state is nothing else but an accommodation to the needs of this economic order. This accommodation serves the needs of multinational corporations, but not the needs of Canadians. For this reason, there has been a resurgence of interest in political economy and in the theory of the state among Canadians.

RACHLIS: *I would like to focus discussion on a point that Wally Clement made explicitly, and which was implicit to the other comments, concerning the relationship between the theory of the state and the theory of society. So as to define this relationship more precisely, I would like you to comment on what is the 'state' in the Marxist theory of the state, what are its constituents and what areas of the Canadian state are in need of examination?*

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PANITCH: I think we all missed a factor raised by Chuck Rachlis in his opening statement when he spoke of the failure of Marxism to develop a systematic theory of the state. I disagree with him when he says that the root of the problem resides in the Marxist formulation of the modern state as the executive committee of the *whole* bourgeoisie. I do not think that there is a problem with that formulation. I think the problem, rather, can be found in a lack of specification, complexity and subtlety in the elaboration of that fundamental principle. It is in this area that, in terms of developing the conditions for a full theory of the state, advances are to be made. I do not think this involves rejecting a great deal of classical Marxist thought, but rather of building on it. Of course, Marx himself at no point systematically developed a theory of the state as he did vis-a-vis the mode of production.

Having said that, I think that many important developments have occurred in the Marxist theory of the state. These developments have involved a debate over the definition of the state itself. This raises interesting questions similar to those Paul Phillips noted about the Hudson's Bay Company. Should the state, as Miliband argues, be viewed as a complex of institutions in the public sector, or should the state be defined in terms of the functions that are performed by *whatever* institutions in terms of facilitating accumulation and maintaining legitimation for the system?

The debate that has occurred between Miliband and Poulantzas on this question arises out of Poulantzas arguing that you have to see the state in terms of functions, in terms of unifying the bourgeoisie and disunifying the working class. He would, therefore, broaden the definition of the state beyond the public sector to include the family, the media, the political parties and the interest groups, i.e. whatever structures perform these functions. Although this debate is by no means resolved, and although different tendencies in Marxist theory utilize different approaches, it is important that, at least, a clarity with regard to the problematic has evolved.

Most important, and most neglected, has been a particular gain in the theorization which a number of people have been developing. A recent article in *Kapitalistate* called "Modes of Class Struggle and the Capitalist State" attempted to *link* the functions of the state — the output of the state — to Marx's economic categories in terms of whether the state is intervening in the economy at the level of production, distribution or circulation. That I think is a very important theoretical breakthrough. Interestingly enough, Allan Moscovitch, at Carleton University, has also been working on this problem, attempting to intergrate political theory, in that sense, with the more systematic economic theory laid out by Marx. The result is all types of interesting theorizations regarding the specific output of the state and its relation to maintaining accumulation or facilitating legitimation.

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There has also been a growing sophistication in understanding the state itself as shot through with class struggle. Although the dominant class, the hegemonic class, maintains dominance within or over the state, depending upon your perspective, the state itself has always to be understood in the context of class struggle.

CHORNEY: It seems to me that Leo has dealt quite well with the essential elements of the Marxist theory of the state, and, in particular, with related developments in that theory. But in discussing a couple of these concepts, he raises some good questions which I would like to pursue further. I do not profess to have the answers to them, but they seem to be important concerns. One of them is the notion of state intervention to legitimate itself as well as the capitalist system, and also to facilitate accumulation. It seems quite obvious that, in fact, the state does function in this way. We can see it in Canada when we examine regional development programmes, unemployment policies and anti-inflation legislation — both the legislation itself and the administration of it.

There remains, however, an element which is part of both accumulation and legitimation, and this brings me to my second concept, that of cultural reproduction. It seems to me that the state does not monopolize cultural reproduction, but shares this area with the corporations themselves as well as with other institutions of society. Certainly it is a critical function of contemporary capitalism to reproduce at the cultural level those conditions which ensure that the vast majority of people in society remain powerless, remain unaware of how they can transform the society.

If we look closely at the working class, we soon discover that it remains a class only in a taxonomic sense, and not necessarily a class in the sense that it is conscious of itself as a class. I am, therefore, quite curious how Leo and the others will respond to the questions as to whether or not in contemporary capitalist society in Canada we really do have a working class, whether, in fact, the state functions in response to specific challenges from working class institutions, or whether the state — even given all of its confusion and all of its contradictions — is still at the rather sophisticated point of being able to fragment class consciousness so that a working class consciousness cannot develop and, therefore, a working class movement cannot develop. Now these are the kinds of questions that are important for me. I do not disagree with Panitch's conception of how the capitalist state functions, for he has painted a fairly accurate picture of the Marxist theory of the state. But the question in my mind is, what does all this mean for social change and what are its practical consequences? I certainly do not have definite answers, but I am curious as to whether the others do.

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RACHLIS: *Wally Clement, do you want to respond to the overall question and perhaps address yourself to Harold Chorney's comment as well?*

CLEMENT: I will just make a couple of brief remarks about the overall question and concur with Leo with respect to the theory of the state. The theorists have set out the problematic in a very clear fashion through debate. I think that the major issue now becomes one of *how can we begin to use* the theories of the state in order to make some sense of the concrete situation. This is very similar to the question Harold raised. Our problem is, how do we translate these theoretical issues into researchable problems? I think that the ability to ask the right questions — the methodology — is what is very much lacking. We have had much very detailed theoretical debate, but we have had very little by way of asking the questions and of applying the theoretical debate to Canada.

When we try to apply our theoretical insights to the Canadian situation, we confront immediate difficulties. One major methodological problem with respect to research on the state is the built-in bias in favour of the formal state structure for much evidence. For while the state keeps formal records, these records are of proceedings perceived from an institutional and bureaucratic point of view. As an example, even when we are doing research on the working class, we are not usually doing working class history but union history. We have not really done much working class history. Consequently, I have been grappling with such problems as, What is the working class? And, as Harold has pointed out, How is the working class actually doing? So the problem is much more one of beginning to use the new theories of the state, having acknowledged and accepted the problematics that have been laid out.

PHILLIPS: I disagree with the earlier rejection of the traditional Marxist interpretation of the state, providing we do not simplistically suppose the ruling class to be monolithic. Often, diverse elements loosely coalesce and behind a sometimes tenuous coalition seek to exercise a unified control of the state. These diverse elements may differ considerably in their interests, and as a consequence squabble among themselves, but when there is a mutual threat they soon cooperate. In British Columbia, for example (at the end of the Barrett regime), there was a sudden dropping of all sorts of divisions in the bourgeoisie and a quick falling in behind the flag of Social Credit. When the ballot box poses a threat, you get a Chilean situation. For when the ballot box turns down the ruling coalition, the rejected powers coalesce behind military force.

Québec is an interesting situation at the moment, for there we witness a new coalition of interests within what appears to be a state attempting to bring

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together a nationalist or cultural movement with an economic one while giving forth a populist or hinterland appeal that glosses over class interests. You can easily see the conflict that is shaping up when Lévesque flies off to New York to get money.

The question about control of the working class, and divisions within the working class, is one that is increasingly interesting. Obviously union history consists of records, but there are no records of the unorganized. The dual labour market approach to the working class now, of course, separates the market into those who are attached through unions to monopoly capitalism and those who are not, the former being bought off and the latter not. And so the problem with the social democratic approach to government is that there is no working class coalition or consensus *except* on issues which are of critical importance also to the capitalists. One thinks of the problem of maintaining a high level of demand in a climate of uncertainty. So one must *not* think of either the working class or the bourgeoisie as being monolithic, but as having degrees of differences and splits within them. Only in times of crisis do the different elements come solidly together.

I would argue that the whole historical debate over capitalism and the national question in Canada, whether we had a merchant or industrial capitalism, is irrelevant, because as it happens the national policy favoured both.

RACHLIS: *What about the question of the influence of the working class on the state? Can, in fact, working class representation and working class interests concretely effect the direction of state policy-making?*

CHORNEY: In fact, we must look at what working class interests *are*, because I do not think they have been adequately defined. Is there, in fact, a working class that actually articulates interests, or are there institutions which articulate supposed interests of the working class and are therefore defined as working class institutions?

PANITCH: Can I reply to that? But first, can I go to the other point Chorney made? It was very important. On the question of cultural reproduction. One of the lacunae of Marxist thought in the past was that it tended to stress too much the repressive nature of the state, and too little the hegemonic, the cultural aspects. The sophisticated use of the concept of cultural hegemony helps us a great deal in understanding the differences between a bourgeois capitalist system, a democratic capitalist system, and an authoritarian capitalist system. It helps us to understand that while the state has a coercive function which is

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based ultimately on the monopolistic use of force, its stability and its normal or contemporary operations necessitate an emphasis on the role of cultural domination. A recent paper by an independent Montreal Marxist grouping referred to the Canadian state in terms of *its speech being repressive and its repression being liberal*. I think that this thought captures something very important.

As to the question of the working class, I have some fundamental disagreements with some of the other people here. I do not think that union history is not working class history. I think that it is a partial aspect of working class history, but I see unions as indigenous working class institutions. They no doubt mediate the demands of the working class, but, nevertheless, I conceive of them as working class institutions. The demands that they make upon the state in their mediating role reflect working class interests. In this sense union history is working class history. I agree that it is partial. While there are fractions of the working class which are undoubtedly not represented, union history is still working class history.

I disagree also with the view that the working class is powerless. Class can only be conceived in its relational sense, and in the interrelational sense both classes have power. This is not to say we are dealing here with the power of equivalents. But Marxism as a dynamic theory and as a dynamic praxis is obviously involved in developing working class power. It, too, can be a hegemonic force in society. In a day-to-day sense, the working class uses its power, for it formulates demands both through its indigenous organizations and, to some extent, spontaneously. The operations of the state have to be understood precisely, as I said before, in terms of the class struggle. The urgent methodological problems Wally Clement talked about are great, and although we have solved some methodological problems by looking at the linkages between the state and class-structuration, and others by seeking to understand the functions of the state in concrete policy terms, we have not yet made great advances in terms of a systematic understanding of how these policies are brought about by the class struggle.

RACHLIS: *Let us go back to Wally Clement, since he said earlier that he wished to address Harold's question on the working class.*

CLEMENT: I would agree with Leo Panitch with respect to class being a relational concept, and I think that this is crucial to an understanding of Canada. Leo and I have discussed this before, and it is certainly not a new point. C.B. Macpherson made it long before we did. But the importance remains of the

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persistence of the petty-bourgeoisie as the most powerful class outside the capitalist class in Canada almost to the outset of the Second World War. Prior to this time, Canada had a primarily rural, agrarian and resource-based economy. After that time, we have a Canada with a very distorted economy, with an enormous focus on industrial resources, and with a resource-based proletariat, much of which is not urbanized. Consequently, a distorted pattern of industrialization has occurred, and this has had ramifications in terms of the nature, scope and power of the working class.

We have had simultaneously a rapid development of the state sector as a very important employer. I think Hugh Armstrong demonstrated that by 1971, twenty-two percent of the labour force was employed by the state, as opposed to six percent being thus employed in 1946. This was a tremendous growth at the same time as Canada was industrializing. So rather than the petty bourgeois class moving into traditional industrial pursuits, it has moved in large part into the state sector and service industries which are crucial employers in Canada. The state becomes a major employer! So really, the petty bourgeoisie in decline moves into quite bureaucratized settings. This makes for some interesting dynamics, especially in Québec, where the struggles that go on, do so along with the struggles *within* the state.

There is no doubt that we have a working class, but it is a *fragmented* working class. Along with it we have national questions that confuse the working class, and splits between national and international unions that confuse the political problems of the working class. I think that the fundamental place to look is in the economy itself, to Canada's initial persistence in commodity production, industrialization from without and the focus on resources. Looking at some of the society level factors, and how they shape the class structure, will tell us much about the politics of the working class, the actions of the working class, how it is fragmented, and why it is political at some times and not at others.

PHILLIPS: I would like to expand on one or two points: the growth of the state, particularly of what might be called the technocrats, and the fragmentation of the working class. Government has to a large extent become an employer of last resort in order to prevent mass unemployment. In Québec the strong support for the Parti Québécois comes from the technocrats. These are the technical people who have no function in the higher echelons of multinational corporations, people who cannot rise in the multinational corporation because they are French. The only way they can rise, in fact, is through the state. Their only interest, indeed their only coalition, is not finally with the working class. They use the state for themselves and defend the role of the state as a mediating, umbrella organization. It strikes me that much of the growth of state employment is "bread and circuses".

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RACHLIS: *Given the issues raised and the problematics articulated here, what are the exciting things — the real spurs to activity — that are going on, not simply in academic terms but outside the academic pursuit of political economy?*

PANITCH: It is difficult to say that there is a great deal going on that is exciting, particularly in the wake of the very serious defeat of the working class — the organized working class — on wage controls.

There are all kinds of Marxist *groupuscules* emerging in Canada, most of which I do not personally find exciting. Yet, within the working class, there is an increasing number of workers, young ones particularly, who are rising into positions of responsibility, primarily at the local level, but also to some extent above that. These are the workers who have not been tainted by the anti-communism that affected the previous generation and they are open, therefore, to radical, even Marxist, ideas. In terms of building linkages between Marxist strategy and spontaneous or trade union working class action, I think that is exciting. There is evidence also of the Québec trade unions, and even now of trade unions in English Canada hiring people trained in Marxism to cover their research work and to turn out pamphlets containing a Marxist analysis. I think all of that is exciting.

I would not like, however, to end this discussion on an up-note entirely. There is much more analytic work to be done in the area of the state in Canada, and with regard to the role of the state vis-a-vis the American empire. This is an area where, despite all kinds of work with respect to the economy (together with Wally Clement's analysis vis-a-vis the corporate elite), there has been very little in the way of systematic gains on questions such as whether the state is the primary link between American imperialism and Canadian society, or whether the imperial link occurs at the level of civil society; i.e. through culture or through inter-class relations. Those kinds of question and, with them others such as whether we are to understand the behaviour of the Canadian state in terms of domestic class forces (including a comprador bourgeoisie), or whether direct external influences from multinationals and foreign states have played a major role, such questions have not been properly addressed. With regard to the specificity of the Canadian state, they need to be addressed.

CHORNEY: I would have to confess that I am much more pessimistic. Perhaps that comes from having worked for the past five years for the state itself in a much more direct way than one would in the academic community. I am not certain that that does not colour my outlook more than if I had been working in the academic community.

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In fact, my impression also comes from having spent a number of years attempting to deal in an educational way with working people, from having tried to develop educational programmes for workers and for trade unions, where I found — and here I disagree with Leo Panitch and others — that the very institution which was supposed to be a working class institution was very much dominated by bureaucratic functions and by cultural hegemony in terms of culture and outlook.

Needless to say, I do not see around me a universal subject about to arise and emancipate us all. That is sadly lacking at the moment. I think, in fact, that the absence of the subject of our emancipation is one of the great crises of our times. The fragmented, privatized lives that people lead in the state is an important area requiring further exploration, particularly in Canadian radical thought. Nonetheless, I find it a bit more heartening that there is a sophisticated attempt on the part of a number of people who try to grapple with theoretical notions which develop from a Marxist tradition and try to make them more meaningful in the context of present realities. I get the distinct impression of a possibility of more disenchanted people looking for alternatives, becoming more conscious that alternatives simply have to be found. I think, however, that the crisis of the Canadian state is mirrored as much by the crisis of Canadian thought, and that the Canadian Left has not yet worked out how we can reactivate the subject of our emancipation. I would like to see that happen and then I could be a bit more optimistic.

CLEMENT: Certainly the resurgence of political economy has been important for me and for a large number of people. I think that there is a community of interest developing. As to why this has happened, there has always been a political economy tradition in this country, but it has been smothered, especially in the social sciences, by perspectives imported largely from the United States. However, the university system has recently developed to the point where people can actually study and teach in Canada and remain here to research Canadian problems. This is encouraging to me.

What is also encouraging is the disintegration of the rigid barriers that existed in the past between the various disciplines. Political economy is having a large role in this. And, I think, in general, the interest in political questions, in questions of *real* political importance, comes from the politicization of a broader range of academics than in the past. I do not think they regard themselves any longer as commentators, but write for much more than an academic audience, for a broader audience. Larry Pratt the other night (the dramatization of Pratt's book *The Tar Sands* on CBC T.V.; Monday, September 12) was certainly a major step forward in Canadian political economy.

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Very personally, I am quite excited by the current developments, because I am doing some research for which I have been waiting a long time on transformations in the Canadian class structure, and I am now in a position where I can think five years ahead and design all kinds of research over that period. There are enough people around to talk with and to debate with, so for me, on a very personal level there is the development of a critical mass of people interested in the problems I consider to be the important ones. And we are about to do some work.

PANITCH: Can I add to what Wally is saying? I think that all of what he has said is terribly important, but there is something else, and that is the critical mass of people who are, in their political work, giving serious thought to the question of strategic theory. One big question is, How do Marxist intellectuals sink their roots in the working class? A number of us have been working on this problem, but it is too big a subject to go into it tonight in more detail. I thought I would mention the problem because it is central.

PHILLIPS: I do not know whether it is the West or the weather, but I am even more pessimistic than Harold Chorney. I am at the same time in a state of euphoria from all this intellectual stimulation. What has happened in Québec raises intriguing questions. The worst part of it is that these are scarcely talked about. So much for the pessimism.

There are two developments that interest me personally: one is the resurgence of interest in political economy. I came through the University of Saskatchewan when it was one of the centres of political economy and my interest has never flagged. So obviously I am pleased about this development. The second happy development is the increase in interest — particularly among young workers — in the concept of workers' control, workers' self-management. Along with this has come a welcome interest in an understanding of both alienation and the dehumanization function of technology as the agent of class control. These are part of a broader intellectual explosion which concerns itself with not only alienation from capital but from power, from one's country, one's milieu. Perhaps there is something to get excited about! Maybe I am dreaming, but I would like to hope.

KROKER: *In light of the questions which have been raised concerning the difficulties in formulating a politically conscious workers' movement in Canada and the possible need for a reappraisal of the Canadian Left, would you care to clarify whether, and what, progressive tendencies are emerging from the Québec situation?*

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PANITCH: *Of course* there are progressive tendencies. There is no question but that the Parti Québécois — which is by no means a proletarian party — is a progressive force in relation to the reactionary forces that the Liberal Party represents. However, to go overboard on that, to engage in wishful thinking with regard to what some people see as the possibility for “doing a Cuba” in which a petty-bourgeois party mobilizes the working class, kicks out the Americans and turns itself into a sort of Communist Party, that surely seems to me to be a pie-in-the-sky dream. But that is not to say that there are no progressive tendencies in the Parti Québécois, and that they are not undertaking progressive actions in terms of building a new compromise, a class compromise, in Québec. Inevitably, that is what is happening, and the anti-scab legislation is an example of it, although there are other areas where they are deficient, particularly because of their need to secure American loans.

Another important, progressive tendency, which is occurring in Québec as well as in English Canada, is a tendency on the part of political activists to stop thinking that they have to have *the* correct line and *the* correct formulation of the proper party organization before they engage in struggle. In fact, there is a realization that one cannot conceive of the revolutionary party in the abstract, that only when a sufficient number of workers have been mobilized into Marxist action groups across the country can one address the question of what kind of party is needed. The working class itself has to be involved in building that.

CHORNEY: It seems to me that while it is quite true that the events in Québec have definitely opened up a whole area in which progressive notions can be articulated, and in which long submerged questions can be finally asked about the nature of the Canadian state and the Canadian nation, at the same time it is very interesting that the Québec question has also been a kind of touchpoint for many working class people in terms of their attitudes towards the basic way in which they have been culturally dominated by various notions. In particular, to put it quite frankly, the kind of racism that one finds amongst many people in English-speaking Canada. Maybe it is more particular to the West than it is to central Canada, but one finds a tremendous latent hostility towards the idea that the French in Québec should be able to assert themselves and create an independent and autonomous state. And it seems to me that Trudeau and the Liberal Party have very effectively and very dangerously, played on that fear and have used it to deflect attention away from some of the very important issues that currently, in both the economic and social sense, are very critical at this time.

I would see the Québec situation, dialectically, as cutting both ways. On the one hand, there are very progressive things: Leo has mentioned some of them — the labour laws, the idea of the Québec people finally daring in the ballot

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box to vote for something that they have been told for generations is anathema. These are the progressive features of it, but at the same time, it has enabled some very reactionary things to get stirred up. And I am really very curious to know how the Québec situation will be resolved in a way that will prevent the Canadian state as a whole from becoming more authoritarian. I see that as one of the important challenges for people on the Left, to see how they can deal and come to terms with that particular problem.

CLEMENT: I have little to add to what Harold and Leo said, except to say I would agree that it certainly is progressive. It has opened debate. I should add that I have great fears as well about the consequences because the actions of the U.S. state are very frightening. But I think that there has also been a submerging of some of the class issues. This has caused a concern on my part. But I think it important to support these moves in Québec for autonomy, for control, for people controlling their own lives and being able to have a say in matters that affect them. One can hope that it will be a positive lesson, but if the forces of repression become too strong, it can have regressive ramifications throughout the country. I would agree with Harold that psychologically the effects are at best mixed.

PHILLIPS: If I can continue a point I made earlier, the Parti Québécois is obviously a coalition of both progressive, petty bourgeois, and technocratic forces sheltering under the umbrella of nationalism. It is also obvious that there are powerful progressive tendencies within the working class trade union movement in Québec, which are much stronger than anywhere else in Canada at the present time. Once the problem of the state has been resolved one way or the other (i.e. an independent state or a modified Confederation), then the class issues have to come to the fore. My fear is that the progressive elements will then break down along the old lines, and we shall see a government of not-so-progressives which will be, at best, social democratic, and, at worst, liberal. This is the tradition that has usually prevailed in Canada.

With regard to the West, I do not think the opposition is to Québec. The opposition rather is to central Canada, to a kind of pure dictation from the metropolitan centre. The opposition in the West to Ottawa and Trudeau's Frenchification program imposed from on high is essentially the same response as that of the Farmers' Movement earlier in the century to similar edicts from similar directions. The resistance is to solutions to problems that have meaning in the centre of Canada but very little meaning in the West.

EXCHANGE/ECHANGE

THE "MYTH" OF THE RED TORY?

Gad Horowitz

I regret that I must deprive Rod Preece of the rare experience of exposing a real live "myth", but there is no major disagreement between us on the question of the character of British and Canadian Conservatism.¹ There is a semantic difference: Preece will use the terms "tory" and "corporate-organic-collectivist" only for "absolutist" or "romantic" philosophers like Filmer, Carlyle, George Grant, who are totally opposed or "essentially inimical" to "liberty," individualism and capitalism, while I would use these terms to refer *also* to men like Burke, who combine an endorsement of the main achievements of the bourgeois revolution with continued adherence to many pre-liberal values and beliefs.

Preece himself points out that the Burkean Conservatism which superseded Filmerian Toryism "was a synthesis of waxing Whig and waning Tory doctrines", that Burke "provides . . . a healthy measure of conservative restraint on the Lockean Whig ideals of individual liberty." However, unlike those who "denounced a philosophy of individual rights and liberties, Burke only diminished them to make them more effectively realized;" for Preece, therefore, Burkean Conservatism is not *at all* tory or corporate-organic-collectivist. I apply these labels in a different manner: insofar as Burke used tory ideas for the purpose of "diminishing" the idea of individual rights, Burke was a tory. In the *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* Burke elevates "prejudice", "prescription" and "duty" above reason and individual rights; utterly transforms the Lockean idea of contract into the idea of a "great primaeval contract of eternal society" which is not at all a matter of individual consent; passionately defends the "natural" hereditary aristocracy as the "soul" of the body politic; and justifies inequality of opportunity in these terms: "the awful author of our being is the author of our place in the order of existence." What are these ideas if not tory, corporate-organic-collectivist?

Of course Burkean Conservatism also contains liberal elements; I have never argued that liberalism is an "alien" aspect of British and Canadian Conservatism; on the contrary, I have emphasized that the "primary component of the ideology of business-oriented parties is liberalism." Preece himself quotes

1. Rod Preece, "The Myth of the Red Tory", *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, Vol. 1 (Spring-Summer, 1977):3-28.

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this caveat and proceeds to ignore it in his interpretation of my argument. I have never pretended that a thoroughly antiliberal red-toryism such as that of George Grant is *widespread* or *powerful* in the Conservative party. I have never denied that Meighen, Bennett, and Drew were business liberals. Preece can therefore quote their individualistic rhetoric from now until morning (as we say in Yiddish) without refuting my statement (which he also quotes) that "theirs is not the characteristically American conservatism which conserves *only* liberal values." The discussion of Robert Stanfield as a Burkean, with which Preece concludes his piece, is not a refutation but a confirmation of my argument.

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ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

Charles Taylor

Robert Paul Wolff, *Understanding Rawls: A Reconstruction and Critique of A Theory of Justice*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977, \$13.50 cloth, \$3.95 paper.

There have been literally dozens of articles, and some books, written in comment on John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* since it appeared in 1971. A great many of these have attempted to demonstrate how Rawls' famous derivation of the two principles of justice from the original position through game-theoretical reasoning does not really work.

Robert Paul Wolff also tries to show that this derivation breaks down, but his book attempts much more. It attempts to justify its title. Wolff's aim is to make clear the "basic idea" or the "core insight" which informs Rawls' theory through its many versions, from the early articles in the 1950s through to the mature statement of his position in *A Theory of Justice*.

In Wolff's view, Rawls' core insight offers a way out of an impasse in which many sensitive philosophically inclined people find themselves in the Anglo-Saxon world once they begin to reflect on the bases of their ethical position. They find themselves torn between utilitarianism on the one hand, and on the other some view which will make sense of their strongly felt moral intuitions concerning the unconditional nature of the right, and, in particular, the inviolability of the human person. For some this alternate view might take the form of intuitionism, but even those who are quite unattracted to intuitionism as an ethical theory often seek some way of grounding these moral intuitions.

What strengthens the appeal of utilitarianism in this philosophical culture is that it offers a clear method of reasoning about ethical matters which fits well with our paradigms about reasoning, viz., calculation; and, moreover, calculation about an unchallengeable, unmystical and thoroughly empirical definition of the human good, viz., happiness. What is unappealing about utilitarianism, apart from its general insensitivity and crassness, is that it does not seem to allow for an unconditional right and wrong. What is right depends on what is good, on what will produce the greatest quantity of good in any situation, i.e., what tends to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. This seems to permit us to reason in certain (admittedly boundary) situations about the admissibility of sacrificing some innocent person, or grossly neglecting his rights, in order to bring about the happiness of many others. But this, of course, contradicts our deeply held moral intuitions about the inviolability of the person.

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The two sides of the liberal outlook thus enter into conflict with each other. On the one hand, this outlook starts from the individual and his rights as the ground for all ethical and political reasoning; the rest of the universe, including the political and social structures linking individuals, is to be conceived only as means to the securing of the rights and well-being of individual human beings. On the other hand, this very invitation to calculate the effects of nature and social structure *as means* tends to carry forward under the weight of its own intellectual justification until the fate of individuals themselves is part of the calculation. Liberalism is torn between its Lockean and Hobbesian sides; or, in terms of later reference points, between its utilitarian and Kantian allegiances.

Rawls' basic idea may be understood as providing a way out of this dilemma. Rawls, as Wolff argues, draws on another strand of the modern liberal outlook, contract theory, to produce a justification of unconditional right and the inviolability of the individual (in the form of a theory of justice which ensures that one cannot be sacrificed for others) by means of a rigorous argument of instrumental reason which involves attributing no controversial, substantive goals to the contractors, but which only assumes that they are interested in their own happiness. Consequently, the principles of justice, and the acceptance of inviolability that they incorporate, may be envisaged as the necessary outcome of an attempt to arrive at unanimous agreement about the rules governing their association on the part of self-interested individuals in certain defined conditions. If this argument holds, we would then have justified our most cherished intuitions about the right, but by means of a reasoning process every bit as rigorous and "tough-minded" as the utilitarians', and which, moreover, involves no questionable initial assumptions concerning what men necessarily seek or ought to seek. To take this same point from another angle, we should have proved some very substantive conclusions about how men ought to treat each other starting from some minimal, and purely formal assumptions: that men are self-interested (they have *some* goals, but we do not know which), that they must reach binding agreement on rules, that none can dominate the others, etc.

Wolff's purpose in *Understanding Rawls* is to take this core idea, and to trace its development through the different stages of Rawls' position, from the early "Justice as Fairness" article (*Philosophical Review*, 1958) to its mature statement in *A Theory of Justice*, accounting for the changes it has undergone in terms of the difficulties that it has encountered at each stage. This occupies Part Two of his work (Part One sets out the basic idea itself). In Part Three he discusses the relation of Rawls to Kant. In Part Four, he offers a wide-ranging criticism of the mature statement of the argument, and attempts to show that the derivation of the two principles in *A Theory of Justice* breaks down. Part Five provides some general reflections by way of conclusion on the inap-

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propriateness of attempting to resolve questions about social justice in such an abstract fashion as that to which the apparatus of the social contract and game-theoretical calculation condemns us.

There is something of real moment in Wolff's notion that Rawls' theory should be viewed as a resolution of a dilemma, or at least of a tension, between the pull of utilitarianism and certain strong moral intuitions. This does much to account for the extraordinary popularity of Rawls' work, and the intense interest that it has generated in the philosophical world. Even though most of those who write about Rawls do so in order to refute him, they are drawn by the intrinsic interest of what he attempts, which is to open out this area of our strongest moral convictions to the same rigorous, calculative mode of reasoning which has achieved such prestige in other, less humanly and emotionally central, areas. In the intellectual culture of Anglo-American philosophy, where this mathematically-modelled argument enjoys such (I think irrational) prestige, it is a tremendous achievement when someone allows us to discuss something really humanly and philosophically important in this canonical form — the only one in which we can be sure of saying something philosophically valid.

From this point of view, Rawls' achievement can be seen as that of bringing together a certain content and a certain form of argument. It resolves the problem of those who might have felt a nagging, half-admitted worry that their mode of philosophizing was keeping them from addressing important questions (as the critics of analytic philosophy have always insisted). But Wolff's critique goes further. He contends that Rawls' core idea is meant to resolve the dilemma in moral philosophy outlined above, the tension between the utilitarian and the Kantian in the contemporary philosopher. I think there is a great deal in this, too. But there is also something very puzzling when one tries to clarify what this means.

Wolff himself is puzzled, for at the end of Part Four, he has a section entitled "The Logical Status of Rawls' Argument", where he offers three possible accounts, incompatible with each other, of what exactly Rawls might be trying to prove about his two principles by their derivation from the original position. And there is, indeed, a great mystery surrounding this question, which makes it very difficult to say exactly in what way Rawls can be seen as resolving the tension between the two sides of the liberal outlook.

Perhaps, at this point, I might share my own bafflement with the reader, and then refer him to Wolff's instructive discussion of this issue, and through that back to the text of *A Theory of Justice*. Wolff mentions three possible readings of what Rawls attempts to prove. I should like to single out two, which are close to his first two.

One might think that the derivation of the two principles from the original position was itself a proof of their validity. How might this be? One way might

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be as an example of what Rawls calls pure procedural justice. We speak of pure procedural justice where the fairness of a distribution, for instance, resides in its having issued from a certain procedure. If we play a fair game of poker, and I lose my shirt to you, it is justly yours, in virtue of the way the game has actually gone.

But, as Rawls points out, it is essential to pure procedural justice that we actually play out the procedure. You could not walk off with my shirt before the game, and justify yourself on the grounds that this is a *possible* outcome of a poker game, or even that this is the *inescapable* outcome of a poker game (given my well-known combination of stupidity and rashness) between us. But now Rawls' contract is not something that we actually play out as contractors; it is an imagined predicament about which we are engaged in demonstrating the best strategy it dictates to us. So we cannot understand Rawls as intending the derivation as a proof of the two principles by pure procedural justice.

Another way exists of viewing the derivation as a proof of the validity of the principles of justice. We could envisage it as a claim that a rational agent, in the sense of an agent of instrumental reason, was committed to these principles as his best strategy (on pain thus of irrationality), once he accepted that he had to enter into *some* binding system of rules with others. This seems to be Wolff's view of Rawls' original intentions. Thus, discussing Rawls' early position, he states: "Rawls would, if he could prove his theorem, be in a position to say to a reader:

If you are a rationally self-interested agent, and if you are to have a morality at all, then you must acknowledge as binding upon you the moral principle I shall enunciate."
(p. 17)

If this theorem could be demonstrated successfully, one would have solved the tension between utilitarianism and our intuitions about right; for from a basis no richer than that of utilitarianism, viz., the self-interested individual, plus the constraint that we must come to some binding agreement on the rules which are to hold among us (and surely we must all accept *this*, unless we are willing to live as hermits in the Mackenzie delta), we should have derived valuable moral notions.

However, whether Wolff is correct or not about Rawls' original intentions, this cannot be the status of the argument proposed in *A Theory of Justice*. This is sufficiently obvious from Rawls' discussion of reflective equilibrium, his explicit discussion of the possible need to adjust our definition of the original situation in order to derive principles that meet our intuitions, his invocation of Kant, and much else.

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But, in addition, one can argue that it is just not possible to conceive of this derivation as a proof that the principles are valid. Even if we waive all of the objections that have been made to the derivation in *A Theory of Justice*, there are two basic reasons which rule it out as a validity proof, one touching the way things are, the other the nature of moral obligation.

The first reason is that the strategy of adopting the two principles is only shown to be the best for contractors in the extremely counter-factual predicament of the original position, where none has a special bargaining leverage to impose on the others his solution, and where, moreover, all are ignorant of their goals, talents, desires, etc. But in any real life contracting situation, we all know something of our goals, and of our bargaining counters, and it is rational to use these to the hilt. The two principles are far from being the rational policy for a self-interested contractor as such, but only at best in those empirically unrealizable conditions that Rawls lays down.

The second reason is that even if accepting the two principles did turn out to be the best strategy for rational agents as such, it would be just that: the best strategy of instrumental reason. It would still not have the status of a moral obligation, laying a higher claim on us than the realization of self-interest. But this sense of a higher claim is an integral part of the moral intuition we are trying to recapture. And this cannot be accomplished by an argument about the best strategy of instrumental reason. The gap here is the one Kant tried to mark by his distinction of categorical and hypothetical imperatives.

But if the derivation of the principles is not a proof of their validity then what is it? I should like to suggest that Rawls sees it as a method for defining justice. I want to distinguish a method of defining justice from a statement of what justice is. Perhaps, we could clarify this distinction by noting that there are two ways we could answer the question: What acts are right? or the question: How can I tell what acts are right? One would be to give a characterization of right actions which made clear in some way what it is that makes an action right, or as we might put it, that in virtue of which actions are right. We might reply for instance that actions are right which fulfil our nature as rational animals, or that tend to produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number. In both these cases we would be replying by providing the underlying ground that makes actions right (that is, our very controversial view of this ground). We are not only telling our questioner how to identify right acts from wrong acts, but we are also telling him why these acts are right or wrong.

But we might also reply in this vein. If you want to be able to tell right from wrong, then follow this rule: do unto others as you would be done by. Here there is no claim that what makes an act a right/wrong one is that we would want/not want it to be done to us. Rather the answer to *this* question might be: it is according to the will of God to treat your fellow creatures with

benevolence; or, we are bound by our common nature to do good and not harm to each other. The claim is only that the reflection: Would I want this done to me? provides an excellent (perhaps even infallible) method of discovering in any case what is right. What makes this right is something different.

The claim underlying such a criterion, of course, must be that there is some systematic connection between the criterion and what makes things right. We can see the grounds of this systematic connection in the case of the golden rule. If the basis of right and wrong is that we are called on by God or by nature to treat our fellow men with benevolence; and if we can assume that we are all roughly the same in our make-up; then a good criterion for whether I should do *A* to *X* (i.e., whether it is a benevolent act) is my willingness to have *A* done to me. We thus have a systematic connection between the grounds of right and our criterion; but they are not the same.

The golden rule is, as I noted above, a method of defining the right. Another famous such example, this time in the history of political theory, is Kant's use of the social contract idea, which is the direct ancestor to Rawls'. Kant suggests that we use the hypothetical test of unanimous agreement to ascertain whether laws are just. But this does not mean that something would be made just by the fact of unanimous agreement. What makes something just is that it can be willed as universal. There is a systematic connection between what can be willed as a universal law and what self-interested persons with varying goals will actually agree to unanimously; for in order to reach unanimous agreement, they would have to abstract from particular interests, and seek only what was in the interest of everybody. But in doing so they would have to detach themselves from the same particular goals which the moral person is asked to set aside as the motive of his/her actions. Thus we can expect a congruence between the unanimous compacts of even bad persons and the moral will of the good person.

I would argue that Rawls is proposing something of this sort in his derivation of the principles of justice. As a method of calculating what is just, it is very similar to the Kantian contract notion on which it is based; and it is meant to work as a criterion through the same kind of systematic connection (which Rawls discusses in section 40 of *A Theory of Justice*). Consequently, there is no implied claim that the derivation provides us with the grounds for just acts being just, much less, therefore, with a proof of their being just (which would have to lay clear the grounds).

Here I also take issue with Wolff. I do not agree that we can view the derivation as offering what he calls a "rational reconstruction" of our moral convictions (p. 181). For such reconstructions, which derive our multiform moral convictions from some small set of general principles, must also claim to lay bare to some extent the grounds of right; while what I have called a method of defin-

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ing the right makes no such claim whatever.

Rawls' derivation as I see it makes no such claim. Rawls' notion of the grounds of right seems to be similar to Kant's (on a plausible interpretation of Kant). Embracing the principles of justice "expresses our nature as free and equal rational persons" (*A Theory of Justice*, p. 256). The ground of the right is that we are called on to live up to our status as rational agents. This requires that we judge universally, abstracting from our particular goals. There is thus a systematic connection between this process of moral abstracting, and that which self-interested contractors would be forced to in the original position. But the fact that the principles are a good strategy for self-interested subjects in certain conditions has nothing to do with what makes them principles of justice.

What then is the value of the derivation? Why not just argue for the principles directly out of their grounds, which in Rawls' case seem to be Kantian-Humboldtian in nature? (cf. particularly, section 79 of *A Theory of Justice*) The justification would be that of all methods of definition. What underlies the popularity of the golden rule? The fact that it provides an easily available identification of the right, even for those who find it difficult to reason from the content of God's will or from the demands of a common nature, or even from the requirements of general benevolence.

One might in a parallel way make a claim for the derivation, that it allows us to go further in an exact and fine-tuned definition of the principles of justice than we could achieve if we argued straight from the grounds of justice. Precisely because we can use game-theoretical reasoning, we can arrive at such finely-nuanced definitions of the general principle of social equality as the difference principle. Once such principles are derived in the game-theoretical argument, they are recognized by our intuitions and informed by our understanding of the grounds of justice as indeed principles of justice. In the course of this reflection, our intuitions have thus been changed (made more precise), and we will have reached what Rawls calls reflective equilibrium.

This, I submit, is one way of understanding the logical status of Rawls' contract argument. It makes sense of this argument, and gives it a justification which does not involve our making untenable claims about the status of validity proof on its behalf.

But if this makes sense of the argument, then why did I confess to bafflement above? Because it is not at all clear that this is the sense that Rawls makes of it. Much of Rawls' commentary in *A Theory of Justice*, including, for instance, the opening remarks about the value of contract theory, seem to give it a more exalted status than simply (as what I have called) a method of defining the just.

But there is more. If Rawls' contract has the same status as Kant's and as the golden rule, then it must surely be clear by now that it has failed in its purpose.

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The derivation of the two principles is, even if valid, so complex and involves so much artifice that all hope must be abandoned of its serving as a vehicle of discovery of more rigorous, fine-grained definitions of the principles of justice. Rawls has a very interesting position on justice, derived partly from Kant and von Humboldt, which is being obscured by all the arid churning of the academic game-theoretical mill.

But I shall stop here, just short of saying something unbearably paradoxical: that Rawls' position might be improved by sloughing off what has made it the philosophical *succès d'estime* of the 1970s.

Perhaps one day, Rawls in his replies to critics shall take up the question of the logical status of the derivation, or what its strategic role is in the whole argument about justice. Should he do so, I would hope that he would address himself to this book. For Wolff, in trying to lay bare the core insight behind Rawls' developing position, has raised this issue with unusual focus and clarity. He brings together a grasp of Rawls' strategic goals with a detailed understanding of his arguments to produce an uncommonly interesting commentary on issues of pressing philosophical and moral significance.

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IN PRAISE OF CIVILITY

George Woodcock

Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*. New York: Knopf-Random House of Canada, 1976, pp. xiii, 373, \$17.95 cloth.

The Fall of Public Man is an important and serious book, and well written enough to be accessible to the moderately patient general reader. It deals with questions which are of some urgency to us in the social crises through which we are at present passing and, though I do not agree with all Richard Sennett's premises and do not share all his conclusions, I have no hesitation in saying that his book contributes a great deal to our understanding of why politics and social arrangements in the modern democratic world so often fail to produce what those who still have faith in their leaders expect from their efforts.

Richard Sennett, it is obvious, has no faith in such leaders and his distrust springs from one of the central themes of his book — that we have shifted from the objective consideration of political aims and practices to the cult of personality which means that we support a politician for what he appears to be rather than for what he proposes to do; thus we are always and inevitably disappointed, as we are in all endeavours to achieve practical results through emotionally based relationships.

I can best illustrate Sennett's view of what has happened in our society by quoting two paragraphs from the final pages that together summarize the *leitmotif* of his whole book, whose divagations into illustrative historical episodes and trends always swing back to this central theme. Sennett talks of the "long historical process . . . in which the very terms of human nature have been transformed, into that individual, unstable and self-absorbed phenomenon we call 'personality'." And he continues:

That history is of the erosion of a delicate balance which maintained society in the first flush of its secular and capitalist existence. It was a balance between public and private life, a balance between an impersonal realm in which men could invest one kind of passion and a personal realm in which they could invest another. This geography of society was governed by an image of human nature based on the idea of a natural human character; this character was not created by the experiences of a lifetime, but was revealed in them. It belonged to Nature and was

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reflected in man. As both secularity and capitalism arrived at new forms in the last century, this idea of a transcendent nature gradually lost its meaning. Men came to believe that they were the authors of their own characters, that every event in their lives must have a meaning in terms of defining themselves, but what this meaning was, the instabilities and contradictions of their lives made it difficult to say. Yet the sheer attention and involvement in matters of personality grew ever greater. Gradually this mysterious, dangerous force which was the self came to define social relations. It became a social principle. At that point, the public realm of impersonal meaning and impersonal action began to wither.

The society we inhabit today is burdened with the consequences of that history, the effacement of the *res publica* by the belief that social meanings are generated by the feelings of individual human beings. This change has obscured for us two areas of social life. One is the realm of power, the other is the realm of the settlements in which we live.

In order to establish his thesis, Sennett goes through the elaborate historical and sociological analysis of change which forms the main body of his work. He poses a time when there was a balance between the impersonality of public life, the realm of culture, and the personality of the private life, the realm of nature. And he traces how, during the nineteenth century, the dams of convention parting the two realms were broken down and personality flooded into the realm of social relationships — the *res publica* — in which it had no place.

Given Sennett's concern with balance, it is appropriate that his book should be divided into carefully poised sections. After two introductory chapters, there are three groups of four chapters each, discussing respectively the society of the *ancien régime* in major cities, its nineteenth century disintegration and the narcissistic present with its dominating and disastrous cult of personality.

The two introductory chapters discuss the "public problem", which Sennett sees as the fact that modern man has sought to "make the fact of being private, alone with ourselves and with family and intimate friends, an end in itself", and that the pursuit of this end has infected the public realm, so that: "In the *ancien régime* public experience was connected to the formation of social order; in the last century, public experience came to be connected to the formation of personality." In other words, the public and the private have in our time

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coalesced to the detriment of society, whereas in the past the danger of this very development was recognized. Of the mid-eighteenth century city Sennett remarks:

The line drawn between public and private was essentially the one on which the claims of civility — epitomized by cosmopolitan, public behaviour — were balanced against the claims of nature epitomized by the family. They saw these claims in conflict, and the complexity of their vision lay in that they refused to prefer the one over the other, but held the two in a state of equilibrium.

The next four chapters are mainly devoted to a description of the patrician society of the great eighteenth century cities, Paris and to a less extent London, and particularly the extent to which public behaviour was governed by an elaborate series of conventions and disguises, so that dress, coiffure and makeup formed a mask to which the code of manners (including highly formalized types of speech) was the counterpart in action, to the extent that even conflict was formalized and thus largely defused. Sennett admits that such a situation could exist only in a "society" restricted in extent and numbers, an elite in which everyone knew the rules of the game, and he is frank in admitting that he excludes from consideration the poor and the menial, who were in any case regarded as outside the world where power was played.

I cannot help feeling, from my own knowledge of the history of this period, that Sennett is being even more restrictive than his own admissions suggest, and is presenting to us a model of an ordered society based on selected phenomena in eighteenth century cities rather than a picture of what actually existed. In many directions *ancien régime* society was not nearly as unanimously dedicated to the impersonality of social and political life as Sennett suggests. At this very time, after all, a cult of personality was already developing through the rise of Methodism, which was not entirely a religion of plebians, and middle class society had been considerably affected, in London certainly, by the tendency of the Quakers and to a lesser degree of other rich dissenters — some of them powerful men in the City of London and in the background of political life — to reject patrician dress and patrician manners in favour of simplicity and frankness. The cult of total frankness reached its apogee in Godwin's *Political Justice* (published in 1793), but Godwin represented the extreme development of a trend evident in British and specifically in London society at many levels throughout the eighteenth century.

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The elitist conventions may indeed, as Sennett argues, have been observed in the theatres, largely because of the traditional patron-servant relationship between audience and player (though this was waning by mid-century, as Gaerick's independence showed), but the same was not the case in the novel, the rising literary form of the period, and in Richardson and his followers we already see a breaking down of the conventions of impersonality and an intrusion of the values of family life (the realm of nature which Sennett opposes to public life in the eighteenth century city) into the public world. Such tendencies, admittedly, were not so strong in eighteenth century Paris, though even there one encounters the curious fact of the anti-patrician plays of the watchmaker's son Beaumarchais having won their way against great opposition until they were accepted in inner court circles, and the equally curious fact that Rousseau — who on Sennett's own admission represents almost the opposite of the cult of convention and artifice — had so great an influence on the intellectual life of the Enlightenment.

Indeed, when I read this section of *The Fall of Public Man*, I was often reminded less of what I had read by eighteenth century writers than of the views on the value of artifice in life that were developed by the men of the 1890s — who looked back to an idealized Augustan age — and borrowed by them largely from Charles Baudelaire, a great pasticheur of eighteenth century attitudes. In a different way, much of the substance of Mr. Sennett's argument is contained in Wilde's essay, "The Truth of Masks", and even more in the work of that mask- and ritual-obsessed poet, W.B. Yeats, who is constantly juxtaposing the impersonal and the intimate in poems like "A Prayer for My Daughter":

How but in custom and in ceremony
Are innocence and beauty born?
Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
And custom for the spreading laurel tree.

It must be said for the benefit of those who — like myself — have no great taste for the image of a world where women in yard-high head-dresses called *poufs au sentiment* screamed insults at actors (*how many* really wore *poufs* or screamed the insults?) that Mr. Sennett disclaims any desire to return to such a society, or any thought that its semblance might be reconstructed in the contemporary world. And we may indeed be doing better justice to the arguments in the remainder of *The Fall of Public Man* if we assume that in his chapters on the *ancien régime* Sennett is in fact creating a kind of Platonic

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myth, an exemplary model, just as eighteenth century man created exemplary models out of a republican Rome that never existed as they conceived it. Otherwise, it would be hard to reconcile the urbanity and formalized confrontations of eighteenth century city existence as he presents it with the barbarity of the law and its administration, the callousness of social relations, the acceptance of slavery and the fact that the people who did something practical about these anomalies within such a society were mainly the very Methodists and dissenters who saw their religion in a personal rather than a ceremonial relationship to the deity, in an acceptance of natural law, including the laws of human nature, as immanent rather than transcendent.

But in the sense of Platonian or Sorelian myth, the four chapters on public and private man in the *ancien régime* do make sense and have their use in giving imaginable form to a concept of society in which a deliberate impersonalization of public affairs serves to protect the personal nature of private life — or, to put it another way, in which human culture protects human nature.

The four succeeding chapters appear under the general title of "The Turmoil of Public Life in the 19th Century". Sennett sees that turmoil as already anticipated in Rousseau's writings in which he detects the strange but prophetic conjunction of a "search for individual authenticity" and "political tyranny". But the turmoil expressed itself in the nineteenth century in the "fears and fantasies" of the bourgeoisie, which find their point of focussing tension in Balzac's Paris. It was — because of widespread ignorance even among industrialists and financiers of the real workings of capitalism — a highly unstable world. It was also a world in which the transcendent was replaced by the immanent, in which both the pietist's God and the rationalist's Human Nature gave way to a mystification of the individual and his potentialities — and since that individual had yet to be defined, men lived in uncertainty and fear. And so instead of dress and manners providing a reassurance since they indicated a predictable way of behaviour, they became threats because no one knew what lay behind and even the drabest of appearances was watched for the minute signs that revealed the truth about its wearer. "There are no disguises; each mask is a face," says Sennett. One sought first to hide one's emotions, then to suppress them in case they should inadvertently become evident. Men in public became passive spectators: "In silence, watching life go by, a man was at last free." He was free because his silence and his sameness of appearance defended the personality of which he had become so apprehensively conscious. The complement to the silent, solitary men in the cafés and clubs was the politician who exposed and exploited rather than concealing his personality, and in this situation "the content of political belief recedes as in public people become more interested in the content of the politician's life." Though Sennett does not use it, an appropriate comparison could be made between Wilkes in the

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eighteenth century, about whose scandalous private life few of his followers were concerned, and Parnell in the nineteenth century, whose career was destroyed by the revelations of his affair with Kitty O'Shea. The content of life had undermined the content of belief.

Again, the representation is simplified until the outlines of a myth emerge. A factual picture, literal in its detail, is not being presented. Anyone who knows much about London clubs in the Victorian age remembers that only in certain rooms was silence enjoined; anyone who knows something of the history of Parisian cafés like the d'Harcourt and the Closerie des Lilas is aware that these were not the gathering places of speechless and solitary men and women fantasizing over their glasses of absinthe. And what of the great balls of the Victorian age where marriageable girls were paraded like horses for their points to be observed? What of the salons where brilliant stylized conversation was cultivated and valued? What of the country house parties where people of a number of classes met and the celebrated British reserve of street encounters was abandoned? Nor, when one comes to the replacement of political ideas by political personality, should it be forgotten that this was the age of Ruskin as well as Dizzy, and that Christian and secular socialism both developed in this period a serious criticism of existing society that attracted converts from all classes because of its ideas, not because of the personalities of those who expounded them. Yet Sennett is again using his myth to isolate genuine trends and to simplify the complexities of an age when change was widespread and rapid.

In many ways we are more the descendants of the Victorians than we choose to admit, inheriting some of their attitudes unchanged and others in inverted form. Constant is the shift in politics from idea and concrete proposal to personality. Indeed, it had grown even more evident, so that one can say of the 1970s even more emphatically than Sennett says of the 1870s:

To the extent that a politician in public arouses credence in himself as a person, to that extent those who are credulous lose a sense of themselves . . . They focus on who he is rather than on what he can do for them.

The difference is illustrated when we compare the fate of Parnell with the fate of Pierre Trudeau after the breakup of his marriage, which would have been fatal for a Victorian politician or indeed for any Canadian politician before 1960. Trudeau gained an access of popularity, largely because the incident seemed to exhibit a freedom of personal passions, the appearance of

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spontaneous intimacy, that has become part of the cult of personality as in our day it swings towards paralysing narcissism.

Sennett sees the plight of our society signified in the loss of a real consciousness of the city as a social form, and in the fragmenting cult of quarters and communities.

Cities appear in present-day clichés as the ultimate in empty impersonality. In fact, the lack of a strong impersonal culture in the modern city instead has aroused a passion for fantasized intimate disclosures between people.

He defends the city and also civility, which, as he says, "has as its aim the shielding of others from being burdened with oneself."

There is no room even to summarize the detailed criticism of contemporary social trends with which *The Fall of Public Man* ends, but some critical points about these last chapters must be made.

I agree completely with Sennett's view that the cult of intimacy which has been fostered by the electronic media has largely destroyed true contact between people, and that personal encounter movements have been harmful and self-defeating. But I would not continue with him from that point to reject the trend towards creating smaller, more participatory communities within our cities. Clearly a return to the eighteenth century patrician order is impossible, and Sennett does not attempt to advocate it. (Indeed, he is almost entirely concerned with diagnosis and suggests no actual remedies.) The demographic evidence is enough to show our present predicament. Cities have grown so large that the elite groups which still exist in them have lost true significance among the masses of people and the vast neutral buildings that dominate modern city centres where these have not been destroyed entirely. Also, class structures and relationships have changed, so that vastly more people belong to the dominant culture such as it is and their needs can no longer be met in great metropolitan agglomerations. We must indeed attempt to preserve and to recover in a form appropriate to our time the values embraced in the word *civility*, but it is not impossible to see this happening in a group of interlocking communities. It is the isolation between such communities that has to be avoided, and the answer to that — to the problem of creating real local centres which are not wholly inward-looking — lies in the concept of federalism applied municipally, not in the hybrid form that passes for federalism in current Canadian politics, but in a form much closer to what Proudhon advocated in nineteenth century Paris.

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I propose this tentative answer in terms of a possible direction towards the future only to suggest that urban and national decentralization may not be so negative a goal as Sennett believes. It is certainly not fatally linked to the galloping narcissism which he rightly sees as a malady — perhaps the major psychic malady — of our world. But essentially *The Fall of Public Man* must be judged by its validity as a diagnosis, and here, once one accepts the convention of sociological myth within which Sennett works, it is a penetrating, wide-ranging and salutary study.

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AMNESIA CRITIQUE: A 'MARXIST' APPROPRIATION OF THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL

Ray Morrow

Phil Slater, *Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School: A Marxist Perspective*. Routledge and Kegan Paul: London and Boston, 1977, pp. 185, xvi.

The subtitle provides an accurate forewarning: "A Marxist Perspective." With minimal metatheoretical fanfare Phil Slater describes his *Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School* as a "metacritique" — "a critique framed within a context that transcends the object under scrutiny. In the case of the Frankfurt School, such a procedure is both complex and problematical: they acknowledge as their frame of reference the method, categories and political orientation of historical materialism, yet their analyses fail to concretize these categories, particularly as regards to the problem of economic manipulation and revolutionary social praxis. Thus, immanent critique and metacritique, in the case of an analysis of the Frankfurt School, fuse." (p. xiv)

For those who have previously understood the Frankfurt School as a "metacritique" of Marxism, this may come as a surprise and appear a rather dubious interpretive strategy: a catalogue of "deviations" has little to recommend itself beyond its function as an indicator of the current standings on the ideological charts. But the author's intentions are more conciliatory, restorative, indeed "practical".¹ The metacritique provided is not "purely" theoretical, but is based on "a close study of the Frankfurt School's failure to establish links with the working-class movement in the 1930's and, subsequently, in connection with the *practical* critique the Frankfurt School underwent at the hands of the student anti-authoritarian movement in the 1960's." (p. xv) As a consequence: "The present study . . . stresses the intended Marxist orientation of the Frankfurt School's formative years, an orientation which is distorted in the vast majority of the commentaries at hand today, where the Frankfurt School's works in its early years is either condemned for 'revisionism' and 'eclecticism' (by the 'orthodox' Marxist-Leninists), or else 'saved' from the 'slandorous' label of 'Marxist' (by bourgeois intellectuals). Both perspectives are inadequate: what is needed is a differentiated analysis. The following study propounds the following thesis: the Frankfurt School of the 1930's and early 1940's made a serious contribution to the elucidation and articulation of historical materialism but, *at the same time*, failed to achieve the relation to praxis which is central to the Marxist project." (pp. xiii-xiv)

Taken at face value, this is not an implausible interpretive strategy. Let us concede the need for such a metacritique oriented toward the problem of praxis

— political praxis — in the Frankfurt tradition. Let us concede the possibility that this requires overcoming the tendency to attempt to excommunicate or embalm it. Let us accept, in short, a potential heuristic value in a study which could compare the early Critical Theory with classical Marxism and Marx from the perspective of a contemporary in the 1930's such as Karl Korsch.² Let us grant the possible redeeming characteristics of a metacritique of the early Frankfurt School from some kind of 'Marxist perspective'.

Regrettably, Slater's study scarcely meets even these minimal objectives. The reasons are many, ranging from such technical features as brevity and frequent lack of penetration in the summary of texts,³ to underlying theoretical difficulties which converge ultimately in the decision to isolate the period from 1930 to 1942. This is coupled with the assumption that the work after this period is simply the beginning of a series of steps toward idealistic regression culminating in the younger generation of the Frankfurt School.⁴ He can thus avoid accounting for the diversity of these later interpretations and how even those who continue, like himself, to hold a belief in the possibility of a proletarian class movement in the traditional sense, have found it necessary to proceed via an immanent critique which passes *through* the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, rather than passing around or behind it, thus confirming that which would be denied. The consequence is the naiveté of historical anachronism and a grave neglect of the internal tensions within Critical Theory from the beginning. The resulting interpretation culminates in a kind of latent theory of *coupure épistémologique régressive* — a psycho-theoretical malady resulting from an aversion to economic class analysis and to nitty-gritty proletarian politics.

The book itself is coherently organized in terms of five chapters: (1) the historical background of the Institute; (2) an exposition of the "critical theory of society" as historical materialist ideology critique; (3) the historical materialist praxis-nexus; (4) historical materialist psychology; and (5) historical materialist aesthetics. Yet the insistent repetition of the loaded contrast term "historical materialist" gives a clue to the latent tendency of the discussion to approach a deviationist catalogue. This sense is further reinforced by the loose internal organization of the chapters, each of which is divided into a dozen or so numbered sections usually two to three pages long. The only thing that seems to link these sections — for the most part textual summaries — is some kind of thematic relation to the chapter topic and a patient search for symptoms of the two guiding metacritical axioms deriving from Slater's "Marxist perspective": first, that the failure of Critical Theory stems from an unwillingness and an inability to develop an "agitational" strategy for a "practical critical" proletarian movement; and secondly, that this is a *logical* consequence of a "tendential idealism" which is manifest in an inability to provide an economically grounded class analysis, especially a theory of the "economic

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manipulation" of monopoly capitalism instead of an absolutization of "superstructural manipulation."

These constitute, as it were, the internal and external poles of this metacritical strategy. Despite a certain plausibility as objections of the sort that might proceed from a Marxist perspective, the fatal limitation of this strategy lies in its implicit assumption that such theses can be taken for granted with only minimal explication and that they need not be confronted with the later theoretical developments within the Frankfurt School as a whole. This is not to say, as we shall see, that there is not *some* attempt to justify these two overriding assumptions, but that this justification makes no effort to try to persuade anyone who has a deeper comprehension of the issues posed within the Frankfurt School. This is a telltale sign of a catechismal variety of unreflexive critique, however forgiving it may be in the end.

The first chapter provides a routine rundown of the pre-Horkheimer history of the Institute followed by a background analysis of the rise of Fascism in the Weimar Republic. While it is indeed difficult to give more than a thumbnail sketch of this period in ten pages, there is a notable failure to penetrate to the character of the political stalemate, the implication of the Left within this catastrophic totality, and the very real political and personal isolation of Institute figures within the academic world. This neglect is essential to the strategy of harping on the failure of the Frankfurt theorists to develop a "practical" theory and of rejecting at the outset Jay's thesis that this very marginality was a condition of the peculiar theoretical achievements of the Frankfurt School.

In the second chapter, devoted to the difficult task of an elementary summary of the leading themes of Critical Theory from 1930-1942, Slater introduces and defends his "revisionist, anti-revisionist" interpretation of the development of the Frankfurt School. To this end, Wellmer's *Critical Theory of Society* is singled out as the important source of the erroneous view (culminating in Schroyer's work) which seeks to deny that early Critical Theory was *really* Marxist. Fortunately, "all" of Wellmer's arguments are "wrong". These are summarized as the threefold contention that "first, Marx's version of historical materialism shows serious metaphysical and crypto-positivist deviations; second, the Frankfurt School, under Horkheimer, were aware of this in the 1930's already; and third, their work of that period was a conscious attempt to rectify the science of historical materialism, which Marx had distorted! Each and every of these assertions is, in fact, false." (p. 43) Perhaps doubly so, since they are something less than a nuanced reproduction of Wellmer's argument. In any case, there is little that can be added here to resolve this debate and Slater has not provided any convincing new tools. Suffice it to say that at least Wellmer can provide a persuasive account of the immanent continuity of the transition within Critical Theory without necessarily assuming that this was a

"conscious" effort from the very beginning. Slater, in contrast, can account for the "tendential idealism" of Horkheimer and Adorno only in terms of a psychological reaction-syndrome assumed typical of bourgeois intellectuals.

With such considerations in mind, the third chapter on the theory-praxis nexus takes on a rather different significance than meets the more or less naive eye. All of the evidence compiled to prove the fact of an avoidance of strictly political debates about actual struggles and an inability to develop a practical theory of revolutionary organization remains essentially anachronistic and hence ahistorical to the extent that it simply bypasses the historical circumstances and immanent theoretical deliberations which underlay this failure of concrete strategy. For why should the Frankfurt theorists have hoped to succeed where their predecessor and early source of inspiration — Karl Korsch — with all of his practical experience and theoretical brilliance had failed? The irony that slips past Slater's lament is that the charge that "'Praxis' thus became a theoretical, methodological category rather than a concrete notion of socio-historical class struggle" (p. 63) and was consequently "ultimately academic . . . not a constituent of a concrete revolutionary struggle" (p. 55), applies *almost* as well to Korsch, Mattick and the Council Communists who Slater reasonably takes as potential allies. This failure is attributed, however, to a mystical faith in a "spontaneity" theory of revolution. Even though it is admitted that the Frankfurt School stood "head and shoulders" above the normal ivory tower and "had a great number of highly differentiated observations to make on the *general* problems of class-struggle", they could not translate this into a "*practical* theory of class struggle." (p. 56) Following a series of snippets on the Frankfurt theorists' relations to Lenin, the dictatorship of the proletariat, Stalinism, Rosa Luxemburg, the KPD, Trotsky, Brandlerism, Council Communism, SPD reformism, and left-wing social democracy (Adler), it is concluded — largely through imputation by default — that the Frankfurt theorists must have had a spontaneity theory because they persisted in affirming a faith in revolution and yet avoided coming to terms with the question of organization. In short, they "failed to assimilate in an adequate and conscious manner the lessons of defeat of the German and Russian workers. Fascism and Stalinism remained . . . traumas that blocked the view of any concrete critical praxis." (p. 55) Perhaps. But with the third trauma of that "brave new world" opened up by the view from Morningside Heights and Beverley Hills, they could begin to assimilate the implications of the "victory" of the American workers. In their deepest of Marxist hearts, it was probably nostalgia which lead Adorno and Horkheimer back home to the defeated proletariat of Central Europe.

This is not to imply that Slater avoids providing a formal presentation of their mode of reasoning. As he points out, the Frankfurt School "seems to have been convinced in the early 1930's that political praxis, given the conditions

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obtaining, was already doomed. The 'truth' of the 'critical theory of society' became, of necessity, increasingly isolated from the organized oppositional groupings; the only hope was that, at some future date, 'the truth' would once more be taken up in earnest by a significant political movement." (p. 81) Yet since this argument is not taken seriously as a reasonable existential judgment, the anachronistic lament persists: "Naturally, a spontaneity-theory is conveniently freed from the necessity of formulating organizational categories, but any such theory can hardly claim to be the revolutionary 'truth'." (p. 82) Perhaps it cannot claim to be the whole truth, but it could be said that it was the unseen side, the moment of negation, where truth must begin practically to reconstitute itself anew.

Somewhat surprisingly, despite the central place of the concept of "spontaneity" in Marcuse's theory and the continuities between the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse is granted a dispensation and credited with having "radicalized" and "sublated" the "critical theory of society." This judgment stems from a formal application of the criteria of practical-political class orientation and the primacy of economic manipulation as the cornerstones of fidelity to historical materialism. Consequently, because of his "historical materialist insights" — consistent acknowledgement of the proletarian revolution despite the allowance of a complementary role for the student movement, theory of libidinal liberation, scattered remarks on rationalization in the sphere of economic production — Marcuse can qualify more or less as a "good Marxist". And this *despite* the aberrations of Marcuse's aesthetic theory with its rejection of the use of art as a weapon of the class struggle. Yet this latter dimension cannot be dismantled as some kind of superfluous detail when it is the trigger underlying his whole theoretical project. What is missing in Slater's account is any recognition that the differences among Marcuse and his former colleagues (excepting the later Horkheimer) are not so much theoretical as circumstantial and temperamental: departing from a shared tradition of discourse he has continued to articulate the logic of utopian possibility much as Adorno, the traumatized realist, conversely tried to come to terms with the logical consequences of the possibility of historical catastrophe. For someone such as Slater, for whom the meaning of "radicalism" is reduced to a purely political stance, militant affect and attitudes — *Parteilichkeit*, the internal dynamic between optimism and pessimism as the motive for exploring the logic of possibilities in a new historical conjuncture is lost. In this context, Marcuse's effort to stretch the old categories to the limits of utopian possibility and Adorno's attempt to pose the question of their archaic contamination are only two sides of the same coin: their value can be realized only together, not by setting off a radical from a regressive side in the name of militant exchange value.

The final two chapters are devoted to what is acknowledged to be the most important contributions of the Frankfurt School: a theory of superstructural "manipulation" based upon an analysis of both the psychic dimension and its mediation through the culture industry. The choice of the term "manipulation", however, is indicative of a form of interpretation which may have the effect of unintentionally stressing an aspect which easily lends itself to vulgarization. The term manipulation suffers from a conspiratorial connotation which, despite its agitational resonance, tends to gloss over the nuances of a theory of domination and its abolition. Moreover, it is a concept which has a tendency to return to haunt its author: when revolutionary agitation is implicitly defined as a form of counter-manipulation, counter-propaganda, the question of the creation of a counter-culture drops out of sight as self-evident.

As for the psychological dimension of "manipulation", the sins of the Frankfurt School are those we have seen before: no strategy for the anti-authoritarian movement; and inadequate grounding in an economic theory. "The psychological theory of the Frankfurt School is not structured according to the need of any ideological struggle of the present. Nowhere are there indications as to a theory and strategy of anti-authoritarian struggle." (p. 113) On the one hand, it could be asked in response why would they have even tried or have been able to develop a theory of praxis for the 1970's on the basis of the circumstances of the 1930's? So here we are reminded of the better example of Wilhelm Reich who "had been active in this work during the crucial, and fatal, class struggles of the last years of Weimar Germany. The Frankfurt School, by contrast, held no hopes for changing the world, so they set about explaining it. That explanation, though dialectical, did not throw up any concepts for an anti-authoritarian strategy and even failed to emphasize the *need* for such a strategy." (p. 114)⁵ This failure is explained as the "logical outcome" of the fact that "in the absence of a sound economic theory, the role of psychology becomes distorted." (p. 114) Unfortunately, the relation between such a "sound economic theory" and psychology is not clarified for the reader and no alternative other than Reich is suggested.⁶ The "practical" fate of Reich in the various phases of his career is not elaborated upon.

In the final, and in many respects best, chapter all of these issues converge on the question of "historical materialist" aesthetics. Here we are lead to the conclusion that "in the evolution of the 'critical theory of society' . . . the experience of fascism was, in a sense, traumatic for the Frankfurt School. Their theory was not developed with any concept of a continuing confrontation between wage-labour and capital, anything less than total revolution, with a perfect mass class-consciousness, was viewed as hopelessly caught up in the contradictions of that very world which was to be smashed. This weakness is reproduced in the Frankfurt School's aesthetics. The analysis of manipulation is highly incisive, whereas the concept of 'negation' is tendentially idealist."

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(p. 135) "Ultimately, the Frankfurt School's differentiated critique of culture collapsed due to its failure to proceed from ideology-critique to the *practical-critical* theory of class praxis." (p. 145)

In contrast, the author finds it adequate to point to the counter examples of Brecht and Benjamin reduced to materialist measure. While it is perfectly legitimate to challenge the pessimism of the assumption of total administration and to pose "the question of the possibility of critical work in popular culture . . . the question of the progressive employment of the advanced means of communication," (p. 136) to locate this discussion anachronistically in the context of the Weimar Republic tends to overlook the contradictory effects of agit-prop even then, and completely bypasses the fact of the general absence of such a proletarian public in the postwar period.

There is little point here in replaying the details of the polarization between the Frankfurt theorists' conception of determinate negation — the resulting high estimation of the capacity of avant-garde art forms to elicit utopian remembrance on the one hand, and an agit-prop aesthetic oriented toward the subordination of art to the immediate class struggle on the other. Slater's discussion, while only scratching the surface of the problematic of the aesthetic theories of Adorno and Benjamin, does provide an instructive confrontation of positions in terms of their implications for revolutionary organization. But what emerges from this discussion — despite the author's obvious intentions — is a lingering sense of the misplaced focus of the whole debate and the limiting horizon of its genesis in Central Europe in the 1920's and 1930's. As mirror images of each other, the two polar positions reproduce the contradictions of a form of social crisis which has largely faded from advanced capitalist societies. In this new context, it is clear that any agitationally conceived theory of counter-manipulation cannot compete with the consciousness industry: it is the cultural equivalent of the illusions of the urban guerilla.⁷ Nor does the affirmation that protest lingers on in the technical virtuosity of Schonberg or the estranged language of Beckett provide any great consolation. Both of these perspectives fail to grasp the changed horizon of possibilities and the contradictory dynamic of the reproduction of culture in the context of advanced consumer societies.

Marcuse has come the closest here with his portrayal of the tension between repressive desublimation and the systematic cultivation of new needs. In various formulations, this is the point of departure for conceptions of a "legitimacy crisis" as a longer term locus for the development of a new form of potentially collective subjects with more advanced forms of communicative competence. Whatever objections may be raised to such conceptions, it is clear at least that they are trying to come to terms with the possibilities immanent in the transformations of advanced capitalism. In contrast, the agitational conception of proletarian organization as developed by Slater simply avoids addressing

the anomaly that the most potentially critical forms of popular culture no longer proceed self-consciously under a class banner, but cut across class lines, binding individuals together in an array of class-heterogeneous status-spheres. In persisting in narrowly defining the instrumental functions of art in terms of the mobilizing capacity of aesthetic cheerleaders, such a view loses sight of both the new field conditions and the end zone. The goal of critical communication can no longer be simply the "solidarity" of damaged selves in a march of cripples (as in the slaughter scene concluding Alexandro Jodorowski's film, *E/Topo*), but in the equi-finality of reconvergence of those who know themselves well enough to love their neighbours. That is the long egocentric march in the West: to proclaim the death of the subject is a precondition of reconceptualizing its further development.

It must be admitted that in the course of the book, some evidence is given for its two guiding metacritical assumptions by Slater's references to the development of the German student movement and to the economic theory of Alfred Sohn-Rethel. The use of the example of the German student movement — a falsely promising theme — does not penetrate beyond the citation of early expressions of intention as expressed in Hans-Jurgen Krahl's observation that "Critical Theory was able to recognize a concept of totality . . . But . . . was nonetheless unable to grasp this totality in its concrete expression as class-anatagonism . . . The practical class standpoint, to put it crudely, did not enter into the theory as an active constituent of that theory." (cited p. 82) Hence the German student movement was concerned with a "practical" appropriation and "awareness of the need for organized ideological struggle . . . Thus, the German form of the student anti-authoritarian movement organized to criticize the social significance of the content and method of university courses." (p. 82) Curiously, the reader is spared any account of the subsequent decade of development of this movement and the sectarian splintering of the "ideological struggle" in the face of the polarization provoked within the German university system and society. Above all, there is no hint that this attempt to use the university as the bastion for a traditionally conceived agitational struggle has proven itself a complete failure in terms of Slater's own two criteria — applied to the Frankfurt School — for assessing the promotion of changes in consciousness: "*effective* communication, and communication to a *revolutionary* class." (p. 146)

But the analytical backbone of Slater's argumentation seeks to build upon the work of Alfred Sohn-Rethel. Almost unknown to the English-language reader, he has a tangential relation to the Frankfurt School (corresponding with Adorno and Benjamin in the 1930's) and has provoked some interesting discussions on the West German Left over the past several years.⁸ But on the basis of a five page exposition of Sohn-Rethel's fragmentary and controversial thesis on

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the rise of Fascism in Germany, there is scarcely space for moving beyond a superficial account; above all it does not credibly establish the *use* made of his theory. For the argument is that because the Frankfurt School "never elaborated a systematic theory of manipulation in *production*," it was unable to develop an adequate account of superstructural manipulation or a theory of organizational praxis. (p. 17) In contrast, because Sohn-Rethel could propose an economic critique of the USSR, he did not have to betray the idea of concrete class struggle as such and could turn to the development of a practical theory for capitalist society based upon the rationalization — Taylorization — of the economic process. While the Frankfurt School was not blind to this and pioneered the discussion of monopoly capitalist theory, "unfortunately the primacy of economic manipulation was not reflected in the overall direction of Horkheimer's and Adorno's research." (p. 86) Sohn-Rethel, on the other hand, could point the way toward practical liberation through worker's control and the abolition of the split between manual and mental labour brought to its peak with scientific management.

Setting aside any discussion of Sohn-Rethel as such — which would lead us far beyond the point at stake here — several comments are necessary to situate this attempt to link an ostensible failure to analyze economic manipulation in the 1930's with an inability to conceptualize political practice. First, it must be noted that Sohn-Rethel's position, despite its germination in this period, has only been fully developed and published in the 1970's. As a consequence, it is inconsistent to exclude all interim developments within the younger generation of the Frankfurt School which have touched upon similar themes.⁹ Second, it is not at all self-evident how a specification of these issues in the 1930's would have provided a practical theory of organization. The link between rationalization in the workplace and a political strategy is difficult to find, indeed this is only one more of a series of obstacles to organization. Moreover, these transformations were implicit to the superstructural theory of domination, an extension of the theory of the consciousness industry and the critique of positivism, rather than a purely "economic" phenomenon. The continuous reference in Slater's study to a theory of "economic manipulation" in contrast to a theory of "superstructural manipulation" obscures the intimate relation between the two which was one of the defining characteristics of the new order *and* Critical Theory. Third, reference is made to the Frankfurt theorists' awareness of the changing economic structure of "monopoly" capitalism without indicating how this was coupled with an even stronger emphasis on the role of the state in this process, yet another factor which reduces the immediate significance of purely economic factors as the basis for a conventional revolutionary strategy.¹⁰ Finally, there is no indication that at the centre of Adorno's conception of emancipation was the abolition of the split between manual and mental labour. In short, the thrust of Slater's thesis can be completely reversed:

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precisely *because* the Frankfurt School had a basic sense of the new structures of domination in the workplace, in institutions of socialization, in the public sphere and communications, and in the state, they retreated from any attempt to develop a theory of "practical" politics as theoretically premature and historically displaced into an indefinite future. Moreover — and this is the most regrettable feature of Slater's "Marxist perspective", any "Marxism" which does not attempt to push all the way through the immanent logic of this mode of questioning *is* bound to be "preaching to the saved."

Despite its failure as an account of the "origin and significance of the Frankfurt School", this study of "Horkheimer's team" succeeds more or less in terms of its own agitational self-understanding. Through easily digestible summaries of key texts coupled with a metacritique guided by a vocabulary of positive truth terms (advanced positions, practical class standpoints, materialist insights, idealist regressions), it will serve as a self-defensive soundingboard for those who, in dream-like wish-fulfillment, continue to "think with their ears" (Adorno) in the name of the proletariat.

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Notes

1. Metacritique here is a polite way of referring to signs of "revisionism". This metatheoretical self-understanding bears citation in full to grasp its "stringent" logic: "The metacritical perspective . . . demands a stringent procedure . . . the critical categories must be appropriated in such a way as to qualify the theoretical distortions within the manipulative machinery to the needs, possibilities and goals of critical praxis. The intention is not to demolish, but rationalize the Frankfurt School's work in the period concerned (1930-42)." (p. 93) The specific meaning of the term "rationalize" in this context remains a mystery.
2. This "Marxist perspective" seems to be a present-minded (practical) reading of the Frankfurt School in this early period through the 1930's eyes of Korsch (theory of ideology and praxis), Alfred Sohn-Rethel (economic theory), Reich (psychology) and Brecht (aesthetics). The difficulty is that this "present-mindedness" gets in the way of comprehending the discontinuity between past and present, obscuring the comprehension of both.
3. There are also a number of annoying stylistic habits which must be attributed to editing such as the incessant reference to "Horkheimer's team" and the use of the term "critical theory of society" without a preceding "the". I have silently changed the latter in citations. Textual penetration fails with such generalities as the fact of "Adorno's ignorance of the complex, dynamic nature of class-consciousness" (p. 141) or the comforting knowledge that "the basic difference between Benjamin and Adorno can be summarized as the differing levels of concreteness in their respective work. Adorno's aesthetics reveals a high level of hypostization, even unintelligibility . . ." (p. 136). And of course it is easy to find an appropriate passage to "prove" this to the English reader! Benjamin, a good materialist, ironically gets off scott-free on the unintelligibility count.
4. The examples of Habermas and Wellmer are most well-known here. But it should be recalled there are others such as Oskar Negt who have followed this path without losing sight of the practical problems of proletarian organization and education at the center of Slater's concern. Similarly, Jean-Marie Vincent, who carries no love for what he has termed Habermas' "social-liberal reformism", has seen no need to break off the contribution of Horkheimer and Adorno in 1942. Cf. *La theorie critique de l'ecole de Francfort* (Paris, 1976).
5. This is a slight exaggeration facilitated by leaving out the authoritarian personality studies which fall outside the period under examination.
6. But it would perhaps be fair to surmise that Slater's position, given his charge that the Frankfurt theorists "absolutized" psychology, is close to that of Michael Schneider in his *Neurosis and Civilization*, trans. M. Roloff (N.Y., 1976). For a politely devastating response see the review by Joel Kovel in *Telos*, 27 (Spring, 1976), pp. 185-195.
7. This is not to speak against the obvious imperative of a cultural and media politics, but to suggest that such a frontal attack is suicidal and that, even if successful, provides no guarantee that merely the content of manipulation would be changed instead of the communicational process. Slater's conception can meet neither the objections of Alvin Gouldner in his *Dialectic of Ideology and Technology* (N.Y., 1976) who would characterize it as a museum relic of "normal Marxisms" or, more seriously from Slater's Marxist perspective, Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge in their *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1972) for whom it would be elitist and social psychologically naive.

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8. This controversy has been situated and Sohn-Rethel's theories subjected to a close critical examination in defense of Marx by Jost Halffmann and Tilman Rexroth in their *Marxismus als Erkenntniskritik* (München, 1976). Slater's reliance on his economic theory is ironic given that Sohn-Rethel is better located in the trajectory of the Frankfurt School and is not the clean-cut Marxist implied by exclusive reliance on his Fascism theory. In a letter to Adorno in 1936, he would outline the thesis which would guide his later epistemological analysis appearing three decades later:

"For I am unconditionally convinced that the scientific consistency (*Stimmigkeit*) of Marxism depends on the possibility of extending the analysis of the commodity form to that point where, beyond the special capitalist fetishisms, the entire mechanism of fetishism, i.e., the genesis of ideologies with regard to their validity aspects (*hinsichtlich ihrer Geltungscharaktere*), will be uncovered all the way through so-called cultural history, thus back to antiquity and perhaps further." *Warenform und Denkform* (Frankfurt am Main, 1971), p. 12. This is the project begun in Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and dismissed by Slater as the first step toward degeneration.

9. For example, Claus Offe, *Leistungsprinzip und industrielle Arbeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1970). Also Pollock's later work on automation should be recalled in this context. Moreover, Slater's account not only underplays the understanding of Horkheimer and Adorno of economic issues in this period, but it fails to grasp the essential point of their profound sense of the transformation of place of the economic process in organized capitalism, a transformation which undermined the conventional understanding of the political significance of economic factors. Cf. Giacomo Marramo, "Political Economy and Critical Theory", *Telos*, 24 (Summer, 1975), pp. 56-80.
10. Nor was Sohn-Rethel's position substantially different during this period; he developed the clear political consequences of his theories only much later with the example of China and further developments in the labour process in capitalist societies. Moreover, his Fascism theory was based upon unique access in the early thirties to quasi-official sources in Berlin which allowed him to trace connections between political and economic elites which was impossible for those in exile. (See his "*Ökonomie und Klassenstruktur des deutschen Faschismus*", (Frankfurt am Main, 1973). And when he finally did draw out those political implications of his analysis of the work process in the 1960's, they were radically different from those implied by Slater: "It will therefore become ever more difficult to find material interests in the working class which allow themselves to be transformed politically into energies for the social revolution. And party-political Marxist thinking is so attuned to this transformation technique that with this technique revolutionary will itself tend to fade at the same time." *Geistige und körperliche Arbeit* (Frankfurt am Main, 1973), p. 259. To rely upon Sohn-Rethel for a defense of the contemporary applicability of the agitational strategies of the 1930's is a slanderous contradiction.

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Francisco Jose Moreno, *Between Faith and Reason: An Approach to Individual and Social Psychology*. New York: New York University Press, 1977, pp. 133.

One of the triumphs of modern intellectual history has been the initial construction and development of a pragmatic world view. Early twentieth century pragmatists in the new western world enjoyed the distinction of constructing the first uniquely new world philosophy. In the development of the North American Continent, Europe sent not only its immigrants but its ideas. Thus, it appeared that the new western nations might be nothing more than ideological outposts for continental philosophy. This was the intent of intellectuals such as Josiah Royce who struggled to establish absolute idealism in the new world. The debates between William James and Josiah Royce can be interpreted as a broader conflict between intellectuals attempting to create an independent intellectual approach and those intent on transplanting ontologically top-heavy continental philosophy in the colonies across the Atlantic. Thus, the promise of the new world was not only free land and economic independence for the immigrant. There was the added possibility of a fresh perspective on the world, the self, and socio-political institutions.

Only a brief interval later, the promise of the new world is degenerating into a corporate world order. Free land no longer exists and economic security for the masses is attained only by accepting narrowly defined roles in public and private bureaucracies. In addition, the promise of pragmatic thought has dimmed. In their haste to liberate social and political action from restrictive ontologies, the early pragmatists de-emphasized abstractions and concepts. This has led to hyper-factualism and a behaviouralistic social science that restricts human action as effectively as the earlier ontologies.

The author of *Between Faith and Reason* is part of a post-pragmatic movement. Intellectuals in this category are not interested in the narrow reconstruction of the former philosophy but are rather intent on recapturing and extrapolating its liberating insights into the human condition. This movement faces a formidable challenge. The first is to utilize the insights of pragmatism and yet avoid its internal weaknesses. The second is to revive the critical spirit of pragmatism in an age when criticism is not encouraged.

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In so far as the first task is concerned, Francisco Jose Moreno retreats from the early pragmatist's confidence in reason. John Dewey's *School and Society*, for example, argued that through democratic experimentation all of life could become a creative educational project. Public schools were to establish an atmosphere of experimental inquiry. After the public school experience, democratic political institutions were to provide a similar opportunity for each individual to create and expand his understanding. The books of Mary Parker Follett also reflect this pragmatic confidence in human reason. *The New State* outlines a rational decision process to be implemented within the metropolis. She envisioned that urban political decisions could be made at the grass roots level as neighbourhoods rationally developed policy and modified it through discussion with city officials.

The thesis developed by Moreno's book is that human reason functions within other human constraints. He corrects early pragmatic optimism about reason by stressing an argument conceived but eventually ignored by the pragmatists themselves—the argument that reason functions within naturalistic boundaries. The author does not go so far as to say that naturalistic-biological factors govern reason. Rather, the author clarifies their relationship by illustrating the dialectical relationship between the concern for survival and the human ability to reason.

Moreno develops this relationship by pointing out that humanity shares with the animal world an ongoing concern for survival. Humans share with animals the ability to perceive imminent danger. However, the human capacity to reason not only sets the species apart from other animals but enhances as well our ability to understand the precarious status of the human condition. Reasoning about this status produces "basic fear." This is a fear of not only imminent danger — a fear known by animals as well — but a broader, reasoned concern for the conditions surrounding existence. Thus, through this dialectic, Moreno shows us that reason does not deliver us from fear but *to* fear.

This dialectic also paves the way for the solution of one of pragmatism's most troublesome problems — the empty consciousness. In his haste to debunk idealism, William James was anxious to establish that consciousness had no substantive content. The empty consciousness was also useful in establishing the relationship and continuity between inner experience and outer realities. In the "Will to Believe", James intended to show that human consciousness could be actively creative by selecting out of the stream of experience items for further reflection as well as items of greater significance. However, subsequent to James, opportunistic manipulators have reasoned that if human consciousness is unable to "create" reality, it can also be construed as a passive vehicle for the receipt of any reality forced upon it. (Thus, Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* is possible).

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Between Faith and Reason suggests that human consciousness is not only limited in its ability to create and expand but in its ability to accommodate manipulation and deceit. The book leads the reader to assume that an exploitative society can depend upon its citizens to accept the dominant definition of reality only so long as the basic fear of its citizenry is not aroused. Once the people of a given nation perceive their security to be in jeopardy, their reasoning becomes oriented around preserving their existence. Thus, they become as dangerous to the maintenance of a political order as a cornered animal becomes to a hunter.

The second major task faced by those who share the post-pragmatic ideal is to revive the critical-liberative perspective inherent in the turn of the century approach. Toward this end, Moreno proposes an approach to individual and social psychology which criticizes human action rather than inflates it beyond life size through flattery. His competitors, although he does not name them directly, are psychologists who read into human processes noble goals and lofty purposes. Abraham Maslow, for example, sees all of humanity involved in self actualization. Eric Fromm finds that the quest for love vitalizes human processes.

In contrast, Moreno constructs a less flattering picture of human action. Relying on the dialectic between fear and reason, the book develops an approach to individual psychology by considering the issue of human freedom and individual sexual behaviour. The book suggests an approach to social psychology by considering peer group and family relations, religious, and political institutions. The above topics provide a context within which the author illustrates the dialectic between basic fear and reason as it currently operates in mass culture.

With respect to the first topic, freedom, classical liberal psychology flatters humanity by postulating an overarching preoccupation with freedom. Therefore, the state exists to insure the greatest freedom possible for the masses. Constitutions throughout existing federal systems devote considerable space to the protection of individual freedom. Moreno finds an interesting anomaly when examining the various parts of these constitutions. Liberal constitutions overtly pay lip service to the ideal of freedom but covertly restrict diverse political activity and access to political institutions through arbitrary election laws. Moreno explains this contradiction by observing that our constitutions reflect an idealized fascination with the possibilities of free political action. Yet, these constitutions contain conservative portions to prevent the pursuit of reasoned possibilities and rapid political change. These conservative portions insure the maintenance of the status quo and are motivated by fear of change.

The chapter on sexual behaviour observes that the human fetish for sex is not duplicated in the animal world. Therefore, just as man's reasoning capacity

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accounts for a greater capability to fear, so man's reasoning ability enables the species to appreciate the possibilities of sex to a far greater extent than animals. Thus, humans symbolize sex and develop fetishes and extended courtship rituals — all of which far exceed any similar tendencies found in the animal world. Moreno, however, does not use this observation as an excuse to elevate sex to the status of a basic culture-dominating drive. Rather, he argues that the people in the existing mass culture are exaggerating the importance of sex. The explanation for this malady is the heightened sense of fear which flourishes throughout the mass society. Thus, sex has become a drug and a way of occupying time. It is a way to forget temporarily our fear rather than deal with it more openly and constructively.

Such an individual psychology presents an unflattering vision of humanity — at least within the context of the present culture. Moreno would, no doubt, admit that other cultures could deal or have dealt more adequately with basic fear. However, this book does not outline other cultural alternatives. The book implies that no culture can fully conquer the pain which humans experience as a result of basic fear. However, culture can deal intelligently with this propensity. Individually and collectively people deal with basic fear through faith. Those who would attempt to cure the agony of basic fear through reason, logic or positivistic reflection are to be reminded that the presence of reason enhances individual capacity to fear. Therefore, Moreno concludes that it is through an act of faith that a person interrupts the vicious dialectic between fear and reason. Through faith in God, the law, or some other object, one finds relief from doubt and insecurity induced by reason. Moreno's emphasis on the role of faith adds a note of urgency to James' "will to believe". James suggested that a person enjoyed considerable freedom in selecting items out of the flow as belief objects. Moreno goes beyond James by explaining why people believe — they cannot endure the pain of not believing.

In a subsequent analysis of selected institutions within mass society, the later chapters of the book argue that individuals seek psychological reassurances from institutions and through these institutions cultivate a faith. In smaller institutions such as the family or peer group, the faith object becomes the other person. Thus, children cling to their parents and give them credit for capacities and talents which they do not have. Parents reciprocate by living for their children and depending on them to provide meaning to life. Marriages often become relationships in which the spouse becomes a faith object. In these institutions, members abandon all attempts to critically reason about the other person and clothe their spouse in blind, romantic love. It becomes much less painful to develop a faith in one's spouse rather than to maintain a reasoned perspective on the spouse's capacities and weaknesses.

Larger institutions within any given culture provide more sophisticated faith objects (though seemingly not necessarily more substantial). Moreno furnishes

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two examples. First, prior to the triumph of the scientific method and the development of mass society, religious institutions, through ceremonies and other rituals, promoted the development of faith and de-emphasized the role of reason. (The author confidently argues that his concept of basic fear explains the development of organized religion far better than the metaphysical-ontological explanations of theologians, psychologists, historians and sociologists. Religious institutions declined as promoters of the scientific method elevated the role of reason and systematically destroyed religious faith objects.

The book concludes on a pessimistic note. Moreno argues that the destruction of faith in religious objects has been premature. Scientists propose that reason and scientific method can be the new faith of the masses. However, the author contends that reason in itself cannot function as a faith. Thus, the prospect for humanity caught up in mass society is bleak. As citizens are encouraged to become more reasonable, their sense of basic fear is enhanced. In such an atmosphere, the chances for revolution are great as citizens can be expected to overturn the present order in search of institutions which provide more substantial faith objects.

The chief value of *Beyond Faith and Reason* lies in its keen and innovative diagnosis of present social maladies. Such perception into the roots of insecurity deserves subsequent inquiry. For example, Moreno's approach could profitably be applied to bureaucratic institutions. Social psychologists, when dealing with bureaucracy tend to diverge over the competing goals of promoting efficient hierarchical control versus encouraging human relations within the bureaucracy as a means of enhancing productivity. Both approaches assume that the more rational an institution can be structured, the greater the productivity although each perspective sanctions different means to this end. Moreno's approach would suggest that bureaucracies suffer rather than benefit from an intensive application of rationality to their internal affairs. Thus, both the hierarchical and the human relations approaches would be culpable of attempting to alleviate the human condition through reason. From this perspective, the malady of bureaucracies would be an over-abundance of scientific management rather than too little. This thesis would be borne out by examining the performance of bureaucracies during World Wars I and II. When workers became convinced of the merit of an end which transcended the narrow interests of bureaucratic rationality and higher productivity (winning the war and making the world safe), they suspended concern for internal rationality and ceased to be preoccupied for their own well being. The massive difficulties of contemporary bureaucracies could be interpreted as the lack of middle, working and lower class faith in the present ends of bureaucratic activity. Moreno's approach tells us that the cure for ailing bureaucracies is not greater rationality but rather more noble bureaucratic ends. Workers, for a time, can have faith in

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the morality of war and thus can be counted upon to assemble diligently in defense bureaucracies. However, since World War II, leaders of the mass societies throughout the western world have found nothing to replace war as an imperative for diligent worker performance within the bureaucracy. And, it is doubtful that an army of middle class managers can manufacture a suitable end which will function as the moral equivalent of war.

A second avenue of inquiry which emerges out of *Between Faith and Reason* involves searching for what Moreno terms new "articles of faith". Such an inquiry is reminiscent of the questions which E.H. Carr asked in *The New Society*. Carr envisioned real problems with soldiers returning from World War II as well as with members of war-swollen defense bureaucracies. They would not, he concluded, be integrated easily into a new society. Carr much preferred positive faith as an incentive for cooperative human action in the new peacetime society to carrot-stick sanctions or reliance upon other techniques of social control.

To a great extent, Moreno's problem resembles that perceived by Carr. Both envision an affluent society where most citizens have an opportunity for some reflection. In such a society, the masses have risen above a simple animal concern for survival. In the new mass society, people have the capacity to think and thus must endure the consequences — increased apprehension and fear. Both Carr and Moreno prefer positive faith as an incentive for social action, yet neither supplies us with such a faith. However, in the absence of such a faith, Carr was not willing to admit that the post-war mass society would fall apart. He hoped that the myth of progress could be revived. In the meantime, he sanctioned social control and assumed that it would suffice. Moreno, however, warns that now, in the absence of faith, revolution is a distinct possibility.

E.H. Carr first identified the problem of faith in the post-war mass society in 1951. Over a quarter century later, Moreno reminds us that the problem is not yet solved. The price for this failure is the collapse of mass society or a painful existence for its citizens as they continually drug themselves with diversionary games which, for a time, ease their fears. Moreno warns us that the days of rational social control may be numbered.

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David Jay Bercuson, editor, *Canada and the Burden of Unity*. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977, pp. 192, \$6.95 paper, \$12.95 cloth.

The burden of unity is the burden borne by the hinterlands of Canada in political and economic union with central, or metropolitan Canada. That burden of the Canadian hinterlands, the four provinces of the Maritimes and the four between Ontario and the Pacific has perhaps never been analyzed and stated with such vigor and coherence as in these eight essays by scholars all from those two regions. This book, for it is more than a collection of essays, is not a history or a restatement of grievance; it is a sober and weighty demonstration of enacted and repeated facts, the subordination of Maritime and Western resources, enterprise and aspiration to the political power, economic interests, and popular complacency of metropolitan Canada.

How weighty the compilation of subordination is may be instanced from any essay, but for brevity is noted only in Bercuson's incisive statement of the inevitability of the burden, Paul Phillips' analysis of the unreality, given the replacement of national policy by continental integration under the so-called multinationals, of metropolitan attempts to offset the weight of its own policies by concession and subsidy and Ernest Forbes' acute dissection of the events which replaced tolerable transport rates by the imposition in the policy of 'Symmetry' of a system of rates evolved under circumstances not local to the Maritimes.

In the demonstration of the concentration and weight of metropolitan dominance and exploitation, the tone is not one of recrimination. It is, to repeat, one of cool demonstration. Moreover, the aim of the writers is to seek and set out, means of alleviation. The bedrock reasons for Maritime and Western alienation having been set out, the effort is to find ways to alternate, remedy and remove. This is in fact a sterner task and the suggestions, such as Carman Miller's proposal, after excellent historical analysis, for at long last restoration of "Greater Nova Scotia" if appealing seem less likely to be effective than well tried central domination. In the effort, however, T.W. Acheson's support for the tried, if any ineffective, policies of offset, transfer and subsidization are the only such support of the well meant efforts to make the weight of central Canadian confederation tolerable. Most striking is T.D. Regeher's remarkable re-survey of Manitoba's railway policy, 1901 to 1911 and its success by promoting competition in a region in monopoly, in giving the West at least a transport system it could live with. If such statecraft is to succeed in today's condition, Alberta, it would seem, must carry the ball.

Since the authors are not separatists, they cannot indulge in the analyses of Messrs. Lévesque and Morin. They are therefore constrained to work within the limits of the federal state, its political anatomy and physiology and its antiquated and crumbling constitution. David Smith rehearses how the West,

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finding the one hope, given the political domination of populous Ontario and Quebec, sitting securely on the sanctified heritage of George Brown, of rep. by pop., that the West and the Maritimes might hold a balance of votes in the ruling party, or even in Parliament by means of a third party (the Progressives), turned to political alienation in voting consistently for the perpetual opposition, the Conservative party. Only a fundamental revision of the constitution, with a powerful Upper House representing provincial, or regional rights, could alter this. And that is not possible, given the fact that central Canada would not likely agree, and more important, the fundamental "populist", or rep. by pop. nature of the Canadian political mentality.

So Colin Howell is quite right to seek for a "meaningful federalism", one which allows expression of legitimate local interests and concerns. He does not, alas, elaborate, but the book has led us to the door.

Such is its purpose and its value. Its larger meaning is that Canada is now in 1864, the year of decision for Confederation. Either Canada by a supreme effort — a coalition government — finds means to reconcile Québec and liberate the Maritimes and the West, or we are all in serious trouble. The means to do so begins to emerge, but the crunch will have to harden to break up the old convictions and release the new possibilities.

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William Ophuls, *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity*, San Francisco, W.H. Freeman and Company, 1977, cloth \$12.95, paper \$6.95, pp. 303.

The book consists of two parts. The essential message of Part I is that the ecosystems constituting our biosphere have natural limits which insure their ability to continue performing naturally designed functions. Interventions in these complex systems by man for purposes of production must be such that they "strike a balance between production and protection". This can only be done by maintaining an attitude of respect toward the natural biospheric laws of *limitation*, an attitude which has not of late characterized man's use of the environment. Hence, like all other living populations, we must level off and attempt to achieve a steady state in recognition of our rapidly approaching "limits to growth". However, any reasonable palliatives to ecological scarcity, such as the author's plea for an immediate transition to a steady state society,

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must face the vexing need to alter radically current social, economic, and political values. Part II addresses itself to this need. The author argues that the classical liberal values, based as they were on political and economic assumptions of unlimited abundance, are no longer viable. What is called for is a "new paradigm" of politics.

My criticisms of the book have mainly to do with this second part in which the author attempts a political and economic analysis of the present ecological crisis documented in Part I. The essential problem in this regard is that the author never squarely faces the international and national *structures* within which the problem of ecological scarcity will or will not be worked out. Instead, he has a tendency to personify nations and then to engage in a psychological reductionism which obliterates awareness of the present problems as involving entrenched political, economic and social patterns whose historical and present reality must be fully understood and confronted. On an international level, for example, the dominant contemporary structure of the trans-national corporation and its complicity in ecological destruction is barely addressed. As well, the whole discussion of the state and its relationship to and intimidation by such structures is entirely omitted. Instead, the author vilifies individual nations and falls, for instance, to blaming participants in the 1972 Stockholm Conference because the "quarrelsome and self-seeking nations" fail to "put aside stale old grudges, recognize their common predicament and act in concert to improve the human condition . . ." (p. 217).

Similarly, the performance of Third World countries at such international conferences is criticized because of their tendency to turn the discussion (as well they might) toward issues of international economic justice, a tendency which for the author "enormously complicates the process of negotiation" (p. 218).

At the national level, the discussion of ecological destruction and pollution and any potential remedies to them is badly in need of a sustained class analysis showing the differential involvement of the various socioeconomic levels in the general problem. The "implicated" and the implications of ecological scarcity and environmental violation are very different depending upon where one looks in the class structure. Proposed solutions must show a recognition of this.

In the place of this structural awareness, the author offers a kind of Jeffersonian republicanism which calls us back to the classical American virtues contained in that paradigm — to a communal, decentralized, locally autonomous, aristocratically ruled, planned, and conserving society. The dynamic by which present *structures* will give way to the implementation of these *values* is, unfortunately, not seriously addressed.

To conclude, any author who attempts to address the pressing ecological problems in our time must immediately confront the fractured nature of the contemporary approach to knowledge. Although one would like to see an

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explicit and sustained treatment of the implicit survival threat in the very organization of the sciences, the author does not provide it. He can, however, be commended for his lucid and largely successful effort in Part I to summarize the main and varied components of the present ecological crisis. The political, economic and sociological analysis contained in Part II I found to lean heavily in the direction of an idealist and cultural critique at the expense of structural considerations and, for this reason, I found it less satisfying.

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Kent S. Miller. *Managing Madness: The Case Against Civil Commitment*. New York: The Free Press, 1976, pp. 185.

Concern about the incarceration of the mentally ill has reached the proportion of a broad public debate. Since the 1960s when in various parts of the industrial world mental patients were given increased rights through legislation and constitutional adjudication, the perspectives held by progressive thinkers have altered considerably. Many of the assumptions with which benign observers operated a decade ago have either been thrown into serious disrepute or, at the very least, have become the subject of investigation and discovery.

It was not long ago that Thomas Szasz, who questioned the existence of mental illness, gained a reputation of infamy among reasonable-minded mental health professionals. Although some were prepared to acknowledge that our understanding of mental illness was not a precise science, nonetheless, in the interest of protecting the community and at the same time providing medical benefits, it was generally held that involuntary commitment was on occasion justifiable. Legislative revisions were mounted to provide criteria in order to assure that when involuntary commitment occurred it was done under due process of law. It was not expected, after these legislative reforms were enacted, for example, in England and Scotland in 1959 and 1960, and in Canada at various points in the late 1960s, that difficulties would emerge with respect to liberties.

From the perspective of commonwealth jurisdictions the American jurisprudence thus took on the appearance of an alien community of interests and polarizations which did not meaningfully reflect the tranquillity of professional and governmental relations outside the United States. This contentment, unfortunately, was short-lived as it has rapidly become apparent that the

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knowledge we possess about involuntary confinement has implications trans-nationally in terms of values, statistics and procedures.¹

Miller, in *Managing Madness*, develops a set of arguments which, without putting himself entirely into the Szaszian camp, exposes the degree to which involuntary hospitalization is unwarranted. His position is that state intervention for therapeutic reasons should be rarely exercised. The presentation is based on the observation that civil commitment has been proven to be selectively administered, that it usually does not realize its express purposes and in addition to violating human rights, in most instances, it fosters wasteful expenditures of the public purse and the resources of mental health professionals. Miller avoids attacking the motivations of mental health professionals and does not deny the existence of psychiatric illness. Rather his project is to clarify the social and political dimensions of incarceration and to relate these variables to the real politic of contemporary institutionalization. He points out correctly that there are any number of factors which have encouraged interest in the field, including the activities of both the media and groups of mental health professionals, and the various associations in the United States and England which have addressed themselves to the plight of the mentally ill.

He documents two case studies to enlarge upon the theme of the vulnerability of non-violent, albeit socially deviant, individuals. In dealing with Kenneth Donaldson,² whose widely-discussed case reached the Supreme Court of the United States, Miller points out that the Supreme Court has, despite pressure, resisted adjudicating most of the compelling relevant issues, for example, whether a non-dangerous person may be confined for treatment and whether an involuntarily committed person might in certain circumstances have the right to refuse treatment. The second case treated is that of Jim Fair, whose non-conformist political involvements became so irritating to government and business, that he was arbitrarily placed in a Florida mental institution.

What such difficult cases accentuate is that in many jurisdictions the rights guaranteed in law are greater for the criminal than for the mental patient. Available statistics about the numbers of involuntary patients further confuse the issue because the practical reality is often that patients who attempt to leave an institution after arriving of their own volition are circumvented by psychiatric professionals. Other factors as well prejudice the case against mental patients. Studies have shown that age, sex, race and marital status have significant influences on the outcome of incarceration. Finally, there are highly questionable associations made between illness and violence. The prediction of violent conduct, either to one's self or to others, has not held up under scrutiny.

However, once it is understood that the criminal has special advantages it may not be the case that the mental patient cases can be handled effectively through a criminalization model. Although Miller moves in this direction in his

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notation on Implications and Recommendations, the guidelines which he presents, utilizing such standards as 'clear and present danger' and 'beyond a reasonable doubt', are in the final analysis unconvincing. There may not only be a problem with the degree of protection here but also of kind. Critics must not be hasty in overriding the complex area of civil incarceration with standards which avoid the real difficulty of what society is to do about the unmanageable deviants who harass their families and workmates. The treatment model, without careful surveillance, is indeed dangerous, but the alternative route may simply result in the criminalization of the mentally ill and this is equally undesirable.

It is important that the adjudication of commitment be made, when necessary, according to standards and procedures which respond to the value of high social visibility and formalization. However, after agreeing to this in principle we might want to reserve judgment about a minority of cases where the strict imposition of courtroom rules of evidence, adversariness, and the participation of a jury would be to the advantage of the lawyers at the expense of disturbed and vulnerable persons.

There are few safe answers to the puzzling array of models which authors are beginning to present. Over time it is expected that the fresh review of the legislation of the 1960s will produce a set of directives which will respond in a creative fashion, to the phenomenology of social deviancy, avoiding the radical polarities of treatment versus civil libertarianism. The challenge for the 1970s should be to produce legislation which will relate the delivery of care to the 'deincarcerated' in such a way that will both maximize liberty and protect the innocent. That, after all, has always been the only and real issue in involuntary commitment.

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Notes

1. This observation does not imply, however, that procedural and substantive responses ought not to reflect the specific social and legal cultures in question.
2. F 2d (5th cir) decided April 26, 1974 (U.S.C.A.) Cert. granted 95 S.Ct. 171 c. 1974.

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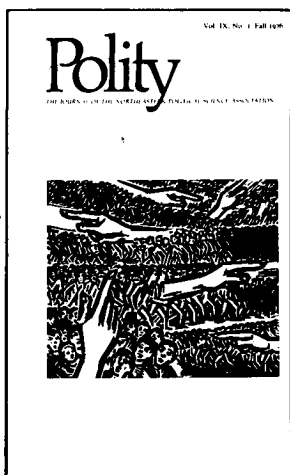
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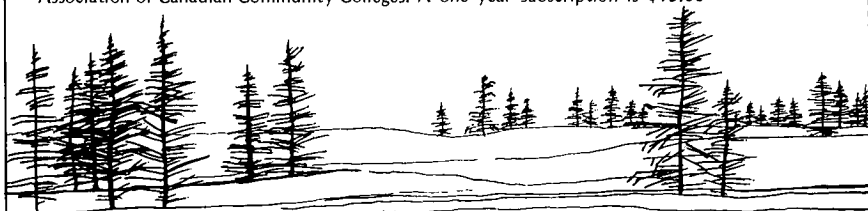
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