



Sixth Edition

Social Theory

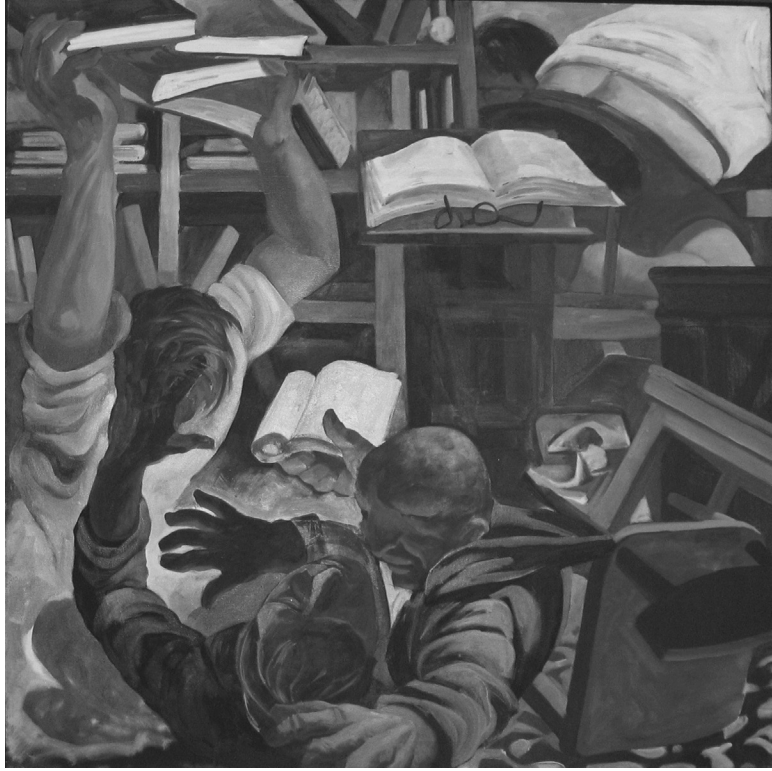
Roots & Branches

PETER KIVISTO

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SOCIAL THEORY



Peter Xiao. *Intellectual Pursuits*

SOCIAL THEORY

ROOTS AND BRANCHES

SIXTH EDITION

Peter Kivisto

AUGUSTANA COLLEGE
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IX Gender Theory 241**39. Doing Gender, Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman** 241

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X Critical Theory 290**45. Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, Walter Benjamin** 290

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- 46. Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda, *Theodor W. Adorno** 295**
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- 47. One-Dimensional Man, *Herbert Marcuse* 302**
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- 49. The Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race, *Michael Omi and Howard Winant* 316**
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- 50. Between Camps: Race and Culture in Postmodernity, *Paul Gilroy* 326**
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- 51. Ethnicity without Groups, *Rogers Brubaker* 337**
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- 52. Nationalism and the Cultures of Democracy, *Craig Calhoun* 349**
 Calhoun is critical of postnationalists who argue that nationalism either is being or should be overcome, contending that such a position fails to appreciate the role nationalism plays in facilitating social integration and solidarity, which are prerequisites for democratic practice.

XII State, Economy, and Civil Society 359**53. War Making and State Making as Organized Crime, Charles Tilly** 359

As the title suggests, Tilly draws a parallel between the way that nation states and organized crime syndicates function, both creating protection rackets to enhance their own positions.

54. The Politicization of Life, Giorgio Agamben 366

Modern politics, Agamben contends, is increasingly defined in terms of bare life, directed to bodies subject to various technologies of power in contrast to political beings defined as citizens.

55. How Will Capitalism End? Wolfgang Streeck* 370

Streeck sees capitalism as rapidly unraveling, linked to the erosion of democracy and the ecological crisis but does not see a viable alternative to capitalism on the horizon. The result, he contends, is an "age of entropy" characterized by individualistic responses to this situation.

56. The Socialist Compass, Erik Olin Wright* 380

Described as a pragmatic Marxist, Wright sought out models of what he considered to be real world utopias, progressive alternatives to capitalism that can be used in the future to shape the implementation of policies and political programs that advance social justice.

57. A Network Theory of Power, Manuel Castells* 387

Castells argues that the contemporary information age is the product of the network society. In this article, he seeks to articulate, as the title indicates, a network theory of power, specifying four distinct manifestations of power and indicating the respective roles of programmers and switchers.

58. Real Civil Societies: Dilemmas of Institutionalization, Jeffrey C. Alexander 399

Alexander distinguishes three different versions of civil society theory, with the third representing his own position. Central to his version, the civil sphere is the social space wherein solidarity and justice are promoted.

XIII Modernity 413**59. Shame and Repugnance, Norbert Elias** 413

According to Elias, the civilizing process has profoundly transformed people psychologically and behaviorally; in this selection he suggests how the ideas of shame and repugnance have been an integral part of this process.

- 60. Spectacular Time, Guy Debord 419**
 In developing his idea that the contemporary stage of capitalist development can be defined as a “society of the spectacle,” in this selection Debord defines spectacular time in terms of being both consumable and pseudo-cyclical.
- 61. The Reflexivity of Modernity, Anthony Giddens 423**
 Giddens has disagreed with postmodernists that we have entered a new stage of development beyond the modern. Rather, he thinks we have entered “late modernity.” In exploring the “consequences of modernity,” Giddens distinguishes traditional and modern societies insofar as reflexivity assumes a new and more significant role in the latter.
- 62. Redistribution, Bruno Latour 427**
 Latour calls for a reconsideration of the relationship between humans and nature and the question of God and, in so doing, challenges not only the claims of modernity but also postmodernity before suggesting a “nonmodern constitution.”
- 63. On Living in a Liquid Modern World, Zygmunt Bauman 437**
 Using the term “liquid” to describe contemporary social life, Bauman views the present as characterized by rapid change that prevents the establishment of patterns of thought and action, thus preventing people from relying on solid frames of reference.
- 64. The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, Jean-François Lyotard 445**
 Lyotard’s classic statement on postmodernity links this cultural shift to the economic shift resulting in postindustrial societies, going on to argue that postmodern culture undermines totalizing accounts of social change.
- 65. Multiple Modernities, S. N. Eisenstadt* 454**
 Eisenstadt disputes the idea that a single, Western model of modernity characterizes modernity around the globe. Rather, while agreeing that modernity first took form in Western terms that inflect developments elsewhere, Eisenstadt argues those developments amount to novel iterations of modernity.
- 66. Modernity as a Project of Emancipation and the Possibility of Politics, Peter Wagner* 457**
 In this selection, Wagner focuses on the politics of the modern, with an explication of what emancipation might mean, shifting from a philosophical to a sociological answer. Central to his thesis is the claim that critique must fuse with a project of political reconstruction.

XIV French Critical Theory: Structuralisms and Poststructuralisms 462

- 67. Structures and Habitus, Pierre Bourdieu*** 462
Building on both Marxism and structuralism, Bourdieu seeks to correct both traditions by taking more seriously the role of actors. Here he discusses three terms that are of central importance to his own theoretical work: structure, habitus, and practice.
- 68. Advertising, Jean Baudrillard** 470
As a radical proponent of postmodernism, Baudrillard offers a vision of a world saturated by the media and entertainment industries. The result, he contends, is a dissolving of the differences between the real and images, signs, and simulations.
- 69. The Subject and Societal Movements, Alain Touraine** 476
Building on his idea of action sociology, Touraine develops his understanding of the subject conceived in collective terms. Collective actors shape his understanding of social movements. The linking of the subject and social movements serves as the basis for discussing the democratic prospect.
- 70. Panopticism, Michel Foucault** 486
In this passage from *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault discusses the Panopticon as a prime example of the uniting of knowledge and power into a new system of surveillance and control.
- 71. The Spirit of Capitalism, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello*** 492
Boltanski and Chiapello seek to describe the new spirit of capitalism that, in their view, took off in the 1970s. In this excerpt, the authors offer their definition of capitalism, followed by a discussion of why capitalism needs an ideological justification or, in other words, a spirit.

XV World Systems and Globalization 502

- 72. Mapping the Global Condition, Roland Robertson*** 502
Robertson thinks that a theory of globalization must go beyond world-systems and modernization theories. He outlines the contours of contemporary globalization, tracing its historical development in terms of five historical periods beginning in the fifteenth century.
- 73. The Three Instances of Hegemony in the History of the Capitalist World-Economy, Immanuel Wallerstein** 513
Wallerstein approaches capitalism as a global system, emphasizing the *longue durée* characterized by long-term cycles of development. In this essay, he uses the concept of "hegemony" to link the system's core exploiting nations and those on the periphery and semi-periphery.

74. The Cosmopolitan Condition: Why Methodological Nationalism Fails, Ulrich Beck 519

Taking aim at methodological nationalism, Beck seeks to link a cosmopolitan alternative to both modernity and globalization.

75. Disjunction and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy, Arjun Appadurai 525

Appadurai addresses the cultural aspects of globalization as shaped by contemporary transportation networks and communication technologies. He develops a framework involving five dimensions of global cultural flows: ethoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes.

PREFACE

NEW TO THE SIXTH EDITION

This edition of *Social Theory: Roots and Branches* contains 19 new selections, including 10 substitutions for entries by a particular author in the previous edition and 9 readings by theorists who are new to this collection. These include the following:

1. Karl Marx, passage from *The Civil War in France*
2. Émile Durkheim, "Individualism and the Intellectuals"
3. W.E.B. DuBois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings"
4. John Dewey, "Democracy and Human Nature"
5. Talcott Parsons, "The Structure of the Societal Community"
6. C. Wright Mills, "Situated Actions and Vocabularies of Motive"
7. Alfred Schutz, "The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology"
8. Jon Elster, "Fairness and Norms"
9. Dorothy E. Smith, "Categories Are Not Enough"
10. Judith Butler, "Subversive Bodily Acts"
11. Theodor W. Adorno, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda"
12. Wolfgang Streeck, "How Will Capitalism End?"
13. Erik Olin Wright, "The Socialist Compass"
14. Manuel Castells, "A Network Theory of Power"
15. S. N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities"
16. Peter Wagner, "Modernity as a Project of Emancipation and the Possibility of Politics"
17. Pierre Bourdieu, "Structures and Habitus"
18. Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, "The Spirit of Capitalism"
19. Roland Robinson, "Mapping the Global Condition"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been teaching social theory for four decades and during that time have been able to introducing students to the many creative and challenging innovations, while also helping to ground them in a long tradition. First and foremost, I would like to thank all of the students who have passed through my classes at my home institution during this time. I would like to single out for thanks five exceptional students: Emma Anderson, Sonia Carlson, Logan Green, Chad McPherson, and Dan Pittman. In addition, I would like to thank a number of former professors who in rather different ways and with different results shaped my ability to think like a theorist. They include, from my undergraduate days, Max Heirich and Stephen Berkowitz and, from my graduate school days, David Apter, Norman Birnbaum, Niklas Luhmann, Stanford M. Lyman, Benjamin Nelson, Arthur Vidich, and R. Stephen Warner.

Sherith Pankratz has been involved in several of my book projects for more than two decades, and as I knew would be the case, it has been a real pleasure to have worked with her on this new edition. Sherith is a pro who knows what works. Thus, I always value her judgment and her generous advice. Grace Li and I didn't know each other prior to commencing work on this project. She has proven to be masterful at keeping me on task while providing plenty of assistance along the way.

To the reviewers who provided detailed comments and suggestions, I extend my appreciation for their careful reading and insights:

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PETER KIVISTO

SOCIAL THEORY: CLASSICAL FOUNDATIONS AND CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS

Near the end of the past century, a century that had witnessed the institutionalization and dramatic growth of sociology in the academy, Alan Sica, the director of the Graduate Program in Social Thought at Pennsylvania State University and a well-known scholar of classical social theory, convened a panel of prominent scholars to probe the question, “What is social theory?” The result of the gathering was a book whose title posed that very question (Sica 1998). A little more than a decade later, two other prominent social theorists, Hans Joas and Wolfgang Knöbl, would begin *Social Theory: Twenty Introductory Lectures* (2009) with a chapter titled “What Is Theory?” Thus, it is that a question inevitably raised by undergraduate sociology majors entering a required course in social theory is also a question that scholars who have made theory their vocation continue to ask.

Those who have asked this question repeatedly over the course of their careers are well aware of the fact that one of the reasons it remains germane is that sociologists are far from arriving at a consensus in articulating a reply. At a very general level, most would concur with various depictions of social theory. Thus, few would object to those who characterize theories, variously, as tools of analysis, or lenses into aspects of social reality. All would concur that theories offer something more than description or broad generalizations based on composites of cases.

But it is here that theorists of various persuasions begin to part company. Some advance theories that are interpretive, while others construct theories to explain. Some theorists prefer to focus on structure, while others concentrate on the agency of social actors. Indeed, some theorists begin with the individual while others think it quite all right to dispense altogether with individuals. Some theorists think the proper

object of investigation ought to be social structures, while others are equally convinced that culture should be the main focus. In another theoretical divide, one side is intent on keeping social theory closely linked to social philosophy, while the other side urges the construction of formal mathematical models patterned after the natural sciences. Finally, for some theorists the purpose of theory extends no further than to understand some patch of reality, a view that was articulated by Erving Goffman (1982) in his presidential address to the American Sociological Association, where he contended that the reason one studies the social world is simply “because it is there.” Others—indeed, if Goffman is right, a majority of the profession—think that theories ought to have some practical or applied import, or, to use Marxist terminology, theory ought to be related to praxis (or, in other words, concrete social practices). It is thus not surprising that Donald Levine would speak in the plural of *Visions of the Sociological Tradition* (1995) rather than of a singular, shared vision.

Given such widely divergent assessments of the nature and functions of theory, it’s reasonable to ask what counts as theory and what doesn’t. It is also reasonable to ask whether the fragmented and contested discipline of sociology will ever move beyond being what George Ritzer (1975) has called a “multiple paradigm science.” There are those who dream of the time that sociology will “mature” sufficiently to develop a commonly shared paradigm that serves to shape inquiry. To lay my cards on the table, I am not convinced that we are moving or someday will move toward consensus, nor do I think it is necessary to do so. Indeed, part of the vitality of the discipline derives from the fact that it is engaged in attempting to make sense of what is invariably “contested knowledge” (Seidman 2017;

Callinicos 2007). Sociology is a big-tent discipline. It relies on a wide range of research methodologies as well as a broad spectrum of theoretical approaches.

This fact, of course, poses challenges to anybody seeking to introduce students to social theory, for being as comprehensive as possible can make it difficult for students to be able to see the forest for the trees. Moreover, the need to be selective means that some theorists are being privileged over others. It is this issue that I want to address by explaining the structure and rationale for this particular collection of articles. Social theory encompasses a body of writing dating from the early nineteenth century that has informed and continues to inform the discipline of sociology. This anthology has a simple objective, which is to assist students in social theory classes to acquire an appreciation of its range and scope. A casual perusal of the 75 entries in this collection will reveal the remarkable variety of work that falls under the rubric "social theory." Looking a bit further, readers will find ample indications that social theory is indeed a contested terrain abounding in intellectual debates and controversies.

As with the previous five editions of this book, I used Peter Xiao's painting titled "Intellectual Pursuits" for the cover or in the front matter because I think it manages to humorously convey the sense of urgency and importance that thinkers attach to ideas. While it is not often that intellectual disputes lead scholars to throw books at one another, it is true that social theorists are capable of being quite feisty! They take ideas seriously and, as such, do not enter lightly into debates with those who have a different sense of the nature and purpose of theory.

Although the selection process necessarily excluded many significant theorists, I have tried to identify and include representatives of those theoretical approaches that have had the greatest impact on sociology. The history of sociology has been an ongoing process of defining disciplinary boundaries while remaining open to interdisciplinary dialogues. The readings I have selected reflect an attempt to show how sociology has developed as a distinctive enterprise while also revealing the ways in which voices from outside the discipline have continued to enrich it. While in the end I am responsible for the choices appearing within these two covers, this is far from a solo

venture. On the contrary, anthologies that attempt to provide readers with a broad, ecumenical overview of a field are not possible without a sustained conversation with numerous other people, including prominent scholars, professors who teach relevant courses, reviewers employed by the publisher, editors, and students. I have relied on dozens of such individuals and have benefited in many ways from the sage advice I have received for each previous edition as well as for this one. While some of these people are mentioned by name in the acknowledgments, the point here is simply that creating a theory reader is very much a cooperative enterprise.

CLASSICAL ROOTS AND THE EMERGENCE OF A CANON

This reader is divided into two sections, which I have termed "roots" and "branches." The former comprises the period from roughly 1840 to 1920, a time when sociology emerged as a distinctive enterprise, distinguishing itself from philosophy and the other social sciences. During this time, the first explicit advocates of this new field of inquiry appeared on the scene and created what might be seen as the infrastructure needed to sustain it, particularly the carving out of a legitimate place in the university system, with all that implies. This time frame represents sociology's classical period. The individuals associated with this era were responsible, even when they were not trying to do so, for giving sociology its initial identity.

In this regard, it is important to note that left out of this collection are those philosophers who preceded the rise of sociology and social theory. These include classics in the history of philosophy, beginning with Plato and Aristotle, but in particular those that are associated with the rise of modern philosophical inquiry into the nature of social order, such as Niccolò Machiavelli; Charles Louis Montesquieu; the social contract theorists Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau; Claude Henri de Rouvroy Saint-Simon; the Scottish moralists such as Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson; Immanuel Kant; and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. These and others constitute the central figures of the prehistory of sociology (Heilbron forthcoming; Hawthorne 1976). According

to Johan Heilbron in *The Rise of Social Theory* (1995), it was in the predisciplinary era from approximately 1600 to 1850 that such thinkers developed analytical tools that would become central to the sociological enterprise, including such basic concepts as society, economy, state, and civil society. He sees the rise of social theory being made possible by the emergence of an intellectual space distinct from both church and state. In a related argument, Brian Singer (2004) contends that the birth of the social was made possible insofar as social theory began to be viewed as an enterprise distinct from political theory. These thinkers not only had a profound impact on the classic figures we take up in this collection but also continue to inform theorists (e.g., see contemporary theorists of civil society, who frequently begin by turning to figures such as Locke, Ferguson, Smith, Rousseau, and Hegel).

In a provocative article, R. W. Connell (1997) asked, "Why is classical theory classical?" He claimed that, contrary to the standard view that sociology arose to make sense of the emergence of modern industrial societies, in fact, the early figures associated with the formative years of the discipline were keenly interested in the worlds of the colonial Other and as such they engaged in the "imperial gaze" and granted legitimacy to the colonialism of the era. Sociology's linkage to issues concerning imperialism was reflected in its practitioners' preoccupation with the idea of progress, which was assessed by comparisons of "primitive" and "advanced" societies. In his pointed rejoinder to the article, Randall Collins (1997) insisted, quite accurately in my opinion, that early sociologists were far more preoccupied with changes occurring within their own societies than with what was happening elsewhere and thus the common narrative of the rise of sociology is an accurate depiction of that history. More to the point of this discussion, he observes that Connell "has no real explanation of canonicity, just a denunciation of it" (Collins 1997: 1558). He, in short, failed to answer the question posed in his article's title.

Before suggesting an answer to what makes something classical or canonical, we first turn to question of process: How does one become a classic? And, related to this question, how does a text become part of the canon? There is no simple answer to either of these questions. The reputations of early sociologists

have often waxed and waned over time. Likewise, the canon, being a social construct, is subject to challenges and to change. There is no central sociological authority that lays claim to being the final arbiter regarding who counts as a classic figure and who doesn't and, similarly, which texts are canonical and which are not. Nevertheless, it is clear that influential and well-positioned sociological elites play a key role in making these determinations, acting as brokers.

This situation is no different than in other fields. Thus, in literature, the literary establishment—English professors at elite universities and critics writing for national newspapers and the most influential literary journals—once excoriated James Joyce, and his masterpiece, *Ulysses*, was prevented from entering the United States because it was considered pornographic. Today Joyce is comfortably located in the pantheon of the twentieth century's greatest authors of fiction. Subsequent American novelists such as Philip Roth and John Updike were highly regarded during their lifetimes, but exactly how they will be viewed in the long run is still to be determined—their precise place in the canon can only be surmised. On the other hand, today's literary gatekeepers disparage Danielle Steel's oeuvre (146 novels!), viewing it as nothing more than drivel for the masses. Given that this assessment is not likely to be overturned by subsequent critics, Steel will no doubt remain forever outside the canon, her only consolation being the fortune she has amassed as a result of her pandering.

While the financial stakes and prestige have never been quite so high in sociology, a similar process has been and continues to be at play. The gatekeepers are not all that different from those in the literary world. Professors at elite universities, journal editors, and the editorial decision makers at publishing houses have had a say in deciding which works enter the canon and which are excluded. This is at best an imperfect process, as honest considerations of the particular merits and weaknesses of any work inevitably mingle with the intellectual predilections and cultural prejudices of the critics in question. Nowhere are the latter more evident than in matters related to the gender and racial backgrounds of specific authors.

One way of determining whether someone ought to be considered a contender for the sociological

pantheon is whether his or her work continues to be read today and in some fashion still informs the varied ways in which sociologists frame their patterns of inquiry. Early in the twenty-first century, there is fairly widespread consensus that four scholars have played especially significant roles in shaping what has come to be contemporary sociology: (i) Karl Marx (1818–1883), who never claimed to be a sociologist or suggested he wanted to advance sociology's cause (he did, however, criticize the earliest proponent of sociology, Auguste Comte); (ii) Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), who was single-minded in his determination to promote sociology as a science clearly distinct from competing social sciences; (iii) Max Weber (1864–1920), who became a sociologist later in life but never gave up also considering himself to be a historian and economist; and (iv) Georg Simmel (1858–1918), who until fairly recently was not considered in the league of the preceding trio but whose reputation in recent years has finally landed him in the pantheon of founding figures.

What exactly does it mean to say that this quartet is viewed as foundational to the discipline? Suffice it to say that all of them are widely read today, with all of their major works still in print in many languages. Moreover, in all cases there are virtual cottage industries devoted to exegeses, analyses, and assessments of their works. Parenthetically, the fact that we maintain such interest in individuals who were dead by 1920 and that we continue to read them indicates that sociologists disagree with Alfred North Whitehead's (1938) claim that a science cannot progress unless it forgets its founders. We read them because whatever their shortcomings and however different our world is from theirs, they provide insights that continue to inform the discipline.

In examining how the work of certain social theorists came to be viewed as classical, one can get an implicit sense of what it means to be a classic. Whereas Connell skirted the question in his earlier noted article, Jeffrey C. Alexander (1987) has convincingly addressed it head on in perhaps as clear and concise an account as is possible:

Classics are earlier works of human exploration which are given privileged status vis-à-vis contemporary explorations in the same field. The concept

of privileged status means that contemporary practitioners of the discipline in question believe that they can learn as much about their field through understanding this earlier work as they can from the work of their own contemporaries. To be accorded such a privileged status, moreover, implies that, in the day-to-day work of the average practitioner, this deference is accorded without prior demonstration; it is accepted as a matter of course that, as a classic, such a work establishes fundamental criteria in the particular field. It is because of this privileged position that exegesis and reinterpretation of the classics—within or without a historical context—become conspicuous currents in various disciplines, for what is perceived to be the “true meaning” of a classical work has broad repercussions. (pp. 11–12)

In other words, we examine these theorists because they get us thinking in intellectually productive ways. Their works are not construed as ends in themselves. If sociologists were to treat any or all of these scholars as providing something akin to revealed truth, they would be approaching works such as *Capital*, *The Division of Labor in Society*, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, and *The Philosophy of Money* in a manner analogous to the way Christian fundamentalists view the Bible—as inerrant and complete. Fortunately, few sociologists operate with such a perspective—and those who do tend to be adherents of an orthodox Marxism that has largely faded from the scene.

The appropriate reason for reading these canonical figures is that sociological theory does not arise out of nowhere, without context or history. Rather, it is always the product of responding to a tradition of thought, and in this regard theorists are no different from other writers who both look forward to what they want to produce and backward to whence they came. Much theoretical work is intended to be revisionist, by which I mean that it seeks to simultaneously build upon and correct those who came before. It sometimes wants to amend, while at other times to challenge, to embrace and refine, or to dismiss. Whatever the particular nature of the relationship with past theorists, all are motivated in part by what literary scholar Harold Bloom (1997) has called the “anxiety of influence.”

When did Marx, Durkheim, Weber, and Simmel become classics? Certainly after their deaths, since

death would appear to be a prerequisite. While this is not the place for intellectual history, I note simply that Durkheim and Weber were accorded classic status first. While the process of becoming part of the canon began rather quickly after their deaths, a most important point occurred with the publication of Talcott Parsons's *The Structure of Social Action* in 1937. Therein the young Harvard theorist, sensing an unappreciated convergence in their writing, placed them in the center of sociological theory. His book was to have a singularly important impact on their subsequent reputations. However, it was not altogether determinative in shaping the received wisdom of various theorists, for he also included two other theorists who are largely unread today: Alfred Marshall and Vilfredo Pareto. At the same time, it is worth mentioning that Parsons appeared to be ambivalent about Simmel. On the one hand, he treated him as a sufficiently compelling theorist to draft a chapter for the book. On the other hand, in the end he decided not to publish that particular chapter.

Marx was never considered for inclusion into Parsons's first major work. Moreover, Marx's move into the canon was stymied by the association of his work with the events surrounding the Russian Revolution and subsequent Marxist-inspired revolutions. During the Cold War, and especially during the McCarthy era, embracing Marx's ideas could be a risky enterprise. Nonetheless, even before the events of the 1960s—the civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement, and the counterculture—Marx's reputation was on the rise among sociologists. As Alvin Gouldner (1973) pointed out, two of the most significant theorists of the post-World War II era, Robert Merton and C. Wright Mills "kept open an avenue of access to Marxist theory" (pp. x–xi). This meant that two of the three major theory schools of the period—functionalism and conflict theory—made room for Marxist thought.

Finally, Simmel's claim to canonical status occurred only in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In no small part, this was due to the promotional efforts of a small number of scholars, most notably the émigré scholar Kurt Wolfe and University of Chicago theorist Donald Levine. It is fair to say that, just like during his lifetime when he was highly regarded by many influential sociologists ranging from Weber to the key figures associated with the early years of the Chicago

school of sociology but still remained marginalized, so it is today. Indeed, if theorists continue to debate whether any of these four should be considered central founders of social theory, Simmel is clearly the one whose status is most insecure.

If these individuals have made the grade, who didn't? I could provide a long list of also-rans, but among the more obvious are Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, William Graham Sumner, and Vilfredo Pareto. Comte was a prolific writer who bequeathed to us the name of our discipline, creating "sociology" out of two stems, the Latin *socius* and Greek *logos*. He had an impact, not the least on someone included in this collection: Harriett Martineau. Nonetheless, he is little read today, and when he is, it is more out of historical curiosity than a desire to import his ideas into contemporary sociological discourse. A similar fate befell Spencer, who was widely read and respected during his lifetime. Nevertheless, by the time Parsons wrote *The Structure of Social Action*, he was increasingly ignored, in no small part because of his association with social Darwinian ideology. Parsons (1937) famously began his book with the following sentence: "Who now reads Spencer?" A similar fate befell Sumner, who introduced sociology to Yale and was one of the first presidents of the American Sociological Society, and he was left out for similar reasons, as his politics were in main respects similar to those of Spencer. Pareto was an acerbic and lacerating critic of other theorists, including Marx and Durkheim, which made him controversial in his lifetime. Over time, his ideas (perhaps fairly, perhaps unfairly) became associated with Italian fascism, which did his reputation no good. In addition, many subsequent theorists concluded that in the end he really wasn't a theorist. It should be noted that periodically calls have been made to reconsider the contribution of one or another of these largely ignored thinkers, as when Jonathan Turner (1985) proposed a re-evaluation of Spencer's legacy. It should also be noted that those calls have largely gone unheeded.

In recent decades the discipline at large has increasingly come to the realization that some scholars from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were not given their due during their lifetimes. These neglected figures are the products of the dual legacies of racism and sexism. In several instances, concerted efforts have

been made to redress this situation, beginning with the civil rights and women's movements in the 1960s. While many of the neglected voices made valuable contributions to one or another of sociology's various subfields, they were not necessarily interested in advancing social theory.

In this collection, I have identified a few particularly significant individuals who because of their gender or race were marginalized from the mainstream of the emerging sociological profession and as a result failed to influence developments in theory the way they might have. Two were neglected due to gender. The earliest such voice that I have included is the British writer Harriet Martineau, whose thought, as noted earlier, was shaped by Comte. Viewed for decades as an entertaining travel writer and essayist, she has only recently—due in no small part to the efforts of historical sociologists such as Michael Hill and Susan Hoecker-Drysdale (2001)—been viewed as someone who made a contribution to social theory. The second is Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who was a student of early American sociologist Lester Ward and is better known today as an early feminist. Her semi-autobiographical terrifying account of a woman's descent into postpartum psychosis and a utopian feminist novel have been widely acclaimed by woman's rights advocates past and present. Less well known, her contribution to social theory, as historian Carl Degler (1956: 24) has pointed out, was to indicate how "sex and economics go hand in hand," the economic dependence of women resulting from their being constricted to unpaid domestic labor and excluded from pursuing occupational opportunities in the larger world.

The marginalization of W. E. B. Du Bois is perhaps even more curious given that he was trained as a sociologist, becoming the first black to obtain a Ph.D. from Harvard (where he studied with such luminaries as William James), and the author of *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), considered to be the first major empirical research study published by an American sociologist. Part of the reason that he was frequently forgotten as a sociologist is that he left academe (his job options were limited to historically black colleges) to become one of the founding members of the NAACP and spent his life—in the United States and later, when he embraced pan-Africanism, in Ghana—as a civil rights and political

activist. In short, Du Bois opted for a larger stage than that of a scholar, becoming a preeminent social reformer and public intellectual. Or as Kwame Anthony Appiah (2014: 163) put it, what transpired was a "move from sociology to soteriology." Nonetheless, as has become clear due to renewed attention to his writings (e.g., see Morris 2015; Zuckermann 2004), it is well worth the effort to explore how Du Bois can contribute to social theory—and particularly, in an age of multiculturalism, to the ongoing salience of racial and ethnic identities.

In recent years, considerable intellectual energy has been expended attempting to include these and related figures as additional important foundation voices. In this regard, they are no longer neglected the way they once were. Just as a consideration and intellectual appreciation of their work is underway, so there is a contemporary reconsideration of figures who were influential during their lifetime, but whose work bears scrutiny to determine to what extent they remain valuable precursors to contemporary social theorizing. Among such are two included herein: the iconoclastic economist and social critic Thorstein Veblen and the pragmatist sociologist usually considered to be an early spokesperson for what would become known as symbolic interactionism, Charles Horton Cooley.

In what is perhaps a place of his own, Alexis de Tocqueville has had a generally positive reputation over the long haul, due primarily to the continued interest in the book he produced after visiting the United States in the 1830s, *Democracy in America* (1969 [1853]). Among the most enduring topics of interest has been his discussion on individualism, which led, for example, to a major study by Robert Bellah and colleagues, *Habits of the Heart* (1985) that, in effect, sought to explore the themes Tocqueville raised about individualism 150 years later.

Three authors in this section are philosophers who have in varied ways had and continue to have a profound impact on social theory: William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead. James, for example, is read as a precursor to current developments in interdisciplinary inquiry that brings philosophy and the social sciences into productive dialogue (Bordogna 2008), while in a moment of crisis of liberal democracy, scholars have returned to John Dewey's stalwart defense of democratic politics and culture (Ryan

1995). For his part, Mead's work is seen as the beginning of symbolic interactionism (Huebner 2014).

What is clear is that the canon developed slowly and fitfully. Borrowing an insight from social constructionism, we should treat the canon as an ongoing accomplishment and not as a fixed, stable, and unchanging "thing." While it would appear that from the vantage of the present the four European scholars accorded their own sections in this collection are firmly located in the pantheon of founding figures of modern social theory, there is also an appreciation of the fact that they are not the only intellectuals from the past who ought to inform present and future trends in social theory.

In this regard, I concur with John O'Neill and Bryan Turner, founders of the *Journal of Classical Sociology*, who in an editorial that launched that publication's first issue wrote, "A canon, however uncertain and contested, has been important as a common platform in the study of sociology, as a framework for teaching sociology to students and as one component in building a common research purpose." With this in mind, they suggested, "A constructive canon of sociology should have the normative goal of nurturing the sociological imagination rather than functioning as a narrow principle of professional exclusion" (O'Neill and Turner 2001: 6–7).

CONTEMPORARY BRANCHES OF A MULTIPLE-PARADIGM SCIENCE

No unified theoretical school, model, or paradigm shapes sociology today. Nor is one looming on the horizon. In fact, many inside and outside the world of social theory would describe the situation as a cacophony of competing approaches. Some bemoan this reality, others embrace it as salutary, and still others simply see it as a fact of life. This is not to suggest that efforts have not been made to create a unified and singular theoretical paradigm. However, the experience of the past seven decades has led most sociologists to be rather circumspect about the prospects of becoming other than a multiple-paradigm science.

The boldest attempt to forge a one-paradigm science commenced with the publication of Parsons's *The Structure of Social Action*. The central claim of that work was that those classic theorists he was prepared to

place in the canon, particularly Durkheim and Weber, had more in common than first met the eye. Indeed, in articulating what he was to call a "theory of action," Parsons explicitly intended to stress the commonalities of these figures (Camic 1989). He thought that none had managed to develop an entirely satisfactory basis for a unified theoretical approach, but they had set the stage. Parsons then turned his attention to a sustained effort to establish that unified theory. Indeed, his goal in *Toward a General Theory of Action* (1951), which he edited with Edward Shils, was to create a theoretical paradigm that would serve to unite the various social sciences, particularly sociology, anthropology, and psychology. He found that paradigm in what was first defined as functionalism or structural functionalism (he shifted to systems theory during the later phase of his life). Given his missionary zeal and his ecumenical outlook on those theory camps that differed from his approach (particularly symbolic interactionism and phenomenology), he managed for a time to establish a near hegemonic theoretical stance, although not one without significant dissent. During the 1950s and 1960s, functionalism was the reigning orthodoxy.

However, it never managed to eliminate all theoretical competitors. Rather, two competing schools during this time came to characterize what might be described as the loyal opposition: conflict theories and symbolic interactionism. Unlike the Parsonian effort to create a unified theoretical model, conflict theorists were a varied lot, some influenced primarily by Marx and Marxism and others aptly characterized by a neo-Weberian approach. What they shared in common was a conviction that structural functionalism presented a distorted portrait of social life that depicted individuals as overly socialized and society as overly integrated (Wrong 1961). This led to frontal assaults on Parsonian theory, evident in two influential works that appeared just as the Cold War consensus began to unravel: C. Wright Mills's *The Sociological Imagination* (1959), with its often sarcastic critique of "Grand Theory," and Alvin Gouldner's far more sustained challenge to "the world of Talcott Parsons" in *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970). Symbolic interactionists did not tend to engage in similar frontal attacks on structural functionalism, but key exponents such as Herbert Blumer did express their misgivings about what they saw as the

dominant tendencies in the discipline (see Vidich and Lyman 1985: 307). A half-century later, there is a growing tendency to dismiss conflict theory as a distinct school of thought. Rather, conflict is seen as a topic of inquiry that in some fashion all theory schools address. Agreeing with that assessment, the first two sections of the “branches” part of the book will take up, respectively, functionalism and symbolic interactionism, with conflict being addressed in a variety of sections.

Beginning with the first section, functionalism, structural functionalism, and systems theory are three analytically distinct but in historical practice interrelated theoretical positions, and since this package of theories achieved a certain level of hegemony in the two decades after World War II, we appropriately begin with them. The section begins with a classic statement from Robert K. Merton, one of the key exponents of functionalism during this era, on the unintended consequences of action. This is followed by an example of Talcott Parsons’s articulation of systems theory, in this instance focusing on the societal community as one of the crucial subsystems of society. If functionalism was deemed useful in accounting for social consensus and solidarity, Lewis Coser’s contribution on the functions of conflict indicates that functionalists thought, contrary to the critics, that they could account for conflict. The section is rounded out with an entry by the German systems theorist Niklas Luhmann, who carried this tradition on and moved it in new directions until his death in 1998. In contrast to Parsons’s contention that the system was an analytical tool for understanding certain societal processes, Luhmann viewed systems ontologically.

The following section examines three discrete theory schools that nevertheless share much in common: symbolic interaction, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology. As noted earlier, symbolic interaction theory was deeply indebted to the work of philosopher George Herbert Mead, although it was sociologist Herbert Blumer who was responsible, in the selection included herein, for spelling out what a symbolic interactionist perspective might look like. Blumer rejected Parsons’s claim that this theoretical stance could readily be incorporated into Parsons’s own theoretical edifice. Symbolic interactionists became closely associated with ethnographic research methods and

with the presentation of thick descriptions in attempts to uncover the interpretive work of actors creating their lives and their social worlds. Although not known as an exponent of symbolic interaction, C. Wright Mills was deeply influenced by the pragmatist tradition, as were proponents of symbolic interaction, and his essay in this section is frequently cited by them. For his part, Erving Goffman would probably have resisted being labeled a symbolic interactionist. Indeed, although in many respects he ought to be seen as offering a distinctive approach to theory, it is clear that subsequent symbolic interactionists like to claim Goffman as one of their own, and it is fair to conclude that if one has to categorize him, this is the most appropriate label to apply.

If symbolic interaction is a distinctly American theoretical branch, phenomenology’s roots are European, located in particular in the philosopher Edmund Husserl’s work. Among the most important scholars to bring phenomenology into sociology was the Austrian-born émigré scholar Alfred Schutz, who along with other European exile scholars taught at New York’s New School for Social Research. Unlike Blumer, he actually sought to engage Parsons in an ongoing dialogue, but in the end he was frustrated by where it was leading. Certainly not to be confused with phenomenology, but bearing what might be called a family resemblance, ethnomethodology emerged, like symbolic interactionism, on American soil. Harold Garfinkel is the founding figure of ethnomethodology, and thus it is appropriate that an excerpt from his landmark book, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967), be included in the section. The final entry in this section provides an outline of how Randall Collins has built on the work of Durkheim and Goffman to advance what he calls “interaction ritual theory.”

The following section, Exchange Theory and Rational Choice Theory, like the preceding one, links two theoretical camps that are distinct but nonetheless are in some respects related or offer overlapping perspectives. Exchange theory is the oldest, generally associated with Parsons’s Harvard colleague and theoretical rival, George Homans. He was an exponent of methodological individualism and a behavioralist approach to the social sciences and thus disagreed profoundly with Parsons’s work. Indeed, in his autobiography, *Coming*

to *My Senses* (1984), Homans wrote that Parsons asked him to read *The Structure of Social Action*. He went on to say, "I conscientiously read it, but did not criticize it, I hated it so much" (p. 323). Peter Blau's contribution to exchange theory in this collection occurs in his effort to link the micro-level analysis characteristic of exchange theory to macro-level issues.

One of the selections in this section was penned by rational choice theorist James S. Coleman. Coleman's selection derives from his magnum opus, *Foundations of Social Theory* (1990), wherein he sought to do nothing less than point social theory in a new direction, specifically one that in many respects abandoned Parsons. Like exchange theorists, Coleman embraced methodological individualism. His excerpt sketches some of the fundamental grounding principles of the approach. Jon Elster has also written extensively from a rational choice perspective, although in recent years he has become more critical of the approach without abandoning it.

If the preceding three sections contain theoretical orientations that operate at fairly high levels of abstraction and at a remove from political engagements, such is not the case with the next two sections. Beginning with the first, Gender Theory, a great outpouring of theoretical work developed during and in the wake of the 1960s women's and gay rights movements. Gender theories often have their origins in other theoretical perspectives, including but not limited to Marxism, neo-Freudianism, structuralism, symbolic interactionism, and postmodernism. This section provides readers with some indication of the range of gender theorizing, beginning with Candace West and Don Zimmerman's symbolic interactionist-grounded article. This is followed by Dorothy Smith's critique of what she sees as a tendency among feminist theorists to fail to appreciate the political dimension to categorizations of sex, gender, and race. Judith Butler similarly argues on behalf of an anti-essentialist approach to theory. Patricia Hill Collins's attempt to link race and gender in outlining an Afrocentric feminist epistemology. The Australian feminist theorist Raewyn Connell (much of her work has been published under the names R. W. or Robert W.) develops a theory of the power dynamics inherent in gender relations, understood in terms of her concept of "hegemonic masculinity." Rounding

out the section, Steven Seidman, one of the principal proponents of queer theory, builds on the work of Foucault and Dorothy Smith to lay out the implications of this perspective for sociology.

The next section contains selections from the key figures associated with the Frankfurt school who advanced a "critical theory" that was at once deeply indebted to Marx and also profoundly influenced (even when not explicitly acknowledged) by Weber. Actually, there is both a broad and a narrower definition of critical theory. The broad definition refers to theories in general that are concerned with overcoming domination and have both a descriptive and a normative character. Thus, for example, the contemporary French theorist Luc Boltanski (who has an entry in Section XIV) has recently written a book in this spirit, *On Critique: A Sociology of Emancipation* (2011). This section is shaped by the narrow definition, which refers specifically to theorists who have been directly associated with the Frankfurt school. Although different from one another in many ways, what linked these individuals was an abiding critique of capitalism and a concern with the consequences of rationalization. This section includes an excerpt from Walter Benjamin's extremely influential article "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Theodor Adorno's use of Freudian theory to analyze fascist leaders and propaganda, and Herbert Marcuse's critique of the new forms of control that he saw arising in the overly administered societies of the world's liberal democracies. All three of these individuals were contemporaries and associated with the first generation of the Frankfurt school. In contrast, Jürgen Habermas is the current heir of these founding figures. He has been concerned with the challenges confronting the public sphere since the earliest phase of his academic life and with their implications for democratic practice. He offers an alternative to what are generally posed as the two available democratic options—liberalism and republicanism—that he refers to as deliberative politics.

This is followed by a section concerned with the interrelated concepts of race, ethnicity, and nationalism, the focus here shifting from theory schools to topics that have proven to preoccupy contemporary theorists. Two of the selections focus explicitly on race, beginning with Michael Omi and Howard Winant's articulation of the outlines of a critical theory of race. This is

followed by and counterpoised to British theorist Paul Gilroy's interrogation of the idea of race from the perspective of a global humanism. In a very different vein, Rogers Brubaker attempts to salvage ethnicity from reifying tendencies, arguing that "groupism" offers a theoretically suspect way of viewing social relations that are inherently dynamic and multifarious. The section is rounded out with an essay by Craig Calhoun on nationalism, which he contends offers an important source of solidarity needed to establish the idea of a "people" that is essential for the flourishing of democracy.

Like the preceding section, the next one is topical, as the title indicates: State, Economy, and Civil Society. The lead article is Charles Tilly's provocative, historically grounded argument that nation states should be seen as parallel institutions to criminal syndicates, both operating as protection rackets. This is followed by an excerpt from Italian political theorist Giorgio Agamben's increasingly influential work on the political condition of the modern world, which he characterizes by what he refers to as "bare life." The following two essays offer critical analyses of the crises of contemporary capitalism and what it portends for the future. German sociologist Wolfgang Streeck presents a bleak portrait of the erosion of democracy and the looming ecological crisis without a sense that an alternative to capitalism is on the horizon. In contrast, Erik Olin Wright sees in what he calls "real world utopias" reason to hope that a more just and equitable world order might be possible. Manuel Castells, in developing his own version of network theory in the information age, seeks to offer an account of the dynamics of power in network societies. Jeffrey Alexander's *The Civil Sphere* (2006) constitutes the most significant effort to rethink a long legacy of civil society theorizing. In this selection, Alexander locates his position in terms of major theorists from the eighteenth century through the twentieth century while advancing the claim that the civil sphere is the institutional realm of solidarity and justice.

The following section offers an array of articles by theorists seeking to account for aspects of the causes and consequences of modernity—viewing it, to borrow from Peter Wagner (2008), as experience and interpretation. The length of this section is a reflection of the fact that from the beginning and henceforth sociologists have sought to make sense of

modernity (Goldberg 2017). It begins with an excerpt from Norbert Elias, a scholar who worked in relative obscurity for decades on the "civilizing process" but who by the 1970s was finally recognized as a major theorist of the rise of modernity. Guy Debord, a key figure of the French Situationist International, is an original thinker, although his work resembles in some respects both critical theory and postmodernism. His contribution to the collection provides a brief introduction to his concept of "the society of the spectacle." Anthony Giddens, one of the most influential theorists in the world from the 1990s to the present, rejects the notion that we have entered a postmodern epoch, instead contending that we have moved to a higher stage of modernity. His focus in the selection contained here is on the reflexive character of modernity. Bruno Latour can be read as an iconoclast who sides neither with postmodernists nor the defenders of modernism, arguing instead that both camps have in fundamental ways gotten it all wrong. He declares as much in his provocative claim that "we have never been modern." In work produced near the end of his life, Zygmunt Bauman began to use "liquid" imagery, describing the present as novel insofar as everyday life and the culture that informs it are increasingly incapable of establishing anything resembling permanence or stability. Within this ambit, he has written brief essays that deal with liquid life, liquid modernity, liquid times, and liquid fear. Next is a selection from what has become one of the classic statements on the epistemology of postmodernism, that of the late French theorist Jean-François Lyotard, a statement that, interestingly, was commissioned by a university advisory body in the Canadian province of Quebec. The late Hebrew University sociologist S. N. Eisenstadt's contribution makes the claim that we cannot speak about modernity in the singular but rather must consider multiple modernities that have arisen around the globe. The final selection in this section is by Peter Wagner, based at the University of Barcelona, who explores the meaning of emancipation and its political implications in modern societies.

The penultimate section, titled "French Critical Theory: Structuralisms and Poststructuralism," contains five selections. The first, from the late Pierre Bourdieu's relatively early work, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), provides readers with an overview of three

concepts central throughout his entire corpus: structure, habitus, and practice. Likewise, Jean Baudrillard's essay "Advertising" derives from his early work, when he was transitioning from Marxism to postmodernism. The recurring theme in his work is that in a media-saturated world, the distinction between the real and the image dissolves into a situation he describes as "hyperreality." Alain Touraine has written extensively on postindustrial society, and in this excerpt he offers a theoretical account of the role of social movements in shaping the contours of such societies. Michel Foucault is the poststructuralist representative in the collection. His analysis of Jeremy Bentham's notion of the panopticon reveals something of his understanding of the relationship between knowledge, power, and control. His ideas about politics, as in the concept of biopower, have had a major impact in the social sciences, not without its critics (e.g., Zamora and Behrent 2016). Finally, the passage from Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello's *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (2007) builds on the idea first advanced by Max Weber about the spirit of capitalism, in this case attempting to indicate how that spirit—or justification—has been recast in the past half century.

Few would dispute the fact that we live in an increasingly interconnected world where what geographer David Harvey (1996) calls "time-space compression" has led to an emerging global economy, the increasing significance of transnational politics, and the ascendance of a global culture. It has become incumbent on theorists to increasingly frame their work with globalization in mind. The four authors in the section on world systems and globalization theory are among the most prominent exemplars of current developments. Roland Robertson explores the deep history of globalization, identifying five formative historical periods dating back to the fifteenth century. Immanuel Wallerstein's major project on world systems theory offers a Marxist-inspired approach to the emergence of a capitalist system that no longer operates primarily at the national level but has over several centuries managed to become a worldwide phenomenon. If his work is more explicitly associated with world-systems theory, the other three authors in the section are globalization theorists, including German theorist Ulrich Beck, who has sought to link globalization theory to

ideas associated with modernity, risk society, and, more recently, cosmopolitanism. Arjun Appadurai is primarily interested in the cultural aspects of globalization as they have been transformed due to developments in communicative and transportation technologies, yielding what he discusses in terms of five dimensions of cultural flows: ethoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes.

CONCLUSION

As this overview reveals, social theory is a remarkably broad and diverse enterprise. I, quite frankly, would have liked to include far more theorists than I was able to within the confines of a single volume. Many of the reviewers for the sixth edition offered suggested theorists and readings, and in some instances I followed their advice. However, in the end there were too many excellent suggestions that I simply could not make room for. The choice of entries is further complicated by the fact that deciding what to include and what to exclude was partially dependent on any particular work's accessibility to student readers—an inherently difficult matter for all social theory anthologies. While I make no claim that the readings are easy, I do believe that careful attention has been paid to including seminal readings that can be made comprehensible to most students. Confidence in my judgment was reinforced by the fact that I received valuable advice from a number of people who currently teach theory courses in a variety of institutional settings.

It is my firm conviction that students cannot get a feel for what theory is or how theorists think without reading them in their own words. There are a number of fine textbooks on the market that can assist students in understanding the intellectual and social contexts that shaped various theoretical projects. These texts can also provide cogent and helpful overviews of the key issues motivating particular theorists and the characteristic elements of their respective theoretical approaches. However, these ought to be viewed as complementary modes of assistance as one engages with the texts themselves. It is only after engaging the original works that one is in a position to begin to offer a compelling, if tentative, answer to the question, What is social theory?

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SOCIAL THEORY

PART

1

THE ROOTS

Classical Social Theory

I. KARL MARX

KARL MARX

1. ALIENATED LABOR

Unpublished during Marx's lifetime (1818–1883), *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844 provide key insights into the early period of his intellectual development. This excerpt concerns alienated labor; it allows the reader to see the Hegelian-inspired philosopher begin to link philosophy to the realm of economics. In this early critique of capitalism, alienation becomes the focus of Marx's analysis. He contends that as a result of a loss of control of the means of production, workers end up alienated not only from the goods that they produce and the process of work itself but from fellow humans, from themselves, and from nature. Wage labor means that workers are reduced to the level of a commodity—an object.

... We started from the presuppositions of political economy. We accepted its vocabulary and its laws. We presupposed private property, the separation of labour, capital, and land, and likewise of wages, profit, and ground rent; also division of labour; competition; the concept of exchange value, etc. Using the very words of political economy we have demonstrated that the worker is degraded to the most miserable sort of commodity; that the misery of the worker is in inverse proportion to the power and size of his production; that the necessary result of competition is the accumulation of capital in a few hands, and thus a more terrible restoration of monopoly; and that finally the distinction between capitalist and landlord, and that between peasant and industrial worker disappears and the whole of society must fall apart into the two classes of the property owners and the property-less workers.

Political economy starts with the fact of private property, it does not explain it to us. It conceives of the material process that private property goes through in

reality in general abstract formulas which then have for it a value of laws. It does not understand these laws, i.e. it does not demonstrate how they arise from the nature of private property. Political economy does not afford us any explanation of the reason for the separation of labour and capital, of capital and land. When, for example, political economy defines the relationship of wages to profit from capital, the interest of the capitalist is the ultimate court of appeal, that is, it presupposes what should be its result. In the same way competition enters the argument everywhere. It is explained by exterior circumstances. But political economy tells us nothing about how far these exterior, apparently fortuitous circumstances are merely the expression of a necessary development. We have seen how it regards exchange itself as something fortuitous. The only wheels that political economy sets in motion are greed and war among the greedy, competition.

It is just because political economy has not grasped the connections in the movement that new contradictions have arisen in its doctrines, for example, between

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that of monopoly and that of competition, freedom of craft and corporations, division of landed property and large estates. For competition, free trade, and the division of landed property were only seen as fortuitous circumstances created by will and force, not developed and comprehended as necessary, inevitable, and natural results of monopoly, corporations, and feudal property.

So what we have to understand now is the essential connection of private property, selfishness, the separation of labour, capital, and landed property, of exchange and competition, of the value and degradation of man, of monopoly and competition, etc.—the connection of all this alienation with the money system.

Let us not be like the political economist who, when he wishes to explain something, puts himself in an imaginary original state of affairs. Such an original stage of affairs explains nothing. He simply pushes the question back into a grey and nebulous distance. He presupposes as a fact and an event what he ought to be deducing, namely the necessary connection between the two things, for example, between the division of labour and exchange. Similarly, the theologian explains the origin of evil through the fall, i.e. he presupposes as an historical fact what he should be explaining.

We start with a contemporary fact of political economy:

The worker becomes poorer the richer is his production, the more it increases in power and scope. The worker becomes a commodity that is all the cheaper the more commodities he creates. The depreciation of the human world progresses in direct proportion to the increase in value of the world of things. Labour does not only produce commodities; it produces itself and the labourer as a commodity and that to the extent to which it produces commodities in general.

What this fact expresses is merely this: the object that labour produces, its product, confronts it as an alien being, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labour is labour that has solidified itself into an object, made itself into a thing, the objectification of labour. The realization of labour is its objectification. In political economy this realization of labour appears as a loss of reality for the worker, objectification as a loss of the object or slavery to it, and appropriation as alienation, as externalization.

The realization of labour appears as a loss of reality to an extent that the worker loses his reality by dying of starvation. Objectification appears as a loss of the object to such an extent that the worker is robbed not only of the objects necessary for his life but also of the objects of his work. Indeed, labour itself becomes an object he can only have in his power with the greatest of efforts and at irregular intervals. The appropriation of the object appears as alienation to such an extent that the more objects the worker produces, the less he can possess and the more he falls under the domination of his product, capital.

All these consequences follow from the fact that the worker relates to the product of his labour as to an alien object. For it is evident from this presupposition that the more the worker externalizes himself in his work, the more powerful becomes the alien, objective world that he creates opposite himself, the poorer he becomes himself in his inner life and the less he can call his own. It is just the same in religion. The more man puts into God, the less he retains in himself. The worker puts his life into the object and this means that it no longer belongs to him but to the object. So the greater this activity, the more the worker is without an object. What the product of his labour is, that he is not. So the greater this product the less he is himself. The externalization of the worker in his product implies not only that his labour becomes an object, an exterior existence but also that it exists outside him, independent and alien, and becomes a self-sufficient power opposite him, that the life that he has lent to the object affronts him, hostile and alien.

Let us now deal in more detail with objectification, the production of the worker, and the alienation, the loss of the object, his product, which is involved in it.

The worker can create nothing without nature, the sensuous exterior world. It is the matter in which his labour realizes itself, in which it is active, out of which and through which it produces.

But as nature affords the means of life for labour in the sense that labour cannot live without objects on which it exercises itself, so it affords a means of life in the narrower sense, namely the means for the physical subsistence of the worker himself.

Thus the more the worker appropriates the exterior world of sensuous nature by his labour, the more he

doubly deprives himself of the means of subsistence, firstly since the exterior sensuous world increasingly ceases to be an object belonging to his work, a means of subsistence for his labour; secondly, since it increasingly ceases to be a means of subsistence in the direct sense, a means for the physical subsistence of the worker.

Thus in these two ways the worker becomes a slave to his object: firstly he receives an object of labour, that is he receives labour, and secondly, he receives the means of subsistence. Thus it is his object that permits him to exist first as a worker and secondly as a physical subject. The climax of this slavery is that only as a worker can he maintain himself as a physical subject and it is only as a physical subject that he is a worker.

(According to the laws of political economy the alienation of the worker in his object is expressed as follows: the more the worker produces the less he has to consume, the more values he creates the more valueless and worthless he becomes, the more formed the product the more deformed the worker, the more civilized the product, the more barbaric the worker, the more powerful the work the more powerless becomes the worker, the more cultured the work the more philistine the worker becomes and more of a slave to nature.)

Political economy hides the alienation in the essence of labour by not considering the immediate relationship between the worker (labour) and production. Labour produces works of wonder for the rich, but nakedness for the worker; it produces palaces, but only hovels for the worker; it produces beauty, but cripples the worker; it replaces labour by machines but throws a part of the workers back to a barbaric labour and turns the other part into machines. It produces culture, but also imbecility and cretinism for the worker.

The immediate relationship of labour to its products is the relationship of the worker to the objects of his production. The relationship of the man of means to the objects of production and to production itself is only a consequence of this first relationship. And it confirms it. We shall examine this other aspect later.

So when we ask the question: what relationship is essential to labour, we are asking about the relationship of the worker to production.

Up to now we have considered only one aspect of the alienation or externalization of the worker, his

relationship to the products of his labour. But alienation shows itself not only in the result, but also in the act of production, inside productive activity itself. How would the worker be able to affront the product of his work as an alien being if he did not alienate himself in the act of production itself? For the product is merely the summary of the activity of production. So if the product of labour is externalization, production itself must be active externalization, the externalization of activity, the activity of externalization. The alienation of the object of labour is only the résumé of the alienation, the externalization in the activity of labour itself.

What does the externalization of labour consist of then?

Firstly, that labour is exterior to the worker, that is, it does not belong to his essence. Therefore he does not confirm himself in his work, he denies himself, feels miserable instead of happy, deploys no free physical and intellectual energy, but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. Thus the worker only feels a stranger. He is at home when he is not working and when he works he is not at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary but compulsory, forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need but only a means to satisfy needs outside itself. How alien it really is is very evident from the fact that when there is no physical or other compulsion, labour is avoided like the plague. External labour, labour in which man externalizes himself, is a labour of self-sacrifice and mortification. Finally, the external character of labour for the worker shows itself in the fact that it is not his own but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that he does not belong to himself in his labour but to someone else. As in religion the human imagination's own activity, the activity of man's head and his heart, reacts independently on the individual as an alien activity of gods or devils, so the activity of the worker is not his own spontaneous activity. It belongs to another and is the loss of himself.

The result we arrive at then is that man (the worker) only feels himself freely active in his animal functions of eating, drinking, and procreating, at most also in his dwelling and dress, and feels himself an animal in his human functions.

Eating, drinking, procreating, etc. are indeed truly human functions. But in the abstraction that separates

them from the other round of human activity and makes them into final and exclusive ends they become animal.

We have treated the act of alienation of practical human activity, labour, from two aspects. (1) The relationship of the worker to the product of his labour as an alien object that has power over him. This relationship is at the same time the relationship to the sensuous exterior world and to natural objects as to an alien and hostile world opposed to him. (2) The relationship of labour to the act of production inside labour. This relationship is the relationship of the worker to his own activity as something that is alien and does not belong to him; it is activity that is passivity, power that is weakness, procreation that is castration, the worker's own physical and intellectual energy, his personal life (for what is life except activity?) as an activity directed against himself, independent of him and not belonging to him. It is self-alienation, as above it was the alienation of the object.

We now have to draw a third characteristic of alienated labour from the two previous ones.

Man is a species-being not only in that practically and theoretically he makes both his own and others species into his objects, but also, and this is only another way of putting the same thing, he relates to himself as to the present, living species, in that he relates to himself as to a universal and therefore free being.

Both with man and with animals the species-life consists physically in the fact that man (like animals) lives from inorganic nature, and the more universal man is than animals the more universal is the area of inorganic nature from which he lives. From the theoretical point of view, plants, animals, stones, air, light, etc. form part of human consciousness, partly as objects of natural science, partly as objects of art; they are his intellectual inorganic nature, his intellectual means of subsistence, which he must first prepare before he can enjoy and assimilate them. From the practical point of view, too, they form a part of human life and activity. Physically man lives solely from these products of nature, whether they appear as food, heating, clothing, habitation, etc. The universality of man appears in practice precisely in the universality that makes the whole of nature into his inorganic body in that it is both (i) his immediate means of subsistence

and also (ii) the material object and tool of his vital activity. Nature is the inorganic body of a man, that is, in so far as it is not itself a human body. That man lives from nature means that nature is his body with which he must maintain a constant interchange so as not to die. That man's physical and intellectual life depends on nature merely means that nature depends on itself, for man is a part of nature.

While alienated labour alienates (1) nature from man, and (2) man from himself, his own active function, his vital activity, it also alienates the species from man; it turns his species-life into a means towards his individual life. Firstly it alienates species-life and individual life, and secondly in its abstraction it makes the latter into the aim of the former which is also conceived of in its abstract and alien form. For firstly, work, vital activity, and productive life itself appear to man only as a means to the satisfaction of a need, the need to preserve his physical existence. But productive life is species-life. It is life producing life. The whole character of a species, its generic character, is contained in its manner of vital activity, and free conscious activity is the species-characteristic of man. Life itself appears merely as a means to life.

The animal is immediately one with its vital activity. It is not distinct from it. They are identical. Man makes his vital activity itself into an object of his will and consciousness. He has a conscious vital activity. He is not immediately identical to any of his characterizations. Conscious vital activity differentiates man immediately from animal vital activity. It is this and this alone that makes man a species-being. He is only a conscious being, that is, his own life is an object to him, precisely because he is a species-being. This is the only reason for his activity being free activity. Alienated labour reverses the relationship so that, just because he is a conscious being, man makes his vital activity and essence a mere means to his existence.

The practical creation of an objective world, the working-over of inorganic nature, is the confirmation of man as a conscious species-being, that is, as a being that relates to the species as to himself and to himself as to the species. It is true that the animal, too, produces. It builds itself a nest, a dwelling, like the bee, the beaver, the ant, etc. But it only produces what it needs immediately for itself or its offspring; it

produces one-sidedly whereas man produces universally; it produces only under the pressure of immediate physical need, whereas man produces freely from physical need and only truly produces when he is thus free; it produces only itself whereas man reproduces the whole of nature. Its product belongs immediately to its physical body whereas man can freely separate himself from his product. The animal only fashions things according to the standards and needs of the species it belongs to, whereas man knows how to produce according to the measure of every species and knows everywhere how to apply its inherent standard to the object; thus man also fashions things according to the laws of beauty.

Thus it is in the working over of the objective world that man first really affirms himself as a species-being. This production is his active species-life. Through it nature appears as his work and his reality. The object of work is therefore the objectification of the species-life of man; for he duplicates himself not only intellectually, in his mind, but also actively in reality and thus can look at his image in a world he has created. Therefore when alienated labour tears from man the object of his production, it also tears from him his species-life, the real objectivity of his species and turns the advantage he has over animals into a disadvantage in that his inorganic body, nature, is torn from him.

Similarly, in that alienated labour degrades man's own free activity to a means, it turns the species-life of man into a means for his physical existence.

Thus consciousness, which man derives from his species, changes itself through alienation so that species-life becomes a means for him.

Therefore alienated labour:

(3) makes the species-being of man, both nature and the intellectual faculties of his species, into a being that is alien to him, into a means for his individual existence. It alienates from man his own body, nature exterior to him, and his intellectual being, his human essence.

(4) An immediate consequence of man's alienation from the product of his work, his vital activity and his species-being, is the alienation of man from man. When man is opposed to himself, it is another man that is opposed to him. What is valid for the relationship of a man to his work, of the product of his

work and himself, is also valid for the relationship of man to other men and of their labour and the objects of their labour.

In general, the statement that man is alienated from his species-being, means that one man is alienated from another as each of them is alienated from the human essence.

The alienation of man and in general of every relationship in which man stands to himself is first realized and expressed in the relationship with which man stands to other men.

Thus in the situation of alienated labour each man measures his relationship to other men by the relationship in which he finds himself placed as a worker.

We began with a fact of political economy, the alienation of the worker and his production. We have expressed this fact in conceptual terms: alienated, externalized labour. We have analysed this concept and thus analysed a purely economic fact.

Let us now see further how the concept of alienated, externalized labour must express and represent itself in reality.

If the product of work is alien to me, opposes me as an alien power, whom does it belong to then?

If my own activity does not belong to me and is an alien, forced activity to whom does it belong then?

To another being than myself.

Who is this being?

The gods? Of course in the beginning of history the chief production, as for example, the building of temples etc. in Egypt, India, and Mexico was both in the service of the gods and also belonged to them. But the gods alone were never the masters of the work. And nature just as little. And what a paradox it would be if, the more man mastered nature through his work and the more the miracles of the gods were rendered superfluous by the miracles of industry, the more man had to give up his pleasure in producing and the enjoyment in his product for the sake of these powers.

The alien being to whom the labour and the product of the labour belongs, whom the labour serves and who enjoys its product, can only be man himself. If the product of labour does not belong to the worker but stands over against him as an alien power, this is only possible in that it belongs to another man apart from the worker.

If his activity torments him it must be a joy and a pleasure to someone else. This alien power above man can be neither the gods nor nature, only man himself.

Consider further the above sentence that the relationship of man to himself first becomes objective and real to him through his relationship to other men. So if he relates to the product of his labour, his objectified labour, as to an object that is alien, hostile, powerful, and independent of him, this relationship implies that another man is the alien, hostile, powerful, and independent master of this object. If he relates to his own activity as to something unfree, it is a relationship to an activity that is under the domination, oppression, and yoke of another man.

Every self-alienation of man from himself and nature appears in the relationship in which he places himself and nature to other men distinct from himself. Therefore religious self-alienation necessarily appears in the relationship of layman to priest, or, because here we are dealing with a spiritual world, to a mediator, etc. In the practical, real world, the self-alienation can only appear through the practical, real relationship to other men. The means through which alienation makes progress are themselves practical. Through alienated labour, then, man creates not only his relationship to the object and act of production as to alien and hostile men; he creates too the relationship in which other men stand to his production and his product and the relationship in which he stands to these other men. Just as he turns his production into his own loss of reality and punishment and his own product into a loss, a product that does not belong to him, so he creates the domination of the man who does not produce over the production and the product. As he alienates his activity from himself, so he hands over to an alien person an activity that does not belong to him.

Up till now we have considered the relationship only from the side of the worker and we will later consider it from the side of the non-worker.

Thus through alienated, externalized labour the worker creates the relationship to this labour of a man who is alien to it and remains exterior to it. The relationship of the worker to his labour creates the relationship to it of the capitalist, or whatever else one wishes to call the master of the labour. Private property is thus the product, result, and necessary consequence

of externalized labour, of the exterior relationship of the worker to nature and to himself.

Thus private property is the result of the analysis of the concept of externalized labour, i.e. externalized man, alienated work, alienated life, alienated man.

We have, of course, obtained the concept of externalized labour (externalized life) from political economy as the result of the movement of private property. But it is evident from the analysis of this concept that, although private property appears to be the ground and reason for externalized labour, it is rather a consequence of it, just as the gods are originally not the cause but the effect of the aberration of the human mind, although later this relationship reverses itself.

It is only in the final culmination of the development of private property that these hidden characteristics come once more to the fore, in that firstly it is the product of externalized labour and secondly it is the means through which labour externalizes itself, the realization of this externalization.

This development sheds light at the same time on several, previously unresolved contradictions.

1. Political economy starts from labour as the veritable soul of production, and yet it attributes nothing to labour and everything to private property. Proudhon has drawn a conclusion from this contradiction that is favourable to labour and against private property. But we can see that this apparent contradiction is the contradiction of alienated labour with itself and that political economy has only expressed the laws of alienated labour.

We can therefore also see that wages and private property are identical: for wages, in which the product, the object of the labour, remunerates the labour itself, are just a necessary consequence of the alienation of labour. In the wage system the labour does not appear as the final aim but only as the servant of the wages. We will develop this later and for the moment only draw a few consequences.

An enforced raising of wages (quite apart from other difficulties, apart from the fact that, being an anomaly, it could only be maintained by force) would only mean a better payment of slaves and would not give this human meaning and worth either to the worker or to his labour.

Indeed, even the equality of wages that Proudhon demands only changes the relationship of the contemporary worker to his labour into that of all men to labour. Society is then conceived of as an abstract capitalist.

Wages are an immediate consequence of alienated labour and alienated labour is the immediate cause of private property. Thus the disappearance of one entails also the disappearance of the other.

2. It is a further consequence of the relationship of alienated labour to private property that the emancipation of society from private property, etc., from slavery, is expressed in its political form by the emancipation of the workers. This is not because only their emancipation is at stake but because general human emancipation is contained in their emancipation. It is contained within it because the whole of human slavery is involved in the relationship of the worker to his product and all slave relationships are only modifications and consequences of this relationship.

Just as we have discovered the concept of private property through an analysis of the concept of alienated, externalized labour, so all categories of political economy can be deduced with the help of these two factors. We shall recognize in each category of market, competition, capital, money, only a particular and developed expression of these first two fundamental elements.

However, before we consider this structure let us try to solve two problems:

1. To determine the general essence of private property as it appears as a result of alienated labour in its relationship to truly human and social property.
2. We have taken the alienation and externalization of labour as a fact and analysed this fact. We now ask, how does man come to externalize, to alienate his labour? How is this alienation grounded in human development? We have already obtained much material for the solution of this problem, in that we have turned the question of the origin of private property into the question of the relationship of externalized labour to the development of human history. For when we speak of private property we think we are dealing with something

that is exterior to man. When we speak of labour then we are dealing directly with man. This new formulation of the problem already implies its solution.

To take point 1, the general nature of private property and its relationship to truly human property.

Externalized labour has been broken down into two component parts that determine each other or are only different expressions of one and the same relationship. Appropriation appears as alienation, as externalization, and externalization as appropriation, and alienation as true enfranchisement. We have dealt with one aspect, alienated labour as regards the worker himself, that is, the relationship of externalized labour to itself. As a product and necessary result of this relationship we have discovered the property relationship of the non-worker to the worker and his labour.

As the material and summary expression of alienated labour, private property embraces both relationships, both that of the worker to his labour, the product of his labour and the non-worker, and that of the non-worker to the worker and the product of his labour.

We have already seen that for the worker who appropriates nature through his work, this appropriation appears as alienation, his own activity as activity for and of someone else, his vitality as sacrifice of his life, production of objects as their loss to an alien power, an alien man: let us now consider the relationship that this man, who is alien to labour and the worker, has to the worker, to labour and its object.

The first remark to make is that everything that appears in the case of the worker to be an activity of externalization, of alienation, appears in the case of the non-worker to be a state of externalization, of alienation.

Secondly, the real, practical behaviour of the worker in production and towards his product (as a state of mind) appears in the case of the non-worker opposed to him as theoretical behaviour. Thirdly, the non-worker does everything against the worker that the worker does against himself but he does not do against himself what he does against the worker.

Let us consider these three relationships in more detail. . . . [The manuscript breaks off unfinished here.]

2. THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY

The German Ideology is a sprawling work of over 700 pages, written largely between the fall of 1845 and the summer of 1846. It picks up where *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* left off. In its pages one sees not only the continued settling of accounts with the German philosophic tradition, but the beginnings of what would become a distinctly Marxist vision of the social world created by industrial capitalism. In this particular selection Marx and Engels take aim at certain exponents of Hegelian idealism, and they do so with a certain acerbic flair, comparing the philosophical idealists known as the Young Hegelians with the person who thinks that people drown because they are “possessed with the idea of gravity.” In their discussion of the production of consciousness, they begin to lay the foundations for an alternative, materialist theory of historical development. In so doing, they part company with Ludwig Feuerbach’s version of materialism, which they find wanting because it is rooted in nature and not history.

PREFACE

Hitherto men have constantly made up for themselves false conceptions about themselves, about what they are and what they ought to be. They have arranged their relationships according to their ideas of God, of normal man, etc. The phantoms of their brains have got out of their hands. They, the creators, have bowed down before their creations. Let us liberate them from the chimeras, the ideas, dogmas, imaginary beings under the yoke of which they are pining away. Let us revolt against the rule of thoughts. Let us teach men, says one, to exchange these imaginations for thoughts which correspond to the essence of man; says the second, to take up a critical attitude to them; says the the third, to knock them out of their heads; and—existing reality will collapse.

These innocent and childlike fancies are the kernel of the modern Young Hegelian philosophy, which not only is received by the German public with horror and awe, but is announced by our philosophic heroes with

the solemn consciousness of its cataclysmic dangerousness and criminal ruthlessness. The first volume of the present publication has the aim of uncloaking these sheep, who take themselves and are taken for wolves; of showing how their bleating merely imitates in a philosophic form the conceptions of the German middle class; how the boasting of these philosophic commentators only mirrors the wretchedness of the real conditions in Germany. It is its aim to debunk and discredit the philosophic struggle with the shadows of reality, which appeals to the dreamy and muddled German nation.

Once upon a time a valiant fellow had the idea that men were drowned in water only because they were possessed with the idea of gravity. If they were to knock this notion out of their heads, say by stating it to be a superstition, a religious concept, they would be sublimely proof against any danger from water. His whole life long he fought against the illusion of gravity, of whose harmful results all statistics brought him new

and manifold evidence. This honest fellow was the type of the new revolutionary philosophers in Germany. . . .

THE PREMISES OF THE MATERIALIST METHOD

The premisses from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premisses from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity. These premisses can thus be verified in a purely empirical way.

The first premiss of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organization of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature. Of course, we cannot here go either into the actual physical nature of man, or into the natural conditions in which man finds himself—geological, oro-hydrographical, climatic, and so on. The writing of history must always set out from these natural bases and their modification in the course of history through the action of men.

Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion, or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life.

The way in which men produce their means of subsistence depends first of all on the nature of the actual means of subsistence they find in existence and have to reproduce. This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the production of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production.

This production only makes its appearance with the increase of population. In its turn this presupposes the intercourse of individuals with one another. The form of this intercourse is again determined by production.

The relations of different nations among themselves depend upon the extent to which each has developed its productive forces, the division of labour, and internal intercourse. This statement is generally recognized. But not only the relation of one nation to others, but also the whole internal structure of the nation itself depends on the stage of development reached by its production and its internal and external intercourse. How far the productive forces of a nation are developed is shown most manifestly by the degree to which the division of labour has been carried. Each new productive force, in so far as it is not merely a quantitative extension of productive forces already known (for instance the bringing into cultivation of fresh land), causes a further development of the division of labour.

The division of labour inside a nation leads at first to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labour, and hence to the separation of town and country and to the conflict of their interests. Its further development leads to the separation of commercial from industrial labour. At the same time, through the division of labour inside these various branches there develop various divisions among the individuals co-operating in definite kinds of labour. The relative position of these individual groups is determined by the methods employed in agriculture, industry, and commerce (patriarchalism, slavery, estates, classes). These same conditions are to be seen (given a more developed intercourse) in the relations of different nations to one another.

The various stages of development in the division of labour are just so many different forms of ownership, i.e. the existing stage in the division of labour determines also the relations of individuals to one another with reference to the material, instrument, and product of labour.

The first form of ownership is tribal ownership. It corresponds to the undeveloped stage of production, at which a people lives by hunting and fishing, by the rearing of beasts, or, in the highest stage, agriculture.

In the latter case it presupposes a great mass of uncultivated stretches of land. The division of labour is at this stage still very elementary and is confined to a further extension of the natural division of labour existing in the family. The social structure is, therefore, limited to an extension of the family; patriarchal family chieftains, below them the members of the tribe, finally slaves. The slavery latent in the family only develops gradually with the increase of population, the growth of wants, and with the extension of external relations, both of war and of barter.

The second form is the ancient communal and State ownership which proceeds especially from the union of several tribes into a city by agreement or by conquest, and which is still accompanied by slavery. Beside communal ownership we already find movable, and later also immovable, private property developing, but as an abnormal form subordinate to communal ownership. The citizens hold power over their labouring slaves only in their community, and on this account alone, therefore, they are bound to the form of communal ownership. It is the communal private property which compels the active citizens to remain in this spontaneously derived form of association over against their slaves. For this reason the whole structure of society based on this communal ownership, and with it the power of the people, decays in the same measure as, in particular, immovable private property evolves. The division of labour is already more developed. We already find the antagonism of town and country; later the antagonism between those states which represent town interests and those which represent country interests, and inside the towns themselves the antagonism between industry and maritime commerce. The class relation between citizens and slaves is now completely developed.

With the development of private property, we find here for the first time the same conditions which we shall find again, only on a more extensive scale, with modern private property. On the one hand, the concentration of private property, which began very early in Rome (as the Licinian agrarian law proves) and proceeded very rapidly from the time of the civil wars and especially under the Emperors; on the other hand, coupled with this, the transformation of the plebeian small peasantry into a proletariat, which, however,

owing to its intermediate position between propertied citizens and slaves, never achieved an independent development.

The third form of ownership is feudal or estate property. If antiquity started out from the town and its little territory, the Middle Ages started out from the country. This differing starting-point was determined by the sparseness of the population at that time, which was scattered over a large area and which received no large increase from the conquerors. In contrast to Greece and Rome, feudal development at the outset, therefore, extends over a much wider territory, prepared by the Roman conquests and the spread of agriculture at first associated with it. The last centuries of the declining Roman Empire and its conquest by the barbarians destroyed a number of productive forces; agriculture had declined, industry had decayed for want of a market, trade had died out or been violently suspended, the rural and urban population had decreased. From these conditions and the mode of organization of the conquest determined by them, feudal property developed under the influence of the Germanic military constitution. Like tribal and communal ownership, it is based again on a community; but the directly producing class standing over against it is not, as in the case of the ancient community, the slaves, but the enserfed small peasantry. As soon as feudalism is fully developed, there also arises antagonism towards the towns. The hierarchical structure of landownership, and the armed bodies of retainers associated with it, gave the nobility power over the serfs. This feudal organization was, just as much as the ancient communal ownership, an association against a subjected producing class; but the form of association and the relation to the direct producers were different because of the different conditions of production.

This feudal system of landownership had its counterpart in the towns in the shape of corporative property, the feudal organization of trades. Here property consisted chiefly in the labour of each individual person. The necessity for association against the organized robber barons, the need for communal covered markets in an age when the industrialist was at the same time a merchant, the growing competition of the escaped serfs swarming into the rising towns, the feudal structure of the whole country: these combined

to bring about the guilds. The gradually accumulated small capital of individual craftsmen and their stable numbers, as against the growing population, evolved the relation of journeyman and apprentice, which brought into being in the towns a hierarchy similar to that in the country.

Thus the chief form of property during the feudal epoch consisted on the one hand of landed property with serf labour chained to it, and on the other of the labour of the individual with small capital commanding the labour of journeymen. The organization of both was determined by the restricted conditions of production—the small-scale and primitive cultivation of the land and the craft type of industry. There was little division of labour in the heyday of feudalism. Each country bore in itself the antithesis of town and country; the division into estates was certainly strongly marked; but apart from the differentiation of princes, nobility, clergy, and peasants in the country, and masters, journeymen, apprentices, and soon also the rabble of casual labourers in the towns, no division of importance took place. In agriculture it was rendered difficult by the strip-system, beside which the cottage industry of the peasants themselves emerged. In industry there was no division of labour at all in the individual trades themselves, and very little between them. The separation of industry and commerce was found already in existence in older towns; in the newer it only developed later, when the towns entered into mutual relations.

The grouping of larger territories into feudal kingdoms was a necessity for the landed nobility as for the towns. The organization of the ruling class, the nobility, had, therefore, everywhere a monarch at its head.

The fact is, therefore, that definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations. Empirical observation must in each separate instance bring out empirically, and without any mystification and speculation, the connection of the social and political structure with production. The social structure and the State are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really are, i.e. as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material

limits, presuppositions, and conditions independent of their will.

The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc. of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.—real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.

In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premisses. Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. In the first method of approach the starting-point is consciousness taken as the living individual; in the second method, which conforms to real life, it is the real living individuals themselves, and consciousness is considered solely as their consciousness.

3. MANIFESTO OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Manifesto, coauthored by Marx and his close ally Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) in 1847 and published the following year, is one of the most important political tracts of all time. A stirring call to arms, the essay begins with the claim that all history is the history of class conflict, and it concludes with the injunction, “Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains.” Thus, it is an appeal to workers to engage in the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. However, the *Manifesto* is much more than this, for it offers a succinct and insightful analysis of the nature of the conflictual relationship between the two central classes in a capitalist class structure, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Moreover, as a part of this excerpt reveals, Marx and Engels maintained a keen appreciation of the historically progressive character of the bourgeoisie, who, they contend, have created a dynamic, innovative, and highly productive economic system that is capable of laying the groundwork for a post scarcity society in which alienation and economic exploitation are overcome.

A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. All the Powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.

Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as Communistic by its opponents in power? Where the Opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach of Communism, against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reactionary adversaries?

Two things result from this fact.

- I. Communism is already acknowledged by all European Powers to be itself a Power.
- II. It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism with a Manifesto of the party itself.

To this end, Communists of various nationalities have assembled in London, and sketched the following Manifesto, to be published in the English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish languages.

BOURGEOIS AND PROLETARIANS¹

The history of all hitherto existing society² is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master³ and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians,

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slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms: Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonisation of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

The feudal system of industry, under which industrial production was monopolised by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed on one side by the manufacturing middle class; division of labour between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labour in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacture no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionised industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry, the place of the industrial middle class, by industrial millionaires, the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois. Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the

extension of industry: and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the mediaeval commune;⁴ here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable "third estate" of the monarchy (as in France), afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world-market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with

reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers.

The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which Reactionists so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world-market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material,

but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, *i.e.*, to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilised ones, nations and peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralised means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralisation. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier and one customs-tariff.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organisation of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it, and by the economical and political sway of the bourgeois class.

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of

over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians.

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piece-meal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a

workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour,⁵ is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labour increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of the machinery, etc.

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the over-looker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labour, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labour of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

No sooner is the exploitation of the labourer by the manufacturer, so far, at an end, that he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc.

The lower strata of the middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants—all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialised skill is rendered worthless by

new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labour, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.

At this stage the labourers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country, and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union, but of the union of the bourgeoisie, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set the whole proletariat in motion, and is moreover yet, for a time, able to do so. At this stage, therefore, the proletarians do not fight their enemies, but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeoisie. Thus the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie. But with the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (Trades Unions) against the bourgeois; they

club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarians, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. Thus the ten-hours' bill in England was carried.

Altogether collisions between the classes of the old society further, in many ways, the course of development of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself, whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all times, with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie.

Further, as we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.

The "dangerous class," the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.

In the conditions of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family-relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interests of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.

Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.

Hitherto, every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes. But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it

can, at least, continue its slavish existence. The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern labourer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

The essential condition for the existence, and for the sway of the bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable. . . .

NOTES

1. By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour. By proletariat, the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live. [*Engels, English edition of 1888*]
2. That is, all *written* history. In 1847, the pre-history of society, the social organisation existing previous to recorded history, was all but unknown. Since then, Haxthausen discovered common ownership of land in Russia, Maurer proved it to be the social foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and by and by village communities were found to be, or to have been the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland. The inner organisation of this primitive Communistic society was laid bare, in its typical form, by Morgan's crowning

discovery of the true nature of the *gens* and its relation to the *tribe*. With the dissolution of these primaevial communities society begins to be differentiated into separate and finally antagonistic classes. I have attempted to retrace this process of dissolution in: "Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats" [*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*], 2nd edition, Stuttgart 1886. [*Engels, English edition of 1888*]

3. Guild-master, that is, a full member of a guild, a master within, not a head of a guild. [*Engels, English edition of 1888*]
4. "Commune" was the name taken, in France, by the nascent towns even before they had conquered from their feudal lords and masters local self-government and political rights as the "Third Estate." Generally speaking, for the economical development of the bourgeoisie, England is here taken as the typical country; for its political development, France. [*Engels, English edition of 1888*]

This was the name given their urban communities by the townsmen of Italy and France, after they had purchased or wrested their initial rights of self-government from their feudal lords. [*Engels, German edition of 1890*]

5. Subsequently Marx pointed out that the worker sells not his labour but his labour power.

4. THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE

In the wake of France's swift and surprising defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, the government of Emperor Napoleon III fell. In the ensuing chaos, the provisional government was met with an uprising of militant working-class revolutionaries who established the Paris Commune of 1871—thereby unleashing civil war. The Commune, which was quickly and violently suppressed, has been described by James Miller as “the most significant democratic uprising in Europe in the late nineteenth century.” In this excerpt from a draft of *The Civil War in France*, Marx attempts to delineate the character of the Commune, describing it as “the reabsorption of state power by society” and as the “political form of [the popular masses'] social emancipation.” His analysis, which has been subjected to differing interpretations, was intended to derive lessons from defeat for the class struggles to come.

The centralized state machinery which, with . . . its ubiquitous and complicated military, bureaucratic, clerical, and judiciary organs, entombs (enmeshes) the living civil society like a boa constrictor, was first forged in the days of absolute monarchy as a weapon of nascent modern society in its struggle of emancipation from feudalism. The seigniorial privileges of the medieval lords and cities and clergy were transformed into the attributes of a unitary state power, displacing the feudal dignitaries by salaried state functionaries, transferring the arms from medieval retainers of the landlords and the corporations of townish citizens to a standing army, substituting for the checkered (party-coloured) anarchy of conflicting medieval powers the regulated plan of a state power, with a systematic and hierarchic division of labour. The first French Revolution with its task to found national unity (to create a nation) had to break down all local, territorial, townish, and provincial independence. It was, therefore, forced to develop what absolute monarchy had commenced, the centralization and organization of state power, and to expand the circumference and the attributes of the state power,

the number of its tools, its independence, and its supernaturalist sway over real society, which in fact took the place of the medieval supernaturalist heaven with its saints. Every minor solitary interest engendered by the relations of social groups was separated from society itself, fixed and made independent of it and opposed to it in the form of state interest, administered by state priests with exactly determined hierarchical functions.

This parasitical excrescence upon civil society, pretending to be its ideal counterpart, grew to its full development under the sway of the first Bonaparte. The Restoration and the Monarchy of July added nothing to it but a greater division of labour, growing at the same measure in which the division of labour within civil society created new groups of interest, and, therefore, new material for state action. In their struggle against the Revolution of 1848, the parliamentary Republic of France and the governments of all continental Europe were forced to strengthen, with their measures of repression against the popular movement, the means of action and the centralization of that governmental power. All revolutions thus only perfected the state

Marx, Karl. “The Civil War in France.” *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, translated by David McLellan, 1977. Pages 551–557. Permission granted by Oxford University Press. ♦

machinery instead of throwing off this deadening incubus. The factions and parties of the ruling classes, which alternately struggled for supremacy, considered the occupancy (control) (seizure) and the direction of this immense machinery of government as the main booty of the victor. It centred in the creation of immense standing armies, a host of state vermin, and huge national debts. During the time of the absolute monarchy it was a means of the struggle of modern society against feudalism, crowned by the French Revolution, and under the first Bonaparte it served not only to subjugate the Revolution and annihilate all popular liberties; it was an instrument of the French Revolution to strike abroad, to create for France on the Continent, instead of feudal monarchies, more or less states after the image of France. Under the Restoration and the Monarchy of July it became not only a means of the forcible class domination of the middle class, and a means of adding to the direct economic exploitation a second exploitation of the people by assuring to their families all the rich places of the state household. During the time of the revolutionary struggle of 1848 at last it served as a means of annihilating that Revolution and all aspirations for the emancipation of the popular masses. But the state parasite received only its last development during the Second Empire. The governmental power with its standing army, its all-directing bureaucracy, its stultifying clergy, and its servile tribunal hierarchy had grown so independent of society itself that a grotesquely mediocre adventurer with a hungry band of desperadoes behind him sufficed to wield it. It did not any longer want the pretext of an armed coalition of old Europe against the modern world founded by the Revolution of 1789. It appeared no longer as a means of class domination, subordinate to its parliamentary ministry or legislature. Humbling under its sway even the interests of the ruling classes, whose parliamentary show work it supplanted by self-elected *Corps Législatifs* and self-paid senates, sanctioned in its absolute sway by universal suffrage, the acknowledged necessity for keeping up 'order', that is, the rule of the landowner and the capitalist over the producer, cloaking under the tatters of a masquerade of the past the orgies of the corruption of the present and the victory of the most parasite faction, the financial swindler, the debauchery of all the

reactionary influences of the past let loose—a pandemonium of infamies—the state power had received its last and supreme expression in the Second Empire. Apparently the final victory of this governmental power over society, it was in fact the orgy of all the corrupt elements of that society. To the eye of the uninitiated it appeared only as the victory of the Executive over the Legislative, of the final defeat of the form of class rule pretending to be the autocracy of society [by] its form pretending to be a superior power to society. But in fact it was only the last degraded and the only possible form of that class rule, as humiliating to those classes themselves as to the working classes which they kept fettered by it.

The 4th of September was only the revindication of the Republic against the grotesque adventurer that had assassinated it. The true antithesis to the Empire itself—that is, the state power, the centralized Executive, of which the Second Empire was only the exhausting formula—was the Commune. This state power forms in fact the creation of the middle class, first a means to break down feudalism, then a means to crush the emancipatory aspirations of the producers, of the working class. All reactions and all revolutions had only served to transfer that organized power—that organized force of the slavery of labour—from one hand to the other, from one faction of the ruling classes to the other. It had served the ruling classes as a means of subjugation and of pelf. It had sucked new forces from every new change. It had served as the instrument of breaking down every popular rise and served it to crush the working classes after they had fought and been ordered to secure its transfer from one part of its oppressors to the other. This was, therefore, a Revolution not against this or that Legitimate, Constitutional, Republican, or Imperialist form of state power. It was a Revolution against the State itself, of this supernaturalist abortion of society, a resumption by the people for the people of its own social life. It was not a Revolution to transfer it from one faction of the ruling classes to the other, but a Revolution to break down this horrid machinery of class domination itself. It was not one of those dwarfish struggles between the executive and the parliamentary forms of class domination, but a revolt against both these forms, integrating each other, and of which the parliamentary form was only the deceitful

bywork of the executive. The Second Empire was the final form of this state usurpation. The Commune was its definite negation and, therefore, the initiation of the social Revolution of the nineteenth century. Whatever, therefore, its fate at Paris, it will make *le tour du monde* [world tour]. It was at once acclaimed by the working class of Europe and the United States as the magic word of delivery. The glories and the antediluvian deeds of the Prussian conqueror seemed only hallucinations of a bygone past.

It was only the working class that could formulate by the word 'Commune' and initiate by the fighting Commune of Paris this new aspiration. Even the last expression of that state power in the Second Empire, although humbling for the pride of the ruling classes and casting to the winds their parliamentary pretensions of self-government, had been only the last possible form of their class rule. While politically dispossessing them, it was the orgy under which all the economic and social infamies of their regime got full sway. The middling bourgeoisie and the petty middle class were by their economical conditions of life excluded from initiating a new revolution and induced to follow in the track of the ruling classes or [be] the followers of the working class. The peasants were the passive economical basis of the Second Empire, of that last triumph of a State separate from and independent of society. Only the proletarians, fired by a new social task to accomplish by them for all society, to do away with all classes and class rule, were the men to break the instrument of that class rule—the State, the centralized and organized governmental power usurping to be the master instead of the servant of society. In the active struggle against them by the ruling classes, supported by the passive adherence of the peasantry, the Second Empire—the last crowning and at the same time the most signal prostitution of the State, which had taken the place of the medieval church—had been engendered. It had sprung into life against them. By them it was broken, not as a peculiar form of governmental (centralized) power, but as its most powerful, elaborated into seeming independence from society, expression, and, therefore, also its most prostitute reality, covered with infamy from top to bottom, having centred in absolute corruption at home and absolute powerlessness abroad.

But this one form of class rule had only broken down to make the Executive, the governmental state machinery, the great and single object of attack to the Revolution.

Parliamentarism in France had come to an end. Its last term and fullest sway was the parliamentary Republic from May 1848 to the *coup d'état*. The Empire that killed it, was its own creation. Under the Empire with its *Corps Législatif* and its Senate—and in this form it has been reproduced in the military monarchies of Prussia and Austria—it had been a mere farce, a mere by-work of despotism in its crudest form. Parliamentarism then was dead in France and the workmen's Revolution certainly was not to awaken it from the death.

The Commune—the reabsorption of the state power by society as its own living forces instead of as forces controlling and subduing it, by the popular masses themselves, forming their own force instead of the organized force of their suppression—the political form of their social emancipation, instead of the artificial force appropriated by their oppressors (their own force opposed to and organized against them) of society wielded for their oppression by their enemies. This form was simple like all great things. The reaction of former revolutions—the time wanted for all historical developments, and in the past always lost in all revolutions in the very days of popular triumph, whenever it had rendered its victorious arms to be turned against itself—[the Commune] first displaced the army by the National Guard. 'For the first time since the 4th September the Republic is liberated from the government of its enemies. . . . In the city [is] a national militia that defends the citizens against the power (the government) instead of a permanent army that defends the government against the citizens.' (Proclamation of Central Committee of 22 March.)

(The people had only to organize this militia on a national scale, to have done away with the standing armies; the first economical *conditio sine qua non* [essential condition] for all social improvements, discarding at once this source of taxes and state debt, and this constant danger of government usurpation of class rule—of the regular class rule or an adventurer pretending to save all classes); at the same time the safest guarantee against foreign aggression and making

in fact the costly military apparatus impossible in all other states; the emancipation of the peasant from the blood-tax and [from being] the most fertile source of all state taxation and state debts. Here already [is] the point in which the Commune is a bait for the peasant, the first word of his emancipation. With the 'independent police' abolished, and its ruffians supplanted by servants of the Commune. The general suffrage, till now abused either for the parliamentary sanction of the Holy State Power, or a play in the hands of the ruling classes, only employed by the people to sanction (choose the instruments of) parliamentary class rule once in many years, adapted to its real purposes, to choose by the Communes their own functionaries of administration and initiation. [Gone is] the delusion as if administration and political governing were mysteries, transcendent functions only to be trusted to the hands of a trained caste—state parasites, richly paid sycophants and sinecurists, in the higher posts, absorbing the intelligence of the masses and turning them against themselves in the lower places of the hierarchy. Doing away with the state hierarchy altogether and replacing the haughteous masters of the people by its always removable servants, a mock responsibility by a real responsibility, as they act continuously under public supervision. Paid like skilled workmen, £12 a month, the highest salary not exceeding £240 a year, a salary somewhat more than a fifth, according to a great scientific authority, Professor Huxley, [needed] to satisfy a clerk for the Metropolitan School Board. The whole sham of state mysteries and state pretensions was done away [with] by a Commune, mostly consisting of simple working men, organizing the defence of Paris, carrying on war against the pretorians of Bonaparte, securing the supplies for that immense town, filling all the posts hitherto divided between government, police, and prefecture, doing their work publicly, simply, under the most difficult and complicated circumstances, and doing it, as Milton did his *Paradise Lost*, for a few pounds, acting in bright daylight, with no pretensions to infallibility, not hiding itself behind circumlocution offices, not ashamed to confess blunders by correcting them. Making in one order the public functions—military, administrative, political—real workmen's functions, instead of the hidden attributes of a trained caste; (keeping order

in the turbulence of civil war and revolution) (initiating measures of general regeneration). Whatever the merits of the single measures of the Commune, its greatest measure was its own organization, extemporized with the foreign enemy at one door, and the class enemy at the other, proving by its life its vitality, confirming its theories by its action. Its appearance was a victory over the victors of France. Captive Paris resumed by one bold spring the leadership of Europe, not depending on brute force, but by taking the lead of the social movement, by giving body to the aspirations of the working class of all countries.

With all the great towns organized into Communes after the model of Paris, no government could have repressed the movement by the surprise of sudden reaction. Even by this preparatory step the time of incubation, the guarantee of the movement, won. All France would have been organized into self-working and self-governing communes, the standing army replaced by the popular militias, the army of state parasites removed, the clerical hierarchy displaced by the schoolmasters, the state judge transformed into Communal organs, the suffrage for national representation not a matter of sleight of hand for an all-powerful government, but the deliberate expression of the organized communes, the state functions reduced to a few functions for general national purposes.

Such is the Commune—the political form of the social emancipation, of the liberation of labour from the usurpation (slaveholding) of the monopolists of the means of labour, created by the labourers themselves or forming the gift of nature. As the state machinery and parliamentarism are not the real life of the ruling classes, but only the organized general organs of their dominion, the political guarantees and forms the expressions of the old order of things, so the Commune is not the social movement of the working class and, therefore, of a general regeneration of mankind, but the organized means of action. The Commune does not [do] away with the class struggles, through which the working classes strive for the abolition of all classes, and, therefore, of all [class rule] (because it does not represent a peculiar interest. It represents the liberation of 'labour', that is, the fundamental and natural condition of individual and social life which only by usurpation, fraud, and artificial contrivances can be

shifted from the few upon the many), but it affords the rational medium in which that class struggle can run through its different phases in the most rational and humane way. It could start violent reactions and as violent revolutions. It begins the emancipation of labour—its great goal—by doing away with the unproductive and mischievous work of the state parasites, by cutting away the springs which sacrifice an immense portion of the national produce to the feeding of the state monster, on the one side, by doing, on the other, the real work of administration, local and national, for working men's wages. It begins therefore with an immense saving, with economical reform as well as political transformation.

The Communal organization once firmly established on a national scale, the catastrophes it might still have to undergo would be sporadic slaveholders' insurrections, which, while for a moment interrupting the work of peaceful progress, would only accelerate the movement, by putting the sword into the hand of the Social Revolution.

The working classes know that they have to pass through different phases of class struggle. They know that the superseding of the economical conditions of

the slavery of labour by the conditions of free and associated labour can only be the progressive work of time (that economical transformation), that they require not only a change of distribution, but a new organization of production, or rather the delivery (setting free) of the social forms of production in present organized labour (engendered by present industry) of the trammels of slavery, of their present class character, and their harmonious national and international co-ordination. They know that this work of regeneration will be again and again relented and impeded by the resistance of vested interests and class egotisms. They know that the present 'spontaneous action of the natural laws of capital and landed property' can only be superseded by 'the spontaneous action of the laws of the social economy of free and associated labour' in a long process of development of new conditions, as was the 'spontaneous action of the economic laws of slavery' and the 'spontaneous action of the economical laws of serfdom'. But they know at the same time that great strides may be [made] at once through the Communal form of political organization and that the time has come to begin that movement for themselves and mankind. . . .

SECTION I

1. Implicit in Marx's analysis of alienated labor is a view of the significance of work for a meaningful life. How would you characterize his view?
2. How does capitalism alienate workers from the product of their work?
3. What distinguished Marx and Engels's view of materialism from that of philosophers such as Feuerbach?
4. How would you summarize Marx and Engels's understanding of the production of consciousness?
5. If the bourgeoisie is a revolutionary class, why did Marx and Engels want to see it overthrown?
6. How would you interpret: "All that is solid melts into air"?
7. What was the Paris Commune, and what was its significance according to Marx?

II. ÉMILE DURKHEIM

ÉMILE DURKHEIM

5. ON MECHANICAL AND ORGANIC SOLIDARITY

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) used two metaphors to describe the different bases of solidarity, or social order, in traditional preindustrial and modern industrial societies. He saw traditional society as characterized by mechanical solidarity and modern society as defined in terms of organic solidarity. In this excerpt from his first major book, *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893), Durkheim poses a fundamental question about modern society: How can it facilitate individual autonomy while people are increasingly more dependent on others? As the title of the book might suggest, the answer has to do with the ever more complex and differentiated division of labor in industrial societies.

... This work had its origins in the question of the relations of the individual to social solidarity. Why does the individual, while becoming more autonomous, depend more upon society? How can he be at once more individual and more solidary? Certainly, these two movements, contradictory as they appear, develop in parallel fashion. This is the problem we are raising. It appeared to us that what resolves this apparent antinomy is a transformation of social solidarity due to the steadily growing development of the division of labor. That is how we have been led to make this the object of our study. . . .

INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM

The division of labor is not of recent origin, but it was only at the end of the eighteenth century that social cognizance was taken of the principle, though, until then, unwitting submission had been rendered to it. To be sure, several thinkers from earliest times saw its

importance;¹ but Adam Smith was the first to attempt a theory of it. Moreover, he adopted this phrase that social science later lent to biology.

Nowadays, the phenomenon has developed so generally it is obvious to all. We need have no further illusions about the tendencies of modern industry; it advances steadily towards powerful machines, towards great concentrations of forces and capital, and consequently to the extreme division of labor. Occupations are infinitely separated and specialized, not only inside the factories, but each product is itself a specialty dependent upon others. Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill still hoped that agriculture, at least, would be an exception to the rule, and they saw it as the last resort of small-scale industry. Although one must be careful not to generalize unduly in such matters, nevertheless it is hard to deny today that the principal branches of the agricultural industry are steadily being drawn into the general movement.² Finally, business itself is ingeniously following and reflecting in all its shadings the infinite diversity of industrial enterprises; and, while

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this evolution is realizing itself with unpremeditated spontaneity, the economists, examining its causes and appreciating its results, far from condemning or opposing it, uphold it as necessary. They see in it the supreme law of human societies and the condition of their progress . . .

. . . [T]he relations governed by co-operative law with restitutive sanctions and the solidarity which they express, result from the division of social labor. We have explained, moreover, that, in general, co-operative relations do not convey other sanctions. In fact, it is in the nature of special tasks to escape the action of the collective conscience, for, in order for a thing to be the object of common sentiments, the first condition is that it be common, that is to say, that it be present in all consciences and that all can represent it in one and the same manner. To be sure, in so far as functions have a certain generality, everybody can have some idea of them. But the more specialized they are, the more circumscribed the number of those cognizant of each of them. Consequently, the more marginal they are to the common conscience. The rules which determine them cannot have the superior force, the transcendent authority which, when offended, demands expiation. It is also from opinion that their authority comes, as is the case with penal rules, but from an opinion localized in restricted regions of society.

Moreover, even in the special circles where they apply and where, consequently, they are represented in people, they do not correspond to very active sentiments, nor even very often to any type of emotional state. For, as they fix the manner in which the different functions ought to concur in diverse combinations of circumstances which can arise, the objects to which they relate themselves are not always present to consciences. We do not always have to administer guardianship trusteeship,³ or exercise the rights of creditor or buyer, etc., or even exercise them in such and such a condition. But the states of conscience are strong only in so far as they are permanent. The violation of these rules reaches neither the common soul of society in its living parts, nor even, at least not generally, that of special groups, and, consequently, it can determine only a very moderate reaction. All that is necessary is that the

functions concur in a regular manner. If this regularity is disrupted, it behooves us to re-establish it. Assuredly, that is not to say that the development of the division of labor cannot be affective of penal law. There are, as we already know, administrative and governmental functions in which certain relations are regulated by repressive law, because of the particular character which the organ of common conscience and everything that relates to it has. In still other cases, the links of solidarity which unite certain social functions can be such that from their break quite general repercussions result invoking a penal sanction. But, for the reason we have given, these counter-blows are exceptional.

This law definitely plays a role in society analogous to that played by the nervous system in the organism. The latter has as its task, in effect, the regulation of the different functions of the body in such a way as to make them harmonize. It thus very naturally expresses the state of concentration at which the organism has arrived, in accordance with the division of physiological labor. Thus, on different levels of the animal scale, we can measure the degree of this concentration according to the development of the nervous system. Which is to say that we can equally measure the degree of concentration at which a society has arrived in accordance with the division of social labor according to the development of co-operative law with restitutive sanctions. We can foresee the great services that this criterion will render us . . .

Since negative solidarity does not produce any integration by itself, and since, moreover, there is nothing specific about it, we shall recognize only two kinds of positive solidarity which are distinguishable by the following qualities:

1. The first binds the individual directly to society without any intermediary. In the second, he depends upon society, because he depends upon the parts of which it is composed.
2. Society is not seen in the same aspect in the two cases. In the first, what we call society is a more or less organized totality of beliefs and sentiments common to all the members of the group: this is the collective type. On the other hand, the society in which we are solidary in the second instance is a

system of different, special functions which definite relations unite. These two societies really make up only one. They are two aspects of one and the same reality, but none the less they must be distinguished.

3. From this second difference there arises another which helps us to characterize and name the two kinds of solidarity.

The first can be strong only if the ideas and tendencies common to all the members of the society are greater in number and intensity than those which pertain personally to each member. It is as much stronger as the excess is more considerable. But what makes our personality is how much of our own individual qualities we have, what distinguishes us from others. This solidarity can grow only in inverse ratio to personality. There are in each of us, as we have said, two consciences: one which is common to our group in its entirety, which, consequently, is not *ourselves*, but *society living and acting within us*; the other, on the contrary, represents that in us which is personal and distinct, that which makes us an individual.⁴ Solidarity which comes from likenesses is at its maximum when the collective conscience completely envelops our whole conscience and coincides in all points with it. But, at that moment, our individuality is nil. It can be born only if the community takes smaller toll of us. There are, here, two contrary forces, one centripetal, the other centrifugal, which cannot flourish at the same time. We cannot, at one and the same time, develop ourselves in two opposite senses. If we have a lively desire to think and act for ourselves, we cannot be strongly inclined to think and act as others do. If our ideal is to present a singular and personal appearance, we do not want to resemble everybody else. Moreover, at the moment when this solidarity exercises its force, our personality vanishes, as our definition permits us to say, for we are no longer ourselves, but the collective life.

The social molecules which can be coherent in this way can act together only in the measure that they have no actions of their own, as the molecules of inorganic bodies. That is why we propose to call this type of solidarity mechanical. The term does not signify that it is produced by mechanical and artificial means. We call it that only by analogy to the cohesion which unites the elements of an inanimate body, as opposed to that which makes a unity out of the elements of a living

body. What justifies this term is that the link which thus unites the individual to society is wholly analogous to that which attaches a thing to a person. The individual conscience, considered in this light, is a simple dependent upon the collective type and follows those of its owner. In societies where this type of solidarity is highly developed, the individual does not appear, as we shall see later. Individuality is something which the society possesses. Thus, in these social types, personal rights are not yet distinguished from real rights.

It is quite otherwise with the solidarity which the division of labor produces. Whereas the previous type implies that individuals resemble each other, this type presumes their difference. The first is possible only in so far as the individual personality is absorbed into the collective personality; the second is possible only if each one has a sphere of action which is peculiar to him; that is, a personality. It is necessary, then, that the collective conscience leave open a part of the individual conscience in order that special functions may be established there, functions which it cannot regulate. The more this region is extended, the stronger is the cohesion which results from this solidarity. In effect, on the one hand, each one depends much more strictly on society as labor is more divided; and, on the other, the activity of each is much more personal as it is, more specialized. Doubtless, as circumscribed as it is, it is never completely original. Even in the exercise of our occupation, we conform to usages, to practices which are common to our whole professional brotherhood. But, even in this instance, the yoke that we submit to is much less heavy than when society completely controls us, and it leaves much more place open for the free play of our initiative. Here, then, the individuality of all grows at the same time as that of its parts. Society becomes more capable of collective movement, at the same time that each of its elements has more freedom of movement. This solidarity resembles that which we observe among the higher animals. Each organ, in effect, has its special physiognomy, its autonomy. And, moreover, the unity of the organism is as great as the individuation of the parts is more marked. Because of this analogy, we propose to call the solidarity which is due to the division of labor, organic . . .

Not only, in a general way, does mechanical solidarity link men less strongly than organic solidarity, but also, as we advance in the scale of social evolution, it grows ever slacker.

The force of social links which have this origin vary with respect to the three following conditions:

1. The relation between the volume of the common conscience and that of the individual conscience. The links are as strong as the first more completely envelops the second.
2. The average intensity of the states of the collective conscience. The relation between volumes being equal, it has as much power over the individual as it has vitality. If, on the other hand, it consists of only feeble forces, it can but feebly influence the collective sense. It will the more easily be able to pursue its own course, and solidarity will be less strong.
3. The greater or lesser determination of these same states. That is, the more defined beliefs and practices are, the less place they leave for individual divergencies. They are uniform moulds into which we all, in the same manner, couch our ideas and our actions. The *consensus* is then as perfect as possible; all consciences vibrate in unison. Inversely, the more general and indeterminate the rules of conduct and thought are, the more individual reflection must intervene to apply them to particular cases. But it cannot awaken without upheavals occurring, for, as it varies from one man to another in quality and quantity, everything that it produces has the same character. Centrifugal tendencies thus multiply at the expense of social cohesion and the harmony of its movements.

On the other hand, strong and defined states of the common conscience are the roots of penal law. But we are going to see that the number of these is less today than heretofore, and that it diminishes, progressively, as societies approach our social type. . . .

To prove this, it would avail us nothing to compare the number of rules with repressive sanctions in different social types, for the number of rules does not vary exactly with the sentiments the rules represent. The same sentiment can, in effect, be offended in several different ways, and thus give rise to several

rules without diversifying itself in so doing. Because there are now more ways of acquiring property, there are also more ways of stealing, but the sentiment of respect for the property of another has not multiplied itself proportionally. . . .

This is not to say, however, that the common conscience is threatened with total disappearance. Only, it more and more comes to consist of very general and very indeterminate ways of thinking and feeling, which leave an open place for a growing multitude of individual differences. There is even a place where it is strengthened and made precise: that is the way in which it regards the individual. As all the other beliefs and all the other practices take on a character less and less religious, the individual becomes the object of a sort of religion. We erect a cult in behalf of personal dignity which, as every strong cult, already has its superstitions. It is thus, if one wishes, a common cult, but it is possible only by the ruin of all others, and, consequently, cannot produce the same effects as this multitude of extinguished beliefs. There is no compensation for that. Moreover, if it is common in so far as the community partakes of it, it is individual in its object. If it turns all wills towards the same end, this end is not social. It thus occupies a completely exceptional place in the collective conscience. It is still from society that it takes all its force, but it is not to society that it attaches us; it is to ourselves. Hence, it does not constitute a true social link. That is why we have been justly able to reproach the theorists who have made this sentiment exclusively basic in their moral doctrine, with the ensuing dissolution of society. We can then conclude by saying that all social links which result from likeness progressively slacken.

This law, in itself, is already enough to show the tremendous grandeur of the role of the division of labor. In sum, since mechanical solidarity progressively becomes enfeebled, life properly social must decrease or another solidarity must slowly come in to take the place of that which has gone. The choice must be made. In vain shall we contend that the collective conscience extends and grows stronger at the same time as that of individuals. We have just proved that the two terms vary in a sense inverse to each other. Social progress, however, does not consist in a continual dissolution. On the contrary, the more we advance,

the more profoundly do societies reveal the sentiment of self and of unity. There must, then, be some other social link which produces this result; this cannot be any other than that which comes from the division of labor.

If, moreover, one recalls that even where it is most resistant, mechanical solidarity does not link men with the same force as the division of labor, and that, moreover, it leaves outside its scope the major part of

phenomena actually social, it will become still more evident that social solidarity tends to become exclusively organic. It is the division of labor which, more and more, fills the role that was formerly filled by the common conscience. It is the principal bond of social aggregates of higher types.

This is a function of the division of labor a good deal more important than that ordinarily assigned to it by economists.

NOTES

1. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, E1133a, 16.
2. *Journal des Economistes*, November 1884, p. 211.
3. That is why the law which governs the relations of domestic functions is not penal, although these functions are very general.
4. However, these two consciences are not in regions geographically distinct from us, but penetrate from all sides.

6. WHAT IS A SOCIAL FACT?

Durkheim was intent on staking out a distinctive place for sociology among the human sciences. He took particular pains to indicate the ways in which sociology and psychology differ. In *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895), his famous methodological treatise, he begins making his case by defining what he refers to as “social facts.” These, he proceeds to argue, are the proper subject matter of sociology and are what serve to distinguish it from the other sciences. Central to his understanding of the proper domain of sociological inquiry is his claim that social facts are forces that have an impact on the behavior of individuals. This focus on the constraining character of social facts has led subsequent critics to charge that Durkheim’s overemphasis on social structure resulted in a devaluation of agency. In other words, he failed to appreciate that although people are shaped by their social circumstances, they can affect those circumstances.

Before inquiring into the method suited to the study of social facts, it is important to know which facts are commonly called “social.” This information is all the more necessary since the designation “social” is used with little precision. It is currently employed for practically all phenomena generally diffused, within society, however small their social interest. But on that basis, there are, as it were, no human events that may not be called social. Each individual drinks, sleeps, eats, reasons; and it is to society’s interest that these functions be exercised in an orderly manner. If, then, all these facts are counted as “social” facts, sociology would have no subject matter exclusively its own, and its domain would be confused with that of biology and psychology.

But in reality there is in every society a certain group of phenomena which may be differentiated from those studied by the other natural sciences. When I fulfil my obligations as brother, husband, or citizen, when I execute my contracts, I perform duties which are defined, externally to myself and my acts, in law and in custom. Even if they conform to my own

sentiments and I feel their reality subjectively, such reality is still objective, for I did not create them: I merely inherited them through my education. How many times it happens, moreover, that we are ignorant of the details of the obligations incumbent upon us, and that in order to acquaint ourselves with them we must consult the law and its authorized interpreters! Similarly, the churchmember finds the beliefs and practices of his religious life ready-made at birth; their existence prior to his own implies their existence outside of himself. The system of signs I use to express my thought, the system of currency I employ to pay my debts, the instruments of credit I utilize in my commercial relations, the practices followed in my profession, etc., function independently of my own use of them. And these statements can be repeated for each member of society. Here, then, are ways of acting, thinking, and feeling that present the noteworthy property of existing outside the individual consciousness.

These types of conduct or thought are not only external to the individual but are, moreover, endowed

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with coercive power, by virtue of which they impose themselves upon him, independent of his individual will. Of course, when I fully consent and conform to them, this constraint is felt only slightly, if at all, and is therefore unnecessary. But it is, nonetheless, an intrinsic characteristic of these facts, the proof thereof being that it asserts itself as soon as I attempt to resist it. If I attempt to violate the law, it reacts against me so as to prevent my act before its accomplishment, or to nullify my violation by restoring the damage, if it is accomplished and repairable, or to make me expiate it if it cannot be compensated for otherwise.

In the case of purely moral maxims the public conscience exercises a check on every act which offends it by means of the surveillance it exercises over the conduct of citizens, and the appropriate penalties at its disposal. In many cases the constraint is less violent, but nevertheless it always exists. If I do not submit to the conventions of society, if in my dress I do not conform to the customs observed in my country and in my class, the ridicule I provoke, the social isolation in which I am kept, produce, although in an attenuated form, the same effects as a punishment in the strict sense of the word. The constraint is nonetheless efficacious for being indirect. I am not obliged to speak French with my fellow countrymen nor to use the legal currency, but I cannot possibly do otherwise. If I tried to escape this necessity, my attempt would fail miserably. As an industrialist, I am free to apply the technical methods of former centuries; but by doing so, I should invite certain ruin. Even when I free myself from these rules and violate them successfully, I am always compelled to struggle with them. When finally overcome, they make their constraining power sufficiently felt by the resistance they offer. The enterprises of all innovators, including successful ones, come up against resistance of this kind.

Here, then, is a category of facts with very distinctive characteristics: it consists of ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, external to the individual, and endowed with a power of coercion, by reason of which they control him. These ways of thinking could not be confused with biological phenomena, since they consist of representations and of actions; nor with psychological phenomena, which exist only in the individual consciousness and through it. They constitute, thus, a

new variety of phenomena; and it is to them exclusively that the term "social" ought to be applied. And this term fits them quite well, for it is clear that, since their source is not in the individual, their substratum can be no other than society, either the political society as a whole or some one of the partial groups it includes, such as religious denominations, political, literary, and occupational associations, etc. On the other hand, this term "social" applies to them exclusively, for it has a distinct meaning only if it designates exclusively the phenomena which are not included in any of the categories of facts that have already been established and classified. These ways of thinking and acting therefore constitute the proper domain of sociology. It is true that, when we define them with this word "constraint," we risk shocking the zealous partisans of absolute individualism. For those who profess the complete autonomy of the individual, man's dignity is diminished whenever he is made to feel that he is not completely self-determinant. It is generally accepted today, however, that most of our ideas and our tendencies are not developed by ourselves but come to us from without. How can they become a part of us except by imposing themselves upon us? This is the whole meaning of our definition. And it is generally accepted, moreover, that social constraint is not necessarily incompatible with the individual personality.¹

Since the examples that we have just cited (legal and moral regulations, religious faiths, financial systems, etc.) all consist of established beliefs and practices, one might be led to believe that social facts exist only where there is some social organization. But there are other facts without such crystallized form which have the same objectivity and the same ascendancy over the individual. These are called "social currents." Thus the great movements of enthusiasm, indignation, and pity in a crowd do not originate in any one of the particular individual consciousnesses. They come to each one of us from without and can carry us away in spite of ourselves. Of course, it may happen that, in abandoning myself to them unreservedly, I do not feel the pressure they exert upon me. But it is revealed as soon as I try to resist them. Let an individual attempt to oppose one of these collective manifestations, and the emotions that he denies will turn against him. Now, if this power of external coercion asserts itself so clearly

in cases of resistance, it must exist also in the first-mentioned cases, although we are unconscious of it. We are then victims of the illusion of having ourselves created that which actually forced itself from without. If the complacency with which we permit ourselves to be carried along conceals the pressure undergone, nevertheless it does not abolish it. Thus, air is no less heavy because we do not detect its weight. So, even if we ourselves have spontaneously contributed to the production of the common emotion, the impression we have received differs markedly from that which we would have experienced if we had been alone. Also, once the crowd has dispersed, that is, once these social influences have ceased to act upon us and we are alone again, the emotions which have passed through the mind appear strange to us, and we no longer recognize them as ours. We realize that these feelings have been impressed upon us to a much greater extent than they were created by us. It may even happen that they horrify us, so much were they contrary to our nature. Thus, a group of individuals, most of whom are perfectly inoffensive, may, when gathered in a crowd, be drawn into acts of atrocity. And what we say of these transitory outbursts applies similarly to those more permanent currents of opinion on religious, political, literary, or artistic matters which are constantly being formed around us, whether in society as a whole or in more limited circles.

To confirm this definition of the social fact by a characteristic illustration from common experience, one need only observe the manner in which children are brought up. Considering the facts as they are and as they have always been, it becomes immediately evident that all education is a continuous effort to impose on the child ways of seeing, feeling, and acting which he could not have arrived at spontaneously. From the very first hours of his life, we compel him to eat, drink, and sleep at regular hours; we constrain him to cleanliness, calmness, and obedience; later we exert pressure upon him in order that he may learn proper consideration for others, respect for customs and conventions, the need for work, etc. If, in time, this constraint ceases to be felt, it is because it gradually gives rise to habits and to internal tendencies that render constraint unnecessary; but nevertheless it is not abolished, for it is still the source from which these habits were derived.

It is true that, according to Spencer, a rational education ought to reject such methods, allowing the child to act in complete liberty; but as this pedagogic theory has never been applied by any known people, it must be accepted only as an expression of personal opinion, not as a fact which can contradict the aforementioned observations. What makes these facts particularly instructive is that the aim of education is, precisely, the socialization of the human being; the process of education, therefore, gives us in a nutshell the historical fashion in which the social being is constituted. This unremitting pressure to which the child is subjected is the very pressure of the social milieu which tends to fashion him in its own image, and of which parents and teachers are merely the representatives and intermediaries.

It follows that sociological phenomena cannot be defined by their universality. A thought which we find in every individual consciousness, a movement repeated by all individuals, is not thereby a social fact. If sociologists have been satisfied with defining them by this characteristic, it is because they confused them with what one might call the reincarnation in the individual. It is, however, the collective aspects of the beliefs, tendencies, and practices of a group that characterize truly social phenomena. As for the forms that the collective states assume when refracted in the individual, these are things of another sort. This duality is clearly demonstrated by the fact that these two orders of phenomena are frequently found dissociated from one another. Indeed, certain of these social manners of acting and thinking acquire, by reason of their repetition, a certain rigidity which on its own account crystallizes them, so to speak, and isolates them from the particular events which reflect them. They thus acquire a body, a tangible form, and constitute a reality in their own right, quite distinct from the individual facts which produce it. Collective habits are inherent not only in the successive acts which they determine but, by a privilege of which we find no example in the biological realm, they are given permanent expression in a formula which is repeated from mouth to mouth, transmitted by education, and fixed even in writing. Such is the origin and nature of legal and moral rules, popular aphorisms and proverbs, articles of faith wherein religious or political groups

condense their beliefs, standards of taste established by literary schools, etc. None of these can be found entirely reproduced in the applications made of them by individuals, since they can exist even without being actually applied.

No doubt, this dissociation does not always manifest itself with equal distinctness, but its obvious existence in the important and numerous cases just cited is sufficient to prove that the social fact is a thing distinct from its individual manifestations. Moreover, even when this dissociation is not immediately apparent, it may often be disclosed by certain devices of method. Such dissociation is indispensable if one wishes to separate social facts from their alloys in order to observe them in a state of purity. Currents of opinion, with an intensity varying according to the time and place, impel certain groups either to more marriages, for example, or to more suicides, or to a higher or lower birthrate, etc. These currents are plainly social facts. At first sight they seem inseparable from the forms they take in individual cases. But statistics furnish us with the means of isolating them. They are, in fact, represented with considerable exactness by the rates of births, marriages, and suicides, that is, by the number obtained by dividing the average annual total of marriages, births, suicides, by the number of persons whose ages lie within the range in which marriages, births, and suicides occur.² Since each of these figures contains all the individual cases indiscriminately, the individual circumstances which may have had a share in the production of the phenomenon are neutralized and, consequently, do not contribute to its determination. The average, then, expresses a certain state of the group mind (*l'âme collective*).

Such are social phenomena, when disentangled from all foreign matter. As for their individual manifestations, these are indeed, to a certain extent, social, since they partly reproduce a social model. Each of them also depends, and to a large extent, on the organopsychological constitution of the individual and on the particular circumstances in which he is placed. Thus they are not sociological phenomena in the strict sense of the word. They belong to two realms at once; one could call them sociopsychological. They interest the sociologist without constituting the immediate subject matter of sociology. There exist in the interior

of organisms similar phenomena, compound in their nature, which form in their turn the subject matter of the "hybrid sciences," such as physiological chemistry, for example.

The objection may be raised that a phenomenon is collective only if it is common to all members of society, or at least to most of them—in other words, if it is truly general. This may be true; but it is general because it is collective (that is, more or less obligatory), and certainly not collective because general. It is a group condition repeated in the individual because imposed on him. It is to be found in each part because it exists in the whole, rather than in the whole because it exists in the parts. This becomes conspicuously evident in those beliefs and practices which are transmitted to us ready-made by previous generations; we receive and adopt them because, being both collective and ancient, they are invested with a particular authority that education has taught us to recognize and respect. It is, of course, true that a vast portion of our social culture is transmitted to us in this way; but even when the social fact is due in part to our direct collaboration, its nature is not different. A collective emotion which bursts forth suddenly and violently in a crowd does not express merely what all the individual sentiments had in common; it is something entirely different, as we have shown. It results from their being together, a product of the actions and reactions which take place between individual consciousnesses; and if each individual consciousness echoes the collective sentiment, it is by virtue of the special energy resident in its collective origin. If all hearts beat in unison, this is not the result of a spontaneous and pre-established harmony but rather because an identical force propels them in the same direction. Each is carried along by all.

We thus arrive at the point where we can formulate and delimit in a precise way the domain of sociology. It comprises only a limited group of phenomena. A social fact is to be recognized by the power of external coercion which it exercises or is capable of exercising over individuals, and the presence of this power may be recognized in its turn either by the existence of some specific sanction or by the resistance offered against every individual effort that tends to violate it. One can, however,

define it also by its diffusion within the group, provided that, in conformity with our previous remarks, one takes care to add as a second and essential characteristic that its own existence is independent of the individual forms it assumes in its diffusion. This last criterion is perhaps, in certain cases, easier to apply than the preceding one. In fact, the constraint is easy to ascertain when it expresses itself externally by some direct reaction of society, as is the case in law, morals, beliefs, customs, and even fashions. But when it is only indirect, like the constraint which an economic organization exercises, it cannot always be so easily detected. Generality combined with externality may, then, be easier to establish. Moreover, this second definition is but another form of the first; for if a mode of behavior whose existence is external to individual consciousnesses becomes general, this can only be brought about by its being imposed upon them.³

But these several phenomena present the same characteristic by which we defined the others. These "ways of existing" are imposed on the individual precisely in the same fashion as the "ways of existing" of which we have spoken. Indeed, when we wish to know how a society is divided politically, of what these divisions themselves are composed, and how complete is the fusion existing between them, we shall not achieve our purpose by physical inspection and by geographical observations; for these phenomena are social, even when they have some basis in physical nature. It is only by a study of public law that a comprehension of this organization is possible, for it is this law that determines the organization, as it equally determines our domestic and civil relations. This political organization is, then, no less obligatory than the social facts mentioned above. If the population crowds into our cities instead of scattering into the country, this is due to a trend of public opinion, a collective drive that imposes this concentration upon the individuals. We can no more choose the style of our houses than of our clothing—at least, both are equally obligatory. The channels of communication prescribe the direction of internal migrations and commerce, etc., and even their extent. Consequently, at the very most, it should be necessary to add to the

list of phenomena which we have enumerated as presenting the distinctive criterion of a social fact only one additional category, "ways of existing"; and, as this enumeration was not meant to be rigorously exhaustive, the addition would not be absolutely necessary.

Such an addition is perhaps not necessary, for these "ways of existing" are only crystallized "ways of acting." The political structure of a society is merely the way in which its component segments have become accustomed to live with one another. If their relations are traditionally intimate, the segments tend to fuse with one another, or, in the contrary case, to retain their identity. The type of habitation imposed upon us is merely the way in which our contemporaries and our ancestors have been accustomed to construct their houses. The methods of communication are merely the channels which the regular currents of commerce and migrations have dug, by flowing in the same direction. To be sure, if the phenomena of a structural character alone presented this permanence, one might believe that they constituted a distinct species. A legal regulation is an arrangement no less permanent than a type of architecture, and yet the regulation is a "physiological" fact. A simple moral maxim is assuredly somewhat more malleable, but it is much more rigid than a simple professional custom or a fashion. There is thus a whole series of degrees without a break in continuity between the facts of the most articulated structure and those free currents of social life which are not yet definitely molded. The differences between them are, therefore, only differences in the degree of consolidation they present. Both are simply life, more or less crystallized. No doubt, it may be of some advantage to reserve the term "morphological" for those social facts which concern the social substratum, but only on condition of not overlooking the fact that they are of the same nature as the others. Our definition will then include the whole relevant range of facts if we say: *A social fact is every way of acting, fixed or not, capable of exercising on the individual an external constraint; or again, every way of acting which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations.*⁴

NOTES

1. We do not intend to imply, however, that all constraint is normal. We shall return to this point later.
2. Suicides do not occur at every age, and they take place with varying intensity at the different ages in which they occur.
3. It will be seen how this definition of the social fact diverges from that which forms the basis of the ingenious system of M. Tarde. First of all, we wish to state that our researches have nowhere led us to observe that preponderant influence in the genesis of collective facts which M. Tarde attributes to imitation. Moreover, from the preceding definition, which is not a theory but simply a résumé of the immediate data of observation, it seems indeed to follow, not only that imitation does not always express the essential and characteristic features of the social fact, but even that it never expresses them. No doubt, every social fact is imitated; it has, as we have just shown, a tendency to become general, but that is because it is social, i.e., obligatory. Its power of expansion is not the cause but the consequence of its sociological character. If, further, only social facts produced this consequence, imitation could perhaps serve, if not to explain them, at least to define them. But an individual condition which produces a whole series of effects remains individual nevertheless. Moreover, one may ask whether the word "imitation" is indeed fitted to designate an effect due to a coercive influence. Thus, by this single expression, very different phenomena, which ought to be distinguished, are confused.
4. This close connection between life and structure, organ and function, may be easily proved in sociology because between these two extreme terms there exists a whole series of immediately observable intermediate stages which show the bond between them. Biology is not in the same favorable position. But we may well believe that the inductions on this subject made by sociology are applicable to biology and that, in organisms as well as in societies, only differences in degree exist between these two orders of facts.

7. ANOMIC SUICIDE

Durkheim has been depicted as a physician of society because of his interest in diagnosing the problems of contemporary society and offering prescriptions to remedy social ills. This approach is nowhere more evident than in his landmark empirical study of self-destruction, *Suicide* (1897). One reason for undertaking this particular study was Durkheim's desire to meet psychology on what might seem to be its own turf, by examining a phenomenon that lends itself to psychological interpretations. As such, the book is a polemic in which he argues that sociology can offer unique insights beyond the access of psychological concepts. In this excerpt, Durkheim discusses what he means by anomic suicide, one of four types of suicide he identifies. He contends that anomie, which is often translated as "rulelessness" or "normlessness," is a characteristic social pathology of modern society.

If anomy never appeared except. . . in intermittent . . . spurts and acute crisis, it might cause the social suicide rate to vary from time to time, but it would not be a regular, constant factor. In one sphere of social life, however—the sphere of trade and industry—it is actually in a chronic state.

For a whole century, economic progress has mainly consisted in freeing industrial relations from all regulation. Until very recently, it was the function of a whole system of moral forces to exert this discipline. First, the influence of religion was felt alike by workers and masters, the poor and the rich. It consoled the former and taught them contentment with their lot by informing them of the providential nature of the social order, that the share of each class was assigned by God himself, and by holding out the hope for just compensation in a world to come in return for the inequalities of this world. It governed the latter, recalling that worldly interests are not man's entire lot, that they must be subordinate to other and higher interests, and that they should, therefore, not be pursued without rule or measure. Temporal power, in turn, restrained the scope of economic

functions by its supremacy over them and by the relatively subordinate role it assigned them. Finally, within the business world proper, the occupational groups, by regulating salaries, the price of products and production itself, indirectly fixed the average level of income on which needs are partially based by the very force of circumstances. However, we do not mean to propose this organization as a model. Clearly it would be inadequate to existing societies without great changes. What we stress is its existence, the fact of its useful influence, and that nothing today has come to take its place.

Actually, religion has lost most of its power. And government, instead of regulating economic life, has become its tool and servant. The most opposite schools, orthodox economists and extreme socialists, unite to reduce government to the role of a more or less passive intermediary among the various social functions. The former wish to make it simply the guardian of individual contracts; the latter leave it the task of doing the collective bookkeeping, that is, of recording the demands of consumers, transmitting them to producers, inventorying the total revenue and distributing

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it according to a fixed formula. But both refuse it any power to subordinate other social organs to itself and to make them converge toward one dominant aim. On both sides nations are declared to have the single or chief purpose of achieving industrial prosperity; such is the implication of the dogma of economic materialism, the basis of both apparently opposed systems. And as these theories merely express the state of opinion, industry, instead of being still regarded as a means to an end transcending itself, has become the supreme end of individuals and societies alike. Thereupon the appetites thus excited have become freed of any limiting authority. By sanctifying them, so to speak, this apotheosis of well-being has placed them above all human law. Their restraint seems like a sort of sacrilege. For this reason, even, the purely utilitarian regulation of them exercised by the industrial world itself through the medium of occupational groups has been unable to persist. Ultimately, this liberation of desires has been made worse by the very development of industry and the almost infinite extension of the market. So long as the producer could gain his profits only in his immediate neighborhood, the restricted amount of possible gain could not much overexcite ambition. Now that he may assume to have almost the entire world as his customer, how could passions accept their former confinement in the face of such limitless prospects?

Such is the source of the excitement predominating in this part of society, and which has thence extended to the other parts. There, the state of crisis and anomy is constant and, so to speak, normal. From top to bottom of the ladder, greed is aroused without knowing where to find ultimate foothold. Nothing can calm it, since its goal is far beyond all it can attain. Reality seems valueless by comparison with the dreams of fevered imaginations; reality is therefore abandoned, but so too is possibility abandoned when it in turn becomes reality. A thirst arises for novelties, unfamiliar pleasures, nameless sensations, all of which lose their savor once known. Henceforth one has no strength to endure the least reverse. The whole fever subsides and the sterility of all the tumult is apparent, and it is seen that all these new sensations in their infinite quantity cannot form a solid foundation of happiness to support one during days of trial. The wise man, knowing how to enjoy achieved results without having constantly to

replace them with others, finds in them an attachment to life in the hour of difficulty. But the man who has always pinned all his hopes on the future and lived with his eyes fixed upon it, has nothing in the past as a comfort against the present's afflictions, for the past was nothing to him but a series of hastily experienced stages. What blinded him to himself was his expectation always to find further on the happiness he had so far missed. Now he is stopped in his tracks; from now on nothing remains behind or ahead of him to fix his gaze upon. Weariness alone, moreover, is enough to bring disillusionment, for he cannot in the end escape the futility of an endless pursuit.

We may even wonder if this moral state is not principally what makes economic catastrophes of our day so fertile in suicides. In societies where a man is subjected to a healthy discipline, he submits more readily to the blows of chance. The necessary effort for sustaining a little more discomfort costs him relatively little, since he is used to discomfort and constraint. But when every constraint is hateful in itself, how can closer constraint not seem intolerable? There is no tendency to resignation in the feverish impatience of men's lives. When there is no other aim but to outstrip constantly the point arrived at, how painful to be thrown back! Now this very lack of organization characterizing our economic condition throws doors wide to every sort of adventure. Since imagination is hungry for novelty, and ungoverned, it gropes at random. Setbacks necessarily increase with risks and thus crises multiply, just when they are becoming more destructive. Yet these dispositions are so inbred that society has grown to accept them and is accustomed to think them normal. It is everlastingly repeated that it is man's nature to be eternally dissatisfied, constantly to advance, without relief or rest, toward an indefinite goal. The longing for infinity is daily represented as a mark of moral distinction, whereas it can only appear within unregulated consciences which elevate to a rule the lack of rule from which they suffer. The doctrine of the most ruthless and swift progress has become an article of faith. But other theories appear parallel with those praising the advantages of instability, which, generalizing the situation that gives them birth, declare life evil, claim that it is richer in grief than in pleasure and that it attracts men only by false claims. Since this disorder is greatest in the economic world, it has most victims there.

TABLE 7.1 SUICIDES PER MILLION PERSONS OF DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONS

	Trade	Transportation	Industry	Agriculture	Liberal* Professions
France (1878–87) [†]	440	—	340	240	300
Switzerland (1876)	664	1,514	577	304	558
Italy (1866–76)	277	152.6	80.4	26.7	618 [‡]
Prussia (1883–90)	754	—	456	315	832
Bavaria (1884–91)	465	—	369	153	454
Belgium (1886–90)	421	—	160	160	100
Wurttemberg (1873–78)	273	—	190	206	—
Saxony (1878)		341.59 [§]		71.17	—

* When statistics distinguish several different sorts of liberal occupations, we show as a specimen the one in which the suicide-rate is highest.

[†] From 1826 to 1880 economic functions seem less affected (see *Compte-rendu* of 1880); but were occupational statistics very accurate?

[‡] This figure is reached only by men of letters.

[§] Figure represents Trade, Transportation and Industry combined for Saxony.—Ed.

Industrial and commercial functions are really among the occupations which furnish the greatest number of suicides (see Table 7.1). Almost on a level with the liberal professions, they sometimes surpass them; they are especially more afflicted than agriculture, where the old regulative forces still make their appearance felt most and where the fever of business has least penetrated. Here is best recalled what was once the general constitution of the economic order. And the divergence would be yet greater if, among the suicides of industry, employers were distinguished from workmen, for the former are probably most stricken by the state of anomy. The enormous rate of those with independent means (720 per million) sufficiently shows that the possessors of most comfort suffer most. Everything that enforces subordination attenuates the effects of this state. At least the horizon of the lower classes is limited by those above them, and for this same reason their desires are more modest. Those who have only empty space above them are almost inevitably lost in it, if no force restrains them.

Anomy, therefore, is a regular and specific factor in suicide in our modern societies; one of the springs from which the annual contingent feeds. So we have here a new type to distinguish from the others. It differs from them in its dependence, not on the way in which individuals are attached to society, but on how it regulates them. Egoistic suicide results from man's no longer finding a basis for existence in life; altruistic suicide, because this basis for existence

appears to man situated beyond life itself. The third sort of suicide, the existence of which has just been shown, results from man's activity's lacking regulation and his consequent sufferings. By virtue of its origin we shall assign this last variety the name of *anomic suicide*.

Certainly, this and egoistic suicide have kindred ties. Both spring from society's insufficient presence in individuals. But the sphere of its absence is not the same in both cases. In egoistic suicide it is deficient in truly collective activity, thus depriving the latter of object and meaning. In anomic suicide, society's influence is lacking in the basically individual passions, thus leaving them without a check-rein. In spite of their relationship, therefore, the two types are independent of each other. We may offer society everything social in us, and still be unable to control our desires; one may live in an anomic state without being egoistic, and vice versa. These two sorts of suicide therefore do not draw their chief recruits from the same social environments; one has its principal field among intellectual careers, the world of thought—the other, the industrial or commercial world.

But economic anomy is not the only anomy which may give rise to suicide. The suicides occurring at the crisis of widowhood . . . are really due to domestic anomy resulting from the death of husband or wife. A family catastrophe occurs which affects the survivor. He is not adapted to the new situation in which he finds himself and accordingly offers less resistance to suicide.

But another variety of anomic suicide should draw greater attention, both because it is more chronic and because it will serve to illustrate the nature and functions of marriage.

In the *Annales de demographie internationale* (September 1882), Bertillon published a remarkable study of divorce, in which he proved the following proposition: throughout Europe the number of suicides varies with that of divorces and separations. If the different countries are compared from this two-fold point of view, this parallelism is apparent (see Table 7.2). Not only is the relation between the averages evident, but the single irregular detail of any importance is that of Holland, where suicides are not as frequent as divorces.

The law may be yet more vigorously verified if we compare not different countries but different provinces of a single country. Notably, in Switzerland the agreement between phenomena is striking (see

Table 7.3). The Protestant cantons have the most divorces and also the most suicides. The mixed cantons follow, from both points of view, and only then come the Catholic cantons. Within each group the same agreements appear. Among the Catholic cantons Solothurn and Inner Appenzell are marked by the high number of their divorces; they are likewise marked by the number of their suicides. Freiburg, although Catholic and French, has a considerable number of both divorces and suicides. Among the Protestant German cantons none has so many divorces as Schaffhausen; Schaffhausen also leads the list for suicides. Finally, the mixed cantons, with the one exception of Argau, are classed in exactly the same way in both respects.

The same comparison, if made between French departments, gives the same result. Having classified them in eight categories according to the importance of their suicidal mortality, we discovered that the groups

TABLE 7.2 COMPARISON OF EUROPEAN STATES FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF BOTH DIVORCE AND SUICIDE

	Annual Divorces per 1,000 Marriages	Suicides per Million Inhabitants
<i>I. Countries Where Divorce and Separation Are Rare</i>		
Norway	0.54 (1875-80)	73
Russia	1.6 (1871-77)	30
England and Wales	1.3 (1871-79)	68
Scotland	2.1 (1871-81)	—
Italy	3.05 (1871-73)	31
Finland	3.9 (1875-79)	30.8
Averages	2.07	46.5
<i>II. Countries Where Divorce and Separation Are of Average Frequency</i>		
Bavaria	5.0 (1881)	90.5
Belgium	5.1 (1871-80)	68.5
Holland	6.0 (1871-80)	35.5
Sweden	6.4 (1871-80)	81
Baden	6.5 (1874-79)	156.6
France	7.5 (1871-79)	150
Wurttemberg	8.4 (1871-78)	162.4
Prussia	—	133
Averages	6.4	109.6
<i>III. Countries Where Divorce and Separation Are Frequent</i>		
Kingdom of Saxony	26.9 (1876-80)	299
Denmark	38.0 (1871-80)	258
Switzerland	47.0 (1876-80)	216
Averages	37.3	257

TABLE 7.3 COMPARISON OF SWISS CANTONS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF DIVORCE AND SUICIDE

	Divorces and Separations per 1,000 Marriages	Suicides per Million		Divorces and Separations per 1,000 Marriages	Suicides per Million
<i>I. Catholic Cantons</i>					
<i>French and Italian</i>					
Tessina	7.6	57	Freiburg	15.9	119
Valais	<u>4.0</u>	<u>47</u>			
Averages	5.8	50	Averages	15.9	119
<i>German</i>					
Uri	—	60	Solothurn	37.7	205
Upper Unterwalden	4.9	20	Inner Appenzell	18.9	158
Lower Unterwalden	5.2	1	Zug	14.8	87
Schwyz	<u>5.6</u>	<u>70</u>	Luzern	<u>13.0</u>	<u>100</u>
Averages	3.9	37.7	Averages	21.1	137.5
<i>II. Protestant Cantons</i>					
<i>French</i>					
Neuchâtel	42.4	560	Vaud	43.5	352
<i>German</i>					
Bern	47.2	229	Schaffhausen	106.0	602
Basel (city)	34.5	323	Outer Appenzell	100.7	213 127
Basel (country)	33.0	288	Glaris	83.1	
			Zurich	<u>80.0</u>	<u>288</u>
Averages	38.2	280	Averages	92.4	307
<i>III. Cantons Mixed as to Religion</i>					
Argau	40.0	195	Geneva	70.5	360
Grisons	<u>30.9</u>	<u>116</u>	Saint Goll	<u>57.6</u>	<u>179</u>
Averages	36.9	155	Averages	64.0	269

thus formed were arranged in the same order as with reference to divorces and separations (see Table 7.4): Having shown this relation, let us try to explain it.

We shall mention only as a note the explanation Bertillon summarily suggested. According to that author, the number of suicides and that of divorces vary in parallel manner because both depend on the same factor: the greater or less frequency of people with unstable equilibrium. There are actually, he says, more divorces in a country the more incompatible married couples it contains. The latter are recruited especially from among people of irregular lives, persons of poor

TABLE 7.4

	Suicides per Million	Average of Divorces and Separations per 1,000 Marriages
1st group (5 departments)	Below 50	2.6
2nd group (18 departments)	From 51 to 75	2.9
3rd group (15 departments)	76 to 100	5.0
4th group (19 departments)	101 to 150	5.4
5th group (10 departments)	151 to 200	7.5
6th group (9 departments)	201 to 250	8.2
7th group (4 departments)	251 to 300	10.0
8th group (5 departments)	Above 300	12.4

character and intelligence, whom this temperament predisposes to suicide. The parallelism would then be due, not to the influence of divorce itself upon suicide, but to the fact that these two phenomena derive from a similar cause which they express differently. But this association of divorce with certain psychopathic flaws is made arbitrarily and without proof. There is no reason to think that there are 15 times as many unbalanced people in Switzerland as in Italy and from 6 to 7 times as many as in France, and yet in the first of these countries divorces are 15 times as frequent as in the second and about 7 times as frequent as in the third. Moreover, so far as suicide is concerned, we know how far purely individual conditions are from accounting for it. Furthermore, all that follows will show the inadequacy of this theory.

One must seek the cause of this remarkable relation not in the organic predispositions of people but in the intrinsic nature of divorce. As our first proposition here we may assert: in all countries for which we have the necessary data, suicides of divorced people are immensely more numerous than those of other portions of the population.

Thus, divorced persons of both sexes kill themselves between three and four times as often as married persons, although younger (40 years in France as against 46 years), and considerably more often than widowed persons in spite of the aggravation resulting for the latter from their advanced age. What is the explanation?

There is no doubt that the change of moral and material regimen which is a consequence of divorce is of some account in this result. But it does not sufficiently explain the matter. Widowhood is indeed as complete a disturbance of existence as divorce; it usually even has much more unhappy results, since it was not desired by husband and wife, while divorce is usually a deliverance for both. Yet divorced persons who, considering their age, should commit suicide only one half as often as widowed persons, do so more often everywhere, even twice as often in certain countries. This aggravation, to be represented by a coefficient between 2.5 and 4, does not depend on their changed condition in any way.

Let us refer to one of the propositions established above to discover the causes of this fact. . . . [I]n a given society the tendency of widowed persons to suicide was a function of the corresponding tendency of married persons. While the latter are highly protected, the former enjoy an immunity less, to be sure, but still considerable, and the sex best protected by marriage is also that best protected in the state of widowhood. Briefly, when conjugal society is dissolved by the death of one of the couple, the effects which it had with reference to suicide continue to be felt in part by the survivor. . . . Then, however, is it not to be supposed that the same thing takes place when the marriage is interrupted, not by death, but by a judicial act, and that the aggravation which afflicts divorced persons is

TABLE 7.5 SUICIDES IN A MILLION

	Unmarried		Married		Widowed		Divorced	
	Above 15 Years		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
	Men	Women						
Prussia (1887-1889)*	360	120	430	90	1,471	215	1,875	290
Prussia (1883-1890)*	388	129	498	100	1,552	194	1,952	328
Baden (1885-1893)	45	93	460	85	1,172	171	1,328	—
Saxony (1847-1858)	—	—	481	120	1,242	240	3,102	312
Saxony (1876)	555.18†		821	146	—	—	3,252	389
Wurttemberg (1846-1860)	—	—	226	52	530	97	1,298	281
Wurttemberg (1873-1892)	251	—	218†		405†		796†	

* There appears to be some error in the figures for Prussia here.—Ed

† Men and women combined.—Ed.

a result not of the divorce but of the marriage ended by divorce? It must be connected with some quality of the matrimonial society, the influence of which the couple continue to experience even when separated. If they have so strong an inclination to suicide, it is because they were already strongly inclined to it while living together and by the very effect of their common life.

Admitting so much, the correspondence between divorces and suicides becomes explicable. Actually, among the people where divorce is common, this peculiar effect of marriage in which divorce shares must necessarily be very wide-spread; for it is not confined to households predestined to legal separation. If it

reaches its maximum intensity among them, it must also be found among the others, or the majority of the others, though to a lesser degree. For just as where there are many suicides, there are many attempted suicides, and just as mortality cannot grow without morbidity increasing simultaneously, so wherever there are many actual divorces there must be many households more or less close to divorce. The number of actual divorces cannot rise, accordingly, without the family condition predisposing to suicide also developing and becoming general in the same degree, and thus the two phenomena naturally vary in the same general direction.

8. INDIVIDUALISM AND THE INTELLECTUALS

From the beginning of his career to the end, Durkheim was concerned with the development and implications of individualism in modern societies, which he saw as the product of society, and he took to be a fundamental given. His 1898 essay "Individualism and the Intellectuals" was written in the midst of the Dreyfus Affair, which resulted after it was revealed that the Jewish military officer Alfred Dreyfus had been convicted erroneously for spying for Germany. When the military's efforts to conceal the exonerating evidence became public, Dreyfus became a *cause célèbre*, revealing a public polarized between pro-Dreyfus liberal secularists and socialists against reactionary Catholics, monarchists, and anti-Semitic right-wing nationalists. Durkheim's manifesto was not simply written on behalf of the embattled Dreyfus, but it was also a defense of liberalism and of the form of modern individualism in which the individual is invested with sacred meaning, leading to what he called the "cult of the individual."

'INDIVIDUALISM AND THE INTELLECTUALS'¹

The question which, for six months now, has so grievously divided the country is in the process of transformation; having begun as a simple question of fact, it has become more and more general in scope. The recent intervention of a well-known *littérateur*² as contributed greatly to this development. It seems to have been felt that the time had come to renew with a great fanfare a controversy that was dying out through repetition. That is why, instead of returning yet again to a discussion of the facts, that writer wanted, in one leap, to rise immediately to the level of principles: the state of mind of the 'intellectuals',³ the fundamental ideas to which they adhere, and no longer the detail of their arguments, is what has been attacked. If they obstinately refuse 'to bend their logic at the word of an army general', this is, evidently, because they have arrogated to themselves the right to judge the matter; they are putting their own reason above authority, and the rights of the individual appear to them to be

imprescriptible. It is, therefore, their individualism which has brought about their schism. But in that case, it has been said, if one wants to restore peace to men's minds and prevent the return of similar discords, it is this individualism which must be directly confronted. This inexhaustible source of domestic divisions must be silenced once and for all. And a veritable crusade has begun against this public scourge, 'this great sickness of the present time'.

We fully agree to conducting the debate in these terms. We too believe that the controversies of yesterday were only superficial expressions of a deeper disagreement; and that men's minds have been divided much more over a question of principle than over a question of fact. Let us therefore leave on one side the minutely detailed arguments which have been exchanged from side to side; let us forget the Affair itself and the melancholy scenes we have witnessed. The problem confronting us goes infinitely beyond the current events and must be disengaged from them.

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I

There is a preliminary ambiguity which must be cleared up first of all.

In order to facilitate the condemnation of individualism, it has been confused with the narrow utilitarianism and utilitarian egoism of Spencer and the economists. This is to take the easy way out. It is not hard, in effect, to denounce as an ideal without grandeur that narrow commercialism which reduces society to nothing more than a vast apparatus of production and exchange, and it is only too clear that all social life would be impossible if there did not exist interests superior to the interests of individuals. Nothing is more just than that such doctrines should be treated as anarchical, and with this attitude we are in full agreement. But what is inadmissible is that this individualism should be presented as the only one that there is or even that there could be. Quite the contrary; it is becoming more and more rare and exceptional. The practical philosophy of Spencer is of such moral poverty that it now has scarcely any supporters. As for the economists, even if they once allowed themselves to be seduced by the simplicity of this theory, they have for a long time now felt the need to temper the rigour of their primitive orthodoxy and to open their minds to more generous sentiments. M. de Molinari is almost alone, in France, in remaining intractable and I am not aware that he has exercised a great influence on the ideas of our time. In truth, if individualism had no other representatives, it would be quite pointless to move heaven and earth in this way to combat an enemy that is in the process of quietly dying a natural death.

However, there exists another individualism over which it is less easy to triumph. It has been upheld for a century by the great majority of thinkers: it is the individualism of Kant and Rousseau, that of the *spiritualistes*, that which the Declaration of the Rights of Man sought, more or less successfully, to translate into formulae, that which is currently taught in our schools and which has become the basis of our moral catechism. It is true that it has been thought possible to attack this individualism under cover of the first type, but that differs from it fundamentally and the criticisms which apply to the one could not be appropriate to the other. So far is it from making personal interest

the object of human conduct, that it sees in all personal motives the very source of evil. According to Kant, I am only certain of acting well if the motives that influence me relate, not to the particular circumstances in which I am placed, but to my quality as a man *in abstracto*. Conversely, my action is wicked when it cannot be justified logically except by reference to the situation I happen to be in and my social condition, my class or caste interests, my passions, etc. That is why immoral conduct is to be recognised by the sign that it is closely linked to the individuality of the agent and cannot be universalized without manifest absurdity. Similarly, if, according to Rousseau, the general will, which is the basis of the social contract, is infallible, if it is the authentic expression of perfect justice, this is because it is a resultant of all the particular wills; consequently it constitutes a kind of impersonal average from which all individual considerations have been eliminated, since, being divergent and even antagonistic to one another, they are neutralised and cancel each other out.⁴ Thus, for both these thinkers, the only ways of acting that are moral are those which are fitting for all men equally, that is to say, which are implied in the notion of man in general.

This is far indeed from that apotheosis of comfort and private interest, that egoistic cult of the self for which utilitarian individualism has justly been reproached. Quite the contrary: according to these moralists, duty consists in averting our attention from what concerns us personally, from all that relates to our empirical individuality, so as uniquely to seek that which our human condition demands, that which we hold in common with all our fellow men. This ideal goes so far beyond the limit of utilitarian ends that it appears to those who aspire to it as marked with a religious character. The human person, whose definition serves as the touchstone according to which good must be distinguished from evil, is considered as sacred, in what one might call the ritual sense of the word. It has something of that transcendental majesty which the churches of all times have given to their Gods. It is conceived as being invested with that mysterious property which creates an empty space around holy objects, which keeps them away from profane contacts and which draws them away from ordinary life. And it is exactly this feature which induces the respect of which it is the object. Whoever makes an attempt on a man's

life, on a man's liberty, on a man's honour inspires us with a feeling of horror, in every way analogous to that which the believer experiences when he sees his idol profaned. Such a morality is therefore not simply a hygienic discipline or a wise principle of economy. It is a religion of which man is, at the same time, both believer and God.

But this religion is individualistic, since it has man as its object, and since man is, by definition, an individual. Indeed there is no system whose individualism is more uncompromising. Nowhere are the rights of man affirmed more energetically, since the individual is here placed on the level of sacrosanct objects; nowhere is he more jealously protected from external encroachments, whatever their source. The doctrine of utility can easily accept all kinds of compromises, without denying its fundamental axiom; it can allow that individual liberties should be suspended whenever the interest of the greatest number demands this sacrifice. But there is no possible compromise with a principle which is thus put above and beyond all temporal interests. There is no reason of State which can excuse an outrage against the person when the rights of the person are placed above the State. If, therefore, individualism by itself is a ferment of moral dissolution, one can expect to see its anti-social essence as lying here.

One can now see how grave this question is. For the liberalism of the eighteenth century which is, after all, what is basically at issue, is not simply an armchair theory, a philosophical construction. It has entered into the facts, it has penetrated our institutions and our customs, it has become part of our whole life, and, if we really must rid ourselves of it, it is our entire moral organization that must be rebuilt at the same time.

II

Now, it is a remarkable fact that all these theorists of individualism are no less sensitive to the rights of the collectivity than they are to those of the individual. No one has insisted more emphatically than Kant on the supra-individual character of morality and law. He sees them rather as a set of imperatives that men must obey because they are obligatory, without having to discuss them; and if he has sometimes been reproached for having carried the autonomy of reason to excess, it

could equally be said, with some truth, that he based his ethics on an act of unreasoning faith and submission. Besides, doctrines are judged above all by their products, that is to say by the spirit of the doctrines that they engender. Now Kantianism led to the ethics of Fichte, which was already thoroughly imbued with socialism, and to the philosophy of Hegel whose disciple was Marx. As for Rousseau, one knows how his individualism is complemented by an authoritarian conception of society. Following him, the men of the Revolution, in promulgating the famous Declaration of Rights, made France one, indivisible, centralized, and perhaps one should even see the revolutionary achievement as being above all a great movement of national concentration. Finally, the chief reason for which the *spiritualistes* have always fought against utilitarian morality is that it seemed to them to be incompatible with social necessities.

Perhaps it will be said that this eclecticism is self-contradictory? Certainly, we do not propose to defend the way in which these different thinkers have set about combining these two aspects in the construction of their systems. If, with Rousseau, one begins by seeing the individual as a sort of absolute who can and must be sufficient unto himself, it is obviously difficult then to explain how civil society could be established. But here it is a question of ascertaining, not whether such and such a moralist has succeeded in showing how these two tendencies may be reconciled, but rather whether they are in principle reconcilable or not. The reasons that have been given for establishing their complementarity may be worthless, and yet that complementarity may be real. The very fact that they are generally to be found together in the same thinkers offers at least a presumption that they are contemporaneous with one another; whence it follows that they must depend on a single social condition of which they are probably only different aspects.

And, in effect, once one has ceased to confuse individualism with its opposite, that is to say, with utilitarianism, all these apparent contradictions vanish as if by magic. This religion of humanity has all that is required to speak to its believers in a tone that is no less imperative than the religions it replaces. Far from confining itself to indulging our instincts, it offers us an ideal which infinitely surpasses nature; for we do not

naturally have that wise and pure reason which, dissociated from all personal motives, would make laws in the abstract concerning its own conduct. Doubtless, if the dignity of the individual derived from his individual qualities, from those particular characteristics which distinguish him from others, one might fear that he would become enclosed in a sort of moral egoism that would render all social cohesion impossible. But in reality he receives this dignity from a higher source, one which he shares with all men. If he has the right to this religious respect, it is because he has in him something of humanity. It is humanity that is sacred and worthy of respect. And this is not his exclusive possession. It is distributed among all his fellows, and in consequence he cannot take it as a goal for his conduct without being obliged to go beyond himself and turn towards others. The cult of which he is at once both object and follower does not address itself to the particular being that constitutes himself and carries his name, but to the human person, wherever it is to be found, and in whatever form it is incarnated. Impersonal and anonymous, such an end soars far above all particular consciences and can thus serve as a rallying-point for them. The fact that it is not remote from us (for the very reason that it is human) does not prevent it from dominating us.

Now all that societies require in order to hold together is that their members fix their eyes on the same end and come together in a single faith; but it is not at all necessary that the object of this common faith be quite unconnected with individual persons. In short, individualism thus understood is the glorification not of the self, but of the individual in general. Its motive force is not egoism but sympathy for all that is human, a wider pity for all sufferings, for all human miseries, a more ardent desire to combat and alleviate them, a greater thirst for justice. Is this not the way to achieve a community of all men of good will? Doubtless it can happen that individualism is practised in quite a different spirit. Certain people use it for their own personal ends, as a means for disguising their egoism and escaping more easily from their duties towards society. But this deceptive misuse of individualism proves nothing against it, just as the utilitarian fictions of religious hypocrites prove nothing against religion.

But I now immediately come to the great objection. This cult of man has for its first dogma the

autonomy of reason and for its first rite freedom of thought. Now, it will be said, if all opinions are free, by what miracle will they then be harmonious? If they are formed without knowledge of one another and without having to take account of one another, how can they fail to be incoherent? Intellectual and moral anarchy would then be the inevitable consequence of liberalism. Such is the argument, always being refuted and always reappearing, which the perennial adversaries of reason take up periodically, with a perseverance that nothing can discourage, each time a passing weariness of the human spirit puts it more at their mercy. Certainly, it is true that individualism does not go without a certain intellectualism; for liberty of thought is the first of all liberties. But why has it been seen to have as a consequence this absurd self-infatuation which would confine each within his own desires and would create a gap between men's minds? What it demands is the right for each individual to know those things that he may legitimately know. It does not sanction unlimited right to incompetence. Concerning a question on which I cannot pronounce with expert knowledge, my intellectual independence suffers no loss if I follow a more competent opinion. The collaboration of scientists is only possible thanks to this mutual deference. Each science continuously borrows from its neighbours propositions which it accepts without verifying them. The only thing is that my intellect requires reasons for bowing to the authority of others. Respect for authority is in no way incompatible with rationalism provided that authority be rationally based.

This is why, when one seeks to summon certain men to rally to a sentiment that they do not share, it is not sufficient, in order to convince them, to remind them of that commonplace of banal rhetoric, that society is not possible without mutual sacrifices and without a certain spirit of subordination. It is still necessary to justify *in this particular case* the submission one asks of them, by showing them their incompetence. When, on the other hand, it is a matter of one of those questions which pertain, by definition, to the common judgement of men, such an abdication is contrary to all reason and, in consequence, contrary to duty. For, in order to know whether a court of justice can be allowed to condemn an accused man without having heard his defence, there is no need for any special expertise. It is a

problem of practical morality concerning which every man of good sense is competent and about which no one ought to be indifferent. If, therefore, in these recent times, a certain number of artists, but above all of scholars, have believed that they ought to refuse to assent to a judgement whose legality appeared to them to be suspect, it is not because, as chemists or philologists, philosophers or historians, they attribute to themselves any special privileges, or any exclusive right of exercising control over the case in question. It is rather that, being men, they seek to exercise their entire right as men and to keep before them a matter which concerns reason alone. It is true that they have shown themselves more jealous of this right than the rest of society; but that is simply because, as a result of their professional activities, they have it nearer to heart. Accustomed by the practice of scientific method to reserve judgement when they are not fully aware of the facts, it is natural that they give in less readily to the enthusiasms of the crowd and to the prestige of authority.

III

Not only is individualism distinct from anarchy; but it is henceforth the only system of beliefs which can ensure the moral unity of the country.

One often hears it said today that only a religion can bring about this harmony. This proposition, which modern prophets feel it necessary to utter in a mystical tone of voice, is really no more than a simple truism over which everyone can agree. For we know today that a religion does not necessarily imply symbols and rites in the full sense, or temples and priests. All this external apparatus is merely its superficial aspect. Essentially, it is nothing other than a system of collective beliefs and practices that have a special authority. Once a goal is pursued by a whole people, it acquires, as a result of this unanimous adherence, a sort of moral supremacy which raises it far above private goals and thereby gives it a religious character. On the other hand, it is clear that a society cannot hold together unless there exists among its members a certain intellectual and moral community. However, having recalled this sociological truism, one has not advanced very far. For if it is true that religion is, in a sense, indispensable, it is no less certain that religions change, that yesterday's religion

could not be that of tomorrow. Thus, what we need to know is what the religion of today should be.

Now, all the evidence points to the conclusion that the only possible candidate is precisely this religion of humanity whose rational expression is the individualist morality. To what, after all, should collective sentiments be directed in future? As societies become more voluminous and spread over vaster territories, their traditions and practices, in order to adapt to the diversity of situations and constantly changing circumstances, are compelled to maintain a state of plasticity and instability which no longer offers adequate resistance to individual variations. These latter, being less well contained, develop more freely and multiply in number; that is, everyone increasingly follows his own path. At the same time, as a consequence of a more advanced division of labour, each mind finds itself directed towards a different point of the horizon, reflects a different aspect of the world and, as a result, the contents of men's minds differ from one subject to another. One is thus gradually proceeding towards a state of affairs, now almost attained, in which the members of a single social group will no longer have anything in common other than their humanity, that is, the characteristics which constitute the human person in general. This idea of the human person, given different emphases in accordance with the diversity of national temperaments, is therefore the sole idea that survives, immutable and impersonal, above the changing tides of particular opinions; and the sentiments which it awakens are the only ones to be found in almost all hearts. The communion of minds can no longer form around particular rites and prejudices, since rites and prejudices have been swept away in the natural course of things. In consequence, there remains nothing that men may love and honour in common, apart from man himself. This is why man has become a god for man, and it is why he can no longer turn to other gods without being untrue to himself. And just as each of us embodies something of humanity, so each individual mind has within it something of the divine, and thereby finds itself marked by a characteristic which renders it sacred and inviolable to others. The whole of individualism lies here. That is what makes it into the doctrine that is currently necessary. For, should we wish to hold back its progress, we would have to

prevent men from becoming increasingly differentiated from one another, reduce their personalities to a single level, bring them back to the old conformism of former times and arrest, in consequence, the tendency of societies to become ever more extended and centralised, and stem the unceasing growth of the division of labour. Such an undertaking, whether desirable or not, infinitely surpasses all human powers.

What, in any case, are we offered in place of this individualism that is so disparaged? The merits of Christian morality are extolled to us and we are subtly invited to rally to its support. But are those who take this position unaware that the originality of Christianity has consisted precisely in a remarkable development of the individualist spirit? While the religion of the Ancient City was entirely made up of material practices from which the spiritual element was absent, Christianity expressed in an inward faith, in the personal conviction of the individual, the essential condition of godliness. It was the first to teach that the moral value of actions must be measured in accordance with intention, which is essentially private, escapes all external judgements and which only the agent can competently judge. The very centre of the moral life was thus transferred from outside to within and the individual was set up as the sovereign judge of his own conduct having no other accounts to render than those to himself and to his God. Finally, in completing the definitive separation of the spiritual and the temporal, in abandoning the world to the disputes of men, Christ at the same time opened the way for science and freedom of thought. In this way one can explain the rapid progress made by scientific thought from the date that Christian societies were established. Let no one therefore denounce individualism as the enemy that must be opposed at all costs! One only opposes it so as to return to it, so impossible is it to escape. Whatever alternative is offered turns out to be a form of it. The whole question, however, is to know how much of it is appropriate, and whether some advantage is to be gained by disguising it by means of symbols. Now, if individualism is as dangerous as people say, it is hard to see how it could become inoffensive or salutary, by the mere fact of having its true nature hidden with the aid of metaphors. And, on the other hand, if that restricted individualism which constitutes Christianity

was necessary eighteen centuries ago, it seems probable that a more developed individualism should be indispensable today; for things have changed in the interval. It is thus a singular error to present individualist morality as antagonistic to Christian morality; quite the contrary, it is derived from it. By adhering to the former, we do not disown our past; we merely continue it.

We are now in a better position to understand the reason why certain people believe that they must offer an unyielding resistance to all that seems to them to threaten the individualist faith. If every attack on the rights of an individual revolts them, this is not solely because of sympathy for the victim. Nor is it because they fear that they themselves will suffer similar acts of injustice. Rather it is that such outrages cannot rest unpunished without putting national existence in jeopardy. It is indeed impossible that they should be freely allowed to occur without weakening the sentiments that they violate; and as these sentiments are all that we still have in common, they cannot be weakened without disturbing the cohesion of society. A religion which tolerates acts of sacrilege abdicates any sway over men's minds. The religion of the individual can therefore allow itself to be flouted without resistance, only on penalty of ruining its credit; since it is the sole link which binds us one to another, such a weakening cannot take place without the onset of social dissolution. Thus the individualist, who defends the rights of the individual, defends at the same time the vital interests of society; for he is preventing the criminal impoverishment of that final reserve of collective ideas and sentiments that constitutes the very soul of the nation. He renders his country the same service that the ancient Roman rendered his city when he defended traditional rites against reckless innovators. And if there is one country among all others in which the individualist cause is truly national, it is our own; for there is no other whose fate has been so closely bound up with the fate of these ideas. We gave the most recent expression to it, and it is from us that other people have received it. That is why we have hitherto been held to be its most authoritative exponents. We cannot therefore renounce it today, without renouncing ourselves, without diminishing ourselves in the eyes of the world, without committing real moral suicide. Lately it has been asked whether it would not perhaps be

convenient for us to agree to a temporary eclipse of these principles, so as not to disturb the functioning of a system of public administration which everyone, anyway, recognizes to be indispensable to the security of the state. We do not know if the antinomy really presents itself in this acute form; but, in any case, if a choice really must be made between these two evils, we would choose the worst of them were we to sacrifice what has hitherto been our historical *raison d'être*. A public institution, however important it may be, is only an instrument, a means that relates to an end. What is the point of so carefully preserving the means if one abandons the end? And what a deplorable calculation to make—to renounce, in order to live, all that constitutes the worth and dignity of living,

Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas!

IV

In truth, it is to be feared that this campaign has been mounted with a certain lack of seriousness. A verbal similarity has made it possible to believe that *individualism* necessarily resulted from *individual*, and thus egoistic, sentiments. In reality, the religion of the individual is a social institution like all known religions. It is society which assigns us this ideal as the sole common end which is today capable of providing a focus for men's wills. To remove this ideal, without putting any other in its place, is therefore to plunge us into that very moral anarchy which it is sought to avoid.⁵

All the same, we should not consider as perfect and definitive the formula with which the eighteenth century gave expression to individualism, a formula which we have made the mistake of preserving in an almost unchanged form. Although it was adequate a century ago, it is now in need of being enlarged and completed. It presented individualism only in its most negative aspect. Our fathers were concerned exclusively with freeing the individual from the political fetters which hampered his development. Freedom of thought, freedom to write, and freedom to vote were thus placed by them among the primary values that it was necessary to achieve, and this emancipation was certainly the necessary condition for all subsequent progress. However, carried away by the enthusiasm of

the struggle, solely concerned with the objective they pursued, they ended by no longer seeing beyond it, and by converting into a sort of ultimate goal what was merely the next stage in their efforts. Now, political liberty is a means, not an end. It is worth no more than the manner in which it is put to use. If it does not serve something which exists beyond it, it is not merely useless: it becomes dangerous. If those who handle this weapon do not know how to use it in fruitful battles, they will not be slow in turning it against themselves.

It is precisely for this reason that it has fallen today into a certain discredit. The men of my generation recall how great was our enthusiasm when, twenty years ago, we finally succeeded in toppling the last barriers which we impatiently confronted. But alas! disenchantment came quickly; for we soon had to admit that no one knew what to do with this liberty that had been so laboriously achieved. Those to whom we owed it only made use of it in internecine strife. And it was from that moment that one felt the growth in the country of this current of gloom and despondency, which became stronger with each day that passed, the ultimate result of which must inevitably be to break the spirit of those least able to resist.

Thus, we can no longer subscribe to this negative ideal. It is necessary to go beyond what has been achieved, if only to preserve it. Indeed, if we do not learn to put to use the means of action that we have in our hands, it is inevitable that they will become less effective. Let us therefore use our liberties in order to discover what must be done and with the aim of doing it. Let us use them in order to alleviate the functioning of the social machine, still so harsh to individuals, in order to put at their disposal all possible means for developing their faculties unhindered, in order, finally, to work towards making a reality of the famous precept: to each according to his works! Let us recognize that, in general, liberty is a delicate instrument the use of which must be learnt, and let us teach this to our children; all moral education should be directed to this end. One can see that we will not be short of things to do. However, if it is certain that we will henceforth have to work out new objectives, beyond those which have been attained, it would be senseless to renounce the latter so as to pursue the former more easily; for necessary advances are only possible thanks to those

already achieved. It is a matter of completing, extending, and organizing individualism, not of restricting it or struggling against it. It is a matter of using and not stifling rational faculties. They alone can help us emerge from our present difficulties; we do not see what else can do so. In any case, it is not by meditating on the *Politique tirée de l'Écriture sainte* that we will ever find the means of organizing economic life and introducing more justice into contractual relations!

In these circumstances, does not our duty appear to be clearly marked out? All those who believe in the value, or even merely in the necessity, of the moral revolution accomplished a century ago, have the same interest: they must forget the differences which divide them and combine their efforts so as to hold positions already won. Once this crisis is surmounted, it will certainly be appropriate to recall the lessons of experience, so that we may avoid falling once more into that sterile inaction for which we are now paying; but that is the task of tomorrow. As for today, the urgent task, which must be put before all else, is that of saving our moral patrimony; once that is secure, we shall see that it is made to prosper. May the common danger we confront at least help us by shaking us out of our

torpor and giving us again the taste for action! And already, indeed, one sees initiatives awakening within the country, men of good will seeking one another out. Let someone appear who can combine them and lead them into the struggle: perhaps victory will then not be long in coming. For what should, to a certain extent, reassure us is that our adversaries are only strong by virtue of our weakness. They have neither that deep faith nor those generous enthusiasms which sweep people irresistibly to great reactions as well as to great revolutions. Of course, we would not dream of doubting their sincerity; yet who can fail to notice the improvised quality of all that they believe? They are neither apostles who allow themselves to be overwhelmed by their anger or their enthusiasm, nor are they scholars who bring us the product of their research and their deliberations, They are literary men seduced by an interesting theme. It seems therefore impossible that these games of dilettantes should succeed in keeping hold for long of the masses, providing that we know how to act. Moreover, what a humiliation it would be if, having no stronger opponents than these, reason were to end by being defeated, even if only for a time!

NOTES

1. The present translation is by S. and J. Lukes (Eds., *Political Studies*).
2. See the article by M. Brunetière: 'Après le procès', in *Revue des Deux Mondes* of 15 March 1898. (This note and the subsequent ones are Durkheim's. Ed., *Political Studies*.)
3. Let us note in passing that this word, which is most appropriate, does not properly have the pejorative meaning that has so maliciously been attributed to it. The intellectual is not a person who has a monopoly of understanding (*intelligence*); there are no social functions where understanding is unnecessary. But there are those in which it is at once both the means and the end, the instrument and the goal. Here understanding is used to extend understanding, that is to say, to enrich it with knowledge, ideas, and new sensations. It is thus the basis of these professions (art, science) and it is in order to express this peculiarity that it has come to be natural to call those who practise them intellectuals.
4. See *Control social*, 1. II, Chap. III.
5. This is how it is possible, without contradiction, to be an individualist while asserting that the individual is a product of society, rather than its cause. The reason is that individualism itself is a social product, like all moralities and all religions. The individual receives from society even the moral beliefs which deify him. This is what Kant and Rousseau did not understand. They wished to deduce their individualist ethics not from society, but from the notion of the isolated individual. Such an enterprise was impossible, and from it resulted the logical contradictions of their systems.

SECTION II

1. What in Durkheim's view is the significance of the division of labor in modern society for solidarity?
2. Describe the difference between mechanical and organic solidarity.
3. What is a social fact, and why is it so central to Durkheim's vision of sociology?
4. Define "anomie" in your own words and relate it to Marx's understanding of alienation.
5. Based on Durkheim's discussion of anomic suicide, explain why it is particularly common in modern societies.
6. What was the Dreyfus Affair, and what position did Durkheim take in this conflict?
7. What does Durkheim mean by the "cult of the individual"?

III. MAX WEBER

MAX WEBER

9. THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

Weber's most famous and widely read work is *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904–05). In this essay, he seeks to account for what he describes as an elective affinity between capitalism and Protestantism. The spirit of capitalism, according to Weber, encouraged a distinctive mentality that proved to be vital during the early stages of capitalist development. The capitalist was an ascetic—a rational miser—who was devoted to the task of making money, not in order to enjoy its fruits but to reinvest it to make more money. The question Weber poses is: Why would someone act in such a manner? The answer he develops hinges on the idea that a distinctly Protestant ethic served to provide a rationale for such conduct. While the thrust of the essay is to focus on the formative period of capitalism, Weber concludes with a pessimistic account of the future wrought by capitalism, depicted most graphically and poignantly by his metaphor of the “iron cage.”

The title of this study uses a concept that sounds rather intimidating: the “*spirit of capitalism*.”¹ What should be understood by it? An attempt to provide even an approximate “definition” immediately unveils certain difficulties that are embedded in the essence of this investigation’s purpose. [1920]

If one can discover at all an object for which the utilization of this concept is meaningful, then it can only be a specific *historical case*. Such a singular entity is nothing more than a complex of relationships in historical reality. We join them together, from the vantage point of their *cultural significance*, into a conceptual unity.

Such a historical concept, however, cannot be defined according to how it is “demarcated” vis-à-vis other concepts (*genus proximum, differentia specifica*). This holds if only because the concept denotes a phenomenon that is of qualitative importance as a consequence of its individual *uniqueness*. Moreover, this

concept must be gradually *put together* from its single component parts, each of which is taken out of historical reality. Therefore, the final formation of the concept cannot appear at the beginning of the investigation; rather, it must stand at its *conclusion*. In other words, how our understanding of a “spirit” of capitalism is to be best defined will have to unfold only in the course of our discussion and only as its main outcome. Only a definition formulated in this manner will be adequate to the particular vantage points of interest to us here.

In turn, it must be recognized that these vantage points (which are still to be discussed) by no means constitute the only ones possible in reference to which the historical cases under consideration can be analyzed. Other vantage points would identify other features of our historical cases as “essential,” as is true with every historical case. From this premise it follows unequivocally that whatever one understands by a

Reprinted from *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, by Max Weber. Translated by Stephen Kalberg. Copyright © 2011 by Oxford University Press. All rights reserved. Pgs. 67–73; 157–159. ♦

“spirit” of capitalism by no means necessarily can or must correspond to *that which we* will note as essential in our exegesis here.

This must be acknowledged, namely, the central role played by the researcher’s particular vantage point in identifying what is essential to each case, as it belongs to the very essence of the “formation of historical concepts.” This endeavor does not aim, in terms of its methodological goals, to trap reality in abstract, general concepts (*Gattungsbegriffe*). Rather, when forming historical concepts we strive to achieve something different: to order reality into tangible, causal connections that are stable and, unavoidably, of a *unique* character.²

That being said, and even if we succeed in demarcating the case we are attempting here to analyze and explain historically, our concern now cannot be to offer a conceptual definition. Instead, our focus at the beginning should be only to provide a provisional *illustration* of the activity implied here by the term “spirit” of capitalism. Indeed, such an illustration is indispensable in order to attain our aim now of simply understanding the object of our investigation. On behalf of this purpose we turn to a document that contains the spirit of concern to us in near classical purity, and simultaneously offers the advantage of being detached from *all* direct connection to religious belief—hence, for our theme, of being “free of presuppositions.”

Remember, that *time is money*. He that can earn ten shillings a day by his labour, and goes abroad, or sits idle one half of that day, though he spends but sixpence during his diversion or idleness, ought not to reckon that the only expense; he has really spent or rather thrown away five shillings besides.

Remember, that *credit is money*. If a man lets his money lie in my hands after it is due, he gives me the interest, or so much as I can make of it during that time. This amounts to a considerable sum where a man has good and large credit, and makes good use of it.

Remember, that money is of the *prolific, generating nature*. Money can beget money, and its offspring can beget more, and so on. Five shillings turned is six, turned again it is seven and threepence, and so on, till it becomes a hundred pounds. The more there is of it, the more it produces every turning, so that the profits

rise quicker and quicker. He that kills a breeding-sow, destroys all her offspring to the thousandth generation. He that murders a crown, *destroys* all that it might have produced, even scores of pounds. . . .

Remember this saying: The good *paymaster* is lord of another man’s purse. He that is known to pay punctually and exactly to the time he promises, may at any time, and on any occasion, raise all the money his friends can spare.

This is sometimes of great use. After industry and frugality, nothing contributes more to the *raising* of a young man in the world than punctuality and justice in all his dealings; therefore never keep borrowed money an hour beyond the time you promised, lest a disappointment shut up your friend’s purse for ever.

The most trifling actions that affect a man’s *credit* are to be regarded. The sound of your hammer at five in the morning, or nine at night, heard by a creditor, makes him easy six months longer; but if he sees you at a billiard-table, or hears your voice at a tavern, when you should be at work, he sends for his money the next day; . . . [he] demands it before you are able to pay.

It shows, besides, that you are mindful of what you owe; it makes you *appear* a careful as well as an *honest man*, and that still increases your *credit*.

Beware of thinking that you own all that you possess, and of living accordingly. It is a mistake that many people who have credit fall into. To prevent this, keep an exact account both of your expenses and your income. If you make an effort to attend to particular expenses, it will have this good effect: you will discover how wonderfully small, trifling expenses mount up to large sums, and will discern what might have been, and may for the future be saved, without occasioning any great inconvenience.

For six pounds a year you may have the use of one hundred pounds if you are a man of known prudence and honesty.

He that spends a groat a day idly, spends idly above six pounds a year, which is the price of using one hundred pounds.

He that wastes idly a groat’s worth of his time per day, one day with another, wastes the privilege of using one hundred pounds each year.

He that idly loses five shillings’ worth of time, loses five shillings and might as prudently throw five shillings into the sea.

He that loses five shillings not only loses that sum, but all the advantage that might be made by turning it in dealing, which by the time that a young man becomes old, amounts to a comfortable bag of money.

It is *Benjamin Franklin*³ [1706–90] who preaches to us in these sentences. As the supposed catechism of a Yankee, Ferdinand Kürnberger satirizes these axioms in his brilliantly clever and venomous *Picture of American Culture*.⁴ That the “spirit of capitalism” is here manifest in Franklin’s words, even in a characteristic manner, no one will doubt. It will not be argued here, however, that *all aspects* of what can be understood by this “spirit” are contained in them.

Let us dwell a moment upon a passage, the worldly wisdom of which is summarized thusly by Kürnberger: “They make tallow for candles out of cattle and money out of men.” Remarkably, the real peculiarity in the “philosophy of avarice” contained in this maxim is the ideal of the *credit-worthy* man of honor and, above all, the idea of the *duty* of the individual to increase his wealth, which is assumed to be a self-defined interest in itself. Indeed, rather than simply a common-sense approach to life, a peculiar “ethic” is preached here: its violation is treated not simply as foolishness but as a sort of forgetfulness of *duty*. Above all, this distinction stands at the center of the matter. “Business savvy,” which is found commonly enough, is here not *alone* taught; rather, an *ethos* is expressed in this maxim. Just this quality is of interest to us in this investigation.

A retired business partner of Jakob Fugger [1459–1525, an extremely wealthy German financier, export merchant, and philanthropist] once sought to convince him to retire. Yet his colleague’s argument—that he had accumulated enough wealth and should allow others their chance—was rebuked by Fugger as “contemptible timidity.” He “viewed matters differently,” Fugger answered, and “wanted simply to make money as long as he could.”⁵

Obviously, the “spirit” of this statement must be *distinguished* from Franklin’s. Fugger’s entrepreneurial daring and personal, morally indifferent proclivities⁶ now take on the character, in Franklin, of an *ethically* oriented maxim for the **organization of life**. The expression “spirit of capitalism” will be used here in just this specific manner⁷—naturally the spirit of *modern*

capitalism. That is, in light of the formulation of our theme, it must be evident that the Western European and American capitalism of the last few centuries constitutes our concern rather than the “capitalism” that has appeared in China, India, Babylon, the ancient world, and the Middle Ages. As we will see, *just that peculiar ethic was missing in all these cases*.

Nevertheless, all of Franklin’s moral admonishments are applied in a utilitarian fashion: Honesty is *useful* because it leads to the availability of credit. Punctuality, industry, and frugality are also useful and are *therefore* virtues. It would follow from this that, for example, the *appearance* of honesty, wherever it accomplishes the same end, would suffice. Moreover, in Franklin’s eyes an unnecessary surplus of this virtue must be seen as unproductive wastefulness. Indeed, whoever reads in his autobiography the story of his “conversion” to these virtues,⁸ or the complete discussions on the usefulness of a strict preservation of the *appearance* of modesty and the intentional minimizing of one’s own accomplishments in order to attain a general approval,⁹ will necessarily come to the conclusion that all virtues, according to Franklin, become virtues *only to the extent* that they are useful to the individual. The surrogate of virtue—namely, its appearance only—is fully adequate wherever the same purpose is achieved. Indeed, this inseparability of motive and appearance is the inescapable consequence of all strict utilitarianism. The common German tendency to perceive the American virtues as “hypocrisy” appears here confirmed beyond a doubt.

In truth, however, matters are not so simple. Benjamin Franklin’s own character demonstrates that the issue is more complex: his character appears clearly, however seldom, in his autobiography as one of candor and truthfulness. It is also evident in Franklin’s tracing of his realization—virtues can be “useful”—back to a revelation from God that was designed, he believed, to guide him onto the path of righteousness. Something more is involved here than simply an embellishing of purely self-interested, egocentric maxims.

The complexity of this issue is above all apparent in the *summum bonum* [“supreme good”] of this “ethic”: namely, the acquisition of money, and more and more money, takes place here simultaneously with the strictest avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of it.

The pursuit of riches is fully stripped of all pleasurable (*eudämonistischen*), and surely all hedonistic, aspects.

Accordingly, this striving becomes understood completely as an end in itself—to such an extent that it appears as fully outside the normal course of affairs and simply irrational, at least when viewed from the perspective of the “happiness” or “utility” of the single individual.¹⁰ Here, people are oriented to acquisition as the purpose of life; acquisition is no longer viewed as a means to the end of satisfying the substantive needs of life. Those people in possession of spontaneous, fun-loving dispositions experience this situation as an absolutely meaningless reversal of a “natural” condition (as we would say today). Yet this reversal constitutes just as surely a guiding principle of [modern] capitalism as incomprehension of this new situation characterizes all who remain untouched by [modern] capitalism’s tentacles.

This reversal implies an internal line of development that comes into close contact with certain religious ideas. One can ask *why* then “money ought to be made out of persons.” In his autobiography, and although he is himself a neutral Deist, Franklin answers with a maxim from the Bible that, as he says, his strict Calvinist father again and again drilled into him in his youth: “Seest thou a man vigorous in his **vocational calling** (*Beruf*)? He shall stand before kings” (Prov. 22:29). As long as it is carried out in a legal manner, the acquisition of money in the modern economic order is the result and manifestation of competence and proficiency in a *vocational calling*. *This competence and proficiency* is the actual alpha and omega of Franklin’s morality, as now can be easily recognized. It presents itself to us both in the passages cited above and, without exception, in all his writings.¹¹

In fact, this peculiar idea of a *duty to have a vocational calling*, so familiar to us today but actually not at all selfevident, is the idea that is characteristic of the “social ethic” of modern capitalist culture. In a certain sense, it is even of constitutive significance for it. It implies a notion of duty that individuals ought to experience, and do, vis-à-vis the content of their “vocational” activity. This notion appears regardless of the particular nature of the activity and regardless, especially, of whether this activity seems to involve (as it does for people with a spontaneous, fun-loving disposition)

nothing more than a simple utilization of their capacity for labor or their treatment of it as only a material possession (as “capital”).

Nevertheless, it is surely not the case that the idea of a duty in one’s vocational calling could grow *only* on the soil of [modern] capitalism. Rather, our attempt later to trace its roots will take us to a period prior to [modern] capitalism. Naturally it will be argued here even less that, under *today’s* capitalism, the subjective acquisition of these ethical maxims by capitalism’s particular social carriers (such as businesspersons or workers in modern capitalist companies) constitutes a condition for capitalism’s further existence. Rather, the capitalist economic order of today is a vast cosmos into which a person is born. It simply exists, to each person, as a factually unalterable casing (*unabänderliches Gehäuse*) in which he or she must live. To the extent that people are interwoven into the context of capitalism’s market forces, the norms of its economic action are forced onto them. Every factory owner who operates in the long term against these norms will inevitably be eliminated from the economy. With the same degree of inevitability, every worker who cannot or will not adapt to the norms of the marketplace will become unemployed.

Our analysis should have demonstrated that one of the constitutive components of the modern capitalist spirit and, moreover, generally of modern civilization was the rational organization of life on the basis of the *idea of the calling*. It was born out of the spirit of *Christian asceticism*. If we now read again the passages from Benjamin Franklin cited at the beginning of this essay, we will see that the essential elements of the frame of mind described as the “spirit of capitalism” are just those that we have conveyed above as the content of Puritan vocational asceticism.¹² In Franklin, however, this “spirit” exists without the religious foundation, which had already died out.

The idea that modern work in a vocational calling carries with it an *ascetic* imprint is, of course, also not new. The restriction of persons to specialized work, and the renunciation of the Faustian multidimensionality of the human species it requires, is in our world today the precondition for doing anything of value at all—that is, the “specialized task” and this “foresaking” unavoidably determine one another. *Goethe*, at

the peak of his wisdom in his *Wilhelm Meister's Years of Travel* [1829] and in his depiction of Faust's final stage of life [1808], tried to teach us just this:¹³ the middle-class way of ordering life, if it wishes to be directed at all rather than to be devoid of continuity, contains a basic component of asceticism. This realization for Goethe implied a resigned farewell to an era of full and beautiful humanity—and a forsaking of it. For such an era will repeat itself in the course of our civilizational development with as little likelihood as a re-appearance of the epoch in which Athens bloomed.¹⁴

The Puritan *wanted* to be a person with a vocational calling; we *must* be. For to the extent that asceticism moved out of the monastic cell and was carried over into the life of work in a vocational calling, and then commenced to rule over this-worldly morality, it helped to do its part to build the mighty cosmos of the modern economic order. This economy is bound to the technical and economic conditions of mechanized, machine-based production.

This cosmos today determines the style of life *not* only of those directly engaged in economically productive activity, but of all born into this grinding mechanism. It does so with overwhelming force, and perhaps it will continue to do so until the last ton of fossil fuel has burnt to ashes. The concern for material goods, according to Baxter, should lie on the shoulders of his saints like "a lightweight coat that one can throw off at any time."¹⁵ Yet fate allowed this coat to become a steel-hard casing (*stahlhartes Gehäuse*).¹⁶ To the extent that asceticism undertook to transform and influence the world, the world's material goods acquired an increasing and, in the end, inescapable power over people—as never before in history.

Today asceticism's spirit has fled from this casing—whether with finality who knows? Victorious capitalism, in any case, ever since it came to rest on a mechanical foundation, no longer needs asceticism as a supporting pillar. Even the optimistic temperament of the Enlightenment, asceticism's joyful heir, appears finally to be fading. And the idea of an "obligation to search for and then accept a vocational calling" now wanders around in our lives as the ghost of past religious beliefs. Persons today usually reject entirely all attempts to make sense of a "fulfillment of one's calling" wherever this notion cannot be directly aligned with

the highest spiritual and cultural values, or wherever, conversely, it is not experienced subjectively simply as economic coercion. The pursuit of gain, in the region where it has become most completely unchained and stripped of its religious-ethical meaning, the United States, tends to be associated with purely competitive passions. Not infrequently, these passions directly imprint this pursuit with the character of a sports event.¹⁷

No one any longer knows who will live in this casing and whether entirely new prophets or a mighty rebirth of ancient ideas and ideals will stand at the end of this monumental development. Or, however, if neither, whether a mechanized ossification, embellished with a sort of rigidly compelled sense of self-importance, will arise. Then, indeed, if ossification appears, the saying might be true for the "last humans"¹⁸ in this long civilizational development:

narrow specialists without minds, pleasureseekers without heart: in its conceit this nothingness imagines it has climbed to a level of humanity never before attained.¹⁹

Here, however, we have fallen into the realm of value-judgments, with which this purely historical analysis should not be burdened. Nor should it be burdened by judgments rooted in faith. The further task is a different one: to chart the significance of ascetic rationalism.²⁰ The above sketch has only hinted at its importance.

Its significance for the content of a community-building, ethical *social policy* must now be outlined—that is, for the type of organization of social groups, ranging from the conventicle to the state, and their functions. Having done that we must analyze the relationship of ascetic rationalism to the ideals and cultural influences of humanistic rationalism.²¹ Further, we must investigate the relationship of ascetic rationalism to the development of philosophical and scientific empiricism, to the unfolding of technology, and to the development of nonmaterial culture (*geistige Kulturgüter*) in general.²² Finally, beginning with the first signs of this-worldly asceticism in the Middle Ages and moving all the way to its dissolution in pure utilitarianism, we need to pursue the historical course of ascetic rationalism. That is, in its *historical* manifestations and through the particular regions of

the expansion of ascetic religious devotion. Only after the completion of such investigations can the *extent* of ascetic Protestantism's civilizational significance be demarcated in comparison to that of other elements of modern civilization that can be changed and shaped in response to the actions of persons.

This study has attempted, of course, merely to trace ascetic Protestantism's influence, and the particular *nature* of this influence, back to ascetic Protestantism's motives in regard to one—however important—point.²³ The way in which Protestant asceticism was in turn influenced in its development and characteristic uniqueness by the entirety of societal-cultural

conditions, and especially *economic* conditions, must also have its day.²⁴ For sure, even with the best will, the modern person seems generally unable to imagine *how* large a significance those components of our consciousness rooted in religious beliefs have actually had upon culture, national character, and the organization of life. Nevertheless, of course it cannot be the intention here to set a one-sided religion-oriented analysis of the causes of culture and history in place of an equally one-sided "materialistic" analysis. *Both* are *equally possible*.²⁵ Historical truth, however, is served equally little if either of these analyses claims to be the conclusion of an investigation rather than its preparatory stage.²⁶

NOTES

1. Weber generally places the term *spirit* in quotation marks. By doing so he wishes (a) to express his awareness that controversy surrounded this term and (b) to emphasize that it is used in this study in a specific and unique manner (and thus to distance his usage, above all, from that of the major figure of German Idealism, G. W. F. Hegel [1770–1831]) [sk].
2. Weber here alludes to a few central aspects of his sociological methodology: (a) historical concepts must refer to "historical individuals" (unique cases); (b) classificatory schemes (*genus proximum, differentia specifica*) are too abstract to capture uniqueness and hence are useful *only* as preliminary conceptual tools; (c) concepts do not "replicate reality," for "reality" varies depending on the investigator's particular research question (or "vantage point" upon reality); and (d) following from the above, concepts can be formulated only after an assessment by researchers of the "cultural significance" of potential constituent elements and a selection accordingly. All the above points are central to Weber's sociological methodology based on "subjective meaning," "interpretive understanding," and "ideal types." See "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy," in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, translated and edited by Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch (New York: Free Press, 1949). See also the "Basic Concepts" chapter in *E&S* (pp. 3–22). See Fritz Ringer, *Max Weber's Methodology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); John Drysdale, "How Are Social-Scientific Concepts Formed? A Reconstruction of Max Weber's Theory of Concept Formation," *Sociological Theory* 14 (March 1996): 71–88 [sk].
3. The final [five short] passages are from *Necessary Hints to Those That Would Be Rich*, in *Works* (1736) [Sparks ed. (Chicago, 1882), vol. 2, p. 80]. The earlier are passages from *Advice to a Young Tradesman* (1748) [Sparks ed., vol. 2, p. 87]. [The italics in the text are Franklin's.]
4. This book, *Der Amerikamüde* (Frankfurt, 1855; Vienna and Leipzig, 1927), is well known to be a fictional paraphrase of Lenau's impressions of America. As a work of art, the book would today be somewhat difficult to enjoy. However, it is unsurpassed as a document of the differences (now long since blurred over) between German and American sensibilities; indeed, one could say, of the spiritual life of the Germans (which has remained *common* to all Germans since the German mysticism of the Middle Ages, despite all the differences between German

Catholics and German Protestants) in contrast to Puritan-capitalist “can-do” energy. [Italics in paragraphs one (*time*), two (*credit*), and four (the good *paymaster*) are Franklin’s; the remainder are Weber’s.]

5. Sombart has used this quotation as a motto for his section on “the genesis of capitalism” (*Der moderne Kapitalismus*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1 [see pp. 193–634], p. 193. See also p. 390.).
6. Which obviously does not mean either that Jakob Fugger was a morally indifferent or an irreligious man, or that Benjamin Franklin’s ethic is *completely* covered by the above quotations. It scarcely required Brentano’s quotations (*Die Anfänge des modernen Kapitalismus*, *op. cit.*, pp. 151 f.) to protect this well-known philanthropist from the misunderstanding that Brentano seems to attribute to me. The problem is actually just the reverse: how could such a philanthropist come to write precisely *these sentences* (the especially characteristic form of which Brentano neglected to reproduce) in the manner of a *moralist*? [1920]
7. This way of formulating the problem constitutes the basis for our differences with Sombart. The very considerable practical significance of this difference will become clear later. It should, however, be noted here that Sombart has by no means neglected this ethical aspect of the capitalist employer. However, in his train of thought, capitalism calls forth this ethical aspect. We must, on the contrary, for our purposes, take into consideration the opposite hypothesis. A final position on this difference can only be taken up at the end of this investigation. For Sombart’s view see *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 357, 380, etc. His reasoning here connects with the brilliant conceptualizations offered in [Georg] Simmel’s *Philosophie des Geldes* [Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1900] [*The Philosophy of Money* (London: Routledge, 1978)] (final chapter). I will speak later of the polemics which Sombart has brought forward against me in his *The Quintessence of Capitalism*. At this point any thorough discussion must be postponed.
8. “I grew convinced that *truth, sincerity, and integrity* in dealings between man and man were of the utmost importance *to the felicity of life*; and I formed written resolutions, which still remain *in my journal book* to practise them ever while I lived. Revelation had indeed no weight with me as such; but I entertained an opinion that, though certain actions might not be bad because they were forbidden by it, or good because it commanded them, yet probably these actions might be forbidden *because* they were bad for us, or commanded *because* they were beneficial to us in their own nature, all the circumstances of things considered” [*Autobiography*, ed. by F. W. Pine (New York: Henry Holt, 1916), p. 112].
9. “I therefore put myself as much as I could out of sight and started it”—that is, the project of a library which he had initiated—“as a scheme of a *number of friends*, who had requested me to go about and propose it to such as they thought lovers of reading. In this way my affair went on smoothly, and I ever after practised it on such occasions; and from my frequent successes, can heartily recommend it. The present little sacrifice of your vanity will afterwards be amply repaid. If it remains *awhile* uncertain to whom the merit belongs, someone more vain than yourself will be encouraged to claim it, and then even envy will be disposed to do you justice by plucking those assumed feathers and restoring them to their right owner” [*Autobiography, ibid.*, p. 140].
10. Brentano (*op. cit.*, pp. 125; 127, note I) takes this remark as an occasion to criticize the later discussion of “that rationalization and intensification of discipline” to which this-worldly asceticism has subjected men. That, he says, is a “rationalization” toward an “irrational” organization of life. This is in fact quite correct. Something is never “irrational” in itself but only from a particular “rational” vantage point. For the nonreligious person every religious way of organizing life is irrational; for the hedonist every ascetic organization of life is “irrational” even if it may be, measured against *its* ultimate values, a “rationalization.” If this essay wishes

to make any contribution at all, may it be to unveil the many-sidedness of a concept—the “rational”—that only appears to be straightforward and linear. [1920] [see also Weber, 1946c, p. 326; 1946e, p. 293; Kalberg, 1980.]

11. In reply to Brentano’s (*Die Anfänge des modernen Kapitalismus*, *op. cit.*, pp. 150 f.) very detailed but somewhat imprecise defense of Franklin, which alleges that I have misunderstood his ethical qualities, I refer only to this statement. It should have been sufficient, in my opinion, to have rendered his defense unnecessary. [1920]
12. That even the components here (which have not yet been traced back to their religious roots)—namely, the maxim honesty is the best policy (Franklin’s discussion of *credit*)—are also of Puritan origins is a theme that belongs in a somewhat different context (see the “Protestant Sects” essay below) [pp. 209–26]. Only the following observation of J. S. Rowntree (*Quakerism, Past and Present* [London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1859], pp. 95–96), to which Eduard Bernstein called my attention, needs to be repeated:

Is it merely a *coincidence*, or is it a *consequence*, that the lofty profession of spirituality made by the Friends has gone hand in hand with shrewdness and tact in the transaction of mundane affairs? Real piety favours the success of a trader by insuring his integrity and fostering habits of prudence and forethought. [These are] important items in obtaining that standing and credit in the commercial world, which are requisite for the steady accumulation of wealth (see the “Protestant Sects” essay). [Original in English]

“Honest as a Huguenot” was as proverbial in the seventeenth century as the respect for law of the Dutch (which Sir W. Temple admired) and, a century later, that of the English. The peoples of the European continent, in contrast, had not moved through this ethical schooling. [1920]

13. This theme is analyzed well in Albert Bielschowsky’s *Goethe: sein Leben und seine Werke*, 3rd ed., vol. 2 (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1902–04), ch. 18. A related idea is articulated in regard to the development of the *scientific* “cosmos” by [Wilhelm] Windelband at the end of his *Blütezeit der deutschen Philosophie* [The Flowering Era of German Philosophy] (vol. 2 of his *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* [Leipzig: Breitkopf und Hartel, 1899], pp. 428 ff.).
14. See Weber, “The Meaning of ‘Ethical Neutrality,’” p. 18 (Weber 1949) [sk].
15. *Saints’ Everlasting Rest*, *op. cit.* [ch. 4, note 62], p. 310. [The text varies slightly from Weber’s quote. It reads: “Keep these things loose about thee like thy upper garments, that thou mayest lay them by whenever there is need.”]
16. Translated by Parsons as “iron cage,” this phrase has acquired near-mythical status in sociology. Weber elaborates upon its meaning in several passages in his “Parliament and Government in Germany” essay, which was unfortunately taken by the editors of *Economy and Society* from the corpus of his political writings and incorporated into this *analytic* treatise (see pp. 1400–03), and in “Prospects for Liberal Democracy in Tsarist Russia” (see *Weber: Selections in Translation*, ed. by W. G. Runciman [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1978], pp. 281–83). Parallel German expressions are translated in these passages as “housing,” “shell of bondage,” and “casing.”

There are many reasons that speak in favor of “steel-hard casing.” Not least, it is a literal rendering of the German. Had Weber wished to convey an “iron cage” to his German readership he could easily have done so by employing a commonly used phrase, *eisener Käfig* (or even *eisenes Gefängnis* [iron prison]); see Stephen Kent, “Weber, Goethe, and the Nietzschean Allusion,” *Sociological Analysis* 44 (1983): pp. 297–320 (esp. at pp. 299–300). Let us turn first to the adjective.

Weber's choice of *stahlhart* appropriately conveys (even more than *eisen*) the "hardness" of the constraining casing, as emphasized in the mechanistic images utilized in this paragraph to describe this new "powerful cosmos." This same image of hardness, however, is visible also in the "lightweight coat" metaphor above: once supple, it has now hardened into something (the power of material goods over the individual) that encases persons and cannot be thrown off. Appropriately, because ascetic Protestantism to Weber helped to call forth this cosmos, the same adjective is used to describe the Puritan merchant (see p. 125). This lineage is apparent, he argues, even though the dimension foremost for this "merchant saint"—the ethical—has today vanished and left, unforeseeably, in its wake instrumental (or "mechanical") modes of action devoid of genuine brotherhood and resistant to ethical regulation (see, again, the images above and below; see also Weber, 2009, pp. 426–30). Finally, although not directly apparent in this passage, "steel-hard" conveys a related theme crucial to Weber (as well as Marx and Simmel): the massively impersonal, coldly formal, harsh, and machine-like character of modern public sphere relationships whenever they remain uninfluenced by either traditions or values (see, e.g., the last page of "Science as a Vocation" [Weber, 2005, p. 339]).

Now let us turn to the noun. There are substantive reasons also to prefer "casing" over "cage." Almost without exception, the secondary literature has argued that *stahlhartes Gehäuse* is a phrase intended to call attention to a bleak future inevitably on the horizon. Once in place, this commentary asserts, according to Weber, a nightmare society is putatively permanent. He is then characterized as a dour prophet of doom who, heroically, performs the worthy service of analyzing in a realistic manner a civilization on its deathbed. However, through conditional terms such as "if," "perhaps," "might," "would," "potentially," and "possibly," the usages of this and similar expressions in Weber's other works (as noted above) stress that such a cosmos arises from a series of identifiable economic, religious, political, historical, etc., forces that have become juxtaposed in a unique manner rather than from an unstoppable unfolding of "bureaucratization and rationalization." In other words, if a *stahlhartes Gehäuse* does appear, it must be seen, Weber insists, as a contingent occurrence with, as other occurrences, a period of development and a period of decline (see 2009, pp. 313–430).

In my view, this interpretation conforms to the overall tenor of Weber's sociology—a body of work that attends on the one hand to configurations of forces and their unique contexts rather than to linear historical change and, on the other hand, sees change, conflict, dynamism, and upheaval nearly universally (see 1946e, 1968, and Kalberg, 1994b, pp. 71–78, 98–117, 168–77, 189–92). Of course, Weber notes that a few civilizations have been quite ossified, such as China for 1500 years and ancient Egypt. Yet their closed character did not result from an "inevitable development" or "evolutionary historical laws" (see above, pp. 97–98, 108–10). Rather, their rigidity must be understood as a consequence of an identifiable constellation of historical, political, etc., forces. (See also the paragraph below on "new prophets . . . ideas and ideals.") "Cage" implies great inflexibility and hence does not convey this contingency aspect as effectively as "casing" (which, under certain circumstances, can become less restrictive and even peeled off).

In general, in regard to *stahlhartes Gehäuse*, the commentary has vastly exaggerated the importance of this metaphorical image in Weber's works, in the process transforming him from a rigorous comparative-historical sociologist of near-universal breadth into a social philosopher of modernity (see Lawrence A. Scaff, *Fleeing the Iron Cage* [Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1989]). Notably, *stahlhartes Gehäuse*, and its equivalents, appear in Weber's works either at the end of an empirical study, where he cannot resist the temptation to offer more general speculations (this volume and this volume only), or in his political writings (see "Prospects"

- [1978b] and "Parliament and Government" [1968]), but only once in the body of his sociology; see above (p. 73). Not a single entry can be found in the detailed index to *E&S*, for example, nor in the comprehensive index to the German edition. On the "steel-hard cage" theme generally, see Kalberg, "The Modern World as a Monolithic Iron Cage? Utilizing Max Weber to Define the Internal Dynamics of the American Political Culture Today," in *Max Weber Studies* 1, 2 (2001): 178–97. See also Chalcraft (1994) [sk].
17. "Couldn't the old man be satisfied with his \$75,000 a year and retire? No! The frontage of the store must be widened to 400 feet. Why? That beats everything, he says. Evenings, when his wife and daughter read together, he longs for bed. Sundays, in order to know when the day will be over, he checks his watch every five minutes. What a miserable existence!" In this manner the son-in-law (who had emigrated from Germany) of this prosperous dry-goods-man from a city on the Ohio River offered his judgment. Such a judgment would surely appear to the "old man" as completely incomprehensible. It could be easily dismissed as a symptom of the lack of energy of the Germans.
 18. This phrase (*letzte Menschen*) is from Friedrich Nietzsche. It could as well be translated as "last people." It is normally rendered as "last men." See *Ecce Homo* (New York: Vintage Books; transl. by Walter Kaufmann, 1967), p. 330; see also *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (New York: Penguin; transl. by R. J. Hollingdale, 1961), pp. 275–79, 296–311. The "last humans," to Nietzsche, are repulsive figures without emotion. Through their "little pleasures" they render everything small—yet they claim to have "invented happiness." Weber uses this phrase also in "Science as a Vocation." See *Weber*, 2005, p. 325 [sk].
 19. Despite thorough investigations by many generations of Weber scholars, the source of this quotation has remained unidentified. Although it appears not to be directly from Nietzsche, as often believed, it is clearly formulated from the tenor of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In full accord with the common usage in academic circles in his time, Weber is using the term *Geist* here to denote a thinker's "multidimensional" capacity to unify and integrate diverse ideas and concepts. This vital capacity was widely lamented in Germany as lacking among narrow specialists (*Fachmenschen*). This passage links back to the above paragraph on Goethe [sk].
 20. This term is a synonym for "ascetic Protestantism" [sk].
 21. This remark (which remains here unchanged) might have indicated to Brentano [*Die Anfänge des modernen Kapitalismus*, *op. cit.* (ch. 1, note 15)] that I never doubted the independent significance of humanistic rationalism. That even Humanism was not *pure* "rationalism" has been strongly emphasized recently again. See Karl Borinski, "Die Wiedergeburtsidee in den neueren Zeiten," in *Abhandlungen der Münchener Akademie der Wissenschaft* (1919). [1920] [Humanistic rationalism, which Weber is here contrasting to his subject, ascetic rationalism, refers to Humanism generally as it arose out of the Renaissance.]
 22. This phrase (*geistige Kulturgüter*) refers to the entire spectrum of "products of the mind," ranging from mathematical ideas and philosophical theories to interpretations of art and history. In Weber's time, they were more frequently referred to as "cultural ideas" (*Kulturideen*) or, simply, "ideas" (*Ideen*) [sk].
 23. Namely, the relationship between religious belief and economic activity [sk].
 24. The university lecture by Georg von Below, *Die Ursachen der Reformation* [Munich: Oldenbourg, 1917], is not concerned with this problem, but with the Reformation in general, especially with Luther. For the theme addressed *here*, and in particular the controversies that have tied into this study, the book from Heinrich Hermelink should be noted finally. See *Reformation und*

Gegenreformation (Tübingen: Mohr, 1911). Nonetheless, this investigation primarily addresses other problems. [1920]

25. The sketch above has intentionally taken up only the relationships in which an effect on “material” life by components of a religious consciousness is actually beyond doubt. It would have been a simple matter to move beyond this theme to a formal “construction,” according to which *all* that is “characteristic” of modern civilization is logically *deduced* out of Protestant rationalism. However, this sort of construction is better left to that type of dilettante who believes in the “unity” (*Einheitlichkeit*) of the “social psyche” and its reducibility to *one* formula. It should only further be noted that naturally the period of capitalist development *before* the development we have considered was *comprehensively co-determined* by Christian influences, both inhibiting and promoting. What type of influences these were belongs in a later chapter [see Weber, 2009, pp. 304–10, 370–76].

Whether, by the way, of those further problems outlined above, one or another can be discussed in the pages of *this journal* remains, in light of its particular tasks, uncertain. [Weber was an editor of *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* where *PE* was originally published.] I for one am not at all inclined to write large treatises that rest upon, as would occur if these “further problems” were to be pursued, unfamiliar (theological and historical) investigations. (I am allowing [1920] these sentences to stand unchanged [despite Weber’s authorship over a decade-long period of a three-volume treatise, *Economy and Society*, and the three-volume EEW series].)

On the *tension* between life-ideals and reality in the “early capitalist” period before the Reformation, see now Jakob Strieder, *Studien zur Geschichte kapitalistischer Organisationformen*, vol. 2 (Munich: Duncker & Humblot, 1914). (This study stands against the earlier cited work of Franz Keller, which Sombart used [see ch. 1, note 25; ch. 2, note 32].) [1920]

26. I would have believed that this sentence and the directly preceding observations [in the text] and endnotes might well have sufficed to exclude every misunderstanding regarding what this investigation *wanted* to achieve—and I find *no occasion for any sort of supplement*. Instead of pursuing the originally intended, direct continuation of this study, in the sense of the *agenda* outlined above, I have decided to follow a different course. This conclusion was arrived at in part owing to accident (especially the publication of Ernst Troeltsch’s *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, which comes to conclusions on subjects I would have taken up; yet, as a nontheologian, I could not have addressed them adequately), and in part as a consequence of a decision to strip this study on the Protestant ethic of its isolation and to place it in relation to the entirety of civilizational development. In order to do so I decided at the time to write down first of all the results of several comparative studies on the *universal-historical* relationships between religion and society. [1920] [See the EEW series and pp. 207–08.]

10. BUREAUCRACY

Weber was the first scholar to assess the impact of modern bureaucratic organizations, which he saw as an integral aspect of industrial capitalism, parallel in significance to the machine. He thought this to be the case because he understood that a successful capitalist had to make decisions based on such criteria as efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. Bureaucracy, like the machine, was a reflection of a scientific and rational worldview. Bureaucracy was thus essential if capitalism was to expand productive capacity. In Weber's estimation, this novel form of modern bureaucracy was becoming so pervasive that it was appropriate to define the present era as the age of bureaucracy. In this selection from his magnum opus, *Economy and Society* (1921), Weber presents an ideal typical portrait of the most salient features of bureaucracy, paying particular attention to the nature and basis of authority in bureaucracy.

Modern officialdom functions in the following specific manner:

I.

There is the principle of fixed and official jurisdictional areas, which are generally ordered by rules, that is, by laws or administrative regulations.

1. The regular activities required for the purposes of the bureaucratically governed structure are distributed in a fixed way as official duties.
2. The authority to give the commands required for the discharge of these duties is distributed in a stable way and is strictly delimited by rules concerning the coercive means, physical, sacerdotal, or otherwise, which may be placed at the disposal of officials.
3. Methodical provision is made for the regular and continuous fulfilment of these duties and for the execution of the corresponding rights; only persons who have the generally regulated qualifications to serve are employed.

In public and lawful government these three elements constitute 'bureaucratic authority.' In private economic domination, they constitute bureaucratic 'management.' Bureaucracy, thus understood, is fully developed in political and ecclesiastical communities only in the modern state, and, in the private economy, only in the most advanced institutions of capitalism. Permanent and public office authority, with fixed jurisdiction, is not the historical rule but rather the exception. This is so even in large political structures such as those of the ancient Orient, the Germanic and Mongolian empires of conquest, or of many feudal structures of state. In all these cases, the ruler executes the most important measures through personal trustees, table-companions, or court-servants. Their commissions and authority are not precisely delimited and are temporarily called into being for each case.

II.

The principles of office hierarchy and of levels of graded authority mean a firmly ordered system of super- and

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subordination in which there is a supervision of the lower offices by the higher ones. Such a system offers the governed the possibility of appealing the decision of a lower office to its higher authority, in a definitely regulated manner. With the full development of the bureaucratic type, the office hierarchy is monocratically organized. The principle of hierarchical office authority is found in all bureaucratic structures: in state and ecclesiastical structures as well as in large party organizations and private enterprises. It does not matter for the character of bureaucracy whether its authority is called 'private' or 'public.'

When the principle of jurisdictional 'competency' is fully carried through, hierarchical subordination—at least in public office—does not mean that the 'higher' authority is simply authorized to take over the business of the 'lower.' Indeed, the opposite is the rule. Once established and having fulfilled its task, an office tends to continue in existence and be held by another incumbent.

III.

The management of the modern office is based upon written documents ('the files'), which are preserved in their original or draught form. There is, therefore, a staff of subaltern officials and scribes of all sorts. The body of officials actively engaged in a 'public' office, along with the respective apparatus of material implements and the files, make up a 'bureau.' In private enterprise, 'the bureau' is often called 'the office.'

In principle, the modern organization of the civil service separates the bureau from the private domicile of the official and, in general, bureaucracy segregates official activity as something distinct from the sphere of private life. Public monies and equipment are divorced from the private property of the official. This condition is everywhere the product of a long development. Nowadays, it is found in public as well as in private enterprises; in the latter, the principle extends even to the leading entrepreneur. In principle, the executive office is separated from the household, business from private correspondence, and business assets from private fortunes. The more consistently the modern type of business management has been carried through the more are these separations the case.

The beginnings of this process are to be found as early as the Middle Ages.

It is the peculiarity of the modern entrepreneur that he conducts himself as the 'first official' of his enterprise, in the very same way in which the ruler of a specifically modern bureaucratic state spoke of himself as 'the first servant' of the state.¹ The idea that the bureau activities of the state are intrinsically different in character from the management of private economic offices is a continental European notion and, by way of contrast, is totally foreign to the American way.

IV.

Office management, at least all specialized office management—and such management is distinctly modern—usually presupposes thorough and expert training. This increasingly holds for the modern executive and employee of private enterprises, in the same manner as it holds for the state official.

V.

When the office is fully developed, official activity demands the full working capacity of the official irrespective of the fact that his obligatory time in the bureau may be firmly delimited. In the normal case, this is only the product of a long development, in the public as well as in the private office. Formerly, in all cases, the normal state of affairs was reversed: official business was discharged as a secondary activity.

VI.

The management of the office follows general rules, which are more or less stable, more or less exhaustive, and which can be learned. Knowledge of these rules represents a special technical learning which the officials possess. It involves jurisprudence, or administrative or business management.

The reduction of modern office management to rules is deeply embedded in its very nature. The theory of modern public administration, for instance, assumes that the authority to order certain matters by decree—which has been legally granted to public authorities—does not entitle the bureau to regulate the matter by commands given for each case, but only to regulate the

matter abstractly. This stands in extreme contrast to the regulation of all relationships through individual privileges and bestowals of favor, which is absolutely dominant in patrimonialism, at least in so far as such relationships are not fixed by sacred tradition.

THE POSITION OF THE OFFICIAL

All this results in the following for the internal and external position of the official:

I.

Office holding is a 'vocation.' This is shown, first, in the requirement of a firmly prescribed course of training, which demands the entire capacity for work for a long period of time, and in the generally prescribed and special examinations which are prerequisites of employment. Furthermore, the position of the official is in the nature of a duty. This determines the internal structure of his relations, in the following manner: Legally and actually, office holding is not considered a source to be exploited for rents or emoluments, as was normally the case during the Middle Ages and frequently up to the threshold of recent times. Nor is office holding considered a usual exchange of services for equivalents, as is the case with free labor contracts. Entrance into an office, including one in the private economy, is considered an acceptance of a specific obligation of faithful management in return for a secure existence. It is decisive for the specific nature of modern loyalty to an office that, in the pure type, it does not establish a relationship to a *person*, like the vassal's or disciple's faith in feudal or in patrimonial relations of authority. Modern loyalty is devoted to impersonal and functional purposes. Behind the functional purposes, of course, 'ideas of culture-values' usually stand. These are *ersatz* for the earthly or supramundane personal master: ideas such as 'state,' 'church,' 'community,' 'party,' or 'enterprise' are thought of as being realized in a community; they provide an ideological halo for the master.

The political official—at least in the fully developed modern state—is not considered the personal servant of a ruler. Today, the bishop, the priest, and the preacher are in fact no longer, as in early Christian

times, holders of purely personal charisma. The supramundane and sacred values which they offer are given to everybody who seems to be worthy of them and who asks for them. In former times, such leaders acted upon the personal command of their master; in principle, they were responsible only to him. Nowadays, in spite of the partial survival of the old theory, such religious leaders are officials in the service of a functional purpose, which in the present-day 'church' has become routinized and, in turn, ideologically hallowed.

II.

The personal position of the official is patterned in the following way:

1. Whether he is in a private office or a public bureau, the modern official always strives and usually enjoys a distinct *social esteem* as compared with the governed. His social position is guaranteed by the prescriptive rules of rank order and, for the political official, by special definitions of the criminal code against 'insults of officials' and 'contempt' of state and church authorities.

The actual social position of the official is normally highest where, as in old civilized countries, the following conditions prevail: a strong demand for administration by trained experts; a strong and stable social differentiation, where the official predominantly derives from socially and economically privileged strata because of the social distribution of power; or where the costliness of the required training and status conventions are binding upon him. The possession of educational certificates—to be discussed elsewhere²—are usually linked with qualification for office. Naturally, such certificates or patents enhance the 'status element' in the social position of the official. For the rest this status factor in individual cases is explicitly and impassively acknowledged; for example, in the prescription that the acceptance or rejection of an aspirant to an official career depends upon the consent ('election') of the members of the official body. This is the case in the German army with the officer corps. Similar phenomena, which promote this guild-like closure of officialdom, are

typically found in patrimonial and, particularly, in prebendal officialdoms of the past. The desire to resurrect such phenomena in changed forms is by no means infrequent among modern bureaucrats. For instance, they have played a role among the demands of the quite proletarian and expert officials (the *tretyj* element) during the Russian revolution.

Usually the social esteem of the officials as such is especially low where the demand for expert administration and the dominance of status conventions are weak. This is especially the case in the United States; it is often the case in new settlements by virtue of their wide fields for profit-making and the great instability of their social stratification.

2. The pure type of bureaucratic official is *appointed* by a superior authority. An official elected by the governed is not a purely bureaucratic figure. Of course, the formal existence of an election does not by itself mean that no appointment hides behind the election—in the state, especially, appointment by party chiefs. Whether or not this is the case does not depend upon legal statutes but upon the way in which the party mechanism functions. Once firmly organized, the parties can turn a formally free election into the mere acclamation of a candidate designated by the party chief. As a rule, however, a formally free election is turned into a fight, conducted according to definite rules, for votes in favor of one of two designated candidates.

In all circumstances, the designation of officials by means of an election among the governed modifies the strictness of hierarchical subordination. In principle, an official who is so elected has an autonomous position opposite the superordinate official. The elected official does not derive his position 'from above' but 'from below,' or at least not from a superior authority of the official hierarchy but from powerful party men ('bosses'), who also determine his further career. The career of the elected official is not, or at least not primarily, dependent upon his chief in the administration. The official who is not elected but appointed by a chief normally functions more exactly, from a technical point of view, because, all other circumstances being equal, it is more likely that purely functional points of consideration and qualities will

determine his selection and career. As laymen, the governed can become acquainted with the extent to which a candidate is expertly qualified for office only in terms of experience, and hence only after his service. Moreover, in every sort of selection of officials by election, parties quite naturally give decisive weight not to expert considerations but to the services a follower renders to the party boss. This holds for all kinds of procurement of officials by elections, for the designation of formally free, elected officials by party bosses when they determine the slate of candidates, or the free appointment by a chief who has himself been elected. The contrast, however, is relative: substantially similar conditions hold where legitimate monarchs and their subordinates appoint officials, except that the influence of the followings are then less controllable.

Where the demand for administration by trained experts is considerable, and the party followings have to recognize an intellectually developed, educated, and freely moving 'public opinion,' the use of unqualified officials falls back upon the party in power at the next election. Naturally, this is more likely to happen when the officials are appointed by the chief. The demand for a trained administration now exists in the United States, but in the large cities, where immigrant votes are 'corralled,' there is, of course, no educated public opinion. Therefore, popular elections of the administrative chief and also of his subordinate officials usually endanger the expert qualification of the official as well as the precise functioning of the bureaucratic mechanism. It also weakens the dependence of the officials upon the hierarchy. This holds at least for the large administrative bodies that are difficult to supervise. The superior qualification and integrity of federal judges, appointed by the President, as over against elected judges in the United States is well known, although both types of officials have been selected primarily in terms of party considerations. The great changes in American metropolitan administrations demanded by reformers have proceeded essentially from elected mayors working with an apparatus of officials who were appointed by them. These reforms have thus come about in

a 'Caesarist' fashion. Viewed technically, as an organized form of authority, the efficiency of 'Caesarism,' which often grows out of democracy, rests in general upon the position of the 'Caesar' as a free trustee of the masses (of the army or of the citizenry), who is unfettered by tradition. The 'Caesar' is thus the unrestrained master of a body of highly qualified military officers and officials whom he selects freely and personally without regard to tradition or to any other considerations. This 'rule of the personal genius,' however, stands in contradiction to the formally 'democratic' principle of a universally elected officialdom.

3. Normally, the position of the official is held for life, at least in public bureaucracies; and this is increasingly the case for all similar structures. As a factual rule, *tenure for life* is presupposed, even where the giving of notice or periodic reappointment occurs. In contrast to the worker in a private enterprise, the official normally holds tenure. Legal or actual life-tenure, however, is not recognized as the official's right to the possession of office, as was the case with many structures of authority in the past. Where legal guarantees against arbitrary dismissal or transfer are developed, they merely serve to guarantee a strictly objective discharge of specific office duties free from all personal considerations. In Germany, this is the case for all juridical and, increasingly, for all administrative officials.

Within the bureaucracy, therefore, the measure of 'independence,' legally guaranteed by tenure, is not always a source of increased status for the official whose position is thus secured. Indeed, often the reverse holds, especially in old cultures and communities that are highly differentiated. In such communities, the stricter the subordination under the arbitrary rule of the master, the more it guarantees the maintenance of the conventional seigneurial style of living for the official. Because of the very absence of these legal guarantees of tenure, the conventional esteem for the official may rise in the same way as, during the Middle Ages, the esteem of the nobility of office³ rose at the expense of esteem for the freemen, and as the king's judge surpassed that of the people's judge. In Germany, the military officer or the administrative

official can be removed from office at any time, or at least far more readily than the 'independent judge,' who never pays with loss of his office for even the grossest offense against the 'code of honor' or against social conventions of the salon. For this very reason, if other things are equal, in the eyes of the master stratum the judge is considered less qualified for social intercourse than are officers and administrative officials, whose greater dependence on the master is a greater guarantee of their conformity with status conventions. Of course, the average official strives for a civil-service law, which would materially secure his old age and provide increased guarantees against his arbitrary removal from office. This striving, however, has its limits. A very strong development of the 'right to the office' naturally makes it more difficult to staff them with regard to technical efficiency, for such a development decreases the career-opportunities of ambitious candidates for office. This makes for the fact that officials, on the whole, do not feel their dependency upon those at the top. This lack of a feeling of dependency, however, rests primarily upon the inclination to depend upon one's equals rather than upon the socially inferior and governed strata. The present conservative movement among the Badenia clergy, occasioned by the anxiety of a presumably threatening separation of church and state, has been expressly determined by the desire not to be turned 'from a master into a servant of the parish.'⁴

4. The official receives the regular pecuniary compensation of a normally fixed salary and the old age security provided by a pension. The salary is not measured like a wage in terms of work done, but according to 'status,' that is, according to the kind of function (the 'rank') and, in addition, possibly, according to the length of service. The relatively great security of the official's income, as well as the rewards of social esteem, make the office a sought-after position, especially in countries which no longer provide opportunities for colonial profits. In such countries, this situation permits relatively low salaries for officials.
5. The official is set for a 'career' within the hierarchical of the public service. He moves from the lower,

less important, and lower paid to the higher positions. The average official naturally desires a mechanical fixing of the conditions of promotion: if not of the offices, at least of the salary levels. He wants these conditions fixed in terms of 'seniority,' or possibly according to grades achieved in a developed system of expert examinations. Here and there, such examinations actually form a character indelebilis of the official and have lifelong effects on his career. To this is joined the desire to qualify the right to office and the increasing tendency

toward status group closure and economic security. All of this makes for a tendency to consider the offices as 'prebends' of those who are qualified by educational certificates. The necessity of taking general personal and intellectual qualifications into consideration, irrespective of the often subaltern character of the educational certificate, has led to a condition in which the highest political offices, especially the positions of 'ministers,' are principally filled without reference to such certificates. . . .

NOTES

1. Frederick II of Prussia.
2. Cf. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, pp. 73 ff. and part II. (German Editor.)
3. 'Ministerialan.'
4. Written before 1914. (German editor's note.)

11. THE SOCIOLOGY OF CHARISMATIC AUTHORITY

In his political sociology, Weber identified three bases for legitimate authority or domination: traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational. In this selection from *Economy and Society* (1921), he discusses the characteristic features of charismatic authority. Borrowing the term from Rudolph Sohm's depiction of religious leadership in early Christianity, he locates this type of authority in the perceived extraordinary character of the individual, who is viewed by followers as being endowed with grace. Charismatic leadership involves a profoundly emotional bond between the leader and followers, and in its purest form it is construed as being potentially disruptive, revolutionary, and anti-institutional, and thus a source of far-reaching social upheaval.

Bureaucracy, like the patriarchal system which is opposed to it in so many ways, is a structure of 'the everyday', in the sense that stability is among its most important characteristics. Patriarchal power, above all, is rooted in the supply of the normal, constantly recurring needs of everyday life and thus has its basis in the economy—indeed, in just those sections of the economy concerned with the supply of normal everyday requirements. The patriarch is the 'natural leader' in everyday life. In this respect, bureaucracy is the counterpart of patriarchy, only expressed in more rational terms. Bureaucracy, moreover, is a permanent structure and is well adapted, with its system of rational rules, for the satisfaction of calculable long-term needs by normal methods. On the other hand, the supply of all needs which go beyond the economic requirements of everyday life is seen, the further back we go in history, to be based on a totally different principle, that of *charisma*. In other words, the 'natural' leaders in times of spiritual, physical, economic, ethical, religious or political emergency were neither appointed officials nor trained and salaried specialist 'professionals' (in the present-day sense of the word

'profession'), but those who possessed specific physical and spiritual gifts which were regarded as supernatural, in the sense of not being available to everyone.

In this context, the concept of 'charisma' is being used in a completely 'value-free' way. The ability of the Nordic 'Berserker' to work himself up into an heroic trance, in which he bites his shield and his person like a rabid dog, eventually dashing off in a raving blood-lust (like the Irish hero Cuculain or Homer's Achilles) is a form of manic attack, artificially induced, according to a theory long held about the Berserkers, by acute poisoning: in Byzantium, indeed, a number of 'blond beasts' with a talent for inducing such attacks were kept, in much the same way as war elephants had previously been. Shamanic trances, likewise, are connected with constitutional epilepsy, the possession of which, once confirmed, constitutes the charismatic qualification. Thus, both kinds of trance have nothing 'uplifting' about them to our way of thinking, any more than does the kind of 'revelation' to be found in the sacred book of the Mormons which must, at least in terms of its value, be considered a crude swindle. Such questions, however, do not concern sociology: the

Weber, Max. "The Nature of Charismatic Domination," pages 226–235 in W.G. Runciman, editor, *Weber: Selections in Translation*, translated by Eric Matthews, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978. ♦

Mormon leader, like the heroes and magicians already referred to, is certified as charismatically gifted by the beliefs of his followers. It was in virtue of possessing this gift or 'charisma' and (if a clear concept of god had already been formed) in virtue of the divine mission embodied therein that they practised their art and exercised their domination. This was as true of healers and prophets as of judges or leaders in war or great hunting expeditions. We have to thank Rudolph Sohm for having worked out the sociological features of this type of power-structure in relation to one particular case of great historical importance (the historical development of the power of the Christian Church in its early stages) in a way which is intellectually coherent and so, from a purely historical point of view, necessarily one-sided. But the same situation in all its essentials is repeated everywhere, even though often expressed in its purest form in the religious domain.

In contrast with all forms of bureaucratic administrative system, the charismatic structure recognises no forms or orderly procedures for appointment or dismissal, no 'career', no 'advancement', no 'salary'; there is no organised training either for the bearer of charisma or his aides, no arrangements for supervision or appeal, no allocation of local areas of control or exclusive spheres of competence, and finally no standing institutions comparable to bureaucratic 'governing bodies' independent of persons and of their purely personal charisma. Rather, charisma recognises only those stipulations and limitations which come from within itself. The bearer of charisma assumes the tasks appropriate to him and requires obedience and a following in virtue of his mission. His success depends on whether he finds them. If those to whom he feels himself sent do not recognise his mission, then his claims collapse. If they do recognise him, then he remains their master for as long as he is able to retain their recognition by giving 'proofs'. His right to rule, however, is not dependent on their will, as is that of an elected leader; on the contrary, it is the duty of those to whom he is sent to recognise his charismatic qualification. When the Emperor's right to rule is said, in the Chinese theory, to depend on recognition by the people, that is no more a case of the acceptance of popular sovereignty than is the requirement of the early Christian Church that prophets should be 'recognised'

by the faithful. Rather, it is a sign of the charismatic character of the monarch's office, based as it is on personal qualification and proof. Charisma may be, and obviously often is, qualitatively specialised, in which case qualitative limitations are imposed on the mission and power of its bearer by the internal character of his charisma, not by external regulation. The meaning and content of the mission may be (and normally are) directed to a human group which is defined geographically, ethnically, socially, politically, occupationally, or in some other way; its limits are then set by the boundaries of that group.

Charismatic domination is diametrically opposed to bureaucratic in all respects, and hence in its economic sub-structure. Bureaucracy depends on constancy of income, and so *a fortiori* on a money economy and money taxation, while charisma lives in the world, but is certainly not of it. The true meaning of this remark needs to be understood. Frequently there is a completely conscious sense of horror at the possession of money and at money incomes as such, as in the case of St. Francis and many like him. But of course this is not the general rule. The domination exercised even by a gifted pirate may be 'charismatic' in the value-free sense of that term used here, and charismatic political heroes seek booty, above all in the form of money. But the important point is that charisma rejects as dishonourable all rational planning in the acquisition of money, and in general all rational forms of economy. In this it is sharply contrasted also with all 'patriarchal' structures, which are based on the orderly foundation of the 'household'. In its 'pure' form, charisma is not a private source of income for its bearer, either in the sense of being economically exploited in the fashion of an exchange of services or in the other sense of being salaried; equally, it is without any organised levying of tribute to provide for the material needs of the mission. Rather, if its mission is a peaceful one, its requirements are economically provided either by individual patrons or by the donations, contributions or other voluntary services given by those to whom it is directed. Alternatively, in the case of charismatic war heroes, booty furnishes both one of the goals of the mission and a means of supplying its material needs. 'Pure' charisma is opposed to all forms of regulated economy—in contrast with all

kinds of 'patriarchal' domination in the sense of that term used here: it is a, indeed *the*, anti-economic force, even (indeed precisely) when it seeks to obtain possession of material goods, as in the case of the charismatic war hero. This is possible because charisma, by its very essence, is not a permanent 'institutional' structure, but rather, when it is functioning in its 'pure' form, the exact opposite. Those who possess charisma—not only the master himself but his disciples and followers—must, in order to fulfil their mission, keep themselves free of all worldly ties, free from everyday occupations as well as from everyday family responsibilities. The prohibition against accepting payment for ecclesiastical office laid down in the statutes of the Jesuit order, the prohibition against owning property imposed on members of an order, or even, as in the original rule of the Franciscans, on the order itself, the rule of celibacy for priests and members of knightly orders, the actual celibacy of many bearers of prophetic or artistic charisma—all express the necessary 'alienation from the world' of those who have a share ('κληρος') in charisma. The economic conditions of having such a share may, however, seem, from the outside to be opposed to each other, depending on the kind of charisma and the way of life which expresses its meaning (religious or artistic, for example). When modern charismatic movements of artistic origin suggest 'those of independent means' (or, putting it in plainer language, *rentiers*) as the persons normally best qualified to be followers of someone with a charismatic mission, this is just as logical as was the vow of poverty taken by the medieval monastic orders, which had precisely the opposite economic implications.

The continued existence of charismatic authority is, by its very nature, characteristically *unstable*: the bearer may lose his charisma, feel himself, like Jesus on the cross, to be 'abandoned by his God', and show himself to his followers as 'bereft of his power', and then his mission is dead, and his followers must hopefully await and search out a new charismatic leader. He himself, however, is abandoned by his following, for pure charisma recognises no 'legitimacy' other than that conferred by personal power, which must be constantly re-confirmed. The charismatic hero does not derive his authority from ordinances and statutes, as if it were an official 'competence', nor from customary

usage or feudal fealty, as with patrimonial power: rather, he acquires it and retains it only by proving his powers in real life. He must perform miracles if he wants to be a prophet, acts of heroism if he wants to be a leader in war. Above all, however, his divine mission must 'prove' itself in that those who entrust themselves to him must prosper. If they do not, then he is obviously not the master sent by the gods. This very serious conception of genuine charisma obviously stands in stark contrast with the comfortable pretensions of the modern theory of the 'divine right of kings', with its references to the 'inscrutable' decrees of God, 'to whom alone the monarch is answerable': the genuinely charismatic leader, by contrast, is answerable rather to his subjects. That is, it is for that reason and that reason alone that precisely he personally is the genuine master willed by God.

Someone who holds power in a way which still has important residual charismatic elements, as the Chinese monarchs did (at least in theory), will blame himself if his administration does not succeed in exorcising some calamity which has befallen his subjects, whether a flood or a defeat in war: openly, before the whole people, he will condemn his own sins and shortcomings, as we have seen even in the last few decades. If even this penitence does not appease the gods, then he resigns himself to dismissal and death, which is often the method of atonement. This is the very specific meaning of the proposition found, for instance, in Mencius that the voice of the people is 'the voice of God' (according to Mencius, this is the *only* way in which God speaks!): once he is no longer recognised by the people, the master becomes (as is expressly said) a simple private citizen, and, if he aspires to anything more, he is a usurper and deserves to be punished. The situation expressed in these phrases, with their extremely revolutionary resonance, can also be found, in forms which carry no hint of pathos, in primitive societies, where authority has the charismatic character to be found in almost all primitive authority, with the exception of domestic power in the strictest sense, and the chief is often simply deserted if success deserts him.

The purely *de facto* 'recognition', whether active or passive, of his personal mission by the subjects, on which the power of the charismatic lord rests, has its

source in submission by faith to the extraordinary and unheard-of, to that which does not conform to any rule or tradition and is therefore regarded as divine—a submission born from distress and enthusiasm. In genuine charismatic domination, therefore, there are no abstract legal propositions and regulations and no ‘formalised’ legal judgments. ‘Objective’ law, in such a case, flows from concrete and intensely personal experience of heavenly grace and a semi-divine heroic stature: it means the rejection of the bonds of external organisation in favour of nothing but the ecstasy of the true prophet and hero. It thus leads to a revolutionary revaluation of everything and a sovereign break with all traditional or rational norms: ‘it is written, but I say unto you’. The specifically charismatic method of settling disputes is a revelation through the prophet or oracle, or the ‘Solomonic’ judgments of a charismatically qualified sage based on evaluations which, while extremely concrete and individual, yet claim absolute validity. This is the true home of ‘Kadi-justice’, in the proverbial rather than the historical sense of that word. For, as an actual historical phenomenon, the judgments of the Islamic *Kadi* were bound up with sacred traditions and their often extremely formalistic interpretation: they amounted in some situations, to be sure, to specific, rule-free evaluations of the individual case, but only where these sources of knowledge had failed. Genuinely charismatic justice is always rule-free in this sense: in its pure form it is completely opposed to all the bonds of formalism and tradition and is as free in its attitude to the sanctity of tradition as to rationalistic deductions from abstract concepts. There will be no discussion here of the relation of the reference to ‘*aequum et bonum*’ in Roman Law and the original sense of the term ‘equity’ in English law to charismatic justice in general and the theocratic Kadi-justice of Islam in particular. However, both are products in part of a system of justice which is already highly rationalised and in part of the abstract concepts of Natural Law: the phrase ‘*ex fide bona*’ contains in any case an allusion to good commercial ‘morality’ and so has as little to do with genuinely irrational justice as does our own ‘free judicial opinion’. To be sure, all forms of trial by ordeal are derived from charismatic justice. But to the extent that they substitute for the personal authority of a bearer of charisma a rule-bound mechanism

for the formal determination of the divine will, they already belong to the domain of that ‘bringing down to earth’ of charisma which is shortly to be discussed.

As we saw, bureaucratic rationalisation can also be, and often has been, a revolutionary force of the first order in its relation to tradition. But its revolution is carried out by *technical* means, basically ‘from the outside’ (as is especially true of all economic reorganisation); first it revolutionises things and organisations, and then, in consequence, it changes people, in the sense that it alters the conditions to which they must adapt and in some cases increases their chances of adapting to the external world by rational determination of means and ends. The power of charisma, by contrast, depends on beliefs in revelation and heroism, on emotional convictions about the importance and value of a religious, ethical, artistic, scientific, political or other manifestation, on heroism, whether ascetic or military, or judicial wisdom or magical or other favours. Such belief revolutionises men ‘from within’ and seeks to shape things and organisations in accordance with its revolutionary will. This contrast must, to be sure, be rightly understood. For all the vast differences in the areas in which they operate, the psychological origins of ideas are essentially the same, whether they are religious, artistic, ethical, scientific or of any other kind: this is especially true of the organising ideas of social and political life. Only a purely subjective, ‘time-serving’ evaluation could attribute one sort of idea to ‘understanding’ and another to ‘intuition’ (or whatever other pair of terms one might care to use): the mathematical ‘imagination’ of a Weierstrass is ‘intuition’ in exactly the same sense as that of any artist, prophet or, for that matter, of any demagogue: that is not where the difference lies.¹ If we are to understand the true meaning of ‘rationalism’, we must emphasise that the difference does not lie in general in the person or in the inner ‘experiences’ of the creator of the ideas or the ‘work’, but in the manner in which it is inwardly ‘appropriated’ or ‘experienced’ by those whom he rules or leads. We have already seen that, in the process of rationalisation, the great majority of those who are led merely appropriate the external technical consequences which are of practical importance to their interests, or else adapt themselves to them (in the same way that we ‘learn’ our multiplication tables

or as all too many jurists learn the techniques of the law): the actual content of their creator's ideas remains irrelevant to them. This is the meaning of the assertion that rationalisation and rational organisation revolutionise 'from the outside', whereas charisma, wherever its characteristic influence is felt, on the contrary exerts its revolutionary power from within, by producing a fundamental change of heart (*'metanoia'*) in the ruled. The bureaucratic form of organisation merely replaces the belief in the holiness of what has always been—the traditional standards—with submission to deliberately created rules: everyone knows that anyone with sufficient power can always replace these rules with others, equally deliberately created, and so that they are not in any sense 'sacred'. By contrast, charisma, in its highest forms, bursts the bonds of rules and tradition in general and overturns all ideas of the sacred. Instead of the pious following of time-hallowed custom, it enforces inner subjection to something which has never before existed, is absolutely unique and is therefore considered divine. It is in this purely empirical and value-free sense the characteristically 'creative' revolutionary force in history.

Although both charismatic and patriarchal power rest on personal submission to 'natural leaders' and personal exercise of authority by them (in contrast with the 'appointed' leaders of bureaucratic systems), the submission and the authority take very different forms in the two cases. The patriarch, like the bureaucratic official, holds his authority in virtue of a certain established order: the difference between this order and the laws and regulations of the bureaucracy is that it is not deliberately created by men but has been accepted as inviolably valid from time immemorial. The bearer of charisma holds his authority in virtue of a mission held to be incarnate in his person: this mission need not always or necessarily be of a revolutionary nature, dedicated to the subversion of all hierarchies of value and the overthrow of existing morality, law and tradition, but it certainly has been in its highest forms. However unstable the existence of patriarchal power may be in the case of any particular individual, it is nevertheless the structure of social domination which is appropriate to the demands of everyday life and which, like everyday life itself, continues to function without regard to changes in the individual holder of

power or in the environment. In these respects it may be contrasted with the charismatic structure which is born of extraordinary situations of emergency and enthusiasm. Both kinds of structure may, in themselves, be suited to any sphere of life: many of the old German armies, for instance, fought patriarchally, divided into families each under the leadership of its head. The ancient colonising armies of Eastern monarchs and the contingents of small farmers in the Frankish army, marching under the leadership of their *'seniores'*, were patrimonially organised. The religious function of the head of the household and religious worship within the household persist alongside the official community cult on the one hand and the great movements of charismatic prophecy, which in the nature of the case are almost always revolutionary, on the other. Along with the peacetime leader who deals with the everyday economic business of the community, and the popular levy in times of war involving the whole community, there is found nevertheless, among the Germans as well as the Indians, the charismatic war hero, who takes the field with his volunteer force of followers; even in official national wars the normal peacetime authorities are very often replaced by the warprince, proclaimed as *'Herzog'* on an *ad hoc* basis because he has proved himself as a hero in such adventures.

In the political sphere, as in the religious, it is traditional, customary, everyday needs which are served by the patriarchal structure, resting as it does on habit, respect for tradition, piety towards elders and ancestors and bonds of personal loyalty, in contrast with the revolutionary role of charisma. This holds likewise in the economic sphere. The economy, as an organised permanent system of transactions for the purpose of planned provision for the satisfaction of material needs, is the specific home of the patriarchal structure of domination, and of the bureaucratic structure as it becomes increasingly rationalised to the level of the 'enterprise'. Nevertheless, even here there may be room for charisma. In primitive societies, charismatic features are often found in the organisation of hunting, which was at that time an important branch of the provision of material needs, even if it became less important as material culture increased: hunting was organised in a similar way to war, and even at a later stage was long treated in much the same way as war

(even up to the time of the Assyrian royal inscriptions). But even in specifically capitalist economies the antagonism between charisma and the everyday can be found, except that here it is not charisma and 'household', but charisma and 'enterprise' which are opposed. When Henry Villard, with the aim of pulling off a coup on the stock exchange involving the shares of the Northern Pacific Railroad, arranged the famous 'blind pool', asked the public, without stating his purpose, for fifty million pounds for an undertaking which he refused to specify any further, and got the loan without security on the basis of his reputation, his action was an example of grandiose booty-capitalism and economic brigandage which, like other similar examples, was fundamentally different in its whole structure and spirit from the rational management of a normal large capitalist 'enterprise', while on the other hand resembling the large financial undertakings and projects for colonial exploitation, or the 'occasional trade' combined with piracy and slave-hunting expeditions, which have been known since earliest times. One can only understand the double nature of what one might call 'the spirit of capitalism', and equally the specific features of the modern, professionalised, bureaucratic form of everyday capitalism if one learns to make the conceptual distinction between these two structural elements, which are thoroughly entangled with one another, but are in the last analysis distinct.

Although a 'purely' charismatic authority in the sense of the word used here cannot, to the extent that it preserves its purity, be understood as an 'organisation' in the usual sense of an ordering of men and things according to the principle of ends and means, nevertheless its existence implies, not an amorphous, unstructured condition, but a well-defined form of social structure with personal organs and a suitable apparatus for providing services and material goods for the mission of the bearer of charisma. The leader's personal aides and, among them, a certain kind of charismatic aristocracy represent a narrower group of followers within the group, formed on principles of discipleship and personal loyalty and chosen according to personal charismatic qualification. The provision of material goods, though in theory voluntary, non-statutory and fluctuating, is regarded as a bounden duty of the charismatic ruler's subjects to an extent sufficient to cover what is required, and such

services are offered according to need and capacity. The more the purity of the charismatic structure is maintained, the less the followers or disciples receive their material means of support or social position in the form of prebends, stipends, or any form of remuneration or salary, or in the form of titles or places in an ordered hierarchy. As far as material needs are concerned, to the extent that individuals have no other means of support, the master, in a community under authoritarian leadership, shares with his followers, without any form of deduction or contract, the wealth which flows in, according to circumstances, in the form of donations, booty or bequests; in some cases, therefore, they have rights of commensality and claims to equipment and donations which he bestows on them. As for non-material needs, they have a right to share in the social, political and religious esteem and honour which is paid to the master himself. Every deviation from this sullies the purity of the charismatic structure and marks a step towards other structural forms.

Together with the household community (though distinct from it), charisma is thus the second great historical example of communism, if that term is taken to mean a lack of 'calculation' in the *consumption* of goods, rather than the rational organisation of the *production* of goods for some kind of common benefit (which might be called 'socialism'). Every form of 'communism' in this sense which is known to history finds its true home either in traditional or patriarchal societies (household communism)—the only form in which it has been or is now a phenomenon of the everyday—or amongst charismatic modes of thought far removed from the everyday: in the latter case, when complete, it is either the camp-communism of the robber band or the love-communism of the monastery in all its varied forms and its tendency to degenerate into mere 'charity' or almsgiving. Camp-communism (in varying degrees of purity) can be found in charismatic warrior societies in all periods, from the pirate-state of the Ligurian islands to the organisation of Islam under the Caliph Omar and the warrior orders of Christendom and of Japanese Buddhism. Love-communism in one form or another is found at the origins of all religions, and lives on amongst the professional followers of the god, or monks; it is also to be found in the many pietistic sects (Labadie,

for instance) and other extremist religious communities. Both the genuine heroic disposition and genuine sanctity, as it seems to their true advocates, can only be preserved by maintenance of the communistic basis and absence of the urge towards individual private property. In this they are right: charisma is a force which is essentially outside the everyday and so necessarily outside economics. It is immediately threatened in its innermost being when the economic interests of everyday life prevail, as always tends to happen: the first stage in its decline is the 'prebend', the 'allowance' granted in place of the earlier communistic mode of provision from the common store. Every possible means is used by the proponents of true charisma to set limits to this decline. All specifically warrior states—Sparta is a typical example—retained remnants of charismatic communism and sought (no less than religious orders) to protect the heroes from the 'temptations' presented by a concern for possessions,

rational industry, and family cares. The adjustments achieved between these remnants of the older charismatic principles and individual economic interests, which enter with the introduction of prebends and are constantly hammering at the doors, take the most varied forms. In all cases, however, the limitless freedom to found families and acquire wealth which is finally given marks the end of the domination of true charisma. It is only the shared dangers of the military camp or the loving disposition of disciples who are withdrawn from the world which can hold communism together, and it is only communism in its turn which can ensure the purity of charisma against the interests of the everyday.

All charisma, however, in every hour of its existence finds itself on this road, from a passionate life in which there is no place for the economic to slow suffocation under the weight of material interests, and with every hour of its existence it moves further along it.

NOTE

1. And incidentally they correspond completely with each other also in the 'value-sphere', which does not concern us here, in that they all—even artistic intuition—in order to make themselves objective and so in general to prove their reality, imply 'grasping', or, if it is preferred, being 'grasped' by the claims of the 'work', and not a subjective 'feeling' or 'experience' like any other.

12. CLASS, STATUS, PARTY

Albert Salomon once wrote that Weber's sociology constitutes "a long and intense dialogue with the ghost of Marx." While this is something of an overstatement, Weber was in significant ways responding to Marxist theory. In this passage from *Economy and Society* (1921), Weber articulates at the conceptual level the basis of a critique of the economic determinism that he thought infected Marx's work. He identifies three discrete but interrelated realms: the economic, where class is the key concept; the social order (or culture), where status is the central notion; and power (or the political), where the party is the key associational mode. Weber was actually in agreement with Marx insofar as he believed that the economy has a particularly determinative impact on the social order and power, but he sought to correct what he thought was Marx's tendency to deny a relative autonomy to culture and politics.

ECONOMICALLY DETERMINED POWER AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

Law exists when there is a probability that an order will be upheld by a specific staff of men who will use physical or psychical compulsion with the intention of obtaining conformity with the order, or of inflicting sanctions for infringement of it.¹ The structure of every legal order directly influences the distribution of power, economic or otherwise, within its respective community. This is true of all legal orders and not only that of the state. In general, we understand by 'power' the chance of a man or of a number of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action.

'Economically conditioned' power is not, of course, identical with 'power' as such. On the contrary, the emergence of economic power may be the consequence of power existing on other grounds. Man does not strive for power only in order to enrich himself economically. Power, including economic power, may be valued 'for its own sake.' Very frequently the striving

for power is also conditioned by the social 'honor' it entails. Not all power, however, entails social honor: The typical American boss, as well as the typical big speculator, deliberately relinquishes social honor. Quite generally, 'mere economic' power, and especially 'naked' money power, is by no means a recognized basis of social honor. Nor is power the only basis of social honor. Indeed, social honor, or prestige, may even be the basis of political or economic power, and very frequently has been. Power, as well as honor, may be guaranteed by the legal order, but, at least normally, it is not their primary source. The legal order is rather an additional factor that enhances the chance to hold power or honor; but it cannot always secure them.

The way in which social honor is distributed in a community between typical groups participating in this distribution we may call the 'social order.' The social order and the economic order are, of course, similarly related to the 'legal order.' However, the social and the economic order are not identical. The economic order is for us merely the way in which economic goods and

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services are distributed and used. The social order is of course conditioned by the economic order to a high degree, and in its turn reacts upon it.

Now: 'classes,' 'status groups,' and 'parties' are phenomena of the distribution of power within a community.

DETERMINATION OF CLASS-SITUATION BY MARKET-SITUATION

In our terminology, 'classes' are not communities; they merely represent possible, and frequent, bases for communal action. We may speak of a 'class' when (1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, in so far as (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets. [These points refer to 'class situation,' which we may express more briefly as the typical chance for a supply of goods, external living conditions, and personal life experiences, in so far as this chance is determined by the amount and kind of power, or lack of such, to dispose of goods or skills for the sake of income in a given economic order. The term 'class' refers to any group of people that is found in the same class situation.]

It is the most elemental economic fact that the way in which the disposition over material property is distributed among a plurality of people, meeting competitively in the market for the purpose of exchange, in itself creates specific life chances. According to the law of marginal utility this mode of distribution excludes the non-owners from competing for highly valued goods; it favors the owners and, in fact, gives to them a monopoly to acquire such goods. Other things being equal, this mode of distribution monopolizes the opportunities for profitable deals for all those who, provided with goods, do not necessarily have to exchange them. It increases, at least generally, their power in price wars with those who, being propertyless, have nothing to offer but their services in native form or goods in a form constituted through their own labor, and who above all are compelled to get rid of these products in order barely to subsist. This mode of distribution gives to the propertied a monopoly on the possibility

of transferring property from the sphere of use as a 'fortune,' to the sphere of 'capital goods;' that is, it gives them the entrepreneurial function and all chances to share directly or indirectly in returns on capital. All this holds true within the area in which pure market conditions prevail. 'Property' and 'lack of property' are, therefore, the basic categories of all class situations. It does not matter whether these two categories become effective in price wars or in competitive struggles.

Within these categories, however, class situations are further differentiated: on the one hand, according to the kind of property that is usable for returns; and, on the other hand, according to the kind of services that can be offered in the market. Ownership of domestic buildings; productive establishments; warehouses; stores; agriculturally usable land, large and small holdings—quantitative differences with possibly qualitative consequences—; ownership of mines; cattle; men (slaves); disposition over mobile instruments of production, or capital goods of all sorts, especially money or objects that can be exchanged for money easily and at any time; disposition over products of one's own labor or of others' labor differing according to their various distances from consumability; disposition over transferable monopolies of any kind—all these distinctions differentiate the class situations of the propertied just as does the 'meaning' which they can and do give to the utilization of property, especially to property which has money equivalence. Accordingly, the propertied, for instance, may belong to the class of renters or to the class of entrepreneurs.

Those who have no property but who offer services are differentiated just as much according to their kinds of services as according to the way in which they make use of these services, in a continuous or discontinuous relation to a recipient. But always this is the generic connotation of the concept of class: that the kind of chance in the *market* is the decisive moment which presents a common condition for the individual's fate. 'Class situation' is, in this sense, ultimately 'market situation.' The effect of naked possession *per se*, which among cattle breeders gives the non-owning slave or serf into the power of the cattle owner, is only a forerunner of real 'class' formation. However, in the cattle loan and in the naked severity of the law of debts in such communities, for the first time mere 'possession' as such emerges as

decisive for the fate of the individual. This is very much in contrast to the agricultural communities based on labor. The creditor-debtor relation becomes the basis of 'class situations' only in those cities where a 'credit market,' however primitive, with rates of interest increasing according to the extent of dearth and a factual monopolization of credits, is developed by a plutocracy. Therewith 'class struggles' begin.

Those men whose fate is not determined by the chance of using goods or services for themselves on the market, e.g., slaves, are not, however, a 'class' in the technical sense of the term. They are, rather, a 'status group.'

COMMUNAL ACTION FLOWING FROM CLASS INTEREST

According to our terminology, the factor that creates 'class' is unambiguously economic interest, and indeed, only those interests involved in the existence of the 'market.' Nevertheless, the concept of 'class-interest' is an ambiguous one: even as an empirical concept it is ambiguous as soon as one understands by it something other than the factual direction of interests following with a certain probability from the class situation for a certain 'average' of those people subjected to the class situation. The class situation and other circumstances remaining the same, the direction in which the individual worker, for instance, is likely to pursue his interests may vary widely, according to whether he is constitutionally qualified for the task at hand to a high, to an average, or to a low degree. In the same way, the direction of interests may vary according to whether or not a communal action of a larger or smaller portion of those commonly affected by the 'class situation,' or even an association among them, e.g., a 'trade union,' has grown out of the class situation from which the individual may or may not expect promising results. [Communal action refers to that action which is oriented to the feeling of the actors that they belong together. Societal action, on the other hand, is oriented to a rationally motivated adjustment of interests.] The rise of societal or even of communal action from a common class situation is by no means a universal phenomenon.

The class situation may be restricted in its effects to the generation of essentially *similar* reactions, that is to say, within our terminology, of 'mass actions.' However,

it may not have even this result. Furthermore, often merely an amorphous communal action emerges. For example, the 'murmuring' of the workers known in ancient oriental ethics: the moral disapproval of the work-master's conduct, which in its practical significance was probably equivalent to an increasingly typical phenomenon of precisely the latest industrial development, namely, the 'slow down' (the deliberate limiting of work effort) of laborers by virtue of tacit agreement. The degree in which 'communal action' and possibly 'societal action,' emerges from the 'mass actions' of the members of a class is linked to general cultural conditions, especially to those of an intellectual sort. It is also linked to the extent of the contrasts that have already evolved, and is especially linked to the *transparency* of the connections between the causes and the consequences of the 'class situation.' For however different life chances may be, this fact in itself, according to all experience, by no means gives birth to 'class action' (communal action by the members of a class). The fact of being conditioned and the results of the class situation must be distinctly recognizable. For only then the contrast of life chances can be felt not as an absolutely given fact to be accepted, but as a resultant from either (1) the given distribution of property, or (2) the structure of the concrete economic order. It is only then that people may react against the class structure not only through acts of an intermittent and irrational protest, but in the form of rational association. There have been 'class situations' of the first category (1), of a specifically naked and transparent sort, in the urban centers of Antiquity and during the Middle Ages; especially then, when great fortunes were accumulated by factually monopolized trading in industrial products of these localities or in foodstuffs. Furthermore, under certain circumstances, in the rural economy of the most diverse periods, when agriculture was increasingly exploited in a profit-making manner. The most important historical example of the second category (2) is the class situation of the modern 'proletariat.'

TYPES OF CLASS STRUGGLE

Thus every class may be the carrier of any one of the possibly innumerable forms of 'class action,' but this is not necessarily so. In any case, a class does not in

itself constitute a community. To treat 'class' conceptually as having the same value as 'community' leads to distortion. That men in the same class situation regularly react in mass actions to such tangible situations as economic ones in the direction of those interests that are most adequate to their average number is an important and after all simple fact for the understanding of historical events. Above all, this fact must not lead to that kind of pseudo-scientific operation with the concepts of 'class' and 'class interests' so frequently found these days, and which has found its most classic expression in the statement of a talented author, that the individual may be in error concerning his interests but that the 'class' is 'infallible' about its interests. Yet, if classes as such are not communities, nevertheless class situations emerge only on the basis of communalization. The communal action that brings forth class situations, however, is not basically action between members of the identical class; it is an action between members of different classes. Communal actions that directly determine the class situation of the worker and the entrepreneur are: the labor market, the commodities market, and the capitalistic enterprise. But, in its turn, the existence of a capitalistic enterprise presupposes that a very specific communal action exists and that it is specifically structured to protect the possession of goods *per se*, and especially the power of individuals to dispose, in principle freely, over the means of production. The existence of a capitalistic enterprise is preconditioned by a specific kind of 'legal order.' Each kind of class situation, and above all when it rests upon the power of property *per se*, will become most clearly efficacious when all other determinants of reciprocal relations are, as far as possible, eliminated in their significance. It is in this way that the utilization of the power of property in the market obtains its most sovereign importance.

Now 'status groups' hinder the strict carrying through of the sheer market principle. In the present context they are of interest to us only from this one point of view. Before we briefly consider them, note that not much of a general nature can be said about the more specific kinds of antagonism between 'classes' (in our meaning of the term). The great shift, which has been going on continuously in the past, and up to our times, may be summarized, although at the cost of

some precision: the struggle in which class situations are effective has progressively shifted from consumption credit toward, first, competitive struggles in the commodity market and, then, toward price wars on the labor market. The 'class struggles' of antiquity—to the extent that they were genuine class struggles and not struggles between status groups—were initially carried on by indebted peasants, and perhaps also by artisans threatened by debt bondage and struggling against urban creditors. For debt bondage is the normal result of the differentiation of wealth in commercial cities, especially in seaport cities. A similar situation has existed among cattle breeders. Debt relationships as such produced class action up to the time of Cataline. Along with this, and with an increase in provision of grain for the city by transporting it from the outside, the struggle over the means of sustenance emerged. It centered in the first place around the provision of bread and the determination of the price of bread. It lasted throughout antiquity and the entire Middle Ages. The propertyless as such flocked together against those who actually and supposedly were interested in the dearth of bread. This fight spread until it involved all those commodities essential to the way of life and to handicraft production. There were only incipient discussions of wage disputes in antiquity and in the Middle Ages. But they have been slowly increasing up into modern times. In the earlier periods they were completely secondary to slave rebellions as well as to fights in the commodity market.

The propertyless of antiquity and of the Middle Ages protested against monopolies, pre-emption, forestalling, and the withholding of goods from the market in order to raise prices. Today the central issue is the determination of the price of labor.

This transition is represented by the fight for access to the market and for the determination of the price of products. Such fights went on between merchants and workers in the putting-out system of domestic handicraft during the transition to modern times. Since it is quite a general phenomenon we must mention here that the class antagonisms that are conditioned through the market situation are usually most bitter between those who actually and directly participate as opponents in price wars. It is not the rentier, the shareholder, and the banker who suffer the ill will of the worker, but almost exclusively the manufacturer and the business

executives who are the direct opponents of workers in price wars. This is so in spite of the fact that it is precisely the cash boxes of the rentier, the share-holder, and the banker into which the more or less 'unearned' gains flow, rather than into the pockets of the manufacturers or of the business executives. This simple state of affairs has very frequently been decisive for the role the class situation has played in the formation of political parties. For example, it has made possible the varieties of patriarchal socialism and the frequent attempts—formerly, at least—of threatened status groups to form alliances with the proletariat against the 'bourgeoisie.'

STATUS HONOR

In contrast to classes, *status groups* are normally communities. They are, however, often of an amorphous kind. In contrast to the purely economically determined 'class situation' we wish to designate as 'status situation' every typical component of the life fate of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honor*. This honor may be connected with any quality shared by a plurality, and, of course, it can be knit to a class situation: class distinctions are linked in the most varied ways with status distinctions. Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regularity. In the subsistence economy of the organized neighborhood, very often the richest man is simply the chieftain. However, this often means only an honorific preference. For example, in the so-called pure modern 'democracy,' that is, one devoid of any expressly ordered status privileges for individuals, it may be that only the families coming under approximately the same tax class dance with one another. This example is reported of certain smaller Swiss cities. But status honor need not necessarily be linked with a 'class situation.' On the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property.

Both propertied and propertyless people can belong to the same status group, and frequently they do with very tangible consequences. This 'equality' of social esteem may, however, in the long run become quite precarious. The 'equality' of status among the American 'gentlemen,' for instance, is expressed by the fact that outside the subordination determined by the different

functions of 'business,' it would be considered strictly repugnant—wherever the old tradition still prevails—if even the richest 'chief,' while playing billiards or cards in his club in the evening, would not treat his 'clerk' as in every sense fully his equal in birthright. It would be repugnant if the American 'chief' would bestow upon his 'clerk' the condescending 'benevolence' marking a distinction of 'position,' which the German chief can never dis sever from his attitude. This is one of the most important reasons why in America the German 'clubbiness' has never been able to attain the attraction that the American clubs have. . . .

PARTIES

Whereas the genuine place of 'classes' is within the economic order, the place of 'status groups' is within the social order, that is, within the sphere of the distribution of 'honor.' From within these spheres, classes and status groups influence one another and they influence the legal order and are in turn influenced by it. But 'parties' live in a house of 'power.'

Their action is oriented toward the acquisition of social 'power,' that is to say, toward influencing a communal action no matter what its content may be. In principle, parties may exist in a social 'club' as well as in a 'state.' As over against the actions of classes and status groups, for which this is not necessarily the case, the communal actions of 'parties' always mean a societalization. For party actions are always directed toward a goal which is striven for in planned manner. This goal may be a 'cause' (the party may aim at realizing a program for ideal or material purposes), or the goal may be 'personal' (sinecures, power, and from these, honor for the leader and the followers of the party). Usually the party action aims at all these simultaneously. Parties are, therefore, only possible within communities that are societalized, that is, which have some rational order and a staff of persons available who are ready to enforce it. For parties aim precisely at influencing this staff, and if possible, to recruit it from party followers.

In any individual case, parties may represent interests determined through 'class situation' or 'status situation,' and they may recruit their following respectively from one or the other. But they need be neither purely 'class' nor purely 'status' parties. In most cases they are

partly class parties and partly status parties, but sometimes they are neither. They may represent ephemeral or enduring structures. Their means of attaining power may be quite varied, ranging from naked violence of any sort to canvassing for votes with coarse or subtle means: money, social influence, the force of speech, suggestion, clumsy hoax, and so on to the rougher or more artful tactics of obstruction in parliamentary bodies.

The sociological structure of parties differs in a basic way according to the kind of communal action which they struggle to influence. Parties also differ according to whether or not the community is stratified by status or by classes. Above all else, they vary according to the structure of domination within the community. For their leaders normally deal with the conquest of a community. They are, in the general concept which is maintained here, not only products of specially modern forms of domination. We shall also designate as parties the ancient and medieval 'parties,' despite the fact that their structure differs basically from the structure of modern parties. By virtue of these structural differences of domination it is impossible to say anything about the structure of parties without discussing the structural forms of social domination *per se*. Parties, which are always structures struggling

for domination, are very frequently organized in a very strict 'authoritarian' fashion. . . .

Concerning 'classes,' 'status groups,' and 'parties,' it must be said in general that they necessarily presuppose a comprehensive societalization, and especially a political framework of communal action, within which they operate. This does not mean that parties would be confined by the frontiers of any individual political community. On the contrary, at all times it has been the order of the day that the societalization (even when it aims at the use of military force in common) reaches beyond the frontiers of politics. This has been the case in the solidarity of interests among the Oligarchs and among the democrats in Hellas, among the Guelfs and among Ghibellines in the Middle Ages, and within the Calvinist party during the period of religious struggles. It has been the case up to the solidarity of the landlords (International Congress of Agrarian Landlords), and has continued among princes (Holy Alliance, Karlsbad Decrees), socialist workers, conservatives (the longing of Prussian conservatives for Russian intervention in 1850). But their aim is not necessarily the establishment of new international political, i.e. *territorial*, dominion. In the main they aim to influence the existing dominion.²

NOTES

1. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, part III, chap. 4, pp. 631–40. The first sentence in paragraph one and the several definitions in this chapter which are in brackets do not appear in the original text. They have been taken from other contexts of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*.
2. The posthumously published text breaks off here. We omit an incomplete sketch of types of 'warrior estates.'

SECTION III

1. What do you see as the central characteristic features of the spirit of capitalism?
2. What did Weber mean when he wrote that it is the fact of people in modern societies to live in an "iron cage"?
3. Why, according to Weber, is bureaucracy so integral to capitalist development?
4. What are the essential components of bureaucracy developed in Weber's ideal type?
5. What is charismatic leadership, and why is it so inherently unstable?
6. Think of a current right-wing populist political figure and indicate how that person fits into and diverges from Weber's idea of the charismatic leader.
7. In what ways does Weber's discussion of status and party call into question Marx's emphasis on class?

IV. GEORG SIMMEL

GEORG SIMMEL

13. FASHION

Georg Simmel (1858–1918) was the first classical figure in sociology to turn his attention to the realms of leisure and consumption. This interest is nowhere more evident than in this 1904 essay on fashion, in which he discusses the reason that fashions come into vogue and go out of style with such rapidity in modern social life. On the one hand, he explains this phenomenon in terms of the collective psyche of the times: We live, he says, in a “more nervous age” than the past. On the other hand, Simmel attributes changes in fashion to the wide expansion of consumer choices industrial society makes possible and to the fact that people increasingly seek to use fashions as ways to differentiate themselves from others. He also points out, however, that fashions are not merely reflections of individual choices but are structured by class and other social divisions.

The vital conditions of fashion as a universal phenomenon in the history of our race are circumscribed by these conceptions. Fashion is the imitation of a given example and satisfies the demand for social adaptation; it leads the individual upon the road which all travel, it furnishes a general condition, which resolves the conduct of every individual into a mere example. At the same time it satisfies in no less degree the need of differentiation, the tendency towards dissimilarity, the desire for change and contrast, on the one hand by a constant change of contents, which gives to the fashion of today an individual stamp as opposed to that of yesterday and of tomorrow, on the other hand because fashions differ for different classes—the fashions of the upper stratum of society are never identical with those of the lower; in fact, they are abandoned by the former as soon as the latter prepares to appropriate them. Thus fashion represents nothing more than one of the many forms of

life by the aid of which we seek to combine in uniform spheres of activity the tendency towards social equalization with the desire for individual differentiation and change. Every phase of the conflicting pair strives visibly beyond the degree of satisfaction that any fashion offers to an absolute control of the sphere of life in question. If we should study the history of fashions (which hitherto have been examined only from the view-point of the development of their contents) in connection with their importance for the form of the social process, we should find that it reflects the history of the attempts to adjust the satisfaction of the two counter-tendencies more and more perfectly to the condition of the existing individual and social culture. The various psychological elements in fashion all conform to this fundamental principle.

Fashion, as noted above, is a product of class distinction and operates like a number of other forms, honor especially, the double function of which consists

Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms, Georg Simmel. pp. 23–35, 143–149, 296–304. University of Chicago press. ♦

in revolving within a given circle and at the same time emphasizing it as separate from others. Just as the frame of a picture characterizes the work of art inwardly as a coherent, homogeneous, independent entity and at the same time outwardly severs all direct relations with the surrounding space, just as the uniform energy of such forms cannot be expressed unless we determine the double effect, both inward and outward, so honor owes its character, and above all its moral rights, to the fact that the individual in his personal honor at the same time represents and maintains that of his social circle and his class. These moral rights, however, are frequently considered unjust by those without the pale. Thus fashion on the one hand signifies union with those in the same class, the uniformity of a circle characterized by it, and, *uno actu*, the exclusion of all other groups.

Union and segregation are the two fundamental functions which are here inseparably united, and one of which, although or because it forms a logical contrast to the other, becomes the condition of its realization. Fashion is merely a product of social demands, even though the individual object which it creates or recreates may represent a more or less individual need. This is clearly proved by the fact that very frequently not the slightest reason can be found for the creations of fashion from the standpoint of an objective, aesthetic, or other expediency. While in general our wearing apparel is really adapted to our needs, there is not a trace of expediency in the method by which fashion dictates, for example, whether wide or narrow trousers, colored or black scarfs shall be worn. As a rule the material justification for an action coincides with its general adoption, but in the case of fashion there is a complete separation of the two elements, and there remains for the individual only this general acceptance as the deciding motive to appropriate it. Judging from the ugly and repugnant things that are sometimes in vogue, it would seem as though fashion were desirous of exhibiting its power by getting us to adopt the most atrocious things for its sake alone. The absolute indifference of fashion to the material standards of life is well illustrated by the way in which it recommends something appropriate in one instance, something abstruse in another, and something materially and aesthetically quite indifferent in a third.

The only motivations with which fashion is concerned are formal social ones. The reason why even aesthetically impossible styles seem *distingué*, elegant, and artistically tolerable when affected by persons who carry them to the extreme, is that the persons who do this are generally the most elegant and pay the greatest attention to their personal appearance, so that under any circumstances we would get the impression of something *distingué* and aesthetically cultivated. This impression we credit to the questionable element of fashion, the latter appealing to our consciousness as the new and consequently most conspicuous feature of the *tout ensemble*.

Fashion occasionally will affect objectively determined subjects such as religious faith, scientific interests, even socialism and individualism; but it does not become operative as fashion until these subjects can be considered independent of the deeper human motives from which they have risen. For this reason the rule of fashion becomes in such fields unendurable. We therefore see that there is good reason why externals—clothing, social conduct, amusements—constitute the specific field of fashion, for here no dependence is placed on really vital motives of human action. It is the field which we can most easily relinquish to the bent towards imitation, which it would be a sin to follow in important questions. We encounter here a close connection between the consciousness of personality and that of the material forms of life, a connection that runs all through history. The more objective our view of life has become in the last centuries, the more it has stripped the picture of nature of all subjective and anthropomorphic elements, and the more sharply has the conception of individual personality become defined. The social regulation of our inner and outer life is a sort of embryo condition, in which the contrasts of the purely personal and the purely objective are differentiated, the action being synchronous and reciprocal. Therefore wherever man appears essentially as a social being we observe neither strict objectivity in the view of life nor absorption and independence in the consciousness of personality.

Social forms, apparel, aesthetic judgment, the whole style of human expression, are constantly transformed by fashion, in such a way, however, that

fashion—*i.e.*, the latest fashion—in all these things affects only the upper classes. Just as soon as the lower classes begin to copy their style, thereby crossing the line of demarcation the upper classes have drawn and destroying the uniformity of their coherence, the upper classes turn away from this style and adopt a new one, which in its turn differentiates them from the masses; and thus the game goes merrily on. Naturally the lower classes look and strive towards the upper, and they encounter the least resistance in those fields which are subject to the whims of fashion; for it is here that mere external imitation is most readily applied. The same process is at work as between the different sets within the upper classes, although it is not always as visible here as it is, for example, between mistress and maid. Indeed, we may often observe that the more nearly one set has approached another, the more frantic becomes the desire for imitation from below and the seeking for the new from above. The increase of wealth is bound to hasten the process considerably and render it visible, because the objects of fashion, embracing as they do the externals of life, are most accessible to the mere call of money, and conformity to the higher set is more easily acquired here than in fields which demand an individual test that gold and silver cannot affect.

We see, therefore, that in addition to the element of imitation the element of demarcation constitutes an important factor of fashion. This is especially noticeable wherever the social structure does not include any superimposed groups, in which case fashion asserts itself in neighboring groups. Among primitive peoples we often find that closely connected groups living under exactly similar conditions develop sharply differentiated fashions, by means of which each group establishes uniformity within, as well as difference without, the prescribed set. On the other hand, there exists a widespread predilection for importing fashions from without, and such foreign fashions assume a greater value within the circle, simply because they did not originate there. The prophet Zephaniah expressed his indignation at the aristocrats who affected imported apparel. As a matter of fact the exotic origin of fashions seems strongly to favor the exclusiveness of the groups which adopt them. Because of their external origin, these imported fashions create a special

and significant form of socialization, which arises through mutual relation to a point without the circle. It sometimes appears as though social elements, just like the axes of vision, converge best at a point that is not too near. The currency, or more precisely the medium of exchange among primitive races, often consists of objects that are brought in from without. On the Solomon Islands, and at Ibo on the Niger, for example, there exists a regular industry for the manufacture of money from shells, etc., which are not employed as a medium of exchange in the place itself, but in neighboring districts, to which they are exported. Paris modes are frequently created with the sole intention of setting a fashion elsewhere.

This motive of foreignness, which fashion employs in its socializing endeavors, is restricted to higher civilization, because novelty, which foreign origin guarantees in extreme form, is often regarded by primitive races as an evil. This is certainly one of the reasons why primitive conditions of life favor a correspondingly infrequent change of fashions. The savage is afraid of strange appearances; the difficulties and dangers that beset his career cause him to scent danger in anything new which he does not understand and which he cannot assign to a familiar category. Civilization, however, transforms this affectation into its very opposite. Whatever is exceptional, bizarre, or conspicuous, or whatever departs from the customary norm, exercises a peculiar charm upon the man of culture, entirely independent of its material justification. The removal of the feeling of insecurity with reference to all things new was accomplished by the progress of civilization. At the same time it may be the old inherited prejudice, although it has become purely formal and unconscious, which, in connection with the present feeling of security, produces this piquant interest in exceptional and odd things. For this reason the fashions of the upper classes develop their power of exclusion against the lower in proportion as general culture advances, at least until the mingling of the classes and the leveling effect of democracy exert a counter-influence.

Fashion plays a more conspicuous rôle in modern times, because the differences in our standards of life have become so much more strongly accentuated, for the more numerous and the more sharply drawn these differences are, the greater the opportunities

for emphasizing them at every turn. In innumerable instances this cannot be accomplished by passive inactivity, but only by the development of forms established by fashion; and this has become all the more pronounced since legal restrictions prescribing various forms of apparel and modes of life for different classes have been removed.

Two social tendencies are essential to the establishment of fashion, namely, the need of union on the one hand and the need of isolation on the other. Should one of these be absent, fashion will not be formed—its sway will abruptly end. Consequently the lower classes possess very few modes and those they have are seldom specific; for this reason the modes of primitive races are much more stable than ours. Among primitive races the socializing impulse is much more powerfully developed than the differentiating impulse. For, no matter how decisively the groups may be separated from one another, separation is for the most part hostile in such a way that the very relation the rejection of which within the classes of civilized races makes fashion reasonable, is absolutely lacking. Segregation by means of differences in clothing, manners, taste, etc., is expedient only where the danger of absorption and obliteration exists, as is the case among highly civilized nations. Where these differences do not exist, where we have an absolute antagonism, as for example between not directly friendly groups of primitive races, the development of fashion has no sense at all.

It is interesting to observe how the prevalence of the socializing impulse in primitive peoples affects various institutions, such as the dance. It has been noted quite generally that the dances of primitive races exhibit a remarkable uniformity in arrangement and rhythm. The dancing group feels and acts like a uniform organism; the dance forces and accustoms a number of individuals, who are usually driven to and fro without rime or reason by vacillating conditions and needs of life, to be guided by a common impulse and a single common motive. Even making allowances for the tremendous difference in the outward appearance of the dance, we are dealing here with the same element that appears in socializing force of fashion.

Movement, time, rhythm of the gestures, are all undoubtedly influenced largely by what is worn: similarly dressed persons exhibit relative similarity in their actions. This is of especial value in modern life with its individualistic diffusion, while in the case of primitive races the effect produced is directed within and is therefore not dependent upon changes of fashion. Among primitive races fashions will be less numerous and more stable because the need of new impressions and forms of life, quite apart from their social effect, is far less pressing. Changes in fashion reflect the dullness of nervous impulses: the more nervous the age, the more rapidly its fashions change, simply because the desire for differentiation, one of the most important elements of all fashion, goes hand in hand with the weakening of nervous energy. This fact in itself is one of the reasons why the real seat of fashion is found among the upper classes. . . .

The very character of fashion demands that it should be exercised at one time only by a portion of the given group, the great majority being merely on the road to adopting it. As soon as an example has been universally adopted, that is, as soon as anything done only by a few has really come to be practiced by all—as is the case in certain portions of our social conduct—we no longer speak of fashion. As fashion spreads, it gradually goes to its doom. The distinctiveness which in the early stages of a set fashion assures for it a certain distribution is destroyed as the fashion spreads, and as this element wanes, the fashion also is bound to die. By reason of this peculiar play between the tendency towards universal acceptance and the destruction of its very purpose to which this general adoption leads, fashion includes a peculiar attraction of limitation, the attraction of a simultaneous beginning and end, the charm of novelty coupled to that of transitoriness. The attractions of both poles of the phenomena meet in fashion, and show also here that they belong together unconditionally, although, or rather because, they are contradictory in their very nature. Fashion always occupies the dividing-line between the past and the future, and consequently conveys a stronger feeling of the present, at least while it is at its height, than most other phenomena. What we call the present is usually nothing more than a combination of a fragment of the past with a fragment of the future.

Attention is called to the present less often than colloquial usage, which is rather liberal in its employment of the word, would lead us to believe.

Few phenomena of social life possess such a pointed curve of consciousness as does fashion. As soon as the social consciousness attains to the highest point designated by fashion, it marks the beginning of the end for the latter. This transitory character of fashion, however, does not on the whole degrade it, but adds a new element of attraction. At all events an object does not suffer degradation by being called fashionable, unless we reject it with disgust or wish to debase it for other, material reasons, in which case, of course, fashion becomes an idea of value. In the practice of life anything else similarly new and suddenly disseminated is not called fashion, when we are convinced of its continuance and its material justification. If, on the other hand, we feel certain that the fact will vanish as rapidly as it came, then we call it fashion. We can discover one of the reasons why in these latter days fashion exercises such a powerful influence on our consciousness in the circumstance that the great, permanent, unquestionable convictions are continually losing strength, as a consequence of which the transitory and vacillating elements of life acquire more room for the display of their activity. The break with the past, which, for more than a century, civilized mankind has been laboring unceasingly to bring about, makes the consciousness turn more and more to the present. This accentuation of the present evidently at the same time emphasizes the element of change, and a class will turn to fashion in all fields, by no means only in that of apparel, in proportion to the degree in which it supports the given civilizing tendency. It may almost be considered a sign of the increased power of fashion, that it has overstepped the bounds of its original domain, which comprised only personal externals, and has acquired an increasing influence over taste, over theoretical convictions, and even over the moral foundations of life.

From the fact that fashion as such can never be generally in vogue, the individual derives the satisfaction of knowing that as adopted by him it still represents something special and striking, while at the same time

he feels inwardly supported by a set of persons who are striving for the same thing, not as in the case of other social satisfactions, by a set actually doing the same thing. The fashionable person is regarded with mingled feelings of approval and envy; we envy him as an individual, but approve of him as a member of a set or group. Yet even this envy has a peculiar coloring. There is a shade of envy which includes a species of ideal participation in the envied object itself. An instructive example of this is furnished by the conduct of the poor man who gets a glimpse of the feast of his rich neighbor. The moment we envy an object or a person, we are no longer absolutely excluded from it; some relation or other has been established—between both the same psychic content now exists—although in entirely different categories and forms of sensations. This quiet personal usurpation of the envied property contains a kind of antidote, which occasionally counter-acts the evil effects of this feeling of envy. The contents of fashion afford an especially good chance of the development of this conciliatory shade of envy, which also gives to the envied person a better conscience because of his satisfaction over his good fortune. This is due to the fact that these contents are not, as many other psychic contents are, denied absolutely to any one, for a change of fortune, which is never entirely out of the question, may play them into the hands of an individual who had previously been confined to the state of envy.

From all this we see that fashion furnishes an ideal field for individuals with dependent natures, whose self-consciousness, however, requires a certain amount of prominence, attention, and singularity. Fashion raises even the unimportant individual by making him the representative of a class, the embodiment of a joint spirit. And here again we observe the curious intermixture of antagonistic values. Speaking broadly, it is characteristic of a standard set by a general body, that its acceptance by any one individual does not call attention to him; in other words, a positive adoption of a given norm signifies nothing. Whoever keeps the laws the breaking of which is punished by the penal code, whoever lives up to the social forms prescribed by his class, gains no conspicuousness or notoriety. The slightest infraction or opposition, however, is immediately noticed and places the individual in an

exceptional position by calling the attention of the public to his action. All such norms do not assume positive importance for the individual until he begins to depart from them. It is peculiarly characteristic of fashion that it renders possible a social obedience, which at the same time is a form of individual differentiation. Fashion does this because in its very nature it represents a standard that can never be accepted by all. While fashion postulates a certain amount of general acceptance, it nevertheless is not without significance in the characterization of the individual, for it emphasizes his personality not only through omission but also through observance. In the dude the social demands of fashion appear exaggerated to such a degree that they completely assume an individualistic and peculiar character. It is characteristic of the dude

that he carries the elements of a particular fashion to an extreme; when pointed shoes are in style, he wears shoes that resemble the prow of a ship; when high collars are all the rage, he wears collars that come up to his ears; when scientific lectures are fashionable, you cannot find him anywhere else, etc., etc. Thus he represents something distinctly individual, which consists in the quantitative intensification of such elements as are qualitatively common property of the given set of class. He leads the way, but all travel the same road. Representing as he does the most recently conquered heights of public taste, he seems to be marching at the head of the general procession. In reality, however, what is so frequently true of the relation between individuals and groups applies also to him: as a matter of fact, the leader allows himself to be led. . . .

14. THE METROPOLIS AND MENTAL LIFE

In this classic essay that first appeared in 1903, Simmel explores the social psychology of city dwellers. Given that urbanization, like industrialization, is a characteristic feature of modernity, he contends that one can find the distillation of modern consciousness most clearly in the metropolis. His essay echoes themes developed by both Durkheim and Weber, but articulated from his own distinctive perspective and in his unique voice. The former's focus on the interdependency of society is on display here, where Simmel speculates about what would happen to Berlin's commercial life if, even for an hour, all the watches in the city were out of sync with all the other watches. This theme also resonates with Weber's sense of the growing impact of rationalization. Simmel expresses his concern about the struggle individuals confront in maintaining individuality and offers a compelling account of the blasé attitude, not as an indication of coldness, apathy, or dullness, but rather as a safeguard for the individual's psychic well-being.

The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life. This antagonism represents the most modern form of the conflict which primitive man must carry on with nature for his own bodily existence. The eighteenth century may have called for liberation from all the ties which grew up historically in politics, in religion, in morality and in economics in order to permit the original natural virtue of man, which is equal in everyone, to develop without inhibition; the nineteenth century may have sought to promote, in addition to man's freedom, his individuality (which is connected with the division of labor) and his achievements which make him unique and indispensable but which at the same time make him so much the more dependent on the complementary activity of others; Nietzsche may have seen the relentless struggle of the individual as the prerequisite for

his full development, while Socialism found the same thing in the suppression of all competition—but in each of these the same fundamental motive was at work, namely the resistance of the individual to being levelled, swallowed up in the social-technological mechanism. When one inquires about the products of the specifically modern aspects of contemporary life with reference to their inner meaning—when, so to speak, one examines the body of culture with reference to the soul, as I am to do concerning the metropolis today—the answer will require the investigation of the relationship which such a social structure promotes between the individual aspects of life and those which transcend the existence of single individuals. It will require the investigation of the adaptations made by the personality in its adjustment to the forces that lie outside of it.

The psychological foundation, upon which the metropolitan individuality is erected, is the intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli. Man is a creature

whose existence is dependent on differences, i.e., his mind is stimulated by the difference between present impressions and those which have preceded. Lasting impressions, the slightness in their differences, the habituated regularity of their course and contrasts between them, consume, so to speak, less mental energy than the rapid telescoping of changing images, pronounced differences within what is grasped at a single glance, and the unexpectedness of violent stimuli. To the extent that the metropolis creates these psychological conditions—with every crossing of the street, with the tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life—it creates in the sensory foundations of mental life, and in the degree of awareness necessitated by our organization as creatures dependent on differences, a deep contrast with the slower, more habitual, more smoothly flowing rhythm of the sensory-mental phase of small town and rural existence. Thereby the essentially intellectualistic character of the mental life of the metropolis becomes intelligible as over against that of the small town which rests more on feelings and emotional relationships. These latter are rooted in the unconscious levels of the mind and develop most readily in the steady equilibrium of unbroken customs. The locus of reason, on the other hand, is in the lucid, conscious upper strata of the mind and it is the most adaptable of our inner forces. In order to adjust itself to the shifts and contradictions in events, it does not require the disturbances and inner upheavals which are the only means whereby more conservative personalities are able to adapt themselves to the same rhythm of events. Thus the metropolitan type—which naturally takes on a thousand individual modifications—creates a protective organ for itself against the profound disruption with which the fluctuations and discontinuities of the external milieu threaten it. Instead of reacting emotionally, the metropolitan type reacts primarily in a rational manner, thus creating a mental predominance through the intensification of consciousness, which in turn is caused by it. Thus the reaction of the metropolitan person to those events is moved to a sphere of mental activity which is least sensitive and which is furthest removed from the depths of the personality.

This intellectualistic quality which is thus recognized as a protection of the inner life against the

domination of the metropolis, becomes ramified into numerous specific phenomena. The metropolis has always been the seat of money economy because the many-sidedness and concentration of commercial activity have given the medium of exchange an importance which it could not have acquired in the commercial aspects of rural life. But money economy and the domination of the intellect stand in the closest relationship to one another. They have in common a purely matter-of-fact attitude in the treatment of persons and things in which a formal justice is often combined with an unrelenting hardness. The purely intellectualistic person is indifferent to all things personal because, out of them, relationships and reactions develop which are not to be completely understood by purely rational methods—just as the unique element in events never enters into the principle of money. Money is concerned only with what is common to all, i.e., with the exchange value which reduces all quality and individuality to a purely quantitative level. All emotional relationships between persons rest on their individuality, whereas intellectual relationships deal with persons as with numbers, that is, as with elements which, in themselves, are indifferent, but which are of interest only insofar as they offer something objectively perceivable. It is in this very manner that the inhabitant of the metropolis reckons with his merchant, his customer, and with his servant, and frequently with the persons with whom he is thrown into obligatory association. These relationships stand in distinct contrast with the nature of the smaller circle in which the inevitable knowledge of individual characteristics produces, with an equal inevitability, an emotional tone in conduct, a sphere which is beyond the mere objective weighting of tasks performed and payments made. What is essential here as regards the economic-psychological aspect of the problem is that in less advanced cultures production was for the customer who ordered the product so that the producer and the purchaser knew one another. The modern city, however, is supplied almost exclusively by production for the market, that is, for entirely unknown purchasers who never appear in the actual field of vision of the producers themselves. Thereby, the interests of each party acquire a relentless matter-of-factness, and its rationally calculated economic egoism need not fear any divergence from its set path because of the imponderability

of personal relationships. This is all the more the case in the money economy which dominates the metropolis in which the last remnants of domestic production and direct barter of goods have been eradicated and in which the amount of production on direct personal order is reduced daily. Furthermore, this psychological intellectualistic attitude and the money economy are in such close integration that no one is able to say whether it was the former that effected the latter or *vice versa*. What is certain is only that the form of life in the metropolis is the soil which nourishes this interaction most fruitfully, a point which I shall attempt to demonstrate only with the statement of the most outstanding English constitutional historian to the effect that through the entire course of English history London has never acted as the heart of England but often as its intellect and always as its money bag.

In certain apparently insignificant characters or traits of the most external aspects of life are to be found a number of characteristic mental tendencies. The modern mind has become more and more a calculating one. The calculating exactness of practical life which has resulted from a money economy corresponds to the ideal of natural science, namely that of transforming the world into an arithmetical problem and of fixing every one of its parts in a mathematical formula. It has been money economy which has thus filled the daily life of so many people with weighing, calculating, enumerating and the reduction of qualitative values to quantitative terms. Because of the character of calculability which money has there has come into the relationships of the elements of life a precision and a degree of certainty in the definition of the equalities and inequalities and an unambiguousness in agreements and arrangements, just as externally this precision has been brought about through the general diffusion of pocket watches. It is, however, the conditions of the metropolis which are cause as well as effect for this essential characteristic. The relationships and concerns of the typical metropolitan resident are so manifold and complex that, especially as a result of the agglomeration of so many persons with such differentiated interests, their relationships and activities intertwine with one another into a many-membered organism. In view of this fact, the lack of the most exact punctuality in promises and performances would cause

the whole to break down into an inextricable chaos. If all the watches in Berlin suddenly went wrong in different ways even only as much as an hour, its entire economic and commercial life would be derailed for some time. Even though this may seem more superficial in its significance, it transpires that the magnitude of distances results in making all waiting and the breaking of appointments an ill-afforded waste of time. For this reason the technique of metropolitan life in general is not conceivable without all of its activities and reciprocal relationships being organized and coordinated in the most punctual way into a firmly fixed framework of time which transcends all subjective elements. But here too there emerge those conclusions which are in general the whole task of this discussion, namely, that every event, however restricted to this superficial level it may appear, comes immediately into contact with the depths of the soul, and that the most banal externalities are, in the last analysis, bound up with the final decisions concerning the meaning and the style of life. Punctuality, calculability, and exactness, which are required by the complications and extensiveness of metropolitan life are not only most intimately connected with its capitalistic and intellectualistic character but also color the content of life and are conducive to the exclusion of those irrational, instinctive, sovereign human traits and impulses which originally seek to determine the form of life from within instead of receiving it from the outside in a general, schematically precise form. Even though those lives which are autonomous and characterised by these vital impulses are not entirely impossible in the city, they are, none the less, opposed to it *in abstracto*. It is in the light of this that we can explain the passionate hatred of personalities like Ruskin and Nietzsche for the metropolis—personalities who found the value of life only in unschematized individual expressions which cannot be reduced to exact equivalents and in whom, on that account, there flowed from the same source as did that hatred, the hatred of the money economy and of the intellectualism of existence.

The same factors which, in the exactness and the minute precision of the form of life, have coalesced into a structure of the highest impersonality, have, on the other hand, an influence in a highly personal direction. There is perhaps no psychic phenomenon

which is so unconditionally reserved to the city as the blasé outlook. It is at first the consequence of those rapidly shifting stimulations of the nerves which are thrown together in all their contrasts and from which it seems to us the intensification of metropolitan intellectuality seems to be derived. On that account it is not likely that stupid persons who have been hitherto intellectually dead will be blasé. Just as an immoderately sensuous life makes one blasé because it stimulates the nerves to their utmost reactivity until they finally can no longer produce any reaction at all, so, less harmful stimuli, through the rapidity and the contradictoriness of their shifts, force the nerves to make such violent responses, tear them about so brutally that they exhaust their last reserves of strength and, remaining in the same milieu, do not have time for new reserves to form. This incapacity to react to new stimulations with the required amount of energy constitutes in fact that blasé attitude which every child of a large city evinces when compared with the products of the more peaceful and more stable milieu.

Combined with this physiological source of the blasé metropolitan attitude there is another which derives from a money economy. The essence of the blasé attitude is an indifference toward the distinctions between things. Not in the sense that they are not perceived, as is the case of mental dullness, but rather that the meaning and the value of the distinctions between things, and therewith of the things themselves, are experienced as meaningless. They appear to the blasé person in a homogeneous, flat and gray color with no one of them worthy of being preferred to another. This psychic mood is the correct subjective reflection of a complete money economy to the extent that money takes the place of all the manifoldness of things and expresses all qualitative distinctions between them in the distinction of "how much." To the extent that money, with its colorlessness and its indifferent quality, can become a common denominator of all values it becomes the frightful leveler—it hollows out the core of things, their peculiarities, their specific values and their uniqueness and incomparability in a way which is beyond repair. They all float with the same specific gravity in the constantly moving stream of money. They all rest on the same level and are distinguished only by their amounts. In individual cases this coloring, or

rather this de-coloring of things, through their equation with money, may be imperceptibly small. In the relationship, however, which the wealthy person has to objects which can be bought for money, perhaps indeed in the total character which, for this reason, public opinion now recognizes in these objects, it takes on very considerable proportions. This is why the metropolis is the seat of commerce and it is in it that the purchasability of things appears in quite a different aspect than in simpler economies. It is also the peculiar seat of the blasé attitude. In it is brought to a peak, in a certain way, that achievement in the concentration of purchasable things which stimulates the individual to the highest degree of nervous energy. Through the mere quantitative intensification of the same conditions this achievement is transformed into its opposite, into this peculiar adaptive phenomenon—the blasé attitude—in which the nerves reveal their final possibility of adjusting themselves to the content and the form of metropolitan life by renouncing the response to them. We see that the self-preservation of certain types of personalities is obtained at the cost of devaluing the entire objective world, ending inevitably in dragging the personality downward into a feeling of its own valuelessness.

Whereas the subject of this form of existence must come to terms with it for himself, his self-preservation in the face of the great city requires of him a no less negative type of social conduct. The mental attitude of the people of the metropolis to one another may be designated formally as one of reserve. If the unceasing external contact of numbers of persons in the city should be met by the same number of inner reactions as in the small town, in which one knows almost every person he meets and to each of whom he has a positive relationship, one would be completely atomized internally and would fall into an unthinkable mental condition. Partly this psychological circumstance and partly the privilege of suspicion which we have in the face of the elements of metropolitan life (which are constantly touching one another in fleeting contact) necessitates in us that reserve, in consequence of which we do not know by sight neighbors of years standing and which permits us to appear to smalltown folk so often as cold and uncongenial. Indeed, if I am not mistaken, the inner side of this external reserve is not

only indifference but more frequently than we believe, it is a slight aversion, a mutual strangeness and repulsion which, in a close contact which has arisen any way whatever, can break out into hatred and conflict. The entire inner organization of such a type of extended commercial life rests on an extremely varied structure of sympathies, indifferences and aversions of the briefest as well as of the most enduring sort. This sphere of indifference is, for this reason, not as great as it seems superficially. Our minds respond, with some definite feeling, to almost every impression emanating from another person. The unconsciousness, the transitoriness and the shift of these feelings seem to raise them only into indifference. Actually this latter would be as unnatural to us as immersion into a chaos of unwished-for suggestions would be unbearable. From these two typical dangers of metropolitan life we are saved by antipathy which is the latent adumbration of actual antagonism since it brings about the sort of distanciation and deflection without which this type of life could not be carried on at all. Its extent and its mixture, the rhythm of its emergence and disappearance, the forms in which it is adequate—these constitute, with the simplified motives (in the narrower sense) an inseparable totality of the form of metropolitan life. What appears here directly as dissociation is in reality only one of the elementary forms of socialization.

This reserve with its overtone of concealed aversion appears once more, however, as the form or the wrappings of a much more general psychic trait of the metropolis. It assures the individual of a type and degree of personal freedom to which there is no analogy in other circumstances. It has its roots in one of the great developmental tendencies of social life as a whole; in one of the few for which an approximately exhaustive formula can be discovered. The most elementary stage of social organization which is to be found historically, as well as in the present, is this: a relatively small circle almost entirely closed against neighboring foreign or otherwise antagonistic groups but which has however within itself such a narrow cohesion that the individual member has only a very slight area for the development of his own qualities and for free activity for which he himself is responsible. Political and familial groups began in this way as do political and religious communities; the self-preservation of very young associations

requires a rigorous setting of boundaries and a centripetal unity and for that reason it cannot give room to freedom and the peculiarities of inner and external development of the individual. From this stage social evolution proceeds simultaneously in two divergent but none the less corresponding directions. In the measure that the group grows numerically, spatially, and in the meaningful content of life, its immediate inner unity and the definiteness of its original demarcation against others are weakened and rendered mild by reciprocal interactions and interconnections. And at the same time the individual gains a freedom of movement far beyond the first jealous delimitation, and gains also a peculiarity and individuality to which the division of labor in groups, which have become larger, gives both occasion and necessity. However much the particular conditions and forces of the individual situation might modify the general scheme, the state and Christianity, guilds and political parties and innumerable other groups have developed in accord with this formula. This tendency seems, to me, however to be quite clearly recognizable also in the development of individuality within the framework of city life. Small town life in antiquity as well as in the Middle Ages imposed such limits upon the movements of the individual in his relationships with the outside world and on his inner independence and differentiation that the modern person could not even breathe under such conditions. Even today the city dweller who is placed in a small town feels a type of narrowness which is very similar. The smaller the circle which forms our environment and the more limited the relationships which have the possibility of transcending the boundaries, the more anxiously the narrow community watches over the deeds, the conduct of life and the attitudes of the individual and the more will a quantitative and qualitative individuality tend to pass beyond the boundaries of such a community.

The ancient *polis* seems in this regard to have had a character of a small town. The incessant threat against its existence by enemies from near and far brought about that stern cohesion in political and military matters, that supervision of the citizen by other citizens, and that jealousy of the whole toward the individual whose own private life was repressed to such an extent that he could compensate himself only by acting as a

despot in his own household. The tremendous agitation and excitement, and the unique colorfulness of Athenian life is perhaps explained by the fact that a people of incomparably individualized personalities were in constant struggle against the incessant inner and external oppression of a de-individualizing small town. This created an atmosphere of tension in which the weaker were held down and the stronger were impelled to the most passionate type of self-protection. And with this there blossomed in Athens, what, without being able to define it exactly, must be designated as "the general human character" in the intellectual development of our species. For the correlation, the factual as well as the historical validity of which we are here maintaining, is that the broadest and the most general contents and forms of life are intimately bound up with the most individual ones. Both have a common prehistory and also common enemies in the narrow formations and groupings, whose striving for self-preservation set them in conflict with the broad and general on the outside, as well as the freely mobile and individual on the inside. Just as in feudal times the "free" man was he who stood under the law of the land, that is, under the law of the largest social unit, but he was unfree who derived his legal rights only from the narrow circle of a feudal community—so today in an intellectualized and refined sense the citizen of the metropolis is "free" in contrast with the trivialities and prejudices which bind the small town person. The mutual reserve and indifference, and the intellectual conditions of life in large social units are never more sharply appreciated in their significance for the independence of the individual than in the dense crowds of the metropolis because the bodily closeness and lack of space make intellectual distance really perceivable for the first time. It is obviously only the obverse of this freedom that, under certain circumstances, one never feels as lonely and as deserted as in this metropolitan crush of persons. For here, as elsewhere, it is by no means necessary that the freedom of man reflect itself in his emotional life only as a pleasant experience.

It is not only the immediate size of the area and population which, on the basis of world-historical correlation between the increase in the size of the social unit and the degree of personal inner and outer freedom, makes the metropolis the locus of this

condition. It is rather in transcending this purely tangible extensiveness that the metropolis also becomes the seat of cosmopolitanism. Comparable with the form of the development of wealth—(beyond a certain point property increases in ever more rapid progression as out of its own inner being)—the individual's horizon is enlarged. In the same way, economic, personal and intellectual relations in the city (which are its ideal reflection), grow in a geometrical progression as soon as, for the first time, a certain limit has been passed. Every dynamic extension becomes a preparation not only for a similar extension but rather for a larger one and from every thread which is spun out of it there continue, growing as out of themselves, an endless number of others. This may be illustrated by the fact that within the city the "unearned increment" of ground rent, through a mere increase in traffic, brings to the owner profits which are self-generating. At this point the quantitative aspects of life are transformed qualitatively. The sphere of life of the small town is, in the main, enclosed within itself. For the metropolis it is decisive that its inner life is extended in a wave-like motion over a broader national or international area. Weimar was no exception because its significance was dependent upon individual personalities and died with them, whereas the metropolis is characterised by its essential independence even of the most significant individual personalities; this is rather its antithesis and it is the price of independence which the individual living in it enjoys. The most significant aspect of the metropolis lies in this functional magnitude beyond its actual physical boundaries and this effectiveness reacts upon the latter and gives to it life, weight, importance and responsibility. A person does not end with limits of his physical body or with the area to which his physical activity is immediately confined but embraces, rather, the totality of meaningful effects which emanates from him temporally and spatially. In the same way the city exists only in the totality of the effects which transcend their immediate sphere. These really are the actual extent in which their existence is expressed. This is already expressed in the fact that individual freedom, which is the logical historical complement of such extension, is not only to be understood in the negative sense as mere freedom of movement and emancipation from prejudices and

philistinism. Its essential characteristic is rather to be found in the fact that the particularity and incomparability which ultimately every person possesses in some way is actually expressed, giving form to life. That we follow the laws of our inner nature—and this is what freedom is—becomes perceptible and convincing to us and to others only when the expressions of this nature distinguish themselves from others; it is our irreplaceability by others which shows that our mode of existence is not imposed upon us from the outside.

Cities are above all the seat of the most advanced economic division of labor. They produce such extreme phenomena as the lucrative vocation of the *quatorzieme* in Paris. These are persons who may be recognized by shields on their houses and who hold themselves ready at the dinner hour in appropriate costumes so they can be called upon on short notice in case thirteen persons find themselves at the table. Exactly in the measure of its extension the city offers to an increasing degree the determining conditions for the division of labor. It is a unit which, because of its large size, is receptive to a highly diversified plurality of achievements while at the same time the agglomeration of individuals and their struggle for the customer forces the individual to a type of specialized accomplishment in which he cannot be so easily exterminated by the other. The decisive fact here is that in the life of a city, struggle with nature for the means of life is transformed into a conflict with human beings and the gain which is fought for is granted, not by nature, but by man. For here we find not only the previously mentioned source of specialization but rather the deeper one in which the seller must seek to produce in the person to whom he wishes to sell ever new and unique needs. The necessity to specialize one's product in order to find a source of income which is not yet exhausted and also to specialize a function which cannot be easily supplanted is conducive to differentiation, refinement and enrichment of the needs of the public which obviously must lead to increasing personal variation within this public.

All this leads to the narrower type of intellectual individuation of mental qualities to which the city gives rise in proportion to its size. There is a whole series of causes for this. First of all there is the difficulty of giving one's own personality a certain status within the framework of metropolitan life. Where

quantitative increase of value and energy has reached its limits, one seizes on qualitative distinctions, so that, through taking advantage of the existing sensitivity to differences, the attention of the social world can, in some way, be won for oneself. This leads ultimately to the strangest eccentricities, to specifically metropolitan extravagances of selfdistanciation, of caprice, of fastidiousness, the meaning of which is no longer to be found in the content of such activity itself but rather in its being a form of "being different"—of making oneself noticeable. For many types of persons these are still the only means of saving for oneself, through the attention gained from others, some sort of self-esteem and the sense of filling a position. In the same sense there operates an apparently insignificant factor which in its effects however is perceptibly cumulative, namely, the brevity and rarity of meetings which are allotted to each individual as compared with social intercourse in a small city. For here we find the attempt to appear to-the-point, clearcut and individual with extraordinarily greater frequency than where frequent and long association assures to each person an unambiguous conception of the other's personality.

This appears to me to be the most profound cause of the fact that the metropolis places emphasis on striving for the most individual forms of personal existence—regardless of whether it is always correct or always successful. The development of modern culture is characterised by the predominance of what one can call the objective spirit over the subjective; that is, in language as well as in law, in the technique of production as well as in art, in science as well as in the objects of domestic environment, there is embodied a sort of spirit [*Geist*], the daily growth of which is followed only imperfectly and with an even greater lag by the intellectual development of the individual. If we survey for instance the vast culture which during the last century has been embodied in things and in knowledge, in institutions and comforts, and if we compare them with the cultural progress of the individual during the same period—at least in the upper classes—we would see a frightful difference in rate of growth between the two which represents, in many points, rather a regression of the culture of the individual with reference to spirituality, delicacy and idealism. This discrepancy is in essence the result of the success of the growing division of labor. For it is this which requires from the

individual an ever more one-sided type of achievement which, at its highest point, often permits his personality as a whole to fall into neglect. In any case this overgrowth of objective culture has been less and less satisfactory for the individual. Perhaps less conscious than in practical activity and in the obscure complex of feelings which flow from him, he is reduced to a negligible quantity. He becomes a single cog as over against the vast overwhelming organization of things and forces which gradually take out of his hands everything connected with progress, spirituality and value. The operation of these forces results in the transformation of the latter from a subjective form into one of purely objective existence. It need only be pointed out that the metropolis is the proper arena for this type of culture which has outgrown every personal element. Here in buildings and in educational institutions, in the wonders and comforts of space-conquering technique, in the formations of social life and in the concrete institutions of the State is to be found such a tremendous richness of crystallizing, depersonalized cultural accomplishments that the personality can, so to speak, scarcely maintain itself in the face of it. From one angle life is made infinitely more easy in the sense that stimulations, interests, and the taking up of time and attention, present themselves from all sides and carry it in a stream which scarcely requires any individual efforts for its ongoing. But from another angle, life is composed more and more of these impersonal cultural elements and existing goods and values which seek to suppress peculiar personal interests and incomparabilities. As a result, in order that this most personal element be saved, extremities and peculiarities and individualizations must be produced and they must be over-exaggerated merely to be brought into the awareness even of the individual himself. The atrophy of individual culture through the hypertrophy of objective culture lies at the root of the bitter hatred which the preachers of the most extreme individualism, in the footsteps of Nietzsche, directed against the metropolis. But it is also the explanation of why indeed they are so passionately loved in the metropolis and indeed appear to its residents as the saviors of their unsatisfied yearnings.

When both of these forms of individualism which are nourished by the quantitative relationships of the metropolis, i.e., individual independence and the

elaboration of personal peculiarities, are examined with reference to their historical position, the metropolis attains an entirely new value and meaning in the world history of the spirit. The eighteenth century found the individual in the grip of powerful bonds which had become meaningless—bonds of a political, agrarian, guild and religious nature—delimitations which imposed upon the human being at the same time an unnatural form and for a long time an unjust inequality. In this situation arose the cry for freedom and equality—the belief in the full freedom of movement of the individual in all his social and intellectual relationships which would then permit the same noble essence to emerge equally from all individuals as Nature had placed it in them and as it had been distorted by social life and historical development. Alongside of this liberalistic ideal there grew up in the nineteenth century from Goethe and the Romantics, on the one hand, and from the economic division of labor on the other, the further tendency, namely, that individuals who had been liberated from their historical bonds sought now to distinguish themselves from one another. No longer was it the “general human quality” in every individual but rather his qualitative uniqueness and irreplaceability that now became the criteria of his value. In the conflict and shifting interpretations of these two ways of defining the position of the individual within the totality is to be found the external as well as the internal history of our time. It is the function of the metropolis to make a place for the conflict and for the attempts at unification of both of these in the sense that its own peculiar conditions have been revealed to us as the occasion and the stimulus for the development of both. Thereby they attain a quite unique place, fruitful with an inexhaustible richness of meaning in the development of the mental life. They reveal themselves as one of those great historical structures in which conflicting life-embracing currents find themselves with equal legitimacy. Because of this, however, regardless of whether we are sympathetic or antipathetic with their individual expressions, they transcend the sphere in which a judge-like attitude on our part is appropriate. To the extent that such forces have been integrated, with the fleeting existence of a single cell, into the root as well as the crown of the totality of historical life to which we belong—it is our task not to complain or to condone but only to understand.

15. THE STRANGER

"The Stranger" (1908) is one of Simmel's classic essays on social types. In it he describes the type of person who lives among and yet apart from—in but not of—a society. The stranger, as he writes in one crucial passage, is a person who "comes today and stays tomorrow." The stranger is both integrally part of the society and in some fashion appended onto it. As Simmel points out, the classic example of the stranger is the Jew in European society: Although part of the economy as trader, the Jew is also marginalized from that society, living in close physical proximity to non-Jews, but in a situation where the social distance between Jews and Christians is pronounced. This social type, recast as the "marginal man," became at the hands of Simmel's former student, the American sociologist Robert E. Park, an important concept in the study of immigration and ethnic relations.

If wandering, considered as a state of detachment from every given point in space, is the conceptual opposite of attachment to any point, then the sociological form of "the stranger" presents the synthesis, as it were, of both of these properties. (This is another indication that spatial relations not only are determining conditions of relationships among men, but are also symbolic of those relationships.) The stranger will thus not be considered here in the usual sense of the term, as the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather as the man who comes today and stays tomorrow—the potential wanderer, so to speak, who, although he has gone no further, has not quite got over the freedom of coming and going. He is fixed within a certain spatial circle—or within a group whose boundaries are analogous to spatial boundaries—but his position within it is fundamentally affected by the fact that he does not belong in it initially and that he brings qualities into it that are not, and cannot be, indigenous to it.

In the case of the stranger, the union of closeness and remoteness involved in every human relationship

is patterned in a way that may be succinctly formulated as follows: the distance within this relation indicates that one who is close by is remote, but his strangeness indicates that one who is remote is near. The state of being a stranger is of course a completely positive relation; it is a specific form of interaction. The inhabitants of Sirius are not exactly strangers to us, at least not in the sociological sense of the word as we are considering it. In that sense they do not exist for us at all; they are beyond being far and near. The stranger is an element of the group itself, not unlike the poor and sundry "inner enemies"—an element whose membership within the group involves both being outside it and confronting it.

The following statements about the stranger are intended to suggest how factors of repulsion and distance work to create a form of being together, a form of union based on interaction.

In the whole history of economic activity the stranger makes his appearance everywhere as a trader, and the trader makes his as a stranger. As long as production for one's own needs is the general rule, or

products are exchanged within a relatively small circle, there is no need for a middleman within the group. A trader is required only for goods produced outside the group. Unless there are people who wander out into foreign lands to buy these necessities, in which case they are themselves "strange" merchants in this other region, the trader *must* be a stranger; there is no opportunity for anyone else to make a living at it.

This position of the stranger stands out more sharply if, instead of leaving the place of his activity, he settles down there. In innumerable cases even this is possible only if he can live by trade as a middleman. Any closed economic group where land and handicrafts have been apportioned in a way that satisfies local demands will still support a livelihood for the trader. For trade alone makes possible unlimited combinations, and through it intelligence is constantly extended and applied in new areas, something that is much harder for the primary producer with his more limited mobility and his dependence on a circle of customers that can be expanded only very slowly. Trade can always absorb more men than can primary production. It is therefore the most suitable activity for the stranger, who intrudes as a supernumerary, so to speak, into a group in which all the economic positions are already occupied. The classic example of this is the history of European Jews. The stranger is by his very nature no owner of land—land not only in the physical sense but also metaphorically as a vital substance which is fixed, if not in space, then at least in an ideal position within the social environment.

Although in the sphere of intimate personal relations the stranger may be attractive and meaningful in many ways, so long as he is regarded as a stranger he is no "landowner" in the eyes of the other. Restriction to intermediary trade and often (as though sublimated from it) to pure finance gives the stranger the specific character of *mobility*. The appearance of this mobility within a bounded group occasions that synthesis of nearness and remoteness which constitutes the formal position of the stranger. The purely mobile person comes incidentally into contact with *every* single element but is not bound up organically, through established ties of kinship, locality, or occupation, with any single one.

Another expression of this constellation is to be found in the objectivity of the stranger. Because he is not bound by roots to the particular constituents and partisan dispositions of the group, he confronts all of these with a distinctly "objective" attitude, an attitude that does not signify mere detachment and nonparticipation, but is a distinct structure composed of remoteness and nearness, indifference and involvement. I refer to my analysis of the dominating positions gained by aliens, in the discussion of superordination and subordination,¹ typified by the practice in certain Italian cities of recruiting their judges from outside, because no native was free from entanglement in family interests and factionalism.

Connected with the characteristic of objectivity is a phenomenon that is found chiefly, though not exclusively, in the stranger who moves on. This is that he often receives the most surprising revelations and confidences, at times reminiscent of a confessional, about matters which are kept carefully hidden from everybody with whom one is close. Objectivity is by no means nonparticipation, a condition that is altogether outside the distinction between subjective and objective orientations. It is rather a positive and definite kind of participation, in the same way that the objectivity of a theoretical observation clearly does not mean that the mind is a passive tabula rasa on which things inscribe their qualities, but rather signifies the full activity of a mind working according to its own laws, under conditions that exclude accidental distortions and emphases whose individual and subjective differences would produce quite different pictures of the same object.

Objectivity can also be defined as freedom. The objective man is not bound by ties which could prejudice his perception, his understanding, and his assessment of data. This freedom, which permits the stranger to experience and treat even his close relationships as though from a bird's-eye view, contains many dangerous possibilities. From earliest times, in uprisings of all sorts the attacked party has claimed that there has been incitement from the outside, by foreign emissaries and agitators. Insofar as this has happened, it represents an exaggeration of the specific role of the stranger: he is the freer man, practically and theoretically; he examines conditions with less prejudice; he

assesses them against standards that are more general and more objective; and his actions are not confined by custom, piety, or precedent.²

Finally, the proportion of nearness and remoteness which gives the stranger the character of objectivity also finds practical expression in the more *abstract* nature of the relation to him. That is, with the stranger one has only certain *more general* qualities in common, whereas the relation with organically connected persons is based on the similarity of just those specific traits which differentiate them from the merely universal. In fact, all personal relations whatsoever can be analyzed in terms of this scheme. They are not determined only by the existence of certain common characteristics which the individuals share in addition to their individual differences, which either influence the relationship or remain outside of it. Rather, the kind of effect which that commonality has on the relation essentially depends on whether it exists only among the participants themselves, and thus, although general within the relation, is specific and incomparable with respect to all those on the outside, or whether the participants feel that what they have in common is so only because it is common to a group, a type, or mankind in general. In the latter case, the effect of the common features becomes attenuated in proportion to the size of the group bearing the same characteristics. The commonality provides a basis for unifying the members, to be sure; but it does not specifically direct *these* particular persons to one another. A similarity so widely shared could just as easily unite each person with every possible other. This, too, is evidently a way in which a relationship includes both nearness and remoteness simultaneously. To the extent to which the similarities assume a universal nature, the warmth of the connection based on them will acquire an element of coolness, a sense of the contingent nature of precisely *this* relation—the connecting forces have lost their specific, centripetal character.

In relation to the stranger, it seems to me, this constellation assumes an extraordinary preponderance in principle over the individual elements peculiar to the relation in question. The stranger is close to us insofar as we feel between him and ourselves similarities of nationality or social position, of occupation or of general human nature. He is far from us insofar as these

similarities extend beyond him and us, and connect us only because they connect a great many people.

A trace of strangeness in this sense easily enters even the most intimate relationships. In the stage of first passion, erotic relations strongly reject any thought of generalization. A love such as this has never existed before; there is nothing to compare either with the person one loves or with our feelings for that person. An estrangement is wont to set in (whether as cause or effect is hard to decide) at the moment when this feeling of uniqueness disappears from the relationship. A skepticism regarding the intrinsic value of the relationship and its value for us adheres to the very thought that in this relation, after all, one is only fulfilling a general human destiny, that one has had an experience that has occurred a thousand times before, and that, if one had not accidentally met this precise person, someone else would have acquired the same meaning for us.

Something of this feeling is probably not absent in any relation, be it ever so close, because that which is common to two is perhaps never common *only* to them but belongs to a general conception which includes much else besides, many *possibilities* of similarities. No matter how few of these possibilities are realized and how often we may forget about them, here and there, nevertheless, they crowd in like shadows between men, like a mist eluding every designation, which must congeal into solid corporeality for it to be called jealousy. Perhaps this is in many cases a more general, at least more insurmountable, strangeness than that due to differences and obscurities. It is strangeness caused by the fact that similarity, harmony, and closeness are accompanied by the feeling that they are actually not the exclusive property of this particular relation, but stem from a more general one—a relation that potentially includes us and an indeterminate number of others, and therefore prevents that relation which alone was experienced from having an inner and exclusive necessity.

On the other hand, there is a sort of “strangeness” in which this very connection on the basis of a general quality embracing the parties is precluded. The relation of the Greeks to the barbarians is a typical example; so are all the cases in which the general characteristics one takes as peculiarly and merely human are

disallowed to the other. But here the expression “the stranger” no longer has any positive meaning. The relation with him is a non-relation; he is not what we have been discussing here: the stranger as a member of the group itself.

As such, the stranger is near and far *at the same time*, as in any relationship based on merely universal human similarities. Between these two factors of nearness and distance, however, a peculiar tension arises, since the consciousness of having only the absolutely general in common has exactly the effect of putting a special emphasis on that which is not common. For a stranger to the country, the city, the race, and so on, what is stressed is again nothing individual, but alien origin, a quality which he has, or could have, in common with many other strangers. For this reason strangers are not really perceived as individuals, but as strangers of a certain type. Their remoteness is no less general than their nearness.

This form appears, for example, in so special a case as the tax levied on Jews in Frankfurt and elsewhere during the Middle Ages. Whereas the tax paid by Christian citizens varied according to their wealth at any

given time, for every single Jew the tax was fixed once and for all. This amount was fixed because the Jew had his social position as a *Jew*, not as the bearer of certain objective contents. With respect to taxes every other citizen was regarded as possessor of a certain amount of wealth, and his tax could follow the fluctuations of his fortune. But the Jew as taxpayer was first of all a Jew, and thus his fiscal position contained an invariable element. This appears most forcefully, of course, once the differing circumstances of individual Jews are no longer considered, limited though this consideration is by fixed assessments, and all strangers pay exactly the same head tax.

Despite his being inorganically appended to it, the stranger is still an organic member of the group. Its unified life includes the specific conditioning of this element. Only we do not know how to designate the characteristic unity of this position otherwise than by saying that it is put together of certain amounts of nearness and of remoteness. Although both these qualities are found to some extent in all relationships, a special proportion and reciprocal tension between them produce the specific form of the relation to the “stranger.”

NOTES

1. Simmel refers here to a passage which may be found in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, pp. 216–21.
2. Where the attacked parties make such an assertion falsely, they do so because those in higher positions tend to exculpate inferiors who previously have been in a close, solidary relationship with them. By introducing the fiction that the rebels were not really guilty, but only instigated, so they did not actually start the rebellion, they exonerate themselves by denying that there were any real grounds for the uprising.

SECTION IV

1. Explain why, according to Simmel, the success of any particular fashion spells its inevitable demise.
2. Why is fashion more characteristic of the modern world than the premodern world?
3. Why does Simmel think that rationalization is a particular feature of metropolitan spaces?
4. What is the blasé attitude, according to Simmel? Do you agree with his assessment? Why or why not?
5. Compare Simmel’s account of the stranger with that of Alfred Schutz elsewhere in this text.

V. OTHER FOUNDATIONAL VOICES

HARRIET MARTINEAU

16. ON MARRIAGE

A growing body of scholarly opinion has concluded that Harriet Martineau (1802–1876) ought to be seen—along with figures such as Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer—as one of the critical formative influences on the subsequent development of sociology. She was a prolific author; included among her most important achievements are *Society in America* (1837), which has been compared favorably with Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, and *How to Observe Morals and Manners* (1838). Martineau’s writings evince a keen appreciation of the importance of social theory, which, like many of her contemporaries, she sought to advance by employing both historical and comparative perspectives. Moreover, she sought to connect theory to both empirical research and social reform. Far more consistently than her male counterparts, she attempted to explore the significance of gender relations. This interest is apparent in this essay, which concerns itself with the institution of marriage across cultures. Martineau contends that the observer will discover that in all cultures the marriage compact treats women unequally, which is related to the limitations imposed on them in terms of occupational opportunities.

The Marriage compact is the most important feature of the domestic state on which the observer can fix his attention. If he be a thinker, he will not be surprised at finding much imperfection in the marriage state wherever he goes. By no arrangements yet attempted have purity of morals, constancy of affection, and domestic peace been secured to any extensive degree in society. Almost every variety of method is still in use, in one part of the world or another. The primitive custom of brothers marrying sisters still subsists in some Eastern regions. Polygamy is very common there, as every one knows. In countries which are too far advanced for this, every restraint of law, all sanction of opinion, has been tried to render that natural method,—the restriction of one husband to one wife,—successful, and therefore universal and

permanent. Law and opinion have, however, never availed to anything like complete success. Even in thriving young countries, where no considerations of want, and few of ambition, can interfere with domestic peace,—where the numbers are equal, where love has the promise of a free and even course, and where religious sentiment is directed full upon the sanctity of the marriage state,—it is found to be far from pure. In almost all countries, the corruption of society in this department is so deep and wide-spreading, as to vitiate both moral sentiment and practice in an almost hopeless degree. It neutralizes almost all attempts to ameliorate and elevate the condition of the race.—There must be something fearfully wrong where the general result is so unfortunate as this. As in most other cases of social suffering, the wrong will be found to lie less

Harriet Martineau, *How to Observe Morals and Manners*. (London: Charles Knight, 1838), 167–182. ♦

in the methods ordained and put in practice, than in the prevalent sentiment of society, out of which all methods arise.

It is necessary to make mention (however briefly) of the kinds of false sentiment from which the evil of conjugal unhappiness appears to spring.—The sentiment by which courage is made the chief ground of honour in men, and chastity in women, coupled with the inferiority in which women have ever been sunk, was sure to induce profligacy. As long as men were brave nothing more was required to make them honourable in the eyes of society: while the inferior condition of women has ever exposed those of them who were not protected by birth and wealth to the profligacy of men. . . .

Marriage exists everywhere, to be studied by the moral observer. He must watch the character of courtships wherever he goes;—whether the young lady is negotiated for and promised by her guardians, without having seen her intended; like the poor girl who, when she asked her mother to point out her future husband from among a number of gentlemen, was silenced with the rebuke, “What is that to you?”—whether they are left free to exchange their faith “by flowing stream, through wood, or craggy wild,” as in the United States;—or whether there is a medium between these two extremes, as in England. He must observe how fate is defied by lovers in various countries . . . Scotch lovers agree to come together after so many years spent in providing the “plenishing.” Irish lovers conclude the business, in case of difficulty, by appearing before the priest the next morning. There is recourse to a balcony and rope-ladder in one country; a steam-boat and back-settlement in another; trust and patience in a third; and intermediate flirtations, to pass the time, in a fourth. He must note the degree of worldly ambition which attends marriages, and which may therefore be supposed to stimulate them,—how much space the house with two rooms in humble life, and the country-seat and carriages in higher life, occupy in the mind of bride or bridegroom.—He must observe whether conjugal infidelity excites horror and rage, or whether it is so much a matter of course as that no jealousy interferes to mar the arrangements of mutual convenience.—He must mark whether women are made absolutely the property of their husbands,

in mind and in estate; or whether the wife is treated more or less professedly as an equal party in the agreement.—He must observe whether there is an excluded class, victims to their own superstition or to a false social obligation, wandering about to disturb by their jealousy or licentiousness those whose lot is happier.—He must observe whether there are domestic arrangements for home enjoyments, or whether all is planned on the supposition of pleasure lying abroad; whether the reliance is on books, gardens, and play with children, or on the opera, parties, the ale-house, or dances on the green.—He must mark whether the ladies are occupied with their household cares in the morning, and the society of their husbands in the evening, or with embroidery and looking out of balconies; with receiving company all day, or gadding abroad; with the library or the nursery; with lovers or with children.—In each country, called civilized, he will meet with almost all these varieties: but in each there is such a prevailing character in the aspect of domestic life, that intelligent observation will enable him to decide, without much danger of mistake, as to whether marriage is merely an arrangement of convenience, in accordance with low morals, or a sacred institution, commanding the reverence and affection of a virtuous people. No high degree of this sanctity can be looked for till that moderation is attained which, during the prevalence of asceticism and its opposite, is reached only by a few. That it yet exists nowhere as the characteristic of any society,—that all the blessings of domestic life are not yet open to all, so as to preclude the danger of any one encroaching on his neighbour,—is but too evident to the travelled observer. He can only mark the degree of approximation to this state of high morals wherever he goes.

The traveller everywhere finds woman treated as the inferior party in a compact in which both parties have an equal interest. Any agreement thus formed is imperfect, and is liable to disturbance; and the danger is great in proportion to the degradation of the supposed weaker party. The degree of the degradation of woman is as good a test as the moralist can adopt for ascertaining the state of domestic morals in any country.

The Indian squaw carries the household burdens, trudging in the dust, while her husband on horseback paces before her, unencumbered but by his own gay trappings. She carries the wallet with food, the matting

for the lodge, the merchandize (if they possess any), and her infant. There is no exemption from labour for the squaw of the most vaunted chief. In other countries the wife may be found drawing the plough, hewing wood and carrying water; the men of the family standing idle to witness her toils. Here the observer may feel pretty sure of his case. From a condition of slavery like this, women are found rising to the highest condition in which they are at present seen, in France, England, and the United States,—where they are less than half-educated, precluded from earning a subsistence, except in a very few ill-paid employments, and prohibited from giving or withholding their assent to laws which they are yet bound by penalties to obey. In France, owing to the great destruction of men in the wars of Napoleon, women are engaged, and successfully engaged, in a variety of occupations which have been elsewhere supposed unsuitable to the sex. Yet there remains so large a number who cannot, by the most strenuous labour in feminine employments, command the necessaries of life, while its luxuries may be earned by infamy, that the morals of the society are naturally bad. Great attention has of late been given to this subject in France: the social condition of women is matter of thought and discussion to a degree which promises some considerable amelioration. Already, women can do more in France than anywhere else; they can attempt more without ridicule or arbitrary hinderance: and the women of France are probably destined to lead the way in the advance which the sex must hereafter make. At present, society is undergoing a transition from a feudal state to one of mutual government; and women, gaining in some ways, suffer in others during the process. They have, happily for themselves, lost much of the peculiar kind of observance which was the most remarkable feature of the chivalrous age; and it has been impossible to prevent their sharing in the benefits of the improvement and diffusion of knowledge. All cultivation of their powers has secured to them the use of new power; so that their condition is far superior to what it was in any former age. But new difficulties about securing a maintenance have arisen. Marriage is less general; and the husbands of the greater number of women are not secure of a maintenance from the lords of the soil, any more than women are from being married. The charge of their

own maintenance is thrown upon large numbers of women, without the requisite variety of employments having been opened to them, or the needful education imparted. A natural consequence of this is, that women are educated to consider marriage the one object in life, and therefore to be extremely impatient to secure it. The unfavourable influence of these results upon the happiness of domestic life may be seen at a glance.

This may be considered the sum and substance of female education in England; and the case is scarcely better in France, though the independence and practical efficiency of women there are greater than in any other country. The women in the United States are in a lower condition than either, though there is less striving after marriage, from its greater frequency, and little restriction is imposed upon the book-learning which women may obtain. But the old feudal notions about the sex flourish there, while they are going out in the more advanced countries of Europe; and these notions, in reality, regulate the condition of women. American women generally are treated in no degree as equals, but with a kind of superstitious outward observance, which, as they have done nothing to earn it, is false and hurtful. Coexisting with this, there is an extreme difficulty in a woman's obtaining a maintenance, except by the exercise of some rare powers. In a country where women are brought up to be indulged wives, there is no hope, help, or prospect for such as have not money and are not married.

In America, women can earn a maintenance only by teaching, sewing, employment in factories, keeping boarding-houses, and domestic service. Some governesses are tolerably well paid,—comparing their earnings with those of men. Employment in factories, and domestic service, are well paid. Sewing is so wretched an occupation everywhere, that it is to be hoped that machinery will soon supersede the use of human fingers in a labour so unprofitable. In Boston, Massachusetts, a woman is paid ninepence (sixpence English) for making a shirt.—In England, besides these occupations, others are opening; and, what is of yet greater consequence, the public mind is awakening to the necessity of enlarging the sphere of female industry. Some of the inferior branches of the fine arts have lately offered profitable employment to many women. The commercial adversity to which the country has

been exposed from time to time, has been of service to the sex, by throwing hundreds and thousands of them upon their own resources, and thus impelling them to urge claims and show powers which are more respected every day.—In France this is yet more conspicuously the case. There, women are shopkeepers, merchants, professional accountants, editors of newspapers, and employed in many other ways, unexampled elsewhere, but natural and respectable enough on the spot.

Domestic morals are affected in two principal respects by these differences. Where feminine occupations of a profitable nature are few, and therefore overstocked, and therefore yielding a scanty maintenance with difficulty, there is the strongest temptation to prefer luxury with infamy to hardship with unrecognized honour. Hence arises much of the corruption of cities,—less in the United States than in Europe, from the prevalence of marriage,—but awful in extent everywhere. Where vice is made to appear the interest of large classes of women, the observer may be quite sure that domestic morals will be found impure. If he can meet with any society where the objects of life are as various and as freely open to women as to men, there he may be sure of finding the greatest amount of domestic purity and peace; for, if women were not helpless, men would find it far less easy to be vicious.

The other way in which domestic morals are affected by the scope which is allowed to the powers of women, is through the views of marriage which are induced. Marriage is debased by being considered the one worldly object in life,—that on which maintenance, consequence, and power depend. Where the husband marries for connexion, fortune, or an heir to his estate, and the wife for an establishment, for consequence, or influence, there is no foundation for high domestic morals and lasting peace; and in a country where marriage is made the single aim of all women, there is no security against the influence of some of these motives even in the simplest and purest cases of attachment. The sordidness is infused from the earliest years; the taint is in the mind before the attachment begins, before the objects meet; and the evil effects upon the marriage state are incalculable.

All this—the sentiment of society with regard to Woman and to Marriage, the social condition of Woman, and the consequent tendency and aim of her

education,—the traveller must carefully observe. Each civilized society claims for itself the superiority in its treatment of woman. In one, she is indulged with religious shows, and with masquerades, or Punch, as an occasional variety. In another, she is left in honourable and undisputed possession of the housekeeping department. In a third, she is allowed to meddle, behind the scenes, with the business which is confided to her husband's management. In a fourth, she is satisfied in being the cherished domestic companion, unaware of the injury of being doomed to the narrowness of mind which is the portion of those who are always confined to the domestic circle. In a fifth, she is flattered at being guarded and indulged as a being requiring incessant fostering, and too feeble to take care of herself. In a sixth society, there may be found expanding means of independent occupation, of responsible employment for women; and here, other circumstances being equal, is the best promise of domestic fidelity and enjoyment.

It is a matter of course that women who are furnished with but one object,—marriage,—must be as unfit for anything when their aim is accomplished as if they had never had any object at all. They are no more equal to the task of education than to that of governing the state; and, if any unexpected turn of adversity befalls them, they have no resource but a convent, or some other charitable provision. Where, on the other hand, women are brought up capable of maintaining an independent existence, other objects remain where the grand one is accomplished. Their independence of mind places them beyond the reach of the spoiler; and their cultivated faculty of reason renders them worthy guardians of the rational beings whose weal or woe is lodged in their hands. There is yet, as may be seen by a mere glance over society, only a very imperfect provision made anywhere for doing justice to the next generation by qualifying their mothers; but the observer of morals may profit by marking the degrees in which this imperfection approaches to barbarism. Where he finds that girls are committed to convents for education, and have no alternative in life but marriage, in which their will has no share, and a return to their convent, he may safely conclude that there a plurality of lovers is a matter of course, and domestic enjoyments of the highest kind undesired and unknown. He

may conclude that as are the parents, so will be the children; and that, for one more generation at least, there will be little or no improvement. But where he finds a variety of occupations open to women; where he perceives them not only pursuing the lighter mechanic arts, dispensing charity and organizing schools for the poor, but occupied in education, and in the study of science and the practice of the fine arts, he may conclude that here resides the highest domestic

enjoyment which has yet been attained, and the strongest hope of a further advance. . . .

From observation on these classes of facts,—the Occupation of the people, the respective Characters of the occupied classes, the Health of the population, the state of Marriage and of Women, and the character of Childhood,—the moralist may learn more of the private life of a community than from the conversation of any number of the individuals who compose it.

17. ON INDIVIDUALISM

Alexis de Tocqueville, a 26-year-old Frenchman, made a nine-month sojourn to the United States in the early 1830s, traveling from the eastern seaboard to the Midwest and into the Deep South, thus seeing both the most settled parts of the nation and regions that were in most respects frontiers. The result of this excursion was *Democracy in America*, a two-volume work, the first volume published in 1835 and the second in 1840. Jon Elster describes Tocqueville as the “first social scientist,” and most commentators speak of his work in the most positive of terms. At the same time, it is generally conceded that his book is sometimes ambiguous and contradictory. This selection, from volume II, addresses the issue of individualism, which was a word that had only recently been coined. Tocqueville’s account is generally seen as the starting point for subsequent explorations of American individualism, including Robert Putnam’s influential *Bowling Alone*. Seeking to distinguish individualism from selfishness, he proceeds to argue that individualism is a characteristic of democratic societies, and as such if democracy takes root in a nation, so too will individualism. The final section of this entry addresses the way that American individualism is channeled into public activities, thus protecting the society from a population solely concerned with private interests.

ON INDIVIDUALISM IN DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES

I have brought out how, in centuries of equality, each man seeks his beliefs in himself; I want to show how, in the same centuries, he turns all his sentiments toward himself alone.

Individualism is a recent expression arising from a new idea. Our fathers knew only selfishness.

Selfishness is a passionate and exaggerated love of self that brings man to relate everything to himself alone and to prefer himself to everything.

Individualism is a reflective and peaceable sentiment that disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of those like him and to withdraw to one side with his family and his friends, so that after having thus created a little society for his own use, he willingly abandons society at large to itself.

Selfishness is born of a blind instinct; individualism proceeds from an erroneous judgment rather than a depraved sentiment. It has its source in the defects of the mind as much as in the vices of the heart.

Selfishness withers the seed of all the virtues; individualism at first dries up only the source of public virtues; but in the long term it attacks and destroys all the others and will finally be absorbed in selfishness.

Selfishness is a vice as old as the world. It scarcely belongs more to one form of society than to another.

Individualism is of democratic origin, and it threatens to develop as conditions become equal.

In aristocratic peoples, families remain in the same state for centuries, and often in the same place. That renders all generations so to speak contemporaries. A man almost always knows his ancestors and respects them; he believes he already perceives his great-grandsons and

he loves them. He willingly does his duty by both, and he frequently comes to sacrifice his personal enjoyments for beings who no longer exist or who do not yet exist.

In addition, aristocratic institutions have the effect of binding each man tightly to several of his fellow citizens.

Classes being very distinct and immobile within an aristocratic people, each of them becomes for whoever makes up a part of it a sort of little native country, more visible and dearer than the big one.

As in aristocratic societies all citizens are placed at a fixed post, some above the others, it results also that each of them always perceives higher than himself a man whose protection is necessary to him, and below he finds another whom he can call upon for cooperation.

Men who live in aristocratic centuries are therefore almost always bound in a tight manner to something that is placed outside of them, and they are often disposed to forget themselves. It is true that in these same centuries the general notion of *those like oneself* is obscure and that one scarcely thinks of devoting oneself to the cause of humanity; but one often sacrifices oneself for certain men.

In democratic centuries, on the contrary, when the duties of each individual toward the species are much clearer, devotion toward one man becomes rarer: the bond of human affections is extended and loosened.

In democratic peoples, new families constantly issue from nothing, others constantly fall into it, and all those who stay on change face; the fabric of time is torn at every moment and the trace of generations is effaced. You easily forget those who have preceded you, and you have no idea of those who will follow you. Only those nearest have interest.

As each class comes closer to the others and mixes with them, its members become indifferent and almost like strangers among themselves. Aristocracy had made of all citizens a long chain that went from the peasant up to the king; democracy breaks the chain and sets each link apart.

As conditions are equalized, one finds a great number of individuals who, not being wealthy enough or powerful enough to exert a great influence over the fates of those like them, have nevertheless acquired or preserved enough enlightenment and goods to be able to be self-sufficient. These owe nothing to anyone, they

expect so to speak nothing from anyone; they are in the habit of always considering themselves in isolation, and they willingly fancy that their whole destiny is in their hands.

Thus not only does democracy make each man forget his ancestors, but it hides his descendants from him and separates him from his contemporaries; it constantly leads him back toward himself alone and threatens finally to confine him wholly in the solitude of his own heart.

HOW INDIVIDUALISM IS GREATER AT THE END OF A DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION THAN IN ANY OTHER PERIOD

It is above all at the moment when a democratic society succeeds in forming itself on the debris of an aristocracy that this isolation of men from one another and the selfishness resulting from it strike one's regard most readily.

These societies not only contain many independent citizens, they are filled daily with men who, having arrived at independence yesterday, are drunk with their new power: these conceive a presumptuous confidence in their strength, and not imagining that from now on they could need to call upon the assistance of those like them, they have no difficulty in showing that they think only of themselves.

An aristocracy ordinarily succumbs only after a prolonged struggle, during which implacable hatreds among the different classes are ignited. These passions survive victory, and one can follow their track in the midst of the democratic confusion that succeeds it.

Those among the citizens who were the first in the hierarchy that has been destroyed cannot immediately forget their former greatness; for a long time they consider themselves strangers within the new society. They see all the equals that this society gives them as oppressors whose destiny cannot excite their sympathy; they have lost sight of their former equals and no longer feel bound by a common interest to their fates; each, in withdrawing separately, therefore believes himself reduced to being occupied only with himself. Those, on the contrary, who were formerly placed at the bottom of the social scale, and whom a sudden revolution has brought to the common level, enjoy

their newly acquired independence only with a sort of secret restiveness; if they find some of their former superiors at their side, they cast looks of triumph and fear at them, and draw apart from them.

It is, therefore, ordinarily at the origin of democratic societies that citizens show themselves the most disposed to isolate themselves.

Democracy inclines men not to get close to those like themselves; but democratic revolutions dispose them to flee each other and to perpetuate in the heart of equality the hatreds to which inequality gave birth.

The great advantage of the Americans is to have arrived at democracy without having to suffer democratic revolutions, and to be born equal instead of becoming so.

HOW THE AMERICANS COMBAT INDIVIDUALISM WITH FREE INSTITUTIONS

Despotism, which in its nature is fearful, sees the most certain guarantee of its own duration in the isolation of men, and it ordinarily puts all its care into isolating them. There is no vice of the human heart that agrees with it as much as selfishness: a despot readily pardons the governed for not loving him, provided that they do not love each other. He does not ask them to aid him in leading the state; it is enough that they do not aspire to direct it themselves. He calls those who aspire to unite their efforts to create common prosperity turbulent and restive spirits, and changing the natural sense of words, he names those who confine themselves narrowly to themselves good citizens.

Thus the vices to which despotism gives birth are precisely those that equality favors. These two things complement and aid each other in a fatal manner.

Equality places men beside one another without a common bond to hold them. Despotism raises barriers between them and separates them. It disposes them not to think of those like themselves, and for them it makes a sort of public virtue of indifference.

Despotism, which is dangerous in all times, is therefore particularly to be feared in democratic centuries.

It is easy to see that in these same centuries men have a particular need of freedom.

When citizens are forced to be occupied with public affairs, they are necessarily drawn from the midst of their individual interests, and from time to time, torn away from the sight of themselves.

From the moment when common affairs are treated in common, each man perceives that he is not as independent of those like him as he at first fancied, and that to obtain their support he must often lend them his cooperation.

When the public governs, there is no man who does not feel the value of public benevolence and who does not seek to capture it by attracting the esteem and affection of those in the midst of whom he must live.

Several of the passions that chill and divide hearts are then obliged to withdraw to the bottom of the soul and hide there. Haughtiness dissimulates; contempt does not dare come to light. Selfishness is afraid of itself.

Under a free government, since most public functions are elective, men who by the loftiness of their souls or the restiveness of their desires are cramped in private life, feel every day that they cannot do without the populace surrounding them.

It then happens that through ambition one thinks of those like oneself, and that often one's interest is in a way found in forgetting oneself. I know that one can object to me here with all the intrigues that arise in an election, the shameful means the candidates often make use of, and the calumnies their enemies spread. These are occasions for hatred, and they present themselves all the more often as elections become more frequent.

These evils are undoubtedly great, but they are passing, whereas the goods that arise with them stay.

The longing to be elected can momentarily bring certain men to make war on each other, but in the long term this same desire brings all men to lend each other a mutual support; and if it happens that an election accidentally divides two friends, the electoral system brings together in a permanent manner a multitude of citizens who would have always remained strangers to one another. Freedom creates particular hatreds, but despotism gives birth to general indifference.

The Americans have combated the individualism to which equality gives birth with freedom, and they have defeated it.

The legislators of America did not believe that, to cure a malady so natural to the social body in democratic times and so fatal, it was enough to accord to the nation as a whole a representation of itself; they thought that, in addition, it was fitting to give political life to each portion of the territory in order to multiply infinitely the occasions for citizens to act together and to make them feel every day that they depend on one another.

This was wisely done.

The general affairs of a country occupy only the principal citizens. They assemble in the same places only from time to time; and as it often happens that afterwards they lose sight of each other, lasting bonds among them are not established. But when it is a question of having the particular affairs of a district regulated by the men who inhabit it, the same individuals are always in contact and they are in a way forced to know each other and to take pleasure in each other.

Only with difficulty does one draw a man out of himself to interest him in the destiny of the whole state, because he understands poorly the influence that the destiny of the state can exert on his lot. But should it be necessary to pass a road through his property, he will see at first glance that he has come across a relation between this small public affair and his greatest private affairs, and he will discover, without anyone's showing it to him, the tight bond that here unites a particular interest to the general interest.

Thus by charging citizens with the administration of small affairs, much more than by leaving the government of great ones to them, one interests them in the public good and makes them see the need they constantly have for one another in order to produce it.

One can capture the favor of a people all at once by a striking action; but to win the love and respect of the populace that surrounds you, you must have a long succession of little services rendered, obscure good offices, a constant habit of benevolence, and a well-established reputation of disinterestedness.

Local freedoms, which make many citizens put value on the affection of their neighbors and those close to them, therefore constantly bring men closer to one another, despite the instincts that separate them, and force them to aid each other.

In the United States, the most opulent citizens take much care not to isolate themselves from the

people; on the contrary, they constantly come close to them, they gladly listen to them and speak to them every day. They know that the rich in democracies always need the poor, and that in democratic times one ties the poor to oneself more by manners than by benefits. The very greatness of the benefits, which brings to light the difference in conditions, causes a secret irritation to those who profit from them; but simplicity of manners has almost irresistible charms: their familiarity carries one away and even their coarseness does not always displease.

At first this truth does not penetrate the minds of the rich. They ordinarily resist it as long as the democratic revolution lasts, and they do not accept it immediately even after this revolution is accomplished. They willingly consent to do good for the people, but they want to continue to hold them carefully at a distance. They believe that is enough; they are mistaken. They would thus ruin themselves without warming the hearts of the population that surrounds them. It does not ask of them the sacrifice of their money, but of their haughtiness.

One would say that in the United States there is no imagination that does not exhaust itself in inventing the means of increasing wealth and satisfying the needs of the public. The most enlightened inhabitants of each district constantly make use of their enlightenment to discover new secrets appropriate to increasing the common prosperity; and when they have found any, they hasten to pass them along to the crowd.

When examining up close the vices and weakness often displayed in America by those who govern, one is astonished at the growing prosperity of the people—and one is wrong. It is not the elected magistrate who makes American democracy prosper; but it prospers because the magistrate is elective.

It would be unjust to believe that the patriotism of the Americans and the zeal that each of them shows for the well-being of his fellow citizens have nothing real about them. Although private interest directs most human actions, in the United States as elsewhere, it does not rule all.

I must say that I often saw Americans make great and genuine sacrifices for the public, and I remarked a hundred times that, when needed, they almost never fail to lend faithful support to one another.

The free institutions that the inhabitants of the United States possess and the political rights of which they make so much use recall to each citizen constantly and in a thousand ways that he lives in society. At every moment they bring his mind back toward the idea that the duty as well as the interest of men is to render themselves useful to those like them; and as he does not see any particular reason to hate them, since he is never either their slave or their master, his heart readily leans to the side of benevolence. One is occupied with the

general interest at first by necessity and then by choice; what was calculation becomes instinct; and by dint of working for the good of one's fellow citizens, one finally picks up the habit and taste of serving them.

Many people in France consider equality of conditions as the first evil and political freedom as the second. When they are obliged to submit to the one, they strive at least to escape the other. And I say that to combat the evils that equality can produce there is only one efficacious remedy: it is political freedom.

18. OF OUR SPIRITUAL STRIVINGS

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868–1963) was one of the monumental figures in the struggle for racial justice, not only in the United States, but internationally. He was one of the leaders of the Niagara Movement and was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Throughout his career, his politics evolved from a liberal integrationist position through a socialist phase, ending up with an embrace of anti-colonial pan-Africanism. With that final political transformation, he moved to the newly independent Ghana, where he spend the remainder of his life. DuBois was trained as a sociologist, the first African American to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University. This selection is Chapter 1 of his magisterial 1903 book, *The Souls of Black Folk*. It expresses the existential reality confronting African Americans four decades after emancipation, formally free but oppressed, marginalized, and confronting deep-rooted prejudice, while striving to find their rightful place in a republic claiming the high principle that all people are created equal.

Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: unasked by some through feelings of delicacy; by others through the difficulty of rightly framing it. All, nevertheless, flutter round it. They approach me in a half-hesitant sort of way, eye me curiously or compassionately, and then, instead of saying directly, How does it feel to be a problem? they say, I know an excellent colored man in my town; or I fought at Mechanicsville; or, Do not these Southern outrages make your blood boil? At these I smile, or am interested, or reduce the boiling to a simmer, as the occasion may require. To the real question, How does it feel to be a problem? I answer seldom a word.

And yet, being a problem is a strange experience,—peculiar even for one who has never been anything else, save perhaps in babyhood and in Europe. It is in the early days of rollicking boyhood that the revelation first burst upon one, all in a day, as it were. I remember well when the shadow swept across me. I was a little thing, away up in the hills of New England, where the dark Housatonic winds between Hoosac and Taghganic to the sea. In a wee wooden schoolhouse, something put it into the boys' and girls' heads to buy georgous

visiting-cards—ten cents a package—and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card,—refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil. I had thereafter no desire to tear down that veil, to creep through; I held all beyond it in common contempt, and lived above it in a region of blue sky and great wandering shadows. That sky was bluest when I could beat my mates at examination-time, or beat them at a foot-race, or even beat their stringy heads. Alas, with the years all this fine contempt began to fade; for the world I longed for, and all its dazzling opportunities, were theirs, not mine. But they should not keep these prizes, I said; some, all, I would wrest from them. Just how I would do it I could never decide: by reading law, by healing the sick, by telling the wonderful tales that swam in my head,—some way. With other black boys the strife was not so fiercely sunny: their youth shrunk into tasteless sycophancy, or into silent hatred of the pale world about them and mocking distrust of everything

white; or wasted itself in a bitter cry, Why did God make me an outcast and a stranger in mine own house? The "shades of the prison-house" closed round about us all: walls strait and stubborn to the whitest, but relentlessly narrow, tall, and unscalable to sons of night who must plod darkly against the stone, or steadily, half hopelessly watch the streak of blue above.

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa; he does not wish to bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he believes—foolishly, perhaps, but fervently—that Negro blood has yet a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without losing the opportunity of self-development.

This is the end of his striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation, and to husband and use his best powers. These powers, of body and of mind, have in the past been so wasted and dispersed as to lose all effectiveness, and to seem like absence of all power, like weakness. The double-aimed struggle of the black artisan, on the one hand to escape white contempt for a nation of mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, and on the other hand to plough and nail and dig for a poverty-stricken horde, could only result in making him a poor craftsman, for he had but half a heart in either cause. By the poverty and ignorance of his people the Negro lawyer

or doctor was pushed toward quackery and demagogism, and by the criticism of the other world toward an elaborate preparation that overfitted him for his lowly tasks. The would-be black-savant was confronted by the paradox that the knowledge his people needed was a twice-told tale to his white neighbors, while the knowledge which would teach the white world was Greek to his own flesh and blood. The innate love of harmony and beauty that set the ruder souls of his people a-dancing, a-singing, and a-laughing raised but confusion and doubt in the soul of the black artist; for the beauty revealed to him was the soul-beauty of a race which his larger audience despised, and he could not articulate the message of another people.

This waste of double aims, this seeking to satisfy two unreconciled ideals, has wrought sad havoc with the courage and faith and deeds of eight thousand people, has sent them often wooing false gods and invoking false means of salvation, and has even at times seemed destined to make them ashamed of themselves. In the days of bondage they thought to see in one divine event the end of all doubt and disappointment; eighteenth-century Rousseauism never worshiped freedom with half the unquestioning faith that the American Negro did for two centuries. To him slavery was, indeed, the sum of all villainies, the cause of all sorrow, the root of all prejudice; emancipation was the key to a promised land of sweeter beauty than ever stretched before the eyes of wearied Israelites. In his songs and exhortations swelled one refrain, liberty; in his tears and curses the god he implored had freedom in his right hand. At last it came,—suddenly, fearfully, like a dream. With one wild carnival of blood and passion came the message in his own plaintive cadences:—

Shout, O children!
Shout, you're free!
The Lord has bought your liberty!

Years have passed away, ten, twenty, thirty. Thirty years of national life, thirty years of renewal and development, and yet the swarthy ghost of Banquo sits in its old place at the national feast. In vain does the nation cry to its vastest problem,—

Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble!

The freedman has not yet found in freedom his promised land. Whatever of lesser good may have come in these years of change, the shadow of a deep disappointment rests upon the Negro people,—a disappointment all the more bitter because the unattained ideal was unbounded save by the simple ignorance of a lowly folk.

The first decade was merely a prolongation of the vain search for freedom, the boon that seemed ever barely to elude their grasp,—like a tantalizing will-o'-the-wisp, maddening and misleading the headless host. The holocaust of war, the terrors of the Kuklux Klan, the lies of carpet-baggers, the disorganization of industry, and the contradictory advice of friends and foes left the bewildered serf with no new watchword beyond the old cry for freedom. As the decade closed, however, he began to grasp a new idea. The ideal of liberty demanded for its attainment powerful means, and these the Fifteenth Amendment gave him. The ballot, which before he had looked upon as a visible sign of freedom, he now regarded as the chief means of gaining and perfecting the liberty with which war had partially endowed him. And why not? Had not votes made war and emancipated millions? Had not votes enfranchised the freedmen? Was anything impossible to a power that had done all this? A million black men started with renewed zeal to vote themselves into the kingdom. The decade fled away,—a decade containing, to the freedman's mind, nothing but suppressed votes, stuffed ballot-boxes, and election outrages that nullified his vaunted right of suffrage. And yet that decade from 1875 to 1885 held another powerful movement, the rise of another ideal to guide the unguided, another pillar of fire by night after a clouded day. It was the ideal of "book-learning;" the curiosity, born of compulsory ignorance, to know and test the power of the cabalistic letters of the white man, the longing to know. Mission and night schools began in the smoke of battle, ran the gauntlet of reconstruction and at last developed into permanent foundations. Here at last seemed to have been discovered the mountain path to Canaan; longer than the highway of emancipation and law, steep and rugged, but straight, leading to heights high enough to overlook life.

Up the new path the advance guard toiled, slowly, heavily, doggedly; only those who have watched and guided the faltering feet, the misty minds, the dull understandings, of the dark pupils of these schools know how faithfully, how piteously, this people strove to learn. It was weary work. The cold statistician wrote down the inches of progress here and there, noted also where here and there a foot had slipped or some one had fallen. To the tired climbers, the horizon was ever dark, the mists were often cold, the Canaan was always dim and far away. If, however, the vistas disclosed as yet no goal, no resting-place, little but flattery and criticism, the journey at least gave leisure for reflection and self-examination; it changed the child of emancipation to the youth with dawning self-consciousness, self-realization, self-respect. In those sombre forests of his striving his own soul rose before him, and he saw himself,—darkly as through a veil; and yet he saw in himself some faint revelation of his power, of his mission. He began to have a dim feeling that, to attain his place in the world, he must be himself, and not another. For the first time he sought to analyze the burden he bore upon his back, that deadweight of social degradation partially masked behind a half-named Negro problem, he felt his poverty; without a cent, without a home, without land, tools, or savings, he had entered into competition with rich landed, skilled neighbors. To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships. He felt the weight of his ignorance,—not simply of letters, but of life, of business, of the humanities; the accumulated sloth and shirking and awkwardness of decades and centuries shackled his hands and feet. Nor was his burden all poverty and ignorance. The red stain of bastardy, which two centuries of systematic legal defilement of Negro women had stamped upon his race, meant not only the loss of ancient African chastity, but also the hereditary weight of a mass of filth from white whoremongers and adulterers, threatening almost the obliteration of the Negro home.

A people thus handicapped ought not to be asked to race with the world, but rather allowed to give all its time and thought to its own social problems. But alas! while sociologists gleefully count his bastards and his prostitutes, the very soul of the toiling, sweating black man is darkened by the shadow of a vast despair.

Men call the shadow prejudice, and learnedly explain it as the natural defense of culture against barbarism, learning against ignorance, purity against crime, the "higher" against the "lower" races. To which the Negro cries Amen! and swears that to so much this strange prejudice as is founded on just homage to civilization, culture, righteousness, and progress he humbly bows and meekly does obeisance. But before that nameless prejudice that leaps beyond all this he stands helpless, dismayed, and well-nigh speechless; before that personal disrespect and mockery, the ridicule and systematic humiliation, the distortion of fact and wanton license of fancy, the cynical ignoring of the better and boisterous welcoming of the worse, the all-pervading desire to inculcated disdain for everything black, from Toussaint to the devil,—before this there rises a sickening despair that would disarm and discourage any nation save that black host to whom "discouragement" is an unwritten word.

They still press on, they still nurse the dogged hope,—not a hope of nauseating patronage, not a hope of reception into charmed social circles of stock-jobbers, pork-packers, and earl-hunters, but the hope of a higher synthesis of civilization and humanity, a true progress, with which the chorus "Peace, good will to men,"

May make one music as before,
But vaster.

Thus the second decade of the American Negro's freedom was a period of conflict, of inspiration and doubt, of faith and vain questionings, of Sturm und Drang. The ideals of physical freedom, of political power, of school training, as separate all-sufficient panaceas for social ills, became in the third decade dim and overcast. They were the vain dreams of credulous

race childhood; not wrong, but incomplete and oversimple. The training of the schools we need to-day more than ever,—the training of deft hands, quick eyes and ears, and the broader, deeper, higher culture of gifted minds. The power of the ballot we need in sheer self-defense, and as a guarantee of good faith. We may misuse it, but we can scarce do worse in this respect than our whilom masters. Freedom, too, the long-sought, we still seek,—the freedom of life and limb, the freedom to work and think. Work, culture, and liberty—all these we need, not singly, but together; for to-day these ideals among the Negro people are gradually coalescing, and finding a higher meaning in the unifying ideal of race,—the ideal of fostering the traits and talents of the Negro, not in opposition to, but in conformity with, the greater ideals of the American republic, in order that some day, on American soil, two world races may give each to each those characteristics which both so sadly lack. Already we come not altogether empty-handed: there is to-day no true American music but the sweet wild melodies of the Negro slave; the American fairy tales are Indian and African; we are the sole oasis of simple faith and reverence in a dusty desert of dollars and smartness. Will America be poorer if she replace her brutal, dyspeptic blundering with the light-hearted but determined Negro humility; or her coarse, cruel wit with loving, jovial good humor; or her Annie Rooney with Steal Away?

Merely a stern concrete test of the underlying principles of the great republic is the Negro problem, and the spiritual striving of the freedmen's sons is the travail of souls whose burden is almost beyond the measure of their strength, but who bear it in the name of an historic race, in the name of this the land of their fathers' fathers, and in the name of human opportunity.

19. THE DEPENDENCE OF WOMEN

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1935) is best known today as a feminist theorist and novelist. Her personal account of her own descent into madness, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, along with her futuristic novel *Herland*, continue to be read today. Less well known is the fact that Gilman was interested in sociology, having been influenced in particular by the work of one of the founders of American sociology, Frank Lester Ward. In this descriptive passage from *Women and Economics* (1898), she discusses the implications of consigning women to household labor and child rearing—which, because these forms of work are uncompensated, means that they have no impact on the economic status of women. As a consequence of this situation, wives are dependent on their husbands for their status in the larger community. As contemporary feminists have frequently pointed out, this assessment by a turn-of-the-century feminist remains relevant today.

... **G**rateful return for happiness conferred is not the method of exchange in a partnership. The comfort a man takes with his wife is not in the nature of a business partnership, nor are her frugality and industry. A housekeeper, in her place, might be as frugal, as industrious, but would not therefore be a partner. Man and wife are partners truly in their mutual obligation to their children, their common love, duty, and service. But a manufacturer who marries, or a doctor, or a lawyer, does not take a partner in parenthood, unless his wife is also a manufacturer, a doctor, or a lawyer. In his business, she cannot even advise wisely without training and experience. To love her husband the composer, does not enable her to compose; and the loss of a man's wife, though it may break his heart, does not cripple his business, unless his mind is affected by grief. She is in no sense a business partner, unless she contributes capital or experience or labor, as a man would in like relation. Most men would hesitate very seriously before entering a business partnership with any woman, wife or not.

If the wife is not, then, truly a business partner, in what way does she earn from her husband the food,

clothing, and shelter she receives at his hands? By house service, it will be instantly replied. This is the general misty idea upon the subject,—that women earn all they get, and more, by house service. Here we come to a very practical and definite economic ground. Although not producers of wealth, women serve in the final processes of preparation and distribution. Their labor in the household has a genuine economic value.

For a certain percentage of persons to serve other persons, in order that the ones so served may produce more, is a contribution not to be overlooked. The labor of women in the house, certainly, enables men to produce more wealth than they otherwise could; and in this way women are economic factors in society. But so are horses. The labor of horses enables men to produce more wealth than they otherwise could. The horse is an economic factor in society. But the horse is not economically independent, nor is the woman. If a man plus a valet can perform more useful service than he could minus a valet, then the valet is performing useful service. But, if the valet is the property of the man, is obliged to perform this service, and is not paid for it, he is not economically independent.

The labor which the wife performs in the household is given as part of her functional duty, not as employment. The wife of the poor man, who works hard in a small house, doing all the work for the family, or the wife of the rich man, who wisely and gracefully manages a large house and administers its functions, each is entitled to fair pay for services rendered.

To take this ground and hold it honestly, wives, as earners through domestic service, are entitled to the wages of cooks, housemaids, nursemaids, seamstresses, or housekeepers, and to no more. This would of course reduce the spending money of the wives of the rich, and put it out of the power of the poor man to "support" a wife at all, unless, indeed, the poor man faced the situation fully, paid his wife her wages as house servant, and then she and he combined their funds in the support of their children. He would be keeping a servant: she would be helping keep the family. But nowhere on earth would there be "a rich woman" by these means. Even the highest class of private housekeeper, useful as her services are, does not accumulate a fortune. She does not buy diamonds and sables and keep a carriage. Things like these are not earned by house service.

But the salient fact in this discussion is that, whatever the economic value of the domestic industry of women is, they do not get it: The women who do the most work get the least money, and the women who have the most money do the least work. Their labor is neither given nor taken as a factor in economic exchange. It is held to be their duty as women to do this work; and their economic status bears no relation to their domestic labors, unless an inverse one. Moreover, if they were thus fairly paid,—given what they earned, and no more,—all women working in this way would be reduced to the economic status of the house servant. Few women—or men either—care to face this condition. The ground that women earn their living by domestic labor is instantly forsaken, and we are told that they obtain their livelihood as mothers. This is a peculiar position. We speak of it commonly enough, and often with deep feeling, but without due analysis.

In treating of an economic exchange, asking what return in goods or labor women make for the goods and labor given them,—either to the rate collectively or to their husbands individually,—what payment

women make for their clothes and shoes and furniture and food and shelter, we are told that the duties and services of the mother entitle her to support.

If this is so, if motherhood is an exchangeable commodity given by women in payment for clothes and food, then we must of course find some relation between the quantity or quality of the motherhood and the quantity and quality of the pay. This being true, then the women who are not mothers have no economic status at all; and the economic status of those who are must be shown to be relative to their motherhood. This is obviously absurd. The childless wife has as much money as the mother of many—more; for the children of the latter consume what would otherwise be hers; and the inefficient mother is no less provided for than the efficient one. Visibly, and upon the face of it, women are not maintained in economic prosperity proportioned to their motherhood. Motherhood bears no relation to their economic status. Among primitive races, it is true,—in the patriarchal period, for instance,—there was some truth in this position. Women being of no value whatever save as bearers of children, their favor and indulgence did bear direct relation to maternity; and they had reason to exult on more grounds than one when they could boast a son. To-day, however, the maintenance of the woman is not conditioned upon this. A man is not allowed to discard his wife because she is barren. The claim of motherhood as a factor in economic exchange is false to-day. But suppose it were true. Are we willing to hold this ground, even in theory? Are we willing to consider motherhood as a business, a form of commercial exchange? Are the cares and duties of the mother, her travail and her love, commodities to be exchanged for bread?

It is revolting so to consider them; and, if we dare face our own thoughts, and force them to their logical conclusion, we shall see that nothing could be more repugnant to human feeling, or more socially and individually injurious, than to make motherhood a trade. Driven off these alleged grounds of women's economic independence; shown that women, as a class, neither produce nor distribute wealth; that women, as individuals, labor mainly as house servants, are not paid as such, and would not be satisfied with such an economic status if they were so paid; that wives are not

business partners or co-producers of wealth with their husbands, unless they actually practise the same profession; that they are not salaried as mothers, and that it would be unspeakably degrading if they were,—what remains to those who deny that women are supported by men? This (and a most amusing position it is),—that the function of maternity unfits a woman for economic production, and, therefore, it is right that she should be supported by her husband.

The ground is taken that the human female is not economically independent, that she is fed by the male of her species. In denial of this, it is first alleged that she is economically independent,—that she does support herself by her own industry in the house. It being shown that there is no relation between the economic status of woman and the labor she performs in the home, it is then alleged that not as house servant, but as mother, does woman earn her living. It being shown that the economic status of woman bears no relation to her motherhood, either in quantity or quality, it is then alleged that motherhood renders a woman unfit for economic production, and that, therefore, it is right that she be supported by her husband. Before going farther, let us seize upon this admission,—that she is supported by her husband.

Without going into either the ethics or the necessities of the case, we have reached so much common ground: the female of genus homo is supported by the male. Whereas, in other species of animals, male and female alike graze and browse, hunt and kill, climb, swim, dig, run, and fly for their livings, in our species the female does not seek her own living in the specific activities of our race, but is fed by the male.

Now as to the alleged necessity. Because of her maternal duties, the human female is said to be unable to get her own living. As the maternal duties of other females do not unfit them for getting their own living and also the livings of their young, it would seem that the human maternal duties require the segregation of the entire energies of the mother to the service of the child during her entire adult life, or so large a proportion of them that not enough remains to devote to the individual interests of the mother.

Such a condition, did it exist, would of course excuse and justify the pitiful dependence of the human female, and her support by the male. As the queen bee,

modified entirely to maternity, is supported, not by the male, to be sure, but by her co-workers, the “old maids,” the barren working bees, who labor so patiently and lovingly in their branch of the maternal duties of the hive, so would the human female, modified entirely to maternity, become unfit for any other exertion, and a helpless dependant.

Is this the condition of human motherhood? Does the human mother, by her motherhood, thereby lose control of brain and body, lose power and skill and desire for any other work? Do we see before us the human race, with all its females segregated entirely to the uses of motherhood, consecrated, set apart, specially developed, spending every power of their nature on the service of their children?

We do not. We see the human mother worked far harder than a mare, laboring her life long in the service, not of her children only, but of men; husbands, brothers, fathers, whatever male relatives she has; for mother and sister also; for the church a little, if she is allowed; for society, if she is able; for charity and education and reform,—working in many ways that are not the ways of motherhood.

It is not motherhood that keeps the housewife on her feet from dawn till dark; it is house service, not child service. Women work longer and harder than most men, and not solely in maternal duties. The savage mother carries the burdens, and does all menial service for the tribe. The peasant mother toils in the fields, and the workingman’s wife in the home. Many mothers, even now, are wage-earners for the family, as well as bearers and rearers of it. And the women who are not so occupied, the women who belong to rich men,—here perhaps is the exhaustive devotion to maternity which is supposed to justify an admitted economic dependence. But we do not find it even among these. Women of ease and wealth provide for their children better care than the poor woman can; but they do not spend more time upon it themselves, nor more care and effort. They have other occupation.

In spite of her supposed segregation to maternal duties, the human female, the world over, works at extra-maternal duties for hours enough to provide her with an independent living, and then is denied independence on the ground that motherhood prevents her working!

If this ground were tenable, we should find a world full of women who never lifted a finger save in the service of their children, and of men who did *all* the work besides, and waited on the women whom motherhood prevented from waiting on themselves. The ground is not tenable. A human female, healthy, sound, has twenty-five years of life before she is a mother, and should have twenty-five years more after the period of such maternal service as is expected of her has been given. The duties of grandmotherhood are surely not alleged as preventing economic independence.

The working power of the mother has always been a prominent factor in human life. She is the worker

par excellence, but her work is not such as to affect her economic status. Her living, all that she gets,—food, clothing, ornaments, amusements, luxuries,—these bear no relation to her power to produce wealth, to her services in the house, or to her motherhood. These things bear relation only to the man she marries, the man she depends on,—to how much he has and how much he is willing to give her. The women whose splendid extravagance dazzles the world, whose economic goods are the greatest, are often neither houseworkers nor mothers, but simply the women who hold most power over the men who have the most money. The female of genus home is economically dependent on the male. He is her food supply.

20. CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION

The American-born son of Norwegian immigrants, Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929) proved to be one of the most original social thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although appreciated for his creativity, his thought has often been misunderstood. This is in no small part due to its mode of presentation. Veblen was perhaps the most acerbic social critic of his era, but his criticism was couched in irony and sarcasm. Growing up in Minnesota, Veblen's political thought was shaped by Midwestern populism rather than Marxism; he shared populism's critique of the economic power of giant corporations and banks, which were seen as undermining democracy and economic justice. Among Veblen's major works are *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (1904), *The Engineers and the Price System* (1921), and *The Higher Learning in America* (1924). His "theory of the leisure class" argued that the capitalist class was not innovative or dynamic, but rather lived off of rather than contributed to industrial society. Much of his book on the topic focuses on the culture of this class, in which he introduced such terms as "pecuniary canons of taste," "conspicuous leisure," and in the excerpt included here "conspicuous consumption."

Conspicuous consumption of valuable goods is a means of reputability to the gentleman of leisure. As wealth accumulates on his hands, his own unaided effort will not avail to sufficiently put his opulence in evidence by this method. The aid of friends and competitors is therefore brought in by resorting to the giving of valuable presents and expensive feasts and entertainments. Presents and feasts had probably another origin than that of naïve ostentation, but they acquired their utility for this purpose very early, and they have retained that character to the present; so that their utility in this respect has now long been the substantial ground on which these usages rest. Costly entertainments, such as the potlatch or the ball, are peculiarly adapted to serve this end. The competitor with whom the entertainer wishes to institute a comparison is, by this method, made to serve as a means to the end. He consumes vicariously for his host at the

same time that he is a witness to the consumption of that excess of good things which his host is unable to dispose of single-handed, and he is also made to witness his host's facility in etiquette.

In the giving of costly entertainments other motives, of a more genial kind, are of course also present. The custom of festive gatherings probably originated in motives of conviviality and religion; these motives are also present in the later development, but they do not continue to be the sole motives. The latter-day leisure-class festivities and entertainments may continue in some slight degree to serve the religious need and in a higher degree the needs of recreation and conviviality, but they also serve an invidious purpose; and they serve it none the less effectually for having a colourable non-invidious ground in these more allowable motives. But the economic effect of these social amenities is not therefore lessened, either in the

Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1924. ♦

vicarious consumption of goods or in the exhibition of difficult and costly achievements in etiquette.

As wealth accumulates, the leisure class develops further in function and structure, and there arises a differentiation within the class. There is a more or less elaborate system of rank and grades. This differentiation is furthered by the inheritance of wealth and the consequent inheritance of gentility. With the inheritance of gentility goes the inheritance of obligatory leisure; and gentility of a sufficient potency to entail a life of leisure may be inherited without the complement of wealth required to maintain a dignified leisure. Gentle blood may be transmitted without goods enough to afford a reputedly free consumption at one's ease. Hence results a class of impecunious gentlemen of leisure, incidentally referred to already. These half-caste gentlemen of leisure fall into a system of hierarchical gradations. Those who stand near the higher and the highest grades of the wealthy leisure class, in point of birth, or in point of wealth, or both, outrank the remoter-born and the pecuniarily weaker. These lower grades, especially the impecunious, or marginal, gentlemen of leisure, affiliate themselves by a system of dependence or fealty to the great ones; by so doing they gain an increment of repute, or of the means with which to lead a life of leisure, from their patron. They become his courtiers or retainers, servants; and being fed and countenanced by their patron they are indices of his rank and vicarious consumers of his superfluous wealth. Many of these affiliated gentlemen of leisure are at the same time lesser men of substance in their own right; so that some of them are scarcely at all, others only partially, to be rated as vicarious consumers. So many of them, however, as make up the retainers and hangers-on of the patron may be classed as vicarious consumers without qualification. Many of these again, and also many of the other aristocracy of less degree, have in turn attached to their persons a more or less comprehensive group of vicarious consumers in the persons of their wives and children, their servants, retainers, etc.

Throughout this graduated scheme of vicarious leisure and vicarious consumption the rule holds that these offices must be performed in some such manner, or under some such circumstance or insignia, as shall point plainly to the master to whom this leisure or consumption pertains, and to whom therefore the resulting

increment of good repute of right inures. The consumption and leisure executed by these persons for their master or patron represents an investment on his part with a view to an increase of good fame. As regards feasts and largesses this is obvious enough, and the imputation of repute to the host or patron here takes place immediately, on the ground of common notoriety. Where leisure and consumption is performed vicariously by henchmen and retainers, imputation of the resulting repute to the patron is effected by their residing near his person so that it may be plain to all men from what source they draw. As the group whose good esteem is to be secured in this way grows larger, more patent means are required to indicate the imputation of merit for the leisure performed, and to this end uniforms, badges, and liveries come into vogue. The wearing of uniforms or liveries implies a considerable degree of dependence, and may even be said to be a mark of servitude, real or ostensible. The wearers of uniforms and liveries may be roughly divided into two classes—the free and the servile, or the noble and the ignoble. The services performed by them are likewise divisible into noble and ignoble. Of course the distinction is not observed with strict consistency in practice; the less debasing of the base services and the less honorific of the noble functions are not infrequently merged in the same person. But the general distinction is not on that account to be overlooked. What may add some perplexity is the fact that this fundamental distinction between noble and ignoble, which rests on the nature of the ostensible service performed, is traversed by a secondary distinction into honorific and humiliating, resting on the rank of the person for whom the service is performed or whose livery is worn. So, those offices which are by right the proper employment of the leisure class are noble; such are government, fighting, hunting, the care of arms and accoutrements, and the like,—in short, those which may be classed as ostensibly predatory employments. On the other hand, those employments which properly fall to the industrious class are ignoble; such as handicraft or other productive labour, menial services, and the like. But a base service performed for a person of very high degree may become a very honorific office; as for instance the office of a Maid of Honour or of a Lady in Waiting to the Queen, or the King's Master of the Horse or his Keeper of the Hounds. The two offices

last named suggest a principle of some general bearing. Whenever, as in these cases, the menial service in question has to do directly with the primary leisure employments of fighting and hunting, it easily acquires a reflected honorific character. In this way great honour may come to attach to an employment which in its own nature belongs to the baser sort.

In the later development of peaceable industry, the usage of employing an idle corps of uniformed men-at-arms gradually lapses. Vicarious consumption by dependents bearing the insignia of their patron or master narrows down to a corps of liveried menials. In a heightened degree, therefore, the livery comes to be a badge of servitude, or rather of servility. Something of a honorific character always attached to the livery of the armed retainer, but this honorific character disappears when the livery becomes the exclusive badge of the menial. The livery becomes obnoxious to nearly all who are required to wear it. We are yet so little removed from a state of effective slavery as still to be fully sensitive to the sting of any imputation of servility. This antipathy asserts itself even in the case of the liveries or uniforms which some corporations prescribe as the distinctive dress of their employees. In this country the aversion even goes the length of discrediting—in a mild and uncertain way—those government employments, military and civil, which require the wearing of a livery or uniform.

With the disappearance of servitude, the number of vicarious consumers attached to any one gentleman tends, on the whole, to decrease. The like is of course true, and perhaps in a still higher degree, of the number of dependents who perform vicarious leisure for him. In a general way, though not wholly nor consistently, these two groups coincide. The dependent who was first delegated for these duties was the wife, or the chief wife; and, as would be expected, in the later development of the institution, when the number of persons by whom these duties are customarily performed gradually narrows, the wife remains the last. In the higher grades of society a large volume of both these kinds of service is required; and here the wife is of course still assisted in the work by a more or less numerous corps of menials. But as we descend the social scale, the point is presently reached where the duties of vicarious leisure and consumption devolve upon the wife alone. In

the communities of the Western culture, this point is at present found among the lower middle class.

And here occurs a curious inversion. It is a fact of common observation that in this lower middle class there is no pretence of leisure on the part of the head of the household. Through force of circumstances it has fallen into disuse. But the middle-class wife still carries on the business of vicarious leisure, for the good name of the household and its master. In descending the social scale in any modern industrial community, the primary fact—the conspicuous leisure of the master of the household—disappears at a relatively high point. The head of the middle-class household has been reduced by economic circumstances to turn his hand to gaining a livelihood by occupations which often partake largely of the character of industry, as in the case of the ordinary business man of to-day. But the derivative fact—the vicarious leisure and consumption rendered by the wife, and the auxiliary vicarious performance of leisure by menials—remains in vogue as a conventionality which the demands of respectability will not suffer to be slighted. It is by no means an uncommon spectacle to find a man applying himself to work with the utmost assiduity, in order that his wife may in due form render for him that degree of vicarious leisure which the common sense of the time demands.

The leisure rendered by the wife in such cases is, of course, not a simple manifestation of idleness or indolence. It almost invariably occurs disguised under some form of work or household duties or social amenities, which prove on analysis to serve little or no ulterior end beyond showing that she does not and need not occupy herself with anything that is gainful or that is of substantial use. As has already been noticed under the head of manners, the greater part of the customary round of domestic cares to which the middle-class housewife gives her time and effort is of this character. Not that the results of her attention to household matters, of a decorative and mundificatory character, are not pleasing to the sense of men trained in middle-class proprieties; but the taste to which these effects of household adornment and tidiness appeal is a taste which has been formed under the selective guidance of a canon of propriety that demands just these evidences of wasted effort. The effects are pleasing to us chiefly because we have been taught to find

them pleasing. There goes into these domestic duties much solicitude for a proper combination of form and colour, and for other ends that are to be classed as æsthetic in the proper sense of the term; and it is not denied that effects having some substantial æsthetic value are sometimes attained. Pretty much all that is here insisted on is that, as regards these amenities of life, the housewife's efforts are under the guidance of traditions that have been shaped by the law of conspicuously wasteful expenditure of time and substance. If beauty or comfort is achieved,—and it is a more or less fortuitous circumstance if they are,—they must be achieved by means and methods that commend themselves to the great economic law of wasted effort. The more reputable, “presentable” portion of middle-class household paraphernalia are, on the one hand, items of conspicuous consumption, and on the other hand, apparatus for putting in evidence the vicarious leisure rendered by the housewife.

The requirement of vicarious consumption at the hands of the wife continues in force even at a lower point in the pecuniary scale than the requirement of vicarious leisure. At a point below which little if any pretence of wasted effort, in ceremonial cleanness and the like, is observable, and where there is assuredly no conscious attempt at ostensible leisure, decency still requires the wife to consume some goods conspicuously for the reputability of the household and its head. So that, as the latter-day outcome of this evolution of an archaic institution, the wife, who was at the outset the drudge and chattel of the man, both in fact and in theory,—the producer of goods for him to consume,—has become the ceremonial consumer of goods which he produces. But she still quite unmistakably remains his chattel in theory; for the habitual rendering of vicarious leisure and consumption is the abiding mark of the unfree servant.

This vicarious consumption practised by the household of the middle and lower classes can not be counted as a direct expression of the leisure-class scheme of life, since the household of this pecuniary grade does not belong within the leisure class. It is rather that the leisure-class scheme of life here comes to an expression at the second remove. The leisure class stands at the head of the social structure in point of reputability; and its manner of life and its standards

of worth therefore afford the norm of reputability for the community. The observance of these standards, in some degree of approximation, becomes incumbent upon all classes lower in the scale. In modern civilized communities the lines of demarcation between social classes have grown vague and transient, and wherever this happens the norm of reputability imposed by the upper class extends its coercive influence with but slight hindrance down through the social structure to the lowest strata. The result is that the members of each stratum accept as their ideal of decency the scheme of life in vogue in the next higher stratum, and bend their energies to live up to that ideal. On pain of forfeiting their good name and their self-respect in case of failure, they must conform to the accepted code, at least in appearance.

The basis on which good repute in any highly organised industrial community ultimately rests is pecuniary strength; and the means of showing pecuniary strength, and so of gaining or retaining a good name, are leisure and a conspicuous consumption of goods. Accordingly, both of these methods are in vogue as far down the scale as it remains possible; and in the lower strata in which the two methods are employed, both offices are in great part delegated to the wife and children of the household. Lower still, where any degree of leisure, even ostensible, has become impracticable for the wife, the conspicuous consumption of goods remains and is carried on by the wife and children. The man of the household also can do something in this direction, and, indeed, he commonly does; but with a still lower descent into the levels of indigence—along the margin of the slums—the man, and presently also the children, virtually cease to consume valuable goods for appearances, and the woman remains virtually the sole exponent of the household's pecuniary decency. No class of society, not even the most abjectly poor, foregoes all customary conspicuous consumption. The last items of this category of consumption are not given up except under stress of the direst necessity. Very much of squalor and discomfort will be endured before the last trinket or the last pretence of pecuniary decency is put away. There is no class and no country that has yielded so abjectly before the pressure of physical want as to deny themselves all gratification of this higher or spiritual need.

21. SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS OF MIND

Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929) is one of a group of American academics associated with the formative period of American pragmatism, a group that included William James, John Dewey, George Herbert Mead (see the essays of all three in this collection), and George Santayana. Born and raised in the university town of Ann Arbor, Cooley remained there throughout his entire career once he accepted a professorship at the University of Michigan. Cooley is sometimes seen as one of the precursors to the symbolic interactionist tradition, and he is often described as a microsociologist or a social psychologist. This is understandable given his interest in analyzing the linkages between consciousness and social context. His notion of the “looking-glass self” is a reflection of this concern. Much of his work focused on the relationship between the individual and others within the confines of the family and the intimacy of small groups—or what he referred to as “primary groups.” These settings constituted the crucible for the forging of self-identity. In this selection from *Social Organization* (1909), Cooley takes issue with the position originating with Descartes’ famous declaration “I think, hence I am.” Cooley counters this by advancing the idea that self and society are intricately intertwined and the idea of a self that is independent from society is mistaken.

Mind is an organic whole made up of coöperating individualities, in somewhat the same way that the music of an orchestra is made up of divergent but related sounds. No one would think it necessary or reasonable to divide the music into two kinds, that made by the whole and that of particular instruments, and no more are there two kinds of mind, the social mind and the individual mind. When we study the social mind we merely fix our attention on larger aspects and relations rather than on the narrower ones of ordinary psychology.

The view that all mind acts together in a vital whole from which the individual is never really separate flows naturally from our growing knowledge of heredity and suggestion, which makes it increasingly clear that every thought we have is linked with the thought of our ancestors and associates, and through them with that of society at large. It is also the only

view consistent with the general standpoint of modern science, which admits nothing isolate in nature.

The unity of the social mind consists not in agreement but in organization, in the fact of reciprocal influence or causation among its parts, by virtue of which everything that takes place in it is connected with everything else, and so is an outcome of the whole. Whether, like the orchestra, it gives forth harmony may be a matter of dispute, but that its sound, pleasing or otherwise, is the expression of a vital coöperation, cannot well be denied. Certainly everything that I say or think is influenced by what others have said or thought, and, in one way or another, sends out an influence of its own in turn.

This differentiated unity of mental or social life, present in the simplest intercourse but capable of infinite growth and adaptation, is what I mean in this work by social organization. It would be useless, I think, to

Charles Horton Cooley, *Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind*, New York: Schocken Books, 1962 [1909]. ♦

attempt a more elaborate definition. We have only to open our eyes to *see* organization; and if we cannot do that no definition will help us.

In the social mind we may distinguish—very roughly of course—conscious and unconscious relations, the unconscious being those of which we are not aware, which for some reason escape our notice. A great part of the influences at work upon us are of this character: our language, our mechanical arts, our government and other institutions, we derive chiefly from people to whom we are but indirectly and unconsciously related. The larger movements of society—the progress and decadence of nations, institutions and races—have seldom been a matter of consciousness until they were past. And although the growth of social consciousness is perhaps the greatest fact of history, it has still but a narrow and fallible grasp of human life.

Social consciousness, or awareness of society, is inseparable from self-consciousness, because we can hardly think of ourselves excepting with reference to a social group of some sort, or of the group except with reference to ourselves. The two things go together, and what we are really aware of is a more or less complex personal or social whole, of which now the particular, now the general, aspect is emphasized.

In general, then, most of our reflective consciousness, of our wide-awake state of mind, is social consciousness, because a sense of our relation to other persons, or of other persons to one another, can hardly fail to be a part of it. Self and society are twin-born, we know one as immediately as we know the other, and the notion of a separate and independent ego is an illusion.

This view, which seems to me quite simple and in accord with common-sense, is not the one most commonly held, for psychologists and even sociologists are still much infected with the idea that self-consciousness is in some way primary, and antecedent to social consciousness, which must be derived by some recondite process of combination or elimination. I venture, therefore, to give some further exposition of it, based in part on firsthand observation of the growth of social ideas in children.

Descartes is, I suppose, the best-known exponent of the traditional view regarding the primacy of self-consciousness. Seeking an unquestionable basis for

philosophy, he thought that he found it in the proposition "I think, therefore I am" (*cogito, ergo sum*). This seemed to him inevitable, though all else might be illusion. "I observed," he says, "that, whilst I thus wished to think that all was false, it was absolutely necessary that I, who thus thought, should be somewhat; and as I observed that this truth, *I think, hence I am*, was so certain and of such evidence that no ground of doubt, however extravagant, could be alleged by the sceptics capable of shaking it, I concluded that I might, without scruple, accept it as the first principle of the philosophy of which I was in search."¹

From our point of view this reasoning is unsatisfactory in two essential respects. In the first place it seems to imply that "I"-consciousness is a part of all consciousness, when, in fact, it belongs only to a rather advanced stage of development. In the second it is one-sided or "individualistic" in asserting the personal or "I" aspect to the exclusion of the social or "we" aspect, which is equally original with it.

Introspection is essential to psychological or social insight, but the introspection of Descartes was, in this instance, a limited, almost abnormal, sort of introspection—that of a self-absorbed philosopher doing his best to isolate himself from other people and from all simple and natural conditions of life. The mind into which he looked was in a highly technical state, not likely to give him a just view of human consciousness in general.

Introspection is of a larger sort in our day. There is a world of things in the mind worth looking at, and the modern psychologist, instead of fixing his attention wholly on an extreme form of speculative self-consciousness, puts his mind through an infinite variety of experiences, intellectual and emotional, simple and complex, normal and abnormal, sociable and private, recording in each case what he sees in it. He does this by subjecting it to suggestions or incitements of various kinds, which awaken the activities he desires to study.

In particular he does it largely by what may be called *sympathetic introspection*, putting himself into intimate contact with various sorts of persons and allowing them to awake in himself a life similar to their own, which he afterwards, to the best of his ability, recalls

and describes. In this way he is more or less able to understand—always by introspection—children, idiots, criminals, rich and poor, conservative and radical—any phase of human nature not wholly alien to his own.

This I conceive to be the principal method of the social psychologist.

One thing which this broader introspection reveals is that the "I"-consciousness does not explicitly appear until the child is, say, about two years old, and that when it does appear it comes in inseparable conjunction with the consciousness of other persons and of those relations which make up a social group. It is in fact simply one phase of a body of personal thought which is self-consciousness in one aspect and social consciousness in another.

The mental experience of a new-born child is probably a mere stream of impressions, which may be regarded as being individual, in being differentiated from any other stream, or as social, in being an undoubted product of inheritance and suggestion from human life at large; but is not aware either of itself or of society.

Very soon, however, the mind begins to discriminate personal impressions and to become both naively self-conscious and naively conscious of society; that is, the child is aware, in an unreflective way, of a group and of his own special relation to it. He does not say "I" nor does he name his mother, his sister or his nurse, but he has images and feelings out of which these ideas will grow. Later comes the more reflective consciousness which names both himself and other people, and brings a fuller perception of the relations which constitute the unity of this small world.²

And so on to the most elaborate phases of self-consciousness and social consciousness, to the metaphysician pondering the Ego, or the sociologist meditating on the Social Organism. Self and society go together, as phases of a common whole. I am aware of the social groups in which I live as immediately and authentically as I am aware of myself; and Descartes might have said "We think," *cogitamus*, on as good grounds as he said *cogito*.

But, it may be said, this very consciousness that you are considering is after all located in a particular

person, and so are all similar consciousnesses, so that what we see, if we take an objective view of the matter, is merely an aggregate of individuals, however social those individuals may be. Common-sense, most people think, assures us that the separate person is the primary fact of life.

If so, is it not because common-sense has been trained by custom to look at one aspect of things and not another? Common-sense, moderately informed, assures us that the individual has his being only as part of a whole. What does not come by heredity comes by communication and intercourse; and the more closely we look the more apparent it is that separateness is an illusion of the eye and community the inner truth. "Social organism," using the term in no abstruse sense but merely to mean a vital unity in human life, is a fact as obvious to enlightened common-sense as individuality.

I do not question that the individual is a differentiated centre of psychical life, having a world of his own into which no other individual can fully enter; living in a stream of thought in which there is nothing quite like that in any other stream, neither his "I," nor his "you," nor his "we," nor even any material object; all, probably, as they exist for him, have something unique about them. But this uniqueness is no more apparent and verifiable than the fact—not at all inconsistent with it—that he is in the fullest sense member of a whole, appearing such not only to scientific observation but also to his own untrained consciousness.

There is then no mystery about social consciousness. The view that there is something recondite about it and that it must be dug for with metaphysics and drawn forth from the depths of speculation, springs from a failure to grasp adequately the social nature of all higher consciousness. What we need in this connection is only a better seeing and understanding of rather ordinary and familiar facts.

We may view social consciousness either in a particular mind or as a coöperative activity of many minds. The social ideas that I have are closely connected with those that other people have, and act and react upon them to form a whole. This gives us public consciousness, or to use a more familiar term, public opinion, in

the broad sense of a group state of mind which is more or less distinctly aware of itself. By this last phrase I mean such a mutual understanding of one another's points of view on the part of the individuals or groups concerned as naturally results from discussion. There are all degrees of this awareness in the various individuals. Generally speaking, it never embraces the whole in all its complexity, but almost always some of the relations that enter into the whole. The more intimate the communication of a group the more complete, the more thoroughly knit together into a living whole, is its public consciousness.

In a congenial family life, for example, there may be a public consciousness which brings all the important thoughts and feelings of the members into such a living and coöperative whole. In the mind of each member, also, this same thing exists as a social consciousness embracing a vivid sense of the personal traits and modes of thought and feeling of the other members. And, finally, quite inseparable from all this, is each one's consciousness of himself, which is largely a direct reflection of the ideas about himself he attributes to the others, and is directly or indirectly altogether a product of social life. Thus all consciousness hangs together, and the distinctions are chiefly based on point of view.

The unity of public opinion, like all vital unity, is one not of agreement but of organization, of interaction and mutual influence. It is true that a certain underlying likeness of nature is necessary in order that minds may influence one another and so coöperate in forming a vital whole, but identity, even in the

simplest process, is unnecessary and probably impossible. The consciousness of the American House of Representatives, for example, is by no means limited to the common views, if there are any, shared by its members, but embraces the whole consciousness of every member so far as this deals with the activity of the House. It would be a poor conception of the whole which left out the opposition, or even one dissentient individual. That all minds are different is a condition, not an obstacle, to the unity that consists in a differentiated and coöperative life.

Here is another illustration of what is meant by individual and collective aspects of social consciousness. Some of us possess a good many books relating to social questions of the day. Each of these books, considered by itself, is the expression of a particular social consciousness; the author has cleared up his ideas as well as he can and printed them. But a library of such books expresses social consciousness in a larger sense; it speaks for the epoch. And certainly no one who reads the books will doubt that they form a whole, whatever their differences. The radical and the reactionist are clearly part of the same general situation.

There are, then, at least three aspects of consciousness which we may usefully distinguish: self-consciousness, or what I think of myself; social consciousness (in its individual aspect), or what I think of other people; and public consciousness, or a collective view of the foregoing as organized in a communicating group. And all three are phases of a single whole.

NOTES

1. Discourse on Method, part iv.
2. There is much interest and significance in the matter of children's first learning the use of "I" and other self-words—just how they learn them and what they mean by them. Some discussion of the matter, based on observation of two children, will be found in *Human Nature and the Social Order*; and more recently I have published a paper in the *Psychological Review* (November, 1908) called *A Study of the Early Use of Self-Words by a Child*. "I" seems to mean primarily the assertion of will in a social medium of which the child is conscious and of which his "I" is an inseparable part. It is thus a social idea and, as stated in the text, arises by differentiation of a vague body of personal thought which is self-consciousness in one phase and social consciousness in another. It has no necessary reference to the body.

22. WHAT PRAGMATISM MEANS

William James (1842–1910), the brother of novelist Henry James, was an American philosopher who, along with Charles S. Peirce and John Dewey, is considered one of the founders of a distinctly American school of philosophy called “pragmatism.” In this selection from Chapter 2 of *Pragmatism* (1907), James offers in characteristically straightforward and unambiguous language what he means by the term. His argument entails a major shift from traditional philosophy’s understanding of its purpose. James contends that pragmatism offers not answers, but a method of inquiry. Moreover, rather than being preoccupied with first principles that serve as the requisite basis for traditional philosophy, pragmatism is concerned from the outset with the implications or consequences of any theoretical position. Such an orientation implies that philosophy ought to be less grandiose in its aims, content to assist in obtaining insights that are both more limited and more provisional than the goal of most philosophers, yet still having the potential for actually affecting people in their everyday lives.

Some years ago, being with a camping party in the mountains, I returned from a solitary ramble to find every one engaged in a ferocious metaphysical dispute. The *corpus* of the dispute was a squirrel—a live squirrel supposed to be clinging to one side of a tree-trunk; while over against the tree’s opposite side a human being was imagined to stand. This human witness tries to get sight of the squirrel by moving rapidly round the tree, but no matter how fast he goes, the squirrel moves as fast in the opposite direction, and always keeps the tree between himself and the man, so that never a glimpse of him is caught. The resultant metaphysical problem now is this: *Does the man go round the squirrel or not?* He goes round the tree, sure enough, and the squirrel is on the tree; but does he go round the squirrel? In the unlimited leisure of the wilderness, discussion had been worn threadbare. Every one had taken sides, and was obstinate; and the numbers on both sides were even. Each side, when I appeared therefore appealed to me to make it a majority. Mindful of the scholastic adage that whenever

you meet a contradiction you must make a distinction, I immediately sought and found one, as follows: “Which party is right,” I said, “depends on what you *practically mean* by ‘going round’ the squirrel. If you mean passing from the north of him to the east, then to the south, then to the west, and then to the north of him again, obviously the man does go round him, for he occupies these successive positions. But if on the contrary you mean being first in front of him, then on the right of him, then behind him, then on his left, and finally in front again, it is quite as obvious that the man fails to go round him, for by the compensating movements the squirrel makes, he keeps his belly turned towards the man all the time, and his back turned away. Make the distinction, and there is no occasion for any farther dispute. You are both right and both wrong according as you conceive the verb ‘to go round’ in one practical fashion or the other.”

Although one or two of the hotter disputants called my speech a shuffling evasion, saying they wanted no quibbling or scholastic hairsplitting, but meant just

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plain honest English 'round,' the majority seemed to think that the distinction had assuaged the dispute.

I tell this trivial anecdote because it is a peculiarly simple example of what I wish now to speak of as *the pragmatic method*. The pragmatic method is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable. Is the world one or many?—fated or free?—material or spiritual?—here are notions either of which may or may not hold good of the world; and disputes over such notions are unending. The pragmatic method in such cases is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to any one if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle. Whenever a dispute is serious, we ought to be able to show some practical difference that must follow from one side or the other's being right. A glance at the history of the idea will show you still better what pragmatism means. The term is derived from the same Greek word *pragma*, meaning action, from which our words 'practice' and 'practical' come. It was first introduced into philosophy by Mr. Charles Peirce in 1878. In an article entitled 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear,' in the *Popular Science Monthly* for January of that year, Mr. Peirce, after pointing out that our beliefs are really rules for action, said that, to develop a thought's meaning, we need only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce: that conduct is for us its sole significance. And the tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions, however subtle, is that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice. To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then, we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve—what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, whether immediate or remote, is then for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all.

This is the principle of Peirce, the principle of pragmatism. It lay entirely unnoticed by any one for twenty years, until I, in an address before Professor Howison's philosophical union at the University of California,

brought it forward again and made a special application of it to religion. By that date (1898) the times seemed ripe for its reception. The word 'pragmatism' spread, and at present it fairly spots the pages of the philosophic journals. On all hands we find the 'pragmatic movement' spoken of, sometimes with respect, sometimes with contumely, seldom with clear understanding. It is evident that the term applies itself conveniently to a number of tendencies that hitherto have lacked a collective name, and that it has 'come to stay.'

To take in the importance of Peirce's principle, one must get accustomed to applying it to concrete cases. I found a few years ago that Ostwald, the illustrious Leipzig chemist, had been making perfectly distinct use of the principle of pragmatism in his lectures on the philosophy of science, though he had not called it by that name.

"All realities influence our practice," he wrote me, "and that influence is their meaning for us. I am accustomed to put questions to my classes in this way: In what respects would the world be different if this alternative or that were true? If I can find nothing that would become different, then the alternative has no sense."

That is, the rival views mean practically the same thing, and meaning, other than practical, there is for us none. Ostwald in a published lecture gives this example of what he means. Chemists have long wrangled over the inner constitution of certain bodies called 'tautomers.' Their properties seemed equally consistent with the notion that an instable hydrogen atom oscillates inside of them, or that they are instable mixtures of two bodies. Controversy raged, but never was decided. "It would never have begun," says Ostwald, "if the combatants had asked themselves what particular experimental fact could have been made different by one or the other view being correct. For it would then have appeared that no difference of fact could possibly ensue; and the quarrel was as unreal as if, theorizing in primitive times about the raising of dough by yeast, one party should have invoked a 'brownie,' while another insisted on an 'elf' as the true cause of the phenomenon."¹

It is astonishing to see how many philosophical disputes collapse into insignificance the moment you subject them to this simple test of tracing a concrete consequence. There can be no difference anywhere that

doesn't *make* a difference elsewhere—no difference in abstract truth that doesn't express itself in a difference in concrete fact and in conduct consequent upon that fact, imposed on somebody, somehow, somewhere, and somewhen. The whole function of philosophy ought to be to find out what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world-formula or that world-formula be the true one.

There is absolutely nothing new in the pragmatic method. Socrates was an adept at it. Aristotle used it methodically. Locke, Berkeley, and Hume made momentous contributions to truth by its means. Shadworth Hodgson keeps insisting that realities are only what they are 'known as.' But these forerunners of pragmatism used it in fragments: they were preluders only. Not until in our time has it generalized itself, become conscious of a universal mission, pretended to a conquering destiny. I believe in that destiny, and I hope I may end by inspiring you with my belief.

Pragmatism represents a perfectly familiar attitude in philosophy, the empiricist attitude, but it represents it, as it seems to me, both in a more radical and in a less objectionable form than it has ever yet assumed. A pragmatist turns his back resolutely and once for all upon a lot of inveterate habits dear to professional philosophers. He turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad *a priori* reasons, from fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action and towards power. That means the empiricist temper regnant and the rationalist temper sincerely given up. It means the open air and possibilities of nature, as against dogma, artificiality, and the pretense of finality in truth.

At the same time it does not stand for any special results. It is a method only. But the general triumph of that method would mean an enormous change in what I called in my last lecture the 'temperament' of philosophy. Teachers of the ultra-rationalistic type would be frozen out, much as the courtier type is frozen out in republics, as the ultramontane type of priest is frozen out in protestant lands. Science and metaphysics would come much nearer together, would in fact work absolutely hand in hand.

Metaphysics has usually followed a very primitive kind of quest. You know how men have always

hankered after unlawful magic, and you know what a great part in magic *words* have always played. If you have his name, or the formula of incantation that binds him, you can control the spirit, genie, afrite, or whatever the power may be. Solomon knew the names of all the spirits, and having their names, he held them subject to his will. So the universe has always appeared to the natural mind as a kind of enigma, of which the key must be sought in the shape of some illuminating or power-bringing word or name. That word names the universe's *principle*, and to possess it is after a fashion to possess the universe itself. 'God,' 'Matter,' 'Reason,' 'the Absolute,' 'Energy,' are so many solving names. You can rest when you have them. You are at the end of your metaphysical quest.

But if you follow the pragmatic method, you cannot look on any such word as closing your quest. You must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it at work within the stream of your experience. It appears less as a solution, then, than as a program for more work, and more particularly as an indication of the ways in which existing realities may be *changed*.

Theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas, in which we can rest. We don't lie back upon them, we move forward, and, on occasion, make nature over again by their aid. Pragmatism unstiffens all our theories, limbers them up and sets each one at work. Being nothing essentially new, it harmonizes with many ancient philosophic tendencies. It agrees with nominalism for instance, in always appealing to particulars; with utilitarianism in emphasizing practical aspects; with positivism in its disdain for verbal solutions, useless questions and metaphysical abstractions.

All these, you see, are *anti-intellectualist* tendencies. Against rationalism as a pretension and a method pragmatism is fully armed and militant. But, at the outset, at least, it stands for no particular results. It has no dogmas, and no doctrines save its method. As the young Italian pragmatist Papini has well said, it lies in the midst of our theories, like a corridor in a hotel. Innumerable chambers open out of it. In one you may find a man writing an atheistic volume; in the next some one on his knees praying for faith and strength; in a third a chemist investigating a body's properties. In a fourth a system of idealistic metaphysics is being excogitated; in a fifth the impossibility of metaphysics

is being shown. But they all own the corridor, and all must pass through it if they want a practicable way of getting into or out of their respective rooms.

No particular results then, so far, but only an attitude of orientation, is what the pragmatic method means. *The attitude of looking, away from first things, principles, 'categories,' supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts.*

So much for the pragmatic method! You may say that I have been praising it rather than explaining it to you, but I shall presently explain it abundantly enough by showing how it works on some familiar problems. Meanwhile the word pragmatism has come to be used in a still wider sense, as meaning also a certain *theory of truth*. I mean to give a whole lecture to the statement of that theory, after first paving the way, so I can be very brief now. But brevity is hard to follow, so I ask for your redoubled attention for a quarter of an hour. If much remains obscure, I hope to make it clearer in the later lectures.

One of the most successfully cultivated branches of philosophy in our time is what is called inductive logic, the study of the conditions under which our sciences have evolved. Writers on this subject have begun to show a singular unanimity as to what the laws of nature and elements of fact mean, when formulated by mathematicians, physicists and chemists. When the first mathematical, logical, and natural uniformities, the first *laws*, were discovered, men were so carried away by the clearness, beauty and simplification that resulted, that they believed themselves to have deciphered authentically the eternal thoughts of the Almighty. His mind also thundered and reverberated in syllogisms. He also thought in conic sections, squares and roots and ratios, and geometrized like Euclid. He made Kepler's laws for the planets to follow; he made velocity increase proportionally to the time in falling bodies; he made the law of the sines for light to obey when refracted; he established the classes, orders, families and genera of plants and animals, and fixed the distances between them. He thought the archetypes of all things, and devised their variations; and when we rediscover any one of these his wondrous institutions, we seize his mind in its very literal intention.

But as the sciences have developed farther, the notion has gained ground that most, perhaps all, of

our laws are only approximations. The laws themselves, moreover, have grown so numerous that there is no counting them; and so many rival formulations are proposed in all the branches of science that investigators have become accustomed to the notion that no theory is absolutely a transcript of reality, but that any one of them may from some point of view be useful. Their great use is to summarize old facts and to lead to new ones. They are only a man-made language, a conceptual shorthand, as some one calls them, in which we write our reports of nature; and languages, as is well known, tolerate much choice of expression and many dialects.

Thus human arbitrariness has driven divine necessity from scientific logic. If I mention the names of Sigwart, Mach, Ostwald, Pearson, Milhaud, Poincaré, Duhem, Ruysen, those of you who are students will easily identify the tendency I speak of, and will think of additional names.

Riding now on the front of this wave of scientific logic Messrs. Schiller and Dewey appear with their pragmatistic account of what truth everywhere signifies. Everywhere, these teachers say, 'truth' in our ideas and beliefs means the same thing that it means in science. It means, they say, nothing but this, *that ideas (which themselves are but parts of our experience) become true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience*, to summarize them and get about among them by conceptual short-cuts instead of following the interminable succession of particular phenomena. Any idea upon which we can ride, so to speak; any idea that will carry us prosperously from any one part of our experience to any other part, linking things satisfactorily, working securely, simplifying, saving labor; is true for just so much, true in so far forth, true *instrumentally*. This is the 'instrumental' view of truth taught so successfully at Chicago, the view that truth in our ideas means their power to 'work,' promulgated so brilliantly at Oxford.

Messrs. Dewey, Schiller and their allies, in reaching this general conception of all truth, have only followed the example of geologists, biologists and philologists. In the establishment of these other sciences, the successful stroke was always to take some simple process actually observable in operation—as denudation by weather, say, or variation from parental type, or change of dialect by incorporation of new words and

pronunciations—and then to generalize it, making it apply to all times, and produce great results by summing its effects through the ages.

The observable process which Schiller and Dewey particularly singled out for generalization is the familiar one by which any individual settles into *new opinions*. The process here is always the same. The individual has a stock of old opinions already, but he meets a new experience that puts them to a strain. Somebody contradicts them; or in a reflective moment he discovers that they contradict each other; or he hears of facts with which they are incompatible; or desires arise in him which they cease to satisfy. The result is an inward trouble to which his mind till then had been a stranger, and from which he seeks to escape by modifying his previous mass of opinions. He saves as much of it as he can, for in this matter of belief we are all extreme conservatives. So he tries to change first this opinion, and then that (for they resist change very variously), until at last some new idea comes up which he can graft upon the ancient stock with a minimum of disturbance of the latter, some idea that mediates between the stock and the new experience and runs them into one another most felicitously and expediently.

This new idea is then adopted as the true one. It preserves the older stock of truths with a minimum of modification, stretching them just enough to make them admit the novelty, but conceiving that in ways as familiar as the case leaves possible. An *outrée* explanation, violating all our preconceptions, would never pass for a true account of a novelty. We should scratch round industriously till we found something less eccentric. The most violent revolutions in an individual's beliefs leave most of his old order standing. Time and space, cause and effect, nature and history, and one's own biography remain untouched. New truth is always a go-between, a smoother-over of transitions. It marries old opinion to new fact so as ever to show a minimum of jolt, a maximum of continuity. We hold a theory true just in proportion to its success in solving this 'problem of maxima and minima.' But success in solving this problem is eminently a matter of approximation. We say this theory solves it on the whole more satisfactorily than that theory; but that means more satisfactorily to ourselves, and individuals will

emphasize their points of satisfaction differently. To a certain degree, therefore, everything here is plastic.

The point I now urge you to observe particularly is the part played by the older truths. Failure to take account of it is the source of much of the unjust criticism levelled against pragmatism. Their influence is absolutely controlling. Loyalty to them is the first principle—in most cases it is the only principle; for by far the most usual way of handling phenomena so novel that they would make for a serious re-arrangement of our preconception is to ignore them altogether, or to abuse those who bear witness for them.

You doubtless wish examples of this process of truth's growth, and the only trouble is their superabundance. The simplest case of new truth is of course the mere numerical addition of new kinds of facts, or of new single facts of old kinds, to our experience—an addition that involves no alteration in the old beliefs. Day follows day, and its contents are simply added. The new contents themselves are not true, they simply, *come* and *are*. Truth is *what we say about them*, and when we say that they have come, truth is satisfied by the plain additive formula.

But often the day's contents oblige a re-arrangement. If I should now utter piercing shrieks and act like a maniac on this platform, it would make many of you revise your ideas as to the probable worth of my philosophy. 'Radium' came the other day as part of the day's content, and seemed for a moment to contradict our ideas of the whole order of nature, that order having come to be identified with what is called the conservation of energy. The mere sight of radium paying heat away indefinitely out of its own pocket seemed to violate that conservation. What to think? If the radiations from it were nothing but an escape of unsuspected 'potential' energy, pre-existent inside of the atoms, the principle of conservation would be saved. The discovery of 'helium' as the radiation's outcome, opened a way to this belief. So Ramsay's view is generally held to be true, because, although it extends our old ideas of energy, it causes a minimum of alteration in their nature.

I need not multiply instances. A new opinion counts as 'true' just in proportion as it gratifies the individual's desire to assimilate the novel in his experience to his beliefs in stock. It must both lean on old truths and grasp new fact; and its success (as I said a moment

ago) in doing this, is a matter for the individual's appreciation. When old truth grows, then, by new truth's addition, it is for subjective reasons. We are in the process and obey the reasons. That new idea is truest which performs most felicitously its function of satisfying our double urgency. It makes itself true, gets itself classed as true, by the way it works; grafting itself then upon the ancient body of truth, which thus grows much as a tree grows by the activity of a new layer of cambium.

Now Dewey and Schiller proceed to generalize this observation and to apply it to the most ancient parts of truth. They also once were plastic. They also were called true for human reasons. They also mediated between still earlier truths and what in those days were novel observations. Purely objective truth, truth in whose establishment the function of giving human satisfaction in marrying previous parts of experience with newer parts played no rôle whatever, is nowhere to be found. The reason why we call things true is the

reason why they *are* true, for 'to be true' *means* only to perform this marriage-function.

The trail of the human serpent is thus over everything. Truth independent; truth that we *find* merely; truth no longer malleable to human need; truth incorrigible, in a word; such truth exists indeed superabundantly—or is supposed to exist by rationalistically minded thinkers; but then it means only the dead heart of the living tree, and its being there means only that truth also has its paleontology, and its 'prescription,' and may grow stiff with years of veteran service and petrified in men's regard by sheer antiquity. But how plastic even the oldest truths nevertheless really are has been vividly shown in our day by the transformation of logical and mathematical ideas, a transformation which seems even to be invading physics. The ancient formulas are reinterpreted as special expressions of much wider principles, principles that our ancestors never got a glimpse of in their present shape and formulation. . . .

NOTE

1. "Theorie und Praxis," *Zeitsch. des Oesterreichischen Ingenieur u. Architekten-Vereines*, 1905, Nr. 4 u. 6. I find a still more radical pragmatism than Ostwald's in an address by Professor W. S. Franklin: "I think that the sickliest notion of physics, even if a student gets it, is that it is 'the science of masses, molecules, and the ether.' And I think that the healthiest notion, even if a student does not wholly get it, is that physics is the science of the ways of taking hold of bodies and pushing them!" (*Science*, January 2, 1903.)

23. DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN NATURE

The most influential public intellectual in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century, philosopher John Dewey (1859–1952) was one of the key proponents of philosophical pragmatism. Commentators often describe Dewey and William James as the two most consequential pragmatists. Moreover, in recent years interest in Dewey's work has witnessed a revival, with a disparate group of intellectuals embracing aspects of his thought, including philosopher Richard Rorty, sociologist Robert Bellah, and critical theorist Jürgen Habermas. Dewey's interests and impact were broad. He was involved in educational philosophy as a spokesperson for progressive education, and he supported woman's suffrage and other social movements promoting social justice and international peace. He was associated with Jane Addams and her work with immigrants at Hull House. Given these intellectual and political commitments, it is not surprising that Dewey would become a major theorist of democracy. In this excerpt from his 1939 book *Freedom and Culture*, he makes the case for a humanistic culture that succeeds in socializing citizens to a moral commitment to democracy as a way of life.

The present predicament may be stated as follows: Democracy does involve a belief that political institutions and law be such as to take fundamental account of human nature. They must give it freer play than any non-democratic institutions. At the same time, the theory, legalistic and moralistic, about human nature that has been used to expound and justify this reliance upon human nature has proved inadequate. Upon the legal and political side, during the nineteenth century it was progressively overloaded with ideas and practices which have more to do with business carried on for profit than with democracy. On the moralistic side, it has tended to substitute emotional exhortation to act in accord with the Golden Rule for the discipline and the control afforded by incorporation of democratic ideals into *all* the relations of life. Because of lack of an adequate theory of human nature in its relations to democracy, attachment to democratic ends and methods has tended to become a matter of tradition and

habit—an excellent thing as far as it goes, but when it becomes routine is easily undermined when change of conditions changes other habits.

Were I to say that democracy needs a new psychology of human nature, one adequate to the heavy demands put upon it by foreign and domestic conditions, I might be taken to utter an academic irrelevancy. But if the remark is understood to mean that democracy has always been allied with humanism, with faith in the potentialities of human nature, and that the present need is vigorous reassertion of this faith, developed in relevant ideas and manifested in practical attitudes, it but continues the American tradition. For belief in the "common man" has no significance save as an expression of belief in the intimate and vital connection of democracy and human nature.

We cannot continue the idea that human nature when left to itself, when freed from external arbitrary restrictions, will tend to the production of democratic

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institutions that work successfully. We have now to state the issue from the other side. We have to see that democracy means the belief that humanistic culture *should* prevail; we should be frank and open in our recognition that the proposition is a moral one—like any idea that concerns what *should* be.

Strange as it seems to us, democracy is challenged by totalitarian states of the Fascist variety on moral grounds just as it is challenged by totalitarianisms of the left on economic grounds. We may be able to defend democracy on the latter score, as far as comparative conditions are involved, since up to the present at least the Union of Socialist Republics has not “caught up” with us, much less “surpassed” us, in material affairs. But defense against the other type of totalitarianism (and perhaps in the end against also the Marxist type) requires a positive and courageous constructive awakening to the significance of faith in human nature for development of every phase of our culture:—science, art, education, morals and religion, as well as politics and economics. No matter how uniform and constant human nature is in the abstract, the conditions within which and upon which it operates have changed so greatly since political democracy was established among us, that democracy cannot now depend upon or be expressed in political institutions alone. We cannot even be certain that they and their legal accompaniments are actually democratic at the present time—for democracy is expressed in the attitudes of human beings and is measured by consequences produced in their lives.

The impact of the humanist view of democracy upon all forms of culture, upon education, science and art, morals and religion, as well as upon industry and politics, saves it from the criticism passed upon moralistic exhortation. For it tells us that we need to examine every one of the phases of human activity to ascertain what effects it has in release, maturing and fruition of the potentialities of human nature. It does not tell us to “re-arm morally” and all social problems will be solved. It says, Find out how all the constituents of our existing culture are operating and then see to it that whenever and wherever needed they be modified in order that their workings may release and fulfill the possibilities of human nature.

It used to be said (and the statement has not gone completely out of fashion) that democracy is a by-product

of Christianity, since the latter teaches the infinite worth of the individual human soul. We are now told by some persons that since belief in the soul has been discredited by science, the moral basis for democracy supposed to exist must go into the discard. We are told that if there are reasons for preferring it to other arrangements of the relations of human beings to one another, they must be found in specialized external advantages which outweigh the advantages of other social forms. From a very different quarter, we are told that weakening of the older theological doctrine of the soul is one of the reasons for the eclipse of faith in democracy. These two views at opposite poles give depth and urgency to the question whether there are adequate grounds for faith in the potentialities of human nature and whether they can be accompanied by the intensity and ardor once awakened by religious ideas upon a theological basis. Is human nature intrinsically such a poor thing that the idea is *absurd*? I do not attempt to give any answer, but the word *faith* is intentionally used. For in the long run democracy will stand or fall with the possibility of maintaining the faith and justifying it by works.

Take, for example, the question of intolerance. Systematic hatred and suspicion of any human group, “racial,” sectarian, political, denotes deep-seated scepticism about the qualities of human nature. From the standpoint of a faith in the possibilities of human nature possessing religious quality it is blasphemous. It may start by being directed at a particular group, and be supported in name by assigning special reasons why that group is not worthy of confidence, respect, and decent human treatment. But the underlying attitude is one of fundamental distrust of human nature. Hence it spreads from distrust and hatred of a particular group until it may undermine the conviction that any group of persons has any intrinsic right for esteem or recognition—which, then, if it be given, is for some special and external grounds, such as usefulness to our particular interests and ambitions. There is no physical acid which has the corrosive power possessed by intolerance directed against persons because they belong to a group that bears a certain name. Its corrosive potency gains with what it feeds on. An anti-humanist attitude is the essence of every form of intolerance. Movements that begin by

stirring up hostility against a group of people end by denying to them all human qualities.

The case of intolerance is used as an illustration of the intrinsic connection between the prospects of democracy and belief in the potentialities of human nature—not for its own sake, important as it is on its own account. How much of our past tolerance was positive and how much of it a toleration equivalent to “standing” something we do not like, “putting up” with something because it involves too much trouble to try to change it? For a good deal of the present reaction against democracy is probably simply the disclosure of a weakness that was there before; one that was covered up or did not appear in its true light. Certainly racial prejudice against negroes, Catholics, and Jews is no new thing in our life. Its presence among us is an intrinsic weakness and a handle for the accusation that we do not act differently from Nazi Germany.

The greatest practical inconsistency that would be revealed by searching our own habitual attitudes is probably one between the democratic method of forming opinions in political matters and the methods in common use in forming beliefs in other subjects. In theory, the democratic method is persuasion through public discussion carried on not only in legislative halls but in the press, private conversations and public assemblies. The substitution of ballots for bullets, of the right to vote for the lash, is an expression of the will to substitute the method of discussion for the method of coercion. With all its defects and partialities in determination of political decisions, it has worked to keep factional disputes within bounds, to an extent that was incredible a century or more ago. While Carlyle could bring his gift of satire into play in ridiculing the notion that men by talking to and at each other in an assembly hall can settle what is true in social affairs any more than they can settle what is true in the multiplication table, he failed to see that if men had been using clubs to maim and kill one another to decide the product of 7 times 7, there would have been sound reasons for appealing to discussion and persuasion even in the latter case. The fundamental reply is that social “truths” are so

unlike mathematical truths that unanimity of uniform belief is possible in respect to the former only when a dictator has the power to tell others what they must believe—or profess they believe. The adjustment of interests demands that diverse interests have a chance to articulate themselves.

The real trouble is that there is an intrinsic split in our habitual attitudes when we profess to depend upon discussion and persuasion in politics and then systematically depend upon other methods in reaching conclusions in matters of morals and religion, or in anything where we depend upon a person or group possessed of “authority.” We do not have to go to theological matters to find examples. In homes and in schools, the places where the essentials of character are supposed to be formed, the usual procedure is settlement of issues, intellectual and moral, by appeal to the “authority” of parent, teacher, or textbook. Dispositions formed under such conditions are so inconsistent with the democratic method that in a crisis they may be aroused to act in positively anti-democratic ways for anti-democratic ends; just as resort to coercive force and suppression of civil liberties are readily palliated in nominally democratic communities when the cry is raised that “law and order” are threatened.

It is no easy matter to find adequate authority for action in the demand, characteristic of democracy, that conditions be such as will enable the potentialities of human nature to reach fruition. Because it is not easy the democratic road is the hard one to take. It is the road which places the greatest burden of responsibility upon the greatest number of human beings. Backsets and deviations occur and will continue to occur. But that which is its weakness at particular times is its strength in the long course of human history. Just because the cause of democratic freedom is the cause of the fullest possible realization of human potentialities, the latter when they are suppressed and oppressed will in time rebel and demand an opportunity for manifestation.

With the founders of American democracy, the claims of democracy were inherently one with the demands of a just and equal morality. We cannot now

well use their vocabulary. Changes in knowledge have outlawed the significations of the words they commonly used. But in spite of the unsuitability of much of their language for present use, what they asserted was that self-governing institutions are the means by which human nature can secure its fullest realization in the greatest number of persons. The question of what is involved in self-governing methods is now much more complex. But

for this very reason, the task of those who retain belief in democracy is to revive and maintain in full vigor the original conviction of the intrinsic moral nature of democracy, now stated in ways congruous with present conditions of culture. We have advanced far enough to say that democracy is a way of life. We have yet to realize that it is a way of personal life and one which provides a moral standard for personal conduct.

24. THE FUSION OF THE 'I' AND THE 'ME' IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

George Herbert Mead (1863–1931), a philosopher at The University of Chicago, was a brilliant conversationalist, preferring to present his ideas orally rather than in writing. Thus, many of his books that have had an enduring impact were actually posthumous publications compiled from former students' lecture notes. This is the case with the book from which the following selection derives: *Mind, Self, and Society* (1934). Mead distinguished two aspects of the self, which he rather prosaically referred to as the "I" and the "me." The former includes the spontaneous, dynamic, and autonomous aspects of selfhood, while the latter is the socialized self that is shaped by external social conditions and is responsive to them. The "I" is the aspect of self responsible for initiative, creativity, and novelty, while the "me" provides selfhood with stability and continuity. In this passage, Mead discusses the ways these two aspects of the self working together make possible action in social life.

In a situation where persons are all trying to save someone from drowning, there is a sense of common effort in which one is stimulated by the others to do the same thing they are doing. In those situations one has a sense of being identified with all because the reaction is essentially an identical reaction. In the case of team work, there is an identification of the individual with the group; but in that case one is doing something different from the others, even though what the others do determines what he is to do. If things move smoothly enough, there may be something of the same exaltation as in the other situation. There is still the sense of directed control. It is where the "I" and the "me" can in some sense fuse that there arises the peculiar sense of exaltation which belongs to the religious and patriotic attitudes in which the reaction which one calls out in others is the response which one is making himself. I now wish to discuss in more detail than previously the fusion of the "I" and the "me" in the attitudes of religion, patriotism, and team work.

In the conception of universal neighborliness, there is a certain group of attitudes of kindness and helpfulness in which the response of one calls out in the other and in himself the same attitude. Hence the fusion of the "I" and the "me" which leads to intense emotional experiences. The wider the social process in which this is involved, the greater is the exaltation, the emotional response, which results. We sit down and play a game of bridge with friends or indulge in some other relaxation in the midst of our daily work. It is something that will last an hour or so, and then we shall take up the grind again. We are, however, involved in the whole life of society; its obligations are upon us; we have to assert ourselves in various situations; those factors are all lying back in the self. But under the situations to which I am now referring that which lies in the background is fused with what we are all doing. This, we feel, is the meaning of life—and one experiences an exalted religious attitude. We get into an attitude in which everyone is at one with each other in

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so far as all belong to the same community. As long as we can retain that attitude we have for the time being freed ourselves of that sense of control which hangs over us all because of the responsibilities we have to meet in difficult and trying social conditions. Such is the normal situation in our social activity, and we have its problems back in our minds; but in such a situation as this, the religious situation, all seem to be lifted into the attitude of accepting everyone as belonging to the same group. One's interest is the interest of all. There is complete identification of individuals. Within the individual there is a fusion of the "me" with the "I."

The impulse of the "I" in this case is neighborliness, kindness. One gives bread to the hungry. It is that social tendency which we all have in us that calls out a certain type of response: one wants to give. When one has a limited bank account, one cannot give all he has to the poor. Yet under certain religious situations, in groups with a certain background, he can get the attitude of doing just that. Giving is stimulated by more giving. He may not have much to give, but he is ready to give himself completely. There is a fusion of the "I" and the "me." The time is not there to control the "I," but the situation has been so constructed that the very attitude aroused in the other stimulates one to do the same thing. The exaltation in the case of patriotism presents an analogous instance of this fusion.

From the emotional standpoint such situations are peculiarly precious. They involve, of course, the successful completion of the social process. I think that the religious attitude involves this relation of the social stimulus to the world at large, the carrying-over of the social attitude to the larger world. I think that that is the definite field within which the religious experience appears. Of course, where one has a clearly marked theology in which there are definite dealings with the deity, with whom one acts as concretely as with another person in the room, then the conduct which takes place is simply of a type which is comparable to the conduct with reference to another social group, and it may be one which is lacking in that peculiar mystical character which we generally ascribe to the religious attitude. It may be a calculating attitude in which a person makes a vow, and carries it out providing the deity gives him a particular favor. Now, that attitude would normally come under the general statement of

religion, but in addition it is generally recognized that the attitude has to be one that carries that particular extension of the social attitude to the universe at large. I think it is that which we generally refer to as the religious experience, and that this is the situation out of which the mystical experience of religion arises. The social situation is spread over the entire world.

It may be only on certain days of the week and at certain hours of that day that we can get into that attitude of feeling at one with everybody and everything about us. The day goes around; we have to go into the market to compete with other people and to hold our heads above the water in a difficult economic situation. We cannot keep up the sense of exaltation, but even then we may still say that these demands of life are only a task which is put on us, a duty which we must perform in order to get at particular moments the religious attitude. When the experience is attained, however, it comes with this feeling of complete identification of the self with the other.

It is a different, and perhaps higher, attitude of identification which comes in the form of what I have referred to as "team work." Here one has the sort of satisfaction which comes from working with others in a certain situation. There is, of course, still a sense of control; after all, what one does is determined by what other persons are doing; one has to be keenly aware of the positions of all the others; he knows what the others are going to do. But he has to be constantly awake to the way in which other people are responding in order to do his part in the team work. That situation has its delight, but it is not a situation in which one simply throws himself, so to speak, into the stream where he can get a sense of abandonment. That experience belongs to the religious or patriotic situation. Team work carries, however, a content which the other does not carry. The religious situation is abstract as far as the content is concerned. How one is to help others is a very complicated undertaking. One who undertakes to be a universal help to others is apt to find himself a universal nuisance. There is no more distressing person to have about than one who is constantly seeking to assist everybody else. Fruitful assistance has to be intelligent assistance. But if one can get the situation of a well-organized group doing something as a unit, a sense of the self is attained which is

the experience of team work, and this is certainly from an intellectual standpoint higher than mere abstract neighborliness. The sense of team work is found where all are working towards a common end and everyone has a sense of the common end interpenetrating the particular function which he is carrying on.

The frequent attitude of the person in social service who is trying to express a fundamental attitude of neighborliness¹ may be compared with the attitude of the engineer, the organizer, which illustrates in extreme form the attitude of team work. The engineer has the attitudes of all the other individuals in the group, and it is because he has that participation that he is able to direct. When the engineer comes out of the machine shop with the bare blue print, the machine does not yet exist; but he must know what the people are to do, how long it should take them, how to measure the processes involved, and how to eliminate waste. That sort of taking the attitudes of everyone else as fully and completely as possible, entering upon one's own action from the standpoint of such a complete taking of the rôle of the others, we may perhaps refer to as the "attitude of the engineer." It is a highly intelligent attitude; and if it can be formed with a profound interest in social team work, it belongs to the high social processes and to the significant experiences. Here the full concreteness of the "me" depends upon a man's capacity to take the attitude of everybody else in the process which he directs. Here is gained the concrete content not found in the bare emotional identification of one's self with everyone else in the group.

These are the different types of expressions of the "I" in their relationship to the "me" that I wanted to bring out in order to complete the statement of the relation of the "I" and the "me." The self under these circumstances is the action of the "I" in harmony with the taking of the rôle of others in the "me." The self is both the "I" and the "me"; the "me" setting the situation to which the "I" responds. Both the "I" and "me" are involved in the self, and here each supports the other.

I wish now to discuss the fusion of the "I" and the "me" in terms of another approach, namely, through a comparison of the physical object with the self as a social object.

The "me," I have said, presents the situation within which conduct takes place, and the "I" is the actual

response to that situation. This twofold separation into situation and response is characteristic of any intelligent act even if it does not involve this social mechanism. There is a definite situation which presents a problem, and then the organism responds to that situation by an organization of the different reactions that are involved. There has to be such an organization of activities in our ordinary movements among different articles in a room, or through a forest, or among automobiles. The stimuli present tend to call out a great variety of responses; but the actual response of the organism is an organization of these tendencies, not a single response which mediates all the others. One does not sit down in a chair, one does not take a book, open a window, or do a great variety of things to which in a certain sense the individual is invited when he enters a room. He does some specific thing; he perhaps goes and takes a sought paper out of a desk and does not do anything else. Yet the objects exist there in the room for him. The chair, the windows, tables, exist as such because of the uses to which he normally puts these objects. The value that the chair has in his perception is the value which belongs to his response; so he moves by a chair and past a table and away from a window. He builds up a landscape there, a scene of objects which make possible his actual movement to the drawer which contains the paper that he is after. This landscape is the means of reaching the goal he is pursuing; and the chair, the table, the window, all enter into it as objects. The physical object is, in a certain sense, what you do not respond to in a consummatory fashion. If the moment you step into a room, you drop into a chair you hardly do more than direct your attention to the chair; you do not view it as a chair in the same sense as when you just recognize it as a chair and direct your movement toward a distant object. The chair that exists in the latter case is not one you are sitting down in; but it is a something that will receive you after you do drop into it, and that gives it the character of an object as such.

Such physical objects are utilized in building up the field in which the distant object is reached. The same result occurs from a temporal standpoint when one carries out a more distant act by means of some precedent act which must be first carried through. Such organization is going on all the time in intelligent conduct. We organize the field with reference to what we are going to do. There is now, if you like, a fusion

of the getting of the paper out of the drawer and the room through which we move to accomplish that end, and it is this sort of fusion that I referred to previously, only in such instances as religious experiences it takes place in the field of social mediation, and the objects in the mechanism are social in their character and so represent a different level of experience. But the process is analogous: we are what we are in our relationship to other individuals through taking the attitude of the other individuals toward ourselves so that we stimulate ourselves by our own gesture, just as a chair is what it is in terms of its invitation to sit down; the chair is something in which we might sit down, a physical "me," if you like. In a social "me" the various attitudes of all the others are expressed in terms of our own gesture, which represents the part we are carrying out in the social cooperative activity. Now the thing we actually do, the words we speak, our expressions, our emotions, those are the "I"; but they are fused with the "me" in the same sense that all the activities involved in the articles of furniture of the room are fused with the path followed toward the drawer and the taking out of the actual paper. The two situations are identical in that sense.

The act itself which I have spoken of as the "I" in the social situation is a source of unity of the whole, while the "me" is the social situation in which this act can express itself. I think that we can look at such conduct from the general standpoint of intelligent conduct; only, as I say, conduct is taking place here in this social field in which a self arises in the social situation in the group, just as the room arises in the activity of an individual in getting to this particular object he is after. I think the same view can be applied to the appearance of the self that applies to the appearance of an object in a field that constitutes in some sense a problem; only the peculiar character of it lies in the fact that it is a social situation and that this social situation involves the appearance of the "me" and the "I" which are essentially social elements. I think it is consistent to recognize this parallelism between what we call the "physical object" over against the organism, and the social object over against the self. The "me" does definitely answer to all the different reactions which the objects about us, tend to call out in us. All such objects call out responses in ourselves, and these responses are the meanings or the

natures of the objects: the chair is something we sit down in, the window is something that we can open, that gives us light or air. Likewise the "me" is the response which the individual makes to the other individuals in so far as the individual takes the attitude of the other. It is fair to say that the individual takes the attitude of the chair. We are definitely in that sense taking the attitude of the objects about us; while normally this does not get into the attitude of communication in our dealing with inanimate objects, it does take that form when we say that the chair invites us to sit down, or the bed tempts us to lie down. Our attitude under those circumstances is, of course, a social attitude. We have already discussed the social attitude as it appears in the poetry of nature, in myths, rites, and rituals. There we take over the social attitude toward nature itself. In music there is perhaps always some sort of a social situation, in terms of the emotional response involved; and the exaltation of music would have, I suppose, reference to the completeness of the organization of the response that answers to those emotional attitudes. The idea of the fusion of the "I" and the "me" gives a very adequate basis for the explanation of this exaltation. I think behavioristic psychology provides just the opportunity for such development of aesthetic theory. The significance of the response in the aesthetic experience has already been stressed by critics of painting and architecture.

The relationship of the "me" to the "I" is the relationship of a situation to the organism. The situation that presents the problem is intelligible to the organism that responds to it, and fusion takes place in the act. One can approach it from the "I" if one knows definitely what he is going to do. Then one looks at the whole process simply as a set of means for reaching the known end. Or it can be approached from the point of view of the means and the problem appears then as a decision among a set of different ends. The attitude of one individual calls out this response, and the attitude of another individual calls out another response. There are varied tendencies, and the response of the "I" will be one which relates all of these together. Whether looked at from the viewpoint of a problem which has to be solved or from the position of an "I" which in a certain sense determines its field by its conduct, the fusion takes place in the act itself in which the means expresses the end.

NOTE

1. "Philanthropy from the Point of View of Ethics," *Intelligent Philanthropy*, edited by Faris, Lane, and Dodd.

SECTION V

1. According to Martineau, only "incapables" can be excluded from democratic participation. How does she argue against figures such as Thomas Jefferson that women don't fall into this category?
2. How does Tocqueville distinguish individualism from selfishness? Do you find his argument convincing?
3. What does Du Bois mean by the "double self" of the African American, and what does he wish becomes of it?
4. In your view, to what extent is Gilman's discussion of the negative impact of uncompensated labor on women's independence still an issue today?
5. In your own words, describe what Veblen meant by "conspicuous consumption."
6. What, according to Cooley, is the social mind? How does he see the relationship between the self and society?
7. Summarize in your own words what James means by the "pragmatic method."
8. Do you agree with Dewey that democracy must be more than a form of political engagement and rather must constitute a way of life?
9. Summarize Mead's discussion of the "I" and the "me," first defining the terms and then indicating how in conjunction they come to constitute the self.

PART

2

THE BRANCHES

Contemporary Social Theory

VI. FUNCTIONALISM, STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALISM, SYSTEMS THEORY

ROBERT K. MERTON

25. THE UNANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL ACTION

Appearing in the first issue of the *American Sociological Review*, Robert K. Merton's (1910–2003) "The Unanticipated Consequences of Social Action" (1936) has become one of the most frequently cited essays in the discipline. What makes this all the more remarkable is that it was composed by a 26-year-old Harvard graduate student. Merton, a student of Talcott Parsons, became one of the central figures associated with structural functionalism. The article revealed a writer whose penetrating analyses were matched by a stylistic virtuosity quite uncharacteristic of most sociologists. Merton elevated what at one level is an obvious fact to a matter of central concern to the sociological enterprise: that our actions often turn out other than what we thought they would, or that they have, for better or worse, implications of which we were not originally aware. The sociologist is called upon to examine not only the intended outcomes of actions but those outcomes that were unanticipated, and Merton suggested a variety of factors that contribute to unintended consequences.

In some one of its numerous forms, the problem of the unanticipated consequences of purposive action has been touched upon by virtually every substantial contributor to the long history of social thought.¹ The diversity of context² and variety of terms³ by which this problem has been known, however, have tended to obscure any continuity in its consideration. In fact, this diversity of context—ranging from theology to technology—has been so pronounced that not only has the substantial identity of the problem been overlooked, but no systematic, scientific analysis of it has as yet been made. The failure to subject the problem to thoroughgoing investigation has perhaps resulted in part from its having been linked historically with transcendental and ethical considerations.

Obviously, the ready solution provided by ascribing un- contemplated consequences of action to the inscrutable will of God or Providence or Fate precludes, in the mind of the believer, any need for scientific analysis. Whatever the actual reasons, the fact remains that although the process has been widely recognized and its importance appreciated, it still awaits systematic treatment.

FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

Although the phrase, unanticipated consequences of purposive social action, is in a measure self-explanatory, the setting of the problem demands further specification. In the first place, the greater part of

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this paper deals with isolated purposive acts rather than with their integration into a coherent system of action (though some reference will be made to the latter). This limitation is prescribed by expediency; a treatment of systems of action would introduce further unmanageable complications. Furthermore, *unforeseen* consequences should not be identified with consequences which are necessarily *undesirable* (from the standpoint of the actor). For though these results are unintended, they are not upon their occurrence always deemed axiologically negative. In short, undesired effects are not always undesirable effects. The intended and anticipated outcomes of purposive action, however, are always, in the very nature of the case, relatively desirable to the actor, though they may seem axiologically negative to an outside observer. This is true even in the polar instance where the intended result is "the lesser of two evils" or in such cases as suicide, ascetic mortification and self-torture which, in given situations, are deemed desirable relative to other possible alternatives.

Rigorously speaking, the *consequences* of purposive action are limited to those elements in the resulting situation that are exclusively the outcome of the action, that is, that would not have occurred had the action not taken place. Concretely, however, the consequences result from the interplay of the action and the objective situation, the conditions of action.⁴ We shall be primarily concerned with a pattern of results of action under certain conditions. This still involves the problems of causal imputation (of which more later) though to a less pressing degree than consequences in the rigorous sense. These relatively concrete consequences may be differentiated into (a) consequences to the actor(s), (b) consequences to other persons mediated through the social structure, the culture, and the civilization.⁵

In considering *purposive* action, we are concerned with "conduct" as distinct from "behavior," that is, with action that involves motives and consequently a choice between alternatives.⁶ For the time being, we take purposes as given, so that any theories that "reduce" purpose to conditioned reflexes or tropisms, which assert that motives are simply compounded of instinctual drives, may be considered as irrelevant. Psychological considerations of the source or origin of motives, although undoubtedly important for a more

complete understanding of the mechanisms involved in the development of unexpected consequences of conduct, will be ignored.

Moreover, it is not assumed that social action always involves clear-cut, explicit purpose. Such awareness of purpose may be unusual, the aim of action more often than not being nebulous and hazy. This is certainly the case with habitual action which, though it may originally have been induced by conscious purpose, is characteristically performed without such awareness. The significance of habitual action will be discussed later.

Above all, it must not be inferred that purposive action implies "rationality" of human action (that persons always use the objectively most adequate means for the attainment of their end).⁷ In fact, part of my analysis is devoted to identifying those elements which account for concrete deviations from rationality of action. Moreover, rationality and irrationality are not to be identified with the success and failure of action, respectively. For in a situation where the number of *possible* actions for attaining a given end is severely limited, one acts rationally by selecting the means which, on the basis of the available evidence, has the greatest probability of attaining this goal⁸ even though the goal may actually *not* be attained. . . . Contrariwise, an end may be attained by action that, on the basis of the knowledge available to the actor, is irrational (as in the case of "hunches").

Turning now to *action*, we differentiate this into two kinds: unorganized and formally organized. The first refers to actions of individuals considered distributively out of which may grow the second when like-minded individuals form an association in order to achieve a common purpose. Unanticipated consequences follow both types of action, although the second type seems to afford a better opportunity for sociological analysis since the processes of formal organization more often make for explicit statements of purpose and procedure.

Before turning to the actual analysis of the problem it is advisable to indicate two methodological pitfalls that are, moreover, common to all sociological investigations of purposive action. The first involves the problem of causal imputation, the problem of ascertaining the extent to which "consequences" can justifiably be attributed to certain actions. For example, to what extent has the recent increase in economic production in this

country resulted from governmental measures? To what extent can the spread of organized crime be attributed to Prohibition? This ever-present difficulty of causal imputation must be solved for every empirical case.

The second problem is that of ascertaining the actual purposes of a given action. There is the difficulty, for instance, of discriminating between rationalization and truth in those cases where apparently unintended consequences are *ex post facto* declared to have been intended.⁹ Rationalizations may occur in connection with nationwide social planning just as in the classical instance of the horseman who, on being thrown from his steed, declared that he was “simply dismounting.” This difficulty, though not completely obviated, is significantly reduced in cases of organized group action since the circumstance of organized action customarily demands explicit (though not always “true”) statements of goal and procedure. Furthermore, it is easily possible to exaggerate this difficulty since in many, if indeed not in most, cases, the observer’s own experience and knowledge of the situation enables him to arrive at a solution. Ultimately, the final test is this: does the juxtaposition of the overt action, our general knowledge of the actor(s) and the specific situation and the inferred or avowed purpose “make sense,” is there between these, as Weber puts it, a “verständliche Sinnzusammenhang?” If the analyst self-consciously subjects these elements to such probing, conclusions about purpose can have evidential value. The evidence available will vary, and the probable error of the imputation of purpose will likewise vary.

Although these methodological difficulties are not discussed further in this paper, an effort has been made to take them into account in the substantive analysis.

Last, a frequent source of misunderstanding will be eliminated at the outset if it is realized that the factors involved in unanticipated consequences are—precisely—factors, and that none of these serves by itself to explain any concrete case.

SOURCES OF UNANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES

The most obvious limitation to a correct anticipation of consequences of action is provided by the existing state of knowledge. The extent of this limitation can be

best appreciated by assuming the simplest case where the lack of adequate knowledge is the sole barrier to a correct anticipation.¹⁰ Obviously, a very large number of concrete reasons for inadequate knowledge may be found, but it is also possible to summarize several classes of factors that are most important.

IGNORANCE

The first class derives from the type of knowledge—usually, perhaps exclusively—attained in the sciences of human behavior. The social scientist usually finds stochastic, not functional relationships.¹¹ This is to say, in the study of human behavior, there is found a set of different values of one variable associated with each value of the other variable(s), or in less formal language, the set of consequences of any repeated act is not constant but there is a range of possible consequences, *any one of which may follow the act in a given case*. In some instances, we have sufficient knowledge of the limits of the range of possible consequences, and even adequate knowledge for ascertaining the statistical (empirical) probabilities of the various possible consequences, but it is impossible to predict with certainty the results in any particular case. Our classifications of acts and situations never involve completely homogeneous categories nor even categories whose approximate degree of homogeneity is sufficient for the prediction of particular events.¹² We have here the paradox that whereas past experiences are the guide to our expectations on the assumption that certain past, present and future acts are sufficiently alike to be grouped in the same category, these experiences are in fact different. To the extent that these differences are pertinent to the outcome of the action and appropriate corrections for these differences are not adopted, the actual results will differ from the expected. As Poincaré has put it, “. . . small differences in the initial conditions produce very great ones in the final phenomena. . . . Prediction becomes impossible, and we have the fortuitous phenomenon.”¹³

However, deviations from the usual consequences of an act can be anticipated by the actor who recognizes in the given situation some differences from previous similar situations. But insofar as these differences can themselves not be subsumed under general rules, the direction and extent of these deviations

cannot be anticipated.¹⁴ It is clear, then, that the partial knowledge in the light of which action is commonly carried on permits a varying range of unexpected outcomes of conduct.

Although we do not know the *amount* of knowledge necessary for foreknowledge, one may say in general that consequences are fortuitous when an exact knowledge of many details and facts (as distinct from general principles) is needed for even a highly approximate prediction. In other words, "chance consequences" are those occasioned by the interplay of forces and circumstances that are so numerous and complex that prediction of them is quite beyond our reach. This area of consequences should perhaps be distinguished from that of "ignorance," since it is related not to the knowledge actually in hand but to knowledge that can conceivably be obtained.¹⁵

The importance of ignorance as a factor is enhanced by the fact that the exigencies of practical life frequently compel us to act with some confidence even though it is manifest that the information on which we base our action is not complete. We usually act, as Knight has properly observed, not on the basis of scientific knowledge, but on that of opinion and estimate: Thus, situations that demand (or what is for our purposes tantamount to the same thing, that appear to the actor to demand) immediate action of some sort, will usually involve ignorance of certain aspects of the situation and will the more likely bring about unexpected results.

Even when immediate action is not required there is the *economic* problem of distributing our fundamental resources, time and energy. Time and energy are scarce means and economic behavior is concerned with the rational allocation of these means among alternative wants, only one of which is the anticipation of consequences of action.¹⁶ An economy of social engineers is no more practicable than an economy of laundrymen. It is the fault of the extreme antinoetic activists who promote the idea of action above all else to exaggerate this limit and to claim (in effect) that practically no resources be devoted to the acquisition of knowledge. On the other hand, the grain of truth in the anti-intellectualist position is that there are decided economic limits to the advisability of not acting

until uncertainty is eliminated, and also psychological limits since, after the manner of Hamlet, excessive "forethought" of this kind precludes any action at all.

ERROR

A second major factor in unexpected consequences of conduct, perhaps as pervasive as ignorance, is error. Error may intrude itself, of course, in any phase of purposive action: we may err in our appraisal of the present situation, in our inference from this to the future, objective situation, in our selection of a course of action, or finally in the execution of the action chosen. A common fallacy is frequently involved in the too-ready assumption that actions which have in the past led to the desired outcome will continue to do so. This assumption is often fixed in the mechanism of habit and there often finds pragmatic justification. But precisely because habit is a mode of activity that has previously led to the attainment of certain ends, it tends to become automatic and undeliberative through continued repetition so that the actor fails to recognize that procedures which have been successful *in certain circumstances* need not be so *under any and all conditions*.¹⁷ Just as rigidities in social organization often balk and block the satisfaction of new wants, so rigidities in individual behavior block the satisfaction of old wants in a changing social environment.

Error may also be involved in instances where the actor attends to only one or some of the pertinent aspects of the situation that influence the outcome of the action. This may range from the case of simple neglect (lack of thoroughness in examining the situation) to pathological obsession where there is a determined refusal or inability to consider certain elements of the problem. This last type has been extensively dealt with in the psychiatric literature. In cases of wishfulfilment, emotional involvements lead to a distortion of the objective situation and of the probable future course of events; action predicated upon imaginary conditions must have unexpected consequences.

IMPERIOUS IMMEDIACY OF INTEREST

A third general type of factor, the "imperious immediacy of interest," refers to instances where the actor's paramount concern with the foreseen immediate

consequences excludes consideration of further or other consequences of the same act. The most prominent elements in such immediacy of interest range from physiological needs to basic cultural values. Thus, Vico's imaginative example of the "origin of the family," which derived from the practice of men carrying their mates into caves to satisfy their sex drive out of the sight of God, might serve as a somewhat fantastic illustration of the first. Another kind of example is provided by that doctrine of classical economics in which the individual endeavoring to employ his capital where most profitable to him and thus tending to render the annual revenue of society as great as possible is, in the words of Adam Smith, led "by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention."

However, after the acute analysis by Max Weber, it goes without saying that action motivated by interest is not antithetical to an intensive investigation of the conditions and means of successful action. On the contrary, it would seem that interest, if it is to be satisfied, requires objective analysis of situation and instrumentality, as is assumed to be characteristic of "economic man." The irony is that intense interest often tends to preclude such analysis precisely because strong concern with the satisfaction of the immediate interest is a psychological generator of emotional bias, with consequent lopsidedness or failure to engage in the required calculations. It is as much a fallacious assumption to hold that interested action necessarily entails a rational calculation of the elements in the situation¹⁸ as to deny rationality any and all influence over such conduct. Moreover, action in which the element of immediacy of interest is involved may be rational in terms of the values basic to that interest but irrational in terms of the life organization of the individual. Rational, in the sense that it is an action which may be expected to lead to the attainment of the specific goal; irrational, in the sense that it may defeat the pursuit or attainment of other values not, at the moment, paramount but which nonetheless form an integral part of the individual's scale of values. Thus, *precisely because a particular action is not carried out in a psychological or social vacuum, its effects will ramify into other spheres of value and interest.* For example, the practice of birth control for "economic reasons" influences the age-composition and size of

sibships with profound consequences of a psychological and social character and, in larger aggregations, of course, affects the rate of population growth.

BASIC VALUES

Superficially similar to the factor of immediacy of interest, but differing from it in a significant theoretical sense, is that of basic values. This refers to instances where further consequences of action are not considered because of the felt necessity of the action enjoined by fundamental values. The classical analysis is Weber's study of the Protestant Ethic and the spirit of capitalism. He has properly generalized this case, saying that active asceticism paradoxically leads to its own decline through the accumulation of wealth and possessions entailed by the conjunction of intense productive activity and decreased consumption.

The process contributes much to the dynamic of social and cultural change, as has been recognized with varying degrees of cogency by Hegel, Marx, Wundt, and many others. The empirical observation is incontestable: activities oriented toward certain values release processes that so react as to change the very scale of values which precipitated them. This process can come about when a system of basic values enjoins certain *specific* actions, and adherents are concerned not with the objective consequences of these actions but with the subjective satisfaction of duty well performed. Or, action in accordance with a dominant set of values tends to be focused upon that particular value-area. But with the complex interaction that constitutes society, action ramifies. Its consequences are not restricted to the specific area in which they are intended to center and occur in interrelated fields explicitly ignored at the time of action. Yet it is because these fields are in fact interrelated that the further consequences in adjacent areas tend to *react* upon the fundamental value-system. It is this usually unlooked-for reaction that constitutes a most important element in the process of secularization, of the transformation or breakdown of basic value-systems. Here is the essential paradox of social action—the "realization" of values may lead to their renunciation. We may paraphrase Goethe and speak of "Die Kraft, die stets das Gute will, und stets das Böse schafft."

SELF-DEFEATING PREDICTIONS

There is one other circumstance, peculiar to human conduct, that stands in the way of successful social prediction and planning. Public predictions of future social developments are frequently not sustained precisely because the prediction has become a new element in the concrete situation, thus tending to change the initial course of developments. This is not true of prediction in fields that do not pertain to human conduct. Thus the prediction of the return of Halley's comet does not in any way influence the orbit of that comet; but, to take a concrete social example, Marx' prediction of the progressive concentration of wealth and increasing misery of the masses did influence the very process predicted. For at least one of the consequences of socialist preaching in the nineteenth century was the spread of organization of labor, which, made conscious of its unfavorable bargaining position in cases of individual contract, organized to enjoy the advantages of collective bargaining, thus slowing up, if not eliminating, the developments that Marx had predicted.¹⁹

Thus, to the extent that the predictions of social scientists are made public and action proceeds with full cognizance of these predictions, the "other-things-being-equal" condition tacitly assumed in all forecasting is not fulfilled. Other things will not be equal

just because the scientist has introduced a new "other thing"—his prediction.²⁰ This contingency may often account for social movements developing in utterly unanticipated directions, and it hence assumes considerable importance for social planning.

The foregoing discussion represents no more than the briefest exposition of the major elements involved in one fundamental social process. It would take us too far afield, and certainly beyond the compass of this paper, to examine exhaustively the implications of this analysis for social prediction, control, and planning. We may maintain, however, even at this preliminary juncture, that no blanket statement categorically affirming or denying the practical feasibility of *all* social planning is warranted. Before we may indulge in such generalizations, we must examine and classify the *types* of social action and organization with reference to the elements here discussed and then refer our generalizations to these essentially different types. If the present analysis has served to set the problem, even in only its paramount aspects, and to direct attention toward the need for a systematic and objective study of the elements involved in the development of unanticipated consequences of purposive social action, the treatment of which has for much too long been consigned to the realm of theology and speculative philosophy, then it has achieved its avowed purpose.

NOTES

1. Some of the theorists, though their contributions are by no means of equal importance, are: Machiavelli, Vico, Adam Smith (and some later classical economists), Marx, Engels, Wundt, Pareto, Max Weber, Graham Wallas, Cooley, Sorokin, Gini, Chapin, von Schelting.
2. This problem has been related to such heterogeneous subjects as: the problem of evil (theodicy), moral responsibility, free will, predestination, deism, teleology, fatalism, logical, illogical and nonlogical behavior, social prediction, planning and control, social cycles, the pleasure-and reality principles, and historical "accidents."
3. Some of the terms by which the whole or certain aspects of the process have been known are: Providence (immanent or transcendental), Moira, *Paradoxie der Folgen*, *Schicksal*, social forces, heterogony of ends, immanent causation, dialectical movement, principle of emergence and creative synthesis.
4. Cf. Frank H. Knight, *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1921), pp. 201–2. Professor Knight's doctoral dissertation represents by far the most searching treatment of certain phases of this problem that I have yet seen.
5. For the distinction between society, culture and civilization, see Alfred Weber, "Prinzipielles zur Kultursoziologie: Gesellschaftsprozess, Civilisationsprozess und Kulturbewegung," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 47, 1920, pp. 1–49; R. K. Merton, "Civilization and Culture," *Sociology and Social Research* 21 (1936), pp. 103–13.

6. Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 52.
7. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1925), pp. 3 ff.
8. See J. Bertrand, *Calcul des probabilités* (Paris, 1889), pp. 90 ff.; J. M. Keynes, *A Treatise on Probability* (London: The Macmillan Co., 1921), Chap. XXVI.
9. This introduces the problem of "chance," which will be treated in another connection. It should be realized that the aim of an action and the circumstances that actually ensue may coincide without the latter being a consequence of the action. Moreover, the longer the interval of time between the action and the circumstances in view, the greater the probability (in the absence of contrary evidence) that these circumstances have happened "by chance." Lastly, if this interval is greatly extended, the probability that the desired circumstances will occur fortuitously may increase until virtually the point of certainty. This reasoning is perhaps applicable to the case of governmental action "restoring prosperity." Compare V. Pareto, *Traité de sociologie générale* (Paris: Payot, 1917), II, par. 1977.
10. Most discussions of unanticipated consequences limit the explanation of unanticipated consequences to this one factor of ignorance. Such a view either reduces itself to a sheer tautology or exaggerates the role of only one of many factors. In the first instance, the argument runs in this fashion: "if we had only known enough, we could have anticipated the consequences which, as it happens, were unforeseen." The evident fallacy in this *post mortem* argument rests in the word "enough" which is implicitly taken to mean "enough knowledge to foresee" the consequences of our action. It is then no difficult matter to uphold the contention. This viewpoint is basic to several schools of educational theory, just as it was to Comte's dictum, *savoir pour prévoir, prévoir pour pouvoir*. This intellectualist stand has gained credence partly because of its implicit optimism and because of the indubitable fact that sheer ignorance does actually account for the occurrence of some unforeseen consequences *in some cases*.
11. Cf. A. A. Tschuprow, *Grundbegriffe und Grundprobleme der Korrelationstheorie* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1925), pp. 20 ff., where he introduces the term "stochastic." It is apparent that stochastic associations are obtained because we have not ascertained, or having ascertained, have not controlled the other variables in the situation that influence the final result.
12. A classification into completely homogeneous categories would, of course, lead to functional associations and would permit successful prediction, but the aspects of social action which are of practical importance are too varied and numerous to permit such homogeneous classification.
13. Henri Poincaré, *Calcul des probabilités* (Paris, 1912), p. 2.
14. The actor's awareness of his ignorance and its implications is perhaps most acute in the type of conduct which Thomas and Znaniecki attribute to the wish for "new experience." This is the case where unforeseen consequences actually constitute the purpose of action, but there is always the tacit assumption that the consequences will be desirable.
15. Cf. Keynes, *op. cit.*, p. 295. This distinction corresponds to that made by Keynes between "subjective chance" (broadly, ignorance) and "objective chance" (where even additional wide knowledge of general principles would not suffice to foresee the consequences of a particular act). Much the same distinction appears in the works of Poincaré and Venn, among others.
16. Cf. Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 348. The reasoning is also applicable to cases where the occupation of certain individuals (e.g., social engineers and scientists) is devoted solely to such efforts, since then it is a correlative question of the distribution of the resources of society. Furthermore, there is the practical problem of the communicability of knowledge so obtained, since it may be very complex; the effort to assimilate such knowledge leads back to the same problem of distribution of resources [and costs of information].

17. Similar fallacies in the field of thought have been variously designated as “the philosophical fallacy” (Dewey), the “principle of limits” (Sorokin, Bridgman) and, with a somewhat different emphasis, “the fallacy of misplaced concreteness” (Whitehead). [For an application of the general idea to the case of organizations, see . . . “Bureaucratic Structure and Personality,” in Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: The Free Press, 1968, enlarged ed.), pp. 249–60.]
18. The assumption is tenable only in a normative sense. Obviously such calculation, within the limits specified in our previous discussion, *should* be made if the probability of satisfying the interest is to be at a maximum. The error lies in confusing norm with actuality.
19. Corrado Gini, *Prime linee di patologia economica* (Milan: A. Giuffè, 1935), pp. 72–75. John Venn uses the picturesque term “suicidal prophecies” to refer to this process and properly observes that it represents a class of considerations which have been much neglected by the various sciences of human conduct. See his *Logic of Chance* (London, 1888), pp. 225–26.
20. For the correlative process, see the paper, “The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy” first published a dozen years after this one, and reprinted in Merton, *op. cit.*, 1968, pp. 475–90.

26. THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIETAL COMMUNITY

Talcott Parsons (1902–1979) was the preeminent social theorist of his generation, and during the two decades after World War II, his home institution, Harvard, became in effect the center of the sociological universe. His theoretical work has carried several labels, including functionalism, structuralism, and systems theory. His first major book, *The Structure of Social Action* (1937), was an exegesis of the works of key figures in the formative years of the discipline. Despite their manifold differences, Parsons examined them to articulate what he saw as a theoretical convergence that set the foundation for his subsequent work. His first effort to offer a comprehensive theoretical synthesis of these various strands of thought appeared in *The Social System* (1951). It was an example of what C. Wright Mills would disparagingly characterize as “grand theory.” Part of the problem Parsons had in making his theoretical case was that his prose style, as he well knew, left something to be desired. Despite this tendency, the following excerpt from his 1977 book *The Evolution of Societies* reveals his capacity to write lucidly, with reference to concrete historical events. He is concerned here with the societal community, one of the subsystems of society concerned with social integration and inclusion.

The industrial and democratic revolutions were transformations by which the institutional bulwarks of the early modern system were weakened. European monarchies survived only where they have become constitutional. Aristocracy still twitches but mostly in the informal aspects of stratification systems—nowhere is it structurally central. There are still established churches, but only on the less modern peripheries like Spain and Portugal is there restriction on religious freedom. The trend is toward the separation of church and state and denominational pluralism (except for the Communist countries). The industrial revolution shifted economic organization from agriculture and the commerce and handicrafts of small urban communities; it also extended markets.

The emergence of full modernity thus weakened the ascriptive framework of monarchy, aristocracy, established churches, and an economy circumscribed by kinship and localism to the point where ascription no longer exercises decisive influence. Modern

components had already developed by the eighteenth century, particularly a universalistic legal system and secular culture, which had been diffused through Western society by the Enlightenment. Further developments in the political aspects of societal community emphasized the associational principle, nationalism, citizenship, and representative government. In the economy differentiated markets developed for the factors of production, primarily labor. Occupational services were increasingly performed in employing organizations structurally differentiated from households. New patterns of effectively organizing specific functions arose, especially administration (centering in government and the military) and the new economy. The democratic revolution stimulated efficient administration, the industrial revolution the new economy. Weber saw that in a later phase the two tend to fuse in the bureaucratization of the capitalist economy.¹

The modern structural pattern crystallized in the northwest corner of Europe, and a secondary pattern

Talcott Parsons, *The Evolution of Societies*, Prentice-Hall, 1977, pp. 182–190. Reprinted with permission of Pearson. ♦

subsequently emerged in the north-east corner, centering in Prussia. A parallel development took place in the second phase of modernization. The United States, the "first new nation," has come to play a role comparable to that of England in the seventeenth century.² America was ripe for the democratic and industrial revolutions and for combining them more intimately than had been possible in Europe. By the time of Tocqueville's visit, a synthesis of the French and English revolutions had been achieved: The United States was as democratic a society as all but the extreme wing of the French Revolution had wished for, and its level of industrialization was to surpass that of England. We shall therefore concentrate in the following discussion upon the United States.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIETAL COMMUNITY

Behind the developments outlined in the preceding paragraphs were a special religious constitution and societal community. The United States was in a position to make new departures from the ascriptive institutions of early modern society: monarchy with its subjects rather than citizens; aristocracy; an established church; an economy committed to localism and only a little division of labor; and an ethnically defined societal community or nation. American territory was settled mainly by one distinctive group of migrants. They were nonconformists in search not so much of freedom from persecution as of greater religious independence than they could enjoy at home.³ They were predominantly Puritans, the prototypes of ascetic Protestantism. In the colonies, however, they were divided into a number of denominations and sects. In the early period, for instance in Congregational Massachusetts, the colonies established their own churches. But a conception of the church as ideally a voluntary association emerged only gradually. It was fairly well accepted by the time of independence,⁴ though in Massachusetts disestablishment did not occur until more than a generation later. The religious pluralism of the thirteen colonies and the rationalistic, Enlightenment-influenced cultural atmosphere set the stage for the First Amendment, which prescribed a constitutional separation of church and state for the first time since the institutionalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire.⁵

Religious pluralism spread from differences among the original colonies to pluralism within each state, in contrast to the pattern of *cuius regio, eius religio*. This pluralism formed the basis for toleration and eventually for full inclusion of non-Protestant elements, a large Roman Catholic minority, and a small Jewish minority.⁶ This inclusion was clearly symbolized in the 1960s by the election of a Roman Catholic, John F. Kennedy, to the presidency. American society thus went beyond England and Holland in differentiating organized religion from the societal community. One consequence of this differentiation was that publicly supported education developed in the nineteenth century as secular education. There was never, as in France, a major political struggle over that problem. A parallel development occurred in ethnic composition, the other historic basis of nationality. The United States was for a time an Anglo-Saxon society, which tolerated and granted legal rights to members of some other ethnic groups but did not fully include them. This problem grew acute with the arrival of waves of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, predominantly Roman Catholic and Jewish, from about 1890 to the beginning of World War I.⁷ Although the process of inclusion is still incomplete, the societal community has become ethnically pluralistic. Negroes are still in the early stages of the inclusion process. The bulk of the Negro population was until recently concentrated geographically in the rural South, a region insulated from the rest of American society since the Civil War. But the South has been undergoing modernization through inclusion in the society as a whole, and there has been migration of Negroes to the northern and western cities. These developments have stimulated a further process of inclusion that is creating tensions. The long-run trend, however, is toward successful inclusion.⁸

One reason that the American community has moved toward shedding its identity as a white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant community is that the "WASP" formula was never monolithic. Not only do the Irish speak English, but there are many Anglo-Saxon Roman Catholics and many Protestant Negroes. Pluralism has also been fostered by the socialization of the newer immigrant groups in more general societal values. This trend offers a possible solution to the

instability of ethnic nationalism, the problem of securing congruence between the boundaries of the societal community and the state. One difficulty is inherent in ethnically pluralistic systems, however. Because language is a determinant of ethnic membership, the right of each ethnic group in a pluralistic community to use its own language can lead to disruptive internal tensions, as demonstrated by the conflicts between Walloons and Flemish in Belgium and English and French in Canada.⁹ Where the language of one ethnic group has become the community language, strains may be imposed upon members of other groups. There are enormous benefits in linguistic uniformity, however. Its adoption in a multiethnic community depends on the type of priority enjoyed by the ethnic group whose language becomes the national language and on the number of competing languages; a plurality encourages the designation of only one language as official. In both twentieth-century superpowers (the U.S. and the USSR), the societal communities have gone beyond ethnic bases and adopted single languages.

The settlement of American territory was originally by English-speaking colonists from Great Britain. Other language groups were small and geographically limited—the Dutch in New York, the French in back-woods outposts and Louisiana, the Spanish in Florida and the Southwest—and none could seriously claim to provide a second language for American society as a whole. The first large ethnically distinctive immigrant group was the Roman Catholic Irish, who spoke English (Gaelic was a romantic revival, not the actual language of Irish immigrants). As non-English-speaking Roman Catholic elements arrived, the Irish pressed for their assimilation into the English-speaking community by opposing foreign-language parochial schools. Indeed, common Roman Catholic interests could not have been promoted had the Roman Catholic population been split into language groups. The Protestant immigrants (for example, the Scandinavians) were assimilated easily, without language becoming an issue. Jewish groups arrived quite late and did not represent one European language. Furthermore, they never exceeded 5 percent of the total population. The United States has thus retained English as the common language of the total societal community without widespread feeling that it represents the imposition of Anglo-Saxon hegemony.

A relatively well integrated societal community has thus been established in the United States on bases that are not primarily ethnic or religious. Despite diversity within the population, it has largely escaped pressure by ethnic-linguistic or religious communities for political independence or equal rights that would undermine the solidarity of the more inclusive community. Parallel developments occurred in American patterns of ascriptive stratification, especially compared with European patterns of aristocracy. The American population was nonaristocratic in origin and did not develop an indigent aristocracy.¹⁰ Furthermore, a considerable proportion of upper-class elements left the country during the American Revolution. Granting of titles came to be forbidden by the Constitution, and neither landed proprietorship nor wealth have legal recognition as criteria for government office and authority. Although American society was from the first differentiated internally by class, it never suffered the aftermath of aristocracy and serfdom that persisted in Europe; the nearest approximation appeared in the South. The participation of the wealthier and more educated groups in government has been disproportionate, but there has also been a populist strain and political mobility, advancement coming first through wealth and recently through education.

American society thus abandoned the tradition of aristocracy with only a mild revolutionary disturbance. It also lacked the heritage of Europe's peasant classes. As an industrial working class developed, the European level of class consciousness never emerged, largely because of the absence of aristocratic and peasant elements.¹¹ American society has also carried differentiation between government and societal community very far. For government and societal community to become differentiated, the right to hold office must be dissociated from ascription to monarchy and aristocracy and associated with achievement. Furthermore, authority must be limited to the legally defined powers of office so that private prerogatives and property interests are separated from those of office. Finally, the elective principle requires that holding office be contingent upon constituent support; loss of office through electoral defeat is an inherent risk. The independence of the legal system from the executive and legislative branches of government has been one mechanism for maintaining this kind of differentiation.

Another mechanism is the connection between the government and community stratification. The newly independent nation opted for a republican form of government (with precautions against absolutism)¹² linked with the societal community through the franchise. Although the franchise was originally restricted by property qualifications, it was extended rapidly, and universal manhood suffrage, except for Negroes, was attained early in the nineteenth century. The highest government authority was vested in elected officials: the President and members of the Congress, the state governors and members of state legislatures. The exception has been the appointment of Federal (and increasingly state) judges, with the expectation that they be professional lawyers. A competitive party system based upon the participation in politics of broad segments of the societal community soon emerged.¹³ It has been fluid, oriented toward a pluralistic structure of interest groups rather than toward the regional, religious, ethnic, or class solidarities more typical of Europe.

The societal community must articulate not only with the religious and political systems but also with the economy. In the United States the factors of production, including land and labor, have been free of ascriptive ties, and the Federal Constitution has guaranteed their free movement among the different states. This freedom has encouraged division of labor and the development of an extensive market system. Locally oriented and traditionally directed economic activities and the ascriptive community structures in which they were embedded have thus been undermined, which has had consequences for the stratification system; to the extent that stratification was rooted in occupational structure, it was pushed toward universalism and an open class structure but not toward radical egalitarianism. The American societal community that emerged from these developments was primarily *associational*. This characteristic reflected components of the value system. Universalism, which had its purest modern expression in the ethics of ascetic Protestantism, has exerted continuing value pressure toward inclusion—now reaching the whole Judeo-Christian religious community and beginning to extend beyond it. The inclusion component *alone* could lead to a static, universalistic tolerance. It is complemented by an activist commitment to building a good society in accordance with Divine Will that

underlies the drive toward mastery of the social environments through expansion in territory, economic productivity, and knowledge. The *combination* of these two components contributes to the associational emphasis in modern social, structure—political and social democracy being conspicuously associational.

The associational emphasis has been enhanced in the United States by the partial elimination of ethnic membership and social class as ascriptively constitutive structures. In the early modern phase, the basis of community in Europe was ethnic-national. Yet the coincidence between ethnic membership and territorial organization throughout Europe was incomplete. Ethnic-centered nationalism was thus not an adequate substitute for religion as a basis of societal solidarity, even though it gained in importance with secularization and the inclusion of religious diversity within the same political jurisdiction. The new basis of inclusion in the societal community has been *citizenship*, developing in association with the democratic revolution.¹⁴ Citizenship can be dissociated from ethnic membership, which leans toward nationalism and even racism; race provides an ascriptive criterion of belonging. The alternative has been to define belonging in universalistic terms, which must include reference to voluntary allegiance, although no societal community can be a purely voluntary association.¹⁵ The institutionalization of access to citizenship through *naturalization*, regardless of the ethnic origins of individuals, represents a break with the imperative of ethnic membership.

The development of the American pattern of citizenship has followed the pattern outlined by Marshall for Great Britain, starting with the civic component and developing the political and social components from there. The social component, though it has lagged behind that of the principal European societies, has been extended through public education, social security, welfare policies, insurance, and union benefits, in the present century. Contemporary concern with problems of poverty marks a new phase in that development. The structural outline of citizenship in the new societal community is complete, though not yet fully institutionalized. There are two stress points: race and poverty. Their salience reflects the need to extend the processes of inclusion and upgrading still farther.

A developed legal system is necessary for a stable societal community that has dispensed with religious and ethnic uniformity as radically as has American society. The Puritan tradition and the Enlightenment fostered a predilection for a written constitution, with its echoes of covenant and social contract.¹⁶ An individualistic fear of authoritarianism fostered the separation of government powers.¹⁷ A federal structure was practically necessitated by the legal separation of the colonies. All three circumstances placed a premium on legal forms and on agencies charged with legal functions. Furthermore, many of the framers of the Constitution had legal training. Even though they provided for only one Supreme Court, without specifying membership qualifications and with little specification of its powers, they did lay the foundations for an emphasis on the *legal order*.

But three developments were not foreseen by the Founding Fathers. First was the effect of judicial review in settling conflicts among the branches of Federal government, among the states, and between the states and the Federal government. The second was the adoption of English common law and the resulting proliferation of judge-made law. Finally, there was the professionalization of legal practice. In contrast to the system in Continental Europe, the legal profession, though participating freely in politics, has not been organized about governmental functions.¹⁸ Because the separation of powers and federalism have decentralized American government, legal institutions

have been important in the attenuation of local autonomy. The recent reintegration of the South into the nation is a conspicuous example. The Constitutional framework emphasizes universalistic criteria of citizenship. These criteria have undergone continuous evolution, involving both specification and generalization in interdependence with the evolution of the legal system. One consequence has been pressure toward inclusion, most dramatically of Negroes.

The duality in the civic component of citizenship has become noticeable in the United States because of this nation's reliance on a written constitution. One aspect is the citizen's rights and obligations as they have been formulated in the course of legal history. This component covers a wide range, including principles of equality before the law. Back of it stand more general principles, first embodied in the Bill of Rights and extended both by amendment and by judicial interpretation. The second aspect, increasingly stressed over time, consists of the basic equalities of citizens' rights to protection, freedoms, basic conditions of welfare, and opportunities, especially access to education and occupational development. At least in principle, the new societal community has come to be defined as a company of equals. Departures from the egalitarian principle must be justified, either on the basis of incapacity to participate fully—as among small children—or of being qualified for special contributions, as through competence, to the societal welfare.

NOTES

1. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947).
2. Seymour M. Lipset, *The First New Nation* (New York: Basic Books, 1963).
3. Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (New York: Harper, 1964).
4. *Ibid.* See J. J. Loubser, "The Development of Religious Liberty in Massachusetts," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1964; and Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966).
5. Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: Harcourt, 1965).
6. Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, rev. ed. (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1960); and Talcott Parsons "Some Comments on the Pattern of Religious Organization in the United States," in *Structure and Process in Modern Societies* (New York: Free Press, 1960).

7. Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1951).
8. Talcott Parsons, "Full Citizenship for the Negro American?" in Talcott Parsons and Kenneth Clark (eds.), *The Negro American* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966).
9. Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1961).
10. Clinton Rossiter, *Seedtime of the Republic* (New York: Harcourt, 1953).
11. Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt, 1955).
12. Rossiter, *op. cit.*; and Merrill Jensen, *The Articles of Confederation* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940).
13. William N. Chambers, *Political Parties in a New Nation, 1776-1809* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963); and Richard P. McCormick, *The Second American Party System* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966).
14. T.H. Marshall, *Class, Citizenship and Social Development* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1965).
15. See Karl W. Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social communication* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1953).
16. See Edwin S. Corwin, *The "Higher Law": Background of American Constitutional Law* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1955).
17. Bernard Bailyn, "General Introduction," in *Pamphlets of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965).
18. See Roscoe Pound, *The Spirit of the Common Law* (Boston: Beacon, 1963); and James Willard Hurst, *Law and the Conditions of Freedom* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956).

27. THE FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

Although Lewis Coser (1913–2003) wrote this essay from a functionalist perspective, he took up a topic that critics contended was generally ignored by its Parsonian variant: conflict. In fact, Coser was indebted not only to Parsonian theory but to such classic figures as Simmel, who was concerned with the varied ways that conflict can draw antagonistic parties into webs of group affiliation. While Coser realizes that conflict can be destructive to groups and to intergroup relations, and thus agrees that attempts at conflict resolution are generally appropriate, he focuses in this essay on the functions of conflict not only in reinforcing group solidarity but in serving as a safety-valve, channeling tensions in constructive ways rather than letting them build up to such a point that when conflict is unleashed, it is unleashed with destructive force.

Conflict within a group . . . may help to establish unity or to reestablish unity and cohesion where it has been threatened by hostile and antagonistic feelings among the members. Yet, not *every* type of conflict is likely to benefit group structure, nor that conflict can subserve such functions for *all* groups. Whether social conflict is beneficial to internal adaptation or not depends on the type of issues over which it is fought as well as on the type of social structure within which it occurs. However, types of conflict and types of social structure are not independent variables.

Internal social conflicts which concern goals, values or interests that do not contradict the basic assumptions upon which the relationship is founded tend to be positively functional for the social structure. Such conflicts tend to make possible the readjustment of norms and power relations within groups in accordance with the felt needs of its individual members or subgroups.

Internal conflicts in which the contending parties no longer share the basic values upon which the legitimacy of the social system rests threaten to disrupt the structure.

One safeguard against conflict disrupting the consensual basis of the relationship, however, is contained in the social structure itself: it is provided by the institutionalization and tolerance of conflict. Whether internal conflict promises to be a means of equilibration of social relations or readjustment of rival claims, or whether it threatens to “tear apart,” depends to a large extent on the social structure within which it occurs.

In every type of social structure there are occasions for conflict, since individuals and subgroups are likely to make from time to time rival claims to scarce resources, prestige or power positions. But social structures differ in the way in which they allow expression to antagonistic claims. Some show more tolerance of conflict than others.

Closely knit groups in which there exists a high frequency of interaction and high personality involvement of the members have a tendency to suppress conflict. While they provide frequent occasions for hostility (since both sentiments of love and hatred are intensified through frequency of interaction), the acting out of such feelings is sensed as a danger to such intimate relationships, and hence there is a tendency

to suppress rather than to allow expression of hostile feelings. In close-knit groups, feelings of hostility tend, therefore, to accumulate and hence to intensify. If conflict breaks out in a group that has consistently tried to prevent expression of hostile feelings, it will be particularly intense for two reasons: First, because the conflict does not merely aim at resolving the immediate issue which led to its outbreak; all accumulated grievances which were denied expression previously are apt to emerge at this occasion. Second, because the total personality involvement of the group members makes for mobilization of all sentiments in the conduct of the struggle.

Hence, the closer the group, the more intense the conflict. Where members participate with their total personality and conflicts are suppressed, the conflict, if it breaks out nevertheless, is likely to threaten the very root of the relationship.

In groups comprising individuals who participate only segmentally, conflict is less likely to be disruptive. Such groups are likely to experience a multiplicity of conflicts. This in itself tends to constitute a check against the breakdown of consensus: the energies of group members are mobilized in many directions and hence will not concentrate on *one* conflict cutting through the group. Moreover, where occasions for hostility are not permitted to accumulate and conflict is allowed to occur wherever a resolution of tension seems to be indicated, such a conflict is likely to remain focused primarily on the condition which led to its outbreak and not to revive blocked hostility; in this way, the conflict is limited to "the facts of the case." One may venture to say that multiplicity of conflicts stands in inverse relation to their intensity.

So far we have been dealing with internal social conflict only. At this point we must turn to a consideration of external conflict, for the structure of the group is itself affected by conflicts with other groups in which it engages or which it prepares for. Groups which are engaged in continued struggle tend to lay claim on the total personality involvement of their members so that internal conflict would tend to mobilize all energies and affects of the members. Hence such groups are unlikely to tolerate more than limited departures from

the group unity. In such groups there is a tendency to suppress conflict, where it occurs, it leads the group to break up through splits or through forced withdrawal of dissenters.

Groups which are not involved in continued struggle with the outside are less prone to make claims on total personality involvement of the membership and are more likely to exhibit flexibility of structure. The multiple internal conflicts which they tolerate may in turn have an equilibrating and stabilizing impact on the structure.

In flexible social structures, multiple conflicts criss-cross each other and thereby prevent basic cleavages along one axis. The multiple group affiliations of individuals makes them participate in various group conflicts so that their total personalities are not involved in any single one of them. Thus segmental participation in a multiplicity of conflicts constitutes a balancing mechanism within the structure.

In loosely structured groups and open societies, conflict, which aims at a resolution of tension between antagonists, is likely to have stabilizing and integrative functions for the relationship. By permitting immediate and direct expression of rival claims, such social systems are able to readjust their structures by eliminating the sources of dissatisfaction. The multiple conflicts which they experience may serve to eliminate the causes for dissociation and to re-establish unity. These systems avail themselves, through the toleration and institutionalization of conflict, of an important stabilizing mechanism.

In addition, conflict within a group frequently helps to revitalize existent norms; or it contributes to the emergence of new norms. In this sense, social conflict is a mechanism for adjustment of norms adequate to new conditions. A flexible society benefits from conflict because such behavior, by helping to create and modify norms, assures its continuance under changed conditions. Such mechanism for readjustment of norms is hardly available to rigid systems: by suppressing conflict, the latter smother a useful warning signal, thereby maximizing the danger of catastrophic breakdown.

Internal conflict can also serve as a means for ascertaining the relative strength of antagonistic interests within the structure, and in this way constitutes a mechanism for the maintenance or continual

readjustment of the balance of power. Since the outbreak of the conflict indicates a rejection of a previous accommodation between parties, once the respective power of the contenders has been ascertained through conflict, a new equilibrium can be established and the relationship can proceed on this new basis. Consequently, a social structure in which there is room for conflict disposes of an important means for avoiding or redressing conditions of disequilibrium by modifying the terms of power relations.

Conflicts with some produce associations or coalitions with others. Conflicts through such associations or coalitions, by providing a bond between the members, help to reduce social isolation or to unite individuals and groups otherwise unrelated or antagonistic to each other. A social structure in which there can exist a multiplicity of conflicts contains a mechanism for bringing together otherwise isolated, apathetic or mutually hostile parties and for taking them into the field of public social activities. Moreover, such a structure fosters a multiplicity of associations and coalitions whose diverse purposes crisscross each other, we recall, thereby preventing alliances along one major line of cleavage.

Once groups and associations have been formed through conflict with other groups, such conflict may further serve to maintain boundary lines between them and the surrounding social environment. In this way, social conflict helps to structure the larger social environment by assigning position to the various subgroups within the system and by helping to define the power relations between them.

Not all social systems in which individuals participate segmentally allow the free expression of antagonistic claims. Social systems tolerate or institutionalize conflict to different degrees. There is no society in which any and every antagonistic claim is allowed immediate expression. Societies dispose of mechanisms to channel discontent and hostility while keeping intact the relationship within which antagonism arises. Such mechanisms frequently operate through "safety-valve" institutions which provide substitute objects upon which to displace hostile sentiments as well as means of abreaction of aggressive tendencies.

Safety-valve institutions may serve to maintain both the social structure and the individual's security system, but they are incompletely functional for both of them. They prevent modification of relationships to meet changing conditions and hence the satisfaction they afford the individual can be only partially or momentarily adjustive. The hypothesis has been suggested that the need for safety-valve institutions increases with the rigidity of the social structure, i.e., with the degree to which it disallows direct expression of antagonistic claims.

Safety-valve institutions lead to a displacement of goal in the actor: he need no longer aim at reaching a solution of the unsatisfactory situation, but merely at releasing the tension which arose from it. Where safety-valve institutions provide substitute objects for the displacement of hostility, the conflict itself is channeled away from the original unsatisfactory relationship into one in which the actor's goal is no longer the attainment of specific results, but the release of tension.

This affords us a criterion for distinguishing between realistic and nonrealistic conflict.

Social conflicts that arise from frustrations of specific demands within a relationship and from estimates of gains of the participants, and that are directed at the presumed frustrating object, can be called realistic conflicts. Insofar as they are means toward specific results, they can be replaced by alternative modes of interaction with the contending party if such alternatives seem to be more adequate for realizing the end in view.

Nonrealistic conflicts, on the other hand, are not occasioned by the rival ends of the antagonists, but by the need for tension release of one or both of them. In this case the conflict is not oriented toward the attainment of specific results. Insofar as unrealistic conflict is an end in itself, insofar as it affords only tension release, the chosen antagonist can be substituted for by any other "suitable" target.

In realistic conflict, there exist functional alternatives with regard to the means of carrying out the conflict, as well as with regard to accomplishing desired results short of conflict; in nonrealistic conflict, on the other hand, there exist only functional alternatives in the choice of antagonists.

Our hypothesis, that the need for safety-valve institutions increases with the rigidity of the social system, may be extended to suggest that unrealistic conflict may be expected to occur as a consequence of rigidity present in the social structure.

Our discussion of the distinction between types of conflict, and between types of social structures, leads us to conclude that conflict tends to be dysfunctional for a social structure in which there is no

or insufficient toleration and institutionalization of conflict. The intensity of a conflict which threatens to "tear apart," which attacks the consensual basis of a social system, is related to the rigidity of the structure. What threatens the equilibrium of such a structure is not conflict as such, but the rigidity itself which permits hostilities to accumulate and to be channeled along one major line of cleavage once they break out in conflict.

28. FUNCTIONAL DIFFERENTIATION

Niklas Luhmann (1927–1998) was perhaps the most important German thinker associated with systems theory. His work is indebted to, while seeking to go beyond, that of Talcott Parsons. In addition, Luhmann was influenced by cybernetic theories. He had an ongoing dialogue with his German contemporary Jürgen Habermas, but unlike the writings of that sociologist, which offer a neo-Marxist critique of modern capitalism, the political implications of Luhmann's work are not immediately evident. In this essay from 1986, he explores the ways complex advanced industrial societies, characterized by considerable structural and functional differentiation, address societal problems. In focusing on issues related to environmental concerns, he contends that the tendency to think that problems such as air and water pollution can be resolved by recourse to value commitments to a clean environment are overly simplistic. Instead, he suggests, we must realize that the ways we look at such issues are a consequence of the structure of a society in which we can no longer presume to speak about the unity of the system.

The preceding . . . discussed the existence of ecological problems and the ways in which they trigger resonance in the function systems of modern society. But in the analysis of particular systems the sociologist should not lose sight of the unity of society. Indeed, the comparability of function systems and certain agreements in the structures of their differentiation—we examined the differentiation of codes and programs but this is only one of many viewpoints—point to this. The unity of the entire system resides in the way it operates and the form of its differentiation. The more clearly social evolution approaches a specific kind of operation, namely, meaningful communication, and the primacy of functional differentiation *vis-à-vis* other forms of internal system-formation the more obvious its corresponding structures become. If one eliminates all anachronisms, the conceptual and theoretical means by which society describes itself in its scientific system—in this case in sociology—have to be adapted to this.

Above all, one must realize that theories of hierarchy, delegation or decentralization that begin from an apex or center are incapable of grasping contemporary society adequately. They presuppose a channelling of the communication flow that does not exist nor can even be produced. Furthermore, the attempts to describe the relation of state and economy according to the model of centralization and decentralization and then, when it is politically expedient, to praise the advantages of decentralized decision-making and to warn against its disadvantages is unrealistic. In reality, the economy is a system that is highly centralized by the money-mechanism but with a concomitant, extensive decentralization of decision-making, whereas the political system organizes the political organisation more or less centrally and handles political influences according to entirely different models, like those of social movements. These systems distinguish themselves through the way in which they try to combine and reinforce centralization and decentralization according

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to their respective media of communication. But their independencies cannot be understood according to the model of centralization and decentralization.

Thus it is pointless to try to conceive the unity of modern society as the organization of a network of channels of communication, steering-centers and impulse receivers. One immediately gets the impression that good intentions cannot be realized because somewhere something is directed against them¹ which frequently ends up in mythical explanations in terms of capitalism, bureaucracy or complexity. With the help of a theory of system differentiation it is evident, however, that every formation of a subsystem is nothing more than a *new expression for the unity of the whole system*.² Every formation of a subsystem breaks the unity of the whole system down into a specific difference of system and environment, i.e., of the subsystem and its environment within the encompassing system. Every subsystem therefore, can use such a boundary line to reflect the entire system, in its own specific way; one that leaves other possibilities of subsystem formation open. For example, a political system can interpret society as the relation of consensus and the exercise of force and then attempt to optimize its own relation to these conditions. On one hand, consensus and force are specific operations, but on the other, they are also all-encompassing formulas and horizons for social conditions and consequences that can never be made completely transparent in the political subsystem.

Every function system, together with its environment, reconstructs *society*. Therefore, every function system can plausibly presume to be society *for itself*, if and in so far as it is open to its *own* environment. With the closure of its own autopoiesis it serves *one* function of *the* societal system (society). With openness to environmental conditions and changes it realizes that this has to occur *in the* societal system because society cannot specialize *itself* to one function alone. This is a matter of the operationalization of a paradox. Presented as the difference of system and environment the function system is and is not society at the same time. It operates closed and open at the same time and confers exclusivity on its own claim to reality, even if only in the sense of a necessary, operative illusion. It confers bivalence upon its own code and excludes third values that lurk in the environment's opacity and

the susceptibility to surprise. In this way society reproduces itself as unity and difference at the same time. Of course, this does not eliminate the paradox of *unitas multiplex*. It reappears within the system as opacities, illusions, disturbances and the need for screening-off—as transcendence in immanence, to put it in terms of the religious system's selective coding.

This systems-theoretical analysis highlights the significance and the preference of modern society for institutions like the market or democracy. Such descriptions symbolize the unity of closure and openness, of functional logic and sensibility. Of course, the market is not a real one (as it could be seen to be from the cousin's corner window)³ and democracy no longer means that the people rule. This is a matter of a semantic coding of an ultimately paradoxical state of affairs. It explains the meaning and the illusionary components of these concepts, explains the weakness of the corresponding theories and explains why, since the beginning of the eighteenth century, a kind of self-critique has accompanied this.

Yet the unity of this order is already necessarily given by evolution, i.e., through the continual adjustment of possibilities. Evolution does not guarantee either the selection of the best of all possible worlds nor 'progress' in any sense. At first evolutionary selection produces a very improbable, highly complex order. It transforms an improbable order into a probable (functional) one. This is exactly what concepts like negentropy or complexity intend. But it does not mean that the improbability disappears or is inactualized as prehistory. It is co-transformed and '*aufgehoben*' in Hegel's famous sense. It remains a structurally precipitated risk that cannot be negated.

Stratified societies already had to deal with problematical consequences of their own structural decisions. These were expressed, for example, as the constant conflict between inherited honors and distinctions and new ones, as the unfulfillable obligation to prescribe a class-specific endogamy and not least of all as the conflicts that result from centralizing the control of access to scarce resources, above all of the ownership of land. Compared to modern society these are relatively harmless problems for which historically stable solutions were found in many cases. The transition to primarily functional differentiation leads to a completely

different constellation with higher risks and more intensified problems resulting from structural achievements. Society's self-exposure to ecological dangers is therefore not a completely new problem. But it is a problem that, today, is coming dramatically to the fore.

With functional differentiation the principle of elastic adaptation through processes of substitution becomes the principle of the specification of subsystems. Its consequence is that, more than ever before, functional equivalents can be projected and actualized *but only in the context of the subsystems and their coding*. Extreme elasticity is purchased at the cost of the peculiar rigidity of its contextual conditions. Everything appears as contingent. But the realization of other possibilities is bound to specific system references. Every binary code claims universal validity, but only for its own perspective. Everything, for example, can be either true or false, but only true or false according to the specific theoretical programs of the scientific system. Above all, this means that no function system can step in for any other. None can replace or even relieve any other. Politics cannot be substituted for the economy, nor the economy for science, nor science for law or religion nor religion for politics, etc., in any conceivable intersystem relations.

Of course, this structural barrier does not exclude corresponding attempts. But they must be purchased at the price of dedifferentiation (*Entdifferenzierung*), i.e., with the surrender of the advantages of functional differentiation. This can be seen clearly in socialism's experiments with the politization of the productive sector of the economy or even in tendencies towards the 'Islamization' of politics, the economy and law. Moreover, these are carried out only partially. For example, they do not touch on money (but, at best, the purely economic calculation of capital investment and prices) and are arrested by an immune reaction of the system of the world society.

The structurally imposed non-substitutability of function systems does not exclude interdependencies of every kind. A flowering economy is also a political blessing—and vice versa. This does not mean that the economy could fulfill a political function, namely, to produce collectively binding decisions (to whose profit?). Instead, the non-substitutability of functions (i.e., the regulation of substitution by functions) is

compensated by increasing interdependencies. Precisely because function systems cannot replace one another they support and burden one another reciprocally. It is their irreplaceability that imposes the continual displacement of problems from one system into another. The result is a simultaneous intensification of independencies and interdependencies (dependencies) whose operative and structural balance inflates the individual systems with an immense uncontrollable complexity.

This same state of affairs can be characterized as a progressive resolution and reorganization of the structural redundancies of society. The certainties that lay in multifunctional mechanisms and that specified systems for different functions and programmed them to 'not only/but also' were abandoned. This is shown very clearly by the reduction of the social relevance of the family and morality. Instead, new redundancies were created that rested on the differentiation of functional perspectives and '*ceteris paribus*' clauses. But this does not safeguard the interdependencies between the function systems and the social effects of the change of one for the other. Time, then, becomes relevant: the consequences result only after a certain amount of time and then they have to be handled with new means that are, once again, specific to the system. This is accomplished without being able to go back to the initiating causes. Complexity is temporalized⁴ and so are the ideas of certainty. The future becomes laden with hopes and fears, in any event, with the expectation that it will be different. The transformation of results into problems is accelerated, and structural precautions (for example, for sufficient liquidity or for invariably functional legislation) are established so that such a reproblematicization of the solution is always possible.

The rejection of substitutability has to be understood essentially as the rejection of redundancy, i.e., as the rejection of multiple safeguarding. As we know, the rejection of redundancy restricts the system's possibilities of learning from disturbances and environmental 'noises'.⁵ This implies that a functionally differentiated system cannot adapt itself to environmental changes as well as systems that are constructed more simply although it increasingly initiates concomitant environmental changes. But this is only part of the truth. For, through abstract coding and the functional

specification of subsystems, functional differentiation makes a large measure of sensibility and learning possible on this level. This state of affairs becomes quite complicated when many system levels have to be kept in view at the same time. Society's rejection of redundancy is compensated on the level of subsystems, and the problem is that this is the only place that this can occur. Family households, moralities and religious cosmologies are replaced by an arrangement in which highly organized capacities for substitution and recuperation remain bound to specific functions that operate at the cost of ignoring other functions. Because of this the consequences of adaptive changes are situated within a complex net of dependencies and independencies. In part, they lead to unforeseen extensions, in part they are absorbed. In such cases simple estimations and simple comparisons of the efficiency of different social formations are insufficient and inadvisable.

A further consequence of functional differentiation resides in the intensification of apparent contingencies on the structural level of all function systems. Examples of this are the replacement of natural by positive law, the democratic change of governments, the still merely hypothetical character of the validity of theories, the possibility of the free choice of a spouse and not least of all everything that is experienced as a 'a market decision' (with whoever or whatever may decide) and is subjected to criticism. The result is that much of what was previously experienced as nature is presented as a decision and needs justification. Thus a need arises for new 'inviolable levels'. . . . for a more rational and justifiable a priori or, finally, for 'values'.⁶ Evidently, the strangely non-binding compulsion of values correlates to a widespread discontent with contingencies as much as to the fact that decisions become more exposed to criticism through structural critique and statistical analyses than facts. Indeed, even if we cannot determine that someone has decided (for example, about the number of deaths from accidents or about the increase of the rate of unemployment) decisions are still necessary to redress these unsatisfactory conditions. To require decisions means to appeal to values, explicitly or implicitly. Consequently, structural contingency generates an order of values without considering the possibilities of concretely causing

effects, i.e., without considering the attainability of the corresponding conditions.

It is probable that ecological communication will intensify this inflation of values even more. For if society has to ascribe environmental changes to itself then it is quite natural to reduce them to decisions that would have to be corrected: decisions about emissions quotas, total consumption amounts, new technologies whose consequences are still unknown, etc. . . . [S]uch ascriptions are based on simplifying, illuminating and obscuring causal attributions. This does not prevent them from being carried out and communicated, but, if nothing else, it permits values to surface.⁷

At first, one might think that the value of clean air and water, trees and animals could be placed alongside the values of freedom and equality, and since this is only a matter of lists we could include pandas, Tamils, women, etc. But viewed essentially and in the long run this would be much too simple an answer. The problematic of the inflation of values as a symbolically generalized medium of communication—an idea of Parsons⁸—results from its influence on society's observation and description of itself.

Actually the descriptions of society are steered by the problems that result from structural decisions and, therefore, they have a tendency to evoke values and see 'crises'. Contrary to the mature phase of bourgeois-socialist theories in the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century disadvantages are deferred for a time, are read off in values and are understood as the indefinite obligation to act. In any event, they are no longer understood as digressions of the spirit or matter on the way to perfection. Instead, they are the inescapable result of evolution. According to the theory proposed here, they are consequences of the principle of system differentiation and of its making probable what is improbable.

Moreover, the critical self-observation and description that constantly accompanies society has to renounce moral judgements or end up getting lost in a factional morass.⁹ Instead, a new kind of schematism, namely, manifest or latent (conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional) takes its place. Only manifest functions can be used to differentiate and specify because only these can be transformed into points of comparison or goal-formulas. This means that the critique is formed as a scheme of difference

that also illuminates the other side, the counterpart. Straightforward striving toward a goal is viewed as naive. This even undermines the straightforward intention of enlightenment.¹⁰ A mirror is, as it were, held up to society, assuming that it cannot look through it because that which is latent can fulfill its function only latently. This is the way sociology, too, pursues 'enlightenment' [*Aufklärung*] and explains its ineffectuality in the same process.¹¹ In this sense ideology, the unconscious, latent structures and functions and unintended side-effects all become themes without a clarification of the status of this shadow world—note especially the reversal of Platonic metaphysics. One can therefore use this distinction only to discover that society enlightens itself about itself.

The problem of reintroducing the unity of society within society or even of expressing it in it is extended to the forms of the system's critical self-description. Equally symptomatic are all attempts at judging and condemning society from the exalted standpoint of the subject, i.e., *ab extra*. This signifies nothing more than placing the unity of society in a principle outside itself.¹² A systems-theoretical analysis of such attempts, however, enjoys the advantage of being able to retrace this problematic

back to the structure of modern society (which changes nothing about the fact that this must occur in society).

Essentially, every attempt within the system to make the unity of the system the object of a system operation encounters a paradox because this operation must exclude and include itself. As long as society was differentiated according to center/periphery or rank, positions could be established where it was possible, as it never has been since, to represent the system's unity, i.e., in the center or at the apex of the hierarchy. The transition to functional differentiation destroys this possibility when it leaves it to the many function systems to represent the unity of society through their respective subsystem/environment differences and exposes them in this respect to competition among themselves while there is no superordinate standpoint of representation for them all. To be sure, one can observe and describe this too. But the unity of society is nothing more than this difference of function systems. It is nothing more than their reciprocal autonomy and non-substitutability; nothing more than the transformation of this structure into a togetherness of inflated independence and dependence. In other words, it is the resulting complexity, which is highly improbable evolutionarily.

NOTES

1. Cf., among others Jeffrey L. Pressman/Aaron Wildavsky, *Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington are Dashed in Oakland*, Berkeley Ca. 1973.
2. Cf., Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme*, Frankfurt 1984, pp. 37ff.
3. According to E. T. A. Hoffmann, 'Des Veters Eckfenster', *Werke*, Berlin-Leipzig, no date, vol. 12, pp. 142–64.
4. Cf., for a historico-semantic context Niklas Luhmann. 'Temporalisierung von Komplexität: Zur Semantik neuzeitlicher Zeitbegriffe', in Luhmann, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik*, vol. 1, Frankfurt 1980, pp. 235–300.
5. Cf., André Béjin, 'Différenciation, complexification, évolution des sociétés', in *Communications*, vol. 22 (1974), pp. 109–18 (114) in connection with Henri Atlan, *L'Organisation biologique et la théorie de l'information*, Paris 1972, pp. 270ff.
6. The still unclear semantic career of the concept of value (especially prior to the middle of the nineteenth century) might have one of its sources here. To be sure, it is incorrect to say that the concept of value was appropriated by morality, literature, aesthetics and philosophy from economics only in the middle of the nineteenth century. (The Abbé Morellet, *Prospectus d'un nouveau dictionnaire de commerce*, Paris 1769, reprint Munich 1980, pp. 98ff., observes a restriction to economic profit. But the entire eighteenth century used it in a much more general sense.) It is equally clear, however, that the concept of value has been used as an ultimate guarantee for meaning and therefore non-contradictably in the last hundred years.

7. This happens in any event. But it is also required in many respects and viewed as the precondition for the solutions of problems. Cf., Karl-Heinz Hillmann, *Umweltkrise und Wertwände: Die Umwertung der Werte als Strategie des Überlebens*, Frankfurt-Bern 1981.
8. Cf., Talcott Parsons, 'On the Concept of Value-Commitments', in *Sociological Inquiry*, vol. 38 (1968), pp. 135–60 (153ff.)
9. For a comparison: the self-description of stratified societies had always used a moral schematism—whether in the direct moral criticism of typical behavior in the individual strata or in the formulation of types of perfection from which everyone could measure their distance.
10. Cf., for example, Simon-Nicolas-Henri Linquet, *Le Fanatisme des philosophes*, London-Abbeville 1764; Peter Villaume, *Über das Verhältnis der Religion zur Moral und zum Staate*, Libau 1791, and of course, the widespread critique of the French Revolution as the outbreak of a naive faith in principles.
11. This led many to the conclusion of 'revolution'—with very little support for possibilities and consequences. One finds typically that the manifest/latent schema is introduced without further reflection as a description of facts and forms the basis for analyses. This has been the case especially since Robert K. Merton, 'The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action', in *American Sociological Review*, vol. 1 (1936), pp. 894–904.
12. Jürgen Habermas judges much more sharply and leaves more room for hope. He views this as the theory-immanent *problem* of the Enlightenment's erroneous semantic guidance by the theory of the subject and its object and therefore sees the solution of the problem in the transition to a new paradigm of intersubjective agreement. Cf., *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne: Zwölf Vorlesungen*, Frankfurt 1985. To make this useful sociologically, one must still clarify how this erroneous guidance and the possibility of correcting it are connected with the structure of modern society.

SECTION VI

1. What are the sources that contribute to unintended consequences of action and in what ways do such consequences reveal the relevance of sociological, as opposed to psychological, analysis?
2. Select one of the sources of unintended consequences identified by Merton and provide your own examples to illustrate.
3. According to Parsons, what is the purpose of the societal community, and how does it achieve this objective?
4. Offer your own assessment of Coser's claim that conflict can be functionally beneficial in some circumstances. Provide an example to illustrate his argument.
5. Using his understanding of differentiation, explain why Luhmann doesn't think that value commitments to a clean environment alone can resolve our environmental problems.

VII. SYMBOLIC INTERACTION, PHENOMENOLOGY, AND ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

HERBERT BLUMER

29. SOCIETY AS SYMBOLIC INTERACTION

Herbert Blumer (1900–1987) coined the term *symbolic interactionism* to describe a theoretical approach to sociology different from the reigning orthodoxies of the day, which in his view included behaviorism, functionalism, and other deterministic theoretical approaches. Noting his intellectual debt not only to the key figures associated with the Chicago School of Sociology but to social philosophers William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead, in this 1962 essay Blumer urges a sociology that treats human beings as authors of their own lives insofar as they imbue their actions with meaning and purpose. He believes that competing theoretical paradigms tend to treat people as the products or effects of social forces. To the extent that they do so, they fail to take seriously the idea of the self and the interpretive work that selves do in constructing their social lives—not in isolation, but through complex processes of interaction.

A view of human society as symbolic interaction has been followed more than it has been formulated. Partial, usually fragmentary, statements of it are to be found in the writings of a number of eminent scholars, some inside the field of sociology and some outside. Among the former we may note such scholars as Charles Horton Cooley, W. I. Thomas, Robert E. Parks, E. W. Burgess, Florian Znaniecki, Ellsworth Faris, and James Mickel Williams. Among those outside the discipline we may note William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead. None of these scholars, in my judgment, has presented a systematic statement of the nature of human group life from the standpoint of symbolic interaction. Mead stands out among all of them in laying bare the fundamental premises of

the approach, yet he did little to develop its methodological implications for sociological study. Students who seek to depict the position of symbolic interaction may easily give different pictures of it. What I have to present should be regarded as my personal version. My aim is to present the basic premises of the point of view and to develop their methodological consequences for the study of human group life.

The term “symbolic interaction” refers, of course, to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or “define” each other’s actions instead of merely reacting to each other’s actions. Their “response” is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on

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the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions. This mediation is equivalent to inserting a process of interpretation between stimulus and response in the case of human behavior.

The simple recognition that human beings interpret each other's actions as the means of acting toward one another has permeated the thought and writings of many scholars of human conduct and of human group life. Yet few of them have endeavored to analyze what such interpretation implies about the nature of the human being or about the nature of human association. They are usually content with a mere recognition that "interpretation" should be caught by the student, or with a simple realization that symbols, such as cultural norms or values, must be introduced into their analyses. Only G. H. Mead, in my judgment, has sought to think through what the act of interpretation implies for an understanding of the human being, human action and human association. The essentials of his analysis are so penetrating and profound and so important for an understanding of human group life that I wish to spell them out, even though briefly.

The key feature in Mead's analysis is that the human being has a self. This idea should not be cast aside as esoteric or glossed over as something that is obvious and hence not worthy of attention. In declaring that the human being has a self, Mead had in mind chiefly that the human being can be the object of his own actions. He can act toward himself as he might act toward others. Each of us is familiar with actions of this sort in which the human being gets angry with himself, rebuffs himself, takes pride in himself, argues with himself, tries to bolster his own courage, tells himself that he should "do this" or not "do that," sets goals for himself, makes compromises with himself, and plans what he is going to do. That the human being acts toward himself in these and countless other ways is a matter of easy empirical observation. To recognize that the human being can act toward himself is no mystical conjuration.

Mead regards this ability of the human being to act toward himself as the central mechanism with which the human being faces and deals with his world. This mechanism enables the human being to make

indications to himself of things in his surroundings and thus to guide his actions by what he notes. Anything of which a human being is conscious is something which he is indicating to himself—the ticking of a clock, a knock at the door, the appearance of a friend, the remark made by a companion, a recognition that he has a task to perform, or the realization that he has a cold. Conversely, anything of which he is not conscious is, ipso facto, something which he is not indicating to himself. The conscious life of the human being, from the time that he awakens until he falls asleep, is a continual flow of self-indications—notations of the things with which he deals and takes into account. We are given, then, a picture of the human being as an organism which confronts its world with a mechanism for making indications to itself. This is the mechanism that is involved in interpreting the actions of others. To interpret the actions of another is to point out to oneself that the action has this or that meaning or character.

Now, according to Mead, the significance of making indications to oneself is of paramount importance. The importance lies along two lines. First, to indicate something is to extricate it from its setting, to hold it apart, to give it a meaning or, in Mead's language, to make it into an object. An object—that is to say, anything that an individual indicates to himself—is different from a stimulus; instead of having an intrinsic character which acts on the individual and which can be identified apart from the individual, its character or meaning is conferred on it by the individual. The object is a product of the individual's disposition to act instead of being an antecedent stimulus which evokes the act. Instead of the individual being surrounded by an environment of pre-existing objects which play upon him and call forth his behavior, the proper picture is that he constructs his objects on the basis of his ongoing activity. In any of his countless acts—whether minor, like dressing himself, or major, like organizing himself for a professional career—the individual is designating different objects to himself, giving them meaning, judging their suitability to his action, and making decisions on the basis of the judgment. This is what is meant by interpretation or acting on the basis of symbols.

The second important implication of the fact that the human being makes indications to himself is that

his action is constructed or built up instead of being a mere release. Whatever the action in which he is engaged, the human individual proceeds by pointing out to himself the divergent things which have to be taken into account in the course of his action. He has to note what he wants to do and how he is to do it; he has to point out to himself the various conditions which may be instrumental to his action and those which may obstruct his action; he has to take account of the demands, the expectations, the prohibitions, and the threats as they may arise in the situation in which he is acting. His action is built up step by step through a process of such self-indication. The human individual pieces together and guides his action by taking account of different things and interpreting their significance for his prospective action. There is no instance of conscious action of which this is not true.

The process of constructing action through making indications to oneself cannot be swallowed up in any of the conventional psychological categories. This process is distinct from and different from what is spoken of as the "ego"—just as it is different from any other conception which conceives of the self in terms of composition or organization. Self-indication is a moving communicative process in which the individual notes things, assesses them, gives them a meaning, and decides to act on the basis of the meaning. The human being stands over against the world, or against "alters," with such a process and not with a mere ego. Further, the process of self-indication cannot be subsumed under the forces, whether from the outside or inside, which are presumed to play upon the individual to produce his behavior. Environmental pressures, external stimuli, organic drives, wishes, attitudes, feelings, ideas, and their like do not cover or explain the process of self-indication. The process of self-indication stands over against them in that the individual points out to himself and interprets the appearance or expression of such things, noting a given social demand that is made on him, recognizing a command, observing that he is hungry, realizing that he wishes to buy something, aware that he has a given feeling, conscious that he dislikes eating with someone he despises, or aware that he is thinking of doing some given thing. By virtue of indicating such things to himself, he places himself over against them

and is able to act back against them, accepting them, rejecting them, or transforming them in accordance with how he defines or interprets them. His behavior, accordingly, is not a result of such things as environmental pressures, stimuli, motives, attitudes, and ideas but arises instead from how he interprets and handles these things in the action which he is constructing. The process of self-indication by means of which human action is formed cannot be accounted for by factors which precede the act. The process of self-indication exists in its own right and must be accepted and studied as such. It is through this process that the human being constructs his conscious action.

Now Mead recognizes that the formation of action by the individual through a process of self-indication always takes place in a social context. Since this matter is so vital to an understanding of symbolic interaction it needs to be explained carefully. Fundamentally, group action takes the form of a fitting together of individual lines of action. Each individual aligns his action to the action of others by ascertaining what they are doing or what they intend to do—that is, by getting the meaning of their acts. For Mead, this is done by the individual "taking the role" of others—either the role of a specific person or the role of a group (Mead's "generalized other"). In taking such roles the individual seeks to ascertain the intention or direction of the acts of others. He forms and aligns his own action on the basis of such interpretation of the acts of others. This is the fundamental way in which group action takes place in human society.

The foregoing are the essential features, as I see them, in Mead's analysis of the bases of symbolic interaction. They presuppose the following: that human society is made up of individuals who have selves (that is, make indications to themselves); that individual action is a construction and not a release, being built up by the individual through noting and interpreting features of the situations in which he acts; that group or collective action consists of the aligning of individuals' interpreting or taking into account each other's actions. Since my purpose is to present and not to defend the position of symbolic interaction I shall not endeavor in this essay to advance support for the three premises which I have just indicated. I wish merely to say that the three premises can be easily

verified empirically. I know of no instance of human group action to which the three premises do not apply. The reader is challenged to find or think of a single instance which they do not fit. I wish now to point out that sociological views of human society are, in general, markedly at variance with the premises which I have indicated as underlying symbolic interaction. Indeed, the predominant number of such views, especially those in vogue at the present time, do not see or treat human society as symbolic interaction. Wedded, as they tend to be, to some form of sociological determinism, they adopt images of human society, of individuals in it, and of group action which do not square with the premises of symbolic interaction. I wish to say a few words about the major lines of variance.

Sociological thought rarely recognizes or treats human societies as composed of individuals who have selves. Instead, they assume human beings to be merely organisms with some kind of organization, responding to forces which play upon them. Generally, although not exclusively, these forces are lodged in the make-up of the society, as in the case of "social system," "social structure," "culture," "status position," "social role," "custom," "institution," "collective representation," "social situation," "social norm," and "values." The assumption is that the behavior of people as members of a *society* is an expression of the play on them of these kinds of factors or forces. This, of course, is the logical position which is necessarily taken when the scholar explains their behavior or phases of their behavior in terms of one or another of such social factors. The individuals who compose a human society are treated as the media through which such factors operate, and the social action of such individuals is regarded as an expression of such factors. This approach or point of view denies, or at least ignores, that human beings have selves—that they act by making indications to themselves. Incidentally, the "self" is not brought into the picture by introducing such items as organic drives, motives, attitudes, feelings, internalized social factors, or psychological components. Such psychological factors have the same status as the social factors mentioned: they are regarded as factors which play on the individual to produce his action. They do not constitute the process of self-indication. The process of self-indication stands over against them, just as it

stands over against the social factors which play on the human being. Practically all sociological conceptions of human society fail to recognize that the individuals who compose it have selves in the sense spoken of.

Correspondingly, such sociological conceptions do not regard the social actions of individuals in human society as being constructed by them through a process of interpretation. Instead, action is treated as a product of factors which play on and through individuals. The social behavior of people is not seen as built up by them through an interpretation of objects, situations, or the actions of others. If a place is given to "interpretation," the interpretation is regarded as merely an expression of other factors (such as motives) which precede the act, and accordingly disappears as a factor in its own right. Hence, the social action of people is treated as an outward flow or expression of forces playing on them rather than as acts which are built up by people through their interpretation of the situations in which they are placed.

These remarks suggest another significant line of difference between general sociological views and the position of symbolic interaction. These two sets of views differ in where they lodge social action. Under the perspective of symbolic interaction, social action is lodged in acting individuals who fit their respective lines of action to one another through a process of interpretation; group action is the collective action of such individuals. As opposed to this view, sociological conceptions generally lodge social action in the action of society or in some unit of society. Examples of this are legion. Let me cite a few. Some conceptions, in treating societies or human groups as "social systems," regard group action as an expression of a system, either in a state of balance or seeking to achieve balance. Or group action is conceived as an expression of the "functions" of a society or of a group. Or group action is regarded as the outward expression of elements lodged in society or the group, such as cultural demands, societal purposes, social values, or institutional stresses. These typical conceptions ignore or blot out a view of group life or of group action as consisting of the collective or concerted actions of individuals seeking to meet their life situations. If recognized at all, the efforts of people to develop collective acts to meet their situations are subsumed under the play of underlying

or transcending forces which are lodged in society or its parts. The individuals composing the society or the group become “carriers,” or media for the expression of such forces; and the interpretative behavior by means of which people form their actions is merely a coerced link in the play of such forces.

The indication of the foregoing lines of variance should help to put the position of symbolic interaction in better perspective. In the remaining discussion I wish to sketch somewhat more fully how human society appears in terms of symbolic interaction and to point out some methodological implications.

Human society is to be seen as consisting of acting people, and the life of the society is to be seen as consisting of their actions. The acting units may be separate individuals, collectivities whose members are acting together on a common quest, or organizations acting on behalf of a constituency. Respective examples are individual purchasers in a market, a play group or missionary band, and a business corporation or a national professional association. There is no empirically observable activity in a human society that does not spring from some acting unit. This banal statement needs to be stressed in light of the common practice of sociologists of reducing human society to social units that do not act—for example, social classes in modern society. Obviously, there are ways of viewing human society other than in terms of the acting units that compose it. I merely wish to point out that in respect to concrete or empirical activity human society must necessarily be seen in terms of the acting units that form it. I would add that any scheme of human society claiming to be a realistic analysis has to respect and be congruent with the empirical recognition that a human society consists of acting units.

Corresponding respect must be shown to the conditions under which such units act. One primary condition is that action takes place in and with regard to a situation. Whatever be the acting unit—an individual, a family, a school, a church, a business firm, a labor union, a legislature, and so on—any particular action is formed in the light of the situation in which it takes place. This leads to the recognition of a second major condition, namely, that the action is formed or constructed by interpreting the situation. The acting unit necessarily has to identify the things

which it has to take into account—tasks, opportunities, obstacles, means, demands, discomforts, dangers, and the like; it has to assess them in some fashion and it has to make decisions on the basis of the assessment. Such interpretative behavior may take place in the individual guiding his own action, in a collectivity of individuals acting in concert, or in “agents” acting on behalf of a group or organization. Group life consists of acting units developing acts to meet the situations in which they are placed.

Usually, most of the situations encountered by people in a given society are defined or “structured” by them in the same way. Through previous interaction they develop and acquire common understandings or definitions of how to act in this or that situation. These common definitions enable people to act alike. The common repetitive behavior of people in such situations should not mislead the student into believing that no process of interpretation is in play; on the contrary, even though fixed, the actions of the participating people are constructed by them through a process of interpretation. Since ready-made and commonly accepted definitions are at hand, little strain is placed on people in guiding and organizing their acts. However, many other situations may not be defined in a single way by the participating people. In this event, their lines of action do not fit together readily and collective action is blocked. Interpretations have to be developed and effective accommodation of the participants to one another has to be worked out. In the case of such “undefined” situations, it is necessary to trace and study the emerging process of definition which is brought into play.

Insofar as sociologists or students of human society are concerned with the behavior of acting units, the position of symbolic interaction requires the student to catch the process of interpretation through which they construct their actions. This process is not to be caught merely by turning to conditions which are antecedent to the process. Such antecedent conditions are helpful in understanding the process insofar as they enter into it, but as mentioned previously they do not constitute the process. Nor can one catch the process merely by inferring its nature from the overt action which is its product. To catch the process, the student must take the role of the acting unit whose behavior he is studying.

Since the interpretation is being made by the acting unit in terms of objects designated and appraised, meanings acquired, and decisions made, the process has to be seen from the standpoint of the acting unit. It is the recognition of this fact that makes the research work of such scholars as R. E. Park and W. I. Thomas so notable. To try to catch the interpretative process by remaining aloof as a so-called "objective" observer and refusing to take the role of the acting unit is to risk the worst kind of subjectivism—the objective observer is likely to fill in the process of interpretation with his own surmises in place of catching the process as it occurs in the experience of the acting unit which uses it.

By and large, of course, sociologists do not study human society in terms of its acting units. Instead, they are disposed to view human society in terms of structure or organization and to treat social action as an expression of such structure or organization. Thus, reliance is placed on such structural categories as social system, culture, norms, values, social stratification, status positions, social roles and institutional organization. These are used both to analyze human society and to account for social action within it. Other major interests of sociological scholars center around this focal theme of organization. One line of interest is to view organization in terms of the functions it is supposed to perform. Another line of interest is to study societal organization as a system seeking equilibrium; here the scholar endeavors to detect mechanisms which are indigenous to the system. Another line of interest is to identify forces which play upon organization to bring about changes in it; here the scholar endeavors, especially through comparative study, to isolate a relation between causative factors and structural results. These various lines of sociological perspective and interest, which are so strongly entrenched today, leap over the acting units of a society and bypass the interpretative process by which such acting units build up their actions.

These respective concerns with organization on one hand and with acting units on the other hand set the essential difference between conventional views of human society and the view of it implied in symbolic interaction. The latter view recognizes the presence of organization to human society and respects its importance. However, it sees and treats organization

differently. The difference is along two major lines. First, from the standpoint of symbolic interaction the organization of a human society is the framework inside of which social action takes place and is not the determinant of that action. Second, such organization and changes in it are the product of the activity of acting units and not of "forces" which leave such acting units out of account. Each of these two major lines of difference should be explained briefly in order to obtain a better understanding of how human society appears in terms of symbolic interaction.

From the standpoint of symbolic interaction, social organization is a framework inside of which acting units develop their actions. Structural features, such as "culture," "social systems," "social stratification," or "social roles," set conditions for their action but do not determine their action. People—that is, acting units—do not act toward culture, social structure or the like; they act toward situations. Social organization enters into action only to the extent to which it shapes situations in which people act, and to the extent to which it supplies fixed sets of symbols which people use in interpreting their situations. These two forms of influence of social organization are important. In the case of settled and stabilized societies, such as isolated primitive tribes and peasant communities, the influence is certain to be profound. In the case of human societies, particularly modern societies, in which streams of new situations arise and old situations become unstable, the influence of organization decreases. One should bear in mind that the most important element confronting an acting unit in situations is the actions of other acting units. In modern society, with its increasing criss-crossing of lines of action, it is common for situations to arise in which the actions of participants are not previously regularized and standardized. To this extent, existing social organization does not shape the situations. Correspondingly, the symbols or tools of interpretation used by acting units in such situations may vary and shift considerably. For these reasons, social action may go beyond, or depart from, existing organization in any of its structural dimensions. The organization of a human society is not to be identified with the process of interpretation used by its acting units; even though it affects that process, it does not embrace or cover the process.

Perhaps the most outstanding consequence of viewing human society as organization is to overlook the part played by acting units in social change. The conventional procedure of sociologists is (a) to identify human society (or some part of it) in terms of an established or organized form, (b) to identify some factor or condition of change playing upon the human society or the given part of it, and (c) to identify the new form assumed by the society following upon the play of the factor of change. Such observations permit the student to couch propositions to the effect that a given factor of change playing upon a given organized form results in a given new organized form. Examples ranging from crude to refined statements are legion, such as that an economic depression increases solidarity in the families of working-men or that industrialization replaces extended families by nuclear families. My concern here is not with the validity of such propositions but with the methodological position which they presuppose. Essentially, such propositions either ignore the role of the interpretive behavior of acting units in the given instance of change, or else regard the interpretive behavior as coerced by the factor of change. I wish to point out that any line of social change, since it involves change in human action, is necessarily mediated by interpretation on the part of the people caught up in the change—the change appears in the form of new situations in which people have to construct new forms of action. Also, in line with what has been said previously, interpretations of new situations are not predetermined by conditions antecedent to the situations but depend on what is taken into account and assessed in the actual situations in which behavior is

formed. Variations in interpretation may readily occur as different acting units cut out different objects in the situation, or give different weight to the objects which they note, or piece objects together in different patterns. In formulating propositions of social change, it would be wise to recognize that any given line of such change is mediated by acting units interpreting the situations with which they are confronted.

Students of human society will have to face the question of whether their preoccupation with categories of structure and organization can be squared with the interpretative process by means of which human beings, individually and collectively, act in human society. It is the discrepancy between the two which plagues such students in their efforts to attain scientific propositions of the sort achieved in the physical and biological sciences. It is this discrepancy, further, which is chiefly responsible for their difficulty in fitting hypothetical propositions to new arrays of empirical data. Efforts are made, of course, to overcome these shortcomings by devising new structural categories, by formulating new structural hypotheses, by developing more refined techniques of research, and even by formulating new methodological schemes of a structural character. These efforts continue to ignore or to explain away the interpretative process by which people act, individually and collectively, in society. The question remains whether human society or social action can be successfully analyzed by schemes which refuse to recognize human beings as they are, namely, as persons constructing individual and collective action through an interpretation of the situations which confront them.

30. SITUATED ACTIONS AND VOCABULARIES OF MOTIVE

C. Wright Mills (1916–1962) published prolifically during his short life, having died of a heart attack at 45. He is primarily known as a vocal critic of American sociology's dominant currents of theorizing and research methodologies in the post–World War II era as well as his analyses of class structure and power, reflected in particular in *White Collar* (1951) and *The Power Elite* (1956). However, his work—especially his early publications—reveal the impact of American pragmatism while also indicating an affinity between his thinking and currents of symbolic interactionism. This is evident in this widely cited article on motive that appeared *The American Sociological Review* when Mills was only 24. Building on Dewey (see his essay herein), Mead (see his essay herein), and Kenneth Burke, he writes that “motives are words” that rather than being seen as occurring subjectively ought to be viewed as standing “for anticipated situational consequences of questioned conduct”—justifications for words or actions for which an individual has been called to account.

The major reorientation of recent theory and observation in sociology of language emerged with the overthrow of the Wundtian notion that language has as its function the “expression” of prior elements within the individual. The postulate underlying modern study of language is the simple one that we must approach linguistic behavior, not by referring it to private states in individuals, but by observing its social function of coordinating diverse actions. Rather than expressing something which is prior and in the person, language is taken by other persons as an indicator of future actions.¹

Within this perspective there are suggestions concerning problems of motivation. It is the purpose of this paper to outline an analytic model for the explanation of motives which is based on a sociological theory of language and a sociological psychology.²

As over against the inferential conception of motives as subjective “springs” of action, motives may be considered as typical vocabularies having ascertainable functions in delimited societal situations. Human actors do vocalize and impute motives to themselves and to others. To

explain behavior by referring it to an inferred and abstract “motive” is one thing. To analyze the observable lingual mechanisms of motive imputation and avowal as they function in conduct is quite another. Rather than fixed elements “in” an individual, motives are the terms with which interpretation of conduct by *social actors* proceeds. This imputation and avowal of motives by actors are social phenomena to be explained. The differing reasons men give for their actions are not themselves without reasons.

First, we must demarcate the general conditions under which such motive imputation and avowal seem to occur.³ Next, we must give a characterization of motive in denotable terms and an explanatory paradigm of why certain motives are verbalized rather than others. Then, we must indicate mechanisms of the linkage of vocabularies of motive to systems of action. What we want is an analysis of the integrating, controlling, and specifying function a certain type of speech fulfils in socially situated actions.

The generic situation in which imputation and avowal of motives arise, involves, first, the *social* conduct

“Situating Actions and Vocabularies of Motive,” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 5, No. 6, pp. 904–913. ♦

or the (stated) programs of language creatures, i.e., programs and actions oriented with reference to the actions and talk of others; second, the avowal and imputation of motives is concomitant with the speech form known as the "question." Situations back of questions typically involve *alternative* or *unexpected* programs or actions which phases analytically denote "crises."⁴ The question is distinguished in that it usually elicits another *verbal* action, not a motor response. The question is an element in *conversation*. Conversation may be concerned with the factual features of a situation as they are seen or believed to be or it may seek to integrate and promote a set of diverse social actions with reference to the situation and its normative pattern of expectations. It is in this latter assent and dissent phase of conversation that persuasive and dissuasive speech and vocabulary arise. For men live in immediate acts of experience and their attentions are directed outside themselves until acts are in some way frustrated. It is then that awareness of self and of motive occur. The "question" is a lingual index of such conditions. The avowal and imputation of motives are features of such conversations as arise in "question" situations.

Motives are imputed or avowed as answers to questions interrupting acts or programs. Motives are words. Generically, to what do they refer? They do not denote any elements "in" individuals. They stand for anticipated situational consequences of questioned conduct. Intention or purpose (stated as a "program") is awareness of anticipated consequence; motives are names for consequential situations, and surrogates for actions leading to them. Behind questions are possible alternative actions with their terminal consequences. "Our introspective words for motives are rough, shorthand descriptions for certain typical patterns of discrepant and conflicting stimuli."⁵

The model of purposive conduct associated with Dewey's name may briefly be stated. Individuals confronted with "alternative acts" perform one or the other of them on the basis of the differential consequences which they anticipate. This nakedly utilitarian schema is inadequate because: (a) the "alternative acts" of *social* conduct "appear" most often in lingual form, as a question, stated by one's self or by another; (b) it is more adequate to say that individuals act in terms of anticipation of named consequences.

Among such names and in some technologically oriented lines of action there may appear such terms as "useful," "practical," "serviceable," etc., terms so "ultimate" to the pragmatists, and also to certain sectors of the American population in these delimited situations. However, there are other areas of population with different vocabularies of motives. The choice of lines of action is accompanied by representations, and selection among them, of their situational termini. Men discern situations with particular vocabularies, and it is in terms of some delimited vocabulary that they anticipate consequences of conduct.⁶ Stable vocabularies of motives link anticipated consequences and specific actions. There is no need to invoke "psychological" terms like "desire" or "wish" as explanatory, since they themselves must be explained socially.⁷ Anticipation is a subvocal or overt naming of terminal phases and/or social consequences of conduct. When an individual names consequences, he elicits the behaviors for which the name is a redintegrative cue. In a *societal* situation, implicit in the names for consequences is the social dimension of motives. Through such vocabularies, types of societal controls operate. Also, the terms in which the question is asked often will contain both alternatives: "Love or Duty?", "Business or Pleasure?" Institutionally different situations have different *vocabularies of motive* appropriate to their respective behaviors.

This sociological conception of motives as relatively stable lingual phases of delimited situations is quite consistent with Mead's program to approach conduct socially and from the outside. It keeps clearly in mind that "both motives and actions very often originate not from within but from the situation in which individuals find themselves . . ."⁸ It translates the question of "why"⁹ into a "how" that is answerable in terms of a situation and its typical vocabulary of motives, i.e., those which conventionally accompany that type situation and function as cues and justifications for normative actions in it.

It has been indicated that the question is usually an index to the avowal and imputation of motives. Max Weber defines motive as a complex of meaning, which appears to the actor himself or to the observer to be an adequate ground for his conduct.¹⁰ The aspect of motive which this conception grasps is

its intrinsically social character. A satisfactory or adequate motive is one that satisfies the questioners of an act or program, whether it be the other's or the actor's. As a word, *a motive tends to be one which is to the actor and to the other members of a situation an unquestioned answer to questions concerning social and lingual conduct.* A stable motive is an ultimate in justificatory conversation. The words which in a type situation will fulfil this function are circumscribed by the vocabulary of motives acceptable for such situations. Motives are accepted justifications for present, future, or past programs or acts.

To term them justification is *not* to deny their efficacy. Often anticipations of acceptable justifications will control conduct. ("If I did this, what could I say? What would they say?") Decisions may be, wholly or in part, delimited by answers to such queries.

A man may begin an act for one motive. In the course of it, he may adopt an ancillary motive. This does not mean that the second apologetic motive is inefficacious. The vocalized expectation of an act, its "reason," is not only a mediating condition of the act but it is a proximate and controlling condition for which the term "cause" is not inappropriate. It may strengthen the act of the actor. It may win new allies for his act.

When they appeal to others involved in one's act, motives are strategies of action. In many social actions, others must agree, tacitly or explicitly. Thus, acts often will be abandoned if no reason can be found that others will accept. Diplomacy in choice of motive often controls the diplomat. Diplomatic choice of motive is part of the attempt to motivate acts for other members in a situation. Such pronounced motives undo snarls and integrate social actions. Such diplomacy does not necessarily imply intentional lies. It merely indicates that an appropriate vocabulary of motives will be utilized—that they are conditions for certain lines of conduct.¹¹

When an agent vocalizes or imputes motives, he is not trying to describe his experienced social action. He is not merely stating "reasons." He is influencing others—and himself. Often he is finding new "reasons" which will mediate action. Thus, we need not treat an action as discrepant from "its" verbalization, for in many cases, the verbalization is a new act. In such cases, there is not a discrepancy between an act

and "its" verbalization, but a difference between two disparate actions, motor-social and verbal.¹² This additional (or "*ex post facto*") lingualization may involve appeal to a vocabulary of motives associated with a norm with which both members of the situation are in agreement. As such, it is an integrative factor in future phases of the original social action or in other acts. By resolving conflicts, motives are efficacious. Often, if "reasons" were not given, an act would not occur, nor would diverse actions be integrated. Motives are common grounds for mediated behaviors.

Perry summarily states the Freudian view of motives "as the view that the real motives of conduct are those which we are ashamed to admit either to ourselves or to others."¹³ One can cover the facts by merely saying that scruples (i.e., *moral* vocabularies of motive) are often efficacious and that men will alter and deter their acts in terms of such motives. One of the components of a "generalized other," as a mechanism of societal control, is vocabularies of acceptable motives. For example, a business man joins the Rotary Club and proclaims its public-spirited vocabulary.¹⁴ If this man cannot act out business conduct without so doing, it follows that this vocabulary of motives is an important factor in his behavior.¹⁵ The long acting out of a role, with its appropriate motives, will often induce a man to become what at first he merely sought to appear. Shifts in the vocabularies of motive that are utilized later by an individual disclose an important aspect of various integrations of his actions with concomitantly various groups.

The motives actually used in justifying or criticizing an act definitely link it to situations, integrate one man's action with another's, and line up conduct with norms. The societally sustained motive-surrogates of situations are both constraints and inducements. It is a hypothesis worthy and capable of test that typical vocabularies of motives for different situations are significant determinants of conduct. As lingual segments of social action, motives orient actions by enabling discrimination between their objects. Adjectives such as "good," "pleasant," and "bad" promote action or deter it. When they constitute components of a vocabulary of motives, i.e., are typical and relatively unquestioned accompaniments of typical situations, such words often function as directives and incentives by virtue of their

being the judgments of others as anticipated by the actor. In this sense motives are "social instruments, i.e., data by modifying which the agent will be able to influence [himself or others]."16 The "control" of others is not usually direct but rather through manipulation of a field of objects. We influence a man by naming his acts or imputing motives to them—or to "him." The motives accompanying institutions of war, e.g., are not "the causes" of war, but they do promote continued integrated participation, and they vary from one war to the next. Working vocabularies of motive have careers that are woven through changing institutional fabrics.

Genetically, motives are imputed by others before they are avowed by self. The mother controls the child: "Do not do that, it is greedy." Not only does the child learn what to do, what not to do, but he is given standardized motives which promote prescribed actions and dissuade those proscribed. Along with rules and norms of action for various situations, we learn vocabularies of motives appropriate to them. These are the motives we shall use, since they are a part of our language and components of our behavior.

The quest for "real motives" supposititiously set over against "mere rationalization" is often informed by a metaphysical view that the "real" motives are in some way biological. Accompanying such quests for something more real and back of rationalization is the view held by many sociologists that language is an external manifestation or concomitant of something prior, more genuine, and "deep" in the individual. "Real attitudes" versus "mere verbalization" or "opinion" implies that at best we only infer from his language what "really" is the individual's attitude or motive.

Now what *could we possibly* so infer? Of precisely *what* is verbalization symptomatic? We cannot *infer* physiological processes from lingual phenomena. All we can infer and empirically check17 is another verbalization of the agent's which we believe was orienting and controlling behavior at the time the act was performed. The only social items that can "lie deeper" are other lingual forms.18 The "Real Attitude or Motive" is not something different in kind from the verbalization or the "opinion." They turn out to be only relatively and temporally different.

The phrase "unconscious motive" is also unfortunate. All it can mean is that a motive is not explicitly

verbalized, but there is no need to infer unconscious motives from such situations and then posit them in individuals as elements. The phrase is informed by persistence of the unnecessary and unsubstantiated notion that "all action has a motive," and it is promoted by the observation of gaps in the relatively frequent verbalization in everyday situations. The facts to which this phrase is supposedly addressed are covered by the statements that men do not always explicitly articulate motives, and that *all* actions do not pivot around language. I have already indicated the conditions under which motives are typically avowed and imputed.

Within the perspective under consideration, the verbalized motive is not used as an index of something in the individual but *as a basis of inference for a typical vocabulary of motives of a situated action*. When we ask for the "real attitude" rather than the "opinion," for the "real motive" rather than the "rationalization," all we can meaningfully be asking for is the controlling speech form which was incipiently or overtly presented in the performed act or series of acts. There is no way to plumb behind verbalization into an individual and directly check our motive-mongering, but there is an empirical way in which we can guide and limit, in given historical situations, investigations of motives. That is by the construction of typical vocabularies of motives that are extant in types of situations and actions. Imputation of motives may be controlled by reference to the typical constellation of motives which are observed to be societally linked with classes of situated actions. Some of the "real" motives that have been imputed to actors were not even known to them. As I see it, motives are circumscribed by the vocabulary of the actor. The only source for a terminology of motives is the vocabularies of motives actually and usually verbalized by actors in specific situations.

Individualistic, sexual, hedonistic, and pecuniary vocabularies of motives are apparently now dominant in many sectors of twentieth-century urban America. Under such an ethos, verbalization of alternative conduct in these terms is least likely to be challenged among dominant groups. In this milieu, individuals are skeptical of Rockefeller's avowed religious motives for his business conduct because such motives are not *now* terms of the vocabulary conventionally and prominently accompanying situations of business enterprise.

A medieval monk writes that he gave food to a poor but pretty woman because it was "for the glory of God and the eternal salvation of his soul." Why do we tend to question him and impute sexual motives? Because sex is an influential and widespread motive in our society and time. Religious vocabularies of explanation and of motives are now on the wane. In a society in which religious motives have been debunked on rather wide scale, certain thinkers are skeptical of those who ubiquitously proclaim them. Religious motives have lapsed from selected portions of modern populations and other motives have become "ultimate" and operative. But from the monasteries of medieval Europe we have no evidence that religious vocabularies were not operative in many situations.

A labor leader says he performs a certain act because he wants to get higher standards of living for the workers. A business man says that this is rationalization, or a lie; that it is really because he wants more money for himself from the workers. A radical says a college professor will not engage in radical movements because he is afraid for his job, and besides, is a "reactionary." The college professor says it is because he just likes to find out how things work. What is reason for one man is rationalization for another. The variable is the accepted vocabulary of motives, the ultimates of discourse, of each man's dominant group about whose opinion he cares. *Determination of such groups, their location and character, would enable delimitation and methodological control of assignment of motives for specific acts.*

Stress on this idea will lead us to investigations of the compartmentalization of operative motives in personalities according to situation and the general types and conditions of vocabularies of motives in various types of societies. The motivational structures of individuals and the patterns of their purposes are relative to societal frames. We might, e.g., study motives along stratified or occupational lines. Max Weber has observed:

. . . that in a free society the motives which induce people to work vary with . . . different social classes. . . . There is normally a graduated scale of motives by which men from different social classes are driven to work. When a man changes ranks, he switches from one set of motives to another.¹⁹

The lingual ties which hold them together react on persons to constitute frameworks of disposition and motive. Recently, Talcott Parsons has indicated, by reference to differences in actions in the professions and in business, that one cannot leap from "economic analysis to ultimate motivations; the institutional patterns *always* constitute one crucial element of the problem."²⁰ It is my suggestion that we may analyze, index, and gauge this element by focusing upon those specific verbal appendages of variant institutionalized actions which have been referred to as vocabularies of motive.

In folk societies, the constellations of motives connected with various sectors of behavior would tend to be typically stable and remain associated only with their sector. In typically primary, sacred, and rural societies, the motives of persons would be regularly compartmentalized. Vocabularies of motives ordered to different situations stabilize and guide behavior and expectation of the reactions of others. In their appropriate situations, verbalized motives are not typically questioned.²¹ In secondary, secular, and urban structures, varying and competing vocabularies of motives operate coterminously and the situations to which they are appropriate are not clearly demarcated. Motives once unquestioned for defined situations are now questioned. Various motives can release similar acts in a given situation. Hence, variously situated persons are confused and guess which motive "activated" the person. Such questioning has resulted intellectually in such movements as psychoanalysis with its dogma of rationalization and its systematic motive-mongering. Such intellectual phenomena are underlaid by split and conflicting sections of an individuated society which is characterized by the existence of competing vocabularies of motive. Intricate constellations of motives, for example, are components of business enterprise in America. Such patterns have encroached on the old style vocabulary of the virtuous relation of men and women: duty, love, kindness. Among certain classes, the romantic, virtuous, and pecuniary motives are confused. The asking of the question: "Marriage for love or money?" is significant, for the pecuniary is now a constant and almost ubiquitous motive, a common denominator of many others.²²

Back of "mixed motives" and "motivational conflicts" are competing or discrepant situational patterns

and their respective vocabularies of motive. With shifting and interstitial situations, each of several alternatives may belong to disparate systems of action which have differing vocabularies of motives appropriate to them. Such conflicts manifest vocabulary patterns that have overlapped in a marginal individual and are not easily compartmentalized in clear-cut situations.

Besides giving promise of explaining an area of lingual and societal fact, a further advantage of this view of motives is that with it we should be able to give sociological accounts of other theories (terminologies) of motivation. This is a task for sociology of knowledge. Here I can refer only to a few theories. I have already referred to the Freudian terminology of motives. It is apparent that these motives are those of an upper bourgeois patriarchal group with strong sexual and individualistic orientation. When introspecting on the couches of Freud, patients used the only vocabulary of motives they knew; Freud got his hunch and guided further talk. Mittenzwey has dealt with similar points at length.²³ Widely diffused in a postwar epoch, psychoanalysis was never popular in France where control of sexual behavior is not puritanical.²⁴ To converted individuals who have become accustomed to the psychoanalytic terminology of motives, all others seem self-deceptive.²⁵

In like manner, to many believers in Marxism's terminology of power, struggle, and economic motives, all others, including Freud's, are due to hypocrisy or ignorance. An individual who has assimilated thoroughly only business congeries of motives will attempt to apply these motives to all situations, home and wife included. It should be noted that the business terminology of motives has its intellectual articulation, even as psychoanalysis and Marxism have.

It is significant that since the Socratic period many "theories of motivation" have been linked with ethical and religious terminologies. Motive is that in man which leads him to do good or evil. Under the aegis of religious institutions, men use vocabularies of moral motives: they call acts and programs "good" and "bad," and impute these qualities to the soul. Such lingual behavior is part of the process of social control. Institutional practices and their vocabularies of motive exercise control over delimited ranges of possible situations. One could make a typical catalog of religious motives

from widely read religious texts, and test its explanatory power in various denominations and sects.²⁶

In many situations of contemporary America, conduct is controlled and integrated by *hedonistic* language. For large population sectors in certain situations, pleasure and pain are now unquestioned motives. For given periods and societies, these situations should be empirically determined. Pleasure and pain should not be reified and imputed to human nature as underlying principles of all action. Note that hedonism as a psychological and an ethical doctrine gained impetus in the modern world at about the time when older moral-religious motives were being debunked and simply discarded by "middle class" thinkers. Back of the hedonistic terminology lay an emergent social pattern and a new vocabulary of motives. The shift of unchallenged motives which gripped the communities of Europe was climaxed when, in reconciliation, the older religious and the hedonistic terminologies were identified: the "good" is the "pleasant." The conditioning situation was similar in the Hellenistic world with the hedonism of the Cyrenaics and Epicureans.

What is needed is to take all these *terminologies* of motive and locate them as *vocabularies* of motive in historic epochs and specified situations. Motives are of no value apart from the delimited societal situations for which they are the appropriate vocabularies. They must be situated. At best, socially unlocated *terminologies* of motives represent unfinished attempts to block out social areas of motive imputation and avowal. Motives vary in content and character with historical epochs and societal structures.

Rather than interpreting actions and language as external manifestations of subjective and deeper lying elements in individuals, the research task is the locating of particular types of action within typical frames of normative actions and socially situated clusters of motive. There is no explanatory value in subsuming various vocabularies of motives under some terminology or list. Such procedure merely confuses the task of explaining specific cases. The languages of situations as given must be considered a valuable portion of the data to be interpreted and related to their conditions. To simplify these vocabularies of motive into a socially abstracted terminology is to destroy the legitimate use of motive in the explanation of social actions.

NOTES

1. See C. Wright Mills, "Bibliographical Appendices," Section I, 4: "Sociology of Language" in *Contemporary Social Theory*, Ed. by Barnes, Becker & Becker, New York, 1940.
2. See G. H. Mead, "Social Psychology as Counterpart of Physiological Psychology," *Psychol. Bul.*, VI: 401–408, 1909; Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, New York, 1940; L. V. Wiese-Howard Becker, *Systematic Sociology*, part I, New York, 1932; J. Dewey, "All psychology is either biological or social psychology," *Psychol. Rev.*, vol. 24: 276.
3. The importance of this initial task for research is clear. Most researches on the verbal level merely ask abstract questions of individuals, but if we can tentatively delimit the situations in which certain motives *may* be verbalized, we can use that delimitation in the construction of *situational* questions, and we shall be *testing* deductions from our theory.
4. On the "question" and "conversation," see G. A. DeLaguna, *Speech: Its Junction and Development*, 37 (and index), New Haven, 1927. For motives in crises, see J. M. Williams, *The Foundations of Social Science*, 435 ff, New York, 1920.
5. K. Burke, *Permanence and Change*, 45, New York, 1936. I am indebted to this book for several leads which are systematized into the present statement.
6. See such experiments as C. N. Rexroad's "Verbalization in Multiple Choice Reactions," *Psychol. Rev.*, Vol. 33: 458, 1926.
7. Cf. J. Dewey, "Theory of Valuation," *Int. Ency. of Unified Science*, New York, 1939.
8. K. Mannheim, *Man and Society*, 249, London, 1940.
9. Conventionally answerable by reference to "subjective factors" within individuals. R. M. MacIver, "The Modes of the Question Why," *J. of Soc. Phil.*, April, 1940. Cf. also his "The Imputation of Motives," *Amer. J. Sociol.*, July 1940.
10. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 5, Tübingen, 1922, "'Motiv' heisst ein Sinnzusammenhang, Welcher dem Handelnden selbst oder dem Beobachtenden als sinnhafter 'Grund' eines Verhaltens in dem Grade heissen, als die Beziehung seiner Bestandteile von uns nach den durchschnittlichen Denk- und Gefühlsgewohnheiten als typischer (wir pflegen in sagen: 'richtiger') Sinnzusammenhang bejaht Wird."
11. Of course, since motives are communicated, they may be lies; but, this must be proved. Verbalizations are not lies merely because they are socially efficacious. I am here concerned more with the social function of pronounced motives, than with the sincerity of those pronouncing them.
12. See F. Znaniecki, *Social Actions*, 30, New York, 1936.
13. *General Theory of Value*, 292–293, New York, 1936.
14. *Ibid.*, 392.
15. The "profits motive" of classical economics may be treated as an ideal-typical vocabulary of motives for delimited economic situations and behaviors. For late phases of monopolistic and regulated capitalism, this type requires modification; the profit and commercial vocabularies have acquired other ingredients. See N. R. Danielian's *AT & T*, New York, 1940, for a suggestive account of the *noneconomic* behavior and motives of business bureaucrats.
16. *Social Actions*, 73.
17. Of course, we could infer or interpret constructs posited in the individual, but these are not easily checked and they are not explanatory.
18. Which is not to say that, physiologically, there may not be cramps in the stomach wall or adrenalin in the blood, etc., but the character of the "relation" of such items to social action is quite moot.
19. Paraphrased by K. Mannheim, *op. cit.*, 316–317.

20. "The Motivation of Economic Activities," 67, in C. W. M. Hart, *Essays in Sociology*, Toronto, 1940.
21. Among the ethnologists, Ruth Benedict has come up to the edge of a genuinely sociological view of motivation. Her view remains vague because she has not seen clearly the identity of differing "motivations" in differing cultures with the varied extant and approved vocabularies of motive. "The intelligent understanding of the relation of the individual to his society . . . involves always the understanding of the types of human motivations and capacities capitalized in his society . . ." "Configurations of Culture in North America," *Amer. Anthropol.*, 25, Jan.–Mar. 1931; see also: *Patterns of Culture*, 242–243, Boston, 1935. She turns this observation into a quest for the unique "genius" of each culture and stops her research by words like "Apollonian." If she would attempt constructively to observe the vocabularies of motives which precipitate acts to perform, implement programs, and furnish approved motives for them in circumscribed situations, she would be better able to state precise problems and to answer them by further observation.
22. Also motives acceptably imputed and avowed for one system of action may be diffused into other domains and gradually come to be accepted by some as a comprehensive portrait of *the* motive of men. This happened in the case of the economic man and his motives.
23. Kuno Mittenzwey, "Zur Sociologie der psychoanalytischer Erkenntnis," in Max Scheler, ed. *Versuche zu einer Sociologie des Wissens*, 365–375, Munich, 1924.
24. This fact is interpreted by some as supporting Freudian theories. Nevertheless, it can be just as adequately grasped in the scheme here outlined.
25. See K. Burke's acute discussion of Freud, *op. cit.*, Part I.
26. Moral vocabularies deserve a special statement. Within the viewpoint herein outlined many snarls concerning "value-judgments," etc., can be cleared up.

31. PERFORMANCES

Erving Goffman (1922–1982) has been described as the most important American sociological theorist in the second half of the twentieth century. Moreover, because of the literary character of his writing, his influence has extended well beyond the discipline. As a dramaturgical sociologist, he is sometimes seen as a perceptive, if somewhat cynical, chronicler of the contemporary “human comedy.” In this selection from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman uses the metaphor of social life as theater in outlining his dramaturgical perspective. In a play, actors attempt to convey to an audience a particular impression of both the actor and the social scene. Through the use of scripted dialogue, gestures, props, costumes, and so on, actors create a new reality for the audience to consider. Goffman is concerned here with the ways in which actors convey a sense of personal identity. He begins with an intriguing discussion about whether the individual is taken in by her role performance, embracing it with sincerity or viewing it cynically, and then moves on to an analysis of the nature and function of the “front”—which he describes as the “expressive equipment” used to convince the other about the authenticity of the individual’s performance. Goffman concludes by observing that fronts—along with other theatrical props—tend to be embedded in our social worlds. Rather than social life being improvisational, much of it is predicated on routines that actors select when deemed appropriate.

BELIEF IN THE PART ONE IS PLAYING

When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be. In line with this, there is the popular view that the individual offers his performance and puts on his show “for the benefit of other people.” It will be convenient to begin a consideration of performances by turning the question around and looking at the individual’s own belief in the impression of reality that he attempts to engender in those among whom he finds himself.

At one extreme, one finds that the performer can be fully taken in by his own act; he can be sincerely convinced that the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality. When his audience is also convinced in this way about the show he puts on—and this seems to be the typical case—then for the moment at least, only the sociologist or the socially disgruntled will have any doubts about the “realness” of what is presented.

At the other extreme, we find that the performer may not be taken in at all by his own routine. This possibility is understandable, since no one is in quite as good an observational position to see through the act as the person who puts it on. Coupled with this, the performer may be moved to guide the conviction of his audience only as a means to other ends, having no ultimate concern in

“Performances” from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* by Erving Goffman. Copyright © 1973 by The Overlook Press. Pgs. 17–28. Reprinted with permission of The Overlook Press. ♦

the conception that they have of him or of the situation. When the individual has no belief in his own act and no ultimate concern with the beliefs of his audience, we may call him cynical, reserving the term “sincere” for individuals who believe in the impression fostered by their own performance. It should be understood that the cynic, with all his professional disinvolvement, may obtain unprofessional pleasures from his masquerade, experiencing a kind of gleeful spiritual aggression from the fact that he can toy at will with something his audience must take seriously.¹

It is not assumed, of course, that all cynical performers are interested in deluding their audiences for purposes of what is called “self-interest” or private gain. A cynical individual may delude his audience for what he considers to be their own good, or for the good of the community, etc. For illustrations of this we need not appeal to sadly enlightened showmen such as Marcus Aurelius or Hsun Tzu. We know that in service occupations practitioners who may otherwise be sincere are sometimes forced to delude their customers because their customers show such a heartfelt demand for it. Doctors who are led into giving placebos, filling station attendants who resignedly check and recheck tire pressures for anxious women motorists, shoe clerks who sell a shoe that fits but tell the customer it is the size she wants to hear—these are cynical performers whose audiences will not allow them to be sincere. Similarly, it seems that sympathetic patients in mental wards will sometimes feign bizarre symptoms so that student nurses will not be subjected to a disappointingly sane performance.² So also, when inferiors extend their most lavish reception for visiting superiors, the selfish desire to win favor may not be the chief motive; the inferior may be tactfully attempting to put the superior at ease by simulating the kind of world the superior is thought to take for granted.

I have suggested two extremes: an individual may be taken in by his own act or be cynical about it. These extremes are something a little more than just the ends of a continuum. Each provides the individual with a position which has its own particular securities and defenses, so there will be a tendency for those who have traveled close to one of these poles to complete the voyage. Starting with lack of inward belief in one’s

role, the individual may follow the natural movement described by Park:

It is probably no mere historical accident that the word *person*, in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather a recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role . . . It is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves.³

In a sense, and in so far as this mask represents the conception we have formed of ourselves—the role we are striving to live up to—this mask is our truer self, the self we would like to be. In the end, our conception of our role becomes second nature and an integral part of our personality. We come into the world as individuals, achieve character, and become persons.⁴

This may be illustrated from the community life of Shetland.⁵ For the last four or five years the island’s tourist hotel has been owned and operated by a married couple of crofter origins. From the beginning, the owners were forced to set aside their own conceptions as to how life ought to be led, displaying in the hotel a full round of middle-class services and amenities. Lately, however, it appears that the managers have become less cynical about the performance that they stage; they themselves are becoming middle class and more and more enamored of the selves their clients impute to them.

Another illustration may be found in the raw recruit who initially follows army etiquette in order to avoid physical punishment and eventually comes to follow the rules so that his organization will not be shamed and his officers and fellow soldiers will respect him.

As suggested, the cycle of disbelief-to-belief can be followed in the other direction, starting with conviction or insecure aspiration and ending in cynicism. Professions which the public holds in religious awe often allow their recruits to follow the cycle in this direction, and often recruits follow it in this direction not because of a slow realization that they are deluding their audience—for by ordinary social standards the claims they make may be quite valid—but because they can use this cynicism as a means of insulating their inner selves from contact with the audience. And we may even expect to find typical careers of faith, with the individual starting out with one kind of involvement in the performance he

is required to give, then moving back and forth several times between sincerity and cynicism before completing all the phases and turning-points of self-belief for a person of his station. Thus, students of medical schools suggest that idealistically oriented beginners in medical school typically lay aside their holy aspirations for a period of time. During the first two years the students find that their interest in medicine must be dropped that they may give all their time to the task of learning how to get through examinations. During the next two years they are too busy learning about diseases to show much concern for the persons who are diseased. It is only after their medical schooling has ended that their original ideals about medical service may be reasserted.⁶

While we can expect to find natural movement back and forth between cynicism and sincerity, still we must not rule out the kind of transitional point that can be sustained on the strength of a little self-illusion. We find that the individual may attempt to induce the audience to judge him and the situation in a particular way, and he may seek this judgment as an ultimate end in itself, and yet he may not completely believe that he deserves the valuation of self which he asks for or that the impression of reality which he fosters is valid. Another mixture of cynicism and belief is suggested in Kroeber's discussion of shamanism:

Next there is the old question of deception. Probably most shamans or medicine men, the world over, help along with sleight-of-hand in curing and especially in exhibitions of power. This sleight-of-hand is sometimes deliberate; in many cases awareness is perhaps not deeper than foreconscious. The attitude, whether there has been repression or not, seems to be as toward a pious fraud. Field ethnographers seem quite generally convinced that even shamans who know that they add fraud nevertheless also believe in their powers, and especially in those of other shamans: they consult them when they themselves or their children are ill.⁷

FRONT

I have been using the term "performance" to refer to all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence

on the observers. It will be convenient to label as "front" that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance. Front, then, is the expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance. For preliminary purposes, it will be convenient to distinguish and label what seem to be the standard parts of front.

First, there is the "setting," involving furniture, decor, physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it. A setting tends to stay put, geographically speaking, so that those who would use a particular setting as part of their performance cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place and must terminate their performance when they leave it. It is only in exceptional circumstances that the setting follows along with the performers; we see this in the funeral cortège, the civic parade, and the dream-like processions that kings and queens are made of. In the main, these exceptions seem to offer some kind of extra protection for performers who are, or who have momentarily become, highly sacred. These worthies are to be distinguished, of course, from quite profane performers of the peddler class who move their place of work between performances, often being forced to do so. In the matter of having one fixed place for one's setting, a ruler may be too sacred, a peddler too profane.

In thinking about the scenic aspects of front, we tend to think of the living room in a particular house and the small number of performers who can thoroughly identify themselves with it. We have given insufficient attention to assemblages of sign-equipment which large numbers of performers can call their own for short periods of time. It is characteristic of Western European countries, and no doubt a source of stability for them, that a large number of luxurious settings are available for hire to anyone of the right kind who can afford them. One illustration of this may be cited from a study of the higher civil servant in Britain:

The question how far the men who rise to the top in the Civil Service take on the 'tone' or 'color' of a class other than that to which they belong by birth is

delicate and difficult. The only definite information bearing on the question is the figures relating to the membership of the great London clubs. More than three-quarters of our high administrative officials belong to one or more clubs of high status and considerable luxury, where the entrance fee might be twenty guineas or more, and the annual subscription from twelve to twenty guineas. These institutions are of the upper class (not even of the upper-middle) in their premises, their equipment, the style of living practiced there, their whole atmosphere. Though many of the members would not be described as wealthy, only a wealthy man would unaided provide for himself and his family space, food and drink, service, and other amenities of life to the same standard as he will find at the Union, the Travellers', or the Reform.⁸

Another example can be found in the recent development of the medical profession where we find that it is increasingly important for a doctor to have access to the elaborate scientific stage provided by large hospitals, so that fewer and fewer doctors are able to feel that their setting is a place that they can lock up at night.⁹

If we take the term "setting" to refer to the scenic parts of expressive equipment, one may take the term "personal front" to refer to the other items of expressive equipment, the items that we most intimately identify with the performer himself and that we naturally expect will follow the performer wherever he goes. As part of personal front we may include: insignia of office or rank; clothing; sex, age, and racial characteristics; size and looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions; bodily gestures; and the like. Some of these vehicles for conveying signs, such as racial characteristics, are relatively fixed and over a span of time do not vary for the individual from one situation to another. On the other hand, some of these sign vehicles are relatively mobile or transitory, such as facial expression, and can vary during a performance from one moment to the next.

It is sometimes convenient to divide the stimuli which make up personal front into "appearance" and "manner," according to the function performed by the information that these stimuli convey. "Appearance" may be taken to refer to those stimuli which function at the time to tell us of the performer's social statuses. These stimuli also tell us of the individual's temporary

ritual state, that is, whether he is engaging in formal social activity, work, or informal recreation, whether or not he is celebrating a new phase in the season cycle or in his life-cycle. "Manner" may be taken to refer to those stimuli which function at the time to warn us of the interaction role the performer will expect to play in the oncoming situation. Thus a haughty, aggressive manner may give the impression that the performer expects to be the one who will initiate the verbal interaction and direct its course. A meek, apologetic manner may give the impression that the performer expects to follow the lead of others, or at least that he can be led to do so.

We often expect, of course, a confirming consistency between appearance and manner; we expect that the differences in social statuses among the interactants will be expressed in some way by congruent differences in the indications that are made of an expected interaction role. This type of coherence of front may be illustrated by the following description of the procession of a mandarin through a Chinese city:

Coming closely behind . . . the luxurious chair of the mandarin, carried by eight bearers, fills the vacant space in the street. He is mayor of the town, and for all practical purposes the supreme power in it. He is an ideal-looking official, for he is large and massive in appearance, whilst he has that stern and uncompromising look that is supposed to be necessary in any magistrate who would hope to keep his subjects in order. He has a stern and forbidding aspect, as though he were on his way to the execution ground to have some criminal decapitated. This is the kind of air that the mandarins put on when they appear in public. In the course of many years' experience, I have never once seen any of them, from the highest to the lowest, with a smile on his face or a look of sympathy for the people whilst he was being carried officially through the streets.¹⁰

But, of course, appearance and manner may tend to contradict each other, as when a performer who appears to be of higher estate than his audience acts in a manner that is unexpectedly equalitarian, or intimate, or apologetic, or when a performer dressed in the garments of a high position presents himself to an individual of even higher status.

In addition to the expected consistency between appearance and manner, we expect, of course, some coherence among setting, appearance, and manner.¹¹

Such coherence represents an ideal type that provides us with a means of stimulating our attention to and interest in exceptions. In this the student is assisted by the Journalist, for exceptions to expected consistency among setting, appearance, and manner provide the piquancy and glamor of many careers and the salable appeal of many magazine articles. For example, a *New Yorker* profile on Roger Stevens (the real estate agent who engineered the sale of the Empire State Building) comments on the startling fact that Stevens has a small house, a meager office, and no letter-head stationery.¹²

In order to explore more fully the relations among several parts of social front, it will be convenient to consider here a significant characteristic of the information conveyed by front, namely, its abstractness and generality.

However specialized and unique a routine is, its social front, with certain exceptions, will tend to claim facts that can be equally churned and asserted of other, somewhat different routines. For example, many service occupations offer their clients a performance that is illuminated with dramatic expressions of cleanliness, modernity, competence, and integrity. While in fact these abstract standards have a different significance in different occupational performances, the observer is encouraged to stress the abstract similarities. For the observer this is a wonderful, though sometimes disastrous, convenience. Instead of having to maintain a different pattern of expectation and responsive treatment for each slightly different performer and performance, he can place the situation in a broad category around which it is easy for him to mobilize his past experience and stereotypical thinking. Observers then need only be familiar with a small and hence manageable vocabulary of fronts, and know how to respond to them, in order to orient themselves in a wide variety of situations. Thus in London the current tendency for chimney sweeps¹³ and perfume clerics to wear white lab coats tends to provide the client with an understanding that the delicate tasks performed by these persons will be performed in what has become a standardized, clinical, confidential manner.

There are grounds for believing that the tendency for a large number of different acts to be presented from behind a small number of fronts is a natural development in social organization. Radcliffe-Brown has

suggested this in his claim that a "descriptive" kinship system which gives each person a unique place may work for very small communities, but, as the number of persons becomes large, clan segmentation becomes necessary as a means of providing a less complicated system of identifications and treatments.¹⁴ We see this tendency illustrated in factories, barracks, and other large social establishments. Those who organize these establishments find it impossible to provide a special cafeteria, special modes of payment, special vacation rights, and special sanitary facilities for every line and staff status category in the organization, and at the same time they feel that persons of dissimilar status ought not to be indiscriminately thrown together or classified together. As a compromise, the full range of diversity is cut at a few crucial points, and all those within a given bracket are allowed or obliged to maintain the same social front in certain situations.

In addition to the fact that different routines may employ the same front, it is to be noted that a given social front tends to become institutionalized in terms of the abstract stereotyped expectations to which it gives rise, and tends to take on a meaning and stability apart from the specific tasks which happen at the time to be performed in its name. The front becomes a "collective representation" and a fact in its own right.

When an actor takes on an established social role, usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it. Whether his acquisition of the role was primarily motivated by a desire to perform the given task or by a desire to maintain the corresponding front, the actor will find that he must do both.

Further, if the individual takes on a task that is not only new to him but also unestablished in the society, or if he attempts to change the light in which his task is viewed, he is likely to find that there are already several well-established fronts among which he must choose. Thus, when a task is given a new front we seldom find that the front it is given is itself new.

Since fronts tend to be selected, not created, we may expect trouble to arise when those who perform a given task are forced to select a suitable front for themselves from among several quite dissimilar ones. Thus in military organizations, tasks are always developing which (it is felt) require too much authority and skill

to be carried out behind the front maintained by one grade of personnel and too little authority and skill to be carried out behind the front maintained by the next grade in the hierarchy. Since there are relatively large jumps between grades, the task will come to "carry too much rank" or to carry too little.

NOTES

1. Perhaps the real crime of the confidence man is not that he takes money from his victims but that he robs all of us of the belief that middle-class manners and appearance can be sustained only by middle-class people. A disabused professional can be cynically hostile to the service relation his clients expect him to extend to them; the confidence man is in a position to hold the whole "legit" world in this contempt.
2. See Taxel, *op. cit.*, p. 4. Harry Stack Sullivan has suggested that the tact of institutionalized performers can operate in the other direction, resulting in a kind of noblesse-oblige sanity. See his "Socio-Psychiatric Research," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, X, pp. 987-88.
 "A study of 'social recoveries' in one of our large mental hospitals some years ago taught me that patients were often released from care because they had learned not to manifest symptoms to the enviroing persons; in other words, had integrated enough of the personal environment to realize the prejudice opposed to their delusions. It seemed almost as if they grew wise enough to be tolerant of the imbecility surrounding them, having finally discovered that it was stupidity and not malice. They could then secure satisfaction from contact with others, while discharging a part of their cravings by psychotic means."
3. Robert Ezra Park, *Race and Culture* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1950), p. 249.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 250.
5. Shetland Isle study.
6. H. S. Becker and Blanche Greer, "The Fate of Idealism in Medical School," *American Sociological Review*, 23, pp. 50-56.
7. A. L. Kroeber, *The Nature of Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), p. 311.
8. H. E. Dale, *The Higher Civil Service of Great Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 50.
9. David Solomon, "Career Contingencies of Chicago Physicians" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1952), p. 74.
10. J. Macgowan, *Sidelights on Chinese Life* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1908), p. 187.
11. Cf. Kenneth Burke's comments on the "scene-act-agent ratio," *A Grammar of Motives* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1945), pp. 6-9.
12. E. J. Kahn, Jr., "Closings and Openings," *The New Yorker*, February 13 and 20, 1954.
13. See Mervyn Jones, "White as a Sweep," *The New Statesman and Nation*, December 6, 1952.
14. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, "The Social Organization of Australian Tribes," *Oceania*, I, 440.

32. THE STRANGER: AN ESSAY IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Alfred Schutz (1899–1959) was an Austrian émigré scholar who, after fleeing his native land when the Nazis invaded, found a position at the New School for Social Research in New York City. From this institution, he became an important sociological proponent of phenomenological theory derived primarily from the work of the philosopher Edmund Husserl. In this essay, he offers a phenomenological account of the stranger as a sociological type nearly four decades after Simmel's essay on the same topic (see his essay herein). According to Schutz, people inhabit life-worlds characterized by a stock of common knowledge derived from shared perspectives that is produced by everyday interaction. The essay raises the question of what happens when such a taken-for-granted world view is called into question, examining the implications of the shock that strangers experience when entering a host society—the experience of strangeness due to close physical proximity with members of that society but social distance from them.

The present paper intends to study in terms of a general theory of interpretation the typical situation in which a stranger finds himself in his attempt to interpret the cultural pattern of a social group which he approaches and to orient himself within it. For our present purposes the term “stranger” shall mean an adult individual of our times and civilization who tries to be permanently accepted or at least tolerated by the group which he approaches. The outstanding example for the social situation under scrutiny is that of the immigrant, and the following analyses are, as a matter of convenience, worked out with this instance in view. But by no means is their validity restricted to this special case. The applicant for membership in a closed club, the prospective bridegroom who wants to be admitted to the girl's family, the farmer's son who enters college, the city-dweller who settles in a rural environment, the “selectee” who joins the Army, the family of the war worker who moves into a boom town—all are strangers according to the definition just given, although in

these cases the typical “crisis” that the immigrant undergoes may assume milder forms or even be entirely absent. Intentionally excluded, however, from the present investigation are certain cases the inclusion of which would require some qualifications in our statements: (a) the visitor or guest who intends to establish a merely transitory contact with the group; (b) children or primitives; and (c) relationships between individuals and groups of different levels of civilization, as in the case of the Huron brought to Europe—a pattern dear to some moralists of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, it is not the purpose of this paper to deal with the processes of social assimilation and social adjustment which are treated in an abundant and, for the most part, excellent literature¹ but rather with the situation of approaching which precedes every possible social adjustment and which includes its prerequisites.

As a convenient starting-point we shall investigate how the cultural pattern of group life presents itself to the common sense of a man who lives his everyday life

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within the group among his fellow-men. Following the customary terminology, we use the term "cultural pattern of group life" for designating all the peculiar valuations, institutions, and systems of orientation and guidance (such as the folkways, mores, laws, habits, customs, etiquette, fashions) which, in the common opinion of sociologists of our time, characterize—if not constitute—any social group at a given moment in its history. This cultural pattern, like any phenomenon of the social world, has a different aspect for the sociologist and for the man who acts and thinks within it.² The sociologist (as sociologist, not as a man among fellow-men which he remains in his private life) is the disinterested scientific onlooker of the social world. He is disinterested in that he intentionally refrains from participating in the network of plans, means-and-ends relations, motives and chances, hopes and fears, which the actor within the social world uses for interpreting his experiences of it; as a scientist he tries to observe, describe, and classify the social world as clearly as possible in well-ordered terms in accordance with the scientific ideals of coherence, consistency, and analytical consequence. The actor within the social world, however, experiences it primarily as a field of his actual and possible acts and only secondarily as an object of his thinking. In so far as he is interested in knowledge of his social world, he organizes this knowledge not in terms of a scientific system but in terms of relevance to his actions. He groups the world around himself (as the center) as a field of domination and is therefore especially interested in that segment which is within his actual or potential reach. He singles out those of its elements which may serve as means or ends for his "use and enjoyment,"³ for furthering his purposes, and for overcoming obstacles. His interest in these elements is of different degrees, and for this reason he does not aspire to become acquainted with all of them with equal thoroughness. What he wants is *graduated knowledge* of relevant elements, the degree of desired knowledge being correlated with their relevance. Put otherwise, the world seems to him at any given moment as stratified in different layers of relevance, each of them requiring a different degree of knowledge. To illustrate these strata of relevance we may—borrowing the term from cartography—speak of "isohypses" or "hypsographical contour lines of

relevance," trying to suggest by this metaphor that we could show the distribution of the interests of an individual at a given moment with respect both to their intensity and to their scope by connecting elements of equal relevance to his acts, just as the cartographer connects points of equal height by contour lines in order to reproduce adequately the shape of a mountain. The graphical representation of these "contour lines of relevance" would not show them as a single closed field but rather as numerous areas scattered over the map, each of different size and shape. Distinguishing with William James⁴ two kinds of knowledge, namely, "*knowledge of acquaintance*" and "*knowledge about*," we may say that, within the field covered by the contour lines of relevance, there are centers of explicit knowledge of what is aimed at; they are surrounded by a halo knowledge about what seems to be sufficient; next comes a region in which it will do merely "to put one's trust"; the adjoining foothills are the home of unwarranted hopes and assumptions; between these areas, however, lie zones of complete ignorance.

We do not want to overcharge this image. Its chief purpose has been to illustrate that the knowledge of the man who acts and thinks within the world of his daily life is not homogeneous; it is (1) incoherent, (2) only partially clear, and (3) not at all free from contradictions.

1. It is incoherent because the individual's interests which determine the relevance of the objects selected for further inquiry are themselves not integrated into a coherent system. They are only partially organized under plans of any kind, such as plans of life, plans of work and leisure, plans for every social role assumed. But the hierarchy of these plans changes with the situation and with the growth of the personality; interests are shifted continually and entail an uninterrupted transformation of the shape and density of the relevance lines. Not only the selection of the objects of curiosity but also the degree of knowledge aimed at changes.

2. Man in his daily life is only partially—and we dare say exceptionally—interested in the clarity of his knowledge, i.e., in full insight into the relations between the elements of his world and the general principles ruling those relations. He is satisfied that a well-functioning telephone service is available to him and, normally, does not ask how the apparatus

functions in detail and what laws of physics make this functioning possible. He buys merchandise in the store, not knowing how it is produced, and pays with money, although he has only a vague idea what money really is. He takes it for granted that his fellow-man will understand his thought if expressed in plain language and will answer accordingly, without wondering how this miraculous performance may be explained. Furthermore, he does not search for the truth and does not quest for certainty. All he wants is information on likelihood and insight into the chances or risks which the situation at hand entails for the outcome of his actions. That the subway will run tomorrow as usual is for him almost of the same order of likelihood as that the sun will rise. If by reason of a special interest he needs more explicit knowledge on a topic, a benign modern civilization holds ready for him a chain of information desks and reference libraries.

3. His knowledge, finally, is not a consistent one. At the same time he may consider statements as equally valid which in fact are incompatible with one another. As a father, a citizen, an employee, and a member of his church he may have the most different and the least congruent opinions on moral, political, or economic matters. This inconsistency does not necessarily originate in a logical fallacy. Men's thought is just spread over subject matters located within different and differently relevant levels, and they are not aware of the modifications they would have to make in passing from one level to another. This and similar problems would have to be explored by a logic of everyday thinking, postulated but not attained by all the great logicians from Leibnitz to Husserl and Dewey. Up to now the science of logic has primarily dealt with the logic of science.

The system of knowledge thus acquired—incoherent, inconsistent, and only partially clear, as it is—takes on for the members of the in-group the appearance of a *sufficient* coherence, clarity, and consistency to give anybody a reasonable chance of understanding and of being understood. Any member born or reared within the group accepts the ready-made standardized scheme of the cultural pattern handed down to him by ancestors, teachers, and authorities as an unquestioned and unquestionable guide in all the situations which normally occur within the social

world. The knowledge correlated to the cultural pattern carries its evidence in itself—or, rather, it is taken for granted in the absence of evidence to the contrary. It is a knowledge of trustworthy *recipes* for interpreting the social world and for handling things and men in order to obtain the best results in every situation with a minimum of effort by avoiding undesirable consequences. The recipe works, on the one hand, as a precept for actions and thus serves as a scheme of expression: whoever wants to obtain a certain result has to proceed as indicated by the recipe provided for this purpose. On the other hand, the recipe serves as a scheme of interpretation: whoever proceeds as indicated by a specific recipe is supposed to intend the correlated result. Thus it is the function of the cultural pattern to eliminate troublesome inquiries by offering readymade directions for use, to replace truth hard to attain by comfortable truisms, and to substitute the self-explanatory for the questionable.

This "thinking as usual," as we may call it, corresponds to Max Scheler's idea of the "relatively natural conception of the world" (*relativ natürliche Weltanschauung*);⁵ it includes the "of-course" assumptions relevant to a particular social group which Robert S. Lynd describes in such a masterly way—together with their inherent contradictions and ambivalence—as the "Middletown-spirit."⁶ Thinking as usual may be maintained as long as some basic assumptions hold true, namely: (1) that life and especially social life will continue to be the same as it has been so far, that is to say, that the same problems requiring the same solutions will recur and that, therefore, our former experiences will suffice for mastering future situations; (2) that we may rely on the knowledge handed down to us by parents, teachers, governments, traditions, habits, etc., even if we do not understand their origin and their real meaning; (3) that in the ordinary course of affairs it is sufficient to know something *about* the general type or style of events we may encounter in our life-world in order to manage or control them; and (4) that neither the systems of recipes as schemes of interpretation and expression nor the underlying basic assumptions just mentioned are our private affair, but that they are likewise accepted and applied by our fellow-men.

If only one of these assumptions ceases to stand the test, thinking as usual becomes unworkable. Then

a "crisis" arises which, according to W. I. Thomas' famous definition, "interrupts the flow of habit and gives rise to changed conditions of consciousness and practice"; or, as we may say, it overthrows precipitously the actual system of relevances. The cultural pattern no longer functions as a system of tested recipes at hand; it reveals that its applicability is restricted to a specific historical situation.

Yet the stranger, by reason of his personal crisis, does not share the above-mentioned basic assumptions. He becomes essentially the man who has to place in question nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable to the members of the approached group.

To him the cultural pattern of the approached group does not have the authority of a tested system of recipes, and this, if for no other reason, because he does not partake in the vivid historical tradition by which it has been formed. To be sure, from the stranger's point of view, too, the culture of the approached group has its peculiar history, and this history is even accessible to him. But it has never become an integral part of his biography, as did the history of his home group. Only the ways in which his fathers and grandfathers lived become for everyone elements of his own way of life. Graves and reminiscences can neither be transferred nor conquered. The stranger, therefore, approaches the other group as a newcomer in the true meaning of the term. At best he may be willing and able to share the present and the future with the approached group in vivid and immediate experience; under all circumstances, however, he remains excluded from such experiences of its past. Seen from the point of view of the approached group, he is a man without a history.

To the stranger the cultural pattern of his home group continues to be the outcome of an unbroken historical development and an element of his personal biography which for this very reason has been and still is the unquestioned scheme of reference for his "relatively natural conception of the world." As a matter of course, therefore, the stranger starts to interpret his new social environment in terms of his thinking as usual. Within the scheme of reference brought from his home group, however, he finds a ready-made idea of the pattern supposedly valid within the approached group—an idea which necessarily will soon prove inadequate.⁷

First, the idea of the cultural pattern of the approached group which the stranger finds within the interpretive scheme of his home group has originated in the attitude of a disinterested observer. The approaching stranger, however, is about to transform himself from an unconcerned onlooker into a would-be member of the approached group. The cultural pattern of the approached group, then, is no longer a subject matter of his thought but a segment of the world which has to be dominated by actions. Consequently, its position within the stranger's system of relevance changes decisively, and this means, as we have seen, that another type of knowledge is required for its interpretation. Jumping from the stalls to the stage, so to speak, the former onlooker becomes a member of the cast, enters as a partner into social relations with his co-actors, and participates henceforth in the action in progress.

Second, the new cultural pattern acquires an environmental character. Its remoteness changes into proximity; its vacant frames become occupied by vivid experiences; its anonymous contents turn into definite social situations; its ready-made typologies disintegrate. In other words, the level of environmental experience of social objects is incongruous with the level of mere beliefs about unapproached objects; by passing from the latter to the former, any concept originating in the level of departure becomes necessarily inadequate if applied to the new level without having been restated in its terms.

Third, the ready-made picture of the foreign group subsisting within the stranger's home-group proves its inadequacy for the approaching stranger for the mere reason that it has not been formed with the aim of provoking a response from or a reaction of the members of the foreign group. The knowledge which it offers serves merely as a handy scheme for interpreting the foreign group and not as a guide for interaction between the two groups. Its validity is primarily based on the consensus of those members of the home group who do not intend to establish a direct social relationship with members of the foreign group. (Those who intend to do so are in a situation analogous to that of the approaching stranger.) Consequently, the scheme of interpretation refers to the members of the foreign group merely as objects of this interpretation, but not beyond it, as addressees of possible acts emanating from the

outcome of the interpretive procedure and not as subjects of anticipated reactions toward those acts. Hence, this kind of knowledge is, so to speak, insulated; it can be neither verified nor falsified by responses of the members of the foreign group. The latter, therefore, consider this knowledge—by a kind of “looking-glass” effect⁸—as both irresponsive and irresponsible and complain of its prejudices, bias, and misunderstandings. The approaching stranger, however, becomes aware of the fact that an important element of his “thinking as usual,” namely, his ideas of the foreign group, its cultural pattern, and its way of life, do not stand the test of vivid experience and social interaction.

The discovery that things in his new surroundings look quite different from what he expected them to be at home is frequently the first shock to the stranger’s confidence in the validity of his habitual “thinking as usual.” Not only the picture which the stranger has brought along of the cultural pattern of the approached group but the whole hitherto unquestioned scheme of interpretation current within the home group becomes invalidated. It cannot be used as a scheme of orientation within the new social surroundings. For the members of the approached group *their* cultural pattern fulfils the functions of such a scheme. But the approaching stranger can neither use it simply as it is nor establish a general formula of transformation between both cultural patterns permitting him, so to speak, to convert all the co-ordinates within one scheme of orientation into those valid within the other—and this for the following reasons.

First, any scheme of orientation presupposes that everyone who uses it looks at the surrounding world as grouped around himself who stands at its center. He who wants to use a map successfully has first of all to know his standpoint in two respects: its location on the ground and its representation on the map. Applied to the social world this means that only members of the in-group, having a definite status in its hierarchy and also being aware of it, can use its cultural pattern as a natural and trustworthy scheme of orientation. The stranger, however, has to face the fact that he lacks any status as a member of the social group he is about to join and is therefore unable to get a starting-point to take his bearings. He finds himself a border case outside the territory covered by the scheme of orientation current within the group. He is, therefore, no

longer permitted to consider himself as the center of his social environment, and this fact causes again a dislocation of his contour lines of relevance.

Second, the cultural pattern and its recipes represent only for the members of the in-group a unit of coinciding schemes of interpretation as well as of expression. For the outsider, however, this seeming unity falls to pieces. The approaching stranger has to “translate” its terms into terms of the cultural pattern of his home group, provided that, within the latter, interpretive equivalents exist at all. If they exist, the translated terms may be understood and remembered; they can be recognized by recurrence; they are at hand but not in hand. Yet, even then, it is obvious that the stranger cannot assume that his interpretation of the new cultural pattern coincides with that current with the members of the in-group. On the contrary, he has to reckon with fundamental discrepancies in seeing things and handling situations.

Only after having thus collected a certain knowledge of the interpretive function of the new cultural pattern may the stranger start to adopt it as the scheme of his own expression. The difference between the two stages of knowledge is familiar to any student of a foreign language and has received the full attention of psychologists dealing with the theory of learning. It is the difference between the passive understanding of a language and its active mastering as a means for realizing one’s own acts and thoughts. As a matter of convenience we want to keep to this example in order to make clear some of the limits set to the stranger’s attempt at conquering the foreign pattern as a scheme of expression, bearing in mind, however, that the following remarks could easily be adapted with appropriate modifications to other categories of the cultural pattern such as mores, laws, folkways, fashions, etc.

Language as a scheme of interpretation and expression does not merely consist of the linguistic symbols catalogued in the dictionary and of the syntactical rules enumerated in an ideal grammar. The former are translatable into other languages; the latter are understandable by referring them to corresponding or deviating rules of the unquestioned mother-tongue.⁹ However, several other factors supervene.

1. Every word and every sentence is, to borrow again a term of William James, surrounded by “fringes”

connecting them, on the one hand, with past and future elements of the universe of discourse to which they pertain and surrounding them, on the other hand, with a halo of emotional values and irrational implications which themselves remain ineffable. The fringes are the stuff poetry is made of; they are capable of being set to music but they are not translatable.

2. There are in any language terms with several connotations. They, too, are noted in the dictionary. But, besides these standardized connotations, every element of the speech acquires its special secondary meaning derived from the context or the social environment within which it is used and, in addition, gets a special tinge from the actual occasion in which it is employed.

3. Idioms, technical terms, jargons, and dialects, whose use remains restricted to specific social groups, exist in every language, and their significance can be learned by an outsider too. But, in addition, every social group, be it ever so small (if not every individual), has its own private code, understandable only by those who have participated in the common past experiences in which it took rise or in the tradition connected with them.

4. As Vossler has shown, the whole history of the linguistic group is mirrored in its way of saying things.¹⁰ All the other elements of group life enter into it—above all, its literature. The erudite stranger, for example, approaching an English-speaking country is heavily handicapped if he has not read the Bible and Shakespeare in the English language, even if he grew up with translations of those books in his mother-tongue.

All the above-mentioned features are accessible only to the members of the in-group. They all pertain to the scheme of expression. They are not teachable and cannot be learned in the same way as, for example, the vocabulary. In order to command a language freely as a scheme of expression, one must have written love letters in it; one has to know how to pray and curse in it and how to say things with every shade appropriate to the addressee and to the situation. Only members of the in-group have the scheme of expression as a genuine one in hand and command it freely within their thinking as usual.

Applying the result to the total of the cultural pattern of group life, we may say that the member of

the in-group looks in one single glance through the normal social situations occurring to him and that he catches immediately the ready-made recipe appropriate to its solution. In those situations his acting shows all the marks of habituality, automatism, and half-consciousness. This is possible because the cultural pattern provides by its recipes typical solutions for typical problems available for typical actors. In other words, the chance of obtaining the desired standardized result by applying a standardized recipe is an objective one; that is open to everyone who conducts himself like the anonymous type required by the recipe. Therefore, the actor who follows a recipe does not have to check whether this objective chance coincides with a subjective chance, that is, a chance open to him, the individual, by reason of his personal circumstances and faculties which subsists independently of the question whether other people in similar situations could or could not act in the same way with the same likelihood. Even more, it can be stated that the objective chances for the efficiency of a recipe are the greater, the fewer deviations from the anonymous typified behavior occur, and this holds especially for recipes designed for social interaction. This kind of recipe, if it is to work, presupposes that any partner expects the other to act or to react typically, provided that the actor himself acts typically. He who wants to travel by railroad has to behave in that typical way which the type "railroad agent" may reasonably expect as the typical conduct of the type "passenger," and vice versa. Neither party examines the subjective chances involved. The scheme, being designed for everyone's use, need not be tested for its fitness for the peculiar individual who employs it.

For those who have grown up within the cultural pattern, not only the recipes and their efficiency chance but also the typical and anonymous attitudes required by them are an unquestioned "matter of course" which gives them both security and assurance. In other words, these attitudes by their very anonymity and typicality are placed not within the actor's stratum of relevance which requires explicit knowledge of but in the region of mere acquaintance in which it will do to put one's trust. This interrelation between objective chance, typicality, anonymity, and relevance seems to be rather important.¹¹

For the approaching stranger, however, the pattern of the approached group does not guarantee an objective chance for success but rather a pure subjective likelihood which has to be checked step by step, that is, he has to make sure that the solutions suggested by the new scheme will also produce the desired effect for him in his special position as outsider and newcomer who has not brought within his grasp the whole system of the cultural pattern but who is rather puzzled by its inconsistency, incoherence, and lack of clarity. He has, first of all, to use the term of W. I. Thomas, to *define* the situation. Therefore, he cannot stop at an approximate acquaintance with the new pattern, trusting in his vague knowledge *about* its general style and structure but needs an explicit knowledge of its elements, inquiring not only into their *that* but into their *why*. Consequently, the shape of his contour lines of relevance by necessity differs radically from those of a member of the in-group as to situations, recipes, means, ends, social partners, etc. Keeping in mind the above-mentioned interrelationship between relevance, on the one hand, and typicality and anonymity, on the other, it follows that he uses another yardstick for anonymity and typicality of social acts than the members of the in-group. For to the stranger the observed actors within the approached group are not—as for their co-actors—of a certain presupposed anonymity, namely, mere performers of typical functions, but individuals. On the other hand, he is inclined to take mere individual traits as typical ones. Thus he constructs a social world of pseudo-anonymity, pseudo-intimacy, and pseudo-typicality. Therefore, he cannot integrate the personal types constructed by him into a coherent picture of the approached group and cannot rely on his expectation of their response. And even less can the stranger himself adopt those typical and anonymous attitudes which a member of the in-group is entitled to expect from a partner in a typical situation. Hence the stranger's lack of feeling for distance, his oscillating between remoteness and intimacy, his hesitation and uncertainty, and his distrust in every matter which seems to be so simple and uncomplicated to those who rely on the efficiency of unquestioned recipes which have just to be followed but not understood.

In other words, the cultural pattern of the approached group is to the stranger not a shelter but a

field of adventure, not a matter of course but a questionable topic of investigation, not an instrument for disentangling problematic situations but a problematic situation itself and one hard to master.

These facts explain two basic traits of the stranger's attitude toward the group to which nearly all sociological writers dealing with this topic have rendered special attention, namely, (1) the stranger's objectivity and (2) his doubtful loyalty.

1. The stranger's objectivity cannot be sufficiently explained by his critical attitude. To be sure, he is not bound to worship the "idols of the tribe" and has a vivid feeling for the incoherence and inconsistency of the approached cultural pattern. But this attitude originates far less in his propensity to judge the newly approached group by the standards brought from home than in his need to acquire full knowledge of the elements of the approached cultural pattern and to examine for this purpose with care and precision what seems self-explanatory to the in-group. The deeper reason for his objectivity, however, lies in his own bitter experience of the limits of the "thinking as usual," which has taught him that a man may lose his status, his rules of guidance, and even his history and that the normal way of life is always far less guaranteed than it seems. Therefore, the stranger discerns, frequently with a grievous clear-sightedness, the rising of a crisis which may menace the whole foundation of the "relatively natural conception of the world," while all those symptoms pass unnoticed by the members of the in-group, who rely on the continuance of their customary way of life.

2. The doubtful loyalty of the stranger is unfortunately very frequently more than a prejudice on the part of the approached group. This is especially true in cases in which the stranger proves unwilling or unable to substitute the new cultural pattern entirely for that of the home group. Then the stranger remains what Park and Stonequist have aptly called a "marginal man," a cultural hybrid on the verge of two different patterns of group life, not knowing to which of them he belongs. But very frequently the reproach of doubtful loyalty originates in the astonishment of the members of the in-group that the stranger does not accept the total of its cultural pattern as the natural and appropriate way of life and as the best of all possible solutions

of any problem. The stranger is called ungrateful, since he refuses to acknowledge that the cultural pattern offered to him grants him shelter and protection. But these people do not understand that the stranger in the state of transition does not consider this pattern as a protecting shelter at all but as a labyrinth in which he has lost all sense of his bearings.

As stated before, we have intentionally restricted our topic to the specific attitude of the approaching stranger which precedes any social adjustment and refrained from investigating the process of social assimilation itself. One single remark concerning the latter may be permitted. Strangeness and familiarity are not limited to the social field but are general categories of our interpretation of the world. If we encounter in our experience something previously unknown and which therefore stands out of the ordinary order of our knowledge, we begin a process of inquiry. We first define the new fact; we try to catch its meaning; we then transform step by step our general scheme of interpretation of the world in such a way that the

strange fact and its meaning becomes compatible and consistent with all the other facts of our experience and their meanings. If we succeed in this endeavor, then that which formerly was a strange fact and a puzzling problem to our mind is transformed into an additional element of our warranted knowledge. We have enlarged and adjusted our stock of experiences.

What is commonly called the process of social adjustment which the newcomer has to undergo is but a special case of this general principle. The adaptation of the newcomer to the in-group which at first seemed to be strange and unfamiliar to him is a continuous process of inquiry into the cultural pattern of the approached group. If this process of inquiry succeeds, then this pattern and its elements will become to the newcomer a matter of course, an unquestionable way of life, a shelter, and a protection. But then the stranger is no stranger any more, and his specific problems have been solved.

NEW YORK CITY

NOTES

1. Instead of mentioning individual outstanding contributions by American writers, such as W. G. Sumner, W. I. Thomas, Florian Znaniecki, R. E. Park, H. A. Miller, E. V. Stonequist, E. S. Bogardus, and Kimball Young, and by German authors, especially Georg Simmel and Robert Michels, we refer to the valuable monograph by Margaret Mary Wood, *The Stranger: A Study in Social Relationship* (New York, 1934), and the bibliography quoted therein.
2. This insight seems to be the most important contribution of Max Weber's methodological writings to the problems of social science. Cf. the present writer's *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt* (Vienna, 1932).
3. John Dewey, *Logic, the Theory of Inquiry* (New York, 1938), chap. iv.
4. For the distinction of these two kinds of knowledge cf. William James, *Psychology* (New York, 1890), I, 221–22.
5. Max Scheler, "Probleme einer Soziologie des Wissens," *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft* (Leipzig, 1926), pp. 58 ff.; cf. Howard Becker and Hellmuth Otto Dahlke, "Max Scheler's Sociology of Knowledge," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, II (1942), 310–22, esp. p. 315.
6. Robert S. Lynd, *Middletown in Transition* (New York, 1937), chap. xii, and *Knowledge for What?* (Princeton, 1939), pp. 38–63.
7. As one account showing how the American cultural pattern depicts itself as an "unquestionable" element within the scheme of interpretation of European intellectuals we refer to Martin Gumpert's humorous description in his book, *First Papers* (New York, 1941), pp. 8–9. Cf. also books like Jules Romains, *Visite chez les Américains* (Paris, 1930) and Jean Prevost Usonie, *Esquisse de la civilisation américaine* (Paris, 1939), pp. 245–66.

8. In using this term, we allude to Cooley's well-known theory of the reflected or looking-glass self (Charles H. Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order* [rev. ed.; New York, 1922], p. 184).
9. Therefore, the learning of a foreign language reveals to the student frequently for the first time the grammar rules of his mother-tongue which he has followed so far as "the most natural thing in the world," namely, as recipes.
10. Karl Vossler, *Geist und Kultur in der Sprache* (Heidelberg, 1925), pp. 117 ff.
11. It could be referred to a general principle of the theory of relevance, but this would surpass the frame of the present paper. The only point for which there is space to contend is that all the obstacles which the stranger meets in his attempt at interpreting the approached group arise from the incongruence of the contour lines of the mutual relevance systems and, consequently, from the distortion the stranger's system undergoes within the new surrounding. But any social relationship, and especially any establishment of new social contacts, even between individuals, involves analogous phenomena, although they do not necessarily lead to a crisis.

33. STUDIES OF THE ROUTINE GROUNDS OF EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES

Harold Garfinkel (1929–2011) coined the term “ethnomethodology” and offered its initial portrayal as a distinctive theory school in his influential 1967 book, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. The term refers to the methods people use to make sense of and find ways to act in the routine situations of their everyday lives. As Garfinkel notes, he was significantly influenced by Alfred Schutz, so it is not surprising that phenomenology and ethnomethodology bear a family resemblance. In his own unique way, and with his own distinctive terminology, Garfinkel urges sociologists to refrain from imposing their interpretive frames to explain the subjects of their empirical research. Instead, as an alternative he calls for attentiveness to the structured ways in which the subjects themselves use what is typically referred to as “common sense.” In this particular excerpt, he stresses the importance of attempting to make visible those routine aspects of everyday life that are generally taken for granted, and thus are not really noticed.

THE PROBLEM

For Kant the moral order “within” was an awesome mystery; for sociologists the moral order “without” is a technical mystery. From the point of view of sociological theory the moral order consists of the rule governed activities of everyday life. A society’s members encounter and know the moral order as perceivedly normal courses of action—familiar scenes of everyday affairs, the world of daily life known in common with others and with others taken for granted.

They refer to this world as the “natural facts of life” which for members, are through and through moral facts of life. For members not only are matters so about familiar scenes, but they are so because it is morally right or wrong that they are so. Familiar scenes of everyday activities, treated by members as the “natural facts of life,” are massive facts of the members’ daily existence both as a real world and as the product of activities in a real world. They furnish the “fix,” the

“this is it” to which the waking state returns one, and are the points of departure and return for every modification of the world of daily life that is achieved in play, dreaming, trance, theater, scientific theorizing, or high ceremony.

In every discipline, humanistic or scientific, the familiar common sense world of everyday life is a matter of abiding interest. In the social sciences, and in sociology particularly, it is a matter of essential preoccupation. It makes up sociology’s problematic subject matter, enters the very constitution of the sociological attitude, and exercises an odd and obstinate sovereignty over sociologists’ claims to adequate explanation.

Despite the topic’s centrality, an immense literature contains little data and few methods with which the essential features of socially recognized “familiar scenes” may be detected and related to dimensions of social organization. Although sociologists take socially

structured scenes of everyday life as a point of departure they rarely see,¹ as a task of sociological inquiry in its own right, the general question of how any such common sense world is possible. Instead, the possibility of the everyday world is either settled by theoretical representation or merely assumed. As a topic and methodological ground for sociological inquiries, the definition of the common sense world of everyday life, though it is appropriately a project of sociological inquiry, has been neglected. My purposes in this paper are to demonstrate the essential relevance, to sociological inquiries, of a concern for common sense activities as a topic of inquiry in its own right and, by reporting a series of studies, to urge its "rediscovery."

MAKING COMMONPLACE SCENES VISIBLE

In accounting for the stable features of everyday activities sociologists commonly select familiar settings such as familial households or work places and ask for the variables that contribute to their stable features. Just as commonly, one set of considerations are unexamined: the socially standardized and standardizing, "seen but unnoticed," expected, background features of everyday scenes. The member of the society uses background expectancies as a scheme of interpretation. With their use actual appearances are for him recognizable and intelligible as the appearances-of-familiar-events. Demonstrably he is responsive to this background, while at the same time he is at a loss to tell us specifically of what the expectancies consist. When we ask him about them he has little or nothing to say.

For these background expectancies to come into view one must either be a stranger to the "life as usual" character of everyday scenes, or become estranged from them. As Alfred Schutz pointed out, a "special motive" is required to make them problematic. In the sociologists' case this "special motive" consists in the programmatic task of treating a societal member's practical circumstances, which include from the member's point of view the morally necessary character of many of its background features, as matters of theoretic interest. The seen but unnoticed backgrounds of everyday activities are made visible and are described from a perspective in which persons live out the lives they do, have the children they do, feel the feelings,

think the thoughts, enter the relationships they do, all in order to permit the sociologist to solve his theoretical problems.

Almost alone among sociological theorists, the late Alfred Schutz, in a series of classical studies² of the constitutive phenomenology of the world of everyday life, described many of these seen but unnoticed background expectancies. He called them the "attitude of daily life." He referred to their scenic attributions as the "world known in common and taken for granted." Schutz' fundamental work makes it possible to pursue further the tasks of clarifying their nature and operation, of relating them to the processes of concerted actions, and assigning them their place in an empirically imaginable society.

The studies reported in this paper attempt to detect some expectancies that lend commonplace scenes their familiar, life-as-usual character, and to relate these to the stable social structures of everyday activities. Procedurally it is my preference to start with familiar scenes and ask what can be done to make trouble. The operations that one would have to perform in order to multiply the senseless features of perceived environments; to produce and sustain bewilderment, consternation, and confusion; to produce the socially structured affects of anxiety, shame, guilt, and indignation; and to produce disorganized interaction should tell us something about how the structures of everyday activities are ordinarily and routinely produced and maintained.³

A word of reservation. Despite their procedural emphasis, my studies are not properly speaking experimental. They are demonstrations, designed, in Herbert Spiegelberg's phrase, as "aids to a sluggish imagination." I have found that they produce reflections through which the strangeness of an obstinately familiar world can be detected.

SOME ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF COMMON UNDERSTANDINGS

Various considerations dictate that common understandings cannot possibly consist of a measured amount of shared agreement among persons on certain topics. Even if the topics are limited in number and scope and every practical difficulty of assessment

is forgiven, the notion that we are dealing with an amount of shared agreement remains essentially incorrect. This may be demonstrated as follows.

Students were asked to report common conversations by writing on the left side of a sheet what the parties actually said and on the right side what they and their partners understood that they were talking about. A student reported the following colloquy between himself and his wife. (See Text Box.)

An examination of the colloquy reveals the following. (a) There were many matters that the partners understood they were talking about that they did not mention. (b) Many matters that the partners understood were understood on the basis not only of what was actually said but what was left unspoken. (c) Many matters were understood through a process of attending to the temporal series of utterances as documentary evidences of a developing conversation rather than as a string of terms. (d) Matters that the two understood in common were understood only in and through a course of understanding work that consisted of treating an actual linguistic event as “the document of,” as “pointing to,” as standing on behalf of an underlying pattern of matters that each already supposed to be the matters that the person, by his speaking, could be telling the other about. The underlying pattern was not only derived from a course of individual documentary

evidences but the documentary evidences in their turn were interpreted on the basis of “what was known” and anticipatorily knowable about the underlying patterns.⁴ Each was used to elaborate the other. (e) In attending to the utterances as events-in-the-conversation each party made references to the biography and prospects of the present interaction which each used and attributed to the other as a common scheme of interpretation and expression. (f) Each waited for something more to be said in order to hear what had previously been talked about, and each seemed willing to wait.

Common understandings would consist of a measured amount of shared agreement if the common understandings consisted of events coordinated with the successive positions of the hands of the clock, i.e., of events in standard time. The foregoing results, because they deal with the exchanges of the colloquy as events-in-a-conversation, urge that one more time parameter, at least, is required: the role of time as it is constitutive of “the matter talked about” as a developing and developed event over the course of action that produced it, as both the process and product were known *from within* this development by both parties, each for himself as well as on behalf of the other.

The colloquy reveals additional features. (1) Many of its expressions are such that their sense cannot be decided by an auditor unless he knows or assumes

HUSBAND:	Dana succeeded in putting a penny in a parking meter today without being picked up.	This afternoon as I was bringing Dana, our four-year-old son, home from the nursery school, he succeeded in reaching high enough to put a penny in a parking meter when we parked in a meter parking zone, whereas before he has always had to be picked up to reach that high.
WIFE:	Did you take him to the record store?	Since he put a penny in a meter that means that you stopped while he was with you. I know that you stopped at the record store either on the way to get him or on the way back. Was it on the way back, so that he was with you or did you stop there on the way to get him and somewhere else on the way back?
HUSBAND:	No, to the shoe repair shop.	No, I stopped at the record store on the way to get him and stopped at the shoe repair shop on the way home when he was with me.
WIFE:	What for?	I know of one reason why you might have stopped at the shoe repair shop. Why did you in fact?
HUSBAND:	I got some new shoe laces for my shoes.	As you will remember I broke a shoe lace on one of my brown oxfords the other day so I stopped to get some new laces,
WIFE:	Your loafers need new heels badly.	Something else you could have gotten that I was thinking of. You could have taken in your black loafers which need heels badly. You'd better get them taken care of pretty soon.

something about the biography and the purposes of the speaker, the circumstances of the utterance, the previous course of the conversation, or the particular relationship of actual or potential interaction that exists between user and auditor. The expressions do not have a sense that remains identical through the changing occasions of their use. (2) The events that were talked about were specifically vague. Not only do they not frame a clearly restricted set of possible determinations but the depicted events include as their essentially intended and sanctioned features an accompanying "fringe" of determinations that are open with respect to internal relationships, relationships to other events, and relationships to retrospective and prospective possibilities. (3) For the sensible character of an expression, upon its occurrence each of the conversationalists as auditor of his own as well as the other's productions had to assume as of any present accomplished point in the exchange that by waiting for what he or the other person might have said at a later time the present significance of what had already been said would have been clarified. Thus many expressions had the property of being progressively realized and realizable through the further course of the conversation. (4) It hardly needs to be pointed out that the sense of the expressions depended upon where the expression occurred in serial order, the expressive character of the terms that comprised it, and the importance to the conversationalists of the events depicted.

These properties of common understandings stand in contrast to the features they would have if we disregarded

their temporally constituted character and treated them instead as precoded entries on a memory drum, to be consulted as a definite set of alternative meanings from among which one was to select, under predecided conditions that specified in which of some set of alternative ways one was to understand the situation upon the occasion that the necessity for a decision arose. The latter properties are those of strict rational discourse as these are idealized in the rules that define an adequate logical proof.

For the purposes of *conducting their everyday affairs* persons refuse to permit each other to understand "what they are really talking about" in this way. The anticipation that persons *will* understand, the occasionality of expressions, the specific vagueness of references, the retrospective-prospective sense of a present occurrence, waiting for something later in order to see what was meant before, are sanctioned properties of common discourse. They furnish a background of seen but unnoticed features of common discourse whereby actual utterances are recognized as events of common, reasonable, understandable, plain talk. Persons require these properties of discourse as conditions under which they are themselves entitled and entitle others to claim that they know what they are talking about, and that what they are saying is understandable and ought to be understood. In short, their seen but unnoticed presence is used to entitle persons to conduct their common conversational affairs without interference. Departures from such usages call forth immediate attempts to restore a right state of affairs.

NOTES

1. The work of Alfred Schutz, cited in endnote 2, is a magnificent exception. Readers who are acquainted with his writings will recognize how heavily this paper is indebted to him.
2. Alfred Schutz, *Der Sinnhafte Aufbau Der Sozialen Welt* (Wien: Verlag von Julius Springer, 1932); *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*, ed. Maurice Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962); *Collected Papers II: Studies in Social Theory*, ed. Arvid Broderon (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964); *Collected Papers III: Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, ed. I. Schutz (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966).
3. Obversely, a knowledge of how the structures of everyday activities are routinely produced should permit us to tell how we might proceed for the effective production of desired disturbances.
4. Karl Mannheim, in his essay "On the Interpretation of 'Weltanschauung'" (in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. and ed. Paul Kecskemeti [New York: Oxford University Press, 1952], pp. 33–83), referred to this work as the "documentary method of interpretation." . . .

34. INTERACTION RITUAL THEORY

Randall Collins (b. 1941) established his theoretical career by articulating a formal theory of conflict (see Chapter 39). However, recently he has developed a new theoretical orientation that he calls “interaction ritual theory” (IR). This approach offers a creative appreciation and utilization of two particular theorists: from the classics, Émile Durkheim, and from more recent vintage, Erving Goffman (whom Collins elsewhere has referred to as the most important theorist of the second half of the twentieth century). In this chapter from *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004), Collins lays out the programmatic features of this theoretical approach, which begins with the claim that the starting point of such a theory is the situation, not the individual. In this respect, he follows Goffman in the first section of this excerpt to make claim to the analytical utility of such a position. In the second section, Durkheim comes into focus as Collins presents his case for the significance of interaction ritual for sociological theory in general. He stresses that IR offers a theory of social dynamics and moreover provides a social psychological account that is sensitive to both cognition and the emotions.

A theory of interaction ritual is the key to microsociology, and microsociology is the key to much that is larger. The small scale, the here-and-now of face-to-face interaction, is the scene of action and the site of social actors. If we are going to find the agency of social life, it will be here. Here reside the energy of movement and change, the glue of solidarity, and the conservatism of stasis. Here is where intentionality and consciousness find their places; here, too, is the site of the emotional and unconscious aspects of human interaction. In whatever idiom, here is the empirical/experiential location for our social psychology, our symbolic or strategic interaction, our existential phenomenology or ethnomethodology, our arena of bargaining, games, exchange, or rational choice. Such theoretical positions may already seem to be extremely micro, intimate, and small scale. Yet we shall see they are for the most part not micro enough; some are mere glosses over what happens on the micro-interactional level. If we develop a sufficiently powerful theory on

the microlevel, it will unlock some secrets of large-scale macrosociological changes as well.

Let us begin with two orienting points. First, the center of microsociological explanation is not the individual but the situation. Second, the term “ritual” is used in a confusing variety of ways; I must show what I will mean by it and why this approach yields the desired explanatory results.

SITUATION RATHER THAN INDIVIDUAL AS STARTING POINT

Selecting an analytical starting point is a matter of strategic choice on the part of the theorist. But it is not merely an unreasoning *de gustibus non disputandum est*. I will attempt to show why we get more by starting with the situation and developing the individual, than by starting with individuals; and we get emphatically more than by the usual route of skipping from the individual to the action or cognition that ostensibly

belongs to him or her and bypassing the situation entirely.

A theory of interaction ritual (IR) and interaction ritual chains is above all a theory of situations. It is a theory of momentary encounters among human bodies charged up with emotions and consciousness because they have gone through chains of previous encounters. What we mean by the social actor, the human individual, is a quasi-enduring, quasi-transient flux in time and space. Although we valorize and heroize this individual, we ought to recognize that this way of looking at things, this keyhole through which we peer at the universe, is the product of particular religious, political, and cultural trends of recent centuries. It is an ideology of how we regard it proper to think about ourselves and others, part of the folk idiom, not the most useful analytical starting point for microsociology.

This is not to say that the individual does not exist. But an individual is not simply a body, even though a body is an ingredient that individuals get constructed out of. My analytical strategy (and that of the founder of interaction ritual analysis, Erving Goffman) is to start with the dynamics of situations; from this we can derive almost everything that we want to know about individuals, as a moving precipitate across situations.

Here we might pause for a counterargument. Do we not know that the individual is unique, precisely because we can follow him or her across situations, and precisely because he or she acts in a familiar, distinctively recognizable pattern even as circumstances change? Let us disentangle what is valid from what is misleading in this statement. The argument assumes a hypothetical fact, that individuals are constant even as situations change; to what extent this is true remains to be shown. We are prone to accept it, without further examination, as "something everybody knows" because it is drummed into us as a moral principle: everyone is unique, be yourself, don't give in to social pressure, to your own self be true—these are slogans trumpeted by every mouthpiece from preachers' homilies to advertising campaigns, echoing everywhere from popular culture to the avant-garde marching-orders of modernist and hypermodernist artists and intellectuals. As sociologists, our task is not to go with the flow of taken-for-granted belief—(although doing

just this is what makes a successful popular writer)—but to view it in a sociological light, to see what social circumstances created this moral belief and this hegemony of social categories at this particular historical juncture. The problem, in Goffman's terms, is to discover the social sources of the cult of the individual.

Having said this, I am going to agree that under contemporary social conditions, very likely most individuals are unique. But this is not the result of enduring individual essences. The uniqueness of the individual is something that we can derive from the theory of IR chains. Individuals are unique to just the extent that their pathways through interactional chains, their mix of situations across time, differ from other persons' pathways. If we reify the individual, we have an ideology, a secular version of the Christian doctrine of the eternal soul, but we cut off the possibility of explaining how individual uniquenesses are molded in a chain of encounters across time.

In a strong sense, the individual is the interaction ritual chain. The individual is the precipitate of past interactional situations and an ingredient of each new situation. An ingredient, not the determinant, because a situation is an emergent property. A situation is not merely the result of the individual who comes into it, nor even of a combination of individuals (although it is that, too). Situations have laws or processes of their own; and that is what IR theory is about.

Goffman concluded: "not men and their moments, but moments and their men." In gender-neutral language: not individuals and their interactions, but interactions and their individuals; not persons and their passions, but passions and their persons. "Every dog will have its day" is more accurately "every day will have its dog." Incidents shape their incumbents, however momentary they may be; encounters make their encountees. It is games that make sports heroes, politics that makes politicians into charismatic leaders, although the entire weight of record-keeping, news-story-writing, award-giving, speech-making, and advertising hype goes against understanding how this comes about. To see the common realities of everyday life sociologically requires a gestalt shift, a reversal of perspectives. Breaking such deeply ingrained conventional frames is not easy to do; but the more we can discipline ourselves to think everything through the

sociology of the situation, the more we will understand why we do what we do.

Let us advance to a more subtle source of confusion. Am I proclaiming, on the microlevel, the primacy of structure over agency? Is the structure of the interaction all-determining, bringing to naught the possibility of active agency? Not at all. The agency/structure rhetoric is a conceptual morass, entangling several distinctions and modes of rhetorical force. Agency/structure confuses the distinction of micro/macro, which is the local here-and-now vis-à-vis the interconnections among local situations into a larger swath of time and space, with the distinction between what is active and what is not. The latter distinction leads us to questions about energy and action; but energy and action are always local, always processes of real human beings doing something in a situation. It is also true that the action of one locality can spill over into another, that one situation can be carried over into other situations elsewhere. The extent of that spillover is part of what we mean by macro-patterns. It is acceptable, as a way of speaking, to refer to the action of a mass of investors in creating a run on the stock market, or of the breakdown of an army's logistics in setting off a revolutionary crisis, but this is a shorthand for the observable realities (i.e., what would be witnessed by a micro-sociologist on the spot). This way of speaking makes it seem as if there is agency on the macro-level, but that is inaccurate, because we are taken in by a figure of speech. Agency, if we are going to use that term, is always micro; structure concatenates it into macro.

But although the terms "micro" and "agency" can be lined up at one pole, they are not identical. There is structure at every level. Micro-situations are structures, that is to say, relationships among parts. Local encounters, micro-situations, have both agency and structure. The error to avoid is identifying agency with the individual, even on the micro-level. I have just argued that we will get much further if we avoid reifying the individual, that we should see individuals as transient fluxes charged up by situations. Agency, which I would prefer to describe as the energy appearing in human bodies and emotions and as the intensity and focus of human consciousness, arises in interactions in local, face-to-face situations, or as precipitates of chains of situations. Yes, human individuals also sometimes act

when they are alone, although they generally do so because their minds and bodies are charged with results of past situational encounters, and their solitary action is social insofar as it aims at and comes from communicating with other persons and thus is situated by where it falls in an IR chain.

On the balance, I am not much in favor of the terminology of "agency" and "structure." "Micro" and "macro" are sufficient for us to chart the continuum from local to inter-local connections. The energizing and the relational aspects of interactions, however, are tightly connected. Perhaps the best we might say is that the local structure of interaction is what generates and shapes the energy of the situation. That energy can leave traces, carrying over to further situations because individuals bodily resonate with emotions, which trail off in time but may linger long enough to charge up a subsequent encounter, bringing yet further chains of consequences. Another drawback of the term "agency" is that it carries the rhetorical burden of connoting moral responsibility; it brings us back to the glorification (and condemnation) of the individual, just the moralizing gestalt that we need to break out from if we are to advance an explanatory microsociology. We need to see this from a different angle. Instead of agency, I will devote theoretical attention to emotions and emotional energy, as changing intensities heated up or cooled down by the pressure-cooker of interaction rituals. Instead of emphasizing structure, or taking the other tack of backgrounding it as merely a foil for agency, I will get on with the business of showing how IRs work. . . .

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERACTION RITUAL FOR GENERAL SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

The Durkheimian model addresses the central questions of social theory; and it has implications that extend to all corners of contemporary microsociology. It asks the basic question: What holds society together? And it answers the question with a mechanism of social rituals. Furthermore, it answers it with a mechanism that varies in intensity: society is held together to just the extent that rituals are effectively carried out, and during those periods of time when the effects of those rituals are still fresh in people's

minds and reverberating in their emotions. Society is held together more intensely at some moments than at others. And the “society” that is held together is no abstract unity of a social system, but is just those groups of people assembled in particular places who feel solidarity with each other through the effects of ritual participation and ritually charged symbolism. The total population of France, or the United States, or anywhere else one might consider, consists of pockets of solidarity of different degrees of intensity. A population can be washed by waves of national solidarity on occasion, but these are particular and rather special ritually based events, subject to the same processes of ritual mobilization as more local pockets of solidarity.

This means that the Durkheimian model is entirely compatible with a view of stratification and group conflict. Indeed, it provides key mechanisms for just how stratification and conflict operate. Rephrase the question as, What holds society together as a pattern of stratified and conflicting groups? The answer is social rituals, operating to create and sustain solidarity within those groups. We can elaborate a more complicated answer, and later chapters will do so. Among those complications are these: that some groups have more resources for carrying out their rituals than others, so that some groups have more solidarity and thus can lord it over those who have less; and that these ritually privileged groups have more impressive symbols and fill their members with more emotional energy. We may examine more fine-grained processes of stratification: looking inside the very group that is brought together by participating in a ritual, we can see that some individuals are more privileged than others, by being nearer to the center of the ritual than others. Rituals thus have a double stratifying effect: between ritual insiders and outsiders; and, inside the ritual, between ritual leaders and ritual followers. Rituals are thus key mechanisms, and we might say key weapons, in processes of conflict and domination.

Durkheim famously argued that the utilitarian, economic dimension of life is not basic, but depends upon precontractual solidarity; that rituals provide the basis for a situation of social trust and shared symbolic meanings through which economic exchanges can be carried out. Here I am making a similar argument with regard to social conflict: conflict is not the primordial

condition of social life, a Hobbesian war of all against all, but is analytically derivative of social solidarity. That is to say, effective conflict is not really possible without the mechanisms of social ritual, which generate the alliances and the energies of the partisans, as well as their most effective weapons in dominating others. And the goals of conflict, the things that people fight over, are formed by these patterns of social rituals. The flash-points of conflict, the incidents that set off overt struggle, almost always come from the precedence of symbols and the social sentiments they embody. All this is to say that social conflict, which I and many other theorists have argued is the major process structuring social life, especially on the macro-level of large-scale structures (Collins 1975; Mann 1986–93), requires for its explanation a Durkheimian microsociology of interaction rituals.

The central mechanism of interaction ritual theory is that occasions that combine a high degree of mutual focus of attention, that is, a high degree of intersubjectivity, together with a high degree of emotional entrainment—through bodily synchronization, mutual stimulation/arousal of participants’ nervous systems—result in feelings of membership that are attached to cognitive symbols; and result also in the emotional energy of individual participants, giving them feelings of confidence, enthusiasm, and desire for action in what they consider a morally proper path. These moments of high degree of ritual intensity are high points of experience. They are high points of collective experience, the key moments of history, the times when significant things happen. These are moments that tear up old social structures or leave them behind, and shape new social structures. As Durkheim notes, these are moments like the French Revolution in the summer of 1789. We could add, they are moments like the key events of the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s; like the collapse of communist regimes in 1989 and 1991; and to a degree of significance that can be ascertained only in the future, as in the national mobilization in the United States following September 11, 2001. These examples are drawn from large-scale ritual mobilizations, and examples of a smaller scale could be drawn as we narrow our attention to smaller arenas of social action.

Interaction ritual theory is a theory of social dynamics, not merely of statics. Among social theorists

there is a tendency to regard ritual analysis as conservative, a worship of traditions laid down in the past, a mechanism for reproducing social structure as it always existed. True enough, ritual analysis has often been used in this vein; and even theories like Bourdieu's, which combine Durkheim with Marx, see a mutually supporting interplay between the cultural or symbolic order and the order of economic power. For Bourdieu, ritual reproduces the cultural and therefore the economic fields. . . . But this is to miss the transformative power of ritual mobilization. Intense ritual experience creates new symbolic objects and generates energies that fuel the major social changes. International ritual is a mechanism of change. As long as there are potential occasions for ritual mobilization, there is the possibility for sudden and abrupt periods of change. Ritual can be repetitive and conservatizing, but it also provides the occasions on which changes break through.

In this respect IR theory mediates between post-modernist and similar theories that posit ubiquitous situational flux of meanings and identities, and a culturalist view that fixed scripts or repertoires are repeatedly called upon. The contrast is articulated by Lamont (2000, 243–44, 271), who provides evidence that there are “cultural and structural conditions that lead individuals to use some criteria of evaluation rather than others.” The argument is parallel to my use of IR theory, which pushes the argument at a more micro-situational level: that the operative structural conditions are those that make up the ingredients of interaction ritual; and that cultural repertoires are created in particular kind of IRs, and fade out in others. To show the conditions under which ritual operates in one direction or the other is a principal topic of this book.

Intense moments of interaction ritual are high points not only for groups but also for individual lives. These are the events that we remember, that give meaning to our personal biographies, and sometimes to obsessive attempts to repeat them: whether participating in some great collective event such as a big political demonstration; or as spectator at some storied moment of popular entertainment or sports; or a personal encounter ranging from a sexual experience, to a strongly bonding friendly exchange, to a humiliating insult; the social atmosphere of an alcohol binge, a

drug high, or a gambling victory; a bitter argument or an occasion of violence. Where these moments have a high degree of focused awareness and a peak of shared emotion, these personal experiences, too, can be crystallized in personal symbols, and kept alive in symbolic replays for greater or lesser expanses of one's life. These are the significant formative experiences that shape individuals; if the patterns endure, we are apt to call them personalities; if we disapprove of them we call them addictions. But this usage too easily reifies what is an ongoing flow of situations. The movement of individuals from one situation to another in what I call interaction ritual chains is an up-and-down of variation in the intensity of interaction rituals; shifts in behavior, in feeling and thought occur just as the situations shift. To be a constant personality is to be on an even keel where the kinds of interaction rituals flow constantly from one situation to the next. Here again, IR theory points up the dynamics of human lives, their possibility for dramatic shifts in direction.

IR theory provides a theory of individual motivation from one situation to the next. Emotional energy is what individuals seek; situations are attractive or unattractive to them to the extent that the interaction ritual is successful in providing emotional energy. This gives us a dynamic microsociology, in which we trace situations and their pull or push for individuals who come into them. Note the emphasis: the analytical starting point is the situation, and how it shapes individuals; situations generate and regenerate the emotions and the symbolism that charge up individuals and send them from one situation to another.

Interaction ritual is a full-scale social psychology, not only of emotions and situational behavior, but of cognition. Rituals generate symbols; experience in rituals inculcates those symbols in individual minds and memories. IR provides an explanation of variation in beliefs. Beliefs are not necessarily constant, but situationally fluctuate, as a number of theorists have argued and as researchers have demonstrated (Swider 1986; Lamont 2000). What IR theory adds to contemporary cultural theory in this regard is that what people think they believe at a given moment is dependent upon a kind of interaction ritual taking place in that situation: people may genuinely and sincerely feel the beliefs they express at the moment they express them,

especially when the conversational situation calls out a higher degree of emotional emphasis; but this does not mean that they act on these beliefs, or that they have a sincere feeling about them in other everyday interactions where the ritual focus is different. IR theory gives the conditions under which beliefs become salient, by rising and falling in emotional loading. Everyday life is the experience of moving through a chain of interaction rituals, charging up some symbols with emotional significance and leaving others to fade. IR theory leads us into a theory of the momentary flow of internal mental life, an explanation of subjectivity as well as intersubjectivity.

Durkheim held that the individual consciousness is a portion of the collective consciousness. This is tantamount to saying that the individual is socialized from the outside, by social experience carried within. This is surely true, as most social scientists would agree, as far as early childhood socialization is concerned. The argument of IR theory carries this further: we are constantly being socialized by our interactional experiences throughout our lives. But not in a unidirectional and homogeneous way; it is intense interaction rituals that generate the most powerful emotional energy and the most vivid symbols, and it is these that are internalized. Contrary to an implication of Freudian theory and others that stress early childhood experience, socialization once laid down does not endure forever; emotional energies and symbolic meanings fade if they are not renewed. IR theory is not a model of a wind-up doll, programmed early in life, which ever after walks through the pattern once laid down. It is a theory of moment-to-moment motivation, situation by situation. Thus it has high theoretical ambitions: to explain what any individual will do, at any moment in time; what he or she will feel, think, and say.

Viewed in the abstract, this may seem like an impossibly high ambition. But consider: there are considerable theoretical resources available for this task. We have Durkheimian theory, which yields an explicit model of what produces sentiments of group membership; of symbols that formulate social values, and through which humans think; and of emotional energies that animate individuals. This theory is cast in terms of conditions of varying strength, so that we can tell which situations will generate higher or lower

levels of solidarity, respect for symbols, and emotional energy. And this model is of wide applicability: it fits not only the great collective events of religion and politics, as Durkheim himself pointed out, but it can be brought to bear on the level of everyday life situation by Goffman's line of application. More and more details of how to apply the Durkheimian ritual theory to everyday life situations are becoming available, as I will attempt to show in later chapters, by drawing on such resources as Meadian symbolic interactionist theory of thinking as internalized conversation, along with contemporary research on conversation and on emotions, and on the ethnography of everyday life. The totality of social life is the totality of situations that people go through in their everyday lives; we have a powerful and wide-ranging model that explains what will happen in those situations. An offshoot of this situational microsociology is the internalization of social life in individuals' subjective experience: the sociology of thinking and feeling.

Why not follow this theoretical research program as far as it will go? Some intellectuals have philosophical commitments that hold them back from taking this path; we do not want a theory that explains everything, and we construct arguments to rule out the possibility of any such a theory succeeding. There are lines of metatheory, going back to Max Weber and to his Neo-Kantian predecessors, which hold that the territory of social science is the realm of human meanings and human freedom, *Geisteswissenschaft* as opposed to *Naturwissenschaft*, a realm in which deterministic explanations do not apply. But such arguments are hardly conclusive: they try to lay out in advance and by conceptual definition what we can and cannot find along particular lines of investigation. Social theory and research moves along pragmatically, in the real flow of intellectual history; philosophers and metatheorists cannot legislate what we will not be able to explain in the future.

The program of interaction ritual theory is to take the intellectual tools that we have, and to apply them: to all situations, all emotions, all symbols, all thinking, all subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Intellectual life is an exciting adventure when we try to push it as far as we can. There is surely more emotional energy in exploration than in conservatively standing pat and

trying to avoid extending our understanding beyond the boundaries set up by intellectual taboos. IR theory, as an intellectual enterprise, is a set of symbolic representations riding on its surge of emotional energy; it is the intellectual version of effervescence that gave elan

to Durkheim and his research group, to Goffman and his followers, and to today's sociologists of emotion and process in everyday life. What I attempt to show in this book is some vistas that open up as we ride this intellectual movement into the future.

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SECTION VII

1. What exactly does Blumer have in mind when he contends that we ought to view "society as symbolic interaction?"
2. From Blumer's symbolic interactionist perspective, what is the place of human agency, and how should we understand social structure?
3. What does Mills mean by justifications, and how are they related to "situated actions and vocabularies?"
4. Describe in your own words what Goffman means by "front" and provide an example from your own life.
5. What does sincerity indicate about a person's presentation of self?
6. Define in your own words what Schutz has in mind when he writes about "social distance." What are the implications of social distance for the stranger?
7. How does Garfinkel suggest we ought to view what most would describe as the use of common sense in dealing with life's daily routines?
8. Why does Collins think that the proper starting point for sociological analysis ought to be the situation rather than the individual? In this regard, relate his theoretical approach to that of Durkheim, who factors prominently in this essay.

VIII. EXCHANGE THEORY AND RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

GEORGE C. HOMANS

35. SOCIAL BEHAVIOR AS EXCHANGE

George C. Homans (1910–1989), a Boston Brahmin, was one of the key figures associated with the development of modern exchange theory, which he intended as an alternative to the grand sociological theorizing of his Harvard colleague, Talcott Parsons. Homans argues that sociological theory ought to be grounded in neoclassical economic theory and in behaviorist psychology, associated with figures such as B. F. Skinner. As such he advocates a form of psychological reductionism. In this essay, published in 1958, Homans sketches an outline of an exchange paradigm, which in its most elementary form seeks to explain social behavior in terms of costs and rewards. He sees social exchange as offering sociology a set of general propositions that, in explaining human behavior, constitute an essential starting point for examining issues related to social structure.

THE PROBLEMS OF SMALL-GROUP RESEARCH

This essay will hope to honor the memory of George Simmel in two different ways. So far as it pretends to be suggestive rather than conclusive, its tone will be Simmel's; and its subject, too, will be one of his. Because Simmel, in essays such as those on sociability, games, coquetry, and conversation, was an analyst of elementary social behavior, we call him an ancestor of what is known today as small-group research. For what we are really studying in small groups is elementary social behavior: what happens when two or three persons are in a position to influence one another, the sort of thing of which those massive structures called "classes," "firms," "communities," and "societies" must ultimately be composed.

As I survey small-group research today, I feel that, apart from just keeping on with it, three sorts of

things need to be done. The first is to show the relation between the results of experimental work done under laboratory conditions and the results of *quasi*-anthropological field research on what those of us who do it are pleased to call "real-life" groups in industry and elsewhere. If the experimental work has anything to do with real life—and I am persuaded that it has everything to do—its propositions cannot be inconsistent with those discovered through the field work. But the consistency has not yet been demonstrated in any systematic way.

The second job is to pull together in some set of general propositions the actual results from the laboratory and from the field, of work on small groups—propositions that at least sum up, to an approximation, what happens in elementary social behavior, even though we may not be able to explain

George Homans, "Social Behavior as Exchange." *The American Journal of Sociology*, 63:6 (1958), pp. 597–606. Copyright © 1958 by The University of Chicago. Reprinted with permission of The University of Chicago Press. ♦

why the propositions should take the form they do. A great amount of work has been done, and more appears every day, but what it all amounts to in the shape of a set of propositions from which, under specified conditions, many of the observational results might be derived, is not at all clear—and yet to state such a set is the first aim of science.

The third job is to begin to show how the propositions that empirically hold good in small groups may be derived from some set of still more general propositions. “Still more general” means only that empirical propositions other than ours may also be derived from the set. This derivation would constitute the explanatory stage in the science of elementary social behavior, for explanation is derivation.¹ (I myself suspect that the more general set will turn out to contain the propositions of behavioral psychology. I hold myself to be an “ultimate psychological reductionist,” but I cannot know that I am right so long as the reduction has not been carried out.)

I have come to think that all three of these jobs would be furthered by our adopting the view that interaction between persons is an exchange of goods, material and non-material. This is one of the oldest theories of social behavior, and one that we still use every day to interpret our own behavior, as when we say, “I found so-and-so rewarding”; or “I got a great deal out of him”; or, even, “Talking with him took a great deal out of me.” But, perhaps just because it is so obvious, this view has been much neglected by social scientists. So far as I know, the only theoretical work that makes explicit use of it is Marcel Mauss’s *Essai sur le don*, published in 1925, which is ancient as social science goes.² It may be that the tradition of neglect is now changing and that, for instance, the psychologists who interpret behavior in terms of transactions may be coming back to something of the sort I have in mind.³

An incidental advantage of an exchange theory is that it might bring sociology closer to economics—that science of man most advanced, most capable of application, and, intellectually, most isolated. Economics studies exchange carried out under special circumstances and with a most useful built-in numerical measure of value. What are the laws of the general phenomenon of which economic behavior is one class?

In what follows I shall suggest some reasons for the usefulness of a theory of social behavior as exchange and suggest the nature of the propositions such a theory might contain.

AN EXCHANGE PARADIGM

I start with the link to behavioral psychology and the kind of statement it makes about the behavior of an experimental animal such as the pigeon.⁴ As a pigeon explores its cage in the laboratory, it happens to peck a target, whereupon the psychologist feeds it corn. The evidence is that it will peck the target again; it has learned the behavior, or, as my friend Skinner says, the behavior has been reinforced, and the pigeon has undergone *operant conditioning*. This kind of psychologist is not interested in how the behavior was learned: “learning theory” is a poor name for his field. Instead, he is interested in what determines changes in the rate of emission of learned behavior, whether pecks at a target or something else.

The more hungry the pigeon, the less corn or other food it has gotten in the recent past, the more often it will peck. By the same token, if the behavior is often reinforced, if the pigeon is given much corn every time it pecks, the rate of emission will fall off as the pigeon gets *satiated*. If, on the other hand, the behavior is not reinforced at all, then, too, its rate of emission will tend to fall off, though a long time may pass before it stops altogether, before it is *extinguished*. In the emission of many kinds of behavior the pigeon incurs *aversive stimulation*, or what I shall call “cost” for short, and this, too, will lead in time to a decrease in the emission rate. Fatigue is an example of a “cost.” Extinction, satiation, and cost, by decreasing the rate of emission of a particular kind of behavior, render more probable the emission of some other kind of behavior, including doing nothing. I shall only add that even a hard-boiled psychologist puts “emotional” behavior, as well as such things as pecking, among the unconditioned responses that may be reinforced in operant conditioning. As a statement of the propositions of behavioral psychology, the foregoing is, of course, inadequate for any purpose except my present one.

We may look on the pigeon as engaged in an exchange—pecks for corn—with the psychologist,

but let us not dwell upon that, for the behavior of the pigeon hardly determines the behavior of the psychologist at all. Let us turn to a situation where the exchange is real, that is, where the determination is mutual. Suppose we are dealing with two men. Each is emitting behavior reinforced to some degree by the behavior of the other. How it was in the past that each learned the behavior he emits and how he learned to find the other's behavior reinforcing we are not concerned with. It is enough that each does find the other's behavior reinforcing, and I shall call the reinforcers—the equivalent of the pigeon's corn—*values*, for this, I think, is what we mean by this term. As he emits behavior, each man may incur costs, and each man has more than one course of behavior open to him.

This seems to me the paradigm of elementary social behavior, and the problem of the elementary sociologist is to state propositions relating the variations in the values and costs of each man to his frequency distribution of behavior among alternatives, where the values (in the mathematical sense) taken by these variables for one man determine in part their values for the other.⁵

I see no reason to believe that the propositions of behavioral psychology do not apply to this situation, though the complexity of their implications in the concrete case may be great indeed. In particular, we must suppose that, with men as with pigeons, an increase in extinction, satiation, or aversive stimulation of any one kind of behavior will increase the probability of emission of some other kind. The problem is not, as it is often stated, merely, what a man's values are, what he has learned in the past to find reinforcement but how much of any one value his behavior is getting him now. The more he gets, the less valuable any further unit of that value is to him, and the less often he will emit behavior reinforced by it.

THE INFLUENCE PROCESS

We do not, I think, possess the kind of studies of two person interaction that would either bear out these propositions or fail to do so. But we do have studies of larger numbers of persons that suggest that they may apply, notably the studies by Festinger, Schachter, Back, and their associates on the dynamics of influence. One

of the variables they work with they call *cohesiveness*, defined as anything that attracts people to take part in a group. Cohesiveness is a value variable; it refers to the degree of reinforcement people find in the activities of the group. Festinger and his colleagues consider two kinds of reinforcing activity: the symbolic behavior we call "social approval" (sentiment) and activity valuable in other ways, such as doing something interesting.

The other variable they work with they call *communication* and others call *interaction*. This is a frequency variable: it is a measure of the frequency of emission of valuable and costly verbal behavior. We must bear in mind that, in general, the one kind of variable is a function of the other.

Festinger and his co-workers show that the more cohesive a group is, that is, the more valuable the sentiment or activity the members exchange with one another, the greater the average frequency of interaction of the members.⁶ With men, as with pigeons, the greater the reinforcement, the more often is the reinforced behavior emitted. The more cohesive a group, too, the greater the change that members can produce in the behavior of other members in the direction of rendering these activities more valuable.⁷ That is, the more valuable the activities that members get, the more valuable those that they must give. For if a person is emitting behavior of a certain kind, and other people do not find it particularly rewarding, these others will suffer their own production of sentiment and activity, in time, to fall off. But perhaps the first person has found their sentiment and activity rewarding, and, if he is to keep on getting them, he must make his own behavior more valuable to the others. In short, the propositions of behavioral psychology imply a tendency toward a certain proportionality between the value to others of the behavior a man gives them and the value to him of the behavior they give him.⁸

Schachter also studied the behavior of members of a group toward two kinds of other members, "conformers" and "deviates."⁹ I assume that conformers are people whose activity the other members find valuable. For conformity is behavior that coincides to a degree with some group standard or norm, and the only meaning I can assign to *norm* is "a verbal description of behavior that many members find it valuable for the actual behavior of themselves and others to

conform to." By the same token, a deviate is a member whose behavior is not particularly valuable. Now Schachter shows that, as the members of a group come to see another member as a deviate, their interaction with him—communication addressed to getting him to change his behavior—goes up, the faster the more cohesive the group. The members need not talk to the other conformers so much; they are relatively satiated by the conformers' behavior: they have gotten what they want out of them. But if the deviate, by failing to change his behavior, fails to reinforce the members, they start to withhold social approval from him: the deviate gets low sociometric choice at the end of the experiment. And in the most cohesive groups—those Schachter calls "high cohesive-relevant"—interaction with the deviate also falls off in the end and is lowest among those members that rejected him most strongly, as if they had given him up as a bad job. But how plonking can we get? These findings are utterly in line with everyday experience.

PRACTICAL EQUILIBRIUM

At the beginning of this paper I suggested that one of the tasks of small group research was to show the relation between the results of experimental work done under laboratory conditions and the results of field research on real-life small groups. Now the latter often appear to be in practical equilibrium, and by this I mean nothing fancy. I do not mean that all real-life groups are in equilibrium. I certainly do not mean that all groups must tend to equilibrium. I do not mean that groups have built-in antidotes to change: there is no homeostasis here. I do not mean that we assume equilibrium. I mean only that we sometimes *observe* it, that for the time we are with a group—and it is often short—there is no great change in the values of the variables we choose to measure. If, for instance, person A is interacting with B more than with C both at the beginning and at the end of the study, then at least by this crude measure the group is in equilibrium.

Many of the Festinger-Schachter studies are experimental, and their propositions about the process of influence seem to me to imply the kind of proposition that empirically holds good of real-life groups

in practical equilibrium. For instance, Festinger *et al.* find that, the more cohesive a group is, the greater the change that members can produce in the behavior of other members. If the influence is exerted in the direction of conformity to group norms, then, when the process of influence has accomplished all the change of which it is capable, the proposition should hold good that, the more cohesive a group is, the larger the number of members that conform to its norms. And it does hold good.¹⁰

Again, Schachter found, in the experiment I summarized above, that in the most cohesive groups and at the end, when the effort to influence the deviate had failed, members interacted little with the deviate and gave him little in the way of sociometric choice. Now two of the propositions that hold good most often of real-life groups in practical equilibrium are precisely that the more closely a member's activity conforms to the norms the more interaction he receives from other members and the more liking choices he gets from them too. From these main propositions a number of others may be derived that also hold good.¹¹

Yet we must ever remember that the truth of the proposition linking conformity to liking may on occasion be masked by the truth of other propositions. If, for instance, the man that conforms to the norms most closely also exerts some authority over the group, this may render liking for him somewhat less than it might otherwise have been.¹²

Be that as it may, I suggest that the laboratory experiments on influence imply propositions about the behavior of members of small groups, when the process of influence has worked itself out, that are identical with propositions that hold good of real-life groups in equilibrium. This is hardly surprising if all we mean by equilibrium is that all the change of which the system is, under present conditions, capable has been effected, so that no further change occurs. Nor would this be the first time that statics has turned out to be a special case of dynamics.

PROFIT AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Though I have treated equilibrium as an observed fact, it is a fact that cries for explanation. I shall not, as structural-functional sociologists do, use an assumed

equilibrium as a means of explaining or trying to explain, why the other features of a social system should be what they are. Rather, I shall take practical equilibrium as something that is itself to be explained by the other features of the system.

If every member of a group emits at the end of, and during, a period of time much the same kinds of behavior and in much the same frequencies as he did at the beginning, the group is for that period in equilibrium. Let us then ask why any one member's behavior should persist. Suppose he is emitting behavior of value A_1 . Why does he not let his behavior get worse (less valuable or reinforcing to the others) until it stands at $A_1 - DA$? True, the sentiments expressed by others toward him are apt to decline in value (become less reinforcing to him), so that what he gets from them may be $S_1 - DS$. But it is conceivable that, since most activity carries cost, a decline in the value of what he emits will mean a reduction in cost to him that more than offsets his losses in sentiment. Where, then, does he stabilize his behavior? This is the problem of social control.¹³

Mankind has always assumed that a person stabilizes his behavior, at least in the short run, at the point where he is doing the best he can for himself under the circumstances, though his best may not be a "rational" best, and what he can do may not be at all easy to specify, except that he is not apt to think like one of the theoretical antagonists in the *Theory of Games*. Before a sociologist rejects this answer out of hand for its horrid profit-seeking implications, he will do well to ask himself if he can offer any other answer to the question posed. I think he will find that he cannot. Yet experiments designed to test the truth of the answer are extraordinarily rare.

I shall review one that seems to me to provide a little support for the theory, though it was not meant to do so. The experiment is reported by H. B. Gerard, a member of the Festinger-Schachter team, under the title "The Anchorage of Opinions in Face-to-Face Groups."¹⁴ The experimenter formed artificial groups whose members met to discuss a case in industrial relations and to express their opinions about its probable outcome. The groups were of two kinds: high-attraction groups, whose members were told that they would like one another very much, and low-attraction

groups, whose members were told that they would not find one another particularly likable.

At a later time the experimenter called the members in separately, asked them again to express their opinions on the outcome of the case, and counted the number that had changed their opinions to bring them into accord with those of other members of their groups. At the same time, a paid participant entered into a further discussion of the case with each member, always taking, on the probable outcome of the case, a position opposed to that taken by the bulk of the other members of the group to which the person belonged. The experimenter counted the number of persons shifting toward the opinion of the paid participant.

The experiment had many interesting results, from which I choose only those summed up in Tables 35.1 and 35.2. The three different agreement classes are made up of people who, at the original sessions, expressed different degrees of agreement with the opinions of other members of their groups. And the figure 44, for instance, means that, of all members of high-attraction groups whose initial opinions were strongly in disagreement with those of other members, 44 per cent shifted their opinion later toward that of others.

TABLE 35.1 PERCENTAGE OF SUBJECTS CHANGING TOWARD SOMEONE IN THE GROUP

	Agreement	Mild Disagreement	Strong Disagreement
High Attraction. . . .	0	12	44
Low Attraction. . . .	0	15	9

TABLE 35.2 PERCENTAGE OF SUBJECTS CHANGING TOWARD THE PAID PARTICIPANT

	Agreement	Mild Disagreement	Strong Disagreement
High Attraction. . . .	7	13	25
Low Attraction. . . .	20	38	8

In these results the experimenter seems to have been interested only in the differences in the sums of the rows, which show that there is more shifting toward the group, and less shifting toward the paid participant, in the high-attraction than in the low-attraction condition. This is in line with a proposition suggested earlier. If you think that the members of a group can give you much—in this case, liking—you are apt to give them much—in this case, a change to an opinion in accordance with their views—or you will not get the liking. And, by the same token, if the group can give you little of value, you will not be ready to give it much of value. Indeed, you may change your opinion so as to depart from agreement even further, to move, that is, toward the view held by the paid participant.

So far so good, but, when I first scanned these tables, I was less struck by the difference between them than by their similarity. The same classes of people in both tables showed much the same relative propensities to change their opinions, no matter whether the change was toward the group or toward the paid participant. We see, for instance, that those who change least are the high-attraction, strong-disagreement people and the low-attraction, mild-disagreement ones.

How am I to interpret these particular results? Since the experimenter did not discuss them, I am free to offer my own explanation. The behavior emitted by the subjects is opinion and changes in opinion. For this behavior they have learned to expect two possible kinds of reinforcement. Agreement with the group gets the subject favorable sentiment (acceptance) from it, and the experiment was designed to give this reinforcement a higher value in the high-attraction condition than in the low-attraction one. The second kind of possible reinforcement is what I shall call the “maintenance of one’s personal integrity,” which a subject gets by sticking to his own opinion in the face of disagreement with the group. The experimenter does not mention this reward, but I cannot make sense of the results without something much like it. In different degrees for different subjects, depending on their initial positions, these rewards are in competition with one another: they are alternatives. They are not absolutely scarce goods, but some persons cannot get both at once.

Since the rewards are alternatives, let me introduce a familiar assumption from economics—that the cost

of a particular course of action is the equivalent of the foregone value of an alternative¹⁵—and then add the definition: Profit = Reward–Cost.

Now consider the persons in the corresponding cells of the two tables. The behavior of the high-attraction, agreement people gets them much in the way of acceptance by the group, and for it they must give up little in the way of personal integrity, for their views are from the start in accord with those of the group. Their profit is high, and they are not prone to change their behavior. The low-attraction, strong-disagreement people are getting much in integrity and they are not giving up for it much in valuable acceptance, for they are members of low-attraction groups. Reward less cost is high for them, too, and they change little. The high-attraction, strong-disagreement people are getting much in the way of integrity, but their costs in doing so are high, too, for they are in high-attraction groups and thus foregoing much valuable acceptance by the group. Their profit is low, and they are very apt to change, either toward the group or toward the paid participant, from whom they think, perhaps, they will get some acceptance while maintaining some integrity. The low-attraction, mild-disagreement people do not get much in the way of integrity, for they are only in mild disagreement with the group, but neither are they giving up much in acceptance, for they are members of low-attraction groups. Their rewards are low; their costs are low too, and their profit—the difference between the two—is also low. In their low profit they resemble the high-attraction, strong-disagreement people, and, like them, they are prone to change their opinions, in this case, more toward the paid participant. The subjects in the other two cells, who have medium profits, display medium propensities to change.

If we define profit as reward less cost, and if cost is value foregone, I suggest that we have here some evidence for the proposition that change in behavior is greatest when perceived profit is least. This constitutes no direct demonstration that change in behavior is least when profit is greatest, but if, whenever a man’s behavior brought him a balance of reward and cost, he changed his behavior away from what got him, under the circumstances, the less profit, there might well come a time when his behavior would not change further. That is, his behavior would be stabilized, at

least for the time being. And, so far as this were true for every member of a group, the group would have a social organization in equilibrium.

I do not say that a member would stabilize his behavior at the point of greatest conceivable profit to himself, because his profit is partly at the mercy of the behavior of others. It is a commonplace that the short-run pursuit of profit by several persons often lands them in positions where all are worse off than they might conceivably be. I do not say that the paths of behavioral change in which a member pursues his profit under the condition that others are pursuing theirs too are easy to describe or predict; and we can readily conceive that in jockeying for position they might never arrive at any equilibrium at all.

DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

Yet practical equilibrium is often observed, and thus some further condition may make its attainment, under some circumstance, more probable than would the individual pursuit of profit left to itself. I can offer evidence for this further condition only in the behavior of subgroups and not in that of individuals. Suppose that there are two subgroups, working close together in a factory, the job of one being somewhat different from that of the other. And suppose that the members of the first complain and say: "We are getting the same pay as they are. We ought to get just a couple of dollars a week more to show that our work is more responsible." When you ask them what they mean by "more responsible," they say that, if they do their work wrong, more damage can result, and so they are under more pressure to take care.¹⁶ Something like this is a common feature of industrial behavior. It is at the heart of disputes not over absolute wages but over wage differentials—indeed, at the heart of disputes over rewards other than wages.

In what kind of proposition may we express observations like these? We may say that wages and responsibility give status in the group, in the sense that a man who takes high responsibility and gets high wages is admired, other things equal. Then, if the members of one group score higher on responsibility than do the members of another, there is a felt need on the part of the first to score higher on pay too. There is a pressure,

which shows itself in complaints, to bring the *status factors*, as I have called them, into line with one another. If they are in line, a condition of *status congruence* is said to exist. In this condition the workers may find their jobs dull or irksome, but they will not complain about the relative position of groups.

But there may be a more illuminating way of looking at the matter. In my example I have considered only responsibility and pay, but these may be enough, for they represent the two kinds of thing that come into the problem. Pay is clearly a reward: responsibility may be looked on, less clearly, as a cost. It means constraint and worry—or peace of mind foregone. Then the proposition about status congruence becomes this: If the costs of the members of one group are higher than those of another, distributive justice requires that their rewards should be higher too. But the thing works both ways: If the rewards are higher, the costs should be higher too. This last is the theory of *noblesse oblige*, which we all subscribe to, though we all laugh at it, perhaps because the *noblesse* often fails to *oblige*. To put the matter in terms of profit: though the rewards and costs of two persons or the members of two groups may be different, yet the profits of the two—the excess of reward over cost—should tend to equality. And more than "should." The less-advantaged group will at least try to attain greater equality, as, in the example I have used, the first group tried to increase its profit by increasing its pay.

I have talked of distributive justice. Clearly, this is not the only condition determining the actual distribution of rewards and costs. At the same time, never tell me that notions of justice are not a strong influence on behavior, though we sociologists often neglect them. Distributive justice may be one of the conditions of group equilibrium.

EXCHANGE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

I shall end by reviewing almost the only study I am aware of that begins to show in detail how a stable and differentiated social structure in a real-life group might arise out of a process of exchange between members. This is Peter Blau's description of the behavior of sixteen agents in a federal law-enforcement agency.¹⁷

The agents had the duty of investigating firms and preparing reports on the firms' compliance with the law. Since the reports might lead to legal action against the firms, the agents had to prepare them carefully, in the proper form, and take strict account of the many regulations that might apply. The agents were often in doubt what they should do, and then they were supposed to take the question to their supervisor. This they were reluctant to do, for they naturally believed that thus confessing to him their inability to solve a problem would reflect on their competence, affect the official ratings he made of their work, and so hurt their chances for promotion. So agents often asked other agents for help and advice, and, though this was nominally forbidden, the supervisor usually let it pass.

Blau ascertained the ratings the supervisor made of the agents, and he also asked the agents to rate one another. The two opinions agreed closely. Fewer agents were regarded as highly competent than were regarded as of middle or low competence; competence, or the ability to solve technical problems, was a fairly scarce good. One or two of the more competent agents would not give help and advice when asked, and so received few interactions and little liking. A man that will not exchange, that will not give you what he has when you need it, will not get from you the only thing you are, in this case, able to give him in return, your regard.

But most of the more competent agents were willing to give help, and of them Blau says:

A consultation can be considered an exchange of values: both participants gain something, and both have to pay a price. The questioning agent is enabled to perform better than he could otherwise have done, without exposing his difficulties to his supervisor. By asking for advice, he implicitly pays his respect to the superior proficiency of his colleague. This acknowledgement of inferiority is the cost of receiving assistance. The consultant gains prestige, in return for which he is willing to devote some time to the consultation and permit it to disrupt his own work. The following remark of an agent illustrates this: 'I like giving advice. It's flattering, I suppose, if you feel that others come to you for advice.'¹⁸

Blau goes on to say: "All agents liked being consulted, but the value of any one of very many

consultations became deflated for experts, and the price they paid in frequent interruptions became inflated."¹⁹ This implies that, the more prestige an agent received, the less was the increment of value of that prestige; the more advice an agent gave, the greater was the increment of cost of that advice, the cost lying precisely in the forgone value of time to do his own work. Blau suggests that something of the same sort was true of an agent who went to a more competent colleague for advice: the more often he went, the more costly to him, in feelings of inferiority, became any further request. "The repeated admission of his inability to solve his own problems . . . undermined the self-confidence of the worker and his standing in the group."²⁰

The result was that the less competent agents went to the more competent ones for help less often than they might have done if the costs of repeated admissions of inferiority had been less high and that, while many agents sought out the few highly competent ones, no single agent sought out the latter much. Had they done so (to look at the exchange from the other side), the costs to the highly competent in interruptions to their own work would have become exorbitant. Yet the need of the less competent for help was still not fully satisfied. Under these circumstances they tended to turn for help to agents more nearly like themselves in competence. Though the help they got was not the most valuable, it was of a kind they could themselves return on occasion. With such agents they could exchange help and liking, without the exchange becoming on either side too great a confession of inferiority.

The highly competent agents tended to enter into exchanges, that is, to interact with many others. But, in the more equal exchanges I have just spoken of, less competent agents tended to pair off as partners. That is, they interacted with a smaller number of people, but interacted often with these few. I think I could show why pair relations in these more equal exchanges would be more economical for an agent than a wider distribution of favors. But perhaps I have gone far enough. The final pattern of this social structure was one in which a small number of highly competent agents exchanged advice for prestige with a large number of others less competent and in which the less competent agents exchanged, in pairs and in trios, both help and liking on more nearly equal terms.

Blau shows, then, that a social structure in equilibrium might be the result of a process of exchanging behavior rewarding and costly in different degrees, in which the increment of reward and cost varied with the frequency of the behavior, that is, with the frequency of interaction. Note that the behavior of the agents seems also to have satisfied my second condition of equilibrium: the more competent agents took more responsibility for the work, either their own or others', than did the less competent ones, but they also got more for it in the way of prestige. I suspect that the same kind of explanation could be given for the structure of many "informal" groups.

SUMMARY

The current job of theory in small-group research is to make the connection between experimental and real-life studies, to consolidate the propositions that empirically hold good in the two fields, and to show how these propositions might be derived from a still more general set. One way of doing this job would be to revive and make more rigorous the oldest of theories of social behavior—social behavior as exchange.

Some of the statements of such a theory might be the following. Social behavior is an exchange of goods, material goods but also non-material ones, such as the symbols of approval or prestige. Persons that give

much to others try to get much from them, and persons that get much from others are under pressure to give much to them. This process of influence tends to work out at equilibrium to a balance in the exchanges. For a person engaged in exchange, what he gives may be a cost to him, just as what he gets may be a reward, and his behavior changes less as profit, that is, reward less cost, tends to a maximum. Not only does he seek a maximum for himself, but he tries to see to it that no one in his group makes more profit than he does. The cost and the value of what he gives and of what he gets vary with the quantity of what he gives and gets. It is surprising how familiar these propositions are; it is surprising, too, how propositions about the dynamics of exchange can begin to generate the static thing we call "group structure" and, in so doing, generate also some of the propositions about group structure that students of real-life groups have stated.

In our unguarded moments we sociologists find words like "reward" and "cost" slipping into what we say. Human nature will break in upon even our most elaborate theories. But we seldom let it have its way with us and follow up systematically what these words imply.²¹ Of all our many "approaches" to social behavior, the one that sees it as an economy is the most neglected, and yet it is the one we use every moment of our lives—except when we write sociology.

NOTES

1. See R. B. Braithwaite, *Scientific Explanation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953).
2. Translated by I. Cunnison as *The Gift* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954).
3. In social anthropology D. L. Oliver is working along these lines, and I owe much to him. See also T. M. Newcomb, "The Prediction of Interpersonal Attraction," *American Psychologist*, XI (1956), 575–86.
4. B. F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1953).
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 297–329. The discussion of "double contingency" by T. Parsons and E. A. Shils could easily lead to a similar paradigm (see *Toward a General Theory of Action* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951], pp. 14–16).
6. K. W. Back, "The Exertion of Influence through Social Communication," in L. Festinger, K. Back, S. Schachter, H. H. Kelley, and J. Thibaut (eds.), *Theory and Experiment in Social Communication* (Ann Arbor: Research Center for Dynamics, University of Michigan, 1950), pp. 21–36.
7. S. Schachter, N. Ellertson, D. McBride, and D. Gregory, "An Experimental Study of Cohesiveness and Productivity," *Human Relations*, IV (1951), 229–38.
8. Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

9. S. Schachter, "Deviation, Rejection, and Communication," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, XLVI (1951), 190–207.
10. L. Festinger, S. Schachter, and K. Back, *Social Pressures in Informal Groups* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), pp. 72–100.
11. For propositions holding good of groups in practical equilibrium see G. C. Homans, *The Human Group* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1950), and H. W. Riecken and G. C. Homans, "Psychological Aspects of Social Structure," in G. Lindzey (ed.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1954), II, 786–832.
12. See Homans, *op. cit.*, pp. 244–48, and R. F. Bales, "The Equilibrium Problem in Small Groups," in A. P. Hare, E. F. Borgatta, and R. F. Bales (eds.), *Small Groups* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1953), pp. 450–56.
13. Homans, *op. cit.*, pp. 281–301.
14. *Human Relations*, VII (1954), 313–25.
15. G. J. Stigler, *The Theory of Price* (rev. ed.; New York: Macmillan Co., 1952), p. 99.
16. G. C. Homans, "Status among Clerical Workers," *Human Organization*, XII (1953), 5–10.
17. Peter M. Blau, *The Dynamics of Bureaucracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 99–116.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
21. *The White-Collar Job* (Ann Arbor: Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, 1953), pp. 115–27.

36. FORMULATION OF EXCHANGE THEORY

Peter Blau (1918–2002), who was born in Vienna and emigrated to the United States during the Nazi era, was a key exponent of exchange theory for over three decades. During this time he attempted to go beyond the general propositional stage articulated by George Homans in order to focus on social structure. In this excerpt from *Structural Contexts of Opportunities* (1994), Blau builds on micro-level exchange theory while articulating an appreciation of both the difference between economic and social exchange and the factors that make the macro level different from the micro level. One of the issues he addresses is the paradoxical fact that social exchange both facilitates social bonding and gives rise to status differentiation.

A fundamental difference between social life in small isolated communities and that in large complex societies is the declining significance of the groups into which one is born and the growing significance of reciprocated choices for human relations. To be sure, the significance of ascribed positions has by no means disappeared in contemporary complex societies. Most people's closest relations are with their parents and children. Other ascribed positions continue to exert a major influence on social relations, notably one's kin and the ethnic group and social class into which one is born. Yet, even for quite close relatives, except one's immediate family, the extent of social interaction and the intimacy of the relation are not ascribed but depend on reciprocal choices. Larger ascribed affiliations, like ethnic and class background, affect the likelihood of choice but do not predetermine who selects whom as close associate, which depends on reciprocated choices.

Thus, ascribed as well as achieved positions govern probabilities of association, which are generally higher for ascribed than achieved affiliations, but they do not determine specific associates (with the exception of parents and children), let alone the extent of social

interaction and the closeness of the relation. Their probabilistic influences on ingroup associations are similar to those of a community's population structure. The population distributions in a community also influence only the probabilities of ingroup and intergroup relations of various kinds, but the specific dyads within which these probabilities find expression depend on mutual choices.

Dependence on reciprocated choice implies that, if I want to associate with someone, I cannot realize my goal unless I make him interested in associating with me. For our social relation to persist once it has been established, both of us have to sustain an interest in its continuation. To determine what brings these conditions about is the objective of exchange theory, which analyzes the processes that establish reciprocity in social relations and sustain it, and which thereby dissects the dynamics of social interaction.

Structural conditions impose limits on the exchange relations that can develop. The population structure of an entire society or large community, however, is far removed from the daily social life of individuals and hence does not affect it directly but indirectly. Multilevel structural analysis traces these

Blau, Peter. "Formulation of Exchange Theory," *Structural Contexts of Opportunities*. Pages 152–163. Reprinted with permission of Chicago Press. ♦

indirect limiting influences. It discloses how macrostructural conditions are transmitted to successive levels and which ones reach the lowest level on which direct social interaction and exchange occur. It may indicate, for example, that society's racial heterogeneity penetrates into small substructures or that it is reflected in segregation of different races in different suburbs and neighborhoods with much homogeneity within them. The former situation would make intergroup relations more likely than the latter, but neither would determine which specific social relations occur.

Many, if not most, human gratifications are obtained in relations with other human beings. Intellectual stimulation and relaxing conversation, sexual pleasures and the enchantment of love, academic recognition and a happy family life, satisfying the lust for power and the need for acceptance—all of these are contingent on eliciting responses from others. Exchange theory analyzes the mutual gratifications persons provide one another that sustain social relations.

The basic assumption of the theory of social exchange is that persons establish social associations because they expect them to be rewarding and that they continue social interaction and expand it because they experience it to be rewarding. This assumption that two parties associate with one another not owing to normative requirements but because they both expect rewards from doing so implies that the exchange of rewards is a starting mechanism of social relations that is not contingent on norms prescribing obligations. If a person is attracted to others because she expects associating with them to be rewarding, she will want to associate with them to obtain the expected rewards. For them to associate with her, they must be interested in doing so, which depends, according to the initial assumption, on their expecting such association to be rewarding to them. Consequently, for the first person to realize the rewards expected from the association with others, she must impress them as a desirable associate with whom interaction will be rewarding.

Individuals are often hesitant to take the first step for fear of rejection. A widely used early strategy is for people to impress others in whom they are interested with their outstanding qualities—their wit, charm,

intelligence, knowledge of the arts—which implicitly promises that associating with them would be a rewarding experience. If the early steps are successful, they tend to become self-fulfilling prophecies. As each person puts his best foot forward, associating with him turns out to be an enjoyable experience. In due course, people start doing favors for one another. In a work situation, the more experienced may give their colleagues advice or help with a difficult job. Neighbors may lend one another tools. People who met socially may issue invitations to dinner or a party.

Most people enjoy doing favors for others, usually without any thought of return, at least initially. Nevertheless, a person who benefits from an association is under an obligation to reciprocate. If the benefits are recurrent—whether involving merely the enjoyment of the other's company or getting frequently needed advice about one's work from a colleague—the self-imposed obligation to reciprocate is sustained by the interest in continuing to obtain the benefits. It is further reinforced by the fear of not seeming ungrateful. Even when there is no initial thought of return, failure to reciprocate when the occasion arises invites such an accusation, which will be experienced though it remains unspoken.

Imagine a neighbor lends you her lawn mower in the summer, but when she asks you next winter to borrow your snow blower you refuse. The neighbor and others who learn of your refusal undoubtedly will consider you ungrateful, and whether they do or not, you yourself will feel ungrateful and surely will be hesitant to ask to borrow her lawn mower again. The feelings and possible accusations of ingratitude indicate that favors freely given are not entirely free but create obligations in one's own mind to reciprocate as well as possible social pressures to discharge the obligations.

A fundamental distinction between social and economic exchange is that social exchange engenders diffuse obligations, whereas those in economic exchange are specified in an implicit or explicit contract. For economic transactions that are not immediately completed, like purchases in stores, the terms of the exchange are agreed upon in advance by both parties, and major agreements are formalized in a contract that specifies the precise nature of the obligations of both parties and when any outstanding debts are due.

The favors in social exchange, by contrast, create diffuse obligations, to be discharged at some unspecified future date. If a couple give a dinner party, for instance, they have no agreement on when and where or even whether the guests will invite them back, though their relations may be weakened if they do not, or if they do so too late or too soon. The diffuseness of the obligations implies that large-scale social exchange is not likely to occur unless firm social bonds rooted in trust have been established.

In the absence of legal obligations to make a return for benefits received, the initial problem of new acquaintances is to prove themselves trustworthy in social exchange. This typically occurs as exchange relations evolve in a slow process, starting with minor transactions entailing little risk and requiring little trust. The mutual discharge of obligations and reciprocation profit both parties and prove them increasingly trustworthy as favors are regularly reciprocated. The growing mutual advantages gained from the association fortify their social bond. This may appear to be merely a by-product of social exchange, but it is, in fact, its most important product.

Implicit in discussions of social exchange is an element of rationality, if not calculation, which may give the impression that social exchange theory is simply a version of rational choice theory. However, this impression is misleading. To be sure, social exchange does imply some rational pursuit of rewards, but the prime benefit sought, once the friendship bond of mutual support and trust is clearly established, is the rewarding experience derived from the association itself. Any material benefits exchanged are incidental and of significance largely as tokens of the friendship.

I conceptualize processes of social association as occurring in the relation between two persons. Accordingly, the exchange theory just presented analyzes exchange processes in dyads. . . . Ekeh (1974) has criticized my and Homans's (1961) exchange theory as individualistic, ignoring the difference between my concern with social structure and Homans's psychological reductionism. His criticism centers on the analysis of dyadic exchange. He contrasts the concept of restricted or two-party exchange unfavorably with Lévi-Strauss's

(1949) generalized or multiparty exchange. Ekeh (1974: 62–65) considers the latter (multiparty) exchange more Durkheimian, owing to its concern with structural integration, whereas he dismisses dyadic exchange as individualistic and thus lacking a structural focus.

There is good reason that I, as a structural sociologist, prefer restricted dyadic to generalized multiparty exchange. Generalized exchange refers to the prevailing practice that all members of a tribe or group freely provide benefits to other members without looking for any return from the person to whom the contribution is made. Since doing favors for others is socially expected, it is in effect a group norm. Conformity with this norm is the reason that all group members receive favors in the long run and solidarity is strengthened. My criticism of generalized exchange is that it is simply another name for conformity to group norms and consequently commits the tautological fallacy of explaining social conduct in terms of social norms demanding this conduct.¹ Generalized exchange thereby dispenses with the crucial insight of exchange theory that interpersonal relations are not contingent on social norms, because gradually expanding reciprocity supplies a mechanism for establishing and maintaining them and engendering trust to boot.

That my analysis of social exchange is confined to exchange processes that occur in dyads does not mean that the social context in which these processes occur can be ignored, since it does influence them. Actually, exchange processes are affected by several contexts of widening social circles. The most immediate social context is the groups to which the dyads belong, which exert two distinct influences on dyadic exchange.

First, a group's network structure defines the alternative opportunities for exchange relations various persons have and thereby affects the outcomes of persons in different network positions. (Exchange processes, in turn, may alter the network structure.) Experiments performed by Cook and her colleagues indicate that networks that provide alternative exchange partners to one person but not to others increase the bargaining power of this person in dyadic exchanges (see, for example, Cook, Gillmore, and Tamagishi 1983).

A second influence of the immediate social context is that it discourages failure to reciprocate for benefits received by social disapproval of such ingratitude.

I realize that my reference to social disapproval, which implies social pressure, sounds as if I attributed exchange to group norms, for which I criticized the principle of generalized exchange. There is a major difference, however. If the practice of making a contribution freely to any group member without expecting a return from that member is explained by the cultural norm to do so, the *explicans* cannot explain the *explicandum*, because the two are redundant. But exchange is explained not by social pressures but by the returns it brings, including pleasant company or friendship as well as possibly tangible benefits. Social exchange, however, cannot prevail if trust, once established, is violated, and social disapproval discourages its violation. Social pressures do not explain—account for—reciprocal exchange, but they help to sustain it.

The influence of the wider social circles—the population structure of a neighborhood, community, or entire society—depends on the extent to which the population distributions of the encompassing social structure penetrate into the substructures of face-to-face groups. Many of the differences in society's population structure are the result of differences among rather than within substructures on successive levels. As a result, face-to-face groups are less differentiated than their encompassing social structures. Multilevel structural analysis discloses how much differentiation in various dimensions penetrates into the substructures of interpersonal relations. Greater homophily in segregated substructures promotes ingroup relations, but despite much segregation, some differentiation penetrates to the lowest level of interpersonal relations. Consequently, although ingroup relations prevail in daily social intercourse, intergroup relations also regularly occur.

The common occurrence of intergroup relations is revealed in a study by Marsden (1990) that applies my theoretical scheme to the egocentric face-to-face networks of a sample of the American population. He initially distinguishes a demand-side view of networks in terms of preferences for various kinds of associates from a supply-side view, like my theory's, in terms of opportunities for associating with diverse others. On the basis of previous research on the composition of families and work places, we know that families are more diverse in age and sex but less diverse in ethnic

and religious affiliation than associates at work. Accordingly, Marsden hypothesizes more intergroup relations in respect to age and sex and fewer intergroup relations in respect to ethnic and religious affiliation between relatives than between fellow workers. The results support these hypotheses, which stipulate intergroup as well as ingroup relations even between close associates. Marsden concludes that my macrostructural opportunity theory is applicable to the study of the relations in microstructures, contrary to what I myself had stated.

I am pleased that the theory can be used in the investigation of face-to-face networks, which I had questioned. One should note, however, that confining network analysis to the supply-side approach would fail to take full advantage of the possibilities for analysis the small scope of these networks provides. In the study of large populations, analysis and research cannot proceed without ignoring the complexities of social life by having to aggregate specific observations into gross concepts and measures, like heterogeneity, intersection, or intergroup relations. The subtle processes that govern face-to-face relations are admittedly (but inevitably) obscured by such aggregations. The study of interpersonal relations and small networks can directly analyze these processes and thereby contribute to our understanding of them.

IMBALANCE IN EXCHANGE

A paradox of social exchange is that it gives rise to both social bonds between peers and differentiation of status. This was the case for the ceremonial exchange of gifts in nonliterate societies, and it is the case for exchange processes in advanced industrial societies. To start by exemplifying the former, the Kula ceremonial gift exchange of the Trobriand Islanders, as discussed by Malinowski (1961: 92), "provides every man within its ring with a few friends near at hand, and with some friendly allies in far away, dangerous, foreign districts." A few pages later he states that "among the natives of the Kula . . . wealth is the indispensable appanage of social rank" (p. 97). Probably the extreme case of the significance of social exchange for differentiation of status is the famous potlatch of the Kwakiutl, a feast of reckless spending in which "status in associations and

clans, and rank of every kind, are determined by the war of property" (Maus 1954: 35).

A contemporary case of status differentiation resulting from social exchange was observed in the office of a federal government agency responsible for the enforcement of certain laws. The duties of the agents involved investigating private firms by auditing their books and conducting interviews, determining any legal violations and the action to be taken, and negotiating a settlement with the employer or a top manager. The work was quite complex, and agents often encountered problems. When they did, they were expected to consult their supervisor, but they tended to be reluctant to do so for fear of adversely affecting their annual rating by their supervisor. Instead, they usually consulted colleagues. Whereas officially prohibited, this practice was widespread and evidently tolerated. Although agents worked on different cases, one could observe all day long pairs or small clusters of persons in deep discussions, most of which dealt with problems of their cases. Lunch periods were filled with such discussions.

The observation of these consultations originally gave me the idea of social exchange. To cite the central passage (Blau 1955: 108):²

A consultation can be considered an exchange of values; both participants gain something and both have to pay a price. The questioning agent is enabled to perform better than he could otherwise have done, without exposing his difficulties to the supervisor. By asking for advice, he implicitly pays his respect to the superior proficiency of his colleague. This acknowledgment of inferiority is the cost of receiving assistance. The consultant gains prestige, in return for which he is willing to devote some time to the consultation and permit it to disrupt his own work. The following remark illustrates this: 'I like giving advice. It's flattering, I suppose, if you feel that the others come to you for advice.'

The principle of marginal utility applies to these exchanges. Although most agents liked being consulted, for those frequently asked for advice the gain in informal status of an additional consultation diminished and the cost in repeated interruptions of one's own work increased. As the most popular consultant

said to me when asked about being consulted, "I never object, although sometimes it's annoying." The principle also applies to agents who frequently need advice, but in reverse, of course.

Repeated admissions of needing advice undermine one's self-confidence and standing in the group, particularly if an oft-interrupted consultant expresses some impatience or annoyance. To forestall such experiences, most agents establish partnerships of mutual consultation, reserving consulting the most expert colleagues for their most difficult problems. Since agents often have tentative solutions for their problems and need not so much an answer as assurance that theirs is correct, a colleague whose expertise is not superior to one's own can provide such support.

The most expert agents face a different dilemma: asking for advice or even for confirmation of their tentative solutions may well endanger their superior standing as experts. Making official decisions in a difficult case on one's own can easily raise doubts and questions in a person's mind, even an expert's. One way to cope with this situation is to stop going over it again and again in one's head and instead telling some colleagues about the interesting problems that have arisen in a given case and discussing how they might be solved, possibly over lunch if not in the office.

Such "thinking out loud" may well stimulate new associations and ideas one would not have come up with on one's own, particularly as the listeners are also experienced agents, who might raise objections if one is on the wrong track, and whose assent implicit in attentive listening and interested questions conveys approval. In contrast to asking for advice, telling colleagues about interesting problems in a case and how they might be solved enhances the respect of one's colleagues, though it is, in effect, a subtle form of asking colleagues to corroborate one's own provisional decisions.

To put the underlying principles of imbalanced and balanced exchange into general terms, rendering important services or providing valued benefactions is a claim to superior status. Reciprocation denies this claim, and excessive returns make a counterclaim, which can lead to a potlatch-like war of seeking to

outdo one another to stay ahead. Failure to reciprocate by discharging one's obligations validates the claim and acknowledges the other's superiority in return for the benefits received and in the hope of continuing to receive them. Thus, the contingency that determines whether social exchanges lead to friendships between peers or superordination and subordination is whether benefits received are reciprocated or not. This, in turn, depends on whether one of the two parties has superior resources of the kind that are in contention (which was professional competence in the case of agents).³

In a seminal article, Emerson (1962) specified conditions in which balance in social exchange can be restored. I have slightly modified his scheme to conceptualize it as four alternatives to becoming dependent on a person's influence who has some services to offer that others need or want. First, they can give him something he needs or wants enough to reciprocate by satisfying their wishes, provided that they have resources that meet his needs. Second, they can obtain the needed benefits elsewhere, assuming that they have access to alternative sources of these benefits. These two possibilities, if recurring, result in reciprocal exchange relations between peers. Third, they can coerce him to give them what they want. This involves domination by force and is outside the purview of exchange. Fourth, they can resign themselves to do without what they thought they needed, which is Diogenes' solution for remaining independent.

If none of these four alternatives is available, the others become dependent on the supplier of the needed services and must defer to her to reciprocate for the benefits received lest she lose interest in continuing to provide them. Deference implies not only paying respect to another's superior ability, implicit in asking her help, but also deferring to her wishes in everyday intercourse. Thus, the social interaction among colleagues or in other groups that involves imbalances in social exchange gives rise to differentiation in the power to influence as well as in prestige, which is reflected in a stratified structure of informal status.

The illustration of instrumental assistance in a work group may have left the misleading impression that most social exchange involves instrumental

benefits. Much of the social interaction, even among co-workers and still more outside a work situation, is social intercourse engaged in for its own sake. Hechter (1987: 33) states that people often join groups to pursue joint goods or common objectives, and he stresses that their joint achievement and, particularly, the intrinsic gratifications obtained from social associations among fellow members are the sources of group solidarity.⁴

Workers who organize in order to bargain collectively with their employer for higher wages exemplify joint efforts to achieve a common objective. It is in the interest of the group as a whole if workers who devote more energy to and prove more adept in this endeavor are allowed to take the leading role in their organizing effort. Thus, superior status based on past services prompts other workers to acknowledge and submit to the leadership of the one who seems to be most effective in making contributions to organizing the nascent union. Informal leadership is legitimated by the social approval of the rest of the group, and this approval is the return for past services and for the future contributions the leader is expected to make to the welfare of the group by helping to organize them.⁵

This fictitious description may well be idealized, but it is not completely inaccurate for the initial stage of workers getting together on their own to organize themselves for joint bargaining. To be sure, it is not applicable to formal positions of leadership, particularly not to the impersonal power their incumbents exercise. Thus, the description is not intended to depict the leadership of large national unions; indeed, it is designed as a contrast to them. Once a union has become a large, formal organization and its leaders have become persons of great power, a handful of workers with a grievance cannot on their own decide upon a course of action if the powerful leader is opposed. All they can do is organize a wildcat strike informally, as workers originally did, but now against both the union leadership and management. The point of this illustration is that the interpersonal power that develops in face-to-face relations is fundamentally different from the impersonal power to dominate large numbers, even in the rare cases when the latter emerged from the former.⁶

NOTES

1. Cultural theories that explain social patterns in terms of norms and values are prone to commit this tautology. It is the same fallacy as that of psychological explanations of behavior in terms of instincts to engage in such behavior.
2. As indicated by the publication date, this was written long before the women's movement called attention to the implicit bias involved in referring to some unspecified person always by the masculine pronoun instead of using either he/she or even s/he (which I find deplorable) or alternating between feminine and masculine pronouns, as I have done. . . .
3. This analysis applies to processes of differentiation in informal status among persons whose formal status is essentially the same.
4. The achievement of joint goods raises the well-known free-rider problem (that persons may benefit from public goods without contributing to their production), which Hechter considers to have solved by distinguishing partly excludable goods from public goods. The former are not available to the entire public but only to group members. His major illustration is that one cannot enjoy the sociability in a group without having become a member and thus a contributor to that sociability. But this solution does not work for instrumental objectives, as indicated by the case next discussed in the text.
5. Workers who fail to contribute to the organizing efforts of the new union would also benefit from its success, which illustrates the criticism I made in the last sentence of the preceding footnote that Hechter's (1987) concept of partial excludability does not solve the freeloader problem for joint instrumental objectives.
6. I am particularly critical of the inference made by conservative social scientists that the elite's domination of society's economy and government is earned as a return for the great contributions they have made to society. It is the counterpart of the assumption that oligopolistic corporations achieved their position in free competition.

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37. HUMAN CAPITAL AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

In *Foundations of Social Theory* (1990), a lengthy theoretical treatise written near the end of a long and varied sociological career, James S. Coleman (1926–1995) emerged as the most important spokesperson in sociology for rational choice theory, an orientation that has had a major impact in economics and political science. As with Homans' exchange theory, the starting point for Coleman's paradigm is the individual; he endorses a conceptual orientation known as "methodological individualism." The two elementary concepts in Coleman's theory are actors and resources. In this selection from the book, two key resources—human capital and social capital—are described. The former refers to the skills and knowledge an individual possesses, while the latter refers to social relations.

Probably the most important and most original development in the economics of education in the past thirty years has been the idea that the concept of physical capital, as embodied in tools, machines, and other productive equipment, can be extended to include human capital as well (see Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964). Just as physical capital is created by making changes in materials so as to form tools that facilitate production, human capital is created by changing persons so as to give them skills and capabilities that make them able to act in new ways.

Social capital, in turn, is created when the relations among persons change in ways that facilitate action. Physical capital is wholly tangible, being embodied in observable material form; human capital is less tangible, being embodied in the skills and knowledge acquired by an individual; social capital is even less tangible, for it is embodied in the *relations* among persons. Physical capital and human capital facilitate productive activity, and social capital does so as well. For example, a group whose members manifest trustworthiness and place extensive trust in one another will be able to accomplish much more than a comparable group lacking that trustworthiness and trust.

The distinction between human capital and social capital can be exhibited by a diagram such as Figure 37.1, which represents the relations of three persons (A, B, and C); the human capital resides in the nodes, and the social capital resides in the lines connecting the nodes. Social capital and human capital are often complementary. For example, if B is a child and A is an adult who is a parent of B, then for A to further the cognitive development of B, there must be capital in both the node and the link. There must be human capital held by A and social capital in the relation between A and B.

Using the concept of social capital will uncover no processes that are different in fundamental ways from those discussed in other chapters. This concept groups some of those processes together and blurs distinctions between types of social relations, distinctions that are important for other purposes. The value of the concept lies primarily in the fact that it identifies certain aspects of social structure by their function, just as the concept "chair" identifies certain physical objects by their function, disregarding differences in form, appearance, and construction. The function identified by the concept "social capital" is the value of those

Foundations of Social Theory, James S. Coleman, Harvard University Press. pp. 304–313. ♦

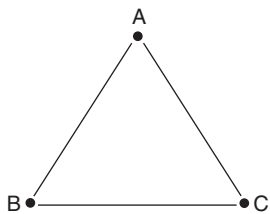


FIGURE 37.1 Three-Person Structure: Human Capital in Nodes and Social Capital in Relations

aspects of social structure to actors, as resources that can be used by the actors to realize their interests.

By identifying this function of certain aspects of social structure, the concept of social capital aids in both accounting for different outcomes at the level of individual actors and making the micro-to-macro transition without elaborating the social-structural details through which this occurs. For example, characterizing the clandestine study circles of South Korean radical students as constituting social capital that these students can use in their revolutionary activities is an assertion that the groups constitute a resource which aids in moving the students from individual protest to organized revolt. If a resource that accomplishes this task is held to be necessary in a theory of revolt . . . then the study circles can be grouped with other organizational structures, of different origins, which have fulfilled the same function for individuals with revolutionary goals in other contexts, such as the *comités d'action lycéen* of the French student revolt of 1968 or the workers' cells in czarist Russia described and advocated by Lenin (1973 [1902]).

It is true, of course, that for other purposes one wants to investigate the details of such organizational resources, to understand the elements that are critical to their usefulness as resources for a given purpose, and to examine how they came into being in a particular case. But the concept of social capital can allow showing how such resources can be combined with other resources to produce different system-level behavior or, in other cases, different outcomes for individuals. Whether social capital will come to be as useful a quantitative concept in social science as are the concepts of financial capital, physical capital, and human capital remains to be seen; its current value lies primarily in its usefulness for qualitative analyses of

social systems and for those quantitative analyses that employ qualitative indicators.

. . . [T]he concept of social capital will be left unanalyzed (as it was in the brief descriptions given above as examples). In this chapter, however, I will examine just what it is about social relations that can constitute useful capital resources for individuals.

OBLIGATIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

. . . [I]f A does something for B and trusts B to reciprocate in the future, this establishes an expectation in A and an obligation on the part of B to keep the trust. This obligation can be conceived of as a "credit slip" held by A to be redeemed by some performance by B. If A holds a large number of these credit slips from a number of persons with whom he has relations, then the analogy to financial capital is direct: The credit slips constitute a large body of credit on which A can draw if necessary—unless, of course, the placement of trust has been unwise, and the slips represent bad debts that will not be repaid. In some social structures (such as, for example, the neighborhoods discussed by Willmott and Young, 1967) it is said that people are "always doing things for each other." There are a large number of these credit slips outstanding, often on both sides of a relation (for these credit slips often appear to be not fungible across different areas of activity, so credit slips from B held by A and those from A held by B are not fully used to cancel each other out). . . . In other social structures where individuals are more self-sufficient, depending on each other less, there are fewer of these credit slips outstanding at any time.

Two elements are critical to this form of social capital: the level of trustworthiness of the social environment, which means that obligations will be repaid, and the actual extent of obligations held. Social structures differ in both of these dimensions, and actors within a particular structure differ in the second.

A case which illustrates the value of trustworthiness is the rotating credit association found in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. These associations are groups of friends and neighbors who typically meet monthly; each person contributes the same amount of money to a central fund, which is then given to one of the members (through bidding or by lot). After n months

each of the n persons has made n contributions and received one payout. As Geertz (1962) points out, these associations serve as efficient institutions for amassing savings for small capital expenditures, an important aid to economic development. Without a high degree of trustworthiness among the members of the group, such a credit association could not exist—for a person who received a payout early in the sequence of meetings could abscond, leaving the others with a loss. One could not imagine such a rotating credit association operating successfully in urban areas marked by a high degree of social disorganization—or, in other words, by a lack of social capital.

Another situation in which extreme trustworthiness facilitates actions that would not otherwise be possible is that of heads of state. Various accounts of the experiences of heads of state suggest that for persons in this position it is extremely valuable to have an extension of one's self, an agent one can trust absolutely to act as one would in a given situation. Many heads of state have such a person, who may not occupy a formal position of power but may be a member of a personal staff. The fact that these persons are often old friends, or cronies, rather than persons who have distinguished themselves in some political activity, is derivative from this: The most important attribute of such a person is that trust can be placed in him, and this requirement often dictates choosing a long-term personal friend. Such persons often come to have enormous power due to their proximity to a head of state and the trust placed in them; and there are many recorded accounts of the use of that power. What is of interest here is the social capital this relation provides for the head of state, assuming that the trust is well placed. The trusted other is virtually an extension of self, allowing the head of state to expand his capacity for action.

Still another case that illustrates the importance of trustworthiness as a form of social capital is a system of mutual trust. The extreme example of such a system is a couple, each of whom places extensive trust in the other, whether they are deeply in love or not. For both members of such a couple, the relation has extraordinary psychological value. Each can confide in the other, can expose inner doubts, can be completely forthright with the other, can raise sensitive issues—all without fear of the other's misuse of the trust.

Differences in social structures with respect to the extent of outstanding obligations arise for a variety of reasons. These include, besides the general level of trustworthiness that leads obligations to be repaid, the actual needs that persons have for help, the existence of other sources of aid (such as government welfare services), the degree of affluence (which reduces the amount of aid needed from others), cultural differences in the tendency to lend aid and ask for aid (see Banfield, 1967), the degree of closure of social networks, the logistics of social contacts (see Festinger, Schachter, and Back, 1963), and other factors. Individuals in social structures with high levels of obligations outstanding at any time, whatever the source of those obligations, have greater social capital on which they can draw. The density of outstanding obligations means, in effect, that the overall usefulness of the tangible resources possessed by actors in that social structure is amplified by their availability to other actors when needed.

In a farming community such as . . . where one farmer got his hay baled by another and where farm tools are extensively borrowed and lent, the social capital allows each farmer to get his work done with less physical capital in the form of tools and equipment. Such a social structure is analogous to an industrial community in which bills of exchange (that is, debts) are passed around, serving as money and effectively reducing the financial capital necessary to carry out a given level of manufacturing activity. (See Ashton, 1945, for a description of this in Lancashire in the 1790s, before a centralized monetary system was well established in England.)

Individual actors in a social system also differ with respect to the extent of credit slips on which they can draw at any time. For example, in hierarchically structured extended family settings, a patriarch often holds an extraordinarily large set of such credit slips, which he can call in at any time to get done what he wants done. Another clear example occurs in villages in traditional settings that are highly stratified, where certain wealthy families, because of their wealth, have built up extensive credits on which they can call at any time. (It is the existence of such asymmetries that can make some families immune to sanctions that can be used to regulate the actions of others in the community. . . .)

Similarly, in a political setting such as a legislature, a legislator in a position that brings extra resources (such as the Speaker of the House of Representatives or the Majority Leader of the Senate in the U.S. Congress) can, by effective use of those resources, build up a set of credits from other legislators so that it becomes possible for him to get legislation passed that would otherwise be defeated. This concentration of obligations constitutes social capital that is useful not only for the powerful legislator, but also in increasing the level of action of the legislature. Thus those members of legislatures who have extensive credit slips should be more powerful than those who do not because they can use the credits to produce bloc voting on many issues. It is well recognized, for example, that in the U.S. Senate, some senators are members of what is called the Senate Club, and others are not. This in effect means that some senators are embedded in a system of credits and debts, and others (outside the Club) are not. It is also well recognized that those in the Club are more powerful than those outside it.

Another example showing asymmetry in the sets of obligations and expectations is the one . . . about the crisis in medical care in the United States due to liability suits. Traditionally physicians have been in control of events having literally life-and-death importance to patients, who in turn often felt unable to adequately compensate them for the extreme benefits they brought about. Part of a physician's payment was in the form of gratitude, deference, and high occupational prestige. These constituted a felt obligation to the physician, a form of social capital which inhibited patients dissatisfied with the outcome of their medical treatments from taking action against the physician.

But several factors have changed. One is that physicians' monopoly on medical knowledge has been lessened by an expansion of education. A second is a reduction in the likelihood that there is a personal relation between physician and patient, since a patient is less likely to use a family doctor or even a general practitioner and more likely to see specialists for particular medical problems. A third is the high income of many physicians, which reduces the perceived asymmetry between service and compensation. A fourth is the increased use of liability insurance, which transfers the financial cost of a lawsuit from physician to insurer.

The combination of these and other factors has reduced the social capital that protected the physician from becoming a target when patients experienced undesirable medical outcomes.

Why do rational actors create obligations? Although some of the variation in the extent of outstanding obligations arises from social changes of the sort described above, some appears to arise from the intentional creation of obligation by a person who does something for another. For example, Turnbull (1972), who studied the Ik, a poverty-ridden tribe in Africa, describes an occasion when a man arrived home to find his neighbors, unasked, on the roof of his house fixing it. Despite his not wanting this aid, he was unable to induce them to stop. In this case and others there appears to be, not the creation of obligations through necessity, but a purposive creation of obligations. The giving of gifts has been interpreted in this light (see Mauss, 1954), as have the potlatches of the Kwakiutl tribe in the Pacific Northwest. In rural areas persons who do favors for others often seem to prefer that these favors not be repaid immediately, and those for whom a favor is done sometimes seem anxious to relieve themselves of the obligation.

Although the motives for freeing oneself from obligations may be readily understood (especially if the existence of obligations consumes one's attention), the motives for creating obligations toward oneself are less transparent. If there is a nonzero chance that the obligation will not be repaid, it would appear that rational persons would extend such credit only if they expect to receive something greater in return—just as a bank makes a loan only at sufficient interest to realize a profit after allowing for risk. The question then becomes whether there is anything about social obligations to make a rational person interested in establishing and maintaining such obligations on the part of others toward himself.

A possible answer is this: When I do a favor for you, this ordinarily occurs at a time when you have a need and involves no great cost to me. If I am rational and purely self-interested, I see that the importance to you of this favor is sufficiently great that you will be ready to repay me with a favor in my time of need

that will benefit me more than this favor costs me—unless, of course, you are also in need at that time. This does not apply when the favor is merely the lending of money, since a unit of money holds about the same interest to a person over time.¹ When the favor involves services, expenditure of time, or some other nonfungible resource, however, or when it is of intrinsically more value to the recipient than to the donor (such as help with a task that can be done by two persons but not by one), this kind of mutually profitable exchange is quite possible. The profitability for the donor depends on the recipient's not repaying the favor until the donor is in need.

Thus creating obligations by doing favors can constitute a kind of insurance policy for which the premiums are paid in inexpensive currency and the benefit arrives as valuable currency. There may easily be a positive expected profit.

There is one more point: A rational, self-interested person may attempt to prevent others from doing favors for him or may attempt to relieve himself of an obligation at a time he chooses (that is, when repaying the favor costs him little), rather than when the donor is in need, because the call for his services may come at an inconvenient time (when repaying the obligation would be costly). Thus in principle there can be a struggle between a person wanting to do a favor for another and the other not wanting to have the favor done for him or a struggle between a person attempting to repay a favor and his creditor attempting to prevent repayment.

INFORMATION POTENTIAL

An important form of social capital is the potential for information that inheres in social relations. Information is important in providing a basis for action. But acquisition of information is costly. The minimum it requires is attention, which is always in short supply. One means by which information can be acquired is to use social relations that are maintained for other purposes. Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) show how this operates for women in several areas of life; for example, a woman who has an interest in being in style but not at the leading edge of fashion can use certain friends, who do stay on the leading edge, as sources of information. As another example, a

person who is not deeply interested in current events but who is interested in being informed about important developments can save the time required to read a newspaper if he can get the information he wants from a friend who pays attention to such matters. A social scientist who is interested in being up to date on research in related fields can make use of his everyday interactions with colleagues to do so, if he can depend on them to be up to date in their fields.

All these are examples of social relations that constitute a form of social capital in providing information that facilitates action. The relations in this case are valuable for the information they provide, not for the credit slips they provide in the form of obligations that one holds for others' performance.

NORMS AND EFFECTIVE SANCTIONS

... When an effective norm does exist, it constitutes a powerful, but sometimes fragile, form of social capital. Effective norms that inhibit crime in a city make it possible for women to walk freely outside at night and for old people to leave their homes without fear. Norms in a community that support and provide effective rewards for high achievement in school greatly facilitate the school's task. A prescriptive norm that constitutes an especially important form of social capital within a collectivity is the norm that one should forgo self-interests to act in the interests of the collectivity. A norm of this sort, reinforced by social support, status, honor, and other rewards, is the social capital which builds young nations (and which dissipates as they grow older), strengthens families by leading members to act selflessly in the family's interest, facilitates the development of nascent social movements from a small group of dedicated, inward-looking, and mutually rewarding persons, and in general leads persons to work for the public good. In some of these cases the norms are internalized; in others they are largely supported through external rewards for selfless actions and disapproval for selfish actions. But whether supported by internal or external sanctions, norms of this sort are important in overcoming the public-good problem that exists in conjoint collectivities.

As all these examples suggest, effective norms can constitute a powerful form of social capital. This social capital, however, like the forms described earlier, not only facilitates certain actions but also constrains others. Strong and effective norms about young persons' behavior in a community can keep them from having a good time. Norms which make it possible for women to walk alone at night also constrain the activities of criminals (and possibly of some noncriminals as well). Even prescriptive norms that reward certain actions, such as a norm which says that a boy who is a good athlete should go out for football, are in effect directing energy away from other activities. Effective norms in an area can reduce innovativeness in that area, can constrain not only deviant actions that harm others but also deviant actions that can benefit everyone. (See Merton, 1968, pp. 195–203, for a discussion of how this can come about.)

AUTHORITY RELATIONS

If actor A has transferred rights of control of certain actions to another actor, B, then B has available social capital in the form of those rights of control. If a number of actors have transferred similar rights of control to B, then B has available an extensive body of social capital, which can be concentrated on certain activities. Of course, this puts extensive power in B's hands. What is not quite so straightforward is that the very concentration of these rights in a single actor increases the total social capital by overcoming (in principle, if not always entirely in fact) the free-rider problem experienced by individuals with similar interests but without a common authority. It appears, in fact, to be precisely the desire to bring into being the social capital needed to solve common problems that leads persons under certain circumstances to vest authority in a charismatic leader (as discussed . . . in Zablocki, 1980, and Scholem, 1973).

APPROPRIABLE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Voluntary organizations are brought into being to further some purpose of those who initiate them. In a housing project built during World War II in a city in the eastern United States, there were many physical problems caused by poor construction, such as faulty plumbing,

crumbling sidewalks, and other defects (Merton, n.d.). Residents organized to confront the builders and to address these problems in other ways. Later, when the problems were solved, the residents' organization remained active and constituted available social capital which improved the quality of life in the project. Residents had available to them resources that were seen as unavailable where they had lived before. (For example, despite the fact that there were *fewer* teenagers in the community, residents were *more* likely to express satisfaction concerning the availability of babysitters.)

Members of the New York Typographical Union who were monotype operators formed a social club called the Monotype Club (Lipset, Trow, and Coleman, 1956). Later, as employers looked for monotype operators and as monotype operators looked for jobs, both found this organization to be an effective employment referral service and utilized it for this purpose. Still later, when the Progressive Party came into power in the New York Typographical Union, the Monotype Club served as an organizational resource for the ousted Independent Party. The Monotype Club subsequently served as an important source of social capital for the Independents, sustaining their party as an organized opposition while they were out of office.

In an example used earlier in this chapter, the study circles of South Korean student radicals were described as being groups of students who came from the same high school or hometown or church. In this case also, organization that was initiated for one purpose is appropriate for other purposes, constituting important social capital for the individuals who have available to them the organizational resources.

These examples illustrate the general point that organization brought into existence for one set of purposes can also aid others, thus constituting social capital that is available for use.² It may be that this form of social capital can be dissolved, with nothing left over, into elements that are discussed under other headings in this section, that is, obligations and expectations, information potential, norms, and authority relations. If so, listing this form of social capital is redundant. But the phenomenon of social organization being appropriated as existing social capital for new purposes is such a pervasive one that separate mention appears warranted.

INTENTIONAL ORGANIZATION

A major use of the concept of social capital depends on its being a by-product of activities engaged in for other purposes. . . . [T]here is often little or no direct investment in social capital. There are, however, forms of social capital which are the direct result of investment by actors who have the aim of receiving a return on their investment.

The most prominent example is a business organization created by the owners of financial capital for the purpose of earning income for them. These organizations ordinarily take the form of authority structures composed of positions connected by obligations and expectations and occupied by persons. . . . In creating such an organization, an entrepreneur or capitalist transforms financial capital into physical capital in the form of buildings and tools, social capital in the form of the organization of positions, and human capital in the form of persons occupying positions. Like the other forms of capital, social capital requires investment in the designing of the structure of obligations and expectations, responsibility and authority, and norms (or rules) and sanctions which will bring about an effectively functioning organization.

Another form of intentional organization is a voluntary association which produces a public good. For

example, a group of parents whose children attend a school forms a PTA chapter where one did not exist before. This organization constitutes social capital not only for the organizers but for the school, the students, and other parents. Even if the organization serves only the original purpose for which it is organized and is not appropriated for other purposes, as is the case for organizations described in an earlier section, it serves this purpose, by its very nature, for a wider range of actors than those who initiated it. Such an organization is, concretely, of the same sort as those described earlier. The PTA is the same kind of organization as the Monotype Club, the residents' association formed to deal with faulty plumbing, and the church groups of South Korean Youth. All are voluntary associations. As it functions, however, the organization creates two kinds of by-products as social capital. One is the by-product described in the preceding section, the appropriability of the organization for other purposes. A second is the by-product described here: Because the organization produces a public good, its creation by one subset of persons makes its benefits available to others as well, whether or not they participate. For example, the disciplinary standards promulgated by an active PTA change a school in ways that benefit non-participants as well as participants. . . .

NOTES

1. It is interesting that, for persons whose interest in money fluctuates wildly over time, this sort of exchange is possible. In a rural county in West Virginia, the county clerk would lend money to the three town drunks when their need for money was great and then collect from them, with exorbitant interest, when they received their welfare checks, when money was of less interest to them.
2. A classic instance of this is described by Sills (1957). The March of Dimes was originally dedicated to the elimination of polio. When Salk's vaccine virtually eradicated polio, the March of Dimes organization did not go out of existence but directed its efforts toward other diseases.

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38. FAIRNESS AND NORMS

Jon Elster (b. 1940) is currently the Robert K. Merton Professor of the Social Sciences at Columbia University. Born in Norway, he received his Ph.D. from the University of Paris in 1972, where he was a student of Raymond Aron. In addition to teaching in his native Norway and in France, he has spent much of his career in the United States, first in Chicago and later at Columbia in New York City. His work, framed early in his career by rational choice theory, is wide-ranging, including a broad interest in the philosophy of the social sciences, a defense of methodological individualism, the theory of distributive justice, and an analytical Marxism informed by game theory. In "Fairness and Norms," Elster makes use of the Ultimatum Game and by contrast to the Dictator Game, in addition to concrete empirical examples such as dealing with water shortages to explore how people come to view some acts and outcomes as unfair. He identifies and explores three fairness behaviors: the rejection of unfair division, conditional cooperation, and reciprocity.

The term "fairness," in everyday language, seems to be used in two main ways. First, there is the idea of a *fair division* of something. A child might say, "It's not fair that she shall get a bigger slice of the cake." In this sense, the term might refer either to the outcome of a division or to the act of dividing itself. The act of proposing an unfair division may be seen as unfair. Consider the Ultimatum Game (UG) in which one person, the Proposer, offers a division of \$10 between himself and another person, the Responder. If the Responder accepts, the proposal is implemented. If she refuses, neither gets anything. Often, a proposal to divide the \$10 into \$8 for the Proposer and \$2 for the Responder is rejected.

In fact, however, act unfairness seems more basic than outcome unfairness. If the Proposer is constrained to choose between (\$8, \$2) and (\$2, \$8), the former proposal is less likely to be rejected (Camerer, 2003: 81–82). We perceive an act to be unfair if we can impute it to an *intention* to treat the other person unfairly (Rabin, 1983), which is certainly the case if the Proposer chooses (\$8, \$2) over (\$5, \$5), but less obviously if he chooses (\$8, \$2) over (\$2, \$8). We may note,

moreover, that the difference between responses in the constrained and unconstrained UG also allows us to exclude *envy* as the motivation in the latter case. Whereas perceptions of outcome unfairness may be hard to distinguish from envy, act unfairness is clearly different.

A fair division may, but need not be, an equal division. In everyday interactions, there is a plethora of norms—social as well as moral—that suggest unequal rather than equal division. Allocative principles of the type "To each according to his X," where X could be need, effort, efficiency (ability to convert the scarce good into welfare), temporal priority, or one of many other criteria (Elster, 1992), may in a given situation be perceived as fairer than an equal split. Often, however, more than one principle may apply. One worker may say, "I should earn more because I have children," whereas another might say, "I should get more because I worked harder." In such a case, equal division may be chosen as a focal-point compromise between competing fairness-based claims (Schelling, 1960), rather than because of any intrinsic fairness property of equal division. Often, however, it may be hard to

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tell whether equal division is chosen on grounds of fairness or because of its focal-point properties.

Second, there is the idea of a *fair response* to the behavior of other people. In one subcase, this takes the form of a *reluctance to be a free rider* in many-person interactions. A person might say, "It's only fair that I refrain from littering, given that most others refrain." Alternatively, he or she might say, "Fairness does not require me to abstain from littering, given that most others do litter." I shall refer to this pattern as *conditional cooperation* (Fehr and Fischbacher: 2004a).

In another subcase, fairness is related to two-person interactions. A farmer might say, "Given that my neighbor helped me with my harvest, it's only fair that I help him with his." He might also say, "Given that my neighbor did not help me, it's not unfair if I don't help him." By extension, he might say, "Given that my neighbor let his cattle graze on my land, I am justified in letting my cattle graze on his." By a further extension, he might say, "Given that my neighbor let his cattle graze on my land, I am justified in taking them to a faraway place, at some cost to me but even greater to him"

These extensions stretch the intuitive idea of fairness. They capture in fact a more general notion, that of *reciprocity*. Put simply, reciprocity requires you to help those who help you, and allows you, perhaps even requires you, to hurt those who hurt you. In the case of helping those who helped you, the term fairness is appropriate. In the case of revenge, hurting those who hurt you, it is not. But I shall not insist on this terminological question.

So far I have isolated three fairness behaviors: the rejection of unfair division, conditional cooperation, and reciprocity. One might ask whether these really require fairness as the *motivation* of the agents. Could they not simply be produced by self-interest? If agents interact on an ongoing basis, this may indeed be the case. In the UG, the Responder might reject stingy proposals in order to build a reputation for toughness that will induce the Proposer (or other Proposers) to be more generous in the future. Reciprocity, too, may follow from simple self-interest. You help your neighbor and expect to be helped in turn, because in an ongoing interaction you both have an interest in doing so. If your neighbor breaks the implicit agreement, you might retaliate to bring him back in line. Conditional cooperation may

also be caused by self-interest, if all understand 1) that all are better off if they follow this policy, and 2) that it will unravel by a unilateral deviation. In these cases, self-interest *mimics* fairness (Elster, 2004).

If the agents can observe what others are doing, in a face-to-face interaction, fairness behaviors might occur even in a one-off situation. I might refrain from cheating another simply because I do not want her to think badly of me, even if I have no reason to think I shall meet her again. In experiments, subjects might not want the *experimenter* to think badly of them. The belief that another holds one in contempt is intrinsically painful. This might explain, for instance, the otherwise puzzling fact that people tip in restaurants even when they do not expect to come back (Conlin and O'Donoghue, 2003). In these cases, the emotion of shame mimics fairness.

To determine whether fairness behaviors are in fact fairness motivated, we would want to study situations in which people interact anonymously in one-shot situations. In the laboratory, this can easily be achieved for rejection of unfair division and for reciprocity. For conditional cooperation it would seem more difficult, since for people to cooperate conditionally on what others do, they have to refer to a previous round of interaction. This problem might be circumvented, however, by allowing for sequential choices.

Suppose, namely, that 6 subjects are each endowed with a certain sum of money, and told that if they contribute some of it to a common pool it will be multiplied and the multiplied amount then distributed equally to all subjects, whether or not they have made a contribution themselves. Contributions are made sequentially, under conditions of full knowledge. The second person knows how much the first person contributed, the third how much the first two donated, and so on. Taking advantage of the anonymity that allows experimenters to manipulate information, they might tell persons 4 through 6, in different groups of six, that their three predecessors had made contributions of varying sizes, and see if their contributions increased with the average size of the (alleged) earlier contributions. A study by Shafir and Tversky (1992) of two-person games with sequential choices suggest that they will. Early low contributions would trigger low contributions later; early large contributions would trigger large contributions later.

Pursuing this idea, one might imagine experiments in which persons 1 through 3 are real subjects making real decisions. In one condition, they would be told that subjects 4 through 6 would not know how much they had contributed. In another, they would be told, truthfully, that subjects 4 through 6 would not know how much they had given. I conjecture that subjects 1 through 3 would contribute more in the first condition, in the expectation that their generosity would trigger the generosity of their successors in the sequence. In fact, subjects 1 through 3 might do so even if they are purely self-interested, as long as they think that others are likely to be more generous.

The findings of Shafir and Tversky also suggest that subjects 4 through 6 might contribute more when they do not know the decisions of their predecessors than when they know how much they contributed, even when the prior contributions are believed to be quite generous. Hence, in addition to fairness, cooperation may be induced by *magical thinking*. If I do not know how much my predecessors have given, I might contribute generously because I believe, unconsciously, that by doing so I may cause their contributions to be high too. There is both experimental and other empirical evidence that this “everyday Calvinism,” or maybe one should call it “everyday Kantianism,” has a certain grip on the mind (Elster, 1989:195–202).

Let me return to the rejection of unfair division and reciprocity. In the UG, low offers are frequently rejected, whereas self-interest would dictate acceptance of any positive offer. Another stylized fact of this game is that Proposers tend to offer something like a 6–4 division. For reasons I shall spell out shortly, I do not think this tendency is due only to fairness motivations on their part. Self-interest is also part of the picture.

Experiments in anonymous one-shot situations also confirm the existence of positive as well as negative reciprocity. In a trust game (Fehr and Rockenbach, 2003), one subject has the option of transferring part of his endowment to another. In the process of transfer, the amount is also multiplied. The other subject then has the option of transferring some of the gains back to the trustor. Self-interest would dictate zero transfers and, if a transfer nevertheless occurred, zero back transfers. In experiments, most trustors make a positive transfer and most trustees a positive back

transfer. The larger the transfer, the larger the back transfer, confirming the force of reciprocity.

In a variant of this game, trustees are given the option of punishing trustors who make low or no back transfers. The punishment is costly, in the sense that trustors have to spend one unit of their endowment to impose a penalty of several units on the trustee. Many trustors use this option to punish stingy trustees, even though they have nothing to gain and something to lose from doing so. Interestingly, when trustors have this option but announce to the trustee that they are not going to use it, back transfers are higher than when they do not have it. The lowest back transfers occur when they have the option and announce that they are going to use it. Thus trust, in the sense of refraining from taking precautions, induces more reciprocity than what we might call blind trust, which is exercised when the option of taking precautions does not exist. Threats, by contrast, are counterproductive.

In various writings, Ernst Fehr and his collaborators introduce three further variations on the theme of punishment. First, punishment may be *altruistic* (Fehr and Gächter, 2002). In some experiments, subjects play the same game again and again, but never with the same partners. Person A may be matched with B in one game, with C in the next, with D in the following, and so on. If A behaves unfairly toward B and B punishes him for his behavior, A may behave better toward C in a later interaction. B's behavior is altruistic, in the behavioral sense of benefiting C at some cost to B. Whether it is altruistic in a motivational sense, is another question, to which Fehr offers a negative answer on the basis of brain scan experiments (Quervain et al., 2004).

Second, Fehr introduces the important idea of *third-party* punishment (Fehr and Fischbacher, 2004b). He shows that C may be willing to spend resources on punishing A for his unfair behavior toward B, even when C has nothing to gain from the punishment. The amount of resources third parties are willing to spend is less, but not much less, than what the offended second party B might spend on punishing A. Fehr argues, moreover, that third-party punishment might in the aggregate be more important than second-party punishment. If, as is often the case, punishment takes the form of refraining from mutually profitable transactions in the future, A might not be deterred by the prospect of being punished

by B. He may not be able to take advantage of B again, but there are plenty of other victims he can exploit. There's a sucker born every minute. Suppose, however, that A behaves unfairly towards B in the presence of C, D, etc. Although A's loss from B's ostracism of him may be small compared with the gains from the unfair behavior, the sum-total of the costs that follow from being ostracized by C, D, etc. may exceed those gains. Even if C, D, etc. do not actually observe B's behavior, gossip may bring it to their attention. Whether, as some writers suggest (Coleman, 1990: 285; Ellickson, 1990:173; Fehr and Fischbacher, 2002c: 18) the existence of gossip can be explained by that function is another matter.

Third, Fehr suggests in some of his writings that punishment of unfair behavior might be reinforced by a norm to *punish nonpunishers* (Fehr and Fischbacher, 2003: 790). I am not sure there is such a norm, and in fact I do not think it is necessary. I agree more with what Fehr asserts in other writings, namely that punishment of unfair behavior occurs spontaneously, based on spontaneous emotional reactions of anger or indignation. If we are looking for something like a multiplier on punishment, third-party punishment is a more plausible candidate than the punishment of nonpunishers.

Fehr refers to reciprocity and conditional cooperation as resulting from the operation of social norms. I want to suggest a different framework. First, let me state how I see the difference between the operation of social norms and of moral norms. The violation of a moral norm triggers simultaneously guilt in the violator and anger in the observer of the violation, if there is an observer. The violation of a social norm triggers first contempt in the observer, and the observation of that reaction triggers in turn shame in the violator. Shameful actions do not by themselves trigger shame. Six French consumers of pedophilia material who killed themselves in 1997 did so only after they were exposed. The year before, an American admiral had killed himself after he was exposed as not entitled to the combat decorations he was wearing.

The two types of norm also have different substantive content. Moral norms include the norm to share equally, the norm to keep promises, the norm to discover the truth when it matters to do so, the norm to tell the truth or at least not to lie, the norm to help others in distress, and so on. Social norms include norms of etiquette, norms regulating the proper and improper use of money,

norms against rate busting and strike breaking, the professional norms of soldiers, lawyers, and doctors, norms against deviant sexual behavior, norms against smoking in the presence of nonsmokers, and many others.

I propose to call norms of reciprocity and of conditional cooperation *quasi-moral norms*. They differ from social norms in the important respect that people abide by them even when they are not observed by others. They are, in that respect, unconditional. At the same time they also have a conditional aspect, in that they are triggered by the behavior of others. By contrast, many moral norms are doubly unconditional. They are not conditional on others observing what the agent is doing, nor on the agent observing what others are doing. Whereas moral norms can be proactive, quasi-moral norms are reactive. Let me first contrast quasi-moral norms with moral norms, and then with social norms.

The norm of reciprocity tells you to help others in distress if they have helped you previously. Moral norms tell you to assist *anyone* in distress, regardless of prior history of cooperation. The quasi-moral norm of conditional cooperation obliges you to donate to charity when others are donating, even though their donations reduce the marginal value of yours. Also, it allows you to abstain from donating when others are not giving, even though your contribution would be especially useful under those circumstances. From the moral point of view, a norm creating a stronger obligation when the *need* is greater seems more appropriate. In practice, that would entail giving more when others give little, but that is not part of the content of the norm. By contrast, in quasimoral norms the behavior of others is cited in the norm itself.

A further reason why strong reciprocity is only a quasi-moral norm emerges when we compare behavior in the UG and the Dictator Game. In the latter, which is not really a game at all, the Proposer can simply allocate the \$10 as he deems fit, and the other player is merely a Recipient rather than a Responder. In both games, the moral norm applies that resources should be shared equally unless one of the parties can claim a special entitlement. The Proposer should retain half of the amount to be divided and offer half to the other person. While the average offer in the UG is about \$4, it is only about \$2 in the Dictator Game.

About half of the Responders in the UG reject offers of \$2 and less. When they do so, it cannot merely be

because they subscribe to a moral norm of equal sharing. Since Proposers and Responders are chosen at random among the subjects, they will on average have the same motivations. If Responders subscribed to the norm of equal sharing, so would Proposers. If Proposers were so motivated, they would make more generous offers in the Dictator Game than they actually do. We can infer that Responders subscribe to the quasi-moral norm of strong reciprocity and that Proposers, knowing this, make more generous offers than they do when there is no opportunity to respond.

In real-life situations, people are usually not able to observe what others are doing without being observed themselves. When people clean up after their dogs, for instance, it may be hard to tell whether it is because they observe that others are cleaning up after their dogs or because they know that others might be watching them. In some cases, however, it may be possible to tell whether cooperative behavior is induced by social norms or by quasi-moral norms. Two contrasting cases of individual responses to water shortage will illustrate the point.

In Bogotá, Colombia, under the imaginative mayorship of Antanas Mockus, people followed a quasi-moral norm when reducing their consumption of water. Although individual monitoring was not feasible, the aggregate water consumption in the city was shown on television so that people could know whether others were for the most part complying. It appears that enough people did so to sustain the conditional cooperation. People were saying to themselves, "Since other people are cutting down on their consumption, it's only fair that I should do so as well." This is not a foregone outcome, however. Conditional cooperation may unravel if (to simplify) the average level of cooperation is below the threshold that triggers the fairness motivation of the average person (Fehr and Fischbacher, 2003).

When there is a water shortage in California, by contrast, it appears that social norms operate to make people limit their consumption. Outdoor consumption such as watering the lawn can of course be monitored not only by neighbors, but by municipal inspectors. Indoor consumption can be monitored by visitors, who may and do express their disapproval if the toilet bowl is clean. In fact, Antanas Mockus (in a personal communication) observes that some

monitoring of individual behavior also occurred in Bogotá, since children often gave their parents a hard time if they did not economize on water.

Let me conclude by two observations about the social consequences of fairness motivations, one relating to reactions to unfairness and the other to conditional cooperation. In many situations, spontaneous rejection of unfair treatment has good long-term consequences, even if the immediate effect is to make all parties worse off. French peasant rebellions never had a chance of defeating the royal troops, but because of their nuisance value the authorities were ultimately led to treat their subjects less harshly. Anticipation of rejection of unfair terms may also prevent unfairness. At the constitutional convention in Philadelphia, George Mason responded to a proposal that the future western states should be admitted on unequal terms with the original 13 states by saying that "They will have the same pride & other passions which we have, and will either not unite with or will speedily revolt from the Union, if they are not in all respects placed on an equal footing" (Farrand, 1966: 578–79) with the founding states. The proposal was not included in the Constitution.

This being said, perceptions of unfairness are notoriously context dependent and liable to manipulation and to self-serving biases (Babcock and Loewenstein, 1997). In real-life cases, fairness rarely has the simple focal-point quality that it has in the UG. What looks like a fair division to the Proposer may seem unfair to the Responder. What seems like a fair offer to the management, may seem unfair to the union. In fact, there are so many competing notions of fairness in wage negotiations that only particularly inept negotiators would be unable to find one that coincides with their interest (Elster, 1989). Strategic or self-deceptive charges of unfairness can raise the stakes, create deadlock, and prevent compromise. Reactions to perceived unfairness, and anticipation of such reactions, can make the world a better place, but may also generate waste and inefficiency.

Let me turn, finally, to conditional cooperation. In war times and in other crisis situations, people may volunteer for dangerous tasks because they think it would be unfair for them to stay behind when others are risking their lives. But this reasoning only kicks in when some are already risking their lives for another reason. The conditional motivation of fairness requires

some unconditional cooperators to get activated. We need some saints, heroes, fanatics, Kantians, or maybe plain irrationals to get the snowball rolling. Once it is under way, the snowball will pick up not only some

who are motivated by the quasi-moral norm of fairness, but also some who are under the sway of social norms. Fairness motivations can make the world a better place, but they need help.

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SECTION VIII

1. Summarize Homans's view of what he refers to as a "social exchange paradigm" and offer examples to illustrate it.
2. How does Blau depict the difference between balanced and imbalanced exchanges, and what is the significance of this distinction?
3. What does Coleman mean by human capital? What does he mean by social capital?
4. What is the significance of the role of trust in social capital? After reviewing the examples Coleman cites, offer one of your own.
5. Think of examples from your own experience that illustrate Elster's three fairness behaviors: the rejection of unfair division, conditional cooperation, and reciprocity.

IX. GENDER THEORY

CANDACE WEST AND DON H. ZIMMERMAN

39. DOING GENDER

Distinguishing between sex and gender, Candace West (b. 1942) and Don H. Zimmerman (b. 1937) borrow insights from both Erving Goffman and Harold Garfinkel in making the claim that gender is the product of social interaction. They begin by stressing the fact that although in everyday life sex and gender are intertwined, it is necessary to analytically distinguish them. Gender is socially constructed, and in this regard it is appropriate to speak about “doing gender,” for it ought to be construed as “a routine accomplishment embedded in everyday interaction.” Central to their efforts at theoretical rethinking is an emphasis on the display of gender (borrowing from Goffman), sex categorization (using the insights of Garfinkel’s famous study on the sex reassignment of Agnes), and accountability.

PERSPECTIVES ON SEX AND GENDER

In Western societies, the accepted cultural perspective on gender views women and men as naturally and unequivocally defined categories of being (Garfinkel 1967, pp. 116–18) with distinctive psychological and behavioral propensities that can be predicted from their reproductive functions. Competent adult members of these societies see differences between the two as fundamental and enduring—differences seemingly supported by the division of labor into women’s and men’s work and an often elaborate differentiation of feminine and masculine attitudes and behaviors that are prominent features of social organization. Things are the way they are by virtue of the fact that men are men and women are women—a division perceived to be natural and rooted in biology, producing in turn profound psychological, behavioral, and social consequences. The structural arrangements of a society are presumed to be responsive to these differences.

Analyses of sex and gender in the social sciences, though less likely to accept uncritically the naive biological determinism of the view just presented, often retain a conception of sex-linked behaviors and traits as essential properties of individuals (for good reviews, see Hochschild 1973; Tresemer 1975; Thorne 1980; Henley 1985). The “sex differences approach” (Thorne 1980) is more commonly attributed to psychologists than to sociologists, but the survey researcher who determines the “gender” of respondents on the basis of the sound of their voices over the telephone is also making trait-oriented assumptions. Reducing gender to a fixed set of psychological traits or to a unitary “variable” precludes serious consideration of the ways it is used to structure distinct domains of social experience (Stacey and Thorne 1985, pp. 307–8).

Taking a different tack, role theory has attended to the social construction of gender categories, called “sex roles” or, more recently, “gender roles” and has

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analyzed how these are learned and enacted. Beginning with Linton (1936) and continuing through the works of Parsons (Parsons 1951; Parsons and Bales 1955) and Komarovsky (1946, 1950), role theory has emphasized the social and dynamic aspect of role construction and enactment (Thorne 1980; Connell 1983). But at the level of face-to-face interaction, the application of role theory to gender poses problems of its own (for good reviews and critiques, see Connell 1983, 1985; Kessler, Ashendon, Connell, and Dowsett 1985; Lopata and Thorne 1978; Thorne 1980; Stacey and Thorne 1985). Roles are *situated* identities—assumed and relinquished as the situation demands—rather than *master identities* (Hughes 1945), such as sex category, that cut across situations. Unlike most roles, such as “nurse,” “doctor,” and “patient” or “professor” and “student,” gender has no specific site or organizational context.

Moreover, many roles are already gender marked, so that special qualifiers—such as “female doctor” or “male nurse”—must be added to exceptions to the rule. Thorne (1980) observes that conceptualizing gender as a role makes it difficult to assess its influence on other roles and reduces its explanatory usefulness in discussions of power and inequality. Drawing on Rubin (1975), Thorne calls for a reconceptualization of women and men as distinct social groups, constituted in “concrete, historically changing—and generally unequal—social relationships” (Thorne 1980, p. 11).

We argue that gender is not a set of traits, nor a variable, nor a role, but the product of social doings of some sort. What then is the social doing of gender? It is more than the continuous creation of the meaning of gender through human actions (Gerson and Peiss 1985). We claim that gender itself is constituted through interaction.¹ To develop the implications of our claim, we turn to Goffman’s (1976) account of “gender display.” Our object here is to explore how gender might be exhibited or portrayed through interaction, and thus be seen as “natural,” while it is being produced as a socially organized achievement.

GENDER DISPLAY

Goffman contends that when human beings interact with others in their environment, they assume that each possesses an “essential nature”—a nature that

can be discerned through the “natural signs given off or expressed by them” (1976, p. 75). Femininity and masculinity are regarded as “prototypes of essential expression—something that can be conveyed fleetingly in any social situation and yet something that strikes at the most basic characterization of the individual” (1976, p. 75). The means through which we provide such expressions are “perfunctory, conventionalized acts” (1976, p. 69), which convey to others our regard for them, indicate our alignment in an encounter, and tentatively establish the terms of contact for that social situation. But they are also regarded as expressive behavior, testimony to our “essential natures.”

Goffman (1976, pp. 69–70) sees *displays* as highly conventionalized behaviors structured as two-part exchanges of the statement-reply type, in which the presence or absence of symmetry can establish deference or dominance. These rituals are viewed as distinct from but articulated with more consequential activities, such as performing tasks or engaging in discourse. Hence, we have what he terms the “scheduling” of displays at junctures in activities, such as the beginning or end, to avoid interfering with the activities themselves. Goffman (1976, p. 69) formulates *gender display* as follows:

If gender be defined as the culturally established correlates of sex (whether in consequence of biology or learning), then gender display refers to conventionalized portrayals of these correlates.

These gendered expressions might reveal clues to the underlying, fundamental dimensions of the female and male, but they are, in Goffman’s view, optional performances. Masculine courtesies may or may not be offered and, if offered, may or may not be declined (1976, p. 71). Moreover, human beings “themselves employ the term ‘expression’, and conduct themselves to fit their own notions of expressivity” (1976, p. 75). Gender depictions are less a consequence of our “essential sexual natures” than interactional portrayals of what we would like to convey about sexual natures, using conventionalized gestures. Our *human* nature gives us the ability to learn to produce and recognize masculine and feminine gender displays—“a capacity [we] have by virtue of being persons, not males and females” (1976, p. 76).

Upon first inspection, it would appear that Goffman’s formulation offers an engaging sociological

corrective to existing formulations of gender. In his view, gender is a socially scripted dramatization of the culture's *idealization* of feminine and masculine natures, played for an audience that is well schooled in the presentational idiom. To continue the metaphor, there are scheduled performances presented in special locations, and like plays, they constitute introductions to or time out from more serious activities.

There are fundamental equivocations in this perspective. By segregating gender display from the serious business of interaction, Goffman obscures the effects of gender on a wide range of human activities. Gender is not merely something that happens in the nooks and crannies of interaction, fitted in here and there and not interfering with the serious business of life. While it is plausible to contend that gender displays—construed as conventionalized expressions—are optional, it does not seem plausible to say that we have the option of being seen by others as female or male.

It is necessary to move beyond the notion of gender display to consider what is involved in doing gender as an ongoing activity embedded in everyday interaction. Toward this end, we return to the distinctions among sex, sex category, and gender introduced earlier.

SEX, SEX CATEGORY, AND GENDER

Garfinkel's (1967, pp. 118–40) case study of Agnes, a transsexual raised as a boy who adopted a female identity at age 17 and underwent a sex reassignment operation several years later, demonstrates how gender is created through interaction and at the same time structures interaction. Agnes, whom Garfinkel characterized as a "practical methodologist," developed a number of procedures for passing as a "normal, natural female" both prior to and after her surgery. She had the practical task of managing the fact that she possessed male genitalia and that she lacked the social resources a girl's biography would presumably provide in everyday interaction. In short, she needed to display herself as a woman, simultaneously learning what it was to be a woman. Of necessity, this full-time pursuit took place at a time when most people's gender would be well-accredited and routinized. Agnes had to consciously contrive what the vast majority of women do without thinking. She was not "faking" what "real" women do

naturally. She was obliged to analyze and figure out how to act within socially structured circumstances and conceptions of femininity that women born with appropriate biological credentials come to take for granted early on. As in the case of others who must "pass," such as transvestites, Kabuki actors, or Dustin Hoffman's "Tootsie," Agnes's case makes visible what culture has made invisible—the accomplishment of gender.

Garfinkel's (1967) discussion of Agnes does not explicitly separate three analytically distinct, although empirically overlapping, concepts—sex, sex category, and gender.

SEX

Agnes did not possess the socially agreed upon biological criteria for classification as a member of the female *sex*. Still, Agnes regarded herself as a female, albeit a female with a penis, which a woman ought not to possess. The penis, she insisted, was a "mistake" in need of remedy (Garfinkel 1967, pp. 126–27, 131–32). Like other competent members of our culture, Agnes honored the notion that there *are* "essential" biological criteria that unequivocally distinguish females from males. However, if we move away from the commonsense viewpoint, we discover that the reliability of these criteria is not beyond question (Money and Brennan 1968; Money and Erhardt 1972; Money and Ogunro 1974; Money and Tucker 1975). Moreover, other cultures have acknowledged the existence of "cross-genders" (Blackwood 1984; Williams 1986) and the possibility of more than two sexes (Hill 1935; Martin and Voorhies 1975, pp. 84–107; but see also Cucchiari 1981, pp. 32–35).

More central to our argument is Kessler and McKenna's (1978, pp. 1–6) point that genitalia are conventionally hidden from public inspection in everyday life; yet we continue through our social rounds to "observe" a world of two naturally, normally sexed persons. It is the *presumption* that essential criteria exist and would or should be there if looked for that provides the basis for sex categorization. Drawing on Garfinkel, Kessler and McKenna argue that "female" and "male" are cultural events—products of what they term the "gender attribution process"—rather than some collection of traits, behaviors, or even physical attributes. Illustratively they cite the child who, viewing a picture of

someone clad in a suit and a tie, contends, "It's a man, because he has a pee-pee" (Kessler and McKenna 1978, p. 154). Translation: "He must have a pee-pee [an essential characteristic] because I see the *insignia* of a suit and tie." Neither initial sex assignment (pronouncement at birth as a female or male) nor the actual existence of essential criteria for that assignment (possession of a clitoris and vagina or penis and testicles) has much—if anything—to do with the identification of sex category in everyday life. There, Kessler and McKenna note, we operate with a moral certainty of a world of two sexes. We do not think, "Most persons with penises are men, but some may not be" or "Most persons who dress as men have penises." Rather, we take it for granted that sex and sex category are congruent—that knowing the latter, we can deduce the rest.

SEX CATEGORIZATION

Agnes's claim to the categorical status of female, which she sustained by appropriate identificatory displays and other characteristics, could be *discredited* before her transsexual operation if her possession of a penis became known and after by her surgically constructed genitalia (see Raymond 1979, pp. 37, 138). In this regard, Agnes had to be continually alert to actual or potential threats to the security of her sex category. Her problem was not so much living up to some prototype of essential femininity but preserving her categorization as female. This task was made easy for her by a very powerful resource, namely, the process of commonsense categorization in everyday life.

The categorization of members of society into indigenous categories such as "girl" or "boy," or "woman" or "man," operates in a distinctively social way. The act of categorization does not involve a positive test, in the sense of a well-defined set of criteria that must be explicitly satisfied prior to making an identification. Rather, the application of membership categories relies on an "if-can" test in everyday interaction (Sacks 1972, pp. 332–35). This test stipulates that if people *can be seen* as members of relevant categories, *then categorize them that way*. That is, use the category that seems appropriate, except in the presence of discrepant information or obvious features that would rule out its use. This procedure is quite in keeping with the attitude of everyday life, which has us take appearances at face

value unless we have special reason to doubt (Schutz 1943; Garfinkel 1967, pp. 272–77; Bernstein 1986).² It should be added that it is precisely when we have special reason to doubt that the issue of applying rigorous criteria arises, but it is rare, outside legal or bureaucratic contexts, to encounter insistence on positive tests (Garfinkel 1967, pp. 262–83; Wilson 1970).

Agnes's initial resource was the predisposition of those she encountered to take her appearance (her figure, clothing, hair style, and so on) as the undoubted appearance of a normal female. Her further resource was our cultural perspective on the properties of "natural, normally sexed persons." Garfinkel (1967, pp. 122–28) notes that in everyday life, we live in a world of two—and only two—sexes. This arrangement has a moral status, in that we include ourselves and others in it as "essentially, originally, in the first place, always have been, always will be, once and for all, in the final analysis, either 'male' or 'female'" (Garfinkel 1967, p. 122).

Consider the following case:

This issue reminds me of a visit I made to a computer store a couple of years ago. The person who answered my questions was truly a *salesperson*. I could not categorize him/her as a woman or a man. What did I look for? (1) Facial hair: She/he was smooth skinned, but some men have little or no facial hair. (This varies by race, Native Americans and Blacks often have none.) (2) Breasts: She/he was wearing a loose shirt that hung from his/her shoulders. And, as many women who suffered through a 1950s' adolescence know to their shame, women are often flat-chested. (3) Shoulders: His/hers were small and round for a man, broad for a woman. (4) Hands: Long and slender fingers, knuckles a bit large for a woman, small for a man. (5) Voice: Middle range, unexpressive for a woman, not at all the exaggerated tones some gay males affect. (6) His/her treatment of me: Gave off no signs that would let me know if I were of the same or different sex as this person. There were not even any signs that he/she knew his/her sex would be difficult to categorize and I wondered about that even as I did my best to hide these questions so I would not embarrass him/her while we talked of computer paper. I left still not knowing the sex of my salesperson, and was disturbed by that unanswered question (child of my culture that I am). (Diane Margolis, personal communication)

What can this case tell us about situations such as Agnes's (cf. Morris 1974; Richards 1983) or the process of sex categorization in general? First, we infer from this description that the computer salesclerk's identificatory display was ambiguous, since she or he was not dressed or adorned in an unequivocally female or male fashion. It is when such a display *fails* to provide grounds for categorization that factors such as facial hair or tone of voice are assessed to determine membership in a sex category. Second, beyond the fact that this incident could be recalled after "a couple of years," the customer was not only "disturbed" by the ambiguity of the sales-clerk's category but also assumed that to acknowledge this ambiguity would be embarrassing to the salesclerk. Not only do we want to know the sex category of those around us (to see it at a glance, perhaps), but we presume that others are displaying it for us, in as decisive a fashion as they can.

GENDER

Agnes attempted to be "120 percent female" (Garfinkel 1967, p. 129), that is, unquestionably in all ways and at all times feminine. She thought she could protect herself from disclosure before and after surgical intervention by comporting herself in a feminine manner, but she also could have given herself away by overdoing her performance. Sex categorization and the accomplishment of gender are not the same. Agnes's categorization could be secure or suspect, but did not depend on whether or not she lived up to some ideal conception of femininity. Women can be seen as unfeminine, but that does not make them "unfemale." Agnes faced an ongoing task of *being* a woman—something beyond style of dress (an identificatory display) or allowing men to light her cigarette (a gender display). Her problem was to produce configurations of behavior that would be seen by others as normative gender behavior.

Agnes's strategy of "secret apprenticeship," through which she learned expected feminine decorum by carefully attending to her fiancé's criticisms of other women, was one means of masking incompetencies and simultaneously acquiring the needed skills (Garfinkel 1967, pp. 146–147). It was through her fiancé that Agnes learned that sunbathing on the lawn in front of her apartment was "offensive" (because it

put her on display to other men). She also learned from his critiques of other women that she should not insist on having things her way and that she should not offer her opinions or claim equality with men (Garfinkel 1967, pp. 147–148). (Like other women in our society, Agnes learned something about power in the course of her "education.")

Popular culture abounds with books and magazines that compile idealized depictions of relations between women and men. Those focused on the etiquette of dating or prevailing standards of feminine comportment are meant to be of practical help in these matters. However, the use of any such source as a *manual of procedure* requires the assumption that doing gender merely involves making use of discrete, well-defined bundles of behavior that can simply be plugged into interactional situations to produce recognizable enactments of masculinity and femininity. The man "does" being masculine by, for example, taking the woman's arm to guide her across a street, and she "does" being feminine by consenting to be guided and not initiating such behavior with a man.

Agnes could perhaps have used such sources as manuals, but, we contend, doing gender is not so easily regimented (Mithers 1982; Morris 1974). Such sources may list and describe the sorts of behaviors that mark or display gender, but they are necessarily incomplete (Garfinkel 1967, pp. 66–75; Wieder 1974, pp. 183–214; Zimmerman and Wieder 1970, pp. 285–98). And to be successful, marking or displaying gender must be finely fitted to situations and modified or transformed as the occasion demands. Doing gender consists of managing such occasions so that, whatever the particulars, the outcome is seen and seeable in context as gender-appropriate or, as the case may be, gender-inappropriate, that is, *accountable*.

GENDER AND ACCOUNTABILITY

As Heritage (1984, pp. 136–37) notes, members of society regularly engage in "descriptive accountings of states of affairs to one another," and such accounts are both serious and consequential. These descriptions name, characterize, formulate, explain, excuse, excoriate, or merely take notice of some circumstance or activity and thus place it within some social framework (locating it relative to other activities, like and unlike).

Such descriptions are themselves accountable, and societal members orient to the fact that their activities are subject to comment. Actions are often designed with an eye to their accountability, that is, how they might look and how they might be characterized. The notion of accountability also encompasses those actions undertaken so that they are specifically unremarkable and thus not worthy of more than a passing remark, because they are seen to be in accord with culturally approved standards.

Heritage (1984, p. 179) observes that the process of rendering something accountable is interactional in character:

[This] permits actors to design their actions in relation to their circumstances so as to permit others, by methodically taking account of circumstances, to recognize the action for what it is.

The key word here is *circumstances*. One circumstance that attends virtually all actions is the sex category of the actor. As Garfinkel (1967, p. 118) comments:

[T]he work and socially structured occasions of sexual passing were obstinately unyielding to [Agnes's] attempts to routinize the grounds of daily activities. This obstinacy points to the *omnirelevance* of sexual status to affairs of daily life as an invariant but

unnoticed background in the texture of relevances that compose the changing actual scenes of everyday life, (*italics added*)

If sex category is omnirelevant (or even approaches being so), then a person engaged in virtually any activity may be held accountable for performance of that activity as a *woman* or a *man*, and their incumbency in one or the other sex category can be used to legitimate or discredit their other activities (Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch 1972; Berger, Conner, and Fisek 1974; Berger, Fisek, Norman, and Zelditch 1977; Humphreys and Berger 1981). Accordingly, virtually any activity can be assessed as to its womanly or manly nature. And note, to "do" gender is not always to live up to normative conceptions of femininity or masculinity; it is to engage in behavior *at the risk of gender assessment*. While it is individuals who do gender, the enterprise is fundamentally interactional and institutional in character, for accountability is a feature of social relationships and its idiom is drawn from the institutional arena in which those relationships are enacted. If this be the case, can we ever *not* do gender? Insofar as a society is partitioned by "essential" differences between women and men and placement in a sex category is both relevant and enforced, doing gender is unavoidable.

NOTES

1. This is not to say that gender is a singular "thing," omnipresent in the same form historically or in every situation. Because normative conceptions of appropriate attitudes and activities for sex categories can vary across cultures and historical moments, the management of situated conduct in light of those expectations can take many different forms.
2. Bernstein (1986) reports an unusual case of espionage in which a man passing as a woman convinced a lover that he/she had given birth to "their" child, who, the lover thought, "looked like" him.

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40. CATEGORIES ARE NOT ENOUGH

Dorothy E. Smith (b. 1926), trained at the University of California, Berkeley, was for many years unknown to the larger sociological community because of the demands of raising a family coupled with the sexism of the discipline during the earlier years of her career. However, by the 1980s, she had been “discovered,” and her argument on behalf of a sociological theory that was in part shaped by the impact of Alfred Schutz (see his essay herein) on her thinking, begins with women’s concrete experiences. Her notion of standpoint has had a significant impact on feminist thinking (e.g., its influence on the work of Patricia Hill Collins [see her essay herein] is obvious). This essay offers Smith’s reflections on subsequent feminist theorizing—specifically critiquing the work of Candace West and Sarah Fenstermaker—raising concern that categories such as race, class, and gender are being taken as givens, rather than political categories that need to be interrogated. By reifying categories, there is a tendency to lose sight of the social relations of real people that the categories presumably “express and reflect.”

West and Zimmerman’s (1975) early investigations of gender in interaction were particularly valuable in contributing to the visibility of how we (women) might be inadvertently participating in our own silencing in interactions with men. I have also appreciated West and Fenstermaker’s insistence on understanding difference as in and of people’s doings. However, I disagree with how the political categories of race, class, and gender are translated into the objects of social scientific investigation as interaction and as “doing difference.” “Doing Gender” began as an ethnomethodological investigation based in uncovering distinctive patterns of talk among women and men (West and Zimmerman 1975). The theoretical generalization of this investigation into the formulation of doing difference (West and Fenstermaker 1995) confounds political categories with the actualities of the social relations out of which movements for change and hence issues of gender, class, and racial inequality arise.

I learned from Marx not to take categories and concepts such as race, class, and gender as givens (Smith

2004) in social scientific inquiry. Social science must, in his thinking, go beyond such concepts to discover actual people active in the social relations that the categories express and reflect but do not make observable. It is my view that the social relations reflected or expressed in each of these categories diverge so deeply that they cannot be subsumed under a single theoretical model such as doing gender or doing difference.

Start with the term *gender*. West and colleagues (West and Fenstermaker 1995; West and Zimmerman 1987) prefer it to *sex*. It entered feminist currency to suppress reference to biology as determinative of women’s inferiority. Dropping *sex* and adopting *gender* buried biology. Although legitimate as a political move, it has left us with no way of recognizing just how biology enters into relations among women, men, and children. I think of my bodily experience, particularly as a mother, and I am powerfully aware of how biological fundamentals entered into that experience—not just in sex and childbirth but also in the profoundly physical pleasure of suckling a baby. Such experiences

mark the intervention, or rather the ongoing presence, of human species' being in the doing of gender.

I read recently a remarkable book about the brain and reading, Maryanne Wolf's (2007) *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain*. Consistent with many other writers on related subjects, Wolf emphasizes the plasticity of the brain's organization. She represents the relation between behavior and brain in a diagram of a pyramid-shaped stack of levels of organization that mediate the genetic foundation of the brain and behavior. She uses this model to locate research exploring different levels of brain organization—neuronal structures, perceptual processes, and so forth. Her model of the relation of brain and behavior is not causal; it is what we in sociology might call "organizational." Her diagram relating foundational brain organization and the level of actual behavior offers an exemplar of how we might begin to incorporate a grounding in human primate social organization into our understanding of what we have come to call gender.

I emphasize that in drawing on Wolf's (2007) model, I do not mean to reproduce the biology as a determinant of individual behavior. But sociology also is deeply infected with the conceptual virus of individuation, invoking concepts such as interaction and social structure or the like to compensate. My own theoretical move has been to conceptualize the focus of inquiry as actual people's activities/doings under the aspect of how they are coordinated (Smith 2005)—the equivalent of "behavior" in the top layer of Wolf's pyramid. That is where it is actually happening. It is where West and Fenstermaker locate difference as something accomplished. But corresponding to what Wolf calls the brain's "genetic foundation" (the bottom layer of the pyramid) are the social organizational dispositions of humans as a species of primate. And there must, of course, be interplay among the different levels of organization.

I stress the term *social organization*. I don't want it reified; it is always to be discovered only in how people's activities are coordinated. It allows us, however, to escape the individuating prison of earlier biological theorizing. If we think about humanity across the globe, we can see persistent—and various—forms of relations among women, men, and children that are grounded in producing subsistence and transgenerational survival.

It is not surprising then how much has been contributed to changes in women's position in North America by the advent of technologies that separate the sexual act from the birth of children.

In adapting Wolf's (2007) model, I imagine drawing in layers of organization mediating between human primate potentials for social organization and the interactional level of doing gender. Without cleaving to the specifics of Marx's account of the capitalist mode of production (which is in any case historically limited), I think of tucking in there at the level just above the primate foundation the organization of the work to produce subsistence (economic organization); then the level immediately above might be bifurcated with institutions on one side and something rather vaguely called "culture" on the other. And then back to the top of the pyramid, we would find people, active in coordination with others, but not necessarily in interaction, since many contemporary forms of coordinating activities are indirect. But whatever the mediating levels of organization, any inequality between women and men must always, I suggest, be tied in some way or another to the presence, care, and control of children (a curious omission from the concepts of gender and gender difference). A model such as this would make it possible to preserve the recurrent deep presence of our species being while at the same time enabling inquiry to engage with the historical relations that organize our everyday lives and the historical trajectories that propel us from a past into a future we do not control.

Nothing so substantive comes into view when the category of race is interrogated. Unlike gender, race has no physiological foundation. Inequalities identified as racial have to be discovered in historical continuities of disadvantage that are marked ideologically as genetic difference. There are, of course, genetic bases for ideological markers, such as skin color, but not for the boundaries of difference identified with race. An ideology translating enforced disadvantage into genetic inferiority is integral to organizing how race exists as a social relation. The myth of race as genetically determined operates overtly, as with Nazi actions to "protect" the purity of the Aryan race, and is found still among racist organizations in North America (Ezekiel 1996) or in the obscure logic of Barack Obama's being described as African American even though his

mother, Stanley Ann Dunham Soetoro, was white. But the ideology is not just a theory; it is integral to how earlier oppressions reach into and are perpetuated in the present. Race reflects social relations that go deeper than the notion of difference can encompass.

When we come to class, West and Fenstermaker's precarious balancing of categories of inequality tips over completely. Although I do not think Marx's model of class holds up under contemporary capitalism, I do think that a comparable model needs theorizing. Enter class and we are now talking about some kind of relationship between the work people do, whether in or outside employment, and how they get paid and hence achieve their subsistence—if indeed they do. I read recently an article that formulated class in stark antithesis to race and gender. Walter Benn Michaels (2008) argues that, contrary to apparent trends in race and gender inequality, class inequality in the United States has increased significantly since 1972: "The struggle for racial and sexual equality—the relative success of which has been incarnated in the race and gender politics of the Democratic Party over the past six months—has not produced greater economic equality, but been compatible with much greater economic inequality and with the formation of an increasingly elitist society" (Michaels 2008, 4).

This passage suggests that issues of class have to be engaged in ways that reject altogether any equivalence with gender and race. It reminds us of the importance of recognizing an economy as social relations—as does Marx—and hence of attending to how class has been transformed as economic organization and has been changing during the past 30 years or so.

Once we attempt to unpack these categories as social relations, they become ambiguous. They arise in the organization of struggle against inequalities that people experience. But gender as relations between men and women is not separable from the actualities of the experiences of racial oppression or of the inequalities of class. Nor is race separable from class. This does not mean, of course, that inequalities, injustices, and oppressions do not differentiate; movements for change mobilize and focus on issues that are relevant to particular groups. But treating the categories as locating discrete phenomena of difference bypasses, indeed conceals, the social relations of inequality in which they are interwoven. It bypasses the significance of different bases of what is politicized as inequality in the ongoing transformations of economic organization—transformations linked both to globalization and the radical shifts in political policy associated with neoliberalism.

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41. SUBVERSIVE BODILY ACTS

Feminist theory in sociology has been open to the influence of thinkers from outside of the discipline. Judith Butler (b. 1956) is an emblematic example of a philosopher who has had a marked impact on feminist theory in sociology. Her writing is engaging, provocative, and, at times, interpretively challenging. In this selection from her now-classic *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler is intent on calling into question the taken-for-granted nature of gender categories as obdurate realities, illustrating instead their inherent fluidity and variability. As such, she encourages readers to view gender as discursively constructed or as a performative accomplishment. In her discussion, Butler is particularly interested in transgressing boundaries, as seen, for example, in her discussion of female impersonators. In exploring the complex interrelationships that weave sex, gender, and sexuality, she calls for a recognition of the significance of the body.

Garbo 'got in drag' whenever she took some heavy glamour part, whenever she melted in or out of a man's arms, whenever she simply let that heavenly-flexed neck . . . bear the weight of her thrown-back head. . . . How resplendent seems the art of acting! It is all *impersonation*, whether the sex underneath is true or not.

—Parker Tyler, "The Garbo Image,"
quoted in Esther Newton, *Mother Camp*

Categories of true sex, discrete gender, and specific sexuality have constituted the stable point of reference for a great deal of feminist theory and politics. These constructs of identity serve as the points of epistemic departure from which theory emerges and politics itself is shaped. In the case of feminism, politics is ostensibly shaped to express the interests, the perspectives, of "women." But is there a political shape to "women," as it were, that precedes and prefigures the political elaboration of their interests and epistemic point of view? How is that identity shaped, and is it a political shaping that takes the very morphology and boundary of the sexed body as the ground, surface, or site of cultural inscription? What circumscribes

that site as "the female body"? Is "the body" or "the sexed body" the firm foundation on which gender and systems of compulsory sexuality operate? Or is "the body" itself shaped by political forces with strategic interests in keeping that body bounded and constituted by the markers of sex?

The sex/gender distinction and the category of sex itself appear to presuppose a generalization of "the body" that preexists the acquisition of its sexed significance. This "body" often appears to be a passive medium that is signified by an inscription from a cultural source figured as "external" to that body. Any theory of the culturally constructed body, however, ought to question "the body" as a construct of suspect generality when it is figured as passive and prior to discourse. There are Christian and Cartesian precedents to such views which, prior to the emergence of vitalistic biologies in the nineteenth century, understand "the body" as so much inert matter, signifying nothing or, more specifically, signifying a profane void, the fallen state: deception, sin, the premonitional metaphors of hell and the eternal feminine. There are many occasions in both Sartre's and Beauvoir's work

where “the body” is figured as a mute facticity, anticipating some meaning that can be attributed only by a transcendent consciousness, understood in Cartesian terms as radically immaterial. But what establishes this dualism for us? What separates off “the body” as indifferent to signification, and signification itself as the act of a radically disembodied consciousness or, rather, the act that radically disembodies that consciousness? To what extent is that Cartesian dualism presupposed in phenomenology adapted to the structuralist frame in which mind/body is redescribed as culture/nature? With respect to gender discourse, to what extent do these problematic dualisms still operate within the very descriptions that are supposed to lead us out of that binarism and its implicit hierarchy? How are the contours of the body clearly marked as the taken-for-granted ground or surface upon which gender significations are inscribed, a mere facticity devoid of value, prior to significance?

Wittig suggests that a culturally specific epistemic *a priori* establishes the naturalness of “sex.” But by what enigmatic means has “the body” been accepted as a *prima facie* given that admits of no genealogy? Even within Foucault’s essay on the very theme of genealogy, the body is figured as a surface and the scene of a cultural inscription: “the body is the inscribed surface of events.”¹ The task of genealogy, he claims, is “to expose a body totally imprinted by history.” His sentence continues, however, by referring to the goal of “history”—here clearly understood on the model of Freud’s “civilization”—as the “destruction of the body” (148). Forces and impulses with multiple directionalities are precisely that which history both destroys and preserves through the *entstehung* (historical event) of inscription. As “a volume in perpetual disintegration” (148), the body is always under siege, suffering destruction by the very terms of history. And history is the creation of values and meanings by a signifying practice that requires the subjection of the body. This corporeal destruction is necessary to produce the speaking subject and its significations. This is a body, described through the language of surface and force, weakened through a “single drama” of domination, inscription, and creation (150). This is not the *modus vivendi* of one kind of history rather than another, but is, for Foucault, “history” (148) in its essential and repressive gesture.

Although Foucault writes, “Nothing in man [*sic*—not even his body—is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men [*sic*]” (153), he nevertheless points to the constancy of cultural inscription as a “single drama” that acts on the body. If the creation of values, that historical mode of signification, requires the destruction of the body, much as the instrument of torture in Kafka’s *In the Penal Colony* destroys the body on which it writes, then there must be a body prior to that inscription, stable and self-identical, subject to that sacrificial destruction. In a sense, for Foucault, as for Nietzsche, cultural values emerge as the result of an inscription on the body, understood as a medium, indeed, a blank page; in order for this inscription to signify, however, that medium must itself be destroyed—that is, fully transvaluated into a sublimated domain of values. Within the metaphysics of this notion of cultural values is the figure of history as a relentless writing instrument, and the body as the medium which must be destroyed and transfigured in order for “culture” to emerge.

By maintaining a body prior to its cultural inscription, Foucault appears to assume a materiality prior to signification and form. Because this distinction operates as essential to the task of genealogy as he defines it, the distinction itself is precluded as an object of genealogical investigation. Occasionally in his analysis of Herculine, Foucault subscribes to a prediscursive multiplicity of bodily forces that break through the surface of the body to disrupt the regulating practices of cultural coherence imposed upon that body by a power regime, understood as a vicissitude of “history.” If the presumption of some kind of precatagorical source of disruption is refused, is it still possible to give a genealogical account of the demarcation of the body as such as a signifying practice? This demarcation is not initiated by a reified history or by a subject. This marking is the result of a diffuse and active structuring of the social field. This signifying practice effects a social space for and of the body within certain regulatory grids of intelligibility.

Mary Douglas’ *Purity and Danger* suggests that the very contours of “the body” are established through markings that seek to establish specific codes of cultural coherence. Any discourse that establishes the boundaries of the body serves the purpose of instating

and naturalizing certain taboos regarding the appropriate limits, postures, and modes of exchange that define what it is that constitutes bodies:

ideas about separating, purifying, demarcating and punishing transgressions have as their main function to impose system on an inherently untidy experience. It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created.²

Although Douglas clearly subscribes to a structuralist distinction between an inherently unruly nature and an order imposed by cultural means, the “untidiness” to which she refers can be redescribed as a region of *cultural* unruliness and disorder. Assuming the inevitably binary structure of the nature/culture distinction, Douglas cannot point toward an alternative configuration of culture in which such distinctions become malleable or proliferate beyond the binary frame. Her analysis, however, provides a possible point of departure for understanding the relationship by which social taboos institute and maintain the boundaries of the body as such. Her analysis suggests that what constitutes the limit of the body is never merely material, but that the surface, the skin, is systemically signified by taboos and anticipated transgressions; indeed, the boundaries of the body become, within her analysis, the limits of the social *per se*. A poststructuralist appropriation of her view might well understand the boundaries of the body as the limits of the socially *hegemonic*. In a variety of cultures, she maintains, there are

pollution powers which inhere in the structure of ideas itself and which punish a symbolic breaking of that which should be joined or joining of that which should be separate. It follows from this that pollution is a type of danger which is not likely to occur except where the lines of structure, cosmic or social, are clearly defined.

A polluting person is always in the wrong. He [*sic*] has developed some wrong condition or simply crossed over some line which should not have been crossed and this displacement unleashes danger for someone.³

In a sense, Simon Watney has identified the contemporary construction of “the Polluting person” as the person

with AIDS in his *Policing Desire: AIDS, Pornography, and the Media*.⁴ Not only is the illness figured as the “gay disease,” but throughout the media’s hysterical and homophobic response to the illness there is a tactical construction of a continuity between the polluted status of the homosexual by virtue of the boundary-trespass that is homosexuality and the disease as a specific modality of homosexual pollution. That the disease is transmitted through the exchange of bodily fluids suggests within the sensationalist graphics of homophobic signifying systems the dangers that permeable bodily boundaries present to the social order as such. Douglas remarks that “the body is a model that can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious.”⁵ And she asks a question which one might have expected to read in Foucault: “Why should bodily margins be thought to be specifically invested with power and danger?”⁶

Douglas suggests that all social systems are vulnerable at their margins, and that all margins are accordingly considered dangerous. If the body is synecdochal for the social system *per se* or a site in which open systems converge, then any kind of unregulated permeability constitutes a site of pollution and endangerment. Since anal and oral sex among men clearly establishes certain kinds of bodily permeabilities unsanctioned by the hegemonic order, male homosexuality would, within such a hegemonic point of view, constitute a site of danger and pollution, prior to and regardless of the cultural presence of AIDS. Similarly, the “polluted” status of lesbians, regardless of their low-risk status with respect to AIDS, brings into relief the dangers of their bodily exchanges. Significantly, being “outside” the hegemonic order does not signify being “in” a state of filthy and untidy nature. Paradoxically homosexuality is almost always conceived within the homophobic signifying economy as *both* uncivilized and unnatural.

The construction of stable bodily contours relies upon fixed sites of corporeal permeability and impermeability. Those sexual practices in both homosexual and heterosexual contexts that open surfaces and orifices to erotic signification or close down others effectively reinscribe the boundaries of the body along new cultural lines. Anal sex among men is an example as is the radical remembering of the body in Wittig’s *The*

Lesbian Body. Douglas alludes to “a kind of sex pollution which expresses a desire to keep the body (physical and social) intact,”⁷ suggesting that the naturalized notion of “the” body is itself a consequence of taboos that render that body discrete by virtue of its stable boundaries. Further, the rites of passage that govern various bodily orifices presuppose a heterosexual construction of gendered exchange, positions, and erotic possibilities. The deregulation of such exchanges accordingly disrupts the very boundaries that determine what it is to be a body at all. Indeed, the critical inquiry that traces the regulatory practices within which bodily contours are constructed constitutes precisely the genealogy of “the body” in its discreteness that might further radicalize Foucault’s theory.⁸

Significantly, Kristeva’s discussion of abjection in *The Powers of Horror* begins to suggest the uses of this structuralist notion of a boundary-constituting taboo for the purposes of constructing a discrete subject through exclusion.⁹ The “abject” designates that which has been expelled from the body, discharged as excrement, literally rendered “Other.” This appears as an expulsion of alien elements, but the alien is effectively established through this expulsion. The construction of the “not-me” as the abject establishes the boundaries of the body which are also the first contours of the subject. Kristeva writes:

nausea makes me balk at that milk cream, separates me from the mother and father who proffer it. “I” want none of that element, sign of their desire; “I” do not want to listen, “I” do not assimilate it, “I” expel it. But since the food is not an “other” for “me,” who am only in their desire, I expel *myself*, I spit *myself* out, I abject *myself* within the same motion through which “I” claim to establish myself.¹⁰

The boundary of the body as well as the distinction between internal and external is established through the ejection and transvaluation of something originally part of identity into a defiling otherness. As Iris Young has suggested in her use of Kristeva to understand sexism, homophobia, and racism, the repudiation of bodies for their sex, sexuality, and/or color is an “expulsion” followed by a “repulsion” that founds and consolidates culturally hegemonic identities along sex/race/sexuality axes of differentiation.¹¹

Young’s appropriation of Kristeva shows how the operation of repulsion can consolidate “identities” founded on the instituting of the “Other” or a set of Others through exclusion and domination. What constitutes through division the “inner” and “outer” worlds of the subject is a border and boundary tenuously maintained for the purposes of social regulation and control. The boundary between the inner and outer is confounded by those excremental passages in which the inner effectively becomes outer, and this excreting function becomes, as it were, the model by which other forms of identity-differentiation are accomplished. In effect, this is the mode by which Others become shit. For inner and outer worlds to remain utterly distinct, the entire surface of the body would have to achieve an impossible impermeability. This sealing of its surfaces would constitute the seamless boundary of the subject; but this enclosure would invariably be exploded by precisely that excremental filth that it fears.

Regardless of the compelling metaphors of the spatial distinction of inner and outer, they remain linguistic terms that facilitate and articulate a set of fantasies, feared and desired. “Inner” and “outer” make sense only with reference to a mediating boundary that strives for stability. And this stability, this coherence, is determined in large part by cultural orders that sanction the subject and compel its differentiation from the abject. Hence, “inner” and “outer” constitute a binary distinction that stabilizes and consolidates the coherent subject. When that subject is challenged, the meaning and necessity of the terms are subject to displacement. If the “inner world” no longer designates a topos, then the internal fixity of the self and, indeed, the internal locale of gender identity, become similarly suspect. The critical question is not *how* did that identity become *internalized*? as if internalization were a process or a mechanism that might be descriptively reconstructed. Rather, the question is: From what strategic position in public discourse and for what reasons has the trope of interiority and the disjunctive binary of inner/outer taken hold? In what language is “inner space” figured? What kind of figuration is it, and through what figure of the body is it signified? How does a body figure on its surface the very invisibility of its hidden depth?

FROM INTERIORITY TO GENDER PERFORMATIVES

In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault challenges the language of internalization as it operates in the service of the disciplinary regime of the subjection and subjectivation of criminals.¹² Although Foucault objected to what he understood to be the psychoanalytic belief in the “inner” truth of sex in *The History of Sexuality*, he turns to a criticism of the doctrine of internalization for separate purposes in the context of his history of criminology. In a sense, *Discipline and Punish* can be read as Foucault’s effort to rewrite Nietzsche’s doctrine of internalization in *On the Genealogy of Morals* on the model of *inscription*. In the context of prisoners, Foucault writes, the strategy has been not to enforce a repression of their desires, but to compel their bodies to signify the prohibitive law as their very essence, style, and necessity. That law is not literally internalized, but incorporated, with the consequence that bodies are produced which signify that law on and through the body; there the law is manifest as the essence of their selves, the meaning of their soul, their conscience, the law of their desire. In effect, the law is at once fully manifest and fully latent, for it never appears as external to the bodies it subjects and subjectivates. Foucault writes:

It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently *around, on within*, the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those that are punished (my emphasis).¹³

The figure of the interior soul understood as “within” the body is signified through its inscription *on* the body, even though its primary mode of signification is through its very absence, its potent invisibility. The effect of a structuring inner space is produced through the signification of a body as a vital and sacred enclosure. The soul is precisely what the body lacks; hence, the body presents itself as a signifying lack. That lack which *is* the body signifies the soul as that which cannot show. In this sense, then, the soul is a surface signification that contests and displaces the inner/outer distinction itself, a figure of interior psychic space inscribed *on* the body as a social signification that perpetually renounces itself as such. In Foucault’s

terms, the soul is not imprisoned by or within the body, as some Christian imagery would suggest, but “the soul is the prison of the body.”¹⁴

The redescription of intrapsychic processes in terms of the surface politics of the body implies a corollary redescription of gender as the disciplinary production of the figures of fantasy through the play of presence and absence on the body’s surface, the construction of the gendered body through a series of exclusions and denials, signifying absences. But what determines the manifest and latent text of the body politic? What is the prohibitive law that generates the corporeal stylization of gender, the fantasied and fantastic figuration of the body? We have already considered the incest taboo and the prior taboo against homosexuality as the generative moments of gender identity, the prohibitions that produce identity along the culturally intelligible grids of an idealized and compulsory heterosexuality. That disciplinary production of gender effects a false stabilization of gender in the interests of the heterosexual construction and regulation of sexuality within the reproductive domain. The construction of coherence conceals the gender discontinuities that run rampant within heterosexual, bisexual, and gay and lesbian contexts in which gender does not necessarily follow from sex, and desire, or sexuality generally, does not seem to follow from gender—indeed, where none of these dimensions of significant corporeality express or reflect one another. When the disorganization and disaggregation of the field of bodies disrupt the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence, it seems that the expressive model loses its descriptive force. That regulatory ideal is then exposed as a norm and a fiction that disguises itself as a developmental law regulating the sexual field that it purports to describe.

According to the understanding of identification as an enacted fantasy or incorporation, however, it is clear that coherence is desired, wished for, idealized, and that this idealization is an effect of a corporeal signification. In other words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this *on the surface* of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as a cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise

Purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. This also suggests that if that reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body, the gender border control that differentiates inner from outer, and so institutes the “integrity” of the subject. In other words, acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality. If the “cause” of desire, gesture, and act can be localized within the “self” of the actor, then the political regulations and disciplinary practices which produce that ostensibly coherent gender are effectively displaced from view. The displacement of a political and discursive origin of gender identity onto a psychological “core” precludes an analysis of the political constitution of the gendered subject and its fabricated notions about the ineffable interiority of its sex or of its true identity.

If the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity. In *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*, anthropologist Esther Newton suggests that the structure of impersonation reveals one of the key fabricating mechanisms through which the social construction of gender takes place.¹⁵ I would suggest as well that drag fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity. Newton writes:

At its most complex, [drag] is a double inversion that says, “appearance is an illusion.” Drag says [Newton’s curious personification] “my ‘outside’ appearance is feminine, but my essence ‘inside’ [the body] is masculine.” At the same time it symbolizes the opposite inversion; “my appearance ‘outside’ [my body, my

gender] is masculine but my essence ‘inside’ [myself] is feminine.”¹⁶

Both claims to truth contradict one another and so displace the entire enactment of gender significations from the discourse of truth and falsity.

The notion of an original or primary gender identity is often parodied within the cultural practices of drag, cross-dressing, and the sexual stylization of butch/femme identities. Within feminist theory, such parodic identities have been understood to be either degrading to women, in the case of drag and cross-dressing, or an uncritical appropriation of sex-role stereotyping from within the practice of heterosexuality, especially in the case of butch/femme lesbian identities. But the relation between the “imitation” and the “original” is, I think, more complicated than that critique generally allows. Moreover, it gives us a clue to the way in which the relationship between primary identification—that is, the original meanings accorded to gender—and subsequent gender experience might be reframed. The performance of drag plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed. But we are actually in the presence of three contingent dimensions of significant corporeality: anatomical sex, gender identity, and gender performance. If the anatomy of the performer is already distinct from the gender of the performer, and both of those are distinct from the gender of the performance, then the performance suggests a dissonance not only between sex and performance, but sex and gender, and gender and performance. As much as drag creates a unified picture of “woman” (what its critics often oppose), it also reveals the distinctness of those aspects of gendered experience which are falsely naturalized as a unity through the regulatory fiction of heterosexual coherence. *In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency.* Indeed, part of the pleasure, the giddiness of the performance is in the recognition of a radical contingency in the relation between sex and gender in the face of cultural configurations of causal unities that are regularly assumed to be natural and necessary. In the place of the law of heterosexual coherence, we see sex and gender denaturalized by means of a performance which avows their distinctness and dramatizes the cultural mechanism of their fabricated unity.

The notion of gender parody defended here does not assume that there is an original which such parodic identities imitate. Indeed, the parody is *of* the very notion of an original; just as the psychoanalytic notion of gender identification is constituted by a fantasy of a fantasy, the transfiguration of an Other who is always already a “figure” in that double sense, so gender parody reveals that the original identity after which gender fashions itself is an imitation without an origin. To be more precise, it is a production which in effect—that is, in its effect—postures as an imitation. This perpetual displacement constitutes a fluidity of identities that suggests an openness to resignification and recontextualization; parodic proliferation deprives hegemonic culture and its critics of the claim to naturalized or essentialist gender identities. Although the gender meanings taken up in these parodic styles are clearly part of hegemonic, misogynist culture, they are nevertheless denaturalized and mobilized through their parodic recontextualization. As imitations which effectively displace the meaning of the original, they imitate the myth of originality itself. In the place of an original identification which serves as a determining cause, gender identity might be reconceived as a personal/ cultural history of received meanings subject to a set of imitative practices which refer laterally to other imitations and which, jointly, construct the illusion of a primary and interior gendered self or parody the mechanism of that construction.

According to Fredric Jameson’s “Postmodernism and Consumer Society,” the imitation that mocks the notion of an original is characteristic of pastiche rather than parody:

Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language: but it is a neutral practice of mimicry, without parody’s ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something *normal* compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic. Pastiche is blank parody, parody that has lost its humor.¹⁷

The loss of the sense of “the normal,” however, can be its own occasion for laughter, especially when “the normal,” “the original” is revealed to be a copy, and an inevitably failed one, an ideal that no one *can* embody. In this sense, laughter emerges in the realization that all along the original was derived.

Parody by itself is not subversive, and there must be a way to understand what makes certain kinds of parodic repetitions effectively disruptive, truly troubling, and which repetitions become domesticated and recirculated as instruments of cultural hegemony. A typology of actions would clearly not suffice, for parodic displacement, indeed, parodic laughter, depends on a context and reception in which subversive confusions can be fostered. What performance where will invert the inner/outer distinction and compel a radical rethinking of the psychological presuppositions of gender identity and sexuality? What performance where will compel a reconsideration of the *place* and stability of the masculine and the feminine? And what kind of gender performance will enact and reveal the performativity of gender itself in a way that destabilizes the naturalized categories of identity and desire

NOTES

1. Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 148. References in the text are to this essay.
2. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London, Boston, and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 4.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
4. Simon Watney, *Policing Desire: AIDS, Pornography, and the Media* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

5. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 115.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
8. Foucault's essay "A Preface to Transgression" (in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*) does provide an interesting juxtaposition with Douglas' notion of body boundaries constituted by incest taboos. Originally written in honor of Georges Bataille, this essay explores in part the metaphorical "dirt" of transgressive pleasures and the association of the forbidden orifice with the dirt-covered tomb. See pp. 46–48.
9. Kristeva discusses Mary Douglas' work in a short section of *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), originally published as *Pouvoirs de l'horreur* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1980). Assimilating Douglas' insights to her own reformulation of Lacan, Kristeva writes, "Defilement is what is jettisoned from the *symbolic system*. It is what escapes that social rationality, that logical order on which a social aggregate is based, which then becomes differentiated from a temporary agglomeration of individuals and, in short, constitutes a *classification system* or a *structure*" (p. 65).
10. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
11. Iris Marion Young, "Abjection and Oppression: Unconscious Dynamics of Racism, Sexism, and Homophobia," paper presented at the Society of Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy Meetings, Northwestern University, 1988. The paper will be published in the proceedings of the 1988 meetings by the State University of New York Press. It will also be included as part of a larger chapter in her forthcoming *The Politics of Difference*.
12. Parts of the following discussion were published in two different contexts, in my "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse," in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, ed. Linda J. Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1989) and "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 3, Winter 1988.
13. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979), p. 29.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
15. See the chapter "Role Models" in Esther Newton, *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).
16. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
17. Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post-modern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983), p. 114.

PATRICIA HILL COLLINS

42. TOWARD AN AFROCENTRIC FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY

Patricia Hill Collins (b. 1948) is the most important advocate within sociology proper of what she terms in this essay, from her book *Black Feminist Thought* (1990), “an Afrocentric feminist epistemology.” The essay begins with a critique of Eurocentric and masculinist thought, which, particularly in its positivist articulation (she contends), seeks to divorce the researcher from the object of investigation, enforce a notion of objectivity by preventing emotions from entering in, and promote a value-free research process. The remainder of the essay is devoted to sketching a black feminist epistemology as an alternative. Key to this approach is recognizing and appreciating the concrete experiences of daily life as the basis for meaning construction and the notion of understanding, not as an individual accomplishment, but as the result of the collective efforts resulting from sisterhood.

A small girl and her mother passed a statue depicting a European man who had barehandedly subdued a ferocious lion. The little girl stopped, looked puzzled and asked, ‘Mama, something’s wrong with that statue. Everybody knows that a man can’t whip a lion.’ ‘But darling,’ her mother replied, ‘you must remember that the man made the statue.’

—As told by Katie G. Cannon

Black feminist thought, like all specialized thought, reflects the interests and standpoint of its creators. Tracing the origin and diffusion of any body of specialized thought reveals its affinity to the power of the group that created it (Mannheim 1936). Because elite white men and their representatives control structures of knowledge validation, white male interests pervade the thematic content of traditional scholarship. As a result, Black women’s experiences with work, family, motherhood, political activism, and sexual politics have been routinely distorted in or excluded from traditional academic discourse.

Black feminist thought as specialized thought reflects the thematic content of African-American women’s experiences. But because Black women have had to struggle against white male interpretations of the world in order to express a self-defined standpoint, Black feminist thought can best be viewed as subjugated knowledge. The suppression of Black women’s efforts for self-definition in traditional sites of knowledge production has led African-American women to use alternative sites such as music, literature, daily conversations, and everyday behavior as important locations for articulating the core themes of a Black feminist consciousness.

Investigating the subjugated knowledge of subordinate groups—in this case a Black women’s standpoint and Black feminist thought—requires more ingenuity than that needed to examine the standpoints and thought of dominant groups. I found my training as a social scientist inadequate to the task of studying the subjugated knowledge of a Black women’s standpoint. This is because subordinate groups have

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*. Reproduced by permission of Routledge, Inc., part of The Taylor & Francis Group. Pages 201–212. ♦

long had to use alternative ways to create independent self-definitions and self-valuations and to rearticulate them through our own specialists. Like other subordinate groups, African-American women have not only developed a distinctive Black women's standpoint, but have done so by using alternative ways of producing and validating knowledge.

Epistemology is the study of the philosophical problems in concepts of knowledge and truth. The techniques I use in this volume to rearticulate a Black women's standpoint and to further Black feminist thought may appear to violate some of the basic epistemological assumptions of my training as a social scientist. In choosing the core themes in Black feminist thought that merited investigation, I consulted established bodies of academic research. But I also searched my own experiences and those of African-American women I know for themes we thought were important. My use of language signals a different relationship to my material than that which currently prevails in social science literature. For example, I often use the pronoun "our" instead of "their" when referring to African-American women, a choice that embeds me in the group I am studying instead of distancing me from it. In addition, I occasionally place my own concrete experiences in the text. To support my analysis, I cite few statistics and instead rely on the voices of Black women from all walks of life. These conscious epistemological choices signal my attempts not only to explore the thematic content of Black feminist thought but to do so in a way that does not violate its basic epistemological framework.

One key epistemological concern facing Black women intellectuals is the question of what constitutes adequate justifications that a given knowledge claim, such as a fact or theory, is true. In producing the specialized knowledge of Black feminist thought, Black women intellectuals often encounter two distinct epistemologies: one representing elite white male interests and the other expressing Afrocentric feminist concerns. Epistemological choices about who to trust, what to believe, and why something is true are not benign academic issues. Instead, these concerns tap the fundamental question of which versions of truth will prevail and shape thought and action.

THE EUROCENTRIC, MASCULINIST KNOWLEDGE VALIDATION PROCESS

Institutions, paradigms, and other elements of the knowledge validation procedure controlled by elite white men constitute the Eurocentric masculinist knowledge validation process. The purpose of this process is to represent a white male standpoint. Although it reflects powerful white male's interest, various dimensions of the process are not necessarily managed by white men themselves. Scholars, publishers, and other experts represent specific interests and credentialing processes, and their knowledge claims must satisfy the political and epistemological criteria of the contexts in which they reside (Kuhn 1962; Mulkey 1979).

Two political criteria influence the knowledge validation process. First, knowledge claims are evaluated by a community of experts whose members represent the standpoints of the groups from which they originate. Within the Eurocentric masculinist process this means that a scholar making a knowledge claim must convince a scholarly community controlled by white men that a given claim is justified. Second, each community of experts must maintain its credibility as defined by the larger group in which it is situated and from which it draws its basic, taken-for-granted knowledge. This means that scholarly communities that challenge basic beliefs held in the culture at large will be deemed less credible than those which support popular perspectives.

When white men control the knowledge validation process, both political criteria can work to suppress Black feminist thought. Given that the general culture shaping the taken-for-granted knowledge of the community of experts is permeated by widespread notions of Black and female inferiority, new knowledge claims that seem to violate these fundamental assumptions are likely to be viewed as anomalies (Kuhn 1962). Moreover, specialized thought challenging notions of Black and female inferiority is unlikely to be generated from within a white-male-controlled academic community because both the kinds of questions that could be asked and the explanations that would be found satisfying would necessarily reflect a basic lack of familiarity with Black women's reality. The experiences

of African-American women scholars illustrate how individuals who wish to rearticulate a Black women's standpoint through Black feminist thought can be suppressed by a white-male-controlled knowledge validation process. Exclusion from basic literacy, quality educational experiences, and faculty and administrative positions has limited Black women's access to influential academic positions (Zinn et al. 1986). While Black women can produce knowledge claims that contest those advanced by the white male community, this community does not grant that Black women scholars have competing knowledge claims based in another knowledge validation process. As a consequence, any credentials controlled by white male academicians can be denied to Black women producing Black feminist thought on the grounds that it is not credible research.

Black women with academic credentials who seek to exert the authority that our status grants us to propose new knowledge claims about African-American women face pressures to use our authority to help legitimate a system that devalues and excludes the majority of Black women. When an outsider group—in this case, African-American women—recognizes that the insider group—namely, white men—requires special privileges from the larger society, a special problem arises of keeping the outsiders out and at the same time having them acknowledge the legitimacy of this procedure. Accepting a few “safe” outsiders addresses this legitimation problem (Berger and Luckmann 1966). One way of excluding the majority of Black women from the knowledge validation process is to permit a few Black women to acquire positions of authority in institutions that legitimate knowledge, and to encourage us to work within the taken-for-granted assumptions of Black female inferiority shared by the scholarly community and by the culture at large. Those Black women who accept these assumptions are likely to be rewarded by their institutions, often at significant personal cost. Those challenging the assumptions run the risk of being ostracized.

African-American women academicians who persist in trying to rearticulate a Black women's standpoint also face potential rejection of our knowledge claims on epistemological grounds. Just as the material realities of the powerful and the dominated produce separate standpoints, each group may also have distinctive

epistemologies or theories of knowledge. Black women scholars may know that something is true but be unwilling or unable to legitimate our claims using Eurocentric, masculinist criteria for consistency with substantiated knowledge and criteria for methodological adequacy. For any body of knowledge, new knowledge claims must be consistent with an existing body of knowledge that the group controlling the interpretive context accepts as true. The methods used to validate knowledge claims must also be acceptable to the group controlling the knowledge validation process.

The criteria for the methodological adequacy of positivism illustrate the epistemological standards that Black women scholars would have to satisfy in legitimating Black feminist thought using a Eurocentric masculinist epistemology. While I describe Eurocentric masculinist approaches as a single process, many schools of thought or paradigms are subsumed under this one process. Moreover, my focus on positivism should be interpreted neither to mean that all dimensions of positivism are inherently problematic for Black women nor that nonpositivist frameworks are better. For example, most traditional frameworks that women of color internationally regard as oppressive to women are not positivist, and Eurocentric feminist critiques of positivism may have less political importance for women of color, especially those in traditional societies than they have for white feminists (Narayan 1989).

Positivist approaches aim to create scientific descriptions of reality by producing objective generalizations. Because researchers have widely differing values, experiences, and emotions, genuine science is thought to be unattainable unless all human characteristics except rationality are eliminated from the research process. By following strict methodological rules, scientists aim to distance themselves from the values, vested interests, and emotions generated by their class, race, sex, or unique situation. By decontextualizing themselves, they allegedly become detached observers and manipulators of nature (Jaggar 1983; Harding 1986). Moreover, this researcher decontextualization is paralleled by comparable efforts to remove the objects of study from their contexts. The result of this entire process is often the separation of information from meaning (Fausto-Sterling 1989).

Several requirements typify positivist methodological approaches. First, research methods generally require a distancing of the researcher from her or his "object" of study by defining the researcher as a "subject" with full human subjectivity and by objectifying the "object" of study (Keller 1985; Asante 1987; Hooks 1989). A second requirement is the absence of emotions from the research process (Hochschild 1975; Jaggard 1983). Third, ethics and values are deemed inappropriate in the research process, either as the reason for scientific inquiry or as part of the research process itself (Richards 1980; Haan et al. 1983). Finally, adversarial debates, whether written or oral, become the preferred method of ascertaining truth: the arguments that can withstand the greatest assault and survive intact become the strongest truths (Moulton 1983).

Such criteria ask African-American women to objectify ourselves, devalue our emotional life, displace our motivations for furthering knowledge about Black women, and confront in an adversarial relationship those with more social, economic and professional power. It therefore seems unlikely that Black women would use a positivist epistemological stance in rearticulating a Black women's standpoint. Black women are more likely to choose an alternative epistemology for assessing knowledge claims, one using different standards that are consistent with Black women's criteria for substantiated knowledge and with our criteria for methodological adequacy. If such an epistemology exists, what are its contours? Moreover, what is its role in the production of Black feminist thought?

THE CONTOURS OF AN AFROCENTRIC FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY

Africanist analyses of the Black experience generally agree on the fundamental elements of an Afrocentric standpoint (Okanlawon 1972). Despite varying histories, Black societies reflect elements of a core African value system that existed prior to and independently of racial oppression (Jahn 1961; Mbiti 1969; Diop 1974; Zahan 1979; Sobel 1979; Richards 1980, 1990; Asante 1987; Myers 1988). Moreover, as a result of colonialism, imperialism, slavery, apartheid, and other systems of racial domination, Black people share a common experience of oppression. These two factors foster shared

Afrocentric values that permeate the family structure, religious institutions, culture, and community life of Blacks in varying parts of Africa, the Caribbean, South America, and North America (Walton 1971; Gayle 1971; Smitherman 1977; Shimkin et al. 1978; Walker 1980; Sudarkasa 1981; Thompson 1983; Mitchell and Lewter 1986; Asante 1987; Brown 1989). This Afrocentric consciousness permeates the shared history of people of African descent through the framework of a distinctive Afrocentric epistemology (Turner 1984).

Feminist scholars advance a similar argument by asserting that women share a history of gender oppression, primarily through sex/gender hierarchies (Eisenstein 1983; Hartsock 1983b; Andersen 1988). These experiences transcend divisions among women created by race, social class, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicity and form the basis of a women's standpoint with a corresponding feminist consciousness and epistemology (Rosaldo 1974; D. Smith 1987; Hartsock 1983a; Jaggard 1983).

Because Black women have access to both the Afrocentric and the feminist standpoints, an alternative epistemology used to rearticulate a Black women's standpoint should reflect elements of both traditions. The search for the distinguishing features of an alternative epistemology used by African-American women reveals that values and ideas Africanist scholars identify as characteristically "Black" often bear remarkable resemblance to similar ideas claimed by feminist scholars as characteristically "female." This similarity suggests that the material conditions of race, class, and gender oppression can vary dramatically and yet generate some uniformity in the epistemologies of subordinate groups. Thus the significance of an Afrocentric feminist epistemology may lie in how such an epistemology enriches our understanding of how subordinate groups create knowledge that fosters resistance.

The parallels between the two conceptual schemes raise a question: Is the worldview of women of African descent more intensely infused with the overlapping feminine/Afrocentric standpoints than is the case for either African-American men or white women? While an Afrocentric feminist epistemology reflects elements of epistemologies used by African-Americans and women as groups, it also paradoxically demonstrates features that may be unique to Black women. On certain

dimensions Black women may more closely resemble Black men; on others, white women; and on still others Black women may stand apart from both groups. Black women's both/and conceptual orientation, the act of being simultaneously a member of a group and yet standing apart from it, forms an integral part of Black women's consciousness. Black women negotiate these contradictions, a situation Bonnie Thornton Dill (1979) labels the "dialectics of Black womanhood," by using this both/and conceptual orientation.

Rather than emphasizing how a Black women's standpoint and its accompanying epistemology are different from those in Afrocentric and feminist analyses, I use Black women's experiences to examine points of contact between the two. Viewing an Afrocentric feminist epistemology in this way challenges additive analyses of oppression claiming that Black women have a more accurate view of oppression than do other groups. Such approaches suggest that oppression can be quantified and compared and that adding layers of oppression produces a potentially clearer standpoint (Spelman 1982). One implication of standpoint approaches is that the more subordinated the group, the purer the vision of the oppressed group. This is an outcome of the origins of standpoint approaches in Marxist social theory, itself an analysis of social structure rooted in Western either/or dichotomous thinking. Ironically, by quantifying and ranking human oppressions, standpoint theorists invoke criteria for methodological adequacy characteristic of positivism. Although it is tempting to claim that Black women are more oppressed than everyone else and therefore have the best standpoint from which to understand the mechanisms, processes, and effects of oppression, this simply may not be the case.

Like a Black women's standpoint, an Afrocentric feminist epistemology is rooted in the everyday experiences of African-American women. In spite of diversity that exists among women, what are the dimensions of an Afrocentric feminist epistemology?

CONCRETE EXPERIENCE AS A CRITERION OF MEANING

"My aunt used to say, 'A heap see, but a few know,'" remembers Carolyn Chase, a 31-year-old inner-city Black woman (Gwaltney 1980, 83). This saying depicts

two types of knowing—knowledge and wisdom—and taps the first dimension of an Afrocentric feminist epistemology. Living life as Black women requires wisdom because knowledge about the dynamics of race, gender, and class oppression has been essential to Black women's survival. African-American women give such wisdom high credence in assessing knowledge.

Allusions to these two types of knowing pervade the words of a range of African-American women. Zilpha Elaw, a preacher of the mid-1800s, explains the tenacity of racism:

The pride of a white skin is a bauble of great value with many in some parts of the United States, who readily sacrifice their intelligence to their prejudices, and possess more knowledge than wisdom. (Andrews 1986, 85)

In describing differences separating African-American and white women, Nancy White invokes a similar rule: "When you come right down to it, white women just think they are free. Black women *know* they ain't free" (Gwaltney 1980, 147). Geneva Smitherman, a college professor specializing in African-American linguistics, suggests that

from a black perspective, written documents are limited in what they can teach about life and survival in the world. Blacks are quick to ridicule 'educated fools,' . . . they have 'book learning' but no 'mother wit,' knowledge, but not wisdom. (Smitherman 1977, 76)

Mabel Lincoln eloquently summarizes the distinction between knowledge and wisdom:

To black people like me, a fool is funny—you know, people who love to break bad, people you can't tell anything to, folks that would take a shotgun to a roach. (Gwaltney 1980, 68)

African-American women need wisdom to know how to deal with the "educated fools" who would "take a shotgun to a roach." As members of a subordinate group, Black women cannot afford to be fools of any type, for our objectification as the Other denies us the protections that white skin, maleness, and wealth confer. This distinction between knowledge and wisdom, and the use of experience as the cutting

edge dividing them, has been key to Black women's survival. In the context of race, gender, and class oppression, the distinction is essential. Knowledge without wisdom is adequate for the powerful, but wisdom is essential to the survival of the subordinate.

For most African-American women those individuals who have lived through the experiences about which they claim to be experts are more believable and credible than those who have merely read or thought about such experiences. Thus concrete experience as a criterion for credibility frequently is invoked by Black women when making knowledge claims. For instance, Hannah Nelson describes the importance personal experience has for her:

Our speech is most directly personal, and every black person assumes that every other black person has a right to a personal opinion. In speaking of grave matters, your personal experience is considered very good evidence. With us, distant statistics are certainly not as important as the actual experience of a sober person. (Gwaltney 1980, 7).

Similarly, Ruth Shays uses her concrete experiences to challenge the idea that formal education is the only route to knowledge:

I am the kind of person who doesn't have a lot of education, but both my mother and my father had good common sense. Now, I think that's all you need. I might not know how to use thirty-four words where three would do, but that does not mean that I don't know what I'm talking about. . . . I know what I'm talking about because I'm talking about myself. I'm talking about what I have lived. (Gwaltney 1980, 27, 33)

Implicit in Ms. Shays's self-assessment is a critique of the type of knowledge that obscures the truth, the "thirty-four words" that cover up a truth that can be expressed in three.

Even after substantial mastery of white masculinist epistemologies, many Black women scholars invoke our own concrete experiences and those of other African-American women in selecting topics for investigation and methodologies used. For example, Elsa Barkley Brown (1986) subtitles her essay on Black women's history, "how my mother taught me to be an historian in spite of my academic training." Similarly,

Joyce Ladner (1972) maintains that growing up as a Black woman in the South gave her special insights in conducting her study of Black adolescent women. Lorraine Hansberry alludes to the potential epistemological significance of valuing the concrete:

In certain peculiar ways, we have been conditioned to think not small—but tiny. And the thing, I think, which has strangled us most is the tendency to turn away from the world in search of the universe. That is chaos in science—can it be anything else in art? (1969, 134).

Experience as a criterion of meaning with practical images as its symbolic vehicles is a fundamental epistemological tenet in African-American thought systems (Mitchell and Lewter 1986). "Look at my arm!" Sojourner Truth proclaimed: "I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman?" (Loewenberg and Bogin 1976, 235). By invoking concrete practical images from her own life to symbolize new meanings, Truth deconstructed the prevailing notions of woman. Stories, narratives, and Bible principles are selected for their applicability to the lived experiences of African-Americans and become symbolic representations of a whole wealth of experience. Bible tales are often told for the wisdom they express about everyday life, so their interpretation involves no need for scientific historical verification. The narrative method requires that the story be told, not torn apart in analysis, and trusted as core belief, not "admired as science" (Mitchell and Lewter 1986, 8).

June Jordan's essay about her mother's suicide illustrates the multiple levels of meaning that can occur when concrete experiences are used as a criterion of meaning. Jordan describes her mother, a woman who literally died trying to stand up, and the effect her mother's death had on her own work:

I think all of this is really about women and work. Certainly this is all about me as a woman and my life work. I mean I am not sure my mother's suicide was something extraordinary. Perhaps most women must deal with a similar inheritance, the legacy of a woman whose death you cannot possibly pinpoint because she died so many, many times and because, even before she became your mother, the life of that

woman was taken. . . . I came too late to help my mother to her feet. By way of everlasting thanks to all of the women who have helped me to stay alive I am working never to be late again. (Jordan 1985, 26)

While Jordan has knowledge about the concrete act of her mother's death, she also strives for wisdom concerning the meaning of that death.

Some feminist scholars offer a similar claim that women as a group are more likely than men to use concrete knowledge in assessing knowledge claims. For example, a substantial number of the 135 women in a study of women's cognitive development were "connected knowers" and were drawn to the sort of knowledge that emerges from first-hand observation (Belenky et al. 1986). Such women felt that because knowledge comes from experience, the best way of understanding another person's ideas was to develop empathy and share the experiences that led the person to form those ideas.

In valuing the concrete, African-American women invoke not only an Afrocentric tradition but a women's tradition as well. Some feminist theorists suggest that women are socialized in complex relational nexuses where contextual rules versus abstract principles govern behavior (Chodorow 1978; Gilligan 1982). This socialization process is thought to stimulate characteristic ways of knowing (Hartsock 1983a; Belenky et al. 1986). These theorists suggest that women are more likely to experience two modes of knowing: one located in the body and the space it occupies and the other passing beyond it. Through their child-rearing and nurturing activities, women mediate these two modes and use the concrete experiences of their daily lives to assess more abstract knowledge claims (D. Smith 1987).

Although valuing the concrete may be more representative of women than men, social class differences among women may generate differential expression of this women's value. One study of working-class women's ways of knowing found that both white and African-American women rely on common sense and intuition (Luttrell 1989). These forms of knowledge allow for subjectivity between the knower and the known, rest in the women themselves (not in higher authorities), and are experienced directly in the world (not through abstractions).

Amanda King, a young African-American mother, describes how she used the concrete to assess the abstract and points out how difficult mediating these two modes of knowing can be:

The leaders of the ROC [a labor union] lost their jobs too, but it just seemed like they were used to losing their jobs. . . . This was like a lifelong thing for them, to get out there and protest. They were like, what do you call them—intellectuals. . . . You got the ones that go to the university that are supposed to make all the speeches, they're the ones that are supposed to lead, you know, put this little revolution together, and then you got the little ones . . . that go to the factory everyday, they be the ones that have to fight. I had a child and I thought I don't have the time to be running around with these people. . . . I mean I understand some of that stuff they were talking about, like the bourgeoisie, the rich and the poor and all that, but I had surviving on my mind for me and my kid. (Byerly 1986, 198)

For Ms. King abstract ideals of class solidarity were mediated by the concrete experience of motherhood and the connectedness it involved.

In traditional African-American communities Black women find considerable institutional support for valuing concrete experience. Black women's centrality in families, churches, and other community organizations allows us to share our concrete knowledge of what it takes to be self-defined Black women with younger, less experienced sisters. "Sisterhood is not new to Black women," asserts Bonnie Thornton Dill, but "while Black women have fostered and encouraged sisterhood, we have not used it as the anvil to forge our political identities" (1983, 134). Though not expressed in explicitly political terms, this relationship of sisterhood among Black women can be seen as a model for a whole series of relationships African-American women have with one another (Gilkes 1985; Giddings 1988).

Given that Black churches and families are both woman-centered, Afrocentric institutions, African-American women traditionally have found considerable institutional support for this dimension of an Afrocentric feminist epistemology. While white women may value the concrete, it is questionable whether white families—particularly middle-class nuclear ones—and white community institutions

provide comparable types of support. Similarly, while Black men are supported by Afrocentric institutions, they cannot participate in Black women's sisterhood. In terms of Black women's relationships with one

another, African-American women may find it easier than others to recognize connectedness as a primary way of knowing, simply because we are encouraged to do so by a Black women's tradition of sisterhood.

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43. FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY

Raewyn Connell (b. 1944; formerly Robert William Connell) is an Australian theorist who currently holds a position as university professor at the University of Sydney. She has taught at various universities in Australia, Canada, Germany, and the United States. Connell has published two of the most widely cited works in gender studies: *Gender and Power* (1987) and *Masculinities* (1995). The selection below derives from the former book, in which she developed the concept of “hegemonic masculinity.” The idea of hegemony derives from the work of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who applied it to class relations. Connell offers an original application of the concept to gender rather than class (a parallel application to race can be found in the work of Howard Winant and Michael Omi; they have an entry in the following section). Hegemony refers to domination brought about not simply by the application of force or coercion, but by its linkage to ideology. The result is a mode of domination that involves both coercion and the consent of dominated groups. In her discussion of masculinity and femininity, Connell stresses the structured character of gendered power relations, noting that the situation is always further complicated by the fact that there are multiple types of both masculinity and femininity. Thus, hegemonic masculinity is situated both in terms of varied patterns of relations to women and in its relationships with subordinated masculinities.

MULTIPLE MODELS: FROM TYPOLOGY TO RELATIONSHIP

Scalar models of personality have often stemmed from theories of personality “types.” Extraversion-introversion scales and the famous “F scale” of authoritarianism both derive from such typologies, devised by Jung and the Frankfurt school respectively. M/F scales similarly derive from unitary models of sexual character, in effect ‘dimensionalizing’ them by adding a range of possibilities in between. But this is not the only way diversity can be recognized in a theory of types. One may hold to the conception of a whole personality rather than a dimension, and subdivide or multiply the types.

In the case of sexual character the classic of this approach is Simone de Beauvoir’s account of femininity in Book Two of *The Second Sex*. Starting with a general difference in the social situation and ontological

status of women and men, she goes on to develop a subtle account of half-a-dozen types of femininity in literature and French social life: the lesbian, the married woman, the prostitute, the independent woman, etc. Her types are partly based on social circumstances, partly on the patterns of inner dynamics.

In principle the same kind of thing can be done for types of masculinity, though no Simone de Beauvoir has appeared to do it. Andrew Tolson’s *The Limits of Masculinity* makes a beginning. Going through the (mostly British) research in community studies and industrial sociology, Tolson draws out connections between economic circumstance, life cycle and sexual identity in a broad distinction between a working-class type and a middle-class type of masculinity.

Both de Beauvoir and Tolson assume a one-to-one correspondence between character type and milieu.

Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics. R. W. Connell. pp. 175–190. Stanford University Press. ♦

This is a step forward from unitary models of sexual character, but not a long one. Character is still treated as unitary within a given setting. The logic is the same as in “national character” or culture-and-personality research that described the “modal personalities” supposed to characterize Germany, Japan, Samoa. The same treatment of sexual character is found in the cross-cultural contrasts made by Margaret Mead in *Male and Female*.

The next step is to recognize that qualitatively different types are produced within the same social setting. Evidence for this is not difficult to find. Here is an example taken from the collection of working-class autobiographies. The author, Bim Andrews, is talking about growing up and going to work at Cambridge in the 1920s:

In the mid-twenties, I learned how to become a clerk at the Co-op, and after evening classes in shorthand and typing, a higher grade office worker. A dutiful, heads-down-all-day, worker, with no ideas at all about my rights. Not even my basic rights as a human being, never mind my rights as part of a deal involving my work and their money. True, there was some talk of a Trades Union, but no girl or woman ever thought it applied to her. Some of my work kept me standing up all day, and when I had bad menstrual cramps, as I often did, I would slink off to the lavatory to sit down for as long as I dared. No rest room, not even a chair in our crowded cloakroom.

Some new ideas did take root—the Co-op was quite an evangelical movement then, and it was their evening classes which I joined. But my emotions and understanding were still at sixes and sevens. Which was the right way to live? Like Nellie, with her placid face and her engagement ring, and her pieces of linen and underclothes in tissue paper, brought for display to the girls before settling in her bottom drawer? Or like Jessie, coy and nudging—what we would now call sexy—surrounded by men, single and married? Or like Miss Marshall, the General Manager’s secretary and our immediate boss. Composed, and sharp with us, the owner of a little car, involved in a sly relationship with the Manager of the Grocery Dept?

Nellie, Jessie, Miss Marshall and indeed the earliest Bim herself, are present in her mind as types—real types, not ideal or abstracted types—standing

for different “ways to live.” Yet they do not float free from each other. Bim experiences a relationship between them. It is a kind of rivalry between alternatives, confronting her with an existential and to some extent moral choice. She can become a certain kind of woman, enter a certain kind of femininity, by throwing herself forward along one path in life.

The important point is that the types exist in a relationship with each other. In the research which first raised this question for me, in an Australian ruling-class boys’ school, the connections take the definite form of a hierarchy. A teacher whom we call Angus Barr described to us an episode, some details of which we could confirm from other sources, of what he thought of as “bullying” between two groups of boys:

There are a group [‘the Bloods’] which I suppose you can say is a traditional one, the sporting group, they are more active physically . . . And sometimes they ride a bit rough over another group who have been called, and now call themselves, ‘the Cyrils’, the conshies. [From ‘conscientious’.] Who are the ones who don’t play any games. Who have this year [had] a particularly bad time from the Blood group . . . And about the middle of the year I had to—it hasn’t arisen in past years, I’ve taken the form for a number of years so I think I know—had to intervene. And say, Well now, what is being done by some of you to some others has reached limits where it has got to stop, it is going too far . . . [The Cyrils] were these quite clever little boys who are socially totally inadequate, and yet who have got very good brains. They’ve all got glasses, short, very fat and that sort of thing . . . I think I was reasonably successful in stopping it. I tried to ask discreetly some of the Cyrils how things had been getting on, and they said, Well it had been better. And I spoke to one or two of the Bloods, said that it’s got to stop.

In contrast to Bim Andrews’s perceptions, the difference between these masculinities is not a matter of free choice by the boys: an unathletic way of life may for instance be imposed by a boy’s understanding of his physique. Larger cultural dynamics can be detected here. But the crucial point is that entering one group does not make the other irrelevant. Far from it: an active relationship is constructed. The Bloods persecute the Cyrils, because being a Blood *involves* an active rejection of what they see as effeminacy.

This particular pattern of conflict does not arise by chance. The school in question is noted for its attachment to a fiercely competitive body-contact sport, football. Both official school policy, and the ethos among staff, parents and Old Boys, encourage activities in which the kind of aggressive, physically dominant masculinity represented by the Bloods is at a premium. The boys are obliged to define their attitude to this demand, either for or against. Hence they polarize along the axis described by Mr Barr. Yet those boys who react against the model embraced by the Bloods are not simply pushed into limbo. For the school not only wants football glory, it also must have academic success. A high rate of performance in matriculation examinations is necessary if the school is to hold its position in the now strongly competitive secondary-education market. In short, the school needs the Cyrils too. Within their own sphere it gives them honour: acknowledging examination success by means of prizes, giving awards to the chess club as well as the football team. And it protects their interests, as Mr Barr's intervention to stop the "bullying" neatly shows.

The production of multiple masculinities and femininities can be seen in studies of other schools. In one of the earlier school ethnographies, *Social Relations in a Secondary School*, David Hargreaves portrayed the production of a semi-delinquent "subculture" in the lower streams of a British secondary modern school. One of its components was a rough, aggressive masculinity, strongly and no doubt deliberately contrasted with the more compliant behaviour of boys in the upper streams. A similar pattern in a similar school a decade later is traced by Paul Willis in *Learning to Labour*, a contrast between "the lads" and "the ear'oles." Willis is more explicit about the construction of masculinity and its connection with class fate, as the two groups of boys head for factory jobs on the one hand and white-collar jobs on the other.

In the Australian girls' private school we call Auburn College, there is not only a differentiation between several kinds of femininity, but also a recent change in the pattern of hegemony among them. An academic renovation of the school, undertaken by a new headmistress and new staff, has altered the context of the girls' peer-group life. The prestige formerly enjoyed by a "social" set of girls has been broken and

their place in the sun taken by academically successful girls headed for university and professional careers.

The pattern of differentiation and relation appears in other institutions besides schools. The fashion industry is an important case, given the significance of clothes and cosmetics as markers of gender. Here there is a constant interplay between the economic need of a turnover of styles—the basis of "fashion" itself—and the need to sustain the structures of motive that constitute their markets.

In the aftermath of the new feminism, the promotion of a "liberated" femininity became the basis of many marketing strategies. "Charlie" perfumes and cosmetics (introduced by Revlon in 1973) and "Virginia Slims" cigarettes were among the most heavily promoted examples. Yet a femininity that gets "liberated" too completely loses the need to present itself through cosmetics and fashionable clothes. Thus an oscillation: on one poster "Charlie" strides out boldly in trousers; on another, "Pretty Polly" advertises its fragile pantyhose with the caption "For girls who don't want to wear the trousers." Some marketers take the contradiction inside the one promotion: thus "natural look" cosmetics; or a magazine that uses a feminist name, *Ms London*, as a vehicle for wholly stereotyped advertising.

The fashion industry works through competition of images, but also on the assumption that the competition is always being resolved. A leading designer emerges; a "look" is settled on; a particular presentation of femininity made normative. In cases such as Dior and the "New Look" of 1947, a trend lasting over a number of seasons may be set. Moreover, the brilliantly lit centre stage of high fashion is only a small part of the clothing industry's sales. The bulk of the business concerns cheap, drab, and poorly made clothing for the mass market in styles that change slowly. Two centuries ago this was called bluntly "slop cloathing"; it is now called in the rag trade "dumb fashion." So the currently exalted style does not eliminate all other styles. Rather it subordinates them.

There need not be any psychological traits which all femininities have in common and which distinguish them from all masculinities, or vice versa. The character structure of the academic high-flyers at Auburn College is probably closer to that of Milton's "Cyrils" than to socialite femininities. What unites the

femininities of a given social milieu is the double *context* in which they are formed: on the one hand in relation to the image and experience of a female body, on the other to the social definitions of a woman's place and the cultural oppositions of masculinity and femininity. Femininity and masculinity are not essences: they are ways of living certain relationships. It follows that static typologies of sexual character have to be replaced by histories, analyses of the joint production of sets of psychological forms.

THE EFFECT OF STRUCTURES

To this point I have discussed the production of sexual character as if each milieu were independent of all others. It is time to bring into the analysis the structures that interrelate milieus and their historical composition into a gender order for the society as a whole.

To start with the structure of power, workplace studies show that face-to-face relations are strongly conditioned by the general power situation between employers and employees and its materialization in particular labour processes. A notable case is the job of personal "secretary" in business. An apparently very individualized relationship of mutual dependence and trust between the executive (generally a man) and the personal secretary (almost always a woman) in fact rests on sharp differences of income, the industrial vulnerability of the employee, and the overall social power and authority of men. A specific version of femininity is called for, in which technical competence and the social presentation of attractiveness, social skill and interpersonal compliance are fused. This kind of femininity has to be produced, and is by the informal training documented in Chris Griffin's study of British girls moving from school into office work.

The power hierarchy among men in the industrial enterprise is clear enough, from managers and professionals at the top to unqualified manual workers at the bottom. In sharp contrast to the situation of personal secretaries, the men in manual industrial work are often in situations that allow a countervailing solidarity (one of the bases of unionism) and with it a rejection of the masculinity of the dominant group. John Lippert provides a striking description of the aggressive, sometimes violent, heterosexual masculinity

produced among motor manufacturing workers in Detroit. The description can be matched in other countries: Meredith Burgmann's account of "machismo" among radical builders' labourers in Sydney and Paul Willis's account of masculine "shop-floor culture" among metal workers in Birmingham. The common elements are a cult of masculinity centring on physical prowess, and sexual contempt directed at managers, and men in office work generally, as being effete.

These examples also point to the gender structuring of production. Elements of sexual character are embedded in the distinctive sets of practices sometimes called "occupational cultures." Professionalism is a case in point. The combination of theoretical knowledge with technical expertise is central to a profession's claim to competence and to a monopoly of practice. This has been constructed historically as a form of masculinity: emotionally flat, centred on a specialized skill, insistent on professional esteem and technically based dominance over other workers, and requiring for its highest (specialist) development the complete freedom from childcare and domestic work provided by having wives and maids to do it. The masculine character of professionalism has been supported by the simplest possible mechanism, the exclusion of women. Women have had a long struggle even to get the basic training, and are still effectively excluded from professions like accountancy and engineering.

In manual trades, and manual work more broadly, the claim to competence is rather different. Here the most competent are not the most specialized but the most versatile—those with a range of skills, able to tackle any job that offers. This too is often constructed as a form of masculinity dependent on a domestic division of labour. Tradesmen have often been prepared to move around from place to place, even from country to country, to increase their range of experience, the wife's willingness to stay or go being assumed. Fathers have taken care to provide their sons with a range of skills as insurance against economic fluctuations. To quote another British working-class autobiography, from a miner's son called Fred Broughton who grew up in the years before World War I, "Father used to say, 'I shall not leave you much money, but I will teach you every job, then you can always get work.' He showed us every job in the garden and on the farm, including

how to get stone in the quarry and trim it and build stone walls."

The construction of nursing has an element of the sexual division of labour, and is an occupation blending a particular version of femininity with the technical requirements of the job.

Finally the structure of cathexis is involved. This is the most obvious of structural determinations of sexual character because of the prominence of heterosexual couple relationships in everyday life. It is folklore that "opposites attract." One of the most familiar features of sexual display is behaviour and clothing that emphasizes stereotyped sex differences. Studs display their biceps and pectorals, suave charmers grow their pencil moustaches; "girls" emphasize their vulnerability in tight skirts and high-heeled shoes, sheer stockings and make-up that is constantly in need of repair. So much emotion is adrift around these marks of difference that they can get cathected in their own right. These stereotypes are so familiar that it is necessary to stress that they are not the whole story. Alongside the Errol Flynn's and John Wayne's are figures like Cary Grant, whose appeal is specially as a model of sympathetic (though not effeminate) masculinity. In a study of images of masculinity in Australian television, Glen Lewis has pointed to the prominence of "soft" men as presenters, especially in daytime programs directed at women.

Desire may be organized around identification and similarity rather than around difference. Homosexual love is the obvious case. The attempt to reduce this to attraction-of-opposites by assuming it is based on a butch/femme pattern is now generally discredited. Gay liberation theory lays emphasis instead on the *solidarity* created by love between women or between men. The point is that there are many more possibilities than the standard dichotomy or complete structurelessness. Works like Pat Califia's *Sapphisty* explore a variety of erotic constructions of femininity (homosexuality still presupposes gender division) based on identification and shared experience; the same can be done for masculinity.

There is a related possibility among heterosexual people, for powerful desire can exist between those whose character structure is similar. An *interplay* between identification and reciprocity, and a literal

playing with similarity and difference, becomes possible as a basis of eroticism. On such a basis heterosexual masculinity and femininity might be recomposed as various kinds of psychological hermaphroditism.

To sum up: it is possible to see how each of the major structures impinges on the way femininity and masculinity are formed in particular milieux. Conversely, these structures must be seen as the vehicles for the constitution of femininity and masculinity as collective patterns on a scale far beyond that of an individual setting. We have moved from particular gender regimes to the society-wide gender order. The question now to be faced is how, at the level of a whole society, the elements are composed, interrelated and ordered.

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND EMPHASIZED FEMININITY

The central argument can be put in a few paragraphs. There is an ordering of versions of femininity and masculinity at the level of the whole society, in some ways analogous to the patterns of face-to-face relationship within institutions. The possibilities of variation, of course, are vastly greater. The sheer complexity of relationships involving millions of people guarantees that ethnic differences and generational differences as well as class patterns come into play. But in key respects the organization of gender on the very large scale must be more skeletal and simplified than the human relationships in face-to-face milieux. The forms of femininity and masculinity constituted at this level are stylized and impoverished. Their interrelation is centred on a single structural fact, the global dominance of men over women.

This structural fact provides the main basis for relationships among men that define a hegemonic form of masculinity in the society as a whole. "Hegemonic masculinity" is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women. The interplay between different forms of masculinity is an important part of how a patriarchal social order works.

There is no femininity that is hegemonic in the sense that the dominant form of masculinity is hegemonic among men. This is not a new observation. Viola Klein's historical study of conceptions of "the

feminine character" noted wryly how little the leading theorists could agree on what it was: "we find not only contradiction on particular points but a bewildering variety of traits considered characteristic of women by the various authorities." More recently the French analyst Luce Irigaray, in a celebrated essay "This Sex Which Is Not One," has emphasized the absence of any clear-cut definition for women's eroticism and imagination in a patriarchal society.

At the level of mass social relations, however, forms of femininity are defined clearly enough. It is the global subordination of women to men that provides an essential basis for differentiation. One form is defined around compliance with this subordination and is oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men. I will call this "emphasized femininity." Others are defined centrally by strategies of resistance or forms of non-compliance. Others again are defined by complex strategic combinations of compliance, resistance and co-operation. The interplay among them is a major part of the dynamics of change in the gender order as a whole.

The rest of this section will examine more closely the cases of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, making brief comments on subordinated and marginalized forms.

In the concept of hegemonic masculinity, "hegemony" means (as in Gramsci's analyses of class relations in Italy from which the term is borrowed) a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes. Ascendancy of one group of men over another achieved at the point of a gun, or by the threat of unemployment, is not hegemony. Ascendancy which is embedded in religious doctrine and practice, mass media content, wage structures, the design of housing, welfare/taxation policies and so forth, is.

Two common misunderstandings of the concept should be cleared up immediately. First, though "hegemony" does not refer to ascendancy based on force, it is not incompatible with ascendancy based on force. Indeed it is common for the two to go together. Physical or economic violence backs up a dominant cultural pattern (for example beating up "perverts"), or ideologies justify the holders of physical power ("law and order").

The connection between hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal violence is close, though not simple.

Second, "hegemony" does not mean total cultural dominance, the obliteration of alternatives. It means ascendancy achieved within a balance of forces, that is, a state of play. Other patterns and groups are subordinated rather than eliminated. If we do not recognize this it would be impossible to account for the everyday contestation that actually occurs in social life, let alone for historical changes in definitions of gender patterns on the grand scale.

Hegemonic masculinity, then, is very different from the notion of a general "male sex role" though the concept allows us to formulate more precisely some of the sound points made in the sex-role literature. First, the cultural ideal (or ideals) of masculinity need not correspond at all closely to the actual personalities of the majority of men. Indeed the winning of hegemony often involves the creation of models of masculinity which are quite specifically fantasy figures, such as the film characters played by Humphrey Bogart, John Wayne and Sylvester Stallone. Or real models may be publicized who are so remote from everyday achievement that they have the effect of an unattainable ideal, like the Australian Rules footballer Ron Barassi or the boxer Muhammed Ali.

As we move from face-to-face settings to structures involving millions of people, the easily symbolized aspects of interaction become more prominent. Hegemonic masculinity is very public. In a society of mass communications it is tempting to think that it exists only as publicity. Hence the focus on media images and media discussions of masculinity in the "Books About Men" of the 1970s and 1980s, from Warren Farrell's *The Liberated Man* to Barbara Ehrenreich's *The Hearts of Men*.

To focus on the media images alone would be a mistake. They need not correspond to the actual characters of the men who hold most social power—in contemporary societies the corporate and state elites. Indeed a ruling class may allow a good deal of sexual dissent. A minor but dramatic instance is the tolerance for homosexuality that the British diplomat Guy Burgess could assume from other men of his class during his career as a Soviet spy. The public face of hegemonic masculinity is not necessarily what powerful men are,

but what sustains their power and what large numbers of men are motivated to support. The notion of “hegemony” generally implies a large measure of consent. Few men are Bogarts or Stallones, many collaborate in sustaining those images.

There are various reasons for complicity, and a thorough study of them would go far to illuminate the whole system of sexual politics. Fantasy gratification is one—nicely satirized in Woody Allen’s Bogart take-off, *Play it Again, Sam*. Displaced aggression might be another—and the popularity of very violent movies from *Dirty Harry* to *Rambo* suggest that a great deal of this is floating around. But it seems likely that the major reason is that most men benefit from the subordination of women, and hegemonic masculinity is the cultural expression of this ascendancy.

This needs careful formulation. It does not imply that hegemonic masculinity means being particularly nasty to women. Women may feel as oppressed by non-hegemonic masculinities, may even find the hegemonic pattern more familiar and manageable. There is likely to be a kind of “fit” between hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. What it does imply is the maintenance of practices that institutionalize men’s dominance over women. In this sense hegemonic masculinity must embody a successful collective strategy in relation to women. Given the complexity of gender relations no simple or uniform strategy is possible: a “mix” is necessary. So hegemonic masculinity can contain at the same time, quite consistently, openings towards domesticity and openings towards violence, towards misogyny and towards heterosexual attraction.

Hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to women and to subordinated masculinities. These other masculinities need not be as clearly defined—indeed, achieving hegemony may consist precisely in preventing alternatives gaining cultural definition and recognition as alternatives, confining them to ghettos, to privacy, to unconsciousness.

The most important feature of contemporary hegemonic masculinity is that it is heterosexual, being closely connected to the institution of marriage; and a key form of subordinated masculinity is homosexual. This subordination involves both direct interactions and a kind of ideological warfare. Some of the interactions include police and legal harassment, street violence, economic

discrimination. These transactions are tied together by the contempt for homosexuality and homosexual men that is part of the ideological package of hegemonic masculinity. The AIDS scare has been marked less by sympathy for gays as its main victims than by hostility to them as the bearers of a new threat. The key point of media concern is whether the “gay plague” will spread to “innocent,” i.e., straight, victims.

In other cases of subordinated masculinity the condition is temporary. Cynthia Cockburn’s splendid study of printing workers in London portrays a version of hegemonic masculinity that involved ascendancy over young men as well as over women. The workers recalled their apprenticeships in terms of drudgery and humiliation, a ritual of induction into trade and masculinity at the same time. But once they were in, they were “brothers.”

Several general points about masculinity also apply to the analysis of femininity at the mass level. These patterns too are historical: relationships change, new forms of femininity emerge and others disappear. The ideological representations of femininity draw on, but do not necessarily correspond to, actual femininities as they are lived. What most women support is not necessarily what they are.

There is however a fundamental difference. All forms of femininity in this society are constructed in the context of the overall subordination of women to men. For this reason there is no femininity that holds among women the position held by hegemonic masculinity among men.

This fundamental asymmetry has two main aspects. First, the concentration of social power in the hands of men leaves limited scope for women to construct institutionalized power relationships over other women. It does happen on a face-to-face basis, notably in mother–daughter relationships. Institutionalized power hierarchies have also existed in contexts like the girls’ schools pictured in *Mädchen in Uniform* and *Frost in May*. But the note of domination that is so important in relations between kinds of masculinity is muted. The much lower level of violence between women than violence between men is a fair indication of this. Second, the organization of a hegemonic form around dominance over the other sex is absent from the social construction of femininity. Power, authority,

aggression, technology are not thematized in femininity at large as they are in masculinity. Equally important, no pressure is set up to negate or subordinate other forms of femininity in the way hegemonic masculinity must negate other masculinities. It is likely therefore that actual femininities in our society are more diverse than actual masculinities.

The dominance structure which the construction of femininity cannot avoid is the global dominance of heterosexual men. The process is likely to polarize around compliance or resistance to this dominance.

The option of compliance is central to the pattern of femininity which is given most cultural and ideological support at present, called here "emphasized femininity." This is the translation to the large scale of patterns already discussed in particular institutions and milieux, such as the display of sociability rather than technical competence, fragility in mating scenes, compliance with men's desire for titillation and ego-stroking in office relationships, acceptance of marriage and childcare as a response to labour-market discrimination against women. At the mass level these are organized around themes of sexual receptivity in relation to younger women and motherhood in relation to older women.

Like hegemonic masculinity, emphasized femininity as a cultural construction is very public, though its content is specifically linked with the private realm of the home and the bedroom. Indeed it is promoted in mass media and marketing with an insistence and on a scale far beyond that found for any form of masculinity. The articles and advertisements in mass-circulation women's magazines, the "women's pages" of mass-circulation newspapers and the soap operas and "games" of daytime television, are familiar cases. Most of this promotion, it might be noted, is organized, financed and supervised by men.

To call this pattern "emphasized femininity" is also to make a point about how the cultural package is used

in interpersonal relationships. This kind of femininity is performed, and performed especially to men. There is a great deal of folklore about how to sustain the performance. It is a major concern of women's magazines from *Women's Weekly* to *Vogue*. It is even taken up and turned into highly ambivalent comedy by Hollywood (*How to Marry a Millionaire*; *Tootsie*). Marilyn Monroe was both archetype and satirist of emphasized femininity. Marabel Morgan's "total woman," an image that somehow mixes sexpot and Jesus Christ, uses the same tactics and has the same ambivalences.

Femininity organized as an adaptation to men's power, and emphasizing compliance, nurturance and empathy as womanly virtues, is not in much of a state to establish hegemony over other kinds of femininity. There is a familiar paradox about antifeminist women's groups like "Women Who Want to be Women" who exalt the *Kinder, Kirche und Küche* version of femininity: they can only become politically active by subverting their own prescriptions. They must rely heavily on religious ideology and on political backing from conservative men. The relations they establish with other kinds of femininity are not so much domination as attempted marginalization.

Central to the maintenance of emphasized femininity is practice that prevents other models of femininity gaining cultural articulation. When feminist historiography describes women's experience as "hidden from history," in Sheila Rowbotham's phrase, it is responding partly to this fact. Conventional historiography recognizes, indeed presupposes, conventional femininity. What is hidden from it is the experience of spinsters, lesbians, unionists, prostitutes, madwomen, rebels and maiden aunts, manual workers, midwives and witches. And what is involved in radical sexual politics, in one of its dimensions, is precisely a reassertion and recovery of marginalized forms of femininity in the experience of groups like these.

STEVEN SEIDMAN

44. QUEER-ING SOCIOLOGY, SOCIOLOGIZING QUEER THEORY

Steven Seidman (b. 1948) began his career with insightful assessments of classic figures in sociology, but in recent years he has embraced the postmodernist project. Moreover, his own personal politics, which led him to become a political activist in the gay community, have also led him to become a key proponent in sociology of what has become known as “queer theory.” His concerns are in part an attempt to redress the theoretical silence on matters related to sexual orientation that has characterized most of the major theorists considered in this collection. Influenced in particular by the path-breaking work on sexuality by Foucault, and clearly operating from a vantage point similar to that of many feminists (including Dorothy Smith), Seidman is intent on bringing queer theory—which has its origins outside of sociology—and sociology into mutually rewarding contact.

If we follow the recent history and theory of sexuality, we are asked to assume that sexuality is a social fact. What is imagined as sexuality, its personal and social meaning and form, varies historically and between social groups. Indeed, if we are to take seriously Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality* (1980), the very idea of sexuality as a unity composed of discrete desires, acts, developmental patterns, and sexual and psychological types is itself a recent and uniquely “modern” Western event. For example, the ancient Greeks imagined a sphere of pleasures (*aphrodisia*) which included eating, athletics, man/boy love, and marriage, not a realm of sexuality (Foucault 1985). This new theorizing figures sex as thoroughly social: bodies, sensations, pleasures, acts, and interactions are made into “sex” or accrue sexual meanings by means of discourses and institutional practices. Framing “sex” as social unavoidably makes it a political fact. Which sensations of acts are defined as sexual, what moral boundaries demarcate legitimate and illegitimate sex, and who stipulates this are political. Paralleling class or gender

politics, sexual politics involve struggles around the formation of, and resistance to, a sexual social hierarchy (Rubin 1983).

The current theorization of sex as a social and political fact prompts a rereading of the history of modern societies and social knowledges. Consider an interpretation of classical sociology from this perspective.

We are familiar with the standard accounts of the rise of sociology. For example, sociology is described as born in the great transformation from a traditional, agrarian, corporatist hierarchical order to a modern, industrial, class-based, but formally democratic system. The so-called classic sociologists acquired their authority because it is claimed that they provided the core perspectives and themes in terms of which social scientists analyze and debate the great problems of modernity. These perspectives include Marx’s theorization of capitalism as a class-divided system, Weber’s thesis of the bureaucratization of the world, and Durkheim’s theory of social evolution as a process of social differentiation. The classics posed

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the question of the meaning of modernity in terms of the debates about capitalism, secularization, social differentiation, bureaucratization, class stratification, and social solidarity. If our view of modernity derived exclusively from the sociological classics, we would not know that a central part of the great transformation consisted of efforts to define a sphere of sexuality, to organize bodies, pleasures, desires, and acts as they relate to personal and public life, and that this entailed constructing sexual (and gender) identities, producing discourses and cultural representations, enacting state policies and laws, and conducting religious and familial interventions into personal life. In short, the making of embodied sexual selves and codes has been interlaced with the making of the cultural and institutional life of Western societies.

The standard histories link the rise of the modern social sciences to social modernization (e.g., industrialism, class conflict, and bureaucracy), but are silent about sexual (and gender) conflicts. At the very time when the social sciences materialized, announcing a social understanding of the human condition, they assumed a natural order linking sex, gender, and sexuality. Such silences cannot be excused on the grounds that "sexuality" had not become a site of public organization, conflict, and knowledges. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there were public struggles focused on the body, desire, pleasure, intimate acts, and their public expression—struggles in the family, the church, the law, and the realm of knowledges and the state. The women's movement flourished in Europe in the 1780s and 1790s, from the 1840s to the 1860s, and between the 1880s and 1920, the key junctures in the development of modern sociology. Struggles over the "women's question" were connected to public conflicts around what today we would call "sexuality." Sexual conflicts escalated in intensity and gained increasing public attention between the 1880s and World War I—the "breakthrough" period of classical sociology. In Europe and the United States, the body and sexuality were sites of moral and political struggle through such issues as divorce, free love, abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, prostitution, obscenity, and sex education. This period experienced the rise of sexology, psychoanalysis, and psychiatry (Birken 1988; Irvine 1990; Weeks 1985). Magnus Hirschfeld

created the Scientific Humanitarian Committee and Institute for Sex Research in Germany. Homosexuality became an object of knowledge. Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, for example, published 12 volumes on homosexuality between 1864 and 1879. One historian estimates that more than 1,000 publications on homosexuality appeared in Europe between 1898 and 1908 (Weeks 1985:67).

What is striking is the silence in classical sociological texts regarding these sexual conflicts and knowledges. For all their aspiration to theorize the human as social, and to sketch the contours of modernity, the classical sociologists offered no accounts of the making of modern bodies and sexualities. Marx analyzed the social reproduction and organization of labor but not the process by which laborers are physically reproduced. Weber sketched what he assumed to be the historical uniqueness of the modern West; he traced the rise of modern capitalism, the modern state, formal law, modern cities, a culture of risk-taking individualism, but had virtually nothing to say concerning the making of the modern regime of sexuality. The core premises and conceptual strategies of classical sociology defined the real and important social facts as the economy, the church, the military, formal organizations, social classes, and collective representations.

Perhaps the classical sociologists' silence on "sexuality" is related to their privileged gender and sexual social position. They took for granted the naturalness and validity of their own gender and sexual experience and status in just the way, as we sociologists believe, any individual unconsciously assumes as natural and good (i.e., normal, healthy, and right) those aspects of one's life that confer privilege and power. Thus, just as the bourgeoisie assert the naturalness of class inequality and of their rule, individuals whose social identity is that of male and heterosexual do not question the naturalness of a male-dominated, normatively heterosexual social order. For the classics, who apparently assumed that their gender and sexually privileged status was natural and deserved, it is hardly surprising that they conceived of the social as a realm of formal organizations, state power, economic classes, and cultural meanings. Thus the classics never examined the social formation of modern regimes of bodies and sexualities. Moreover, their own science of society contributed

(unwittingly, we like to think) to the making of this regime whose center is the hetero/ homo binary and the heterosexualization of society.

Sociology's silence on "sexuality" was broken when the volume of public sexual conflicts and discourses was turned so high that even sociologists' trained deafness to such sounds was pierced. In early American sociology alone, isolated and still-faint voices speaking to the issue of sexuality can be heard through the first half of the twentieth century. Indeed, sociologists could not entirely avoid addressing this theme in the first few decades of this century. However, the extent to which they did so is remarkable!

Issues such as municipal reform, unionization, economic concentration, the commercialization of everyday life, race relations, and the internationalization of politics were important topics of public debate. At the same time, Americans were gripped by conflicts that placed the body at the center of contention. The women's movement, which in the first two decades of this century was closely aligned to socialist and cultural radical politics, emerged as a national movement. Although the struggle for the right to vote was pivotal, no less important were feminist struggles to eliminate the double standard that permitted men sexual expression and pleasure while pressuring women to conform to Victorian purity norms or suffer degradation if erotic desires were claimed. As women were demanding erotic equality with men, there were public struggles to liberalize divorce, abortion, and pornography; battles over obscenity, prostitution, and marriage were in the public eye (e.g., D'Emilio and Freedman 1988; Peiss 1986; Seidman 1991; Smith-Rosenberg 1990). Sex was being discussed everywhere—in magazines, newspapers, journals, books, the theater, and the courts. In the millions of volumes of sex advice literature published in the early decades of this century, there existed a process of the sexualization of love and marriage (Seidman 1991). Books such as Theodore Van de Velde's *Ideal Marriage* ([1930] 1950), which constructed an eroticized body and intimacy, sold in the hundreds of thousands. Americans were in the first stages of a romance with Freud and psychoanalysis; social radicals such as Max Eastman, Emma Goldman, Edward Boume, and Margaret Sanger connected institutional change to an agenda of sexual and gender

change (Marriner 1972; Simmons 1982; Trimberger 1983). Despite the vigorous efforts of vice squads and purity movements, pornography flourished and obscenity laws were gradually liberalized.

In the first half of this century, sex was put into the public culture of American society in a manner that sociology could not ignore. Yet, through mid-century, sociologists managed to do just that to a considerable degree. The Chicago School studied cab drivers, immigrants, factory workers, and juvenile delinquents, but had little to say about the domain of sexuality. Theorists such as Park, Cooley, Thomas, Parsons, and Ogburn had much to say on urban patterns, the development of the self, political organization, the structure of social action, and technological development—all worthwhile topics—but little or nothing on the making of sexualized selves and institutions. Finally, while sociologists were surveying all other conceivable topics, and while a proliferation of sex surveys was stirring public debate (e.g., K.B. Davis 1929; Dickinson and Beam 1932; Kinsey et al. 1948, 1953), sociologists did not deploy their empirical techniques to study human sexuality.¹

It took the changes of the 1950s and the public turmoil of the 1960s to make sociologists begin to take sex seriously. The immediate postwar years are sometimes perceived as conservative, but the war, patterns of mobility, prosperity, and social liberalization loosened sexual mores. Indicative of changes in the American culture of the body and sexuality, the 1950s witnessed rock music, the beginnings of the women's movement, the appearance of homophile organizations, and the figures of the beatnik and the rebel, for whom social and sexual transgression went hand in hand. The 1960s made sexual rebellion into a national public drama. The women's movement, gay liberation, lesbian feminism, the counterculture, magazines such as *Playboy* and manuals such as *The Joy of Sex*, and cultural radicals such as Herbert Marcuse and Norman O. Brown made sexual rebellion central to social change.

A sociology of sexuality emerged in postwar America (e.g., Henslin 1971; I. Reiss 1967). This sociology, however, approached sex as a specialty area like organizations, crime, or demography. Sex was imagined as a property of the individual, whose personal expression was shaped by social norms and attitudes. Sex and society were viewed as antithetical; society took

on importance as either an obstacle or a tolerant space for sexual release. The idea of a “sexual regime,” of a field of sexual meanings, discourses, and practices that are interlaced with social institutions and movements, was absent. Moreover, although sociologists studied patterns of conventional sexuality—most conspicuously, premarital, marital, and extramarital sex—much of this literature was preoccupied with “deviant” sexualities such as prostitution, pornography, and (most impressively) homosexuality.

A sociology of homosexuality emerged as part of the sociology of sex (e.g., Gagnon and Simon 1967a, 1967b; A. Reiss 1964; Sagarin 1969). Sociologists turned to homosexuality as an object of knowledge in the context of the heightened public visibility and politicization of homosexuality. The social context of the rise of a sociology of homosexuality needs at least to be sketched.

Between the early decades of this century and the mid-1970s, homoerotic desire was figured by scientific-medical knowledges into a homosexual identity. Ironically, the framing of homosexuality as a social identity proved to be productive of homosexual subcultures. To put it very schematically, homosexual subcultures evolved from the marginal, clandestine homophile organizations of the 1950s to the public cultures and movements of confrontation and the affirmation of lesbian feminism and gay liberation in the 1970s (Adam 1987; D’Emilio 1983; Faderman 1981). Integral to the transformation of homoerotic desire into a lesbian and gay identity was the insertion of homosexuality into public discourses. From the early 1900s through the 1950s, a psychiatric discourse that figured the homosexual as a pathological personality, a perverse, abnormal human type, dominated public discussion. Kinsey (1948, 1953) challenged this psychiatric model by viewing sexuality as a continuum. Instead of assuming that individuals are either exclusively heterosexual or homosexual, he proposed (with the support of thousands of interviews) that human sexuality is ambiguous with respect to sexual orientation or that most individuals experience both heterosexual and homosexual feelings and behaviors. Kinsey’s critique of the psychiatric model was met with a hard-line defense of the model (e.g., Bergler 1956; Bieber et al. 1962; Socarides 1968). At the same time, new

social models of homosexuality provided an alternative to both Kinsey and the biological and psychological models of psychiatry. These discourses conceived of homosexuals as an oppressed minority, victims of unwarranted prejudice and social discrimination (e.g., Cory 1951; Hoffman 1968; Hooker 1965; Martin and Lyon 1972). By the early 1970s, the women’s and gay liberation movements had fashioned elaborated social concepts of homosexuality that not only sought to normalize homoerotic desire and identities but also criticized the institutions of heterosexuality, marriage and the family, and conventional gender roles (e.g., Altman 1971; Atkinson 1974; Bunch 1975; Rich 1976).

Sociology was positioned ambivalently with regard to the making of homosexuality as a site of political conflict and knowledge. Undoubtedly, the growing national public awareness of homosexuality and the surfacing of social concepts of homosexuality prompted sociologists to conceive of homosexuality as within their domain of knowledge. Sociologists approached homosexuality as a social stigma to be managed; they analyzed the ways in which homosexuals adapted to a hostile society. Through the 1970s, sociologists studied the homosexual (mostly the male homosexual) as a creature of the sexual underworld of hustlers, prostitutes, prisons, tearrooms, baths, and bars (e.g., Humphreys 1970; Kirkham 1971; A. Reiss 1964; Weinberg and Williams 1975). My impression is that much of this sociology aimed to figure the homosexual as a victim of unjust discrimination. Nevertheless, sociologists contributed to the public perception of the homosexual as a strange, exotic “other” in contrast to the normal, respectable heterosexual.

Sociological perspectives on sexuality in the 1960s and early 1970s, particularly the labeling theory of Howard Becker (1963), Goffman (1963), and Schur (1971) and the “sexual script” concept of John Gagnon and William Simon (1973), proved influential in shaping knowledges of sexuality and homosexuality. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, a new sociology of homosexuality was fashioned, primarily by lesbian- and gay-identified and often feminist sociologists. This new cadre of sociologists took over the conceptual tools of sociology, as well as drawing heavily from feminism and critical social approaches circulating in the lesbian and gay movements, to study

gay life (e.g., Harry and Devall 1979; Levine 1979a, 1979b; Murray 1979; Plummer 1975, 1981; Troiden 1988; Warren 1974). This work underscored the social meaning of homosexuality. It contributed to recent gay theory, which has largely neglected sociological research as a distinctive social tradition of sex studies. . . . The sociology of homosexuality from the early 1970s through the 1980s has not played a major role in recent lesbian and gay theory debates, in part because sociologists did not critically investigate the categories of sexuality, heterosexuality, and homosexuality; they never questioned the social functioning of the hetero/homosexual binary as the master category of a modern regime of sexuality. . . . Moreover, sociologists lacked historical perspective while perpetuating an approach that isolated the question of homosexuality from the broader question of modernization and politics. . . .

As homosexuality was being inserted into public discourses and made into an object of knowledge in academic disciplines, a gay theory was developing outside academe. For example, as sociologists were beginning to think of sex as a social fact, knowledges came out of the women's and gay movements, as I mentioned above. With the formation of homophile groups in the 1950s (e.g., the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis), homosexuality was alternatively theorized as a property of all individuals or as a property of a segment of the human population. The naturalization of homosexuality was intended to legitimate homosexuality. Moreover, despite the radicalization of gay theory in lesbian feminism and gay liberation in the 1970s, few people challenged the view of homosexuality as a natural condition and a key marker of self-identity. A good deal of lesbian feminist and gay liberationist theory simply reversed the dominant sexual hierarchy by asserting the naturalness and normality of homosexuality. For universalists, normalization was often connected to a political strategy of assimilationism, while the minoritization of homosexuality was often wedded to a separatist agenda or to a politics of difference (e.g., Bunch 1971; Johnston 1973). The notion of homosexuality as a universal category of the self and a sexual identity was hardly questioned, if at all, in the homophile, lesbian feminist, and gay liberationist discourses (exceptions include Altman 1971; MacIntosh 1968).

As the initial wave of an antihomophobic, gay affirmative politic (roughly from 1968 to 1973) passed into a period of community building, personal empowerment, and local struggles, we can speak of a new period in lesbian and gay theory, the age of social constructionism. Drawing from labeling and phenomenological theory, and influenced heavily by Marxism and feminism, social constructionists had roots in academia and activism. At the heart of a social constructionist perspective is the rejection of the antithesis of sex and society. Sex is viewed as fundamentally social; the categories of sex—especially heterosexuality and homosexuality; but also the whole regime of modern sexual types, classifications, and norms—are understood as social and historical facts. With respect to homosexuality, the chief theme was that “homosexuality” or (more appropriately) same-sex experiences were not a uniform, identical phenomenon, but that their meaning and social role varied historically. In particular, constructionists argued that “the homosexual” cannot be assumed to be a transhistorical identity; instead the category of homosexuality operates as marking a distinct psychological and physical human type or identity only in modern Western societies. Michel Foucault provided the classic statement:

As defined by ancient civil or canonical codes, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The nineteenth-century homo-sexual became a personage, a past, a case history, a life form. . . . Nothing that went into the total composition was unaffected by his sexuality. It was everywhere present in him: at the root of all his actions . . . because it was a secret that always gave itself away (1980:43).

Foucault's thesis of the social construction of “the homosexual” found parallel articulation in the concurrent work of Jonathan Katz (1976), Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (1975), Randolph Trumbach (1977), and Jeffrey Weeks (1977).

Foucault's genealogical studies of sexuality aimed at exposing a whole sexual regime as a social and political event. In this regard, Foucault questioned the political strategy of an affirmative lesbian and gay movement on the grounds that it unwittingly reproduced this regime. Foucault's deconstructionist message, however,

fell on largely deaf ears in the context of a politics affirming identity and the prodigious efforts at lesbian and gay community building in the 1970s. A good deal of social constructionist studies through the early 1980s sought to explain the origin, social meaning, and changing forms of the modern homosexual (e.g., D'Emilio 1983; Faderman 1981; Plummer 1981). Although this literature challenged essentialist or universalistic understandings of homosexuality, it was often tied to a politics of the making of a homosexual minority. Instead of asserting the homosexual as a natural fact made into a political minority by social prejudice, constructionists traced the social factors that produced a homosexual subject or identity, which functioned as the foundation for the building of a minority, ethnic-like community and politics. Social constructionist studies often functioned as legitimations for the organization of lesbian and gay subcultures into ethnic-like minorities (Epstein 1987; Seidman 1993).²

Social constructionist perspectives dominated studies of homosexuality through the 1980s and have been institutionalized in lesbian and gay studies programs in the 1990s. Debates about essentialism (Stein 1992) and the rise, meaning, and changing social forms of homosexual identities and communities are at the core of lesbian and gay social studies. Since the late 1980s, however, aspects of this constructionist perspective have been contested; its own conceptual and political silences and exclusions have been exposed. In particular, discourses that sometimes circulate under the rubric of queer theory, though often impossible to differentiate from constructionist texts, have sought to shift the debate somewhat away from explaining the modern homosexual to questions of the operation of the hetero/homosexual binary, from an exclusive preoccupation with homosexuality to a focus on heterosexuality as a social and political organizing principle, and from a politics of minority interest to a politics of knowledge and difference (Seidman 1993). What is the social context of the rise of queer theory?

By the end of the 1970s, the gay and lesbian movement had achieved such a level of subcultural elaboration and general social tolerance that a politics of cultural and social mainstreaming far overshadowed both the defensive strategies (e.g., the Mattachine Society) and the revolutionary politics of the previous

decades. Thus Dennis Altman (1982), a keen observer of the gay movement in the 1970s, could speak of the homosexualization of America. Yet at this very historical moment, events were conspiring to put lesbian and gay life into crisis.

A backlash against homosexuality, spearheaded by the new right but widely supported by neoconservatives and mainstream Republicans, punctured illusions of a coming era of tolerance and sexual pluralism (Adam 1987; Patton 1985; Seidman 1992). The AIDS epidemic both energized the anti-gay backlash and put lesbians and gay men on the defensive as religious and medicalized models which discredited homosexuality were rehabilitated in public discourses. Although the AIDS crisis also demonstrated the strength of established gay institutions, for many lesbians and gay men it underscored the limits of a politics of minority rights and inclusion. Both the backlash and the AIDS crisis prompted a renewal of radical activism, of a politics of confrontation, coalition building, and the need for a critical theory that would link gay empowerment to broad institutional change.

Internal developments similarly prompted a shift in gay theory and politics. Long-simmering internal differences erupted around the issues of race and sex. By the early 1980s, a public culture fashioned by lesbian and gay people of color registered sharp criticisms of mainstream gay culture and politics for its marginalization, devaluation, and exclusion of their experiences, interests, values, and unique forms of life (e.g., their language, writing, political perspectives, relationships, and particular modes of oppression). The concept of lesbian and gay identity that served as the foundation for building a community and organizing politically was criticized as reflecting a white, middle-class experience or standpoint (Anzaldúa and Moraga 1983; Beam 1986; Lorde 1984; Moraga 1983; Hemphill 1991). The categories of "lesbian" and "gay" were criticized for functioning as disciplining political forces. Simultaneously, lesbian feminism was further put into crisis by challenges to its foundational concept of sexuality and sexual ethics. At the heart of lesbian feminism, especially in the late 1970s, was an understanding of the difference between men and women anchored in a spiritualized concept of female sexuality and an eroticization of the male that imagined male

desire as revealing a logic of misogyny and domination. Being a woman and a lesbian meant exhibiting in one's desires, fantasies, and behaviors a lesbian-feminist sexual and social identity. Many lesbians, and feminists in general, criticized lesbian feminism for marking their own erotic and intimate lives as deviant or male-identified (e.g., Allison 1981; Bright 1984; Califia 1979, 1981; Rubin 1983). In the course of what some describe as the feminist "sex wars," a virtual parade of female and lesbian sexualities (e.g., butch-fems, sadomasochists, sensualists of all kinds) entered the public text of lesbian culture, mocking the idea of a unified lesbian sexual identity (Ferguson 1989; Phelan 1989; Seidman 1992). The intent of people of color and of sex rebels was to encourage social differences to surface in gay and lesbian life, but one consequence was to raise questions about the very foundations of gay culture and politics.

Some people in the lesbian and gay communities reacted to the "crisis" by reasserting a natural foundation for homosexuality (e.g., the gay brain) in order to unify homosexuals in the face of a political backlash, to defend themselves against attacks prompted by the plague, and to overcome growing internal discord. Many activists and intellectuals, however, moved in the opposite direction, affirming a stronger thesis of the social construction of homosexuality, which took the form of radical politics of difference. Although people of color and sex rebels pressured gay culture in this direction, there appeared a new cadre of theorists, influenced profoundly by French poststructuralism and Lacanian psychoanalysis, who have significantly altered the terrain of gay theory and politics (e.g., Butler 1990; de Lauretis 1991; Doty 1993; Fuss 1991; Sedgwick 1990; Warner 1993). If queer theory speaks to a serious epistemic shift, I think it is to this refigured conceptual field.

As the contributors to this symposium make clear, queer theory has accrued multiple meanings, from a merely useful shorthand way to speak of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered studies to a theoretical sensibility that pivots on transgression or permanent rebellion. I take as central to queer theory its challenge to what has been the dominant foundational concept of both homophobic and affirmative homosexual theory: the assumption of a homosexual subject

or identity. I interpret queer theory as contesting this foundation and therefore the very telos of Western homosexual politics.

Modern Western homophobic and gay affirmative theory has assumed a homosexual subject. Dispute materialized over its origin (natural or social), its changing social forms and roles, its moral meaning, and its politics. There has been hardly any serious disagreement regarding the assumption that homosexual theory and politics have as their object "the homosexual" as a stable, unified, and identifiable agent. Drawing from the critique of unitary identity politics by people of color and by sex rebels, and from the poststructural critique of "representational" models of language, queer theorists argue that identities are always multiple or at best composites, with an infinite number of ways in which "identity-components" (e.g., sexual orientation, race, class, nationality, gender, age, ableness) can intersect or combine. Any specific identity construction, moreover, is arbitrary, unstable, and exclusionary. Identity constructions necessarily entail the silencing or exclusion of some experiences or forms of life. For example, the assertion of a black, middle-class, American lesbian identity silences differences in this social category that relate to religion, regional location, subcultural identification, relation to feminism, age, or education. Identity constructs are necessarily unstable because they elicit opposition or indeed produce resistance by those whose experiences, interests, or forms of life are submerged by the assertion of identity. Finally, rather than viewing affirmations of identity as necessarily liberating, queer theorists figure them as disciplinary and regulatory structures. Identity constructions function, if you will, as templates defining selves and behaviors and therefore as excluding a range of possible ways to frame one's self, body, desires, actions, and social relations.

Approaching identities as multiple, unstable, and regulatory may suggest to critics the undermining of gay theory and politics, but for queer theorists it presents new and productive possibilities. Although I detect a strain of anti-identity politics in some queer theory, the aim is not to abandon identity as a category of knowledge and politics but to render it permanently open and contestable as to its meaning and political role. In other words, decisions about identity categories

become pragmatic, related to concerns of situational advantage, political gain, and conceptual utility. The gain of figuring identity as permanently open as to its meaning and political use, say queer theorists, is that it encourages the public surfacing of differences or a culture where multiple voices and interests are heard and shape gay life and politics.

Queer theory articulates a related objection to a homosexual theory and politics organized on the ground of the homosexual subject: This project reproduces the hetero-homosexual binary, a code that perpetuates the heterosexualization of society. . . . Modern Western affirmative homosexual theory may naturalize or normalize the gay subject or even may register it as an agent of social liberation, but it has the effect of consolidating heterosexuality and homosexuality as master categories of sexual and social identity; it reinforces the modern regime of sexuality. Queer theory wishes to challenge the regime of sexuality itself—that is, the knowledges that construct the self as sexual and that assume heterosexuality and homosexuality as categories marking the truth of sexual selves. The modern system of sexuality organized around the heterosexual or homosexual self is approached as a system of knowledge, one that structures the institutional and cultural life of Western societies. In other words, queer theorists view heterosexuality and homosexuality not simply as identities or social statuses but as categories of knowledge, a language that frames what we know as bodies, desires, sexualities, identities; this is a normative language that erects moral boundaries and political hierarchies. Queer theorists shift their focus from an exclusive preoccupation with the oppression and liberation of the homosexual subject to an analysis of the institutional practices and discourses producing sexual knowledges and how they organize social life, with particular attention to the way in which these knowledges and social practices repress differences. In this regard, queer theory is suggesting that the study of homosexuality should not be a study of a minority—the making of the lesbian/gay/ bisexual/subject—but a study of those knowledges and social practices which organize “society” as a whole by sexualizing—heterosexualizing or homosexualizing—bodies, desires, acts, identities, social relations, knowledges, culture, and social institutions. Queer theory aspires to transform homosexual

theory into a general social theory or one standpoint from which to analyze whole societies.

As of this writing, queer theory and sociology have barely acknowledged one another. Queer theory has largely been the creation of academics, mostly feminists and mostly humanities professors. Sociologists are almost invisible in these discussions. . . . This is somewhat ironic in light of the gesturing of queer theory towards a general social analysis. Moreover, the silence of sociologists is most unfortunate because queer theory has been criticized for its textualism or “underdeveloped” concept of the social (e.g., Hennessy 1993; Seidman forthcoming; Warner 1993). Sociologists have much to learn from queer theory . . . as well as the opportunity to make a serious contribution.

This symposium is intended to bring to an end the mutual neglect between queer theorists and sociologists. It asks the following questions: What is queer theory? How does it speak to sociologists? How does it challenge sociologists to reexamine their paradigms, and how might sociology speak to queer theory? What would a queer theory which seriously engaged sociology look like? The queer-ing of sociology and the sociologizing of queer theory are the twin themes and hopes of this symposium.

A final word about risk and courage is in order. Alan Sica deserves much credit for supporting this symposium, the first of its kind in a sociology journal. It was an act of risk and trust on his part; I hope he has not been disappointed. I have enormous admiration for the contributors. Aside from myself and Ken Plummer, either they are junior faculty members or anticipate entering the job market shortly. Although identifying with a queer standpoint has achieved a level of tolerance and perhaps some cultural currency in the humanities, queer perspectives are barely visible in sociology. These contributors have wagered, perhaps unconsciously but surely bravely, that their contesting of knowledges will be taken on its own terms as part of the ongoing sociological conversation about the understanding and shape of contemporary humanity. Finally, I wish to thank Charles Lemert, whose encouragement of this project and whose respect for “the other” has been as gentle and loving as it has been unyielding and provoking.

NOTES

1. The index of the *American Journal of Sociology* shows that between 1895 and 1965, one article on homosexuality was printed and 13 articles were listed under the heading "Sex"; most of these addressed issues of gender, marriage, or lifestyle. The index of the *American Sociological Review* shows that between 1936 and 1960, 14 articles were published under the heading "Sexual Behavior"; most of these did not address issues of sexuality. One journal article commented on the absence of a sociology of sexuality: "The sociology of sex is quite undeveloped, although sex is a social force of the first magnitude. Sociologists have investigated the changing roles of men and women . . . [and] the sexual aspects of marriage. . . . Occasionally a good study on illegitimacy or prostitution appears. However, when it is stated that a sociology of sex does not exist, I mean that our discipline has not investigated, in any substantial manner, the social causes, conditions and consequences of heterosexual and homosexual activities of all types" (Bowman 1949:626). Another sociologist, Kingsley Davis (1937, 1939), who later became president of the American Sociological Association, also studied sexuality. Some 20 years after Bowman lamented the absence of a sociology of sexuality, Edward Sagarin reiterated this complaint: "Here and there an investigation, a minor paper, a little data, particularly in the literature of criminology . . . and what at the time was called social disorganization . . . marked the totality of sex literature in sociology" (1971:384).
2. Placing all innovative homosexual studies in the 1970s and 1980s under the rubric of social constructionism and the project of minority theory simplifies matters. In particular, it signalizes a powerful current of lesbian feminist-inspired theorizing (e.g., Ferguson 1989; MacKinnon 1989; Rich [1980] 1983). Much of this work was concerned less with issues of essentialism and constructionism or the rise of homosexual identities than with analyzing the social forces creating, maintaining, and resisting the institution of heterosexuality. Departing from a tendency in constructionist studies to approach lesbian and gay theory as separate from feminism, this literature insists on tracing the link between a system of compulsive heterosexuality and patterns of male dominance. In this regard . . . [a] materialist feminist perspective suggests both a critique of queer theory for isolating sexuality from gender and a critique of feminist sociologists for isolating gender from issues of sexuality.

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SECTION IX

1. How do West and Zimmerman distinguish sex and gender, and what do they see as the nature of the relationship between the two? What exactly do they mean when they write about "doing gender?"
2. Why is the example of Agnes so important to West and Zimmerman's thesis?
3. What does Smith mean when contending that "categories are not enough?" How does she understand the difference between scientific and political categories?
4. According to Butler, gender is inherently fluid and variable. Summarize how she makes her case and offer examples to support it.
5. Summarize Collins's advocacy of an Afrocentric feminist epistemology. Do you agree or disagree with critics who contend that such a position undermines the ability of people to see the world from the perspective of a shared humanity? Why?
6. What does Connell mean by "hegemonic masculinity," and what is its role in shaping gender power relations?
7. Discuss and offer an example of what Connell means by the structured character of gender power relations.
8. What is queer theory, and what does Seidman think it can do in reshaping mainstream sociology?

X. CRITICAL THEORY

WALTER BENJAMIN

45. ART IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION

Though associated with members of the Frankfurt School, Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) was an independent scholar without formal institutional affiliations. His thought was influenced by a wide range of intellectual currents, including the neo-Marxism of Theodor Adorno, the more traditional Marxism of Bertolt Brecht, the utopian theory of Ernst Bloch, and the mysticism of Gershom Scholem. First published in 1936, “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” is one of his most original and widely read works. In this essay, he seeks to explain the impact on art of the introduction of new technologies that allow for the easy reproduction of the work. This is most evident in photography and film. His argument is that in traditional cultures, art contained an aura, which he sees as linked to ritual. In the modern world, that aura is lost as a consequence of various modes of mechanical reproduction. Benjamin does not engage in a critique of this new development but instead seeks to articulate its implications for the society at large.

PREFACE

When Marx undertook his critique of the capitalistic mode of production, this mode was in its infancy. Marx directed his efforts in such a way as to give them prognostic value. He went back to the basic conditions underlying capitalistic production and through his presentation showed what could be expected of capitalism in the future. The result was that one could expect it not only to exploit the proletariat with increasing intensity, but ultimately to create conditions which would make it possible to abolish capitalism itself.

The transformation of the superstructure, which takes place far more slowly than that of the substructure, has taken more than half a century to manifest in all areas of culture the changes in the conditions of production. Only today can it be indicated what

form this has taken. Certain prognostic requirements should be met by these statements. However, theses about the art of the proletariat after its assumption of power or about the art of a classless society would have less bearing on these demands than theses about the developmental tendencies of art under present conditions of production. Their dialectic is no less noticeable in the superstructure than in the economy. It would therefore be wrong to underestimate the value of such theses as a weapon. They brush aside a number of outmoded concepts, such as creativity and genius, eternal value and mystery—concepts whose uncontrolled (and at present almost uncontrollable) application would lead to a processing of data in the Fascist sense. The concepts which are introduced into the theory of art in what follows differ from the more familiar terms in that they are completely useless for

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the purposes of Fascism. They are, on the other hand, useful for the formulation of revolutionary demands in the politics of art.

I

In principle a work of art has always been reproducible. Man-made artifacts could always be imitated by men. Replicas were made by pupils in practice of their craft, by masters for diffusing their works, and, finally, by third parties in the pursuit of gain. Mechanical reproduction of a work of art, however, represents something new. Historically, it advanced intermittently and in leaps at long intervals, but with accelerated intensity. The Greeks knew only two procedures of technically reproducing works of art: founding and stamping. Bronzes, terra cottas, and coins were the only art works which they could produce in quantity. All others were unique and could not be mechanically reproduced. With the woodcut graphic art became mechanically reproducible for the first time, long before script became reproducible by print. The enormous changes which printing, the mechanical reproduction of writing, has brought about in literature are a familiar story. However, within the phenomenon which we are here examining from the perspective of world history, print is merely a special, though particularly important, case. During the Middle Ages engraving and etching were added to the woodcut; at the beginning of the nineteenth century lithography made its appearance.

With lithography the technique of reproduction reached an essentially new stage. This much more direct process was distinguished by the tracing of the design on a stone rather than its incision on a block of wood or its etching on a copperplate and permitted graphic art for the first time to put its products on the market, not only in large numbers as hitherto, but also in daily changing forms. Lithography enabled graphic art to illustrate everyday life, and it began to keep pace with printing. But only a few decades after its invention, lithography was surpassed by photography. For the first time in the process of pictorial reproduction, photography freed the hand of the most important artistic functions which henceforth devolved only upon the eye looking into a lens. Since the eye perceives more swiftly than the hand can draw, the process of

pictorial reproduction was accelerated so enormously that it could keep pace with speech. A film operator shooting a scene in the studio captures the images at the speed of an actor's speech. Just as lithography virtually implied the illustrated newspaper, so did photography foreshadow the sound film. The technical reproduction of sound was tackled at the end of the last century. These convergent endeavors made predictable a situation which Paul Valéry pointed up in this sentence: "Just as water, gas, and electricity are brought into our houses from far off to satisfy our needs in response to a minimal effort, so we shall be supplied with visual or auditory images, which will appear and disappear at a simple movement of the hand, hardly more than a sign" (*op. cit.*, p. 226). Around 1900 technical reproduction had reached a standard that not only permitted it to reproduce all transmitted works of art and thus to cause the most profound change in their impact upon the public; it also had captured a place of its own among the artistic processes. For the study of this standard nothing is more revealing than the nature of the repercussions that these two different manifestations—the reproduction of works of art and the art of the film—have had on art in its traditional form.

II

Even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be. This unique existence of the work of art determined the history to which it was subject throughout the time of its existence. This includes the changes which it may have suffered in physical condition over the years as well as the various changes in its ownership. The traces of the first can be revealed only by chemical or physical analyses which it is impossible to perform on a reproduction; changes of ownership are subject to a tradition which must be traced from the situation of the original.

The presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity. Chemical analyses of the patina of a bronze can help to establish this, as does the proof that a given manuscript of the **Middle Ages** stems from an archive of the fifteenth century. The whole sphere

of authenticity is outside technical—and of course, not only technical—reproducibility. . . . Confronted with its manual reproduction, which was usually branded as a forgery, the original preserved all its authority; not so *vis à vis* technical reproduction. The reason is twofold. First, process reproduction is more independent of the original than manual reproduction. For example, in photography, process reproduction can bring out those aspects of the original that are unattainable to the naked eye yet accessible to the lens, which is adjustable and chooses its angle at will. And photographic reproduction, with the aid of certain processes, such as enlargement or slow motion, can capture images which escape natural vision. Secondly, technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself. Above all, it enables the original to meet the beholder halfway, be it in the form of a photograph or a phonograph record. The cathedral leaves its locale to be received in the studio of a lover of art; the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, resounds in the drawing room.

The situations into which the product of mechanical reproduction can be brought may not touch the actual work of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated. This holds not only for the art work but also, for instance, for a landscape which passes in review before the spectator in a movie. In the case of the art object, a most sensitive nucleus—namely, its authenticity—is interfered with whereas no natural object is vulnerable on that score. The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object. . . .

One might subsume the eliminated element in the term “aura” and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art. This is a symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By

making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced. These two processes lead to a tremendous shattering of tradition which is the obverse of the contemporary crisis and renewal of mankind. Both processes are intimately connected with the contemporary mass movements. Their most powerful agent is the film. Its social significance, particularly in its most positive form, is inconceivable without its destructive, cathartic aspect, that is, the liquidation of the traditional value of the cultural heritage. This phenomenon is most palpable in the great historical films. It extends to ever new positions. In 1927 Abel Gance exclaimed enthusiastically: “Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Beethoven will make films . . . all legends, all mythologies and all myths, all founders of religion, and the very religions . . . await their exposed resurrection, and the heroes crowd each other at the gate.”¹ Presumably without intending it, he issued an invitation to a far-reaching liquidation.

III

During long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity’s entire mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well. The fifth century, with its great shifts of population, saw the birth of the late Roman art industry and the Vienna Genesis, and there developed not only an art different from that of antiquity but also a new kind of perception. The scholars of the Viennese school, Riegl and Wickhoff, who resisted the weight of classical tradition under which these later art forms had been buried, were the first to draw conclusions from them concerning the organization of perception at the time. However far-reaching their insight, these scholars limited themselves to showing the significant, formal hallmark which characterized perception in late Roman times. They did not attempt—and, perhaps, saw no way—to show the social transformations expressed by these changes of perception. The conditions for an analogous insight are more favorable in the present. And if changes in

the medium of contemporary perception can be comprehended as decay of the aura, it is possible to show its social causes.

The concept of aura which was proposed above with reference to historical objects may usefully be illustrated with reference to the aura of natural ones. We define the aura of the latter as the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be. If, while resting on a summer afternoon, you follow with your eyes a mountain range on the horizon or a branch which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of those mountains, of that branch. This image makes it easy to comprehend the social bases of the contemporary decay of the aura. It rests on two circumstances, both of which are related to the increasing significance of the masses in contemporary life. Namely, the desire of contemporary masses to bring things "closer" spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction. Unmistakably, reproduction as offered by picture magazines and newsreels differs from the image seen by the unarmored eye. Uniqueness and permanence are as closely linked in the latter as are transitoriness and reproducibility in the former. To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose "sense of the universal equality of things" has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction. Thus is manifested in the field of perception what in the theoretical sphere is noticeable in the increasing importance of statistics. The adjustment of reality to the masses and of the masses to reality is a process of unlimited scope, as much for thinking as for perception.

IV

The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being imbedded in the fabric of tradition. This tradition itself is thoroughly alive and extremely changeable. An ancient statue of Venus, for example, stood in a different traditional context with the Greeks, who made it an object of veneration, than with the clerics of the Middle Ages, who viewed it as an ominous idol.

Both of them, however, were equally confronted with its uniqueness, that is, its aura. Originally the contextual integration of art in tradition found its expression in the cult. We know that the earliest art works originated in the service of a ritual—first the magical, then the religious kind. It is significant that the existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function. . . . In other words, the unique value of the "authentic" work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value. This ritualistic basis, however remote, is still recognizable as secularized ritual even in the most profane forms of the cult of beauty. . . . The secular cult of beauty, developed during the Renaissance and prevailing for three centuries, clearly showed that ritualistic basis in its decline and the first deep crisis which befell it. With the advent of the first truly revolutionary means of reproduction, photography, simultaneously with the rise of socialism, art sensed the approaching crisis which has become evident a century later. At the time, art reacted with the doctrine of *l'art pour l'art*, that is, with a theology of art. This gave rise to what might be called a negative theology in the form of the idea of "purer" art, which not only denied any social function of art but also any categorizing by subject matter. (In poetry, Mallarmé was the first to take this position.)

An analysis of art in the age of mechanical reproduction must do justice to these relationships, for they lead us to an all-important insight: for the first time in world history mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To a greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility. . . . From a photographic negative, for example, one can make any number of prints; to ask for the "authentic" print makes no sense. But the instant the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production, the total function of art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice—politics.

V

Works of art are received and valued on different planes. Two polar types stand out: with one, the accent is on the cult value; with the other, on the exhibition

value of the work. . . . Artistic production begins with ceremonial objects destined to serve in a cult. One may assume that what mattered was their existence, not their being on view. The elk portrayed by the man of the Stone Age on the walls of his cave was an instrument of magic. He did expose it to his fellow men, but in the main it was meant for the spirits. Today the cult value would seem to demand that the work of art remain hidden. Certain statues of gods are accessible only to the priest in the cella; certain Madonnas remain covered nearly all year round; certain sculptures on medieval cathedrals are invisible to the spectator on ground level. With the emancipation of the various art practices from ritual go increasing opportunities for the exhibition of their products. It is easier to exhibit a portrait bust that can be sent here and there than to exhibit the statue of a divinity that has its fixed place in the interior of a temple. The same holds for the painting as against the mosaic or fresco that preceded it. And even though the public presentability of

a mass originally may have been just as great as that of a symphony, the latter originated at the moment when its public presentability promised to surpass that of the mass.

With the different methods of technical reproduction of a work of art, its fitness for exhibition increased to such an extent that the quantitative shift between its two poles turned into a qualitative transformation of its nature. This is comparable to the situation of the work of art in prehistoric times when, by the absolute emphasis on its cult value, it was, first and foremost, an instrument of magic. Only later did it come to be recognized as a work of art. In the same way today, by the absolute emphasis on its exhibition value the work of art becomes a creation with entirely new functions, among which the one we are conscious of, the artistic function, later may be recognized as incidental. . . . This much is certain: today photography and the film are the most serviceable exemplifications of this new function.

NOTE

1. Abel Gance, "Le Temps de l'image est venu," *L'Art cinématographique*, Vol. 2, pp. 94 f, Paris, 1927.

46. FREUDIAN THEORY AND THE PATTERN OF FASCIST PROPAGANDA

Theodor Adorno (1903–1969) was one of the leading scholars associated with the Institute for Social Research (the Frankfurt School), a major figure contributing to the development of a critical theory that was at once informed by Hegelian philosophy, Nietzsche, Marxist, currents of contemporary sociology, and Freudian psychology. The idea of a disenchanted world, influenced by Weber's pessimistic assessment of the modern condition and by the rise of Hitler, informed such works as *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (co-authored with Max Horkheimer in 1944). Forced into exile in the United States by the Nazi regime, Adorno's work sought to understand the causes and consequences of fascism. He was the lead author in the monumental study on the authoritarian personality that reflected his desire to understand the personality types drawn to fascism. In this essay, Adorno uses Freudian ideas to explore the fascist leader type and the role of fascist propaganda in drawing in those predisposed to anti-democratic views.

... We content ourselves with a few observations on the relevancy of the doctrine of identification to fascist propaganda and fascist mentality. It has been observed by several authors and by Erik Homburger Erikson in particular, that the specifically fascist leader type does not seem to be a father figure such as for instance the king of former times. The inconsistency of this observation with Freud's theory of the leader as the primal father, however, is only superficial. His discussion of identification may well help us to understand, in terms of subjective dynamics, certain changes which are actually due to objective historical conditions. Identification is "the earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person," playing "a part in the early history of the Oedipus complex."¹ It may well be that this pre-oedipal component of identification helps to bring about the separation of the leader image as that of an all-powerful primal father, from the actual father image. Since the child's identification with his father as an answer to the Oedipus complex is only a secondary phenomenon, infantile regression may go beyond this father image and

through an "anacritic" process reach a more archaic one. Moreover, the primitively narcissistic aspect of identification as an act of *devouring*, of making the beloved object part of oneself, may provide us with a clue to the fact that the modern leader image sometimes seems to be the enlargement of the subject's own personality, a collective projection of himself, rather than the image of the father whose role during the later phases of the subject's infancy may well have decreased in present-day society.² All these facets call for further clarification.

The essential role of narcissism in regard to the identifications which are at play in the formation of fascist groups, is recognized in Freud's theory of *idealization*. "We see that the object is being treated in the same way as our own ego, so that when we are in love a considerable amount of narcissistic libido overflows on the object. It is even obvious, in many forms of love choice, that the object serves as a substitute for some unattained ego ideal of our own. We love it on account of the perfections which we have striven to reach for our own ego, and which we should now like

The Essential Frankfurt School Reader, edited by Andrew Arato and Eike Gepphardt (New York: Continuum, 1982).

to procure in this roundabout way as a means of satisfying our narcissism."³ It is precisely this idealization of himself which the fascist leader tries to promote in his followers, and which is helped by the *Führer* ideology. The people he has to reckon with generally undergo the characteristic modern conflict between a strongly developed rational, self-preserving ego agency⁴ and the continuous failure to satisfy their own ego demands. This conflict results in strong narcissistic impulses which can be absorbed and satisfied only through idealization as the partial transfer of the narcissistic libido to the object. This, again, falls in line with the semblance of the leader image to an enlargement of the subject: by making the leader his ideal he loves himself, as it were, but gets rid of the stains of frustration and discontent which mar his picture of his own empirical self. This pattern of identification through idealization, the caricature of true, conscious solidarity, is, however, a collective one. It is effective in vast numbers of people with similar characterological dispositions and libidinal leanings. The fascist *community of the people* corresponds exactly to Freud's definition of a group as being "a number of individuals who have substituted one and the same object for their ego ideal and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego."⁵ The leader image, in turn, borrows as it were its primal father-like omnipotence from collective strength.

Freud's psychological construction of the leader imagery is corroborated by its striking coincidence with the fascist leader type, at least as far as its public build-up is concerned. His descriptions fit the picture of Hitler no less than idealizations into which the American demagogues try to style themselves. In order to allow narcissistic identification, the leader has to appear himself as absolutely narcissistic, and it is from this insight that Freud derives the portrait of the "primal father of the horde" which might as well be Hitler's.

He, at the very beginning of the history of mankind, was the *Superman*⁶ whom Nietzsche only expected from the future. Even today, the members of a group stand in need of the illusion that they are equally and justly loved by their leader; but the leader himself need love no one else, he may be of a masterly nature, absolutely narcissistic, but self-confident and independent. We know that love puts a check upon narcissism, and

it would be possible to show how, by operating in this way, it became a factor of civilization.⁷

One of the most conspicuous features of the agitators' speeches, namely the absence of a positive program and of anything they might "give," as well as the paradoxical prevalence of threat and denial, is thus being accounted for: the leader can be loved only if he himself does not love. Yet Freud is aware of another aspect of the leader image which apparently contradicts the first one. While appearing as a superman, the leader must at the same time work the miracle of appearing as an average person, just as Hitler posed as a composite of King Kong and the suburban barber. This, too, Freud explains through his theory of narcissism. According to him,

the individual gives up his ego ideal and substitutes for it the group ideal as embodied in the leader. [However,] in many individuals the separation between the ego and the ego ideal is not very far advanced; the two still coincide readily; the ego has often preserved its earlier self-complacency. The selection of the leader is very much facilitated by this circumstance. He need only possess the typical qualities of the individuals concerned in a particularly clearly marked and pure form, and need only give an impression of greater force and of more freedom of libido; and in that case the need for a strong chief will often meet him halfway and invest him with a predominance to which he would otherwise perhaps have had no claim. The other members of the group, whose ego ideal would not, apart from this, have become embodied in his person without some correction, are then carried away with the rest by 'suggestion', that is to say, by means of identification.⁸

Even the fascist leader's startling symptoms of inferiority, his resemblance to ham actors and asocial psychopaths, is thus anticipated in Freud's theory. For the sake of those parts of the follower's narcissistic libido which have not been thrown into the leader image but remain attached to the follower's own ego, the superman must still resemble the follower and appear as his "enlargement." Accordingly, one of the basic devices of personalized fascist propaganda is the concept of the "great little man," a person who suggests both

omnipotence and the idea that he is just one of the folks, a plain, red-blooded American, untainted by material or spiritual wealth. Psychological ambivalence helps to work a social miracle. The leader image gratifies the follower's twofold wish to submit to authority and to be the authority himself. This fits into a world in which irrational control is exercised though it has lost its inner conviction through universal enlightenment. The people who obey the dictators also sense that the latter are superfluous. They reconcile this contradiction through the assumption that they are themselves the ruthless oppressor.

All the agitators' standard devices are designed along the line of Freud's exposé of what became later the basic structure of fascist demagoguery, the technique of personalization⁹, and the idea of the great little man. We limit ourselves to a few examples picked at random.

Freud gives an exhaustive account of the hierarchical element in irrational groups. "It is obvious that a soldier takes his superior, that is, really, the leader of the army, as his ideal, while he identifies himself with his equals, and derives from this community of their egos the obligations for giving mutual help and for sharing possessions which comradeship implies. But he becomes ridiculous if he tries to identify himself with the general,"¹⁰ to wit, consciously and directly. The fascists, down to the last small-time demagogue, continuously emphasize ritualistic ceremonies and hierarchical differentiations. The less hierarchy within the set-up of a highly rationalized and quantified industrial society is warranted, the more artificial hierarchies with no objective *raison d'être* are built up and rigidly imposed by fascists for purely psycho-technical reasons. It may be added, however, that this is not the only libidinous source involved. Thus, hierarchical structures are in complete keeping with the wishes of the sadomasochistic character. Hitler's famous formula, *Verantwortung nach oben, Autorität nach unten*, (responsibility towards above, authority towards below) nicely rationalizes this character's ambivalence.¹¹

The tendency to tread on those below, which manifests itself so disastrously in the persecution of weak and helpless minorities, is as outspoken as the hatred against those outside. In practice, both tendencies quite frequently fall together. Freud's theory sheds light on

the all-pervasive, rigid distinction between the beloved in-group and the rejected out-group. Throughout our culture, this way of thinking and behaving has come to be regarded as self-evident to such a degree that the question of why people love what is like themselves and hate what is different is rarely asked seriously enough. Here as in many other instances, the productivity of Freud's approach lies in his questioning that which is generally accepted. Le Bon had noticed that the irrational crowd "goes directly to extremes."¹² Freud expands this observation and points out that the dichotomy between in- and out-group is of so deep-rooted a nature that it affects even those groups whose "ideas" apparently exclude such reactions. By 1921, he was therefore able to dispense with the liberalistic illusion that the progress of civilization would automatically bring about an increase of tolerance and a lessening of violence against out-groups.

Even during the kingdom of Christ, those people who do not belong to the community of believers, who do not love him, and whom he does not love, stand outside this tie. Therefore, a religion, even if it calls itself the religion of love, must be hard and unloving to those who do not belong to it. Fundamentally, indeed, every religion is in this same way a religion of love for all those whom it embraces; while cruelty and intolerance towards those who do not belong to it are natural to every religion. However difficult we may find it personally, we ought not to reproach believers too severely on this account: people who are unbelieving or indifferent are so much better off psychologically in this respect. If today that intolerance no longer shows itself so violent and cruel as in former centuries, we can scarcely conclude that there has been a softening in human manners. The cause is rather to be found in the undeniable weakening of religious feelings and the libidinal ties which depend upon them. If another group tie takes the place of the religious one—and the socialistic tie seems to be succeeding in doing so—, then there will be the same intolerance towards outsiders as in the age of the Wars of Religion.¹³

Freud's error in political prognosis, his blaming, the "socialists" for what their German archenemies did, is as striking as his prophecy of fascist destructiveness, the drive to eliminate the outgroup.¹⁴ As

a matter of fact, neutralization of religion seems to have led to just the opposite of what the enlightener Freud anticipated: the division between the believers and nonbelievers has been maintained and reified. However, it has become a structure in itself, independent of any ideational content, and is even more stubbornly defended since it lost its inner conviction. At the same time, the mitigating impact of the religious doctrine of love vanished. This is the essence of the "sheep and goat" device employed by all fascist demagogues. Since they do not recognize any spiritual criterion in regard to who is chosen and who is rejected, they substitute a pseudo-natural criterion such as the race,¹⁵ which seems to be inescapable and can therefore be applied even more mercilessly than was the concept of heresy during the Middle Ages. Freud has succeeded in identifying the libidinal function of this device. It acts as a negatively integrating force. Since the positive libido is completely invested in the image of the primal father, the leader, and since few positive contents are available, a negative one has to be found. "The leader or the leading idea might also, so to speak, be negative; hatred against a particular person or institution might operate in just the same unifying way, and might call up the same kind of emotional ties as positive attachment."¹⁶ It goes without saying that this negative integration feeds on the instinct of destructiveness to which Freud does not explicitly refer in his *Group Psychology*, the decisive role of which he has, however, recognized in his *Civilization and Its Discontents*. In the present context, Freud explains the hostility against the out-group with narcissism:

In the undisguised antipathies and aversions which people feel towards strangers with whom they have to do, we may recognize the expression of self-love—of narcissism. This self-love works for the self-assertion of the individual, and behaves as though the occurrence of any divergence from his own particular lines of development involved a criticism of them and a demand for their alteration.¹⁷

The narcissistic *gain* provided by fascist propaganda is obvious. It suggests continuously and sometimes in rather devious ways, that the follower, simply through belonging to the in-group, is better, higher

and purer than those who are excluded. At the same time, any kind of critique or self-awareness is resented as a narcissistic loss and elicits rage. It accounts for the violent reaction of all fascists against what they deem *zersetzend*, that which debunks their own stubbornly maintained values, and it also explains the hostility of prejudiced persons against any kind of introspection. Concomitantly, the concentration of hostility upon the out-group does away with intolerance in one's own group to which one's relation would otherwise be highly ambivalent.

But the whole of this intolerance vanishes, temporarily or permanently, as the result of the formation of a group, and in a group. So long as a group formation persists or so far as it extends, individuals behave as though they were uniform, tolerate other people's peculiarities, put themselves on an equal level with them, and have no feeling of aversion towards them. Such a limitation of narcissism can, according to our theoretical views, only be produced by one factor, a libidinal tie with other people.¹⁸

This is the line pursued by the agitators' standard "unity trick." They emphasize their being different from the outsider but play down such differences within their own group and tend to level out distinctive qualities among themselves with the exception of the hierarchical one. "We are all in the same boat"; nobody should be better off; the snob, the intellectual, the pleasure seeker are always attacked. The undercurrent of malicious egalitarianism, of the brotherhood of all-comprising humiliation, is a component of fascist propaganda and fascism itself. It found its symbol in Hitler's notorious command of the *Eintopfgericht*. The less they want the inherent social structure changed, the more they prate about social justice, meaning that no member of the "community of the people" should indulge in individual pleasures. Repressive egalitarianism instead of realization of true equality through the abolition of repression is part and parcel of the fascist mentality and reflected in the agitators' "If-you-only-knew" device which promises the vindictive revelation of all sorts of forbidden pleasures enjoyed by others. Freud interprets this phenomenon in terms of the transformation of individuals into members of a psychological "brother horde." Their coherence is a

reaction formation against their primary jealousy of each other, pressed into the service of group coherence.

What appears later on in society in the shape of *Gemeingeist*, *esprit de corps*, 'group spirit', etc. does not belie its derivation from what was originally envy. No one must want to put himself forward, every one must be the same and have the same. Social justice means that we deny ourselves many things so that others may have to do without them as well, or, what is the same thing, may not be able to ask for them.¹⁹

It may be added that the ambivalence towards the brother has found a rather striking, ever-recurring expression in the agitators' technique. Freud and Rank have pointed out that in fairy tales, small animals such as bees and ants "would be the brothers in the primal horde, just as in the same way in dream symbolism insects or vermin signify brothers and sisters (contemptuously, considered as babies)."²⁰ Since the members of the in-group have supposedly "succeeded in identifying themselves with one another by means of similar love for the same object,"²¹ they cannot admit this contempt for each other. Thus, it is expressed by completely negative cathexis of these low animals, fused with hatred against the out-group, and projected upon the latter. Actually it is one of the favorite devices of fascist agitators—examined in great detail by Leo Lowenthal²²—to compare out-groups, all foreigners and particularly refugees and Jews, with low animals and vermin.

If we are entitled to assume a correspondence of fascist propagandist stimuli to the mechanisms elaborated in Freud's *Group Psychology*, we have to ask ourselves the almost inevitable question: how did the fascist agitators, crude and semi-educated as they were, obtain knowledge of these mechanisms? Reference to the influence exercised by Hitler's *Mein Kampf* upon the American demagogues would not lead very far, since it seems impossible that Hitler's theoretical knowledge of group psychology went beyond the most trivial observations derived from a popularized Le Bon. Neither can it be maintained that Goebbels was a mastermind of propaganda and fully aware of the most advanced findings of modern depth psychology. Perusal of his speeches and selections from his recently published diaries give the impression of

a person shrewd enough to play the game of power politics but utterly naive and superficial in regard to all social or psychological issues below the surface of his own catchwords and newspaper editorials. The idea of the sophisticated and "radical" intellectual Goebbels is part of the devil's legend associated with his name and fostered by eager journalism; a legend, incidentally, which itself calls for psychoanalytic explanation. Goebbels himself thought in stereotypes and was completely under the spell of personalization. Thus, we have to seek for sources other than erudition for the much advertised fascist command of psychological techniques of mass manipulation. The foremost source seems to be the already mentioned basic identity of leader and follower which circumscribes one of the aspects of identification. The leader can guess the psychological wants and needs of those susceptible to his propaganda because he resembles them psychologically, and is distinguished from them by a capacity to express without inhibitions what is latent in them, rather than by any intrinsic superiority. The leaders are generally oral character types, with a compulsion to speak incessantly and to befool the others. The famous spell they exercise over their followers seems largely to depend on their orality: language itself, devoid of its rational significance, functions in a magical way and furthers those archaic regressions which reduce individuals to members of crowds. Since this very quality of uninhibited but largely associative speech presupposes at least a temporary lack of ego control, it may well indicate weakness rather than strength. The fascist agitators' boasting of strength is indeed frequently accompanied by hints at such weakness, particularly when begging for monetary contributions—hints which, to be sure, are skillfully merged with the idea of strength itself. In order successfully to meet the unconscious dispositions of his audience, the agitator so to speak simply turns his own unconscious outward. His particular character syndrome makes it possible for him to do exactly this, and experience has taught him consciously to exploit this faculty, to make rational use of his irrationality, similarly to the actor, or a certain type of journalist who knows how to sell their innervations and sensitivity. Without knowing it, he is thus able to speak and act in accord with psychological theory for the simple reason that the psychological

theory is true. All he has to do in order to make the psychology of his audience click, is shrewdly to exploit his own psychology.

The adequacy of the agitators' devices to the psychological basis of their aim is further enhanced by another factor. As we know, fascist agitation has by now come to be a profession, as it were, a livelihood. It had plenty of time to test the effectiveness of its various appeals and, through what might be called natural selection, only the most catchy ones have survived. Their effectiveness is itself a function of the psychology of the consumers. Through a process of "freezing," which can be observed throughout the techniques employed in modern mass culture, the surviving appeals have been standardized, similarly to the advertising slogans which proved to be most valuable in the promotion of business. This standardization, in turn, falls in line

with stereotypical thinking, that is to say, with the "stereopathy" of those susceptible to this propaganda and their infantile wish for endless, unaltered repetition. It is hard to predict whether the latter psychological disposition will prevent the agitators' standard devices from becoming blunt through excessive application. In National Socialist Germany, everybody used to make fun of certain propagandists phrases such as "blood and soil" (*Blut und Boden*), jokingly called *Blubo*, or the concept of the nordic race from which the parodistic verb *aufnorden* (to "northernize") was derived. Nevertheless, these appeals do not seem to have lost their attractiveness. Rather, their very "phoniness" may have been relished cynically and sadistically as an index for the fact that power alone decided one's fate in the Third Reich, that is, power unhampered by rational objectivity.

NOTES

1. S. Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of Ego*, London 1922, p. 60.
2. Cf. Max Horkheimer, "Authoritarianism and the Family Today," *The Family: Its Function and Destiny*, ed. R. N. Anshen (Harper Brothers, New York, 1949).
3. Freud, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
4. The translation of Freud's book renders his term "*Inстанz*" by "faculty," a word which, however, does not carry the hierarchical connotation of the German original. "Agency" seems to be more appropriate.
5. Freud, *l.c.*, p. 80.
6. It may not be superfluous to stress that Nietzsche's concept of the Superman has as little in common with this archaic imagery as his vision of the future with fascism. Freud's allusion is obviously valid only for the "Superman" as he became popularized in cheap slogans.
7. *L. c.* p. 93.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
9. For further details on personalization cf. Freud, *l.c.*, p. 44, footnote, where he discusses the relation between ideas and leader personalities; and p. 53, where he defines as "secondary leaders" those essentially irrational ideas which hold groups together. In technological civilization, no *immediate* transference to the leader, unknown and distant as he actually is, is possible. What happens is rather a regressive re-personalization of impersonal, detached social powers. This possibility was clearly envisaged by Freud. ". . . A common tendency, a wish in which a number of people can have a share, may . . . serve as a substitute. This abstraction, again, might be more or less completely embodied in the figure of what we might call a secondary leader."
10. *L. c.*, p. 110.
11. German folklore has a drastic symbol for this trait. It speaks of *Radfahrernaturen*, bicyclist's characters. Above they bow, they kick below.
12. Freud, *l. c.*, p. 16.
13. *L. c.*, pp. 50–51.

14. With regard to the role of "neutralized," diluted religion in the make-up of the fascist mentality, cf. *The Authoritarian Personality*. Important psychoanalytic contributions to this whole area of problems are contained in Theodor Reik's *Der eigene und der fremde Gott*, and in Paul Fedem's *Die vaterlose Gesellschaft*.
15. It may be noted that the ideology of race distinctly reflects the idea of primitive brotherhood revived, according to Freud, through the specific regression involved in mass formation. The notion of race shares two properties with brotherhood: it is supposedly "natural," a bond of "blood," and it is de-sexualized. In fascism this similarity is kept unconscious. It mentions brotherhood comparatively rarely, and usually only in regard to Germans living *outside* the borders of the Reich ("Our Sudeten brothers"). This, of course, is partly due to recollections of the ideal of *fraternité* of the French Revolution, taboo to the Nazis.
16. *L. c.*, p. 53.
17. *L. c.*, pp. 55–56.
18. *L. c.*, p. 56.
19. *L. c.*, pp. 87–88.
20. *L. c.*, p. 114.
21. *L. c.*, p. 87.
22. Cf. *Prophets of Deceit*.

47. ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN

Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979) was one of the key figures associated with the critical theory developed by the members of the Frankfurt School between World Wars I and II. Like so many of his generation, Marcuse was forced to leave Germany because of the rise of Nazism. He settled in the United States, where he remained for the rest of his life, teaching at Brandeis University and later at the University of California, San Diego. During the tumultuous decade of the 1960s, he became an influential intellectual figure for radical students in the New Left. From an early date, his work sought to reveal the lineage of critical theory in the history of German philosophy, especially in the traditions emerging out of Kant and Hegel. In his view, critical theory is primarily concerned with the potential for human freedom, and as such it offers a critique of contemporary social conditions, not from the perspective of utopian thinking, but with an eye to the actual potential for societal transformation. *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) is perhaps his more important and widely read work of social criticism. The selection below is the introduction to that book, in which Marcuse argues that freedom is eroding in advanced industrial societies that are both affluent and democratic—a consequence of the fact that technology and bureaucracy have produced an overly administered society.

1: THE NEW FORMS OF CONTROL

A comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails in advanced industrial civilization, a token of technical progress. Indeed, what could be more rational than the suppression of individuality in the mechanization of socially necessary but painful performances; the concentration of individual enterprises in more effective, more productive corporations; the regulation of free competition among unequally equipped economic subjects; the curtailment of prerogatives and national sovereignties which impede the international organization of resources. That this technological order also involves a political and intellectual coordination may be a regrettable and yet promising development.

The rights and liberties which were such vital factors in the origins and earlier stages of industrial society yield to a higher stage of this society: they are

losing their traditional rationale and content. Freedom of thought, speech, and conscience were—just as free enterprise, which they served to promote and protect—essentially *critical* ideas, designed to replace an obsolescent material and intellectual culture by a more productive and rational one. Once institutionalized, these rights and liberties shared the fate of the society of which they had become an integral part. The achievement cancels the premises.

To the degree to which freedom from want, the concrete substance of all freedom, is becoming a real possibility, the liberties which pertain to a state of lower productivity are losing their former content. Independence of thought, autonomy, and the right to political opposition are being deprived of their basic critical function in a society which seems increasingly capable of satisfying the needs of the individuals through the way in which it is organized. Such a society may justly

Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1964, pp. 1–12. Permission conveyed through the Copyright Clearance Center. ♦

demand acceptance of its principles and institutions, and reduce the opposition to the discussion and promotion of alternative policies *within* the status quo. In this respect, it seems to make little difference whether the increasing satisfaction of needs is accomplished by an authoritarian or a non-authoritarian system. Under the conditions of a rising standard of living, non-conformity with the system itself appears to be socially useless, and the more so when it entails tangible economic and political disadvantages and threatens the smooth operation of the whole. Indeed, at least in so far as the necessities of life are involved, there seems to be no reason why the production and distribution of goods and services should proceed through the competitive concurrence of individual liberties.

Freedom of enterprise was from the beginning not altogether a blessing. As the liberty to work or to starve, it spelled toil, insecurity, and fear for the vast majority of the population. If the individual were no longer compelled to prove himself on the market, as a free economic subject, the disappearance of this kind of freedom would be one of the greatest achievements of civilization. The technological processes of mechanization and standardization might release individual energy into a yet uncharted realm of freedom beyond necessity. The very structure of human existence would be altered; the individual would be liberated from the work world's imposing upon him alien needs and alien possibilities. The individual would be free to exert autonomy over a life that would be his own. If the productive apparatus could be organized and directed toward the satisfaction of the vital needs, its control might well be centralized; such control would not prevent individual autonomy, but render it possible.

This is a goal within the capabilities of advanced industrial civilization, the "end" of technological rationality. In actual fact, however, the contrary trend operates: the apparatus imposes its economic and political requirements for defense and expansion on labor time and free time, on the material and intellectual culture. By virtue of the way it has organized its technological base, contemporary industrial society tends to be totalitarian. For "totalitarian" is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a nonterroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by

vested interests. It thus precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole. Not only a specific form of government or party rule makes for totalitarianism, but also a specific system of production and distribution which may well be compatible with a "pluralism" of parties, newspapers, "countervailing powers," etc.

Today political power asserts itself through its power over the machine process and over the technical organization of the apparatus. The government of advanced and advancing industrial societies can maintain and secure itself only when it succeeds in mobilizing, organizing, and exploiting the technical, scientific, and mechanical productivity available to industrial civilization. And this productivity mobilizes society as a whole, above and beyond any particular individual or group interests. The brute fact that the machine's physical (only physical?) power surpasses that of the individual, and of any particular group of individuals, makes the machine the most effective political instrument in any society whose basic organization is that of the machine process. But the political trend may be reversed; essentially the power of the machine is only the stored-up and projected power of man. To the extent to which the work world is conceived of as a machine and mechanized accordingly, it becomes the *potential* basis of a new freedom for man.

Contemporary industrial civilization demonstrates that it has reached the stage at which "the free society" can no longer be adequately defined in the traditional terms of economic, political, and intellectual liberties, not because these liberties have become insignificant, but because they are too significant to be confined within the traditional forms. New modes of realization are needed, corresponding to the new capabilities of society.

Such new modes can be indicated only in negative terms because they would amount to the negation of the prevailing modes. Thus economic freedom would mean freedom *from* the economy—from being controlled by economic forces and relationships; freedom from the daily struggle for existence, from earning a living. Political freedom would mean liberation of the individuals *from* politics over which they have no effective control. Similarly, intellectual freedom would mean the restoration of individual thought now

absorbed by mass communication and indoctrination, abolition of “public opinion” together with its makers. The unrealistic sound of these propositions is indicative, not of their utopian character, but of the strength of the forces which prevent their realization. The most effective and enduring form of warfare against liberation is the implanting of material and intellectual needs that perpetuate obsolete forms of the struggle for existence.

The intensity, the satisfaction and even the character of human needs, beyond the biological level, have always been preconditioned. Whether or not the possibility of doing or leaving, enjoying or destroying, possessing or rejecting something is seized as a *need* depends on whether or not it can be seen as desirable and necessary for the prevailing societal institutions and interests. In this sense, human needs are historical needs and, to the extent to which the society demands the repressive development of the individual, his needs themselves and their claim for satisfaction are subject to overriding critical standards.

We may distinguish both true and false needs. “False” are those which are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression: the needs which perpetuate toil, aggressiveness, misery, and injustice. Their satisfaction might be most gratifying to the individual, but this happiness is not a condition which has to be maintained and protected if it serves to arrest the development of the ability (his own and others) to recognize the disease of the whole and grasp the chances of curing the disease. The result then is euphoria in unhappiness. Most of the prevailing needs to relax, to have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what others love and hate, belong to this category of false needs.

Such needs have a societal content and function which are determined by external powers over which the individual has no control; the development and satisfaction of these needs is heteronomous. No matter how much such needs may have become the individual’s own, reproduced and fortified by the conditions of his existence; no matter how much he identifies himself with them and finds himself in their satisfaction, they continue to be what they were from the beginning—products of a society whose dominant interest demands repression.

The prevalence of repressive needs is an accomplished fact, accepted in ignorance and defeat, but a fact that must be undone in the interest of the happy individual as well as all those whose misery is the price of his satisfaction. The only needs that have an unqualified claim for satisfaction are the vital ones—nourishment, clothing, lodging at the attainable level of culture. The satisfaction of these needs is the prerequisite for the realization of *all* needs, of the unsublimated as well as the sublimated ones.

For any consciousness and conscience, for any experience which does not accept the prevailing societal interest as the supreme law of thought and behavior, the established universe of needs and satisfactions is a fact to be questioned—questioned in terms of truth and falsehood. These terms are historical throughout, and their objectivity is historical. The judgement of needs and their satisfaction, under the given conditions, involves standards of *priority*—standards which refer to the optimal development of the individual, of all individuals, under the optimal utilization of the material and intellectual resources available to man. The resources are calculable. “Truth” and “falsehood” of needs designate objective conditions to the extent to which the universal satisfaction of vital needs and, beyond it, the progressive alleviation of toil and poverty, are universally valid standards. But as historical standards, they do not only vary according to area and stage of development, they also can be defined only in (greater or lesser) *contradiction* to the prevailing ones. What tribunal can possibly claim the authority of decision?

In the last analysis, the question of what are true and false needs must be answered by the individuals themselves, but only in the last analysis; that is, if and when they are free to give their own answer. As long as they are kept incapable of being autonomous, as long as they are kept indoctrinated and manipulated (down to their very instincts), their answer to this question cannot be taken as their own. By the same token, however, no tribunal can justly arrogate to itself the right to decide which needs should be developed and satisfied. Any such tribunal is reprehensible, although our revulsion does not do away with the question: how can the people who have been the object of effective and productive domination by themselves create the conditions of freedom?

The more rational, productive, technical, and total the repressive administration of society becomes, the more unimaginable the means and ways by which the administered individuals might break their servitude and seize their own liberation. To be sure, to impose Reason upon an entire society is a paradoxical and scandalous idea—although one might dispute the righteousness of a society which ridicules this idea while making its own population into objects of total administration. All liberation depends on the consciousness of servitude, and the emergence of this consciousness is always hampered by the predominance of needs and satisfactions which, to a great extent, have become the individual's own. The process always replaces one system of preconditioning by another; the optimal goal is the replacement of false needs by true ones, the abandonment of repressive satisfaction.

The distinguishing feature of advanced industrial society is its effective suffocation of those needs which demand liberation—liberation also from that which is tolerable and rewarding and comfortable—while it sustains and absolves the destructive power and repressive function of the affluent society. Here, the social controls exact the overwhelming need for the production and consumption of waste; the need for stupefying work where it is no longer a real necessity; the need for modes of relaxation which soothe and prolong this stupefaction; the need for maintaining such deceptive liberties as free competition at administered prices, a free press which censors itself, free choice between brands and gadgets.

Under the rule of a repressive whole, liberty can be made into a powerful instrument of domination. The range of choice open to the individual is not the decisive factor in determining the degree of human freedom, but *what* can be chosen and *what is* chosen by the individual. The criterion for free choice can never be an absolute one, but neither is it entirely relative. Free election of masters does not abolish the masters or the slaves. Free choice among a wide variety of goods and services does not signify freedom if these goods and services sustain social controls over a life of toil and fear—that is, if they sustain alienation. And the spontaneous reproduction of superimposed needs by the individual does not establish autonomy; it only testifies to the efficacy of the controls.

Our insistence on the depth and efficacy of these controls is open to the objection that we overrate greatly the indoctrinating power of the “media,” and that by themselves the people would feel and satisfy the needs which are now imposed upon them. The objection misses the point. The preconditioning does not start with the mass production of radio and television and with the centralization of their control. The people enter this stage as preconditioned receptacles of long standing; the decisive difference is in the flattening out of the contrast (or conflict) between the given and the possible, between the satisfied and the unsatisfied needs. Here, the so-called equalization of class distinctions reveals its ideological function. If the worker and his boss enjoy the same television program and visit the same resort places, if the typist is as attractively made up as the daughter of her employer, if the Negro owns a Cadillac, if they all read the same newspaper, then this assimilation indicates not the disappearance of classes, but the extent to which the needs and satisfactions that serve the preservation of the Establishment are shared by the underlying population.

Indeed, in the most highly developed areas of contemporary society, the transplantation of social into individual needs is so effective that the difference between them seems to be purely theoretical. Can one really distinguish between the mass media as instruments of information and entertainment, and as agents of manipulation and indoctrination? Between the automobile as nuisance and as convenience? Between the horrors and the comforts of functional architecture? Between the work for national defense and the work for corporate gain? Between the private pleasure and the commercial and political utility involved in increasing the birth rate?

We are again confronted with one of the most vexing aspects of advanced industrial civilization: the rational character of its irrationality. Its productivity and efficiency, its capacity to increase and spread comforts, to turn waste into need, and destruction into construction, the extent to which this civilization transforms the object world into an extension of man's mind and body makes the very notion of alienation questionable. The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism

which ties the individual to his society has changed, and social control is anchored in the new needs which it has produced.

The prevailing forms of social control are technological in a new sense. To be sure, the technical structure and efficacy of the productive and destructive apparatus has been a major instrumentality for subjecting the population to the established social division of labor throughout the modern period. Moreover, such integration has always been accompanied by more obvious forms of compulsion: loss of livelihood, the administration of justice, the police, the armed forces. It still is. But in the contemporary period, the technological controls appear to be the very embodiment of Reason for the benefit of all social groups and interests—to such an extent that all contradiction seems irrational and all counteraction impossible.

No wonder then that, in the most advanced areas of this civilization, the social controls have been introjected to the point where even individual protest is affected at its roots. The intellectual and emotional refusal “to go along” appears neurotic and impotent. This is the socio-psychological aspect of the political event that marks the contemporary period: the passing of the historical forces which, at the preceding stage of industrial society, seemed to represent the possibility of new forms of existence.

But the term “introjection” perhaps no longer describes the way in which the individual by himself reproduces and perpetuates the external controls exercised by his society. Introjection suggests a variety of relatively spontaneous processes by which a Self (Ego) transposes the “outer” into the “inner.” Thus introjection implies the existence of an inner dimension distinguished from and even antagonistic to the external exigencies—an individual consciousness and an individual unconscious *apart from* public opinion and behavior.¹ The idea of “inner freedom” here has its reality: it designates the private space in which man may become and remain “himself.”

Today this private space has been invaded and whittled down by technological reality. Mass production and mass distribution claim the *entire* individual, and industrial psychology has long since ceased to be confined to the factory. The manifold processes of introjection seem to be ossified in almost mechanical

reactions. The result is, not adjustment but *mimesis*: an immediate identification of the individual with *his* society and, through it, with the society as a whole.

This immediate, automatic identification (which may have been characteristic of primitive forms of association) reappears in high industrial civilization; its new “immediacy,” however, is the product of a sophisticated, scientific management and organization. In this process, the “inner” dimension of the mind in which opposition to the status quo can take root is whittled down. The loss of this dimension, in which the power of negative thinking—the critical power of Reason—is at home, is the ideological counterpart to the very material process in which advanced industrial society silences and reconciles the opposition. The impact of progress turns Reason into submission to the facts of life, and to the dynamic capability of producing more and bigger facts of the same sort of life. The efficiency of the system blunts the individuals’ recognition that it contains no facts which do not communicate the repressive power of the whole. If the individuals find themselves, in the things which shape their life, they do so, not by giving, but by accepting the law of things—not the law of physics but the law of their society.

I have just suggested that the concept of alienation seems to become questionable when the individuals identify themselves with the existence which is imposed upon them and have in it their own development and satisfaction. This identification is not illusion but reality. However, the reality constitutes a more progressive stage of alienation. The latter has become entirely objective; the subject which is alienated is swallowed up by its alienated existence. There is only one dimension, and it is everywhere and in all forms. The achievements of progress defy ideological indictment as well as justification; before their tribunal, the “false consciousness” of their rationality becomes the true consciousness.

This absorption of ideology into reality does not, however, signify the “end of ideology.” On the contrary, in a specific sense advanced industrial culture is *more* ideological than its predecessor, inasmuch as today the ideology is in the process of production itself.² In a provocative form, this proposition reveals the political aspects of the prevailing technological

rationality. The productive apparatus and the goods and services which it produces “sell” or impose the social system as a whole. The means of mass transportation and communication, the commodities of lodging, food, and clothing, the irresistible output of the entertainment and information industry carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain intellectual and emotional reactions which bind the consumers more or less pleasantly to the producers and, through the latter, to the whole. The products indoctrinate and manipulate; they promote a false consciousness which is immune against its falsehood. And as

these beneficial products become available to more individuals in more social classes, the indoctrination they carry ceases to be publicity; it becomes a way of life. It is a good way of life—much better than before—and as a good way of life, it militates against qualitative change. Thus emerges a pattern of *one-dimensional thought and behavior* in which ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe. They are redefined by the rationality of the given system and of its quantitative extension.

NOTES

1. The change in the function of the family here plays a decisive role: its “socializing” functions are increasingly taken over by outside groups and media. See my *Eros and Civilization* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), p. 96ff.
2. Theodor W. Adorno, *Prismen. Kulturkritik and Gesellschaft*. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1955), p. 24f.

48. THREE NORMATIVE MODELS OF DEMOCRACY

Jürgen Habermas (b. 1929) is the most important second-generation member of the Frankfurt School. During the 1950s, he studied with Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, both of whom had returned to Germany after living in exile in the United States, and he served as Adorno's research assistant. While indebted to their legacies, Habermas devised his own highly original synthesis of social theory influenced not only by his mentors, but by Marx, Weber, Freud, Parsons, and others. In so doing, he developed his own unique perspective as a latter-day defender of the ideals of the Enlightenment. From his first major work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (which was published in German in the early 1960s, but was not translated into English until 1989) to the present, he has been concerned with the fate of democracy—his ideas shaped from the beginning by his reflections on the reconstitution of democratic politics in postwar Germany. In this selection from *The Inclusion of the Other* (1998) he counterposes three distinctive models of democracy. The first two, liberalism and republicanism, have for some time been pitted against each other as competing models. Habermas finds both of them to be problematic, and in their place he offers an alternative that he refers to as deliberative politics, whose central features he describes.

In what follows I refer to the idealized distinction between the “liberal” and the “republican” understanding of politics—terms which mark the fronts in the current debate in the United States initiated by the so-called communitarians. Drawing on the work of Frank Michelman, I will begin by describing the two polemically contrasted models of democracy with specific reference to the concept of the citizen, the concept of law, and the nature of processes of political will-formation. In the second part, beginning with a critique of the “ethical overload” of the republican model, I introduce a third, procedural model of democracy for which I propose to reserve the term “deliberative politics.”

The crucial difference between liberalism and republicanism consists in how the role of the democratic process is understood. According to the “liberal” view,

this process accomplishes the task of programming the state in the interest of society, where the state is conceived as an apparatus of public administration, and society is conceived as a system of market-structured interactions of private persons and their labor. Here politics (in the sense of the citizens’ political will-formation) has the function of bundling together and bringing to bear private social interests against a state apparatus that specializes in the administrative employment of political power for collective goals.

On the republican view, politics is not exhausted by this mediating function but is constitutive for the socialization process as a whole. Politics is conceived as the reflexive form of substantial ethical life. It constitutes the medium in which the members of quasi-natural solidary communities become aware of their dependence on one another and, acting with full deliberation as citizens, further shape and develop existing relations of reciprocal recognition into an

Jürgen Habermas, *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1998 pp. 239–252. ♦

association of free and equal consociates under law. With this, the liberal architectonic of government and society undergoes an important change. In addition to the hierarchical regulatory apparatus of sovereign state authority and the decentralized regulatory mechanism of the market—that is, besides administrative power and self-interest—*solidarity* appears as a third source of social integration.

This horizontal political will-formation aimed at mutual understanding or communicatively achieved consensus is even supposed to enjoy priority, both in a genetic and a normative sense. An autonomous basis in civil society independent of public administration and market-mediated private commerce is assumed as a precondition for the practice of civic self-determination. This basis prevents political communication from being swallowed up by the government apparatus or assimilated to market structures. Thus, on the republican conception, the political public sphere and its base, civil society, acquire a strategic significance. Together they are supposed to secure the integrative power and autonomy of the communicative practice of the citizens.¹ The uncoupling of political communication from the economy has as its counterpart a coupling of administrative power with the communicative power generated by political opinion- and will-formation.

These two competing conceptions of politics have different consequences.

(a) In the first place, their concepts of the citizen differ. According to the liberal view, the citizen's status is determined primarily by the individual rights he or she has vis-à-vis the state and other citizens. As bearers of individual rights citizens enjoy the protection of the government as long as they pursue their private interests within the boundaries drawn by legal statutes— and this includes protection against state interventions that violate the legal prohibition on government interference. Individual rights are negative rights that guarantee a domain of freedom of choice within which legal persons are freed from external compulsion. Political rights have the same structure: they afford citizens the opportunity to assert their private interests in such a way that, by means of elections, the composition of parliamentary bodies, and the formation of a government, these interests are finally aggregated into a political will that can affect the administration. In this way the citizens in their political role can determine whether

governmental authority is exercised in the interest of the citizens as members of society.²

According to the republican view, the status of citizens is not determined by the model of negative liberties to which these citizens can lay claim as private persons. Rather, political rights—preeminently rights of political participation and communication—are positive liberties. They do not guarantee freedom from external compulsion, but guarantee instead the possibility of participating in a common practice, through which the citizens can first make themselves into what they want to be—politically responsible subjects of a community of free and equal citizens.³ To this extent, the political process does not serve just to keep government activity under the surveillance of citizens who have already acquired a prior social autonomy through the exercise of their private rights and prepolitical liberties. Nor does it act only as a hinge between state and society, for democratic governmental authority is by no means an original authority. Rather, this authority proceeds from the communicative power generated by the citizens' practice of self-legislation, and it is legitimated by the fact that it protects this practice by institutionalizing public freedom.⁴ The state's *raison d'être* does not lie primarily in the protection of equal individual rights but in the guarantee of an inclusive process of opinion- and will-formation in which free and equal citizens reach an understanding on which goals and norms lie in the equal interest of all. In this way the republican citizen is credited with more than an exclusive concern with his or her private interests.

(b) The polemic against the classical concept of the legal person as bearer of individual rights reveals a controversy about the concept of law itself. Whereas on the liberal conception the point of a legal order is to make it possible to determine which individuals in each case are entitled to which rights, on the republican conception these "subjective" rights owe their existence to an "objective" legal order that both enables and guarantees the integrity of an autonomous life in common based on equality and mutual respect. On the one view, the legal order is conceived in terms of individual rights; on the other, their objective legal content is given priority.

To be sure, this conceptual dichotomy does not touch on the *intersubjective* content of rights that demand reciprocal respect for rights and duties in

symmetrical relations of recognition. But the republican concept at least points in the direction of a concept of law that accords equal weight to both the integrity of the individual and the integrity of the community in which persons as both individuals and members can first accord one another reciprocal recognition. It ties the legitimacy of the laws to the democratic procedure by which they are generated and thereby preserves an internal connection between the citizens' practice of self-legislation and the impersonal sway of the law:

For republicans, rights ultimately are nothing but determinations of prevailing political will, while for liberals, some rights are always grounded in a "higher law" of transpolitical reason or revelation. . . . In a republican view, a community's objective, common good substantially consists in the success of its political endeavor to define, establish, effectuate, and sustain the set of rights (less tendentiously, laws) best suited to the conditions and *mores* of that community. Whereas in a contrasting liberal view, the higher-law rights provide the transactional structures and the curbs on power required so that pluralistic pursuit of diverse and conflicting interests may proceed as satisfactorily as possible.⁵

The right to vote, interpreted as a positive right, becomes the paradigm of rights as such, not only because it is constitutive for political self-determination, but because it shows how inclusion in a community of equals is connected with the individual right to make autonomous contributions and take personal positions on issues:

[T]he claim is that we all take an interest in each others' enfranchisement because (i) our choice lies between hanging together and hanging separately; (ii) hanging together depends on reciprocal assurances to all of having one's vital interests heeded by others; and (iii) in the deeply pluralized conditions of contemporary American society, such assurances are not attainable through virtual representation, but only by maintaining at least the semblance of a politics in which everyone is conceded a voice.⁶

This structure, read off from the political rights of participation and communication is extended to *all* rights via the legislative process constituted by political rights. Even the authorization guaranteed by private law to pursue private, freely chosen goals

simultaneously imposes an obligation to respect the limits of strategic action which are agreed to be in the equal interest of all.

(c) The different ways of conceptualizing the role of citizen and the law express a deeper disagreement about the nature of the political process. On the liberal view, politics is essentially a struggle for positions that grant access to administrative power. The political process of opinion- and will-formation in the public sphere and in parliament is shaped by the competition of strategically acting collectives trying to maintain or acquire positions of power. Success is measured by the citizens' approval of persons and programs, as quantified by votes. In their choices at the polls, voters express their preferences. Their votes have the same structure as the choices of participants in a market, in that their decisions license access to positions of power that political parties fight over with a success-oriented attitude similar to that of players in the market. The input of votes and the output of power conform to the same pattern of strategic action.

According to the republican view, the political opinion- and will-formation in the public sphere and in parliament does not obey the structures of market processes but rather the obstinate structures of a public communication oriented to mutual understanding. For politics as the citizens' practice of self-determination, the paradigm is not the market but dialogue. From this perspective there is a structural difference between communicative power, which proceeds from political communication in the form of discursively generated majority decisions, and the administrative power possessed by the governmental apparatus. Even the parties that struggle over access to positions of governmental power must bend themselves to the deliberative style and the stubborn character of political discourse:

Deliberation . . . refers to a certain attitude toward social cooperation, namely, that of openness to persuasion by reasons referring to the claims of others as well as one's own. The deliberative medium is a good faith exchange of views—including participants' reports of their own understanding of their respective vital interests— . . . in which a vote, if any vote is taken, represents a pooling of judgments.⁷

Hence the conflict of opinions conducted in the political arena has legitimating force not just in the sense of

an authorization to occupy positions of power; on the contrary, the ongoing political discourse also has binding force for the way in which political authority is exercised. Administrative power can only be exercised on the basis of policies and within the limits laid down by laws generated by the democratic process.

II

So much for the comparison between the two models of democracy that currently dominate the discussion between the so-called communitarians and liberals, above all in the US. The republican model has advantages and disadvantages. In my view it has the advantage that it preserves the radical democratic meaning of a society that organizes itself through the communicatively united citizens and does not trace collective goals back to “deals” made between competing private interests. Its disadvantage, as I see it, is that it is too idealistic in that it makes the democratic process dependent on the virtues of citizens devoted to the public weal. For politics is not concerned in the first place with questions of ethical self-understanding. The mistake of the republican view consists in an ethical foreshortening of political discourse.

To be sure, ethical discourses aimed at achieving a collective self-understanding—discourses in which participants attempt to clarify how they understand themselves as members of a particular nation, as members of a community or a state, as inhabitants of a region, etc., which traditions they wish to cultivate, how they should treat each other, minorities, and marginal groups, in what sort of society they want to live—constitute an important part of politics. But under conditions of cultural and social pluralism, behind politically relevant goals there often lie interests and value-orientations that are by no means constitutive of the identity of the political community as a whole, that is, for the totality of an intersubjectively shared form of life. These interests and value-orientations, which conflict with one another within the same polity without any prospect of consensual resolution, need to be counterbalanced in a way that cannot be effected by ethical discourse, even though the results of this non-discursive counterbalancing are subject to the proviso that they must not violate the basic values of a culture.

The balancing of interests takes the form of reaching a compromise between parties who rely on their power and ability to sanction. Negotiations of this sort certainly presuppose a readiness to cooperate, that is, a willingness to abide by the rules and to arrive at results that are acceptable to all parties, though for different reasons. But compromise-formation is not conducted in the form of a rational discourse that neutralizes power and excludes strategic action. However, the fairness of compromises is measured by presuppositions and procedures which for their part are in need of rational, indeed normative, justification from the standpoint of justice. In contrast with ethical questions, questions of justice are not by their very nature tied to a particular collectivity. Politically enacted law, if it is to be legitimate, must be at least in harmony with moral principles that claim a general validity that extends beyond the limits of any concrete legal community.

The concept of deliberative politics acquires empirical relevance only when we take into account the multiplicity of forms of communication in which a common will is produced, that is, not just ethical self-clarification but also the balancing of interests and compromise, the purposive choice of means, moral justification, and legal consistency-testing. In this process the two types of politics which Michelman distinguishes in an ideal-typical fashion can interweave and complement one another in a rational manner. “Dialogical” and “instrumental” politics can *interpenetrate* in the medium of deliberation if the corresponding forms of communication are sufficiently institutionalized. Everything depends on the conditions of communication and the procedures that lend the institutionalized opinion- and will-formation their legitimated force. The third model of democracy, which I would like to propose, relies precisely on those conditions of communication under which the political process can be presumed to produce rational results because it operates deliberatively at all levels.

Making the proceduralist conception of deliberative politics the cornerstone of the theory of democracy results in differences both from the republican conception of the state as an ethical community and from the liberal conception of the state as the guardian of a market society. In comparing the three models, I take my orientation from that dimension of politics

which has been our primary concern, namely, the democratic opinion- and will-formation that issue in popular elections and parliamentary decrees.

According to the liberal view, the democratic process takes place exclusively in the form of compromises between competing interests. Fairness is supposed to be guaranteed by rules of compromise-formation that regulate the general and equal right to vote, the representative composition of parliamentary bodies, their order of business, and so on. Such rules are ultimately justified in terms of liberal basic rights. According to the republican view, by contrast, democratic will-formation is supposed to take the form of an ethical discourse of self-understanding; here deliberation can rely for its content on a culturally established background consensus of the citizens, which is rejuvenated through the ritualistic reenactment of a republican founding act. Discourse theory takes elements from both sides and integrates them into the concept of an ideal procedure for deliberation and decision making. Weaving together negotiations and discourses of self-understanding and of justice, this democratic procedure grounds the presumption that under such conditions reasonable or fair results are obtained. According to this proceduralist view, practical reason withdraws from universal human rights or from the concrete ethical life of a specific community into the rules of discourse and forms of argumentation that derive their normative content from the validity-basis of action oriented to reaching understanding, and ultimately from the structure of linguistic communication.⁸

These descriptions of the structures of democratic process set the stage for different normative conceptualizations of state and society. The sole presupposition is a public administration of the kind that emerged in the early modern period together with the European state system and in functional interconnection with a capitalist economic system. According to the republican view, the citizens' political opinion- and will-formation forms the medium through which society constitutes itself as a political whole. Society is centered in the state; for in the citizens' practice of political self-determination the polity becomes conscious of itself as a totality and acts on itself via the collective will of the citizens. Democracy is synonymous with the political self-organization of society. This leads to a polemical understanding of politics

as directed against the state apparatus. In Hannah Arendt's political writings one can see the thrust of republican arguments: in opposition to the civic privatism of a depoliticized population and in opposition to the acquisition of legitimation through entrenched parties, the political public sphere should be revitalized to the point where a regenerated citizenry can, in the forms of a decentralized self-governance, (once again) appropriate the governmental authority that has been usurped by a self-regulating bureaucracy.

According to the liberal view, this separation of the state apparatus from society cannot be eliminated but only bridged by the democratic process. However, the weak normative connotations of a regulated balancing of power and interests stands in need of constitutional channeling. The democratic will-formation of self-interested citizens, construed in minimalist terms, constitutes just one element within a constitution that disciplines governmental authority through normative constraints (such as basic rights, separation of powers, and legal regulation of the administration) and forces it, through competition between political parties, on the one hand, and between government and opposition, on the other, to take adequate account of competing interests and value orientations. This state-centered understanding of politics does not have to rely on the unrealistic assumption of a citizenry capable of acting collectively. Its focus is not so much the input of a rational political will-formation but the output of successful administrative accomplishments. The thrust of liberal arguments is directed against the disruptive potential of an administrative power that interferes with the independent social interactions of private persons. The liberal model hinges not on the democratic self-determination of deliberating citizens but on the legal institutionalization of an economic society that is supposed to guarantee an essentially nonpolitical common good through the satisfaction of the private aspirations of productive citizens.

Discourse theory invests the democratic process with normative connotations stronger than those of the liberal model but weaker than those of the republican model. Once again, it takes elements from both sides and fits them together in a new way. In agreement with republicanism, it gives center stage to the process of political opinion- and will-formation, but without

understanding the constitution as something secondary; on the contrary, it conceives the basic principles of the constitutional state as a consistent answer to the question of how the demanding communicative presuppositions of a democratic opinion- and will-formation can be institutionalized. Discourse theory does not make the success of deliberative politics depend on a collectively acting citizenry but on the institutionalization of corresponding procedures. It no longer operates with the concept of a social whole centered in the state and conceived as a goal-oriented subject writ large. But neither does it localize the whole in a system of constitutional norms mechanically regulating the interplay of powers and interests in accordance with the market model. Discourse theory altogether jettisons the assumptions of the philosophy of consciousness, which invite us either to ascribe the citizens' practice of self-determination to one encompassing macro-subject or to apply the anonymous rule of law to competing individuals. The former approach represents the citizenry as a collective actor which reflects the whole and acts for its sake; on the latter, individual actors function as dependent variables in systemic processes that unfold blindly because no consciously executed collective decisions are possible over and above individual acts of choice (except in a purely metaphorical sense).

Discourse theory works instead with the *higher-level intersubjectivity* of communication processes that unfold in the institutionalized deliberations in parliamentary bodies, on the one hand, and in the informal networks of the public sphere, on the other. Both within and outside parliamentary bodies geared to decision making, these subjectless modes of communication form arenas in which a more or less rational opinion- and will-formation concerning issues and problems affecting society as a whole can take place. Informal opinion-formation results in institutionalized election decisions and legislative decrees through which communicatively generated power is transformed into administratively utilizable power. As on the liberal model, the boundary between state and society is respected; but here civil society, which provides the social underpinning of autonomous publics, is as distinct from the economic system as it is from the public administration. This understanding of democracy leads to the normative demand for a new balance between the three resources of money, administrative power, and solidarity from

which modern societies meet their need for integration and regulation. The normative implications are obvious: the integrative force of solidarity, which can no longer be drawn solely from sources of communicative action, should develop through widely expanded autonomous public spheres as well as through legally institutionalized procedures of democratic deliberation and decision making and gain sufficient strength to hold its own against the other two social forces—money and administrative power.

III

This view has implications for how one should understand legitimation and popular sovereignty. On the liberal view, democratic will-formation has the exclusive function of *legitimizing* the exercise of political power. The outcomes of elections license the assumption of governmental power, though the government must justify the use of power to the public and parliament. On the republican view, democratic will-formation has the significantly stronger function of *constituting* society as a political community and keeping the memory of this founding act alive with each new election. The government is not only empowered by the electorate's choice between teams of leaders to exercise a largely open mandate, but is also bound in a programmatic fashion to carry out certain policies. More a committee than an organ of the state, it is part of a self-governing political community rather than the head of a separate governmental apparatus. Discourse theory, by contrast, brings a third idea into play: the procedures and communicative presuppositions of democratic opinion- and will-formation function as the most important sluices for the discursive rationalization of the decisions of a government and an administration bound by law and statute. On this view, *rationalization* signifies more than mere legitimation but less than the constitution of political power. The power available to the administration changes its general character once it is bound to a process of democratic opinion- and will-formation that does not merely retrospectively monitor the exercise of political power but also programs it in a certain way. Notwithstanding this discursive rationalization, only the political system itself can "act." It is a subsystem specialized for collectively binding decisions, whereas the communicative structures of the public sphere comprise

a far-flung network of sensors that respond to the pressure of society-wide problems and stimulate influential opinions. The public opinion which is worked up via democratic procedures into communicative power cannot itself “rule” but can only channel the use of administrative power in specific directions.

The concept of *popular sovereignty* stems from the republican appropriation and revaluation of the early modern notion of sovereignty originally associated with absolutist regimes. The state, which monopolizes the means of legitimate violence, is viewed as a concentration of power which can overwhelm all other temporal powers. Rousseau transposed this idea, which goes back to Bodin, to the will of the united people, fused it with the classical idea of the self-rule of free and equal citizens, and sublimated it into the modern concept of autonomy. Despite this normative sublimation, the concept of sovereignty remained bound to the notion of an embodiment in the (at first actually physically assembled) people. According to the republican view, the at least potentially assembled people are the bearers of a sovereignty that cannot in principle be delegated: in their capacity as sovereign, the people cannot let themselves be represented by others. Constitutional power is founded on the citizens’ practice of self-determination, not on that of their representatives. Against this, liberalism offers the more realistic view that, in the constitutional state, the authority emanating from the people is exercised only “by means of elections and voting and by specific legislative, executive, and judicial organs.”⁹

These two views exhaust the alternatives only on the dubious assumption that state and society must be conceived in terms of a whole and its parts, where the whole is constituted either by a sovereign citizenry or by a constitution. By contrast to the discourse theory of democracy corresponds the image of a *decentered* society, though with the political public sphere it sets apart an arena for the detection, identification, and interpretation of problems affecting society as a whole. If we abandon the conceptual framework of the philosophy of the subject, sovereignty need neither be concentrated in the people in a concretistic manner nor banished into the anonymous agencies established by the constitution. The “self” of the self-organizing legal community disappears in the subjectless forms of communication that regulate the flow of discursive opinion- and will-formation whose fallible results enjoy the presumption

of rationality. This is not to repudiate the intuition associated with the idea of popular sovereignty but rather to interpret it in intersubjective terms. Popular sovereignty, even though it has become anonymous, retreats into democratic procedures and the legal implementation of their demanding communicative presuppositions only to be able to make itself felt as communicatively generated power. Strictly speaking, this communicative power springs from the interactions between legally institutionalized will-formation and culturally mobilized publics. The latter for their part find a basis in the associations of a civil society distinct from the state and the economy alike.

The normative self-understanding of deliberative politics does indeed call for a discursive mode of socialization for the *legal community*; but this mode does not extend to the whole of the society in which the constitutionally established political system is *embedded*. Even on its own proceduralist self-understanding, deliberative politics remains a component of a complex society, which as a whole resists the normative approach of legal theory. In this regard, the discourse-theoretic reading of democracy connects with an objectifying sociological approach that regards the political system neither as the peak nor the center, nor even as the structuring model of society, but as just *one* action system among others. Because it provides a kind of surety for the solution of the social problems that threaten integration, politics must indeed be able to communicate, via the medium of law, with all of the other legitimately ordered spheres of action, however these may be structured and steered. But the political system remains dependent on other functional mechanisms, such as the revenue-production of the economic system, in more than just a trivial sense; on the contrary, deliberative politics, whether realized in the formal procedures of institutionalized opinion- and will-formation or only in the informal networks of the political public sphere, stands in an internal relation to the contexts of a rationalized lifeworld that meets it halfway. Deliberatively filtered political communications are especially dependent on the resources of the lifeworld—on a free and open political culture and an enlightened political socialization, and above all on the initiatives of opinion-shaping associations. These resources emerge and regenerate themselves spontaneously for the most part—at any rate, they can only with difficulty be subjected to political control.

NOTES

1. Cf. H. Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York, 1965); *On Violence* (New York, 1970).
2. Cf. F. I. Michelman, "Political Truth and the Rule of Law," *Tel Aviv University Studies in Law* 8 (1988): 283: "The political society envisioned by bumper-sticker republicans is the society of private rights bearers, an association whose first principle is the protection of the lives, liberties, and estates of its individual members. In that society, the state is justified by the protection it gives to those prepolitical interests; the purpose of the constitution is to ensure that the state apparatus, the government, provides such protection for the people at large rather than serves the special interests of the governors or their patrons; the function of citizenship is to operate the constitution and thereby to motivate the governors to act according to that protective purpose; and the value to you of your political franchise—your right to vote and speak, to have your views heard and counted—is the handle it gives you on influencing the system so that it will adequately heed and protect *your* particular, prepolitical rights and other interests."
3. On the distinction between positive and negative freedom see Ch. Taylor, "What is Human Agency?" in *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers 1* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 15–44.
4. Michelman, "Political Truth and the Rule of Law," p.284: "In [the] civic constitutional vision, political society is primarily the society not of rights bearers, but of citizens, an association whose first principle is the creation and provision of a public realm within which a people, together, argue and reason about the right terms of social coexistence, terms that they will set together and which they understand as comprising their common good. . . . Hence, the state is justified by its purpose of establishing and ordering the public sphere within which persons can achieve freedom in the sense of self-government by the exercise of reason in public dialogue."
5. Michelman, "Conceptions of Democracy in American Constitutional Argument: Voting Rights," *Florida Law Review* 41 (1989): 446f. (hereafter "Voting Rights").
6. Michelman, "Voting Rights," p. 484.
7. Michelman, "Conceptions of Democracy in American Constitutional Argument: The Case of Pornography Regulation," *Tennessee Law Review* 291 (1989): 293.
8. Cf. J. Habermas, "Popular Sovereignty as Procedure," in *Between Facts and Norms*, trans. W. Rehg (1996), pp. 463–490.
9. Cf. *The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany*, article 20, sec. 2.

SECTION X

1. Using developments in photography and film in the first half of the twentieth century, Benjamin speculates about the impact of such technological developments on the world of art. What are the implications he sees for living in an "age of mechanical reproduction?"
2. Summarize Adorno's description of the fascist leader type. Choose examples from among contemporary authoritarian populist leaders and assess to what extent they fit the description.
3. Do you find convincing Marcuse's argument that freedom is eroding in the world's leading democracies as a result of the impact of technology and bureaucracy? Why or why not?
4. What does Marcuse mean by an "overly administered society?"
5. Habermas contends that historically two particular theories of democracy have constituted competing models: liberalism and republicanism. Compare and contrast those two models.
6. Habermas offers as an alternative to both liberalism and republicanism a theory of democracy he calls "deliberative politics." Summarize this alternative and describe how it differs from the other two.

XI. RACE, ETHNICITY, AND NATIONALISM

MICHAEL OMI AND HOWARD WINANT

49. THE THEORETICAL STATUS OF THE CONCEPT OF RACE

Michael Omi (b. 1951), who teaches in the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of California, Berkeley, and Howard Winant (b. 1946), a professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, introduced the idea of “racial formation” in their highly influential book on *Racial Formation in the United States*. The book was an attempt to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the social significance of race in the post–civil rights era, after the demise of Jim Crow. It extrapolates from Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony and applies it to race (see the preceding entry by Raewyn Connell for a parallel effort with gender), contending that race needs to be construed as a social construct that constitutes a fundamental organizing principle in social life—and that as such it cannot be reduced to other categories such as class or ethnicity. In this essay, which appeared in various versions during the early 1990s, Omi and Winant disagree with the argument that race should be viewed as ideology, if that means a form of false consciousness, and with the competing claim that it should be viewed as objective condition if that essentializes race. As an alternative to both approaches, the authors lay out the contours of a critical theory of race that views it as an unstable, historically contingent, and highly variable construct that arises and is sustained or changed by what they refer to as “racial projects.” The essay ends with a discussion of the spatial and temporal parameters of race today.

INTRODUCTION

Race used to be a relatively intelligible concept; only recently have we seriously challenged its theoretical coherence. Today there are deep questions about what we actually mean by the term. But before (roughly) World War II, before the rise of Nazism, before the end of the great European empires and particularly before the decolonization of Africa, before the urbanization of the U.S. black population and the rise of the modern civil rights movement, race was still largely

seen in Europe and North America (and elsewhere as well) as an essence, a natural phenomenon, whose meaning was fixed, as constant as a southern star.

In the earlier years of this century, only a handful of pioneers, people like W. E. B. Du Bois and Franz Boas, and Robert E. Park of the “Chicago School,” conceived of race in a more social and historical way. Other doubters included avant-garde racial theorists emerging from the intellectual and cultural ferment of the Negritude movement and the Harlem renaissance,

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pan-Africanists and nationalists, and Marxists electrified by the Russian revolution. Many of these had returned from the battlefields of France to a Jim Crow United States, swept in 1919 by antiblack race riots. Others went back to a colony—Senegal, India, Trinidad, the Philippines or elsewhere—where they found the old racist imperialism proceeding undisturbed. So now they sought to apply to the mother continent of Africa or other colonial outposts, or to the United States or Europe itself, the rhetorics of national self-determination expressed at Versailles, in the Comintern, in the various pan-Africanist conferences that had been occurring, or in the music, art, and literature that was now being produced by colored hearts and minds all around the world.

These were but the early upsurges of twentieth-century challenges to the naturalistic and essentialized concept of race that had dominated Western thought for centuries; that had indeed been invented in Europe and had evolved in tandem with the Enlightenment and European imperial rule. To be sure, doubts about the eternality of racial categories, however important, were still very much on the margins of accepted knowledge. Early racial critics were not only peripheral to the global system of racial hierarchy; they too were marked, still marked, by its power and ubiquity. Even the pioneers just mentioned still paid homage to race-theories we would now view as archaic at best.¹ All made incomplete breaks with essentialist notions of race, whether biologicistic or otherwise deterministic.

As do we still today. But that was then; this is now. Although racial essentialism remains very much with us, at the dawn of the twenty-first century the theory of race has been significantly transformed. The social construction of race, which we have labeled the *racial formation* process (Omi and Winant 1994), is widely recognized today, so much so that it is now often *conservatives* who argue that race is an illusion. The main task facing racial theory today, in fact, is no longer to critique the seemingly “natural” or “common sense” concept of race—although that effort has not been entirely completed by any means. Rather the central task is to focus attention on the continuing significance and changing meaning of race. It is to argue against the recent discovery of the illusory nature of

race; against the supposed contemporary transcendence of race; against the widely reported death of the concept of race; and against the replacement of the category of race by other, supposedly more objective categories like ethnicity, nationality, or class. All these initiatives are mistaken at best, and intellectually dishonest at worst.

In order to substantiate these assertions, we must first ask, what is race? Is it merely an illusion: an ideological construct utilized to manipulate, divide, and deceive? This position has been taken by many theorists, and activists as well, including many who have served the cause of racial and social justice in the United States. Or is race something real, material, objective? This view too has its adherents, including both racial reactionaries and racial radicals.

In our view both of these approaches miss the boat. The concept of race is neither an ideological construct, nor does it reflect an objective condition. Here we first reflect critically on these two opposed viewpoints on the contemporary theory of race. Then we offer an alternative perspective based on racial formation theory.

RACE AS AN IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCT

The assertion that race is an ideological construct—understood in the sense of an “illusion” that explains other “material” relationships in distorted fashion—seems highly problematic. Though today it is usually seen as a core tenet of conservative racial theory—think of “colorblindness” (Connerly 2000) and the main neoconservative positions (Murray 1984; Thernstrom 1997; Glazer 1997; see also Winant 1997), as noted this view is held across the political spectrum from right to left. For example the prominent radical historian Barbara Fields takes this view in her 1990 article “Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America.” Although Fields inveighs against various uses of the race concept, she directs her critical barbs most forcefully against historians who “invoke race as a historical explanation” (Fields 101).

According to Fields, the concept of race arose to meet an ideological need: its original effectiveness lay in its ability to reconcile freedom and slavery. The idea of race provided “the means of explaining slavery to

people whose terrain was a republic founded on radical doctrines of liberty and natural rights. . . ." (Fields 114).

But, Fields says, to argue that race—once framed as a category in thought, an ideological explanation for certain distinct types of social inequality—"takes on a life of its own" in social relationships, is to transform (or "reify") an illusion into a reality. Such a position could be sustained

". . . [o]nly if *race* is defined as innate and natural prejudice of color. . . ." [S]ince race is not genetically programmed, racial prejudice cannot be genetically programmed either, but must arise historically. . . . The preferred solution is to suppose that, having arisen historically, race then ceases to be a historical phenomenon and becomes instead an external motor of history; according to the fatuous but widely repeated formula, it "takes on a life of its own." In other words, once historically acquired, race becomes hereditary. The shopworn metaphor thus offers camouflage for a latter-day version of Lamarckism (Fields 101, emphasis in original).

Thus race is either an illusion which does ideological work, or an objective biological fact. Since it is certainly not the latter, it must be the former. No intermediate possibility—consider for example the Durkheimian notion of a "social fact" – is considered.²

Some of this account—for example the extended discussion of the origins of North American race-thinking—can be accepted without major objection.³ Furthermore, Fields effectively demonstrates the absurdity of many commonly held ideas about race. But her position at best can only account for the *origins* of race-thinking, and then only in one social context. To examine how race-thinking evolved from these origins, how it responded to changing sociocultural circumstances, is ruled out. Why and how did race-thinking survive after emancipation? Fields cannot answer, because the very perpetuation of the concept of race is ruled out by her theoretical approach. As a relatively orthodox Marxist, Fields could argue that changing "material conditions" continued to give rise to changes in racial "ideology," except that even the limited autonomy this would attach to the concept of race would exceed her standards. Race cannot take on "a life of its own"; it is a pure ideology, an illusion.

Fields simply skips from emancipation to the present, where she disparages opponents of "racism" for unwittingly perpetuating it. In denunciatory terms Fields concludes by arguing for the concept's abolition:

Nothing handed down from the past could keep race alive if we did not constantly reinvent and re-ritualize it to fit our own terrain. If race lives on today, it can do so only because we continue to create and re-create it in our social life, continue to verify it, and thus continue to need a social vocabulary that will allow us to make sense, not of what our ancestors did then, but of what we choose to do now (Fields 118).

Fields is unclear about how "we" should jettison the ideological construct of race, and one can well understand why. By her own logic, racial ideologies cannot be abolished by acts of will. One can only marvel at the ease with which she distinguishes the bad old slavery days of the past from the present, when "we" anachronistically cling, as if for no reason, to the illusion that race retains any meaning. We foolishly "throw up our hands" and acquiesce in race-thinking, rather than . . . doing what? Denying the racially demarcated divisions in society? Training ourselves to be "color-blind?"⁴

In any case the view that race is an illusion or piece of false consciousness is held not only by intellectuals, based on both well-intentioned and ulterior motivations; it also has a common-sense character. One hears in casual discussion, for example, or in introductory social science classes, variations on the following statement: "I don't care if a person is black, white, or purple, I treat them exactly the same; a person's just a person to me. . . ." etc. Furthermore, some of the integrationist aspirations of racial minority movements, especially the civil rights movement, invoke this sort of idea. Consider the famous line from the "I Have a Dream" speech, the line that made Shelby Steele's career: ". . . that someday my four little children will be judged, not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. . . ."

Our core criticisms of this "race as ideology" approach are two: first, it fails to recognize the salience a social construct can develop over half a millennium or more of diffusion, or should we say enforcement, as a fundamental principle of social organization and identity formation. The longevity of the race concept,

and the enormous number of effects race-thinking (and race-acting) have produced, guarantee that race will remain a feature of social reality across the globe, and a *fortiori* in the United States, despite its lack of intrinsic or scientific merit (in the biological sense).⁵ Second, and related, this approach fails to recognize that at the level of experience, of everyday life, race is a relatively impermeable part of our identities. For example, U.S. society is so thoroughly racialized that to be without racial identity is to be in danger of having no identity. To be raceless is akin to being genderless. It is to be invisible or ghostly.⁶ Indeed, when one cannot identify another's race, a micro sociological "crisis of interpretation" results, something perhaps best interpreted in ethnomethodological or Goffmanian terms. To complain about such a situation may be understandable, but it does not advance understanding.

RACE AS AN OBJECTIVE CONDITION

On the other side of the coin, it is clearly problematic to assign objectivity to the race concept. Such theoretical practice puts us in quite heterogeneous, and sometimes unsavory, company. Of course the biologicistic racial theories of the past do this: here we are thinking of the prototypes of fascism such as Gobineau and Chamberlain (Mosse 1978), of the eugenicists such as Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant, and of the "founding fathers" of scientific racism such as Agassiz, Broca, Terman, and Yerkes (Kevles, 1985; Chase, 1977; Gould, 1981). Indeed an extensive legacy of this sort of thinking extends right up to the present.

But much liberal and even radical social science, though firmly committed to a social as opposed to biological interpretation of race, nevertheless also slips into a kind of objectivism about racial identity and racial meaning. This is true because race is all too frequently treated as discrete variable. It is considered, investigated, or "controlled for" as if it were an objective phenomenon, rather than a sociohistorical construct that is deeply unstable and internally contradictory (Zuberi 2001). Thus, to select only prominent examples, Daniel Moynihan, William Julius Wilson, Milton Gordon, and many other mainstream thinkers theorize race in terms which downplay its variability and historically contingent character. So even these major

writers, whose explicit rejection of biologicistic forms of racial theory would be unquestioned, fall prey to a kind of creeping objectivism of race. For in their analyses a modal explanatory approach emerges as follows: sociopolitical circumstances change over historical time, racially defined groups adapt or fail to adapt to these changes, achieving mobility or remaining mired in poverty, etc. In this logic there is no reconceptualization of group identities, of the constantly shifting parameters through which race is thought about, group interests are assigned, statuses are ascribed, agency is attained, and roles performed.

Contemporary racial theory, then, is often "objectivistic" about its fundamental category. Although abstractly acknowledged to be a sociohistorical construct, race in practice is often treated as an objective fact: one simply *is* one's race; in the contemporary United States for example, if we discard euphemisms, we have five color-based racial categories: black, white, brown, yellow, or red.

This is problematic, indeed ridiculous, in numerous ways. Nobody really belongs in these boxes; they are patently absurd reductions of human variation. But even accepting the nebulous "rules" of racial classification—what Harris (1964) calls "hypodescent," for example—many people don't fit anywhere: into what categories should we place Arab Americans? Brazilians? Argentinians? South Asians? Such a list could be extended indefinitely; every racial identity is unstable. Objectivist treatments, lacking a critique of the constructed character of racial meanings, also clash with experiential dimensions of the issue. If one doesn't *act* black, white, etc., that's just deviance from the norm, etc. There is in these approaches an insufficient appreciation of the performative aspect of race, as postmodernists or pragmatists might call it.⁷

To summarize the critique of this "race as objective condition" approach, then, it fails on three counts: first, it cannot grasp the processual and relational character of racial identity and racial meaning. Second, it denies the historicity and social comprehensiveness of the race concept. And third, it cannot account for the way actors, both individual and collective, have to manage incoherent and conflictual racial meanings and identities in everyday life. It has no concept, in short, of what we have labeled *racial formation*.

TOWARD A CRITICAL THEORY OF THE CONCEPT OF RACE

The foregoing clearly sets forth the agenda which any adequate theorization of the race concept must fulfill. Such an approach must be theoretically constructed so as to steer between the Scylla of "race as illusion" and the Charybdis of "racial objectivism." Such a critical theory can be consistently developed, we suggest, drawing upon racial formation theory. Such a theoretical formulation must be explicitly historicist: it must recognize the importance of historical context and contingency in the framing of racial categories and the social construction of racially defined experiences.

What would be the minimum conditions for the development of such a critical, processual theory of race? Beyond addressing the standard issues to which we have already referred—such as equality, domination/resistance, and micro-macro linkages—we suggest three such conditions for such a theory:

- It must apply to contemporary *politics*;
- It must apply in an increasingly *global* context;
- It must apply across *historical* time.⁸

Contemporary Political Relationships: The meaning and salience of race is forever being reconstituted in the present. In the last half century new racial politics emerged in a process, usually decades-long, that constituted a hegemonic shift or postcolonial transition. Along the lines of what we have called the "trajectory of racial politics" (Omi and Winant 1994, 84-88) the meanings of race, and the political articulations of race, have proliferated.

Examples include the appearance of competing racial projects, by which we mean efforts to institutionalize racial meanings and identities in particular social structures: notably those of individual, family, community, and state. As equality-and difference-oriented movements contend with racial "backlash" over sustained periods of time, as binary logics of racial antagonism (white/black, ladino/indio, settler/native, etc.) become more complex and decentered, political deployment of the concept of race comes to signal qualitatively new types of political domination, as well as new types of opposition.

Consider the U.S. example. In the United States today it is now possible to perpetuate racial domination without making any explicit reference to race at all. Subtextual or "coded" racial signifiers, or the mere denial of the continuing significance of race, usually suffice. Similarly, in terms of opposition, it is now possible to resist racial domination in entirely new ways, particularly by limiting the reach and penetration of the political system into everyday life, by generating new identities, new collectivities, new (imagined) communities that are relatively less permeable to the hegemonic system.⁹ Much of the rationale for Islamic currents among blacks in the United States and to some extent for the Afrocentric phenomenon, can be found here. Thus the old political choices, integration vs. separatism, assimilation vs. nationalism, are no longer the only options.¹⁰

In the "underdeveloped" world, proliferation of so-called postcolonial phenomena also have significant racial dimensions, as the entire Fanonian tradition (merely to select one important theoretical current) makes clear. Crucial debates have now been occurring for decades on the question of postcolonial subjectivity and identity, the insufficiency of the simple dualism of "Europe and its others," the subversive and parodic dimensions of political culture at and beyond the edges of the old imperial boundaries, etc. (Said 1978; Bhabha 1990).

The Global Context of Race: Once seen in terms of imperial reach, in terms of colonization, conquest, and migration, racial space has always been globalized. In the postcolonial period, however, a new kind of racial globalization has become visible.¹¹

Today the distinction "developed/underdeveloped" has been definitively overcome. Obviously by this we don't mean that now there are no disparities between North and South, rich and poor. Rather we mean that the movement of capital and labor has internationalized all nations, all regions. Today we have reached the point where "the empire strikes back," as former (neo)colonial subjects, now redefined as "migrants" and "undocumented" persons (sometimes called "denizens") challenge the majoritarian status or cultural domination of the formerly metropolitan group (the whites, the Europeans, the "Americans," the "French," etc.).¹² Meanwhile such phenomena as the rise of "diasporic" models of blackness, the creation

of “panethnic” communities of Latinos and Asians (in such countries as the United Kingdom or the United States), and the breakdown of borders in both Europe and North America, all seem to be internationalizing and racializing previously national polities, cultures, and identities.¹³ To take just one example, popular culture now divulges racial awareness almost instantaneously, as reggae, rap, samba, or various African pop styles leap from continent to continent.

Comparing hegemonic racial formations in the contemporary global context suggests that diasporic solidarity and race-consciousness is taking new forms as it emerges (or re-emerges) in the twenty-first century. There are also new theoretical and practical efforts to understand national and regional racial dynamics in light of the globalization framework. For example, the attention given to “the black Atlantic” as an evolving sociohistorical complex of domination and resistance (Gilroy 1993; Linebaugh and Rediker 2001) is being supplemented by work on regional diasporas like the Luso-Brazilian Atlantic (Miller 1988; Stam 1997), and the Caribbean (James 1998). Recent scholarship on Africa situates the Motherland much more centrally in global political economic development than was previously the case (Cooper 1993).¹⁴ In similar fashion, African ideas and “the idea of Africa” (Mudimbe 1994; see also Appiah 1992) now challenge formerly hegemonic Northern and Western worldviews much more comprehensively than could ever have been imagined in the past. A burgeoning new literature on processes of continuity and change in the African diaspora points to the unrecognized (and ongoing) political dynamism of that global complex (Patterson and Kelley 2000). The world is learning once again—as it has over and over throughout the modern age—about the centrality of race on the global stage: racial identity continues to shape “life-chances” worldwide; transnational organizing along racial lines is evident among indigenous, black, and many dispersed/diasporic peoples; and racial stigma is continually being reallocated (and resisted) everywhere. Although space is not available to develop these points fully here, we can offer two brief examples of the latter: resurgent Islamophobia and the increasing racialization of white identities.

By *Islamophobia* (Halliday 1999) we mean anti-Islamic (and by extension, anti-Muslim) prejudice.

Although religious bigotry and hostility are certainly at work here, the racial components of Islamophobia should now be obvious, particularly in the United States but elsewhere in the world as well. Very old patterns are resurfacing here: for example, the United States affords itself a civilizing mission in the Arab world, the Muslim world, much as the British and French (not to mention the Crusades) did in the past. Arabs in the United States and Europe are subject to widespread racial profiling; this is particularly true after the September 11, 2001 attacks. The United States has been deluged with a flood of periodical ink and broadcast soundbites devoted to the problematic and mysterious essence of Islam—political Islam, fundamentalist Islam, sex and gender under Islam, the putative “backwardness” of Islam in comparison to the enlightened and democratic West, the tutelary role of Christianity and obligation of proselytization in the Islamic world, etc. All this signals a regression in the West, and particularly in the United States, to orientalism at its worst (Said 1978). It hardly needs repeating that, like the nineteenth-century phenomenon Said analyzed so influentially, twenty-first-century orientalism is also a discursive set of variations on the theme of racial rule; it is redolent of the old colonial and imperial arrogance. The uplifting mission of the West is proclaimed—in the values of “freedom,” “democracy,” “pluralism,” “secularism,” etc.—while underneath the surface the old agendas advance: most notably political-military power and the capture of natural resources.

The dissolution of the transparent racial identity of the formerly dominant group, that is to say, the *increasing racialization of whites* in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere, must also be recognized as proceeding from the increasingly globalized dimensions of race. As previous assumptions erode, white identity loses its transparency, the easy elision with “racelessness” that accompanies racial domination. “Whiteness” enters into crisis; it becomes a matter of anxiety and concern.¹⁵ Harking back to the eugenic panics that swept the United States and the colonial “mother countries” a century ago (Grant 1970 [1916]), mainstream political thinkers now lament the demise of colonial order, hanker for a new imperial system (Ignatieff 2003) that would bring order to the chaotic

postcolonial “ends of the Earth” (Kaplan 1997), and worry about racial “swamping,” the loss of cultural integrity, and declining white fertility in the world’s West and North (Brimelow 1995).

The Emergence of Racial Time: Some final notes are in order regarding the question of the epochal nature of racial time. Classical social theory had an enlightenment-based view of time, a perspective which understood the emergence of modernity in terms of the rise of capitalism and the bourgeoisie. This view was by no means limited to Marxism. Weberian disenchantment and the rise of the Durkheimian division of labor also partake of this temporal substrate. Only rarely does the racial dimension of historical temporality appear in this body of thought, as for example in Marx’s excoriation of the brutalities of “primitive accumulation”:

The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement, and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of blackskins, signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. On their heels treads the commercial war of the European nations with the globe for a theater. It begins with the revolt of the Netherlands from Spain, assumes giant dimensions in England’s Antijacobin War, and is still going on in the opium wars with China, etc. (Marx 1967; 351).

Yet even Marx frequently legitimated such processes as the inevitable and ultimately beneficial birth-pangs of classlessness—by way of the ceaselessly revolutionary bourgeoisie.

Today such teleological accounts seem hopelessly outmoded. Historical time could well be interpreted in terms of something like a racial *longue duree*: for has there not been an immense historical rupture represented by the rise of Europe, the onset of African enslavement, the *conquista*, and the subjugation of much of Asia? We take the point of much poststructural

scholarship on these matters to be quite precisely an effort to explain “Western” or colonial time as a huge project demarcating human “difference,” or more globally as Todorov, say, would argue, of framing partial collective identities in terms of externalized “others” (Todorov 1985). Just as, for example, the writers of the *Annales* school sought to locate the deep logic of historical time in the means by which material life was produced—diet, shoes, etc.—so we might usefully think of a racial *longue duree* in which the slow inscription of phenotypical signification took place upon the human body, in and through conquest and enslavement to be sure, but also as an enormous act of expression, of narration.¹⁶

In short, just as the noise of the “big bang” still resonates through the universe, so the overdetermined construction of world “civilization” as a product of the rise of Europe and the subjugation of the rest of us still defines the race concept. Such speculative notes as these, to be sure, can be no more than provocations. Nor can we conclude this effort to reframe the agenda of racial theory with a neat summation. There was a long period—centuries—in which race was seen as a natural condition, an essence. This was gradually supplanted, although not entirely superseded, during the twentieth century by a new way of thinking about race: it was now seen as subordinate to the supposedly more concrete, “material” relationships of culture, economic interest, and national identity. Centuries of essentialist and “naturalizing” views of race were replaced (though not entirely) with more critical perspectives that envisioned dispensing with the “illusion” of race. Perhaps now we are approaching the end of that racial epoch too.

To our dismay, we may have to give up our familiar ways of thinking about race once more. If so, there may also be some occasion for delight. For it may be possible to glimpse yet another view of race, in which the concept operates neither as a signifier of comprehensive identity, nor of fundamental difference, both of which are patently absurd, but rather as a marker of the infinity of variations we humans hold as a common heritage and hope for the future.

NOTES

1. Du Bois's invocations in *The Souls of Black Folk* of Germanic concepts of race derived from Herder and Fichte are but one example of this. Boas's critique of the physical anthropology of his time also preserved some of its racial stereotypes. Marxism's eurocentric elements contained significant racist residues, and pan-Africanism and Negritude often appealed to quasi-religious or non-rational black or African essences (e.g., *nommo*), in their accounts of racial difference.
2. For a similar "left" argument against the usefulness of the concept, see Appiah 1985 (1992).
3. Minor objections would have to do with Fields's functionalist view of ideology, and her claim that the race concept only "came into existence" (Fields 101) when needed by whites in North American colonies beginning in the late 17th century. The concept of race, of course, has a longer history than that.
4. David Roediger – generally in agreement with Fields – also criticizes her on this point. "At times she nicely balances the ideological creation of racial attitudes with their manifest and ongoing importance and their (albeit ideological) *reality* But elsewhere, race disappears into the 'reality' of class" (Roediger 1991, 7–8; emphasis original).
5. A famous sociological dictum holds that "If men (sic) define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas 1928, 572), a claim that would clearly apply to racial "situations" of all sorts.
6. Avery Gordon has suggested that race "haunts" US society and culture as a consequence of the fierce contradictions it embodies: its simultaneous omnipresence and disavowal throughout American life (Gordon 1997).
7. "The question of identification is never the affirmation of a pre-given identity, never a self-fulfilling prophecy—it is always the production of an image of identity and the transformation of the subject in assuming that image" (Bhabha 1990, 188).
8. Although only in passing. There can be no extended racial theorizing here. In other work we have developed a more systematic theoretical approach to race. See Omi and Winant 1994.
9. The work of Paul Gilroy (1991) on the significance of black music in Afro-Diasporic communities is particularly revealing on this point.
10. Our point here is that previously marginalized identities and positions are now politically more salient, have more "voice," and influence current political conflicts more than they did in the past. Of course there is nothing new about the particular examples we have cited. Islam has always been present among African Americans (as well as in every other racially-identified group). For all its controversies and problems (Moses 1994), Afrocentrism justifiably claims its heritage in pan-Africanism, Ethiopianism, etc.
11. For a more extensive treatment of these large issues, see Winant 2001.
12. We borrow this phrase, not from George Lucas but from the book of that title edited at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1982.
13. David Lopez and Yen Le Espiritu define panethnicity as ". . . the development of bridging organizations and solidarities among subgroups of ethnic collectivities that are often seen as homogeneous by outsiders." Such a development, they claim, is a crucial feature of ethnic change: "supplanting both assimilation and ethnic particularism as the direction of change for racial/ ethnic minorities." They conclude that while panethnic formation is facilitated by an ensemble of cultural factors (e.g., common language and religion) and structural factors (e.g., class, generation, and geographical concentration), a specific concept of race is fundamental to the construction of panethnicity (Lopez and Le Espiritu 1990, 198).

14. Thus confirming Du Bois's claims to this effect ("Semper novi quid ex Africa") nearly a century after he made them (Du Bois 1995 [1915]).
15. Once again this is an old story. Among a vast literature, see Roediger 1991, Harris 1993, Jacobson 1999.
16. For example the magisterial work of Fernand Braudel 1975.

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PAUL GILROY

50. BETWEEN CAMPS: RACE AND CULTURE IN POSTMODERNITY

Currently the holder of the Anthony Giddens Professorship in Social Theory at the London School of Economics, Paul Gilroy (b. 1956) was early in his career affiliated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, where he was part of a collective that produced the acclaimed work on postcolonialism, *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 1970s Britain* (1982). In *Their Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (1987) and *The Black Atlantic* (1993) he further pursued his interest in exploring the political culture of the Black Atlantic Diaspora. Gilroy's essay below derives from his 1997 inaugural address at Goldsmith's College, University of London. In it he lays out the contours of an argument that would be more fully developed in his book published in the United Kingdom in 2000 as *Between Camps* and in the United States the same year with the title *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*. The thesis he offers is provocative and has led some critics to contend that he has fallen into the trap of accepting the "color-blind" argument prevalent among conservatives. This criticism represents a serious misreading of his work. Gilroy contends that nationalism and racial formations operate in terms of "camps," a word he chooses not only to "emphasize their hierarchical and regimented qualities," but to stress the pernicious consequences of the camp mentality in its most grotesque expression during the Nazi era, with its death camps. As an antidote, he promotes a cosmopolitan humanism based on interculturalism.

This is an uncomfortable experience for me. The genre requires that I use the word "I" more than I would normally want to do. Fortunately, it is one rare and special occasion on which I do not have to keep my discomfort to myself. This discomfort turns out to be a complex thing. It has been formed, in part at least, by seeing Britain's institutions of higher learning being destroyed and devalued since 1978 when my own post-graduate work—it was not called training in those days—began. Believing that education is a good in itself, something which just cannot be translated into the terms of economic rationality, is now a perversely conservative position for a dissident to hold. The desire to celebrate on nights like these should not lead us to overlook the problems we share as scholars and

as academics but more profoundly as political intellectuals with utopian aspirations that are patently out of season. Of course, we care about our "customers" the students—tired, ill-prepared and under-resourced though they are—but we also care about the world of which they are but one part. There are other, in a sense less immediate but no less important, issues to contend with, things that resist the awful jargon of targets, budgets, missions and monitoring that claims so much of our precious time and saps our dwindling energy.

I'd like to think that this might also be a variety of discomfort shaped by a good sense of how little what we do matters in the wider scheme of things, by a realistic understanding of how insignificant and immaterial most of our efforts are doomed to be.

Gilroy, Paul. "Between Camps: Race and Culture in Postmodernity." *Economy and Society* 28(2), 1999. Pages 183–197. Routledge. Permission conveyed through the Copyright Clearance Center. ♦

The gulf between work and the world yawns at the best of times but it can be especially wide for those of us who have maintained a commitment to writing about the unspeakable evils perpetrated under the banners of "race" and nation. Apprehending the fissures between our *is* and our *ought* contributes a powerful, lingering corrective, an antidote to the temptation of hubris. That gap is not the sort of problem I can pretend to solve, but I know that writing and teaching are an important part of what makes it bearable. I want to lay that pseudo-insight before you, in good faith, as something like the centre of my own understanding of my work. It constitutes the context in which I would like you to consider what I do: not, I should add, for any alibis it might afford me but, if you like, in mitigation for the failures, the incompleteness, the silences, evasions and provisional formulations, the speculations, the inconsistencies and the errors that characterize what I have published and which have brought me to this happy but uncomfortable point. If this is a discomfort that can too easily become despair, it is also a discomfort that must be transformed into a resource of hope if only because it requires that we look outside the beleaguered walls of the university in order to find the tools, the concepts, that we need in order to maintain our serious work inside it.

An academic friend and colleague in the United States is fond of saying that most members of the professoriate have one or, if we are lucky, perhaps two worthwhile ideas in a lifetime of tenured scholarship. At best then, the bulk of what we do involves the recycling and recoding of those rare insights, often in language that is progressively more forbidding. I am not ready to succumb to that diagnosis of our profession's ills, but I cannot deny that it passed through my mind while searching around for what I would say tonight and trying to find something to tie the threads of my presentation together. I took my difficulties as a sign that I must still be waiting for my big idea to arrive. Then it dawned on me that it might be possible to synthesize all my work and articulate it clearly as a single, quite simple project. It is unified by my antipathy towards nationalism in all its forms and a related concern with the responsibility of intellectuals to act ethically, justly, when faced with the challenges that nationalisms represent. That critical disposition,

something I appreciate as the fortunate product of my London cosmopolitan upbringing by two intellectuals, a migrant and a pacifist, connects almost everything I have written. As I have become more conscious of its power and value, it has given form to the later stages of my writing, as it reaches its urgent conclusion in an exploration of the location of black politics not in relation to England, Britain, the Americas or even the intercultural black Atlantic, but in relation to Europe past and future. Reading Frantz Fanon's work in my second term at Sussex University under the thoughtful guidance of the historian Donald Wood, I remember being struck by his repeated calls for the inauguration of a new humanism that was not blind to Europe's crimes. I do not share Fanon's masculinism, his Hegelianism or his faith in psychoanalysis but it is towards that end that I would like to direct my remarks tonight.

Before I begin, I would also like to express my gratitude to all my teachers, especially Stuart Hall and the late Gillian Rose; to my students here and at the other places where I have taught, to Miriam Glucksmann, Barbara Harrison and Stina Lyon for being prepared to give me my first chance at an academic job when I was on the brink of giving up and to my colleagues in different sociology departments who have wanted me around and given me space and support to get on with my work, even though it is often remote from the doxa that defines the discipline and wins it institutional validity.

Long before I acquired an academic career, it had become commonplace for sociologically minded thinkers analysing the development of political and economic institutions to employ the concept of modernity. At some cost, it is now an indispensable part of professional shorthand. For those outside our masonic circle, I should say that modernity is used loosely to refer to the confluence of capitalism, industrialization and democracy, the emergence of modern government, the appearance of the nation state and numerous other social and cultural changes: in the registration of time, the experience of the metropolis, the configuration of gendered public and private spheres and the quality of ethical life. The development of territorial sovereignty and the cultural and communicative apparatuses that correspond to it was also bound up with the struggle to consolidate the transparent, rational

working of states and governmental powers to which the term modernity refers. That combination promoted a new sense of the relationship between place, community and what we are now able to call identity. It merits recognition as what I have come to call a distinctive ecology of belonging.

Though “race” thinking certainly existed in earlier times, modernity transformed the ways in which “race” was understood and acted upon. I am broadly sympathetic to the account which emerges from the rich work of scholars like Eric Voegelin, Martin Bernal and, most recently, the late Ivan Hannaford. From quite different political positions, all argue in complementary ways, that “race” as we routinely comprehend it, simply did not exist until the nineteenth century. Though it is presented as a permanent, inevitable and extra-historical principle of differentiation, there is nothing natural or spontaneous about “race” and the differences it makes. It is a short step from de-naturing “race” and appreciating the ways that “races” have been invented and imagined to seeing how modernity catalysed a distinctive regime of truths, of discourses that I want to call raciology. This was a novel way of understanding the anatomy, hierarchy and temporality. It made previously mute bodies communicate the truths of an irrevocable otherness that were being confirmed by new science and new semiotics just as the struggle against racial slavery was being won. Though it is not acknowledged as often as it should be, this close connection between “race” and modernity can be apprehended with special clarity if we allow our understanding of modernity to travel, to move with the workings of the great imperial systems it battled to control. Though they were centred on Europe, these systems, both exploitative and communicative, extended far beyond Europe’s changing geo-body. That point need not be over-emphasized in this location: a stone’s throw from the Thames, “the jugular vein of empire,” and those distinctively modern technologies once represented by the operations of the Royal Dockyard in Deptford that have been so beautifully recaptured for us in the luminous work of the activist historian Peter Linebaugh.

Anthropology and geography are usually understood as the terminal points of the cognitive aspects of this social and cultural revolution but its effects were

not confined to these new disciplinary perspectives. This large-scale historical change was given additional philosophical currency by the notion that character and talent could be distinguished unevenly and had been distributed along national and racial lines. These ideas are powerfully articulated in important texts like Kant’s *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* and “On the different races of man” that are too little read these days because they are deemed to embarrass or even compromise the worthy democratic aspirations to which the critical Kant also gave expression. It is noteworthy that, when it comes to specifying what he calls “the distinctiveness of races in general” Kant’s critical insight ebbs away: “The reason for assuming the Negroes and Whites to be fundamental races is self-evident” (1950: 19). Before we judge Kant too harshly we should recall that the view of national characteristics of this country which he derived from the seafarers of Koenigsberg has an interesting contemporary resonance:

For his own countrymen the Englishman establishes great benevolent institutions unheard of among all other peoples. But the foreigner who has been driven to England’s shores by fate, and has fallen into dire need, will be left to die on the dunghill because he is not an Englishman, that is not a human being.

(Kant 1978: 230)

Kant is the first theorist rather than taxonomist of “race.” His prolific writings show how raciology requires that enlightenment and myth are intertwined. Indeed, “race” and nationality supply the logic and mechanism of their interconnection. This complex tale deserves to be reconstructed in a more detailed manner than this occasion permits. It matters to me not only because it suggests the integral significance of “race” in the constitution of modernity, but also because it points towards the ways that raciology became linked to statecraft and modern political theory annexed by the exigencies of imperial power in its emergent phase.

Richard Wright, the first black writer I found who used the word modernity as part of his critical commentary, the philosopher Berel Lang and, from contrasting political standpoints, Aimé Césaire and Hannah Arendt have contributed much to my own

grasp of these problems. All of them have something important to say about the complex and delicate historical processes that culminated in the order of the nation that is also a state. This was a new pattern of power that re-wrote the rules of political and ethical conduct according to novel principles opposed to ancient notions of political rationality, self-possession and citizenship.

Though these resources should not be disposed of lightly, my real point of departure tonight is the heretical notion that modernity's new political codes must also be acknowledged as having been deeply compromised by the raciological drives that partly formed them and which endowed their exciting universal promises with a deadly exclusionary force. Perhaps, without sounding overly defensive, I can identify Adorno's insightful remarks on the value of heresy as a guiding thread for my own wanderings in the labyrinth of "race" politics. "Through violations of the orthodoxy of thought, something in the object becomes visible which it is orthodoxy's secret and objective aim to keep invisible" (Adorno 1993: 23).

I hope it is not too obvious to point out that the ideal of humanity, too narrowly defined, emerged from this revolution in thinking in filleted form. It was not only something to be monopolized by Europeans, it could exist only in neatly bounded, integral units. The national principle that rationalized this peculiar notion was founded, as Claude Lefort has pointed out, on the idea of "the people as one" which would later put hinges on the doorway into totalitarian possibilities. It denied "that division is constitutive of society." It accentuated the interchangeability and disposability of the nation's members—its population. In time, they would also be discovered to exist in the strict organic patterns of a natural hierarchy that continued and extended the pre-modern typologies of race thinking in the direction of a totalizing bio-social science.

By this point, as numerous scholars have observed, "race" would be secure as a central philosophical, economic and historical concept. In some national traditions, it summoned up a political ontology so fundamental that it could supply unsentimental form and ruthless logic to the unfolding of history itself (Connerton 1983: 110). History with a capital letter was reconceptualized in geographical

and geo-political designs. Inferior, no longer merely different, races were excluded from its compass. Their exclusion by means of racialized rationality had the clearest implications for the folly of imagining human beings to be an essentially undifferentiated collectivity. Hegel understood the implications of this point when, in his geographical theory of history, he wrote these words: "The peculiarly African character is difficult to comprehend, for the very reason that in reference to it we must give up the principle which naturally accompanies all *our* ideas—the category of universality" (Hegel 1900: 93). There it is, his own symptomatic apprehension that raciology cut the modern political imaginary to the core. This primal ontology of "race" would become so powerful that the necessarily unnatural world of formal politics could only seem trivial and insubstantial by comparison. In *The Black Atlantic* (1993), I have tried to show that it can be answered by a primal, counter-history of modernity that takes the lives of slaves and their descendants as a privileged point of departure.

The racialization of the nation state and the consequent transformation of the national community involved a comprehensive negation and repudiation of politics as it had been practised in the past. Of course, the effects of this were not confined to the victims of raciology, who had, in any case, been deterred from cultivating or exercising themselves in any polity. I want to emphasize that it had important consequences for the beneficiaries of this new hierarchy as well. As we saw with Kant earlier, their consciousness was, as Fanon might have put it, amputated at this point. In many cases, they were offered an ideology of superiority, the glamour of whiteness, or Aryan-ness for example, as a form of compensation for the loss of that universal humanity. It bears repetition that the elaboration of raciology was toxic to the workings of politics, of political *culture*. Today, surveying its development affords a good means to observe the transformation of the nation into a new type of collective body, integrated spiritually as well as politically.

The spiritual, mystical and irrational aspects that gain in power under the constellation of raciology should not be underplayed in relation to the rational components in its anthropological and geographical schemes. Especially when closely bound to the

workings of imperial nations, the concept of “race” can be appreciated as a successor to what Voegelin calls previous “body ideas”—the Greek polis and the idea of the mystical body of the Christian church. Right at the summit of imperial power, the nation was invested with characteristics associated with an equivalent type of bio-cultural kinship. The integrity of properly historic nations was imagined to derive from the activities of ancient sylvan tribes (MacDougall 1982). The damage done by these ideas is visible from Croatia to Canning Town.

I want to call the national and racial formations that resulted “camps,” a name that emphasizes their hierarchical and regimented qualities rather than any organic features. The organic dimension has been widely commented upon as an antidote it supplied to mechanized modernity and its dehumanizing effects. In some cases, the final stages in the transformation of the nation into an embattled camp coincides with the rise of fascism as a distinctive political and cultural technology. However, I want to suggest that these developments have a wider currency. They are not adequately grasped if they are reduced too swiftly to an argument about the components of fascism as a generic phenomenon. I propose that we see them instead as associated with the perils and possibilities of modernity at a certain point in its unfolding. They communicate not only the entrance of “race” into the operations of modern political culture but also the confluence of “race” and nation in the service of authoritarian ends. It should be immediately apparent that nation states have often comprised camps in this straightforward descriptive sense. They are involuntarily complexes in which the utterly fantastic idea of transmuting heterogeneity into homogeneity can be organized and amplified outwards and inwards.

Especially where “race” and nation become closely articulated, with each register of discourse conferring important legitimation on the other, the national principle can be recognized as forming an important bond between different and even opposing nationalisms that can become trapped in an embrace of mutual parasitism. The dominant varieties are bound to the subordinate by their shared notions of what nationality entails. Think, for example, of the recent history of Chief Buthelezi’s Inkatha Party, the strange

ultra-nationalist alliances constructed in the cause of Holocaust denial or, even closer to home, of the connections made during the late 1980s between “third positionists” in the British National Front and the Nation of Islam in the USA.

What we can call camp thinking has distinctive rules and codes. However bitterly its practitioners may conflict with each other, their common approach to the problems of belonging and collective solidarity is betrayed by shared patterns for organizing thought about self and other, about the institution of collectivities to which one can be compelled to belong. That unexpected connection between sworn foes defines one axis of “race” politics in the twentieth century. What might be more properly termed the (anti) politics of “race” is deeply implicated in the institution of the camp and the emergence of national statecraft as an alternative to more traditional conceptions of politics. Politics is thus reconceptualized and reconstituted in a dualistic conflict between friends and enemies. At worst, citizenship becomes soldiery alone and the political imaginary is comprehensively militarized. The exaltation of war and spontaneity, the cults of youth and violence, the explicitly anti-modern sacralization of the political sphere, its colonization by the civil religion of nationalism: uniforms, flags and mass spectacles, all underline that what I call camps are fundamentally militaristic phenomena. These camps are armed and protected spaces that offer, at best, only a temporary break in unforgiving motion towards the next demanding phase of active conflict.

Marx and Engels appropriated this conception of solidarity in opposition to nation states when, at the start of *The Communist Manifesto*, they described the world they saw progressively divided “into two great hostile camps . . . facing each other” and aspired to break the allegiance of their universal class to its national bourgeoisies (1973: 68). They believed that antagonistic social forces more profound than those of the nation were constituted in this distinctive arrangement. It would be foolish to deny that the internal organization of class consciousness and class struggle can also foster what Alexander Kluge and Oscar Negt, in their discussion of the history of the proletarian public sphere, call a “camp mentality” (1993). Kluge’s and Negt’s concerns differ from mine in that they are

directed towards histories of class and party as sources of camp thinking. They contrast the oppositional but nonetheless antidemocratic moods fostered in the sealed-off space of the class-based camp with the open vitality that a public culture can accumulate even in the most beleaguered circumstances.

It should be obvious that camp solidarity can be constituted and fortified around dimensions of division, apart from class, especially when the resources of communicative technology—print, radio, film and now digital media—mediate solidarity-building. However, the camp mentalities constituted by appeals to “race” nation and ethnic difference, by the lore of blood, bodies and fantasies of absolute cultural identity, have some distinctive qualities. They revive a simple, pre-bourgeois homology between the state and the body and gain great authority through appeals to the ideal of purity which is accorded an inflated value. Their bio-political potency immediately raises questions of prophylaxis and hygiene: “as if the [social] body had to assure itself of its own identity by expelling waste matter” (Lefort 1986: 298). They demand the regulation of fertility as readily as they command the labour power of affiliates. Where the nation is a kin group supposedly composed of symmetrical and interchangeable family groups, the bodies of women are the favoured testing grounds for the principles of obligation, deference and duty that the camp demands. The debates about immigration and nationality that dominated British racial politics until quite recently have regularly presented the illegitimate presence of blacks as an invasion. They could also be used to illustrate each of these unsavoury features.

The camp mentality is also betrayed by its crude theories of culture and defined by the aspirations towards homogeneity, purity and unanimity that it nurtures. These words from James Callaghan’s Home Office bi-centenary lecture from 1982 have stayed in my mind since I first encountered them while writing *There Ain’t No Black*: “whatever their politics, Home Secretaries sprang from the same culture, a culture it was their duty to preserve if the country was to remain a good place to live in” (Gilroy 1987). Inside the fortifications of the national camp, culture is required to assume an artificial texture and an impossibly even consistency. Encampment puts an end to any sense

of its development. Culture as process is arrested. Petrified and sterile, it is impoverished by a national obligation not to change but to recycle the past in essentially unmodified form.

In his unwholesome nineteenth-century raciological enquiries into the meaning of nationality, Ernst Renan argued that there was an active contradiction between the demands of nation building and those of historical study. The nation and its new temporal order involved, for him, socialized forms of forgetting and historical error. These can be identified as further symptoms of the camp mentality. An orchestrated and enforced amnesia supplies the climate in which the national camp’s principles of belonging and solidarity become attractive and powerful.

The idea of diaspora becomes significant here. I have used it to conjure up an altogether different cultural ecology. It introduces the possibility of an historical and experiential rift between the location of residence and the location of belonging. Diaspora demands the recognition of intercultural. The complex and ambivalent identifications it promotes exist outside and sometimes in opposition to the political forms and codes of modern citizenship in its debased, camp form. The national encampment has regularly been presented as the institutional means to terminate diaspora dispersal. At one end of the communicative circuit this is to be accomplished by the assimilation of those who are out of place. At the other, a similar outcome is realized through the prospect of building a bigger and better camp in the place of origin. The fundamental equilibrium of natural nationality and civil society can thus be restored. In both options, it is the operation of an encamped nation-state that brings diaspora time to an end. Diaspora yearning and ambivalence are transformed into a simple unambiguous exile once the possibility of easy reconciliation with either the place of sojourn or the place of origin exists.

The national camp also represents the negation of diaspora because the latter places a premium on commemorative work. In diaspora culture has to be remembered and remade. Its determining powers cannot just be assumed to govern the reproduction of monolithic identity. The diaspora opposes the camp where it becomes comfortable in the in-between locations that camp thinking deprives of any significance.

For the members of the ethnic, national or racial camp, chronic conflict, a war in the background, latent as well as manifest hostility sanction some stern patterns of discipline, authority and deference. The camp operates under martial rules. Even if its ideologues speak the language of organic wholeness, it is stubbornly a place of mechanical solidarity. As it moves towards the totalitarian condition of permanent emergency, the camp is overdetermined by the terrifying sense that anything is possible.

Deliberately adopting a position between camps of this sort is not a sign of indecision or equivocation. It is a timely choice and it can, as I hope the diaspora example makes clear, be a positive if limited gesture against the patterns of authority, government and conflict that characterize raciological modernity's geometry of power. It can also yield richer theoretical understanding of culture as a travelling phenomenon.

Of course, occupying a space between camps means also that you are in danger of getting hostility from both sides, of being caught in the pincers of camp thinking. Responding to this perilous predicament involves re-thinking the practice of politics. We are immediately required to move outside the frustratingly simple binary categories we have inherited: left and right, racist and anti-racist. We need a political analysis that is alive to the fluidity and contingency of a situation that seems to lack precedents. The ultranationalists huddle together in cyberspace. The *Daily Mail* and the prime minister loudly join the family of Stephen Lawrence in the pursuit of justice. Diane Abbott MP acts the part of Alf Garnett in a local struggle against foreign nurses. Black and white boys in East London band together in the name of locality against alien Bengalis. We could say, in the interests of simplicity, that this is a political climate in which the prefix in words like postmodernity and post-traditional has begun to assert its presence. Whether we fasten on to the idea of postmodernity as something more than a provisional element in the enumeration of these novelties cannot be settled here, but the debate which that question raises is still useful.

If we are going to be able to operate in these new circumstances, it helps to approach the problem of camps from another angle. We must understand them not only as a means to comprehend the interrelation

of space, identity and power with modern raciology but as sociological and historical features of a period in which that same raciology has constituted the most profound challenge to the deepest values of Occidental modernity.

I have already identified camps as locations in which particular versions of solidarity, belonging, kinship and identity have been devised, practised and policed. Now I want to turn away from the camp as a *metaphor* for the modern pathologies of "race" and nation and move towards a brief reflection upon actually existing camps. These were and are concrete institutions of radical evil, useless suffering and modern misery rather than odious if somehow routine expressions of the bad habits of power. To identify a connection between these different kinds of camp—in effect, to specify links between normal racism and nationalism and the exceptional state represented by genocidal fascisms—may be regarded as oversimple, even far-fetched. In recent British history, nationalism has sometimes been part of the best populist responses to menacing neofascisms that have been exposed as alien and unpatriotic. I endeavoured to answer arguments of that sort in *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*.

Tonight, I want to invoke a somewhat different case for that fateful linkage. This case is supported by the profane and bewildering tangles of recent post-colonial and post-imperial history. It was a case that, as the Martiniquean surrealist poet, philosopher and statesman Aimé Césaire has made clear, went to the bottom of the relationship between modern civilization and modern barbarism. The general message is certainly confirmed in the history of Rwanda where, in conjunction with modern cultural technologies and the civilizing mission of colonial power, raciology hardened pre-colonial conflicts into fully fledged neo-colonial ethnic absolutism. There too the emergence of camp thinking, camp nationality and encamped ethnicity—the key features of the first kind of camp—have been implicated in the institution of camps of the second variety: first, genocidal death camps and then, bewilderingly, refugee camps in which yesterday's killers become today's victims and reach out to us to seek aid and compassion.

Understanding these connections entails more than seeing these camps as epiphanies of catastrophic

modernity and focusing on the colonial precedents for the genocidal killing that has happened within Europe. It necessitates recognizing our own predicament, caught not only between metaphorical camps but amid the uncertainties and anxieties that real camps both feed on and create. We are not inmates but their testimony calls out to us and we must answer it. Their moral claims might provide important reorientation in a world to which traditional moralities now say next to nothing. This prospect also means being alive to the camps out there now and the camps around the corner, the camps that are being prepared. With his own version of misanthropic humanism in mind, Zygmunt Bauman has suggested that our unstable time could, one day, be remembered as the Age of Camps. Camps are confirmation of the fact that cruelty has itself been modernized, sundered even from outmoded modern morality. Bauman, for whom a reconfigured humanism is neither explicitly post-anthropological nor post-colonial, makes no secret of his Europe-centredness. He has Auschwitz and the Gulag in mind rather than Kigali and Kisangani. I think that weakens his case but there is something valuable and eminently translatable in his polemical observation, especially if it does not prompt simplistic speculation about some easily accessible essence of modernity. In moving towards a different goal, I want to acknowledge the grave dangers that are involved in instrumentalizing extremity. However, I am going to set those important inhibitions cautiously aside in pursuit of a different role for the critical intellectual that is premised upon the way that the camps rupture modernity and constitute significant points of entry into an ethical and cultural climate associated with the repudiation of its more extravagant though nonetheless colour-coded promises. Adorno's acute sense of the unhappy obligations that these novel circumstances placed upon the committed artist have a wider applicability and should be studied carefully by the committed academic lest "political reality is sold short for the sake of political commitment; that decreases the political impact as well" (Adorno 1992: 88–9).

I want to take the risk of identifying those camps: refugee camps, labour camps, punishment camps, concentration camps, even death camps, as providing opportunities for moral and political reflection in the careful sense described by the philosopher Stuart

Hampshire who employs an explicit consideration of Nazism as a means to refine his understanding of justice (Hampshire 1989: 66–72). Other writers, particularly the German sociologist of the concentration camps Wolfgang Sofsky and the Ugandan political philosopher Mahmood Mamdani who adapted the concept of fascism in his analysis of the Amin regime, have guided and inspired me.

To link together the very different historical examples to which this diverse body of work is addressed is already to have transgressed against the prescriptive uniqueness invoked to protect the special status of the Nazi genocide. Without being drawn deeply into the question of what, if anything, constitutes a common denominator at an experiential level, we can observe that the camp and its extreme wrongs have been strongly associated with the demand for justice and with important attempts to clarify the normal moral and historical order of modernity where the state of emergency has become an everyday reality. A condition of social death is common to inmates in regimes of unfreedom, coercion and systematic brutality. If genocide is not already under way, modern racilogies bring it closer and promote it as a rational solution. It is "race," to borrow some terms from Primo Levi, which explains how the outrage motive triumphs over modernity's signature: the profit motive. The death factory is not itself a camp—its inmates are not alive long enough. But camps gain something from their proximity to the death factory. Tadeusz Borowski's work springs to mind as our most vivid exploration of the articulation of the camp and the death factory. We can proceed heuristically by arguing that the camp is not always a death factory though it can easily become one and that the death factory is one possible variation on the patterns of rational administration that the camp initialises. The procedures of the death factory might also be thought of as partially derivative of the camps that preceded them in Europe and outside it. The definitive statement of this argument is found, of course, in Césaire's angry and moving indictment of the West's inability to live a humanism "made to the measure of the world" in his *Discourse on Colonialism*.

I have already hinted that the second type of camp is especially important to me because it has provided some stern tests for the critical intellectual.

Jean Améry, Primo Levi's most profound, though not his most unsettling, interlocutor—that title is reserved for Borowski—describes the shock of discovering the redundancy of his own egg-head learning in the camp where, without technical or practical skills and religious certainties, intellectuals were less well equipped and more vulnerable than many of their fellows.

Not only was rational-analytic thinking in the camp and, particularly in Auschwitz of no help, but it led straight into a tragic dialectic of self-destruction. . . . First of all the intellectual did not so easily acknowledge the unimaginable conditions as a given fact as did the nonintellectual. Long practice in questioning the phenomena of everyday reality prevented him from simply adjusting to the realities of the camp, because these stood in all-too-sharp a contrast to every-thing that he had regarded until then as possible and humanly acceptable.

(Améry 1980: 10)

It is interesting too that Améry was driven to discover the power of even limited counter-violence in the restoration of the human dignity of which he had been deprived. He points to another of those resonant connections which produces hesitation, shuffling and embarrassed silences. In these circumstances, it should be noted, his body did not spontaneously manifest the absolute truths of its "racial" otherness. His words are all the more notable because they make no concessions to the veracity of racial difference coded into the body by nature rather than human endeavour:

Painfully beaten, I was satisfied with myself. But not, as one might think, for reasons of courage and honor, but only because I had grasped well that there are situations in life in which our body is our entire self and our entire fate. I was my body and nothing else: in hunger, in the blow that I suffered, in the blow that I dealt. My body, debilitated and crusted with filth, was my calamity. My body, when it tensed to strike, was my physical and metaphysical dignity. In situations like mine, physical violence is the sole means for restoring a disjointed personality. In the punch I was myself—for myself and for my opponent. What I later read in Frantz Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre*, in a theoretical analysis of the behaviour of colonised peoples, I anticipated back then when I gave concrete

form to my dignity by punching a human face. To be a Jew meant the acceptance of the death sentence imposed by the world as a world verdict. To flee before it by withdrawing into oneself would have been nothing but a disgrace, whereas acceptance was simultaneously the physical revolt against it. I became a person not by subjectively appealing to my abstract humanity but by discovering myself within the given social reality as a rebelling Jew and by realising myself as one.

(Améry 1980: 90–1)

His extraordinary account of his experiences in Auschwitz Monowitz and a number of other camps might be provocatively placed alongside the reflections of Léopold Sédar Senghor. The Senegalese poet, philosopher statesman and influential theorist of Négritude was confined in the prison camp Frontstalag 230 with other colonial troops drawn from very different social backgrounds from his own élite formation. Saved from a racist massacre that took the lives of his fellow colonials by the intervention of a French officer, Senghor sought comfort in the songs, poems and stories of his fellow Africans but also in the classic works of European philosophy and literature. This did not redeem the camp, but it does help him to reconstitute his sense of humanity out of absolutism's reach but still under its nose. He describes how his reading—particularly of Goethe—triggered a "veritable conversion" that enabled him to live with the complex transcultural patterns of his own hybrid mentality and to see that inter-mixture as something more than the loss and betrayal we are always told it must be. His comprehension of the relationship between the particular and the universal was thus transformed along with his understanding of the project Négritude itself. In one essay, "Goethe's message to the new Negroes" he describes how, standing at the camp's barbed wire, he arrived at these important insights under the uncomprehending gaze of a Nazi sentinel:

I had been in the camp for "colonial" prisoners of war for one year. . . . My progress in German had at last enabled me to read Goethe's poetry in the original. . . . The defeat of France and of the West in 1940 had, at first, stupefied black intellectuals. We soon awoke under the sting of the catastrophe naked and sober. . . . It is thus, I thought close to the barbed wire

of the camp, that our most incarnate voice, our most Negro works would be at the same time our most human . . . and the Nazi sentry looked me up and down with an imbecilic air. And I smiled at him, and he didn't understand.

Strange meeting, significant lesson.

(Senghor 1964: 84–6, my translation)

These are only tiny examples. Many more could be drawn from the brave and strange lives of other, perhaps lesser known, black witnesses to European barbarity. Their complex consciousness of the dangers of camp thinking and good understanding of the anti-toxins that can be discovered and celebrated in crossing cultures provide important resources which today's post-colonial peoples will require if we are to weather the storms that lie ahead as we leave the century of the colour line. The need to find responses to globalization has stimulated some new and even more desperate varieties of camp thinking.

One of the many important things that examples drawn from the generation that faced European fascism can communicate today is an invitation to contemplate the precarious nature of our own political environments. Reflecting on the brutal context in which these testimonies were first uttered and thinking about the institutional patterns that fitted around them makes it easier to grasp that we inhabit a precious but nonetheless beleaguered niche in what used to be, but is no longer, a state of emergency. Modernity's limited triumphs are besieged. As democracy, as creativity and as cosmopolitan hope, they are pitted

against a moribund system of formal politics and its numbing representational codes; against the corrosive values of economic rationality and the abjection of post-industrial urban life. The persistence of fascism and the widespread mimicry of its styles is only the most alarming sign that the best of modernity is assailed from all sides by political movements and technological forces that work towards the erasure of ethical considerations and the deadening of aesthetic sensibilities. The resurgent power of racist and racializing language, of raciology in its new genomic form, is a strong link between the perils of our own time and the enduring effects of the past horrors that continue to haunt us in Europe.

Modernity is on trial and fascism is on hold. We must debate the value of the term postmodernity as an interpretative device turned towards these novel conditions. However that problem is resolved, the camp experiences I have recovered and briefly commemorated are addressed to it, if only because they promote a reflexive, untrusting perspective towards the truth claims made by modernity's complacent advocates as well as its sworn foes and their latter-day inheritors. We must claim that legacy now. It helps to appreciate that the achievements of modernity are in continual jeopardy but it might be even more important to be able to welcome their incomplete and suspended state as a further source of insight and moral inspiration. Perhaps it is possible to recognize in that vulnerable condition a new sense of moral agency and the stirrings of an appropriate response to the wrongs that raciology has sanctioned in the "age of camps"?

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51. ETHNICITY WITHOUT GROUPS

Rogers Brubaker (b. 1956) is currently a professor of sociology at UCLA, and was recently elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Previously, he was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship (popularly known as the “Genius Award”). While his early publications focused on the theme of rationality in the thought of Max Weber and on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, his more recent focus has been on ethnicity, nationalism, and citizenship. His book on *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (1992) provided a model for exploring different citizenship regimes by contrasting France’s civic nationalism to Germany’s ethnic nationalism and exploring the implications of these differences for immigrants seeking to become naturalized citizens. Most recently, he coauthored *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town* (2006), which offers a richly detailed account of the significance of ethnicity in the city of Cluj, Romania. He has also written a number of articles that attempt to clarify theoretical issues associated with ethnic and immigration studies, including assimilation, diaspora, identity, and ethnicity. “Ethnicity Without Groups,” first published in 2002, has quickly become a widely cited article, one that takes aim at the essentializing and homogenizing tendency that treats ethnicity as a “thing” in much that is published in ethnic studies and seeks to offer as a corrective a perspective that stresses ethnicity’s “relational, processual, and dynamic” character.

I. COMMON SENSE GROUPLISM

Few social science concepts would seem as basic, even indispensable, as that of group. In disciplinary terms, “group” would appear to be a core concept for sociology, political science, anthropology, demography and social psychology. In substantive terms, it would seem to be fundamental to the study of political mobilization, cultural identity, economic interests, social class, status groups, collective action, kinship, gender, religion, ethnicity, race, multiculturalism, and minorities of every kind.

Yet despite this seeming centrality, the concept “group” has remained curiously unscrutinized in recent years. There is, to be sure, a substantial social psychological literature addressing the concept (Hamilton *et al.* 1998, McGrath 1984), but this has had little

resonance outside that sub-discipline. Elsewhere in the social sciences, the recent literature addressing the concept “group” is sparse, especially by comparison with the immense literature on such concepts as class, identity, gender, ethnicity, or multiculturalism—topics in which the concept “group” is implicated, yet seldom analyzed in its own terms.¹ “Group” functions as a seemingly unproblematic, taken-for-granted concept, apparently in no need of particular scrutiny or explication. As a result, we tend to take for granted not only the concept “group” but also “groups”—the putative things-in-the-world to which the concept refers.

My aim in this paper is not to enter into conceptual or definitional casuistry about the concept of group. It is rather to address one problematic consequence of this tendency to take groups for granted in

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the study of ethnicity, race and nationhood, and in the study of ethnic, racial and national conflict in particular. This is what I will call groupism: the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis.² In the domain of ethnicity, nationalism and race, I mean by “groupism” the tendency to treat ethnic groups, nations and races as substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed. I mean the tendency to reify such groups, speaking of Serbs, Croats, Muslims and Albanians in the former Yugoslavia, of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, of Jews and Palestinians in Israel and the occupied territories, of Turks and Kurds in Turkey, or of Blacks, Whites, Asians, Hispanics and Native Americans in the United States as if they were internally homogeneous, externally bounded groups, even unitary collective actors with common purposes. I mean the tendency to represent the social and cultural world as a multichrome mosaic of monochrome ethnic, racial or cultural blocs.

From the perspective of broader developments in social theory, the persisting strength of groupism in this sense is surprising. After all, several distinct traditions of social analysis have challenged the treatment of groups as real, substantial things-in-the-world. These include such sharply differing enterprises as ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, social network theory, cognitive theory, feminist theory, and individualist approaches such as rational choice and game theory. More generally, broadly structuralist approaches have yielded to a variety of more “constructivist” theoretical stances, which tend—at the level of rhetoric, at least—to see groups as constructed, contingent, and fluctuating. And a diffuse postmodernist sensibility emphasizes the fragmentary, the ephemeral, and the erosion of fixed forms and clear boundaries. These developments are disparate, even contradictory in analytical style, methodological orientation and epistemological commitments. Network theory, with its methodological (and sometimes ontological) relationalism (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Wellman 1988) is opposed to rational choice theory, with its methodological (and sometimes ontological) individualism; both are sharply and similarly opposed, in

analytical style and epistemological commitments, to postmodernist approaches. Yet these and other developments have converged in problematizing groupness and undermining axioms of stable group being.

Challenges to “groupism” however, have been uneven. They have been striking—to take just one example—in the study of class, especially in the study of the working class, a term that is hard to use today without quotation marks or some other distancing device. Yet ethnic groups continue to be understood as entities and cast as actors. To be sure, constructivist approaches of one kind or another are now dominant in academic discussions of ethnicity. Yet everyday talk, policy analysis, media reports, and even much ostensibly constructivist academic writing routinely frame accounts of ethnic, racial and national conflict in groupist terms as the struggles “of” ethnic groups, races, and nations.³ Somehow, when we talk about ethnicity, and even more so when we talk about ethnic conflict, we almost automatically find ourselves talking about ethnic groups.

Now it might be asked: “What’s wrong with this?” After all, it seems to be mere common sense to treat ethnic struggles as the struggles of ethnic groups, and ethnic conflict as conflict between such groups. I agree that this is the—or at least a—common-sense view of the matter. But we cannot rely on common sense here. Ethnic common sense—the tendency to partition the social world into putatively deeply constituted, quasi-natural intrinsic kinds (Hirschfeld 1996)—is a key part of what we want to explain, not what we want to explain things *with*; it belongs to our empirical data, not to our analytical toolkit.⁴ Cognitive anthropologists and social psychologists have accumulated a good deal of evidence about common-sense ways of carving up the social world—about what Lawrence Hirschfeld (1996) has called “folk sociologies.” The evidence suggests that some common sense social categories—and notably common sense ethnic and racial categories—tend to be essentializing and naturalizing (Rothbart and Taylor 1992; Hirschfeld 1996; Gil White 1999). They are the vehicles of what has been called a “participants’ primordialism” (Smith 1998: 158) or a “psychological essentialism” (Medin 1989). We obviously cannot ignore such common sense primordialism. But that does not mean we should simply replicate it in

our scholarly analyses or policy assessments. As “analysts of naturalizers,” we need not be “analytic naturalizers” (Gil-White 1999: 803).

Instead, we need to break with vernacular categories and common sense understandings. We need to break, for example, with the seemingly obvious and uncontroversial point that ethnic conflict involves conflict between ethnic groups. I want to suggest that ethnic conflict—or what might better be called ethnicized or ethnically framed conflict—need not, and should not, be understood as conflict *between ethnic groups*, just as racial or racially framed conflict need not be understood as conflict between *rac*es, or nationally framed conflict as conflict between *nations*.

Participants, of course, regularly do represent ethnic, racial and national conflict in such groupist, even primordialist terms. They often cast ethnic groups, races or nations as the protagonists—the heroes and martyrs—of such struggles. But this is no warrant for analysts to do so. We must, of course, take vernacular categories and participants’ understandings seriously, for they are partly constitutive of our objects of study. But we should not uncritically adopt *categories of ethnopolitical practice* as our *categories of social analysis*. Apart from the general unreliability of ethnic common sense as a guide for social analysis, we should remember that participants’ accounts—especially those of specialists in ethnicity such as ethnopolitical entrepreneurs, who, unlike nonspecialists, may live “off” as well as “for” ethnicity—often have what Pierre Bourdieu has called a *performative* character. By *invoking* groups, they seek to *evoke* them, summon them, call them into being. Their categories are *for doing*—designed to stir, summon, justify, mobilize, kindle and energize. By reifying groups, by treating them as substantial things-in-the-world, ethnopolitical entrepreneurs may, as Bourdieu notes, “contribute to producing what they apparently describe or designate” (1991a: 220).⁵

Reification is a social process, not simply an intellectual bad habit. As a social process, it is central to the *practice* of politicized ethnicity. And appropriately so. To criticize ethnopolitical entrepreneurs for reifying ethnic groups would be a kind of category mistake. Reifying groups is precisely what ethnopolitical entrepreneurs are in the business of doing. When they are

successful, the political fiction of the unified group can be momentarily yet powerfully realized in practice. As analysts, we should certainly try to *account* for the ways in which—and conditions under which—this practice of reification, this powerful crystallization of group feeling, can work. This may be one of the most important tasks of the theory of ethnic conflict. But we should avoid unintentionally *doubling* or *reinforcing* the reification of ethnic groups in ethnopolitical practice with a reification of such groups in social analysis.

II. BEYOND GROUPISM

How, then, are we to understand ethnic conflict, if not in common sense terms as conflict between ethnic groups? And how can we go beyond groupism? Here I sketch eight basic points and then, in the next section, draw out some implications of them. In the final section, I illustrate the argument by considering one empirical case.

RETHINKING ETHNICITY

We need to rethink not only ethnic conflict, but also what we mean by ethnicity itself. This is not a matter of seeking agreement on a definition. The intricate and ever-recommencing definitional casuistry in studies of ethnicity, race and nationalism has done little to advance the discussion, and indeed can be viewed as a symptom of the non-cumulative nature of research in the field. It is rather a matter of critically scrutinizing our conceptual tools. Ethnicity, race and nation should be conceptualized not as substances or things or entities or organisms or collective individuals—as the imagery of discrete, concrete, tangible, bounded and enduring “groups” encourages us to do—but rather in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful and disaggregated terms. This means thinking of ethnicity, race and nation not in terms of substantial groups or entities but in terms of *practical categories, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines, institutional forms, political projects and contingent events*. It means thinking of *ethnicization, racialization and nationalization* as political, social, cultural and psychological *processes*. And it means taking as a basic analytical category not the “group” as an entity but *groupness* as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable. Stated

baldly in this fashion, these are of course mere slogans; I will try to fill them out a bit in what follows.

THE REALITY OF ETHNICITY

To rethink ethnicity, race and nationhood along these lines is in no way to dispute their reality, minimize their power or discount their significance; it is to construe their reality, power and significance in a different way. Understanding the reality of race, for example, does not require us to posit the existence of races. Racial idioms, ideologies, narratives, categories and systems of classification and racialized ways of seeing, thinking, talking and framing claims are real and consequential, especially when they are embedded in powerful organizations. But the reality of race—and even its overwhelming coercive power in some settings—does not depend on the existence of “races.” Similarly, the reality of ethnicity and nationhood—and the overriding power of ethnic and national identifications in some settings—does not depend on the existence of ethnic groups or nations as substantial groups or entities.

GROUPNESS AS EVENT

Shifting attention from groups to groupness and treating groupness as variable and contingent rather than fixed and given,⁶ allows us to take account of—and, potentially, to account for—phases of extraordinary cohesion and moments of intensely felt collective solidarity, without implicitly treating high levels of groupness as constant, enduring or definitionally present. It allows us to treat groupness as an *event*, as something that “happens,” as E. P. Thompson famously said about class. At the same time, it keeps us analytically attuned to the possibility that groupness may *not* happen, that high levels of groupness may *fail* to crystallize, despite the group-making efforts of ethnopolitical entrepreneurs and even in situations of intense elite-level ethnopolitical conflict. Being analytically attuned to “negative” instances in this way enlarges the domain of relevant cases and helps correct for the bias in the literature toward the study of striking instances of high groupness, successful mobilization or conspicuous violence—a bias that can engender an “overethnicized” view of the social world, a distorted

representation of whole world regions as “seething cauldrons” of ethnic tension (Brubaker 1998) and an overestimation of the incidence of ethnic violence (Fearon and Laitin 1996). Sensitivity to such negative instances can also direct potentially fruitful analytical attention toward the problem of explaining failed efforts at ethnopolitical mobilization.

GROUPS AND CATEGORIES

Much talk about ethnic, racial or national groups is obscured by the failure to distinguish between groups and categories. If by “group” we mean a mutually interacting, mutually recognizing, mutually oriented, effectively communicating, bounded collectivity with a sense of solidarity, corporate identity and capacity for concerted action, or even if we adopt a less exigent understanding of “group,” it should be clear that a category is not a group (Sacks 1995, I: 41, 401; Handelman 1977; McKay and Lewins 1978; Jenkins 1997: 53ff).⁷ It is at best a potential basis for group-formation or “groupness.”⁸

By distinguishing consistently between categories and groups, we can problematize—rather than presume—the relation between them. We can ask about the degree of groupness associated with a particular category in a particular setting and about the political, social, cultural and psychological processes through which categories get invested with groupness (Petersen 1987). We can ask how people—and organizations—*do things* with categories. This includes limiting access to scarce resources or particular domains of activity by excluding categorically distinguished outsiders (Weber 1968 [1922]: 43ff, 341ff; Barth 1969; Brubaker 1992; Tilly 1998), but it also includes more mundane actions such as identifying or classifying oneself or others (Levine 1999) or simply “doing being ethnic” in an ethnomethodological sense (Morman 1968). We can analyze the organizational and discursive careers of categories—the processes through which they become institutionalized and entrenched in administrative routines (Tilly 1998) and embedded in culturally powerful and symbolically resonant myths, memories and narratives (Armstrong 1982; Smith 1986). We can study the politics of categories, both from above and from below. From above, we can focus on the ways in which categories are proposed,

propagated, imposed, institutionalized, discursively articulated, organizationally entrenched and generally embedded in multifarious forms of “governmentality” (Noiriel 1991; Slezkine 1994; Brubaker 1994; Torpey 2000; Martin 2001). From below, we can study the “micropolitics” of categories, the ways in which the categorized appropriate, internalize, subvert, evade or transform the categories that are imposed on them (Dominguez 1986). And drawing on advances in cognitive research, ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, we can study the sociocognitive and interactional processes through which categories are used by individuals to make sense of the social world;⁹ linked to stereotypical beliefs and expectations about category members.¹⁰ invested with emotional associations and evaluative judgments; deployed as resources in specific interactional contexts; and activated by situational triggers or cues. A focus on categories, in short, can illuminate the multifarious ways in which ethnicity, race and nationhood can exist and “work” without the existence of ethnic groups as substantial entities. It can help us envision ethnicity without groups.

GROUP-MAKING AS PROJECT

If we treat groupness as a variable and distinguish between groups and categories, we can attend to the dynamics of *group-making* as a social, cultural and political project, aimed at transforming categories into groups or increasing levels of groupness (Bourdieu 1991a, 1991b). Sometimes this is done in quite a cynical fashion. Ethnic and other insurgencies, for example, often adopt what is called in French a *politique du pire*, a politics of seeking the worst outcome in the short run so as to bolster their legitimacy or improve their prospects in the longer run. When the small, ill-equipped, ragtag Kosovo Liberation Army stepped up its attacks on Serb policemen and other targets in early 1998, for example, this was done as a deliberate—and successful—strategy of provoking massive regime reprisals. As in many such situations, the brunt of the reprisals was borne by civilians. The cycle of attacks and counterattacks sharply increased groupness among both Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs, generated greater support for the KLA among both Kosovo and diaspora Albanians and bolstered KLA recruitment and funding. This enabled the KLA to mount a more

serious challenge to the regime, which in turn generated more brutal regime reprisals and so on. In this sense, group crystallization and polarization were the result of violence, not the cause (Brubaker 1999).

Of course, this group-making strategy employed in the late 1990s did not start from scratch. It had already begun with relatively high levels of groupness, a legacy of earlier phases of conflict. The propitious “raw materials” the KLA had to work with no doubt help explain the success of its strategy. Not all group-making projects succeed and those that do succeed (more or less) do so in part as a result of the cultural and psychological materials they have to work with. These materials include not only, or especially, “deep,” *longue-durée* cultural structures such as the *mythomoteurs* highlighted by Armstrong (1982) and Smith (1986), but also the moderately durable ways of thinking and feeling that represent “middle-range” legacies of historical experience and political action. Yet while such raw materials—themselves the product and precipitate of past struggles and predicaments—constrain and condition the possibilities for group-making in the present, there remains considerable scope for deliberate group-making strategies. Certain dramatic events, in particular, can serve to galvanize and crystallize a potential group, or to ratchet up pre-existing levels of groupness. This is why deliberate violence, undertaken as a strategy of provocation, often by a very small number of persons, can sometimes be an exceptionally effective strategy of group-making.

GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Although participants’ rhetoric and common sense accounts treat ethnic groups as the protagonists of ethnic conflict, in fact the chief protagonists of most ethnic conflict—and a fortiori of most ethnic violence—are not ethnic groups as such but various kinds of organizations, broadly understood and their empowered and authorized incumbents. These include states (or more broadly autonomous polities) and their organizational components such as particular ministries, offices, law enforcement agencies and armed forces units; they include terrorist groups, paramilitary organizations, armed bands and loosely structured gangs; and they include political parties, ethnic associations, social movement organizations, churches, newspapers,

radio and television stations and so on. Some of these organizations may represent themselves, or may be seen by others, as organizations of and for particular ethnic groups.¹¹ But even when this is the case, organizations cannot be equated with ethnic groups. It is because and insofar as they are organizations and possess certain material and organizational resources, that they (or more precisely their incumbents) are capable of organized action and thereby of acting as more or less coherent protagonists in ethnic conflict.¹² Although common sense and participants' rhetoric attribute discrete existence, boundedness, coherence, identity, interest and agency to ethnic groups, these attributes are in fact characteristic of organizations. The IRA, KLA and PKK claim to speak and act in the name of the (Catholic) Irish, the Kosovo Albanians and the Kurds; but surely analysts must differentiate between such organizations and the putatively homogeneous and bounded groups in whose name they claim to act. The point applies not only to military, paramilitary and terrorist organizations, of course, but to all organizations that claim to speak and act in the name of ethnic, racial or national groups (Heisler 1991).

A fuller and more rounded treatment of this theme, to be sure, would require several qualifications that I can only gesture at here. Conflict and violence vary in the degree to which, as well as the manner in which, organizations are involved. What Donald Horowitz (2001) has called the deadly ethnic riot, for example, differs sharply from organized ethnic insurgencies or terrorist campaigns. Although organizations (sometimes ephemeral ones) may play an important role in preparing, provoking and permitting such riots, much of the actual violence is committed by broader sets of participants acting in relatively spontaneous fashion and in starkly polarized situations characterized by high levels of groupness. Moreover, even where organizations are the core protagonists, they may depend on a penumbra of ancillary or supportive action on the part of sympathetic non-members. The "representativeness" of organizations—the degree to which an organization can justifiably claim to represent the will, express the interests and enjoy the active or passive support of its constituents—is enormously variable, not only between organizations, but also over time and across domains. In addition, while organizations

are ordinarily the *protagonists* of conflict and violence, they are not always the *objects* or *targets* of conflict and violence. Entire population categories—or putative groups—can be the objects of organized action, much more easily than they can be the subjects or undertakers of such action. Finally, even apart from situations of violence, ethnic conflict may be at least partly amorphous, carried out not by organizations as such but spontaneously by individuals through such everyday actions as shunning, insults, demands for deference or conformity, or withholdings of routine interactional tokens of acknowledgment or respect (Bailey 1997). Still, despite these qualifications, it is clear that organizations, not ethnic groups as such, are the chief protagonists of ethnic conflict and ethnic violence and that the relationship between organizations and the groups they claim to represent is often deeply ambiguous.

FRAMING AND CODING

If the protagonists of ethnic conflict cannot, in general, be considered ethnic groups, then what makes such conflict count as *ethnic* conflict?¹³ And what makes violence count as ethnic violence? Similar questions can be asked about racial and national conflict and violence. The answer cannot be found in the intrinsic properties of behavior. The "ethnic" quality of "ethnic violence" for example, is not intrinsic to violent conduct itself; it is attributed to instances of violent behavior by perpetrators, victims, politicians, officials, journalists, researchers, relief workers or others. Such acts of framing and narrative encoding do not simply *interpret* the violence; they *constitute* it as *ethnic*.

Framing may be a key mechanism through which groupness is constructed. The metaphor of framing was popularized by Goffman (1974), drawing on Bateson 1985 [1955]. The notion has been elaborated chiefly in the social movement literature (Snow *et al.* 1986; Snow and Benford 1988; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Gamson 1992; uniting rational choice and framing approaches, Esser 1999). When ethnic framing is successful, we may "see" conflict and violence not only in ethnic, but in groupist terms. Although such imputed groupness is the product of prevailing interpretive frames, not necessarily a measure of the groupness felt and experienced by the participants in an event, a compelling *ex post* interpretive framing

or encoding may exercise a powerful feedback effect, shaping subsequent experience and increasing levels of groupness. A great deal is at stake, then, in struggles over the interpretive framing and narrative encoding of conflict and violence.

Interpretive framing, of course, is often contested. Violence—and more generally, conflict—is regularly accompanied by social struggles to label, interpret and explain it. Such “metaconflicts” or “conflict[s] over the nature of the conflict,” as Donald Horowitz has called them (1991: 2), do not simply shadow conflicts from the outside, but are integral and consequential parts of the conflicts. To impose a label or prevailing interpretive frame—to cause an event to be seen as a “pogrom” or a “riot” or a “rebellion”—is no mere matter of external interpretation, but a constitutive act of social definition that can have important consequences (Brass 1996b). Social struggles over the proper coding and interpretation of conflict and violence are therefore important subjects of study in their own right (Brass 1996a, 1997, Abelman and Lie 1995).

Coding and framing practices are heavily influenced by prevailing interpretive frames. Today, ethnic and national frames are accessible and legitimate, suggesting themselves to actors and analysts alike. This generates a “coding bias” in the ethnic direction. And this, in turn, may lead us to overestimate the incidence of ethnic conflict and violence by unjustifiably seeing ethnicity everywhere at work (Bowen 1996). Actors may take advantage of this coding bias and of the generalized legitimacy of ethnic and national frames, by strategically using ethnic framing to mask the pursuit of clan, clique or class interests. The point here is not to suggest that clans, cliques or classes are somehow more real than ethnic groups, but simply to note the existence of structural and cultural incentives for strategic framing.

ETHNICITY AS COGNITION

These observations about the constitutive significance of coding and framing suggest a final point about the cognitive dimension of ethnicity.¹⁴ Ethnicity, race and nationhood exist only in and through our perceptions, interpretations, representations, categorizations and identifications. They are not things *in* the world, but perspectives *on* the world.¹⁵ These include ethnicized ways of seeing (and ignoring), of construing (and misconstruing), of inferring (and misinferring), of remembering (and forgetting). They include ethnically oriented frames, schemas and narratives and the situational cues that activate them, such as the ubiquitous televised images that have played such an important role in the latest intifada. They include systems of classification, categorization and identification, formal and informal. And they include the tacit, taken-for-granted background knowledge, embodied in persons and embedded in institutionalized routines and practices, through which people recognize and experience objects, places, persons, actions or situations as ethnically, racially or nationally marked or meaningful.

Cognitive perspectives, broadly understood, can help advance constructivist research on ethnicity, race and nationhood, which has stalled in recent years as it has grown complacent with success.¹⁶ Instead of simply asserting *that* ethnicity, race and nationhood are constructed, they can help specify *how* they are constructed. They can help specify how—and when—people identify themselves, perceive others, experience the world and interpret their predicaments in racial, ethnic or national rather than other terms. They can help specify how “groupness” can “crystallize” in some situations while remaining latent and merely potential in others. And they can help link macro-level outcomes with micro-level processes.

NOTES

1. Foundational discussions include Cooley 1962 [1909], chapter 3 and Homans 1950 in sociology; Nadel 1957, chapter 7 in anthropology; Bentley 1908, chapter 7 and Truman 1951 in political science. More recent discussions include Olson 1965, Tilly 1978 and Hechter 1987.
2. In this very general sense, groupism extends well beyond the domain of ethnicity, race and nationalism to include accounts of putative groups based on gender, sexuality, age, class, abledness, religion, minority status, and any kind of “culture”, as well as putative groups based on

combinations of these categorical attributes. Yet while recognizing that it is a wider tendency in social analysis, I limit my discussion here to groupism in the study of ethnicity, race and nationalism.

3. For useful critical analyses of media representations of ethnic violence, see the collection of essays in Allen and Seaton 1999, as well as Seaton 1999.
4. This is perhaps too sharply put. To the extent that such intrinsic-kind categories are indeed constitutive of common-sense understandings of the social world, to the extent that such categories are used as a resource for participants, and are demonstrably deployed or oriented to by participants in interaction, they can also serve as a resource for analysts. But as Emanuel Schegloff notes in another context, with respect to the category "interruption", the fact that this is a vernacular, common-sense category for participants, does not make it a first-order category usable for professional analysis. Rather than being employed *in* professional analysis, it is better treated as a target category *for* professional analysis' (2000: 27). The same might well be said of common sense ethnic categories.
5. Such performative, group-making practices, of course, are not specific to ethnic entrepreneurs, but generic to political mobilization and representation (Bourdieu 1991b: 248–251).
6. For accounts (not focused specifically on ethnicity) that treat groupness as variable, see Tilly 1978: 62ff; Hechter 1987: 8; Hamilton *et al.* 1998. These accounts, very different from one another, focus on variability in groupness across cases; my concern is primarily with variability in groupness over time.
7. Fredrik Barth's introductory essay to the collection *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969) was extraordinarily influential in directing attention to the workings of categories of self-and other-ascription. But Barth does not distinguish sharply or consistently between categories and groups and his central metaphor of "boundary" carries with it connotations of boundedness, entitativity and groupness.
8. This point was already made by Max Weber, albeit in somewhat different terms. As Weber argued—in a passage obscured in the English translation—ethnic commonality, based on belief in common descent, is "in itself mere (putative) commonality [(geglaubte) Gemeinsamkeit], not community [Gemeinschaft] [. . .] but only a factor facilitating communal action [Vergemeinschaftung]" (1964: 307; *cf.* 1968: 389). Ethnic commonality means more than mere category membership for Weber. It is—or rather involves—a category that is employed by members themselves. But this shows that even self-categorization does not create a "group".
9. Ethnomethodology and conversation analysis have not focused on the use of ethnic categories as such, but Sacks, Schegloff and others have addressed the problem of situated categorization in general, notably the question of the procedures through which participants in interaction, in deploying categories, choose among alternative sets of categories (since there is always more than one set of categories in terms of which any person can be correctly described). The import of this problem has been formulated as follows by Schegloff (2000: 30–31): "And given the centrality of [. . .] categories in organizing vernacular cultural 'knowledge', this equivocality can be profoundly consequential, for *which* category is employed will carry with it the invocation of common-sense knowledge about *that* category of person and bring it to bear on the person referred to on some occasion, rather than bringing to bear the knowledge implicated with *another* category, of which the person being referred to is equally a member". For Sacks on categories, see 1995; I, 40–48, 333–340, 396–403, 578–596; II, 184–187.
10. The language of "stereotypes" is, of course, that of cognitive social psychology (for a review of work in this tradition, see Hamilton and Sherman 1994). But the general ethnomethodological

emphasis on the crucial importance of the rich though tacit background knowledge that participants bring to interaction and—more specifically—Harvey Sacks’ discussion of the “inference-rich” categories in terms of which much everyday social knowledge is stored (1995: I, 40ff *et passim*; cf. Schegloff 2000: 29ff) and of the way in which the knowledge thus organized is “protected against induction” (*ibid.*, 336ff), suggest a domain of potentially converging concern between cognitive work on the one hand and ethnomethodological and conversation-analytic work on the other—however different their analytic stances and methodologies.

11. One should remember, though, that organizations often compete with one another for the monopolization of the right to represent the same (putative) group.
12. In this respect the resource mobilization perspective on social movements, eclipsed in recent years by identity-oriented new social movement theory, has much to offer students of ethnicity. For an integrated statement, see McCarthy and Zald 1977.
13. These paragraphs draw on Brubaker and Laitin 1998.
14. These paragraphs draw on Brubaker *et al.* 2001.
15. As Emanuel Schegloff reminded me in a different context, this formulation is potentially misleading, since perspectives *on* the world—as every Sociology I student is taught—are themselves *in* the world and every bit as “real” and consequential as other sorts of things.
16. Cognitive perspectives, in this broad sense, include not only those developed in cognitive psychology and cognitive anthropology but also those developed in the post-(and anti-) Parsonian “cognitive turn” (DiMaggio and Powell 1991) in sociological and (more broadly) social theory, especially in response to the influence of phenomenological and ethnomethodological work (Schutz 1962; Garfinkel 1967; Heritage 1984). Cognitive perspectives are central to the influential syntheses of Bourdieu and Giddens and—in a very different form—to the enterprise of conversation analysis.

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CRAIG CALHOUN

52. NATIONALISM AND THE CULTURES OF DEMOCRACY

Craig Calhoun (b. 1952) is currently Director of the London School of Economics and Political Science. His research interests and major publications have been wide ranging, including a book on class struggle during the Industrial Revolution, an analysis of the struggle for democracy in China culminating in the occupation of Tiananmen Square, and studies of the theoretical contributions of three major theorists included in this collection: Robert Merton, Pierre Bourdieu, and Jürgen Habermas. Expanding this range, there are several themes that have proven to be major preoccupations for him: democracy and citizenship, social movements, cosmopolitanism, and the continuing significance of nationalism. The selection included herein, deriving from his recent book, *Nations Matter* (2007), is a reflection of these concerns. Calhoun is critical of postnationalist and other theorists who argue that nationalism is being or should be overcome. As he provocatively begins the essay, “If nationalism is over, we shall miss it.” Not only does he disagree with those who underestimate the continued power of nationalism, but he also criticizes them for failing to appreciate the role nationalism plays in facilitating social integration and solidarity, prerequisites for democratic practice. In making this claim, he is well aware of the fact that nationalism can also be deployed in the service of antidemocratic projects.

If nationalism is over, we shall miss it. Revolution may be the project of a vanguard party acting on behalf of its masses. Resistance to capitalist globalization may be pursued by a multifarious and inchoate multitude. But imagining democracy requires thinking of “the people” as active and coherent and oneself as both a member and an agent. Liberalism informs the notion of individual agency, but provides weak purchase at best on membership and on the collective cohesion and capacity of the *demos*. In the modern era, the discursive formation that has most influentially underwritten these dimensions of democracy is nationalism.¹

Nationalists have exaggerated and naturalized the historical and never more than partial unity of the nation. The hyphen in nation-state tied the modern polity—with enormously more intense and

effective internal administration than any large-scale precursors—to the notion of a historically or naturally unified people who intrinsically belong together. The idea that nations give states clearly identifiable and meaningfully integrated populations, which in turn are the bases of their legitimacy, is as problematic as it is influential.² It is of course an empirically tendentious claim. But it is part of a discursive formation that structures the world, not simply an external description of it.

To be sure, nationalism has also been mobilized in sharply antidemocratic projects; it has often organized disturbingly intolerant attitudes; it has led to distorted views of the world and excesses of both pride and imagined insults. It has also been a recipe for conflicts both internal and external. Populations straddle borders or move long distances to new states while

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retaining allegiances to old nations. Dominant groups demand that governments enforce cultural conformity, challenging both the individual freedom and the vitality that comes from cultural creativity. These faults have made it easier for liberals to dismiss nationalism from their theories of democracy. But this has not made it less important in the real world.

There are of course also many problems that affect everyone on earth—environmental degradation, for example, or small arms trade. Nationalist rhetoric is commonly employed in excuses for governmental failures to address these problems. Transnational movements press for action. But for the most part the action comes, if it does, from national states.

Likewise, there is no non-national and cosmopolitan solution available to “complex humanitarian emergencies” like that in Darfur. International humanitarian action is vitally important, but more a compensation for state failures and evils than as a substitute for better states. More generally, lacking a capable state may be as much a source of disaster as state violence. National integration and identity are also basic to many efforts at economic development and to contesting the imposition of a neoliberal model of global economic growth that ignores or undermines local quality of life and inhibits projects of self-government. Nations also remain basic units of international cooperation.

Though a secular decline in the capacity and importance of nation-states has often been asserted—or at least predicted—as a result of globalization, this is not evident. Certainly nation-states face new challenges: multinational corporations and global markets organize production, exchange, and even real estate markets across borders. It is harder for any state to control its fiscal policy autonomously, for example, and harder for most to control their borders (as not only migrants but money, media, and a variety of goods cross them). The popularity of neoliberal privatization programs has challenged state enterprises and provision of services that sometimes played an integrating role. The extent to which the integration of nations matches that of states, has never been complete, and now faces challenges from calls for greater regional, ethnic, and religious autonomy. Proponents of cultural diversity have often challenged assimilationist approaches to the cultural integration of immigrants. Migration has been

organized into diasporic circuits linking communities in several countries and making returning migrants and remittances significant issues in sender states.

Yet nationalism and nation-states retain considerable power and potential. Rather than their general decline, what we see today is loss of faith in progress through secular and civic nationalism and state building projects. This makes it harder to appreciate the positive work that nationalism has done and still does (alongside its evil uses). Nations provide for structures of belonging that build bridges between local communities and mediate between these and globalization. Nations organize the primary arenas for democratic political participation. Nationalism helps mobilize collective commitment to public institutions, projects, and debates. Nationalism encourages mutual responsibility across divisions of class and region. We may doubt both the capacities of nation-states and the morality of many versions of nationalism, but we lack realistic and attractive alternatives.

Crucially, we are poorly prepared to theorize democracy if we cannot theorize the social solidarity of democratic peoples. Substituting ethical attention to the obligations all human beings share does not fill the void. This effort lacks an understanding of politics as the active creation of ways of living together, not only distributing power but developing institutions. And, accordingly, it lacks a sense of democracy as a human creation necessarily situated in culture and history, always imperfect and open to improvement, and therefore always also variable.

A deep mutual relationship has tied nationalism to democracy throughout the modern era. Nationalism was crucial to collective democratic subjectivity, providing a basis for the capacity to speak as “we the people,” the conceptualization of constitution-making as collective self-empowerment, and commitment to accept the judgment of citizens in general on contentious questions. As important, democracy encouraged the formation of national solidarity. When states were legitimated on the basis of serving the commonwealth, when collective struggles won improved institutions, when a democratic public sphere spanned class, regional, religious, and other divisions this strengthened national solidarity. It is a pernicious illusion to think of national identity as the prepolitical basis for

a modern state—an illusion certainly encouraged by some nationalists. It is equally true that national identity is (like all collective identity) inherently political; created in speech, action, and recognition. A democratic public is not merely contingent on political solidarity, it can be productive of it.

Of course political community can be and is constructed on bases other than nations. Most people live in multiple, overlapping zones of solidarity. There are varying degrees of local autonomy within nation-states, and varying degrees of integration among neighboring states. And of course nations can be transformed; they need not be treated as prepolitically given but can be recognized as always made—culturally as well as politically—and therefore remarkable. But the idea of democracy requires some structures of integration, some cultural capacity for internal communication, some social solidarity of “the people.”

LIBERALISM WITHIN OR BEYOND NATIONS

Political liberalism developed largely in the effort to theorize the transition from pre-national empires, monarchies, and aristocracies to nations. Nations were the primary political structures in which liberal individuals would be equals and have more or less universal rights.

The same liberalism was well attuned, of course, to recognizing the failures of actually existing nations, including especially failures to extend equal rights to all citizens. Liberals generally respond to these failings of nations and nationalism by abandoning reliance on historically achieved solidarities and subjectivities. This tendency has been reinforced by recognition of the ways in which globalization limits states. Seeking greater justice and liberty than actual nations have offered, they apply liberal ideas about the equality of and relations among individuals at the scale of humanity as a whole. But it is not clear that ratcheting up universalism makes it any more readily achievable.

In addition, this attempt to pursue liberal equality and justice at a more global level reveals a tension previously beneath the surface of liberalism. So long as liberalism could rely (explicitly or implicitly) on the idea of nation to supply a prepolitical constitution of “the

people” it could be a theory both of democracy and universal rights. But the pursuit of greater universalism commonly comes at the expense of solidarity, for solidarity is typically achieved in more particularistic formations. Since there is no democracy without social solidarity, as liberalism is transposed to the global level it becomes more a theory of universal rights or justice and less a theory of democratic politics.

Liberalism has been pervasive in democratic theory—enough so that its blind spots have left the democratic imaginary impoverished. This shows up in thinking about (or thinking too little about) solidarity, social cohesion, collective identity, and boundaries. With its concerns focused overwhelmingly on freedom, equality, and justice for individual persons, liberalism has had at best a complicated relationship with nationalism. For much of the modern era, liberalism worked within the tacit assumption that nation-states defined the boundaries of citizenship. John Rawls made the assumption explicit:

we have assumed that a democratic society, like any political society, is to be viewed as a complete and closed social system. It is complete in that it is self-sufficient and has a place for all the main purposes of human life. It is also closed, in that entry into it is only by birth and exit from it is only by death.³

This “Westphalian” understanding incorporated a distinction of properly “domestic” from properly international matters that was closely related to the distinction of public from private emerging more generally in modern social thought.⁴ It underwrote, among other things, the exclusion of religion from allegedly “realist” international relations, a treatment of religion as essentially a domestic matter (and often by implication a private choice) that has informed not only liberal political theory but the entire discipline of international relations. This has been closely related to liberalism’s difficulties with “strong” or “thick” accounts of culture as constitutive for human subjectivity. Liberalism typically presumes a theory of culture that it does not recognize as such, but instead treats somewhat ironically as an escape from culture into a more direct access to the universal—whether conceived as human nature, or human rights, or political process in the abstract.

More recently, pressed by the porousness of state borders in an era of intensified globalization, many liberals have recognized the difficulties with relying uncritically on nation-states to provide the framework within which liberal values are to be pursued. Allen Buchanan stated the case clearly in describing Rawls's version of liberal theory as "rules for a vanished Westphalian world."⁵ To be precise, Buchanan challenged Rawls's international argument about a "law of peoples," not all of Rawls's liberal theory. There is in fact considerable controversy among those largely swayed by Rawls's earlier theory of justice over whether to accept his later law of peoples.⁶ For many of these, the demands of justice as fairness simply must override both the norm of tolerance that Rawls sees as underwriting a strong respect for different ways of life and the fact that the cohesion of actual existing social life is rooted in different historically created solidarities and ways of life. Others struggle more to reconcile respect for difference with the demands of a universalistic appeal to cosmopolitan justice.

But perhaps Rawls accepted too much from nationalist representations of "peoples" as discrete, culturally integrated entities. Nationalists often make strong claims to ethnic purity and cultural uniformity. But in fact part of the importance of nationalism is the ways in which the national bridges a variety of differences. It does this not simply by providing an encompassing culture but by providing an arena for public debate and culture-making.⁷

Certainly greater global solidarity would be a good thing. But many liberal, cosmopolitan arguments rely on three tendentious assumptions. First, that it will be possible to create strong enough solidarities at a global scale to underwrite democratic mutual commitment (or to do so soon enough that pursuing these should have equal or higher priority to strengthening national solidarities and making them more democratic). Second, that justice, respect, and rights are more effectively secured for more human beings by approaching these as ethical universals than as moral obligations situated within particular solidarities and ways of life. And third, that an interest in or commitment to the universal (or the cosmopolitan) is based on the absence of culture (because culture is particularistic bias) rather than itself being a kind of cultural perspective.⁸

I have argued elsewhere about the importance of seeing cosmopolitanism as the presence of particular sorts of culture rather than the absence of culture, and about the extent to which access to the cosmopolitan is distributed on the basis of privilege.⁹ What I want to stress here is the extent to which nationalism and democracy may—together—hold more potential for providing political solidarity across lines of cultural difference.

STRUCTURES OF INTEGRATION

A key part of the work that nationalism does is to provide cultural support for structures of social integration. Indeed, it is itself a source of such integration insofar as it structures collective identities and solidarities.¹⁰

Not everyone would consider this an obvious gain. Starting from the premise that the primary obligation of each human being is to all others, a range of ethical cosmopolitans argue that any smaller-scale solidarity requires specific justification—and starts out under the suspicion of being nothing more than an illegitimate expression of self-interest at the expense of justice for humanity at large.¹¹ I don't propose to take up such positions in detail here. Let it suffice to indicate that they are reached by starting with "bare" individuals as equivalent tokens of the universal type, humanity; that they treat the particularities of culture and social relations as extrinsic to and not constitutive of these individuals; that they substitute abstract ethics for politics and particularly for a conception of politics as a world-making and therefore necessarily historically specific process such as that developed in the rhetorical tradition; and finally that they lack any sociological account of how humanity is to be integrated such that the abstract norms they articulate may concretely be achieved. Such a procedure may open up some ethical insights, but it runs the risk of substituting a pure ought for a practical politics. It also deflects our attention from the social, cultural, and historical conditions of democracy.

Democracy depends on social solidarity and social institutions. Neither is given to human beings as a matter of nature; they must be achieved through human imagination and action—in short, through history.

As a result, all actually existing examples vary and all are imperfect. It is more helpful to approach them in a spirit of “pragmatic fallibilism” than radical ethical universalism, asking about improvements more than perfection, next steps more than ultimate ends.¹² This doesn’t mean that there is no value in utopian dreams or efforts to imagine radically better societies; it does mean both that such dreams will be more helpful if they include attention to the social conditions of solidarity alongside the abstract definitions of justice, and that in making abstract norms guides for practical action we will do well to temper them with recognition of historical circumstances.

Nations, and indeed all structures of social integration, have been achieved with more or less violence. This is neither a source of legitimacy nor a disqualification from it. No one gains rights from the blood of fallen ancestors. Neither does bloodshed render the institutions and solidarities that follow it mere results of force. Nations forged partly in war and in projects of remembering heroic dead exert powerful pulls on the living. It is an important project to try to turn national self-understanding in peaceful directions, but a merely illusory project to imagine that moral objections to past bellicosity or domestic repression render national solidarity unimportant.

National allegiances, moreover, are always in some part the result of symbolic violence and imposition, as for example countries are created in part by skewing resources towards capital cities and making provincials embarrassed by rural accents. In other cases the integration of subaltern populations into national projects has been brutal and severely unequal. But this does not mean that there is necessarily a politically sensible project of undoing those allegiances either in favor of the universal or in order to restore prior local identities—or that this might not itself be an imposition involving new symbolic—or material—violence.

Partitions and secessionist wars are almost universally bloody routes to political autonomy, and if they sometimes become inevitable that does not make them praiseworthy. Moreover, they create new nations which may be as repressive of difference as old ones. Far better to remake national identities and institutions to better accommodate diversity and to support both partial local autonomy and intercultural relations.

Many nationalist ideologies—and indeed many versions of the discursive formation of nationalism itself—mislead in this regard. Nationalist rhetoric is commonly employed to produce the image of populations unifying prepolitically, by culture, religion, or territory. This allows those who employ it to judge contemporary politics—and culture and economics—by the standard of a people understood as always already there, constituted in a kind of primal innocence outside the realm of ordinary politics. The people may be understood simply as given, on ethnic or other cultural grounds, or as the creation of martyrs, heroes, and lawgivers acting outside or above the normal politics of individual and sectional interests. Both images may be evoked at the same time. The important thing is the implication that the nation is established in advance of, separately from, the more quotidian developments which may then be judged as serving or failing to serve its interests.

But in reality nations are always the result of at least partially political histories. That is, not merely are they the result of more or less arbitrary historical circumstances—wars won or lost, mountain ranges that slow the spread of evangelism or commerce. They are also the result of self-constituting collective projects in which culture is created and choices are made. Nations are products not only bases of politics, and they are accordingly objects of new political projects.

Saying that the ideal of prepolitical national unity is an illusion does not make the illusion any less powerful, either in its grips on individual imaginations and emotions or in its capacity to constitute a cultural order. People who have read about “the invention of tradition” are still moved by national anthems and soccer teams, enlist in armies, and understand themselves to have “home” countries when they migrate.¹³

Nations are not the only or necessarily the primary structures of social integration of cultural identity. That they are commonly represented as a kind of “trump card” against other identities, exaggerating national unity and giving short shrift to intranational diversity, is a form of symbolic violence. But local autonomy and cultural diversity may be better pursued through improving structures of national integration rather than abandoning them.

National structures are important in the modern era both because they embody historical achievements

and because globalization itself—a key ingredient of the entire modern era—creates a demand for mediating structures between humanity as a whole (or inhumanity as a whole, since that is as often what is achieved on a very large scale) and face-to-face interpersonal relations. Nations are important because integration beyond the level of family and community is important. This requires both culture and institutions. There is no reason to want all to be the same. Moreover, nations are not the only form for such integration—religions are also important and indeed sometimes transnational political movements. But the need for such integration means that nations are not simply “optional”; they may be restructured or replaced but there is no viable way simply to abandon them.

The integration nations help to achieve is of several sorts. They help to bind people together across social classes. They bridge regional and ethnic and sometimes religious differences. They link generations to each other, mobilizing traditions of cultural inheritance mutual obligation. They link the living to both ancestors and future generations. They do this not simply in ideology, but in social institutions which matter to the lives of individuals, families, and communities. Nations are integrated in educational systems, health care systems, and transportation systems. Strengthening these is generally a national and often a state project. Certainly philanthropists moved by care for humanity at large also build schools and clinics and sometimes roads. But, for the most part, these are achievements of nation-states and typically are public institutions (though this very public provision for the common good is currently under challenge). Not least of all, national integration is produced in the formation and sharing of new culture and in political arguments.

Nations accomplish all these linkages imperfectly, leaving room for contention. But if nationalism creates peoples, continued politics can transform them. At best, these are peoples in which the sentiment of common belonging is strong enough that it enables citizens to absorb the frustration of losing political battles over particular policies and leaders while remaining committed to the larger structure of integration. For there is little possibility of collective action to

make and remake solidarity that is not also agonistic.¹⁴ World-making politics is inevitably contentious politics, but not for that reason without solidarities.

Among the range of solidarities that have been mobilized in political action, national solidarities have been distinctively capable of political self-constitution in the making or transformation of states. Nations, at least sometimes, are peoples able to utter (or believe they have uttered) phrases like “we the people” as it appears in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution:

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Such acts of founding are basic to national histories throughout the Americas and present a distinctive counterpart to the idea of nations as ethnic inheritances, as always already there, which is more common in Europe (though in Europe the history of revolutions is a reminder of the role of active creation in nationalism).

To be sure, the founding of a new nation has never been simply the uncoerced and egalitarian project of all potential citizens. On the contrary, elites have commonly driven national projects and claims to unitary national voice have typically occluded not only the cultural diversity within nations but the subjugation of large populations. Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas, and in many countries slaves of African descent, were thus dominated, marginalized, and often in political rhetoric forgotten by national founders. But if independence was not liberation for many in the Americas—or in postcolonies around the world—the new nations, especially where they embraced democracy, did create conditions for continued struggles for fuller citizenship.

The idea of constituting a new country—making new social institutions to integrate people in a solidarity only partially inherited—has profound significance for democracy. Such acts of founding are reminders that the very structures of integration that constitute countries are subject to making—and potentially to democratic

will-formation. Democracy, in other words, is something more than electing the least objectionable leaders.

Hannah Arendt situated such acts of revolutionary founding of new countries within the more general human potential for innovative world-making—"natality"—in every act of political speech.¹⁵ Her argument is rooted in a rhetorical tradition that stretches back to ancient Greece but which has been subordinated by dominant perspectives in philosophy and political theory. Politics has been seen as more about power than persuasion, more about perfecting institutional arrangements than nurturing creativity. But Arendt and the rhetorical tradition remind us of a strong sense in which politics can be the creation of new institutional arrangements and indeed the remaking of the world. Politics in this sense is ineluctably historical, culturally specific, and diverse.

If democracy is, following Arendt's lead, about the ways in which people may creatively develop new ways of living together, choose new institutional arrangements, and even found new countries, then it is necessarily not simply a matter of abstract design or the best formal procedures. It is a matter of discerning ways to make the will and well-being of ordinary people more determinative of the very formation of social institutions as well as of specific decisions within them. This can be informed by abstract, universal political theory but it is also necessarily informed by concrete, historically and culturally specific circumstances.

From one side, nationalism is an internationally reproduced discursive formation full of pressures to make each country into an isomorphic token of a global type. There are pressures for conformity: each country should have a recognizable government with ministers and other officials analogous to those in other countries. Each should have a national museum and national folklore, passports and border controls, an authority to issue driving licenses and postage stamps.¹⁶ Countries also face similar problems and learn from each other. But at the same time, in their more historically and culturally specific dimensions, nationalisms mediate between the isomorphic character of constructing tokens of a global type and

the historical particularities of tradition and cultural creativity. Distinctive national self-understandings are produced and reproduced in literature, film, political debate—and political grumbling, political jokes, and political insults. These structure the ways in which people feel solidarity with each other (and distinction from outsiders).

Modernist self-understanding commonly exaggerates breaks with history and cultural traditions. Conscious plans and rational choices are favored—even immediate expressions of emotion are in more favor than adherence to tradition. Nationalism, however, is a way of claiming history within a modernist frame. It is typically misleading for it claims history through units of contemporary consciousness and solidarity that did not necessarily exist in the past.

Thus archeologists may speak of Sweden or Sudan when describing sites and cultures millennia older than either nation. Of course, the history that produced both Sweden and Sudan is a matter of imposition and drawing of boundaries by force, not simply of maturation. In different ways, each is troubled today by the international flows and forces of modernity – migrations, money and commodities, media. Each has difficulty with its internal diversity, and leaders in each are tempted to assert untenable ethnic (and sometimes religious) definitions of "proper" national identity. Sweden was shaped by its earlier imperial ambitions as well as later nationalism. Transnational Protestantism informed its constitution which is now being transformed by European unification. Sudan has long been shaped by both pan-African and pan-Arab projects as it is now by transnational Islam. Sudan is also being remade by a geopolitical crisis reverberating throughout northeast Africa, with issues of trade and diplomacy making distant China an important counterpart and human suffering which has brought a humanitarian response on a nearly global scale.

The stories of Sweden and Sudan do not simply pit long-standing, unquestioned, and culturally defined internal unity against new, troubling, and political-economic external forces. Internal diversity is part of the history of each. Some of the lines of diversity predate the history of each (as there were Arabs and Africans,

Nubians and Nuer before there was a Sudan). And the history of each is partly a matter of producing what now are taken as defining boundaries (as seemingly obviously unitary Sweden not only includes territories whose integration was contested but doesn't include its former dominions of Estonia, Finland, or Norway). But it is also a matter of producing language, culture, distinctive social institutions, and personal styles.

Nationality situates persons in time, in the world, and in relation to each other. Of course it is not the only identity anyone has. Nationality may be supplemented by a range of other categories of belonging and may be in tension with some—from religion to class. It could be replaced as a primary dimension of belonging; it could be transformed. But simply to imagine overcoming it without attending to the work it does would be a mistake.

NOTES

1. Nationalism is a "discursive formation," in Foucault's sense; see *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *Power/Knowledge*. That is, it is a way of talking that inescapably exceeds the bounds of any single usage, that endlessly generate more talk, and that embody tensions and contradictions. Nationalism is not simply a settled position, but a cluster of rhetoric and reference that enables people to articulate positions which are not settled and to take stands in opposition to each other on basic issues in society and culture. Nationalist rhetoric provides the modern era with a constitutive framework for the identification of collective subjects, both the protagonists of historical struggles and those who experience history and by whose experience it can be judged good or bad, progress or regress or stagnation. In this, nationalism most resembles another great discursive formation, also constitutive for modernity, individualism. See Calhoun, *Nationalism*.
2. The status of this hyphen is subject to considerable controversy. It is common to speak of "nations" without distinguishing the state from the ostensibly integrated population associated with it. This is in fact hard to avoid without pedantry, and while I shall at certain points make clear that I mean one or the other, like most writers I shall not consistently make clear that the relationship between national identity or integration and state authority or structure is not stable or consistent. As a discursive formation, nationalism continually reproduces the idea that there should be a link between nation and state as well as various forms and dimensions of national identity, integration, distinction, and conflict.
3. John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, p. 41.
4. Of course it is worth recalling that the 1648 Peace of Westphalia did not transform the world overnight into one of strongly institutionalized nation-states and international relations. It is more a myth or symbol for the project of remaking the world in these terms than a token of such achievement. See Benno Teschke, *The Myth of 1648*.
5. Allen Buchanan, "Rawls' Law of Peoples: Rules for a Vanished Westphalian World," *Ethics* 110, no. 4 (2000): 697–721.
6. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice and The Law of Peoples*; see also Charles R. Beitz, "Rawls' Law of Peoples," *Ethics* 110, no. 4 (2000): 669–96 and Rex Martin and David Reidy (eds.), *Rawls's Law of Peoples: A Realistic Utopia?* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).
7. By "encompassing" I mean to echo Louis Dumont's argument about the ways in which culture may bring together dimensions that cannot be logically integrated. National cultures often encompass different subcultures without integrating them and encompass logically contradictory values, creating nonetheless a sense in which they belong as parts of the larger whole. See Dumont, *Homo Hierarchicus* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

8. The best and most careful of such cosmopolitan theoretical visions come from Jürgen Habermas (e.g. *Inclusion of the Other*); and David Held (e.g. *Democracy and the Global Order*). See also essays in Archibugi and Held, *Cosmopolitan Democracy*, Archibugi et al., *Re-Imagining Political Community*, Archibugi, *Debating Cosmopolitics*, and Vertovec and Cohen, *Conceiving Cosmopolitanism*. These cosmopolitan visions are clearly Kantian; for elaboration of that heritage see Bohman and Lutz-Bachmann, *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal*. My reference here is mainly to these more political theories of cosmopolitanism, not to the accounts of "vernacular cosmopolitanism" in which some anthropologists and historians have urged us to look at the more concrete and often local transactions and cultural productions in which people actually forge relations with each other across lines of difference. See Pollock et al., "Cosmopolitanisms," *Public Culture* 12, no. 3 (2000). In a sense, I pursue in this paper a meeting point between these two perspectives, one which I think is impossible to discern if one focuses only on transcending the nation, imagining the world mainly globally "at large" and relating this to the local and immediate rather than emphasizing the importance of the mediating institutions of which nations and states are among the most important.
9. See Craig Calhoun, *Cosmopolitanism and Belonging* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).
10. Nationalism figures prominently as an example of "categorical" identities in which each individual figures as an equivalent token of the larger type. But this does not exhaust the ways in which national culture matters to the production of solidarity. Common language and frameworks of meaning, for example, may integrate people without suggesting that they are equivalent. Common projects create alliances among otherwise dissimilar people. Communities understand their solidarity to be embeddedness in webs of relationships as well as "categorical" distinctions from other communities. Of course, culture may also figure as ideology underwriting, for better or worse, functional integration among national institutions or nationally organized markets, and direct exercise of power. See Calhoun, *Cosmopolitanism and Belonging*.
11. Martha Nussbaum can serve as an exemplar of such "extreme cosmopolitans" reasoning from the ethical equivalence of individuals. See her *For Love of Country*. See also discussion in Samuel Scheffler, *Boundaries and Allegiances: Problems of Justice and Responsibility in Liberal Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and Calhoun, "Belonging in the Cosmopolitan Imaginary."
12. See Richard Bernstein, *The Abuse of Evil* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), ch. 2.
13. Hobsbawm and Ranger, writing in *The Invention of Tradition*, are thus right about invention but wrong about its implications.
14. To imagine a politics without agonism, a democratic citizenship merely of agreement, is a contradiction in terms, as Chantal Mouffe and others have suggested. See Mouffe, *Dimensions of Radical Democracy* and continued discussion in more recent works.
15. Arendt, *On Revolution; Between Past and Future* (New York: Viking, 1968).
16. This side of nationalism is emphasized by institutionalist theories such as the "world polity" theory of John Meyer and a range of colleagues; for an early statement that helped launch the perspective and informed discussion of "institutional isomorphism," see, Meyer and Rowan, "I Organizations."

SECTION XI

1. What do Omi and Winant mean when they describe race as an ideological construct? As an objective condition?
2. What is a racial formation, and how do Omi and Winant think this concept contributes to a critical theory of race?
3. Why does Paul Gilroy use the term “camps,” and what is its significance for his argument on behalf of cosmopolitan humanism?
4. Is it possible, as Brubaker encourages us to do, to treat ethnicity without recourse to viewing it in terms of ethnic groups? Why does he think it’s important to make an effort to avoid what he refers to as “groupism?”
5. Calhoun begins his essay by claiming, “If nationalism is over, we shall miss it.” Why does he think we would miss it? Do you agree or disagree with him? Why?

XII. STATE, ECONOMY, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

CHARLES TILLY

53. WAR MAKING AND STATE MAKING AS ORGANIZED CRIME

Charles Tilly (1929–2008) was a prolific scholar who published over 50 books and over 600 scholarly articles. He was trained as a sociologist, but his long and productive scholarly career constituted an ongoing interdisciplinary dialogue among three disciplines: sociology, history, and political science. Moreover, his rich body of empirical work was complemented by his contributions to theoretical inquiry. While his interests ranged far and wide, his most well known and sustained body of work concentrated on the formation of European nation-states and the contentious politics that were part of that long historical process. In this provocative article, he contends that nation-states function in a parallel way to criminal syndicates, and just as the latter often construct for their own benefit protection rackets, so too do the former. As part of his thesis, he discusses the significance of violence—be it construed as legitimate or illegitimate.

WARNING

If protection rackets represent organized crime at its smoothest, then war making and state making—quintessential protection rackets with the advantage of legitimacy—qualify as our largest examples of organized crime. Without branding all generals and statespeople as murderers or thieves, I want to urge the value of that analogy. At least for the European experience of the past few centuries, a portrait of war makers and state makers as coercive and self-seeking entrepreneurs bears a far greater resemblance to the facts than do its chief alternatives: the idea of a social contract, the idea of an open market in which operators of armies and states offer services to willing consumers, the idea of

a society the shared norms and expectations of which call forth a certain kind of government.

The reflections that follow merely illustrate the analogy of war making and state making with organized crime from a few hundred years of European experience and offer tentative arguments concerning principles of change and variation underlying the experience. My reflections grow from contemporary concerns: worries about the increasing destructiveness of war, the expanding role of great powers as suppliers of arms and military organization to poor countries, and the growing importance of military rule in those same countries. They spring from the hope that the European experience, properly understood, will help

“War Making and State Making as Organized Crime” in Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In*. Copyright Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with permission. Pgs. 169–177. ♦

us to grasp what is happening today, perhaps even to do something about it.

The Third World of the twentieth century does not greatly resemble Europe of the sixteenth or the seventeenth century. In no simple sense can we read the future of Third World countries from the pasts of European countries. Yet a thoughtful exploration of European experience will serve us well. It will show us that coercive exploitation played a large part in the creation of the European states. It will show us that popular resistance to coercive exploitation forced would-be power holders to concede protection and constraints on their own action. It will therefore help us to eliminate faulty implicit comparisons between today's Third World and yesterday's Europe. That clarification will make it easier to understand exactly how today's world is different and what we therefore have to explain. It may even help us to explain the current looming presence of military organization and action throughout the world. Although that result would delight me, I do not promise anything so grand.

This essay, then, concerns the place of organized means of violence in the growth and change of those peculiar forms of government we call national states: relatively centralized, differentiated organizations the officials of which more or less successfully claim control over the chief concentrated means of violence within a population inhabiting a large, contiguous territory. The argument grows from historical work on the formation of national states in Western Europe, especially on the growth of the French state from 1600 onward. But it takes several deliberate steps away from that work, wheels, and stares hard at it from theoretical ground. The argument brings with it few illustrations and no evidence worthy of the name.

Just as one repacks a hastily filled rucksack after a few days on the trail—throwing out the waste, putting things in order of importance, and balancing the load—I have repacked my theoretical baggage for the climb to come; the real test of the new packing arrives only with the next stretch of the trail. The trimmed-down argument stresses the interdependence of war making and state making and the analogy between both of those processes and what, when less successful and smaller in scale, we call organized crime. War makes states, I shall claim. Banditry, piracy, gangland

rivalry, policing, and war making all belong on the same continuum—that I shall claim as well. For the historically limited period in which national states were becoming the dominant organizations in Western countries, I shall also claim that mercantile capitalism and state making reinforced each other.

DOUBLE-EDGED PROTECTION

In contemporary American parlance, the word *protection* surrounds two contrasting tones. One is comforting, the other ominous. With one tone, protection calls up images of the shelter against danger provided by a powerful friend, a large insurance policy, or a sturdy roof. With the other, it evokes the racket in which a local strongman forces merchants to pay tribute in order to avoid damage—damage the strongman himself threatens to deliver. The difference, to be sure, is a matter of degree: A hell-and-damnation priest is likely to collect contributions from his parishioners only to the extent that they believe his predictions of brimstone for infidels; our neighborhood mobster may actually be, as he claims to be, a brothel's best guarantee of operation free of police interference.

Which image the word *protection* brings to mind depends mainly on our assessment of the reality and externality of the threat. Someone who produces both the danger and, at a price, the shield against it is a racketeer. Someone who provides a needed shield but has little control over the danger's appearance qualifies as a legitimate protector, especially if his price is no higher than his competitors'. Someone who supplies reliable, low-priced shielding both from local racketeers and from outside marauders makes the best offer of all.

Apologists for particular governments and for government in general commonly argue, precisely, that they offer protection from local and external violence. They claim that the prices they charge barely cover the costs of protection. They call people who complain about the price of protection "anarchists," "subversives," or both at once. But consider the definition of a racketeer as someone who creates a threat and then charges for its reduction. Governments' provision of protection, by this standard, often qualifies as racketeering. To the extent that the threats against which a given government protects its citizens are imaginary or

are consequences of its own activities, the government has organized a protection racket. Since governments themselves commonly simulate, stimulate, or even fabricate threats of external war, and since the repressive and extractive activities of governments often constitute the largest current threats to the livelihoods of their own citizens, many governments operate in essentially the same way as racketeers. There is, of course, a difference: racketeers, by the conventional definition, operate without the sanctity of governments.

How do racketeer governments themselves acquire authority? As a question of fact and of ethics, that is one of the oldest conundrums of political analysis. Back to Machiavelli and Hobbes, nevertheless, political observers have recognized that, whatever else they do, governments organize and, wherever possible, monopolize violence. It matters little whether we take violence in a narrow sense, such as damage to persons and objects, or in a broad sense, such as violation of people's desires and interests; by either criterion, governments stand out from other organizations by their tendency to monopolize the concentrated means of violence. The distinction between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" force, furthermore, makes no difference to the fact. If we take legitimacy to depend on conformity to an abstract principle or on the assent of the governed (or both at once), these conditions may serve to justify, perhaps even to explain, the tendency to monopolize force, they do not contradict the fact.

In any case, Arthur Stinchcombe's agreeably cynical treatment of legitimacy serves the purposes of political analysis much more efficiently. Legitimacy, according to Stinchcombe, depends rather little on abstract principle or assent of the governed: "The person *over whom power is exercised* is not usually as important as *other power-holders*."¹ Legitimacy is the probability that other authorities will act to confirm the decisions of a given authority. Other authorities, I would add, are much more likely to confirm the decisions of a challenged authority that controls substantial force; not only fear of retaliation, but also desire to maintain a stable environment recommend that general rule. The rule underscores the importance of the authority's monopoly of force. A tendency to monopolize the means of violence makes a government's claim to provide protection, in either the comforting or the

ominous sense of the word, more credible and more difficult to resist.

Frank recognition of the central place of force in governmental activity does not require us to believe that governmental authority rests "only" or "ultimately" on the threat of violence. Nor does it entail the assumption that a government's only service is protection. Even when a government's use of force imposes a large cost, some people may well decide that the government's other services outbalance the costs of acceding to its monopoly of violence. Recognition of the centrality of force opens the way to an understanding of the growth and change of governmental forms.

Here is a preview of the most general argument: power holders' pursuit of war involved them willy-nilly in the extraction of resources for war making from the populations over which they had control and in the promotion of capital accumulation by those who could help them borrow and buy. War making, extraction, and capital accumulation interacted to shape European state making. Power holders did not undertake those three momentous activities with the intention of creating national states—centralized, differentiated, autonomous, extensive political organizations. Nor did they ordinarily foresee that national states would emerge from war making, extraction, and capital accumulation.

Instead, the people who controlled European states and states in the making warred in order to check or overcome their competitors and thus to enjoy the advantages of power within a secure or expanding territory. To make more effective war, they attempted to locate more capital. In the short run, they might acquire that capital by conquest, by selling off their assets, or by coercing or dispossessing accumulators of capital. In the long run, the quest inevitably involved them in establishing regular access to capitalists who could supply and arrange credit and in imposing one form of regular taxation or another on the people and activities within their spheres of control.

As the process continued, state makers developed a durable interest in promoting the accumulation of capital, sometimes in the guise of direct return to their own enterprises. Variations in the difficulty of collecting taxes, in the expense of the particular kind of armed force adopted, in the amount of war making

required to hold off competitors, and so on, resulted in the principal variations in the forms of European states. It all began with the effort to monopolize the means of violence within a delimited territory adjacent to a power holder's base.

VIOLENCE AND GOVERNMENT

What distinguished the violence produced by states from the violence delivered by anyone else? In the long run, enough distinguished them to make the division between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" force credible. Eventually, the personnel of states purveyed violence on a larger scale, more effectively, more efficiently, with wider assent from their subject populations, and with readier collaboration from neighboring authorities than did the personnel of other organizations. But it took a long time for that series of distinctions to become established. Early in the state-making process, many parties shared the right to use violence, the practice of using it routinely to accomplish their ends, or both at once. The continuum ran from bandits and pirates to kings via tax collectors, regional power holders, and professional soldiers.

The uncertain, elastic line between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" violence appeared in the upper reaches of power. Early in the state-making process, many parties shared the right to use violence, its actual employment, or both at once. The long love/hate affair between aspiring state makers and pirates or bandits illustrates the division. "Behind piracy on the seas acted cities and city-states," writes Fernand Braudel of the sixteenth century. "Behind banditry, that terrestrial piracy, appeared the continual aid of lords."² In times of war, indeed, the managers of full-fledged states often commissioned privateers, hired sometime bandits to raid their enemies, and encouraged their regular troops to take booty. In royal service, soldiers and sailors were often expected to provide for themselves by preying on the civilian population: commandeering, raping, looting, taking prizes. When demobilized, they commonly continued the same practices, but without the same royal protection; demobilized ships became pirate vessels, demobilized troops, bandits.

It also worked the other way: a king's best source of armed supporters was sometimes the world of

outlaws. Robin Hood's conversion to royal archer may be a myth, but the myth records a practice. The distinctions between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" users of violence came clear only very slowly, in the process during which the state's armed forces became relatively unified and permanent.

Up to that point, as Braudel says, maritime cities and terrestrial lords commonly offered protection, or even sponsorship, to freebooters. Many lords who did not pretend to be kings, furthermore, successfully claimed the right to levy troops and maintain their own armed retainers. Without calling on some of those lords to bring their armies with them, no king could fight a war; yet the same armed lords constituted the king's rivals and opponents, his enemies' potential allies. For that reason, before the seventeenth century, regencies for child sovereigns reliably produced civil wars. For the same reason, disarming the great stood high on the agenda of every would-be state maker.

The Tudors, for example, accomplished that agenda through most of England. "The greatest triumph of the Tudors," writes Lawrence Stone,

was the ultimately successful assertion of a royal monopoly of violence both public and private, an achievement which profoundly altered not only the nature of politics but also the quality of daily life. There occurred a change in English habits that can only be compared with the further step taken in the nineteenth century, when the growth of a police force finally consolidated the monopoly and made it effective in the greatest cities and the smallest villages.³

Tudor demilitarization of the great lords entailed four complementary campaigns: eliminating their great personal bands of armed retainers, razing their fortresses, taming their habitual resort to violence for the settlement of disputes, and discouraging the cooperation of their dependents and tenants. In the Marches of England and Scotland, the task was more delicate, for the Percys and Dacres, who kept armies and castles along the border, threatened the Crown but also provided a buffer against Scottish invaders. Yet they, too, eventually fell into line.

In France, Richelieu began the great disarmament in the 1620s. With Richelieu's advice, Louis XIII

systematically destroyed the castles of the great rebel lords, Protestant and Catholic, against whom his forces battled incessantly. He began to condemn dueling, the carrying of lethal weapons, and the maintenance of private armies. By the later 1620s, Richelieu was declaring the royal monopoly of force as doctrine. The doctrine took another half century to become effective.

Once more the conflicts of the Fronde had witnessed armies assembled by the “grands.” Only the last of the regencies, the one after the death of Louis XIV, did not lead to armed uprisings. By that time Richelieu’s principle had become a reality. Likewise in the Empire after the Thirty Years’ War only the territorial princes had the right of levying troops and of maintaining fortresses. . . . Everywhere the razing of castles, the high cost of artillery, the attraction of court life, and the ensuing domestication of the nobility had its share in this development.⁴

By the later eighteenth century, through most of Europe, monarchs controlled permanent, professional military forces that rivaled those of their neighbors and far exceeded any other organized armed force within their own territories. The state’s monopoly of large-scale violence was turning from theory to reality.

The elimination of local rivals, however, posed a serious problem. Beyond the scale of a small city-state, no monarch could govern a population with his armed force alone, nor could any monarch afford to create a professional staff large and strong enough to reach from him to the ordinary citizen. Before quite recently, no European government approached the completeness of articulation from top to bottom achieved by imperial China. Even the Roman Empire did not come close. In one way or another, every European government before the French Revolution relied on indirect rule via local magnates. The magnates collaborated with the government without becoming officials in any strong sense of the term, had some access to government-backed force, and exercised wide discretion within their own territories: junkers, justices of the peace, lords. Yet the same magnates were potential rivals, possible allies of a rebellious people.

Eventually, European governments reduced their reliance on indirect rule by means of two expensive but effective strategies: (a) extending their officialdom to

the local community and (b) encouraging the creation of police forces that were subordinate to the government rather than to individual patrons, distinct from war-making forces, and therefore less useful as the tools of dissident magnates. In between, however, the builders of national power all played a mixed strategy: eliminating, subjugating, dividing, conquering, cajoling, buying as the occasions presented themselves. The buying manifested itself in exemptions from taxation, creations of honorific offices, the establishment of claims on the national treasury, and a variety of other devices that made a magnate’s welfare dependent on the maintenance of the existing structure of power. In the long run, it all came down to massive pacification and monopolization of the means of coercion.

PROTECTION AS BUSINESS

In retrospect, the pacification, cooptation, or elimination of fractious rivals to the sovereign seems an awesome, noble, prescient enterprise, destined to bring peace to a people; yet it followed almost ineluctably from the logic of expanding power. If a power holder was to gain from the provision of protection, his competitors had to yield. As economic historian Frederic Lane put it decades ago, governments are in the business of selling protection . . . whether people want it or not. Lane argued that the very activity of producing and controlling violence favored monopoly, because competition within that realm generally raises costs, instead of lowering them. The production of violence, he suggested, enjoyed large economies of scale.

Working from there, Lane⁵ distinguished between (a) the monopoly profit, or *tribute*, coming to owners of the means of producing violence as a result of the difference between production costs and the price exacted from “customers,” and (b) the *protection rent* accruing to those customers—for example, merchants—who drew effective protection against outside competitors. Lane, a superbly attentive historian of Venice, allowed specifically for the case of a government that generates protection rents for its merchants by deliberately attacking their competitors. In their adaptation of Lane’s scheme, furthermore, Edward Ames and Richard Rapp⁶ substitute the apt word *extortion* for Lane’s *tribute*. In this model, predation, coercion, piracy, banditry, and

racketeering share a home with their upright cousins in responsible government.

This is how Lane's model worked: if a prince could create a sufficient armed force to hold off his and his subjects' external enemies and to keep the subjects in line for 50 megapounds but was able to extract 75 megapounds in taxes from those subjects for that purpose, he gained a tribute of $(75 - 50 =)$ 25 megapounds. If the 10-pound share of those taxes paid by one of the prince's merchant-subjects gave him assured access to world markets at less than the 15-pound shares paid by the merchant's foreign competitors to *their* princes, the merchant also gained a protection rent of $(15 - 10 =)$ 5 pounds by virtue of his prince's greater efficiency. That reasoning differs only in degree and in scale from the reasoning of violence-wielding criminals and their clients. Labor racketeering (in which, for example, a shipowner holds off trouble from longshoremen by means of a timely payment to the local union boss) works on exactly the same principle: the union boss receives tribute for his no-strike pressure on the longshoremen, while the shipowner avoids the strikes and slowdowns longshoremen impose on his competitors.

Lane pointed out the different behavior we might expect of the managers of a protection-providing government owned by

1. citizens in general
2. a single self-interested monarch
3. the managers themselves

If citizens in general exercised effective ownership of the government—O distant ideal!—we might expect the managers to minimize protection costs and tribute, thus maximizing protection rent. A single self-interested monarch, in contrast, would maximize tribute, set costs so as to accomplish that maximization of tribute, and be indifferent to the level of protection rent. If the managers owned the government, they would tend to keep costs high by maximizing their own wages, to maximize tribute over and above those costs by exacting a high price from their subjects, and likewise to be indifferent to the level of protection rent. The first model approximates a Jeffersonian democracy, the second a petty despotism, and the third a military junta.

Lane did not discuss the obvious fourth category of owner: a dominant class. If he had, his scheme

would have yielded interesting empirical criteria for evaluating claims that a given government was "relatively autonomous" or strictly subordinate to the interests of a dominant class. Presumably, a subordinate government would tend to maximize monopoly profits—returns to the dominant class resulting from the difference between the costs of protection and the price received for it—as well as tuning protection rents nicely to the economic interests of the dominant class. An autonomous government, in contrast, would tend to maximize managers' wages and its own size as well and would be indifferent to protection rents. Lane's analysis immediately suggests fresh propositions and ways of testing them.

Lane also speculated that the logic of the situation produced four successive stages in the general history of capitalism:

1. a period of anarchy and plunder;
2. a stage in which tribute takers attracted customers and established their monopolies by struggling to create exclusive, substantial states;
3. a stage in which merchants and landlords began to gain more from protection rents than governors did from tribute; and
4. a period (fairly recent) in which technological changes surpassed protection rents as sources of profit for entrepreneurs.

In their new economic history of the Western world, Douglass North and Robert Paul Thomas⁷ make the second and third stages—those in which state makers created their monopolies of force and established property rights that permitted individuals to capture much of the return from their own growth-generating innovations—the pivotal moment for sustained economic growth. Protection, at this point, overwhelms tribute. If we recognize that the protected property rights were mainly those of capital and that the development of capitalism also facilitated the accumulation of the wherewithal to operate massive states, that extension of Lane's analysis provides a good deal of insight into the coincidence of war making, state making, and capital accumulation.

Unfortunately, Lane did not take full advantage of his own insight. Wanting to contain his analysis neatly within the neoclassical theory of industrial

organization, Lane cramped his treatment of protection: treating all taxpayers as “customers” for the “service” provided by protection-manufacturing governments, brushing aside the objections to the idea of a forced sale by insisting that the “customer” always had the choice of not paying and taking the consequences of nonpayment, minimizing the problems of divisibility created by the public-goods character of protection, and deliberately neglecting

the distinction between the costs of producing the means of violence in general and the costs of giving “customers” protection by means of that violence. Lane’s ideas suffocate inside the neoclassical box and breathe easily outside it. Nevertheless, inside or outside, they properly draw the economic analysis of government back to the chief activities that real governments have carried on historically: war, repression, protection, adjudication.

NOTES

1. Arthur L. Stinchcombe, *Constructing Social Theories* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), p. 150; italics in the original.
2. Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966), vol. 2, pp. 88–89.
3. Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 200.
4. Dietrich Gerhard, *Old Europe: A Study of Continuity, 1000–1800* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), pp. 124–125.
5. Frederic C. Lane, *Venice and History: The Collected Papers of Frederic C. Lane* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966, originally 1942).
6. Edward Ames and Richard T. Rapp, “The Birth and Death of Taxes: A Hypothesis,” *Journal of Economic History* 37 (1977): 161–178.
7. Douglass C. North and Robert Paul Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World: A New Economic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

54. THE POLITICIZATION OF LIFE

Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (b. 1942) has become an increasingly influential thinker for contemporary social theorists of contemporary politics. Rooted in the classics of philosophy—particularly Aristotle—his thinking has also been shaped by such twentieth-century figures as Martin Heidegger, Walter Benjamin (see selection 61 herein), Carl Schmitt, and, as the beginning of this selection indicates, Michel Foucault (see selection 73). This excerpt derives from what is Agamben’s most widely referenced work, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, which first appeared in Italian in 1995. The term *homo sacer* refers to a person in Roman law who, due to particular offenses, was set apart from the law. This is a person consigned to what he calls “bare life,” which in contrast to the political being characteristic of the citizen is indicative of being reduced to the body which is subject to various technologies of power. In this regard, Agamben builds on Foucault’s idea of biopolitics, arguing that if bare life was the exception in ancient Rome, it has become normative in modern politics.

1.1 In the last years of his life, while he was working on the history of sexuality and unmasking the deployments of power at work within it, Michel Foucault began to direct his inquiries with increasing insistence toward the study of what he defined as *biopolitics*, that is, the growing inclusion of man’s natural life in the mechanisms and calculations of power. At the end of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault, as we have seen, summarizes the process by which life, at the beginning of the modern age, comes to be what is at stake in politics: “For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics calls his existence as a living being into question.” Until the very end, however, Foucault continued to investigate the “processes of subjectivization” that, in the passage from the ancient to the modern world, bring the individual to objectify his own self, constituting himself as a subject and, at the same time, binding himself to a power of external control. Despite what one might have legitimately expected, Foucault never brought his insights to bear

on what could well have appeared to be the exemplary place of modern biopolitics: the politics of the great totalitarian states of the twentieth century. The inquiry that began with a reconstruction of the *grand enfermement* in hospitals and prisons did not end with an analysis of the concentration camp.

If, on the other hand, the pertinent studies that Hannah Arendt dedicated to the structure of totalitarian states in the postwar period have a limit, it is precisely the absence of any biopolitical perspective. Arendt very clearly discerns the link between totalitarian rule and the particular condition of life that is the camp: “The supreme goal of all totalitarian states,” she writes, in a plan for research on the concentration camps, which, unfortunately, was not carried through, “is not only the freely admitted, long-ranging ambition to global rule, but also the never admitted and immediately realized attempt at total domination. The concentration camps are the laboratories in the experiment of total domination, for human nature being what it is, this goal can be achieved only under the extreme circumstances of

Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, Giorgio Agamben. pp. 119–125. Copyright 1998 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University. ♦

human made hell" (*Essays*, p. 240). Yet what escapes Arendt is that the process is in a certain sense the inverse of what she takes it to be, and that precisely the radical transformation of politics into the realm of bare life (that is, into a camp) legitimated and necessitated total domination. Only because politics in our age had been entirely transformed into biopolitics was it possible for politics to be constituted as totalitarian politics to a degree hitherto unknown.

The fact that the two thinkers who may well have reflected most deeply on the political problem of our age were unable to link together their own insights is certainly an index of the difficulty of this problem. The concept of "bare life" or "sacred life" is the focal lens through which we shall try to make their points of view converge. In the notion of bare life the interlacing of politics and life has become so tight that it cannot easily be analyzed. Until we become aware of the political nature of bare life and its modern avatars (biological life, sexuality, etc.), we will not succeed in clarifying the opacity at their center. Conversely, once modern politics enters into an intimate symbiosis with bare life, it loses the intelligibility that still seems to us to characterize the juridico-political foundation of classical politics.

* * *

1.2. Karl Löwith was the first to define the fundamental character of totalitarian states as a "politicization of life" and, at the same time, to note the curious contiguity between democracy and totalitarianism:

Since the emancipation of the third estate, the formation of bourgeois democracy and its transformation into mass industrial democracy, the neutralization of politically relevant differences and postponement of a decision about them has developed to the point of turning into its opposite: a total politicization [*totale Politisierung*] of everything, even of seemingly neutral domains of life. Thus in Marxist Russia there emerged a worker-state that was "more intensively state-oriented than any absolute monarchy"; in fascist Italy, a corporate state normatively regulating not only national work, but also "after-work" [*Dopolavoro*] and all spiritual life; and, in National Socialist Germany, a wholly integrated state, which, by means of racial laws and so forth, politicizes even the life that had until then been private. (*Der okkasionelle Dezionismus*, p. 33)

The contiguity between mass democracy and totalitarian states, nevertheless, does not have the form of a sudden transformation (as Löwith, here following in Schmitt's footsteps, seems to maintain); before impetuously coming to light in our century, the river of biopolitics that gave *homo sacer* his life runs its course in a hidden but continuous fashion. It is almost as if, starting from a certain point, every decisive political event were double-sided: the spaces, the liberties, and the rights won by individuals in their conflicts with central powers always simultaneously prepared a tacit but increasing inscription of individuals' lives within the state order, thus offering a new and more dreadful foundation for the very sovereign power from which they wanted to liberate themselves. "The 'right' to life," writes Foucault, explaining the importance assumed by sex as a political issue, "to one's body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs and, beyond all the oppressions or 'alienation,' the 'right' to rediscover what one is and all that one can be, this 'right'—which the classical juridical system was utterly incapable of comprehending—was the political response to all these new procedures of power" (*La volonté*, p. 191). The fact is that one and the same affirmation of bare life leads, in bourgeois democracy, to a primacy of the private over the public and of individual liberties over collective obligations and yet becomes, in totalitarian states, the decisive political criterion and the exemplary realm of sovereign decisions. And only because biological life and its needs had become the *politically* decisive fact is it possible to understand the otherwise incomprehensible rapidity with which twentieth-century parliamentary democracies were able to turn into totalitarian states and with which this century's totalitarian states were able to be converted, almost without interruption, into parliamentary democracies. In both cases, these transformations were produced in a context in which for quite some time politics had already turned into biopolitics, and in which the only real question to be decided was which form of organization would be best suited to the task of assuring the care, control, and use of bare life. Once their fundamental referent becomes bare life, traditional political distinctions (such as those between Right and Left, liberalism and totalitarianism, private and public) lose their clarity and intelligibility and enter into a zone of indistinction.

The ex-communist ruling classes' unexpected fall into the most extreme racism (as in the Serbian program of "ethnic cleansing") and the rebirth of new forms of fascism in Europe also have their roots here.

Along with the emergence of biopolitics, we can observe a displacement and gradual expansion beyond the limits of the decision on bare life, in the state of exception, in which sovereignty consisted. If there is a line in every modern state marking the point at which the decision on life becomes a decision on death, and biopolitics can turn into thanatopolitics, this line no longer appears today as a stable border dividing two clearly distinct zones. This line is now in motion and gradually moving into areas other than that of political life, areas in which the sovereign is entering into an ever more intimate symbiosis not only with the jurist but also with the doctor, the scientist, the expert, and the priest. In the pages that follow, we shall try to show that certain events that are fundamental for the political history of modernity (such as the declaration of rights), as well as others that seem instead to represent an incomprehensible intrusion of biogenico-scientific principles into the political order (such as National Socialist eugenics and its elimination of "life that is unworthy of being lived," or the contemporary debate on the normative determination of death criteria), acquire their true sense only if they are brought back to the common biopolitical (or thanatopolitical) context to which they belong. From this perspective, the camp—as the pure, absolute, and impassable biopolitical space (insofar as it is founded solely on the state of exception)—will appear as the hidden paradigm of the political space of modernity, whose metamorphoses and disguises we will have to learn to recognize.

1.3. The first recording of bare life as the new political subject is already implicit in the document that is generally placed at the foundation of modern democracy: the 1679 writ of *habeas corpus*. Whatever the origin of this formula, used as early as the eighteenth century to assure the physical presence of a person before a court of justice, it is significant that at its center is neither the old subject of feudal relations and liberties nor the future *citoyen*, but rather a pure and simple *corpus*. When John the Landless conceded Magna Carta to his subjects in 1215, he turned his

attention to the "archbishops, bishops, abbots, counts, barons, viscounts, provosts, officials and bailiffs," to the "cities, towns, villages," and, more generally, to the "free men of our kingdom," so that they might enjoy "their ancient liberties and free customs" as well as the ones he now specifically recognized. Article 29, whose task was to guarantee the physical freedom of the subjects, reads: "No free man [*homo liber*] may be arrested, imprisoned, dispossessed of his goods, or placed outside the law [*utlagetur*] or molested in any way; we will not place our hands on him nor will have others place their hands on him [*nec super eum ibimis, nec super eum mittimus*], except after a legal judgment by his peers according to the law of the realm." Analogously, an ancient writ that preceded the *habeas corpus* and was understood to assure the presence of the accused in a trial bears the title *de homine replegiando* (or *replegiando*).

Consider instead the formula of the writ that the act of 1679 generalizes and makes into law: *Praecipimus tibi quod Corpus X, in custodia vestra detentum, ut dicitur, una cum causa captionis et detentionis, quodcumque nomine idem X censeatur in eadem, habeas coram nobis, apud Westminster, ad subjiciendum*, "We command that you have before us to show, at Westminster, that body X, by whatsoever name he may be called therein, which is held in your custody, as it is said, as well as the cause of the arrest and the detention." Nothing allows one to measure the difference between ancient and medieval freedom and the freedom at the basis of modern democracy better than this formula. It is not the free man and his statutes and prerogatives, nor even simply *homo*, but rather *corpus* that is the new subject of politics. And democracy is born precisely as the assertion and presentation of this "body": *habeas corpus ad subjiciendum*, "you will have to have a body to show."

The fact that, of all the various jurisdictional regulations concerned with the protection of individual freedom, it was *habeas corpus* that assumed the form of law and thus became inseparable from the history of Western democracy is surely due to mere circumstance. It is just as certain, however, that nascent European democracy thereby placed at the center of its battle against absolutism not *bios*, the qualified life of the citizen, but *zoē*—the bare, anonymous life that is as such taken into the sovereign ban ("the body of being taken . . .," as one still reads in one modern formulation of the writ, "by whatsoever name he may be called therein").

What comes to light in order to be exposed *apud Westminster* is, once again, the body of *homo sacer*, which is to say, bare life. This is modern democracy's strength and, at the same time, its inner contradiction: modern democracy does not abolish sacred life but rather shatters it and disseminates it into every individual body, making it into what is at stake in political conflict. And the root of modern democracy's secret biopolitical calling lies here: he who will appear later as the bearer of rights and, according to a curious oxymoron, as the new sovereign subject (*subiectus superanus*, in other words, what is below and, at the same time, most elevated) can only be constituted as such through the repetition of the sovereign exception and the isolation of *corpus*, bare life, in himself. If it is true that law needs a body in order to be in force, and if one can speak, in this sense, of "law's desire to have a body," democracy responds to this desire by compelling law to assume the care of this body. This ambiguous (or polar) character of democracy appears even more clearly in the *habeas corpus* if one considers the fact that the same legal procedure that was originally intended to assure the presence of the accused at the trial and, therefore, to keep the accused from avoiding judgment, turns—in its new and definitive form—into grounds for the sheriff to detain and exhibit the body of the accused. *Corpus* is a two-faced being, the bearer both of subjection to sovereign power and of individual liberties.

This new centrality of the "body" in the sphere of politico-juridical terminology thus coincides with the

more general process by which *corpus* is given such a privileged position in the philosophy and science of the Baroque age, from Descartes to Newton, from Leibniz to Spinoza. And yet in political reflection *corpus* always maintains a close tie to bare life, even when it becomes the central metaphor of the political community, as in *Leviathan* or *The Social Contract*. Hobbes's use of the term is particularly instructive in this regard. If it is true that in *De homine* he distinguishes man's natural body from his political body (*homo enim non modo corpus naturale est, sed etiam civitatis, id est, ut ita loquar, corporis politici pars*, "Man is not only a natural body, but also a body of the city, that is, of the so-called political part" [*De homine*, p. 1]), in the *De cive* it is precisely the body's capacity to be killed that founds both the natural equality of men and the necessity of the "Commonwealth":

If we look at adult men and consider the fragility of the unity of the human body (whose ruin marks the end of every strength, vigor, and force) and the ease with which the weakest man can kill the strongest man, there is no reason for someone to trust in his strength and think himself superior to others by nature. Those who can do the same things to each other are equals. And those who can do the supreme thing—that is, kill—are by nature equal among themselves. (*De cive*, p. 93)

The great metaphor of the Leviathan, whose body is formed out of all the bodies of individuals, must be read in this light. The absolute capacity of the subjects' bodies to be killed forms the new political body of the West.

55. HOW WILL CAPITALISM END?

Wolfgang Streeck (b. 1946) is a German sociologist currently serving as director of the Max Planck Institute for Social Research in Cologne. Although most of his career has been based in his native Germany, he spent seven years at the University of Wisconsin–Madison working on the sociology of industrial relations. In this excerpt from his 2016 book, *How Will Capitalism End?* Streeck argues that capitalism is rapidly unraveling—reflected in the deleterious consequences of neoliberal economic policies for the past four decades, the erosion of democracy, endemic levels of elite corruption, the demoralization of citizens, and the looming ecological crisis. However, unlike socialists of yore, he does not see a viable alternative on the horizon. The result is what Streeck calls the “age of entropy,” in which the social order forces people to fend for themselves in individualistic ways, which he identifies as “*coping, hoping, doping, and shopping.*”

INTERREGNUM

Is capitalism coming to an end? The problem is, while we see it disintegrating before our eyes, we see no successor approaching. As indicated, by disintegration I mean an already far advanced decline of the capacity of capitalism as an economic regime to underwrite a stable society. Capitalist society is disintegrating, but not under the impact of an organized opposition fighting it in the name of a better social order. Rather it disintegrates from within, from the success of capitalism and the internal contradictions intensified by that success, and from capitalism having overrun its opponents and in the process become more capitalist than is good for it. Low growth, grotesque inequality and mountains of debt; the neutralization of post-war capitalism’s progress engine, democracy, and its replacement with oligarchic neo-feudalism; the clearing away by ‘globalization’ of social barriers against the commodification of labour, land and money; and systemic disorders such as infectious corruption in the competitive struggle for ever bigger rewards for individual success, with the attendant culture of demoralization, and rapidly spreading international anarchy—all these

together have profoundly destabilized the post-war capitalist way of social life, without a hint as to how stability might ever be restored.

Why, if capitalism is going out, is there no new social order waiting to succeed it? A social order breaks down if and when its elites are no longer able to maintain it; but for it to be cleared away there have to be new elites able to design and eager to install a new order. Obviously the incumbent management of advanced and not-so-advanced capitalism is uniquely clueless: consider the senseless production of money to stimulate growth in the real economy; the desperate attempts to restore inflation with the help of negative interest rates; and the apparently inexorable coming apart of the modern state system on its periphery.¹ But there is also the absence of a vision of a practically possible progressive future, of a renewed industrial or new post-industrial society developing further and at the same time replacing the capitalist society of today. Not just capital and its running dogs but also their various oppositions lack a capacity to act collectively. Just as capitalism’s movers and shakers do not know how to protect their society from decay, and in any case would lack the

Wolfgang Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?* Essays on a Failing System, Verso, 2016, pp. 35–46. ♦

means to do so, their enemies, when it comes to the crunch, have to admit that they have no idea of how to replace neoliberal capitalism with something else—see the Greek SYRIZA government and its capitulation in 2015 when the ‘Eurogroup’ began to play hardball and SYRIZA, to mix metaphors, was forced to show its hand.

Before capitalism will go to hell, then, it will for the foreseeable future hang in limbo, dead or about to die from an overdose of itself but still very much around, as nobody will have the power to move its decaying body out of the way. *Pace* Wallerstein, the final Manichaean battle between Davos and Porto Alegre is not about to happen in the foreseeable future. Much more likely, we are facing a long period of systemic disintegration, in which social structures become unstable and unreliable, and therefore uninformative for those living in them. A society of this kind that leaves its members alone is, as noted above, less than a society. The social order of capitalism would then issue, not in another order, but in disorder, or entropy—in a historical epoch of uncertain duration when, in the words of Antonio Gramsci, ‘the old is dying but the new cannot yet be born’, ushering in ‘an interregnum in which pathological phenomena of the most diverse sort come into existence’²—in a society devoid of reasonably coherent and minimally stable institutions capable of normalizing the lives of its members and protecting them from accidents and monstrosities of all sorts. Life in a society of this kind demands constant improvisation, forcing individuals to substitute strategy for structure, and offers rich opportunities to oligarchs and warlords while imposing uncertainty and insecurity on all others, in some ways like the long interregnum that began in the fifth century CE and is now called the Dark Age.

Summing up so far, the historical period after the end, inflicted by capitalism, of capitalist society will be one lacking collective political capacities, making it a long and indecisive transition, a time of crisis as the new normal, a crisis that is neither transformative nor adaptive, and unable either to restore capitalism to equilibrium or to replace it with something better. Deep changes will occur, rapidly and continuously, but they will be unpredictable and in any case ungovernable. Western capitalism will decay, but non-Western capitalism will not take its place, certainly not on a

global scale, and neither will Western non-capitalism. As to non-Western capitalism, China will for many reasons not be able to take over as capitalism’s historical host and provide an orderly global environment for its further progress. Nor will there be a co-directorate of China and the United States amicably dividing between them the task of making the world safe for capitalism. And concerning non-capitalism, there is no such thing today as a global socialist movement, comparable to the socialisms that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries so successfully confronted capitalism in national power struggles. As long as the capitalist dynamism continues to outrun collective order-making and the building of non-market institutions, as it has for several decades now, it disempowers both capitalism’s government and its opposition, with the result that capitalism can be neither reborn nor replaced.

AN AGE OF ENTROPY

At the micro-level of society, systemic disintegration and the resulting structural indeterminacy translate into an under-institutionalized way of life, a life in the shadow of uncertainty, always at risk of being upset by surprise events and unpredictable disturbances and dependent on individuals’ resourcefulness, skillful improvisation, and good luck. Ideologically, life in an under-governed society of this sort can be glorified as a life in liberty, unconstrained by rigid institutions and autonomously constructed through voluntary agreements among consenting individuals freely pursuing their idiosyncratic preferences. The problem with this neoliberal narrative is, of course, that it neglects the very unequal distribution of risks, opportunities, gains and losses that comes with de-socialized capitalism, including the ‘Matthew effect’³ of cumulative advantage. This raises the question why the neoliberal life associated with the post-capitalist interregnum is not more powerfully opposed, indeed how it can enjoy as much apparent support as it does—a question that is not satisfactorily answered with reference to the structural and regional fragmentation of anti-capitalist opposition under conditions of ‘globalization’.

It is here that ‘culture’ comes in, which seems to grow the more important for social order the less instructive the institutions become that would otherwise

normalize social intercourse. Without supportive institutions, the burden of organizing everyday life is moved from the macro-to the micro-level, meaning that the onus of securing a minimum of stability and certainty—of creating a modicum of social order—is shifting to the individual.⁴ The behavioral programme of the *post-social society* during the *post-capitalist interregnum* is governed by a neoliberal ethos of competitive self-improvement, of untiring cultivation of one's marketable human capital, enthusiastic dedication to work, and cheerfully optimistic, playful acceptance of the risks inherent in a world that has outgrown government. That this programme is dutifully implemented is essential, as the reproduction of the *post-capitalist society lite* hangs on the thin thread of an accommodating repertoire of individual action filling the widening gaps in the society's systemic architecture. Structuralist critique of *false institutions* may therefore have to be complemented by a renewed culturalist critique of *false consciousness*. What may also become relevant here is the old topic of the relationship between *social structure and social character*, as treated, among others, by Hans Gerth and Charles Wright Mills.⁵ Here, the question is how a given social structure both requires and, as long as it lasts, produces a corresponding character among its occupants. In this tradition, I will in the following take a first cut at an initial phenomenology of the social character that corresponds to the absence of institutional supports under the present interregnum, helping to extend the duration of the latter by providing for a semblance of social integration and legitimacy. I begin by drawing attention to two key terms that have recently become fashionable in political-economic discourse, *disruption* and *resilience*, and then turn to a brief outline of four central features of the behavioural pattern that, it would appear, is required for delaying the final breakdown of under-governed post-capitalism.

What disruption and resilience have in common, in addition to their steep ascent as catchwords characterizing basic features of life in an age of social entropy, is that they carry at the same time ominous and auspicious connotations. While *disruption* has traditionally been associated with unanticipated, destructive and even violent discontinuity—with *disaster* for those affected by it—it is now to stand for radical

economic and social *innovation*, and indeed the only innovation left to make a difference, as it attacks and destroys in particular firms and markets that operate to everybody's satisfaction.⁶ Innovation that is not in this sense disruptive is not innovative enough as it respects too much of the old and may even be concerned, or politically constrained, not to cause too many casualties. It is therefore doomed to be overtaken in the competitive struggles of the contemporary marketplace, where it is not enough for something to *work* if something else promises higher *profits*. Disruption may be considered the neoliberal version of 'creative destruction': more ruthless, more out-of-the-blue, and less willing to take prisoners or accept delay in order to be 'socially compatible'. While for those at the receiving end disruptive innovation can be catastrophic, regrettably they have to be sacrificed as collateral damage on the Darwinian battlefield of global capitalism.

Resilience is the other term on the rise, having recently been imported into social science and policy from bacteriology, engineering and psychology.⁷ In the political economy literature the term is, confusingly at first glance, used both for the capacities of individuals and groups to withstand the onslaught of neoliberalism,⁸ and for the ability of neoliberalism as a social order, or disorder, to persist in spite of its theoretical poverty and practical failure to prevent or repair its own collapse in 2008.⁹ While the two meanings may seem to be opposed to each other, this may not necessarily be so, as the practices that make it possible for individuals to survive under neoliberalism may also help neoliberalism itself to survive. Note that resilience is not resistance but, more or less voluntary, adaptive adjustment. The more resilience individuals manage to develop at the micro-level of everyday life, the less demand will there be for collective action at the macro-level to contain the uncertainties produced by market forces—a demand that neoliberalism could and would not fill.¹⁰

Social life in an age of entropy is by necessity individualistic.¹¹ As collective institutions are eroded by market forces, accidents are to be expected any time, while collective agency to prevent them is lost. Everybody is reduced to fending for themselves, with *saave qui peut* as the foundational principle of social life. Individualization of risk breeds individualization of

protection, by competitive effort ('hard work') and, if at all, private insurance—or, interestingly, by older, pre-modern social ties like family.¹² In the absence of collective institutions, social structures must be devised individually bottom-up, anticipating and accommodating top-down pressures from 'the markets'. Social life consists of individuals building networks of private connections around themselves, as best they can with the means they happen to have in hand. Person-centred relation-making creates lateral social structures that are voluntary and contract-like, which makes them flexible but perishable, requiring continuous 'networking' to keep them together and adjust them on a current basis to changing circumstances. An ideal tool for this are the 'new social media' that produce social structures for individuals, substituting voluntary for obligatory forms of social relations, and *networks of users for communities of citizens*.¹³

What keeps an entropic, disorderly, stalemated post-capitalist interregnum society going, in the absence of collective regulation containing economic crises, limiting inequality, securing confidence in currency and credit, protecting labour, land and money from overuse, and procuring legitimacy for free markets and private property through democratic control of greed and prevention of oligarchic conversion of economic into political power? In a world without system integration, social integration has to carry the entire burden of structuration, as long as no new order begins to settle in. The de-socialized capitalism of the interregnum hinges on the improvised performances of structurally self-centered, socially disorganized and politically disempowered individuals. Four broad types of behaviours are required of the 'users' of post-capitalist social networks for the precarious reproduction of their entropic social life, bestowing resilience both on themselves and on an otherwise unsustainable neoliberal capitalism, summarily and provisionally to be identified as *coping*, *hoping*, *doping* and *shopping*.¹⁴ Briefly and in need of much elaboration, *coping* refers to the way individuals respond with ever-new improvisations and stopgaps to the successive emergencies inflicted on them by an under-governed social environment and its unpredictable and ungovernable fluctuations—emergencies which they have to expect as normal and to which they must

learn to resign themselves as to facts of life.¹⁵ While coping may involve sometimes extreme individual exertion, it does not include organization for collective redress, as this is perceived to be useless and, also and increasingly, for losers only.¹⁶ Coping tends to come with a social construction of life as an ongoing test of one's stamina, inventiveness, patience, optimism and self-confidence—of one's cultivated ability to live up to what has become a social obligation to struggle with adversity on one's own and in eternally good spirits.

Successful coping is assisted by confident *hoping*. Hoping is defined here as an individual mental effort to imagine and believe in a better life waiting for oneself in a not-so-distant, possible future, whatever writing may be on the wall. One could also speak of 'dreaming', in the way the word is used in American political and cultural discourse, where to have a dream for oneself is a moral duty that comes with being a member of the community, perhaps the last remaining duty under liberal individualism, regardless of the circumstances in which one may currently be living. Dreams are allowed and even encouraged to be unrealistic, and trying to talk someone out of his or her dream is considered rude, crude and socially unacceptable, however hopelessly naïve that dream may ever be. In the United States, the sacrosanct nature of dreams, never to be critically assessed, may be the most powerful impediment to political radicalization and collective action.¹⁷ Hoping and dreaming require an optimistic outlook, and life under social entropy elevates being optimistic to the status of a public virtue and civic responsibility. In fact, one can say that even more than capitalism in its heyday, the entropic society of disintegrated, de-structured and under-governed post-capitalism depends on its ability to hitch itself onto the natural desire of people not to feel desperate, while defining pessimism as a socially harmful personal deficiency.

This is, thirdly, where *doping* comes in. Doping helps with both coping and hoping, and it takes many forms. Where it involves substance use and abuse, one may distinguish two kinds, performance-enhancing and performance-replacing. Performance-enhancing drugs are taken whenever the rewards of success are high, obviously in the winner-take-all markets of today's showbusiness, including sports. But they are also

used far down the income scale in middle-class professional and occupational life where competitive pressures have been intensifying for decades, as well as in educational institutions where test results may decide a person's future career and earnings prospects. Here as elsewhere, doping is closely connected to corruption. Most of the substances used to enhance performance one way or other are highly profitable legal products of the pharmaceutical industry. Performance-replacing drugs, on the other hand, as consumed by the losers, are mostly illegal, supplied by criminal operators linked to worldwide trading networks.¹⁸ Lower-class users are often sent to prison and die in comparatively large numbers from overdose.¹⁹ Middle-class users, and in particular top performers, have not only better medical assistance but can also expect more lenient treatment from law enforcement agencies. This is likely to be because using drugs, even illegal ones, to increase ones productivity—as distinguished from generating unearned happiness in underclass dropouts—is more easily forgiven in a world dependent for capital accumulation on ever-increasing individual exertion. Indeed, if pop musicians and actors were imprisoned for drug abuse at the same rate as street corner heroin consumers, many movies and music recordings would have to be produced behind bars; the same might apply to the trading of financial assets. Cross-cutting the distinction between performance-enhancing and performance-replacing drug use is, incidentally, the daily provision of *synthetic happiness* to an astonishingly large number of customers by means of ecstatic-euphoric feel-good pop music, individually delivered and consumed with the help of advanced information technology.

Finally, *shopping*. It doesn't need repeating that today's markets for consumer goods in the rich capitalist countries are by and large saturated, making it essential for capitalist profitability to get individuals whose needs are covered to develop desires that give rise to new *desires* the moment they are fulfilled.²⁰ Product design and advertisement are instrumental for this,²¹ but also low prices as made possible by the sweatshops of today, out-of-sight of final consumers and out-of-reach for collective solidarity. Competitive consumerism under the dictates of continuously changing and rising standards of appropriate consumption also secures the motivation to work hard and harder,²²

for only a constant or even a declining income, and to submit to the strict discipline of the contemporary labour market and labour process. That pressure is reinforced when consumers use credit to acquire, for example, a new flat-screen TV or the latest model SUV. At this point banks join employers as enforcers of capitalist work discipline. Social relations are redefined as relations of consumption when shopping becomes the occasion of choice to socialize with friends and family and the status of an individual in society is defined by his or her status as consumer in the economy. Product differentiation in particular, made possible by new production technology as well as new methods of advertisement, especially in the new, allegedly 'social', media, produces a kind of social integration that allows for a combined sense of individual singularity and collective identity in a community of customers, united in the consumption of continuously upgraded individualized commodities.

Summing up, social life and capital accumulation in the post-capitalist interregnum depend on individuals-as-consumers adhering to a culture of *competitive hedonism*, one that makes a virtue out of the necessity of having to struggle with adversity and uncertainty on one's own. For capital accumulation to continue under post-capitalism, that culture must make hoping and dreaming obligatory, mobilizing hopes and dreams to sustain production and fuel consumption in spite of low growth, rising inequality and growing indebtedness. It must also provide technical assistance enabling people to keep themselves *unreasonably happy*, while at the same time producing a stream of incentives and satisfactions motivating them to constantly intensify their work effort regardless of stagnant or declining pay, unpaid overtime and precarious employment.²³ Capitalism without system integration requires a labour market and labour process capable of sustaining a *neo-Protestant work* ethic alongside socially obligatory hedonistic consumerism. Enthusiastic hard work must be culturally defined and recognized as test and proof of individual value, corresponding to a meritocratic worldview that explains inequality with differences in effort or ability. For hedonism not to undermine productive discipline, as none less than Daniel Bell²⁴ was confident would happen, the attractions of consumerism must be complemented with a

fear of social descent, while non-consumerist gratifications available outside of the money economy must be discounted and discredited. All of this presupposes the presence of a broad middle class willing to seek social integration through the labour market, accepting as a matter of course expectations of employers for full identification with whatever jobs they may be assigned and taking for granted the need for social life to respect the primacy of dedicated work and the pursuit of, it is hoped, life-structuring careers.²⁵

Capital accumulation after the end of capitalist system integration hangs on a thin thread: on the effectiveness, as long as it lasts, of the social integration of individuals into a capitalist culture of consumption and production. Institutional supports having fallen into disarray, post-capitalist capital accumulation depends on culture lagging behind structure, or substituting for a structure that has long dissolved, and on the difficulties of an alternative culture developing under the combined pressures of fragmented competition and precarious, all-too-easily lost access to the means of production and consumption. Ideology, in particular the exaltation of a life in uncertainty as a

life in liberty, is of central importance here. Neoliberal ideological narratives offer a euphemistic reinterpretation of the breakdown of structured order as the arrival of a free society built on individual autonomy, and of de-institutionalization as historical progress out of an *empire of necessity* into an *empire of freedom*. For the interregnum to continue, those living in it must be continuously exhorted to experience the debris of what was once a capitalist society as an adventure playground for them to demonstrate their personal resourcefulness and with good luck get rich. With collective institutions disabled, disorder must be made to appear as spontaneous order based on individual rational choice and individual rights, free from collective rules and obligations. It is only when the manufacturing of ideological enthusiasm for a neoliberal everybody-for-themselves existence will no longer work, perhaps in the course of a major crisis in middle-class employment, as predicted by Collins, or generally when the prevailing disorder will begin on a large scale and seriously to frustrate individual projects and ambitions, that the post-capitalist interregnum may come to an end and a new order may emerge.

NOTES

1. Here the source of systemic entropy is the weakening position of the United States as the political host of global capitalist expansion, as pointed out by Wallerstein among others. Historically, capitalism always advanced on the coat-tails of a strong, hegemonic state opening up and preparing new landscapes for growth, through military force or free trade or, typically, both. Political preparation for capitalist development included not just the breaking-up of pre-or anti-capitalist social orders, but also the creation of new, 'modern' societies supportive of economic progress through private capital accumulation. After 1945, this meant the establishment of a global system of secular states with a 'development' agenda, sovereign but integrated in an international free trade regime. Also on the agenda was the 'containment' and, if necessary and possible, suppression of alternative, oppositional systems, a programme that at first glance had come to its victorious completion in 1989. In fact, however, it turned out that the United States, while still able to destroy enemy regimes, had lost the capacity to replace them with stable pro-American and pro-capitalist regimes: *the hegemon losing its constructive powers while retaining its destructive ones*. The causes of this cannot be explored here; one can assume, however, that they include the demonstration effect of the defeats suffered by the United States in successive wars, as well as declining domestic support for what is now considered foreign 'adventures' by a majority of U.S. citizens. 'Nation-building' having failed in large parts of the world, the global system of sovereign development-friendly free-trade states as originally envisaged shows growing holes and gaps, with *failed states* as a permanent source of unpredictable

and unmanageable political and economic disorder. In many of them, fundamentalist religious movements have taken control, rejecting modernism and international law and seeking an alternative to consumerist capitalism, which they can no longer expect to replicate in their countries. Others, having given up hope in peaceful capitalist development at home, are trying to become part of advanced capitalism by migrating from the periphery to the centre. There they meet with second-generation immigrants who have given up on ever becoming part of the capitalist-consumerist mainstream of their societies. One result is another migration, this time of the violence that is destroying the stateless societies of the periphery into the metropolis, in the form of the 'terrorism' of a new class of 'primitive rebels'.

2. From the *Prison Notebooks*: 'La crisi consiste nel fatto che il vecchio muore e il nuovo non può nascere . . . in questo interregno si verificano i fenomeni morbosi più svariati'.
3. Robert K. Merton, 'The Matthew Effect in Science', *Science*, vol. 159, no. 3810, 1968, pp. 56–63.
4. And social theory shifts, or drifts, from institutionalism to rational choice, to the extent that it desires to be affirmative, or to biological behaviourism.
5. Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *Character and Social Structure: The Psychology of Social Institutions*, New York: Harcourt, Brace 1953.
6. The term was invented by Clayton Christensen (*The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail*, Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press 1997) and subsequently became vastly popular among business school academics and managers. For a critical assessment see Jill Lepore, 'The Disruption Machine: What the gospel of innovation gets wrong', *New Yorker*, 23 June 2014. In management discourse, the concept is associated especially with platform firms like Uber, Airbnb and Amazon, which have in common that they have ceased to offer their workers regular employment. According to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, disruption has in 2015, with the usual delay, arrived in Germany as the leading management buzzword: 'Nicht mehr zu zählen sind die Bücher, Reden, Studien zu dem Thema. Regelmäßig werden die, Disrupter des Jahres' ausgezeichnet. Marketing-Leute können sich besoffen reden über die 'digital disruption', gewöhnliche Beratungsfirmen gönnen sich den Zusatz 'The Disruption Consultancy . . . Nicht mal Praktikanten sind sonst noch anzulocken: Ready to disrupt? Dann komm zu uns', wirbt ein Arbeitgeber in der Hauptstadt'. (Georg Meck and Bettina Weigunt, 'Disrupton, Baby Disruption!', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 27 December 2015, faz.net, last accessed 1 January 2016.)
7. To sample a flavour of the hype around the term, as well as of the real-world condition to which its ascent responds, here is an extract from the Wikipedia article, 'Resilience (organizational)', [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resilience_\(organizational\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resilience_(organizational)), last accessed 1 January 2016: 'In recent years, a new consensus of the concept of resilience emerged as a practical response to the decreasing lifespan of organisations and the [*sic*] from key stakeholders, including boards, governments, regulators, shareholders, staff, suppliers and customers to effectively address the issues of security, preparedness, risk, and survivability.
 1. Being resilient is a proactive and determined attitude to remain a thriving enterprise (country, region, organization or company) despite the anticipated and unanticipated challenges that will emerge;
 2. Resilience moves beyond a defensive security and protection posture and applies the entity's inherent strength to withstand crisis and deflect attacks of any nature;
 3. Resilience is the empowerment of being aware of your situation, your risks, vulnerabilities and current capabilities to deal with them, and being able to make informed tactical and strategic decisions; and,

4. Resilience is an objectively measurable competitive differentiator (i.e., more secure, increased stakeholder and shareholder value).

[. . .] Prominent members in the United States Congress are embracing resilience. The Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, Bennie Thompson (D-MS) declared May 2008 “Resilience Month” as the committee and its subcommittees held a series of hearings to examine the issue. President Obama and the Department of Homeland Security have also made resilience an integral component of homeland security policy. The Quadrennial Homeland Security Review, released by the Department of Homeland Security in February 2010, made resilience a prominent theme and one of the core missions of the U.S. homeland security enterprise.’

8. Peter Hall and Michèle Lamont, eds, *Social Resilience in the Neoliberal Era*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2013.
9. Vivien A. Schmidt and Mark Thatcher, eds, *Resilient Liberalism in Europe’s Political Economy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2013; Aldo Madariaga, *The Political Economy of Neoliberal Resilience: Developmental Regimes in Latin America and Eastern Europe*, Doctoral Dissertation, Wirtschaftsund Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät, Universität zu Köln 2015.
10. Similar with infectious diseases: as resilience to malaria increases, there is no need any more to wipe out the carrier mosquitoes.
11. Its basic principles are cogently summarized in Margret Thatcher’s dictum, stated as an empirical claim but more adequately understood as a neoliberal project: ‘There is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families’. Interview for *Woman’s Own*, 23 September 1987, margareththatcher.org/document/106689, last accessed 21 January 2016.
12. Consider the indispensable unpaid contribution by grandmothers to the raising of small children in societies in which fulltime employment of mothers is socially and economically obligatory. Another case in point is unemployed young adults in Mediterranean countries who still live with their parents and, in the absence of effective unemployment insurance, on their parents’ pensions.
13. Fittingly, the electronic infrastructures of individualized social life are privately owned by huge, overwhelmingly American corporations. While they are dressed up as collective goods freely available to all, they are in reality highly profitable tools of social control rented out to, among others, vendors of consumer goods and services.
14. What follows is a brief idiosyncratic summary of some features of social life under neoliberalism, especially of what is expected of individuals struggling to survive its disorders. There is a broad literature on this already that I cannot discuss here (for many others Wendy Brown, ‘Neo-liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy’, *Theory and Event*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2003; Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, London: Palgrave Macmillan 2008; Johanna Bockman, *Markets in the Name of Socialism: The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2011; Colin Crouch, *The Strange Non-Death of Neoliberalism*, Cambridge: Polity Press 2011; Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval, *The New Way of the World: On Neo-Liberal Society*, London: Verso 2013; Steffen Mau, *Inequality, Marketization and the Majority Class: Why Did the European Middle Classes Accept Neo-Liberalism?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2015). My objective is only to draw attention to the crucial significance of action patterns at the micro-level compensating for institutional deficiencies during the end-of-capitalism interregnum.
15. These include precarious employment, to be celebrated as a positive incentive for competitive self-improvement and the building of an optimized entrepreneurial identity.

16. On this see, among many others, David Brooks on the so-called 'millennials', under the title of 'The Self-Reliant Generation', *New York Times*, 8 January 2016, nytimes.com last accessed 21 January 2016. Brooks summarizes the results of survey of eighteen-to twenty-nine-year-old Americans. To quote: 'You see an abstract celebration of creative transformation but a concrete hunger for order, security and stability. . . . Another glaring feature of millennial culture is they have been forced to be self-reliant and to take a loosely networked individualism as the normal order of the universe. Millennials have extremely low social trust. . . . They want systemic change but there is no compelling form of collective action available. . . . But there will be some giant cultural explosion down the road. You can't be as detached from solid supporting structures as millennials now are and lead a happy middle-aged life. Something is going to change.'
17. 'The most telling polling result from the 2000 election was from a *Time* magazine survey that asked people if they are in the top 1 percent of earners. Nineteen percent of Americans say they are in the richest 1 percent and a further 20 percent expect to be someday. So right away you have 39 percent of Americans who thought that when Mr. Gore savaged a plan that favored the top 1 percent, he was taking a direct shot at them.' David Brooks, 'The Triumph of Hope Over Self-Interest', *New York Times*, 12 January 2003, nytimes.com, last accessed 31 December 2015.
18. Although underclass drug users are kept desirably apathetic and politically incapacitated by their habit, they are the target of harsh law enforcement measures, and so are their suppliers. The reason may be that performance-replacing drugs, although they effectively disorganize the underclass as a potential political force, could subvert the competitive achievement ethic on which capitalism vitally depends. In fact, the United States government is prepared to destroy entire states in Latin America in an effort, wholly futile, to stop the inflow of hard drugs into its inner cities. In a country like Afghanistan, of course, the production of heroin has multiplied under the eyes of the American occupation forces, due to the need for the latter to secure the cooperation of the local war-and-drug lords.
19. In 2013, 37,947 people died in the United States from drug abuse, of which a little less than 40 per cent had used illegal drugs. The number of drug-related deaths had steadily increased from 2001, when it was 12,678. In 2011 it for the first time exceeded the number of deaths from gun violence, which rose to 33,636 in 2013. Deaths from traffic accidents had declined in the same period, from 42,196 in 2001 to 32,719 in 2013. Data are from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, CNN and the U.S. State Department.
20. The prototypical desire that is intensified rather than reduced by its satisfaction, according to Sigmund Freud, is sex. This may explain the increasingly unapologetic employment of sexualized images in contemporary advertising, escalating since the 'sexual revolution' of the 1970s, feminist protests notwithstanding. Indeed, women no less than men seem to cherish pictures of naked bodies and the seductive flair they can apparently attach to just about any commodity.
21. A classic Marxian treatment of current developments, unfortunately not available in English, is Wolfgang Fritz Haug, *Kritik der Warenästhetik. Gefolgt von Warenästhetik im High-Tech-Kapitalismus*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 2009. See also Ch. 3, this volume, for an extended discussion of how today's consumerism turns citizens into clients and customers of private, capital-accumulating corporations.
22. Where the American version of conspicuous consumption (Veblen)—to 'keep up with the Jones's'—is topped by the more collective, 'groupist' neo-Asian one. There one has to have the expensive gimmick of the day, or if necessary has to undergo cosmetic surgery, in order not to

disgrace one's friends and family members, who may not want to be associated with someone not meeting the latest, 'Western' standards of visible prosperity and beauty.

23. Sabine Donauer, *Faktor Freude: Wie die Wirtschaft Arbeitsgefühle erzeugt*, Hamburg: edition Körber-Stiftung 2015.
24. Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, New York: Basic Books 1976.
25. It is precisely this category of people—the disciplined investors in ever more advanced educational degrees—whose employment prospects would be radically curtailed by a rise of artificial intelligence as predicted by Randall Collins (pp. 37–69 in Wallerstein et al., *Does Capitalism Have a Future?*). They are the core constituency of the post-capitalist interregnum, and their destruction would go to the very heart of the disorganized capitalism of today.

56. THE SOCIALIST COMPASS

In its obituary, *The New York Times* described Erik Olin Wright (1947–2019) as a “Marxist sociologist with a pragmatic approach.” A graduate of Harvard University, he completed his Ph.D. in sociology at the University of California, Berkeley. In 1976 he joined the sociology department at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and remained there until his death. His version of an undogmatic Marxism was rooted in rigorous empirical research. The primary focus of his theoretical work was on the class structure of contemporary capitalist societies. Linked to this was his search for real world solutions to the exploitative character of capitalism, using the A. E. Havens Center for Social Justice as a forum for like-minded scholars to generate policy ideas. He promoted such policies as a universal basic income and participatory budgeting and sought out models of what he considered to be real-world utopias—such as the Mondragon Corporation in Spain and Wikipedia. In this excerpt from *Envisioning Real Utopias* (2010), he implicitly critiques Streeck’s view (see the preceding entry) that no alternative to capitalism is forthcoming by sketching out the potential and the challenges to socialism in the twenty-first century.

THREE DOMAINS OF POWER AND INTERACTION: THE STATE, THE ECONOMY, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Efforts at formulating rigorous, foundational definitions of the economy, the state, and civil society as domains of social interaction and power quickly run into all sorts of conceptual difficulties.¹ Should the “economy,” for example, include all activities in which goods and services are produced, or only those that are mediated by the market? Should preparing a meal in the home be considered part of the “economy”? Should taking care of one’s own children be viewed as part of the economy, or only childcare services produced outside the home? Should the economy be defined by the *functions* it fulfills within a “social system” (e.g., the function of “adaptation,” as in Talcott Parson’s schema), by the *motives* of actors engaged in various activities (e.g., utility maximization under conditions of scarcity, as in neoclassical economics), by the *means* that actors use to pursue their goals (e.g.,

the use of money and other resources to satisfy interests), or by some other factor? Perhaps we should distinguish “economic activity” from “the economy”—the former can take place within any domain of social life, while the latter refers to a more specialized arena of activity within which economic activities are dominant. But then, what does “dominant” really mean?

To nail down these kinds of issues is an arduous matter and would, I believe, deflect us from our main task here. So, for present purposes I will define these three domains of social interaction in relatively conventional ways, bracketing these deeper problems of conceptualization:

The state is the cluster of institutions, more or less coherently organized, which imposes binding rules and regulations over a territory. Max Weber defined the state as an organization which effectively monopolizes the legitimate use of force over a territory.² I prefer Michael Mann’s alternative emphasis on the state as the organization with an administrative capacity to

Erik Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias*, Verso, 2010, pp. 118–128. Reprinted with permission of Verso. ♦

impose binding rules and regulations over territories.³ The legitimate use of force is one of the key ways this is accomplished, but it is not necessarily the most important way. *State power* is then defined as the effective capacity to impose rules and regulate social relations over territory, a capacity which depends on such things as information and communications infrastructure, the ideological commitments of citizens to obey rules and commands, the level of discipline of administrative officials, the practical effectiveness of the regulations to solve problems, as well as the monopoly over the legitimate use of coercion.

The economy is the sphere of social activity in which people interact to produce and distribute goods and services. In capitalism this activity involves privately owned firms in which production and distribution is mediated by market exchange. *Economic power* is based on the kinds of economically relevant resources different categories of social actors control and deploy within these interactions of production and distribution.

Civil society is the sphere of social interaction in which people voluntarily form associations of different sorts for various purposes.⁴ Some of these associations have the character of formal organizations with well-defined memberships and objectives. Clubs, political parties, labor unions, churches, and neighborhood associations would be examples. Others are looser associations, in the limiting case more like social networks than bounded organizations. The idea of a “community,” when it means something more than simply the aggregation of individuals living in a place, can also be viewed as a kind informal association within civil society. *Power in civil society* depends on capacities for collective action through such voluntary association, and can accordingly be referred to as “associational power” or “social power.”

The state, the economy, and civil society are all domains for extended social interaction, cooperation, and conflict among people, and each of them involves distinct sources of *power*. Actors within the economy have power by virtue of their ownership and control of economically relevant resources. Actors in the state have power by virtue of their control of rule making and rule enforcing capacity over territory, including coercive capacity. And actors in civil society have power by virtue of their ability to mobilize people for voluntary collective actions of various sorts.

A TYPOLOGY OF ECONOMIC STRUCTURES: CAPITALISM, STATISM, AND SOCIALISM

We can now turn to the key problem: differentiating capitalism, statism, and socialism. One way of thinking about the variations in the types of economic structures that currently exist or could exist in the future is to think about *variations in the ways power rooted in the economy, the state, and civil society shapes the way economic resources are allocated, controlled and used*. Capitalism, statism, and socialism are differentiated, in these terms, on the basis of the form of ownership over means of production and the type of power that determines economic activities:

Capitalism is an economic structure within which the means of production are privately owned and the allocation and use of resources for different social purposes is accomplished through the exercise of economic power. Investments and the control of production are the result of the exercise of economic power by owners of capital.

Statism is an economic structure within which the means of production are owned by the state and the allocation and use of resources for different social purposes is accomplished through the exercise of state power. State officials control the investment process and production through some sort of state-administrative mechanism. *Socialism* is an economic structure within which the means of production are socially owned and the allocation and use of resources for different social purposes is accomplished through the exercise of what can be termed “social power.” “Social power” is power rooted in the capacity to mobilize people for cooperative, voluntary collective actions of various sorts in civil society. This implies that civil society should not be viewed simply as an arena of activity, sociability, and communication, but also of real power. Social power is contrasted with *economic power*, based on the ownership and control of economic resources, and *state power*, based on the control of rule making and rule enforcing capacity over territory. The idea of “democracy,” in these terms, can be thought of as a specific way of linking social power and state power: in the ideal of democracy, state power is fully subordinated to and accountable to social power. The expression “rule by the people” does not really mean, “rule by

the atomized aggregation of the separate individuals of the society taken as isolated persons," but rather, rule by the people collectively organized into associations in various ways: parties, communities, unions, etc. Democracy is thus, inherently, a deeply socialist principle. If "democracy" is the label for the subordination of state power to social power, "socialism" is the term for the subordination of economic power to social power.

It is important to be clear about the conceptual field being mapped here: these are all types of economic structures, but only in capitalism is it the case that economically based power plays the predominant role in determining the use of economic resources.⁵ In statism and socialism a form of power distinct from the economy itself plays the dominant role in allocating economic resources for alternative uses. It is still the case, of course, that in capitalism state power and social power exist, but they do not play the central role in the direct allocation, control, and use of economic resources.

This idea of a socialism rooted in social power is not the conventional way of understanding socialism. It differs from standard definitions in two principle ways. First, most definitions closely identify socialism with what I am calling statism. As Geoff Hodgson has forcefully argued, while Marx was generally quite vague about the institutional design of a socialist alternative to capitalism, in the few places where he discusses socialism it is clear that he envisioned a system of production and distribution controlled by the state.⁶ Since Marx's time, state-centered socialism has been most strongly linked to the programs of communist parties, but until the end of the twentieth century most democratic socialist parties also linked the vision of socialism to state control over economic processes. In contrast to these traditional formulations, the concept of socialism being proposed here is grounded in the distinction between state power and social power, state ownership and social ownership.

The second way the proposed conceptualization of socialism differs from conventional understandings is that it does not say anything explicitly about markets. Particularly in the Marxist tradition, socialism has usually been treated as a non-market form of economic organization: socialism is a rationally planned economy contrasted to the anarchic character of the capitalist market economy. While from time to time there have

been advocates of what is sometimes called "market socialism," in general socialism has been identified with planning (usually understood as centralized state planning) rather than markets. The definition of socialism offered here in terms of social ownership and social power does not preclude the possibility that markets could play a substantial role in coordinating the activities of socially owned and controlled enterprises.

To say that socialism is an economic structure within which the allocation and use of resources for different social purposes is accomplished through the exercise of "social power," defined as power rooted in civil society, leaves open the question of which sorts of associations in civil society are central to social empowerment and which are not. Traditionally socialists, especially those firmly anchored in the Marxist tradition, have understood this problem almost entirely in class terms, focusing especially on the importance of working-class associations for socialism. While it is the case that working-class organization is crucial for social empowerment over the economy, since class is so deeply linked to the ways people are engaged in the process of production, social empowerment is a broader idea than simply working-class empowerment and includes a wide range of associations and collective actors not simply defined by their relationship to class structure. Socialism, understood in the way proposed here, is thus not equivalent to the working class controlling the means of production through its collective associations.⁷ Rather, social empowerment over the economy means broad-based encompassing economic democracy.

HYBRIDS

In terms of these definitions, no actual living economy has ever been purely capitalist or statist or socialist, since it is never the case that the allocation, control, and use of economic resources is determined by a single form of power. Such pure cases live only in the fantasies (or nightmares) of theorists. *Totalitarianism* is a form of imaginary hyper-statism in which state power, unaccountable to civil society and unconstrained by economic power, comprehensively determines all aspects of both production and distribution. In a pure *libertarian capitalism* the state atrophies to a mere "night watchman state," serving only the purpose of enforcing property rights, and commercial activities penetrate into all corners of civil society,

commodifying everything. The exercise of economic power would almost fully explain the allocation and use of resources. Citizens are atomized consumers who make individual choices in a market but exercise no collective power over the economy through association in civil society. *Communism*, as classically understood in Marxism, is a form of society in which the state has withered away and the economy is absorbed into civil society as the free, cooperative activity of associated individuals.

None of these pure forms could exist as stable, reproducible forms of social organization. The statist command economies, even in their most authoritarian forms, never completely eliminated informal social networks as a basis for cooperative social interaction which had real effects on economic activity outside of the direct control of the state, and the practical functioning of economic institutions was never fully subordinated to centralized command-and-control planning. Capitalism would be an unsustainable and chaotic social order if the state played the minimalist role specified in the libertarian fantasy, but it would also, as Polanyi argued, function much more erratically if civil society was absorbed into the economy as a fully commodified and atomized arena of social life.⁸ Pure communism is also a utopian fantasy, since a complex society could not function without some sort of authoritative means of making and enforcing binding rules (a “state”). Feasible, sustainable forms of large-scale social organization, therefore, always involve some kind of reciprocal relations among these three domains of social interaction and power.

In practice, therefore, the concepts of capitalism, statism, and socialism should be thought of not simply as *all-or-nothing ideal types* of economic structures, but also as *variables*. The more the decisions made by actors exercising economic power determine the allocation and use of resources, the more capitalist an economic structure will be. The more power exercised through the state determines the allocation and use of resources, the more the society is statist. The more power rooted in civil society determines such allocations and uses, the more the society will be socialist.

Treating these concepts as varying in degree opens the possibility of complex mixed cases—*hybrids* in which an economy is capitalist in certain respects and in others statist or socialist.⁹

All existing capitalist societies contain significant elements of statism since states everywhere allocate part of the social surplus for various kinds of investments, especially in things like public infrastructure, defense and education. Furthermore, in all capitalist societies the state removes certain powers from holders of private property rights, for example when capitalist states impose rules on capitalist firms that regulate labels, product quality, or pollution. State power, rather than economic power, controls those specific aspects of production, and in these ways the economy is statist. Capitalist societies also always contain at least some socialist elements, at least through the ways collective actors in civil society influence the allocation of economic resources indirectly through their efforts to influence the state and capitalist corporations. The use of the simple, unmodified expression “capitalism” to describe an empirical case is thus shorthand for something like “a hybrid economic structure within which capitalism is the predominant way of organizing economic activity.”¹⁰

This conception of hybrid economic structures opens up a very difficult set of questions about the nature of economic systems and how different principles and power relations get combined. In particular, there is the question of what precisely is meant by the claim that capitalism is “dominant” within a hybrid configuration.¹¹ The problem here is that there is no simple metric in terms of which we can measure and compare the relative weight of different forms of power. Thus while it may seem intuitively clear that in the United States today capitalism is “dominant”—and thus we can reasonably call the US economy “capitalist”—it is also the case that state power has a significant impact on the allocation of resources and the control over production and distribution in the US economy through the myriad ways in which it regulates economic activities and orders certain kinds of production (e.g., education, defense, and a significant amount of healthcare). If the state were to cease these economic activities, the American economy would collapse, and therefore the system “needs” its statist elements. The US economy is clearly an amalgam of capitalism and statism (and also, less clearly, of socialism), and while I believe that within this amalgam capitalism is dominant, it is not so clear how to measure such dominance.

I do not have a rigorous solution to this problem of precisely how to specify the dominance of one form

of power within a configuration of power relations. The working solution I adopt involves a variety of the “functionalist” understanding of the problem: in the economies conventionally described as “capitalist” today, statist elements and socialist elements occupy spaces within functional limits established by capitalism. Attempts to move beyond those limits trigger a variety of negative consequences which tend to undermine the attempts themselves. This is a *functionalist* understanding of “dominance” since within the complex hybrid system of capitalist, statist, and socialist forms it is capitalism which establishes the principles of functional compatibility among the elements of the system and the conditions of system-disruption.

Two points of clarification are needed here. First, the limits in question are limits of functional *compatibility* in the sense that within these limits the statist and socialist elements of the hybrid are consistent with the reproduction of capitalism. This does not imply, however, that these non-capitalist elements always *positively contribute* to the reproduction of capitalism. All that is being claimed here is that they are not systematically disruptive of capitalism, for if they were, this would trigger corrective measures. These limits of functional compatibility can sometimes be quite large, allowing for all sorts of variation and autonomy in statist and socialist elements, but they may also sometimes be quite narrow. Hybrids are, in these terms, *loosely coupled* systems rather than tightly integrated organic systems in which all parts must be finely articulated to all others in order for the system to function well. Second, the limits of functional compatibility operate within structures *in the present*; these limits are not oriented towards future states of the system. So long as existing practices of statist and socialist elements in the hybrid do not disrupt capital accumulation now, they are “functionally compatible.” The system as such does not anticipate its own future states. This is one of the sources of “contradictions” in a system: practices which are perfectly compatible at one point in time (i.e. they do not disrupt capitalism) may generate cumulative effects which eventually are disruptive.

While this kind of functional reasoning about social systems is quite common, it turns out to be extremely difficult to provide clear theoretical criteria and empirical evidence about the limits of functional compatibility of the parts within a system. Indeed, the

difficulty of specifying the limits of functional compatibility is at the center of many political struggles within capitalism: *claims* of incompatibility are one of the weapons pro-capitalist forces use to resist efforts to expand socialist and statist elements within the hybrid. The complexity of these structural configurations is such that there is always a great deal of ambiguity and uncertainty about functional interdependencies, and this opens up considerable space for ideologically driven battles over what is and is not compatible with a healthy capitalism. For the purposes of this book, however, I do not think it is necessary to resolve these issues. It is possible to analyze processes which strengthen and expand the socialist element in a hybrid structure and which thus move in the direction of socialism without being able to give criteria for the dominance of socialism or capitalism or statism. It is sufficient, for now, to be able to say that an economic structure is socialist to the extent that the economy is governed by the exercise of social power.

Although not framed in precisely the language of the present discussion, Marxists have traditionally assumed that within such hybrid forms, one type of economic structure (or “mode of production”) would have to be unequivocally dominant in order for the society to be stable. The basic intuition here is that capitalism and socialism are incompatible since they serve opposing class interests, and thus a stable, balanced hybrid would be impossible. A society, in this view, requires some unifying principle rooted in a particular mode of production for social reproduction to effectively contain social contradictions and struggles. A capitalism-socialism hybrid in which both sources of power played a substantial role thus could not be a stable equilibrium: if such a balanced hybrid were to occur, then capitalist power over significant levels of economic resources would have an inherent tendency to erode the associational power of civil society over the economy to the point that capitalism would again become unequivocally dominant. It is important, however, not to feel too confident that one knows in advance everything that is possible “under heaven and earth,” for there are always things that happen that are not, in advance, “dreamt of in our philosophy.” In any case, in the discussion in this book I am not making any general assumptions about what sorts of hybrids would be stable or even possible.

NOTES

1. Most attempts at formulating broad frameworks for building macro-sociological theory invoke elusive categories like “domains” or “spheres” or “arenas” or “levels” or “subsystems” of social interaction. None of these terms is entirely satisfactory. They mostly evoke spatial metaphors that are misleading. In talking about the economy and civil society as spheres of social interaction I do not mean to suggest that civil society stops at the workplace and the economy begins once you enter. Civil society is made up of voluntary associations (including loose associations like social networks) and these occur within the organizations of the economy as well as those of “society.” All such terms are based on the loose idea that societies can, in some sense, be thought of as “systems” with distinguishable “parts” or “dimensions,” and that a central task of social analysis is to figure out what the salient parts are and how are they connected.
2. Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds), *From Max Weber* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946).
3. Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, Volume I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
4. The term “voluntary” in this formulation is, like many of the concepts used in this discussion, fraught with difficulties. It is meant to highlight a contrast with what can be called “compulsory” associations, especially the state. In many contexts there are all sorts of social pressures and constraints which shape the desire and ability of people to participate in associational life, and thus the strictly “voluntary” quality of such associations may be problematic. Churches often have this character, particularly in social settings where there are significant sanctions for not belonging to a church. The voluntariness of participation in associations is thus a variable.
5. This special property of capitalism is something much remarked upon by Max Weber. He saw the decisive shift from pre-capitalist to capitalist society as lying in the institutional insulation of economic activity from non-economic forms of power and interference which was the essential organizational condition for the full “rationalization” of economic life. For a discussion of Weber’s concept of rationalization as it bears on the class analysis of capitalism, see Erik Olin Wright, “The Shadow of Exploitation in Weber’s Class Analysis,” *American Sociological Review* 67 (2002), pp. 832–53.
6. See Geoff Hodgson, *Economics and Utopia* (London: Routledge, 1999).
7. Even though I do not reduce socialism to working-class empowerment over the economy, working-class associations are still at the center of the conception of socialism proposed here for two reasons. First, as defined earlier, *social ownership* means ownership by “the set of people engaged in interdependent economic activity which uses the means of production and generates some kind of product.” This means that associations representing workers will always be part of the exercise of ownership rights. Second, because they are directly engaged in production, the active cooperation of workers is essential for the effective exercise of social power over economic activity. If, in the future, socialism based on pervasive economic democracy actually occurs, there is likely to be considerable variability in the array of specific *non-class* associations that would play a central role in the realization of social power over the economy, but any possible socialism would have to include a central role for empowered working-class associations.
8. See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001 [1944]) for the classic discussion of the necessity for markets to be embedded and constrained by society.
9. For a somewhat different conception of the hybrid nature of economic systems, see J. K. Gibson-Graham, *A Postcapitalist Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

Gibson-Graham argues that all capitalist economies are really complex multi-form economies which include in addition to the capitalist economy and the state economy a wide range of other economic forms: the gift economy, the household economy, the informal economy, among others. Another interesting formulation of the problem of hybrids can be found in the writing of Colin Ward, the prominent English anarchist. Stuart White describes Ward's approach this way: "For Ward, society inevitably embodies a plurality of basic organizing techniques, including market, state and the anarchist technique of mutual aid: 'Every human society, except the most totalitarian of utopias or anti-utopias, is a plural society with large areas that are not in conformity with the officially imposed or declared values.'" See Stuart White, "Making Anarchism Respectable? The Social Philosophy of Colin Ward," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12: 1 (2007), p. 14, quoting from Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (second edition, London: Freedom Press, 1982).

10. The concept of a *hybrid* economic structure is a specific instance of a style of social theory which can be called "combinatorial structuralism." The general idea is this: For a given domain of social inquiry one can propose a series of elementary structural forms. These are the building blocks of complexity: all concrete societies can then be analyzed in terms of different patterns of combination of these forms. These elementary structures are thus somewhat analogous to the elements in the periodic table of chemistry: all compounds are simply forms of combination of these ingredients. In analyzing economic structures I have proposed here a very simple "social chemistry": there are three elementary forms—capitalism, statism, and socialism. Actual societies, then, are formed through different ways of combining these. There may, of course, also be something akin to isotopes—different forms of each of the elements. There is capitalism consisting of small competitive firms and capitalism of large mega-corporations; capitalism in which capital accumulation is most dynamic in agriculture or in industry or in a variety of service sectors; capitalism with low capital intensity and high capital intensity; and so on. A fully developed combinatorial structuralism of economic forms would explore the diverse ways in which different kinds of elements as well as their variants can form configurations. Of particular importance would be identifying the ways in which some hybrids would be quite stable in the sense that the configuration could be reproduced over time, while others would be unstable and tend to break apart.
11. This is very similar to the problem of "causal primacy": what does it mean to say that one cause is "more important" than another in a multi-causal system? For a discussion of this problem see Erik Olin Wright, Andrew Levine, and Elliott Sober, *Reconstructing Marxism: Essays on Explanation and the Theory of History* (London: Verso, 1992), chapter 7, "Causal Asymmetries."

57. A NETWORK THEORY OF POWER

Manuel Castells (b. 1942) is one of the foremost contemporary theorists of urbanization, globalization, and the impact of technology on modern social life. He is currently the University Professor and the Wallis Annenberg Chair in Communication Technology and Society at the University of Southern California. In his work over the past two decades, he argues that we have entered an Information Age characterized by a global network society predicated in large part on advances in informational technologies. In this essay, Castells attempts, as the title indicates, to explore a network theory of power. His claim is that insofar as power is exercised through networks, it is necessary to understand that this occurs in different ways. Here he specifies and differentiates four distinct manifestations of power: networking power, network power, networked power, and network-making power. Although these domains remain distinct, they interact with one another, with two power holders—programmers and switchers—being central to these inter-actional processes.

Power in the network society is exercised through networks. There are four different forms of power under these social and technological conditions:

1. *Networking Power*: the power of the actors and organizations included in the networks that constitute the core of the global network society over human collectives and individuals who are not included in these global networks.
2. *Network Power*: the power resulting from the standards required to coordinate social interaction in the networks. In this case, power is exercised not by exclusion from the networks but by the imposition of the rules of inclusion.
3. *Networked Power*: the power of social actors over other social actors in the network. The forms and processes of networked power are specific to each network.
4. *Network-making Power*: the power to program specific networks according to the interests and values of the programmers, and the power to switch

different networks following the strategic alliances between the dominant actors of various networks.

Counterpower is exercised in the network society by fighting to change the programs of specific networks and by the effort to disrupt the switches that reflect dominant interests and replace them with alternative switches between networks. Actors are humans, but humans are organized in networks. Human networks act on networks via the programming and switching of organizational networks. In the network society, power and counterpower aim fundamentally at influencing the neural networks in the human mind by using mass communication networks and mass self-communication networks.

INTRODUCTION

Power relationships are the foundation of society, as institutions and norms are constructed to fulfill the interests and values of those in power. However, wherever there is power, there is counterpower, enacting the interests and values of those in subordinate positions

Castells, Manuel, "A Network Theory of Power." *Journal of Communications* 5, 2011, pages 773–787. Reprinted with permission of the Journal of Communications. ♦

in the social organization. The shape of the institutions and organizations that construct human action depend on the specific interaction between power and counterpower. Power is multidimensional, and it is constructed around multidimensional networks programmed in each domain of human activity according to the interests and values of empowered actors.

Each type of society has a specific form of exercising power and counterpower. It should not surprise us that in the network society, social power is primarily exercised by and through networks.¹ The question is, though, which kind of networks? And how do they operate in the making of power?

To approach these questions, I must first differentiate between four distinct forms of power: (a) networking power, (b) network power, (c) networked power, and (d) network-making power.

Each one of these forms of power defines specific processes of exercising power.

Networking power refers to the power of the actors and organizations included in the networks that constitute the core of the global network society over those human collectives or individuals *not* included in these global networks. This form of power operates by exclusion/inclusion. Tongia and Wilson (2007, see also Wilson and Tongia, this special section) have advocated a formal analysis that shows that the cost of exclusion from networks increases faster than do the benefits of inclusion in those same networks. While the value of being in the network increases exponentially with the size of the network—as proposed in 1976 by Metcalfe's Law—the devaluation attached to exclusion from the network also increases exponentially and at a faster rate than does the increase of value of being in the network. *Network gatekeeping theory* has investigated the various processes by which nodes are included or excluded in the network, showing the key role of the network's gatekeeping capacity to be the enforcement of the collective power of some networks over others, or of a given network over disconnected social units (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008). Social actors may establish their power position by constituting a network that accumulates valuable resources and then by exercising their gatekeeping strategies to bar access to those who do not add value to the network or who jeopardize the interests that are dominant in the network's programs.

Network power can be better understood in the conceptualization proposed by Grewal (2008) to theorize globalization from the perspective of network analysis. In this view, globalization involves social coordination between multiple networked actors. This coordination requires standards:

The standards that enable global coordination display what I call network power. The notion of network power consists in the joining of two ideas: first, that coordinating standards are more valuable when greater numbers of people use them, and second that this dynamic—which I describe as a form of power—can lead to the progressive elimination of the alternatives over which otherwise free choice can be collectively exercised. . . . Emerging global standards . . . [provide] the solution to the problem of global coordination among diverse participants but it does so by elevating one solution above others and threatening the elimination of alternative solutions to the same problem. (Grewal, p. 5)

Therefore, the standards or (in my terminology) protocols of communication, determine the rules to be accepted once in the network. Once certain standards are incorporated in the program of networks, power is exercised not by exclusion from the networks but by the imposition of the rules of inclusion. Of course, depending on the level of openness of the network, these rules may be negotiated between its components. But once the rules are set, they become compelling for all nodes in the network, as respect for these rules is what makes the network's existence as a communicative structure possible. Network power is the power of the standards of the network over its components, although this network power ultimately favors the interests of both a specific set of social actors at the source of network formation and also of the establishment of the standards (protocols of communication).

But how does networked power operate? Who has power in the dominant networks? Power is the relational capacity to impose an actor's will over another actor's will on the basis of the structural capacity of domination embedded in the institutions of society. Following this definition, the question of power holding in the networks of the network society could be either answered very simply or simply impossible to answer.

The answer is simple if we answer the question by analyzing the workings of each specific dominant network. Each network defines its own power relationships, depending on its programmed goals. Thus, in global capitalism, the global financial market has the last word, and the IMF or rating financial agencies (e.g., Moody's or Standard & Poor) are the authoritative interpreters for common mortals. The "word" is usually spoken in the language of the U.S. Treasury Department, the Federal Reserve Board, or Wall Street, with some German, French, Japanese, Chinese, or Oxbridge accents, depending upon times and spaces. Another example is the military power of the United States, and in more analytical terms, the power of any apparatus that can harness technological innovation and knowledge in the pursuit of military power and that has the material resources for large-scale investment in war-making capacity.

Yet, the question could become an analytical dead-end if we try to answer it one-dimensionally and attempt to determine "The Source of Power" as a single entity. Because military power could not prevent a catastrophic financial crisis; in fact, it could provoke it under certain conditions of irrational, defensive paranoia and the destabilization of oil-producing countries. Or global financial markets could become an automaton, beyond the control of any major regulatory institution, given the size, volume, and complexity of the flows of capital that circulate throughout its networks, as well as the dependence of its valuation criteria on unpredictable information turbulences. Political decision making is said to be dependent on media, but the media constitute a plural ground—however biased in ideological and political terms—and the process of media politics is highly complex. As for the capitalist class, it does have some power, but not power over everyone or everything: It is highly dependent on both the autonomous dynamics of global markets and on the decisions of governments in terms of regulations and policies. Finally, governments themselves are connected in complex networks of imperfect global governance, conditioned by the pressures of business and Interest groups, obliged to negotiate with the media that translate government actions for their citizenries, and periodically assailed by social movements and expressions of resistance that do not recede easily to the back rooms at the end of history. Yes, in

some instances, like in the United States after 9/11, or in Russia or China, or in Iran or Israel in their area of influence, governments may engage in unilateral actions that bring chaos to the international scene. But geopolitical unilateralism ultimately concedes to the realities of our globally interdependent world. In sum, the states, even the most powerful states, have some power (mainly destructive), but not all the power.

So, perhaps the question of power as traditionally formulated does not make sense in the network society, but new forms of domination and determination are critical in shaping peoples' lives regardless of their will. So, there are power relationships at work, albeit in new forms and with new kinds of actors.

The most crucial forms of power follow the logic of network-making power. In a world of networks, the ability to exercise control over others depends on two basic mechanisms: (a) the ability to constitute network(s) and to program/reprogram the network(s) in terms of the goals assigned to the network; and (b) the ability to connect and ensure the cooperation of different networks by sharing common goals and combining resources while fending off competition from other networks by setting up strategic cooperation.

Let us call holders of the first power position *programmers*; holders of the second power position are *switchers*. It is important to note that these programmers and switchers are certainly social actors, but not necessarily identified with one particular group or individual. More often than not, these mechanisms operate at the interface between various social actors, defined in terms of their position in the social structure and in the organizational framework of society. Thus, I suggest that in many instances the power holders are networks themselves, in fact, subnetworks of the networks that organize society. Not abstract, unconscious networks, nor automata, but humans organized around their projects and interests. Note that they are not single actors (individuals, groups, classes, religious leaders, or political leaders), as the exercise of power in the network society requires a complex set of joint action that goes beyond alliances to become a new form of subject—a networked subject.

Let us examine the workings of these two mechanisms of power making in the networks: *programming* and *switching*. The programming capacity of the goals of the network, as well as the capacity to reprogram it,

is, of course, decisive, because once programmed, the network has greater capability to perform efficiently and reconfigure itself in terms of structure and nodes to achieve its goals. How different actors program the network is a process specific to each network. The process is not the same in global finance as it is in military power, in scientific research, in organized crime, or in professional sports. Therefore, power relationships at the network level have to be identified and understood in terms specific to each network. However, all networks do share a common trait: ideas, visions, projects, and frames generate the programs. These are cultural materials. In the network society, culture is mostly embedded in the processes of communication, particularly in the electronic hypertext, with the global multimedia business networks and the Internet at its core. So, ideas may be generated from a variety of origins and linked to specific interests and subcultures (e.g., neoclassical economics, religions, cultural identities, the worshipping of individual freedom, and the like). Yet, ideas are processed in society according to how they are represented in the realm of communication. And ultimately these ideas reach the constituencies of each network depending on the constituencies' level of exposure to the processes of communication. Thus, the control of (or the influence on) the networks of communication, and the ability to create an effective process of communication and persuasion along the lines that favor the projects of the would-be programmers are the key assets in the ability to program each network. In other words, the process of communication in society, as well as the organizations and networks that enact this process of communication, are the key fields where programming projects are formed and where constituencies are built for these projects. They are the fields of power in the network society.

There is a second source of power: the control of the connecting points between various strategic networks. Holders of these positions are switchers, for example, of the connections between the political leadership networks, the media networks, the scientific and technology networks, and the military and security networks to assert a geopolitical strategy. Or the connection between the political networks and the media networks to produce and diffuse specific political-ideological discourses. Or the relationship between religious networks and political networks to advance a religious agenda in a secular

society. Or between academic networks and business networks to provide knowledge and legitimacy in exchange for resources for universities and jobs for their products (aka graduates). This is not an "old-boy network." These are specific systems of interface that are formulated on a relatively stable basis as a way to articulate the actual operating system of society beyond the formal self-presentation of institutions and organizations. However, this is not to resurrect the idea of a power elite; there is none. This is a simplified image of power in society whose analytical value is limited to some extreme cases. It is precisely because no unified power elite is capable of keeping the programming and switching operations of all important networks under its control that more subtle, complex, and negotiated systems of power enforcement must be established. For these power relationships to be asserted, the programs of the dominant networks of society need to set compatible goals between these networks (e.g., dominance of the market and social stability; military power and financial restraint; political representation and reproduction of capitalism; and free expression and cultural control). And they must be able, through the switching processes enacted by actor-networks, to communicate with each other, inducing synergy and limiting contradiction. This is why it is so important that media tycoons do not become political leaders, or that governments do not have total control over the media. The more that switchers become crude expressions of single purpose domination, the more that power relationships in the network society suffocate the dynamism and initiative of its multiple sources of social structuration and social change. Switchers are actors, composed of networks of actors engaging in dynamic interfaces that are specifically operated in each process of connection.

Programmers and switchers are those actors and networks of actors who, because of their position in the social structure, hold network-making power—the paramount form of power in the network society.

POWER AND COUNTERPOWER IN THE NETWORK SOCIETY

Processes of power making must be seen from two perspectives: On one hand, these processes can enforce existing domination or seize structural positions of

domination; on the other hand, there also exist countervailing processes that resist established domination on behalf of the interest, values, and projects that are excluded or under-represented in the programs and composition of the networks. Analytically, both processes ultimately configure the structure of power through their interaction. They are distinct, but do, however, operate on the same logic. This means that resistance to power is achieved through the same two mechanisms that constitute power in the network society: the programs of the networks and the switches between networks. Thus, collective action from social movements, under their different forms, aims to introduce new instructions and new codes into the networks' programs. For instance, new instructions for global financial networks mean that, under conditions of extreme poverty, debt should be condoned for some countries. Another example of new codes in the global financial networks is the evaluating of company stocks according to their environmental ethics or their respect for human rights in the hope that this would ultimately impact the attitude of investors and shareholders vis-à-vis companies deemed to be good or bad citizens of the planet. Under these conditions, the code of economic calculation shifts from growth potential to sustainable and equitable growth potential. More radical reprogramming comes from resistance movements aimed at altering the fundamental principle of a network—or the kernel of the program code, if I may use the parallel with software language. For instance, if God's will must prevail under all conditions (as in the statement of Christian fundamentalists), the institutional networks that constitute the legal and judicial system must be reprogrammed not to follow the political constitution, legal prescriptions, or government decisions—for example, allowing women to decide on issues with other bodies and pregnancies—but to submit them to the interpretation of God by its earthly bishops. In another instance, when the movement for global justice claims the rewriting of the trade agreements managed by the World Trade Organization to include environmental conservation, social rights, and the respect of indigenous minorities, it acts to modify the programs under which the networks of the global economy work.

The second mechanism of resistance consists of blocking the switches of connection between networks

that allow the networks to be controlled by the *metaprogram* of values that express structural domination. Here, the term metaprogram refers to a program that functions as the source code for the programs of the networks that operate organizations and institutions. This can be accomplished, for instance, by filing law suits, or by influencing the U.S. Congress in order to undo the connection between oligopolistic media business and government by challenging the rules of the U.S. Federal Communication Commission that allow greater concentration of ownership. Other forms of resistance include blocking the networking between corporate business and the political system by regulating campaign finance, or spotlighting the incompatibility between being a vice president and receiving income from one's former company that is benefiting from military contracts, or opposing intellectual servitude to the powers that be, which occurs when academics use their positions as platforms for propaganda. More radical disruption of the switchers affects the material infrastructure of the network society: for example, the material and psychological attacks on air transportation, on computer networks, on information systems, and on the networks of facilities on which societies depend for their livelihood in the highly complex, interdependent system that characterizes the informational world. The challenge of terrorism is precisely predicated on this capacity to target strategic material switches, so that their disruption or the threat of their disruption disorganizes the daily lives of people and forces them to live under a state of emergency, thus feeding the growth of other power networks, particularly the security networks that extend to every domain of life. There is, indeed, a symbiotic relationship between the disruption of strategic switches by resistance actions and the reconfiguration of power networks toward a new set of switches organized around security networks.

Resistance to power programmed in the networks also takes place through and by networks. Resistance networks are also powered by information and communication technologies (Arquilla & Rondfeldt, 2001). The improperly labeled "anti-globalization movement" is a global-local network organized and debated on the Internet, and it is structurally switched on with the media networks. Al Qaeda and its related

organizations is a network of multiple nodes with little central coordination and also directly aimed at their switching with the media networks through which they hope to inflict fear among the infidels and raise hope among the oppressed masses of the believers. The environmental movement is a locally rooted, globally connected network that aims to change the public mind as a means of influencing policy decisions to save the planet or one's own neighborhood.

A central characteristic of the network society is that both the dynamics of domination and the resistance to domination rely on network formation and network strategies of offense and defense, either by forming separate networks and/or reforming existing networks. Indeed, this tracks the historical experience of previous types of societies, such as the industrial society. The factory and the large, vertically organized industrial corporation were the material basis for the development of both corporate capital and the centrally organized labor movement. Similarly, computer networks for global financial markets, transnational production systems, "smart" armed forces with a global reach, terrorist resistance networks, the global civil society, and networked social movements struggling for a better world are all components of the global network society. The conflicts of our time are fought by networked social actors aiming to reach their constituencies and target audiences through the decisive switch to the multimedia communication networks.

POWER, NETWORKS, AND COMMUNICATION

I contend that social power throughout history, but even more so in the network society, operates primarily by the construction of meaning in the human mind through processes of communication. In the network society, this is enacted in global/local multimedia networks of mass communication, including mass self-communication, that is, the communication organized around the Internet and other horizontal digital communication networks. Although theories of power and historical observation point to the importance of the state's monopoly on violence as a source of social power, I argue that the ability to successfully engage in violence or intimidation requires the framing of individual and collective minds. The smooth functioning

of society's institutions does not result from their policing ability to force citizens into compliance. How people think about the institutions under which they live, and how they relate to the culture of their economy and society defines whose power can be exercised and how it can be exercised. Violence and the threat of violence always combine with the construction of meaning in the production and reproduction of power relationships in all domains of social life. The process of constructing meaning operates in a cultural context that is simultaneously global and local, and is characterized by a great deal of diversity. There is, however, one feature common to all processes of symbolic construction: They are largely dependent on the messages and frames created, formatted, and diffused in multimedia communication networks. To be sure, interpersonal, face-to-face communication is a significant part of the communication process. And each individual human mind constructs its own meaning by interpreting the communicated materials on its own terms. Yet, this mental processing is conditioned by the communication environment. Furthermore, in the new world of mass self-communication and highly segmented audiences, there are few instances of simultaneous mass sharing of media messages; instead, what is broadly shared is the culture of sharing messages from multiple senders-receivers. Precisely because the new communication system is so versatile, diversified, and open-ended, it integrates messages and codes from all sources, enclosing most of socialized communication in its multimodal, multichannel networks.

Referring to the typology of network power presented above, let us hypothesize, on the basis of empirical observation,² that multimedia communication networks jointly exercise network power over the messages they convey because messages must adapt to the common protocols of communication embodied in the structure and management of the networks. However, while standardized forms of mass communication may shape minds by their formatting of the messages (for instance, news as infotainment), in the world of mass self-communication (built on the Internet and horizontal digital communication networks), the diversity of formats is the rule. Thus, apparently, standards are diminished as a source of network power. However, digitization operates as a protocol of

communication. In principle, everything can be digitized, so it does not appear that this standard inhibits the message. Yet, it does have an opposite, significant effect: It amplifies the diffusion of the message beyond anyone's control. Digitization is tantamount to potential viral diffusion throughout global networks of communication. This is highly positive if you do want to diffuse the message, but devastating if you do not want to diffuse the message (if, say, the message is a video recording of your wrongdoing). In this case, the network power exercised by digital networks assumes a new form: the removal of control over message distribution. This is in contrast with the traditional network power of mass media, which reformats the message to be suitable for the audience in accordance with their corporate strategy.

Yet, multimedia networks as structures of communication do not hold networking power, networked power, or network-making power by themselves. They depend on the decisions and instructions of their programmers. In my conceptual framework, networking power consists of the capacity to let a medium or a message enter the network through gatekeeping procedures. Those in charge of the operations of each communication network are the gatekeepers, and so they exercise networking power by blocking or allowing access to media outlets and/or to messages that are conveyed to the network. I call it gatekeeping the nodes and gatekeeping the messages. The rise of mass self-communication has deeply modified the gatekeeping capacity of the programmers of mass communication. Anything that reaches the Internet may reach the world at large. However, gatekeeping still yields considerable networking power, as most socialized communication is still processed through the mass media, and the most popular information Web sites are those of mainstream media, given the importance of branding in the source of the message. Furthermore, government's control over the Internet and corporate business' attempt to enclose telecommunication networks in their privately owned "walled gardens" show the persistence of networking power in the hands of the gatekeepers.

Networked power, distinct from network power and from networking power, is the form of power exercised by certain nodes over other nodes within

the network. In communication networks, this translates as the agenda-setting, managerial and editorial decision-making power in the organizations that own and operate multimedia communication networks. Communication research has identified the multi-layered structure of decision making in the corporate media there is a complex interaction between different decision makers of news production, that is, the social actors that set up the communication agenda (e.g., governments or social elites, owners of communication networks and their corporate sponsors [through the intermediation of advertising agencies], managers, editors, journalists, and an increasingly interactive audience). It is at each one of these levels that programmers exercise power. There are multiple programmers in each network. While there is a hierarchy in the capacity to program the network, it is the whole set of programmers who jointly decide on the network's operations. Because they interact among themselves, as well as with the programmers of other communication networks, it can be said that programmers constitute a network themselves—a decision-making network to set up and manage the programs on the network. But their power is specific, as it is geared to ensure the fulfillment of the goals of the network, with the primary objective being to attract an audience regardless of whether it is to maximize profits, or influence, or something else. The overarching goal of network management by the networked power of programmers is to constitute the programmed. The programmed are the subordinated subjects of the power holders in the communication networks. However, the networked management of the communication networks operates under the conditions of a metaprogram that has been designed by someone else from outside the network. This enigmatic "someone else" is the subject of the most determining form of power—network-making power.

Network-making power is the capacity to set up and program a network, in this case a multimedia, mass communication network. This mainly refers to the owners and controllers of media corporations, be they businesses or the state. They are the ones who have the financial, legal, institutional, and technological means to organize and operate mass communication networks. And they are those who, in the

last resort, decide the content and format of communication according to the formula that will best accomplish the goals they assign to the network: profit making, power making, culture making, or all of the above. But who are “they”? To name a few: Murdoch, Berlusconi, Bloomberg, or if I introduce Internet business corporations, Sergey Brin, Larry Paige, Jerry Yang, David Filo, Mark Zuckerberg, and the like. Yet, empirical research (Arsenault & Castells, 2008) shows a highly complex picture of the reality of global multimedia business networks—the core of the entire communication system, global, national or local. Network-making power is in the hands of a small number of conglomerates and their surrogates and partners. But these conglomerates are formed by networks of multiple media properties operating in multiple modes and in multiple cultural and institutional environments. And multimedia conglomerates are intertwined with financial investors of various origins, including financial institutions, sovereign funds, private equity investment firms, hedge funds, and others. There are some exceptional cases of highly personalized decision-making capacity, but, even in the case of Murdoch, there is a dependence on various sources of network-making power. In sum: The *metaprogrammers* empowered with network-making capacity are themselves corporate networks. They are networks creating networks and programming them to fulfill the goals that these originating networks embody: maximizing profits in the global financial market; increasing political power for government-owned corporations; and attracting, creating, and maintaining an audience as the means to accumulate financial capital and cultural capital. Moreover, the range of investment of these global multimedia business networks increases with new possibilities of interactive, multimodal communication, particularly the Internet and wireless communication networks. In this case, the programming of the networks is less about content than it is about format. The Internet only becomes profitable if people use it, and people would use it less if it lost its fundamental features of interactivity and unfettered communication regardless of how surveilled it is. The expansion of Internet networks and the development of the Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 offer extraordinary business opportunities for the implementation of the strategy I call

the *commodification of freedom*: enclosing the commons of free communication and selling people access to global communication networks in exchange for surrendering their privacy and becoming advertising targets. However, once in cyberspace, people may have all kinds of ideas, including challenging corporate power, dismantling government authority, and changing the cultural foundations of our aging, aching civilization.

And so, there is a dialectical process: As more corporations invest in expanding communication networks (benefiting from a hefty return), more people build their own networks of mass self-communication, thus empowering themselves. By networks of mass self-communication I understand Internet-based communication networks. Therefore, network-making power in the communication realms is characterized by the action of multimedia corporate networks, including business and government, that interact with networked users who both consume media products and create their own culture. Networks interact with networks in the shared process of network making.

But where is power in all of this? If power is the relational capacity to impose the will and values of social actors over others, who are these social actors? Power is made through communication networks, and research has shown how these networks operate, and how and by whom these communication networks are established and programmed. But whose power do these networks process? If the metaprogrammers are the owners of the multimedia business networks, are they the power elite of the network society?

The owners of global multimedia corporate networks—themselves networks, but of people at the helm of their organizations—are certainly among the power holders of the network society because they program the decisive network: the metanetwork of communication networks, that is, the networks that process the ideational materials with which we feel, think, live, submit, and fight. Their relationship to the social actors on which they exercise their power is also easy to identify: They transform humans into audiences by selling us the images of our lives. So, they achieve their interests (money making, influence making) by designing the content of our culture according to their corporate strategies. This does not necessarily mean that they impose their values upon

us (although they often do), because the effectiveness of the media depend on their adaptation to different cultural patterns and states of mind, as well as to the differential evolution of each one of these patterns and moods. It means that the bottom line of what will be processed in the networks depends on what sells (or convinces, if the motive is politico-ideological) regardless of the congruity between what corporations want and what we want. There is consumer choice, but within a range of predefined products and presupposing consumption, rather than through coproduction. This is why the rise of mass self-communication, which increases the ability of the audience to produce its (our) own messages, potentially challenges corporate control of communication and may change power relationships in the communication sphere. However, for the time being, there is an unequal competition between professionalized media production and our low quality home videos and blog gossip. The power relationship between multimedia corporate networks and society at large is centered around the shaping of cultural production according to the will, values, and interests of corporate owners and their sponsors.

However, the range of power relationships is much broader, and includes, particularly, political power relationships, which provide the access to and management of institutions of governance. Communication networks are essential to the construction of political power and counterpower. The owners of corporate communication networks also provide the platform for the construction of meaning for other social actors. Thus, they exercise power through cultural production, and they exercise networking power over other actors by controlling access to communication networks, e.g., vis-à-vis political actors who need access to communication to construct their power relationships vis-à-vis the citizenry. However, in political power relationships, the metaprogrammers—those who produce the message—are political actors. To be sure, political actors rely on the actors whose values and interests they represent (e.g., religious organizations, corporate businesses, the military-industrial complex). They articulate the diversity of interests supporting their project to maximize their autonomy as political actors while increasing their chances of seizing political power. But once in power, they are the programmers of

political processes and policy making. Their programs are diverse, because different leaders and their coalitions vie for power in a political competition shaped by the procedures of each political system. However, they share some fundamental protocols of communication that aim to preserve the stability of state domination under constitutional rules. So, the programs embedded in political institutions exercise network power over citizens and political actors. The judiciary exercises networking power by gatekeeping access to political competition both in terms of actors and procedures. And the political system as a whole is based on networked power distributed at different levels of the relationship between the state and society.

Political network-making power, which is the power to define rules and policies in the political realm, depends on winning the competition to access political office and on obtaining support, or at least resignation, from the citizens. Media politics is the fundamental mechanism by which access to political power and policy making operates. Therefore, the programs embedded in multimedia networks shape and condition the implementation of the political networks' programs. Yet, media owners are not those who design and determine political programs. Neither are they passive transmitters of the programs' instructions. They exercise gatekeeping power, and they format and distribute the political programs according to their specific interests as media organizations. Thus, media politics is not just politics in general, nor is it the politics of the media: It is the dynamic interface between political networks and media networks. I call the management of this interface between two or more networks *network switching*. The control of this switching capacity defines a fundamental form of power in the network society—switching power, which refers to the specificity of connecting various power networks in society, particularly, financial networks at the heart of capitalist power. Indeed, the network society, for the time being, is a capitalist society, as was the industrial society in most of the world (although in competition with statism). Furthermore, because the network society is global, we live in global capitalism. However, analysis of capitalism in general does not exhaust the understanding of the dynamics of power relationships, because the brand of global capitalism we live in today

is very different from previous historical forms of capitalism, and because the structural logic of capitalism is articulated in practical terms with the specific forms of social organization in societies around the world. And so, the dynamics of the global network society interact with the dynamics of capitalism in constructing social relationships, including power relationships. How does this interaction work to construct power relationships around communication networks?

Communication networks are largely owned and managed by global multimedia corporate networks. Although states and their controlled corporations are part of these networks, the heart of global communication networks is connected to, and largely dependent on, corporations that are themselves dependent on financial investors and financial markets. This is the bottom line of multimedia business. But financial investors place their bets according to the expected performance of media business in the global financial market—the mother of all accumulations of capital and the dominant network of global capitalism, as analyzed in my trilogy on the Information Age (Castells, 1996–1998, 2010). The critical matter is that the global financial market is a network itself, beyond the control of specific social actors and largely impervious to the regulatory management of national and international institutions of governance, largely because the regulators chose to deregulate the financial networks and program the financial markets accordingly. Once financial markets became organized in a loosely regulated global network, their standards became applicable to financial transactions around the world, and therefore to all economic activities, since in a capitalist economy, production of goods and services begins with investment from capital and yields profits that are converted into financial assets. The global financial market exercises network power over the global economy.

This network power from financial markets is not in the hands of the invisible hand (the market), because, as documented by a number of studies, financial markets only partly behave according to market logic. What some scholars have called “irrational exuberance” and what I term “information turbulence” (Castells, 2000) plays a major role in determining investors’ psychology, and therefore their financial decisions.

Furthermore, the global networking of financial markets means that any information turbulence from anywhere instantly diffuses throughout the network, be it political instability, a natural catastrophe, or a financial scandal. Thus, while the global financial market exercises network power, and the governments of leading countries enact network-making power by deregulating and liberalizing financial markets from the mid-1980s onward, there is a diffusion of networked power in the global financial networks. I have used the term “global automaton” in some of my writings (Castells, 2000) in reference to the global financial market, as it largely functions according to its own dynamic, without control from specific corporations or regulators, and yet it disciplines and shapes the global economy. I am not implying an automatic mechanism of power enforcement or the existence of a dehumanized power. Corporate capitalism is embodied in financial tycoons, in financial managers, in securities traders and corporate lawyers, and in their families, personal networks, bodyguards, personal assistants, golf clubs, temples, secluded venues, and sinful playgrounds. All of these people are part of the networks that run the programs that run the world. But they are not alone in those networks, and they do not even control the financial networks that they inhabit as they navigate their uncertain waters with gut instinct rather than mathematical models, as Caitlin Zaloom (2006) showed in her wonderful ethnographic investigation on financial trading in the pits of Chicago and London.

The networking logic of financial markets is of utmost importance for the exercise of power in communication networks at two levels. First, because communication networks will be programmed, set up, reconfigured, and eventually decommissioned according to financial calculations, unless the function of the communication network is predominantly political. But even in this case, the power-making logic will apply to specific nodes of the global communication network, but not to the network itself, whose overarching principle is profit making on the basis of financial valuation in the global financial market. Second, financial institutions and financial markets are themselves dependent upon the information flows generated, formatted, and diffused in the communication networks. Not just in terms of financially relevant

information, but also in terms of the influence that information communication networks exert on perception and decision making by firms, investors, and consumers. This is precisely a network effect in the networking between financial markets and communication organizations. Global financial networks and global multimedia networks are intimately networked, and this particular network holds extraordinary network power, networking power, and network-making power. But it does not hold all power. This is true because this metanetwork of finance and media is itself dependent on other major networks, such as the political network, the cultural production network (which encompasses all kinds of cultural artifacts, not just communication products), the military network, the global criminal network, and the decisive global network of production and application of science, technology, and knowledge management.

I could proceed with a similar exploration of the dynamics of network making in each one of these fundamental dimensions of the global network society, but this is not really necessary to make my central argument, which is three-fold:

1. As stated at the outset of this article, power is constructed around multidimensional networks programmed in each domain of human activity. But all networks of power exercise their power by influencing the human mind predominantly (but not solely) through multimedia networks of mass communication. Thus, communication networks are the fundamental networks of power making in society.
2. Networks of power in various domains of human activity are networked among themselves; they do not merge. Instead, they engage in strategies of partnership and competition, practicing cooperation and competition simultaneously by forming ad hoc networks around specific projects and by changing partners, depending on their interests in each context and in each moment in time.
3. The network of power constructed around the state and the political system does play a fundamental role in the overall networking of power.

This is, first, because the stable operation of the system and the reproduction of power relationships

in every network ultimately depend on the coordinating and regulatory functions of the state and political system. Second, it is via the state that different forms of exercising power in distinct social spheres relate to the monopoly of violence as the capacity to enforce power in the last resort. So, while communication networks process the construction of meaning on which power relies, the state constitutes the default network for the proper functioning of all other power networks.

The multiplicity of power networks and their necessary interaction for the exercise of power in the respective domains raises some fundamental questions:

How can networks relate to one another without blurring the focus that ensures their specificity, and therefore the implementation of their programs? How do power networks connect with one another while preserving their sphere of action? I propose that they do so through a fundamental mechanism of power making in the network society—*switching power*. This is the capacity to connect two or more different networks in the process of making power for each one of them in their respective fields. Switching functions, and therefore switchers, vary a great deal depending on the characteristics and programs of the networks they switch and on the procedures of exercising switching power. But their action is central to the understanding of power making.

Thus, programmers and switchers are the holders of power in the network society. They are embodied by social actors, but they are not individuals; they are networks themselves. This apparently abstract characterization of power holding in the network society has, in fact, very direct empirical references. Of course, networks are formed by actors in their networking arrangements. But who these actors are and what their networks are is a matter of the specific configuration of networks in each particular context and in each particular process. Therefore, I am not dissolving power relationships in an endless deployment of networks. Rather, I am calling for specificity in the analysis of power relationships and proposing a methodological approach: We must find the specific network configuration of actors, interests, and values who engage in their power-making strategies by connecting their networks of power to the mass communication networks—the source of the construction of meaning in the public

mind. I am not identifying the concrete social actors who are power holders, but presenting a hypothesis: In all cases, they are networks of actors exercising power in their respective areas of influence through the networks that they construct around their interests. I am also proposing the hypothesis of the centrality of communication networks to implement the power-making process of any network. And I am suggesting that switching different networks is a fundamental source of power. Who does what, how, where, and why through this

multipronged networking strategy is a matter for investigation, not for formal theorization. Formal theory will only make sense on the basis of an accumulation of relevant knowledge. For this knowledge to be generated, though, we need an analytical construction that fits the kind of society we inhabit. This is the purpose of my proposition: to suggest an approach that can be used in research, rectified, and transformed in ways that allow the gradual construction of a network theory of power that can be falsified by observation.

NOTES

1. For an analysis of the global network society as the social structure of our time, I refer to "The Rise of the Network Society" (Castells, 1996, 2010 editions).
2. See the empirical evidence presented in "Communication Power" (Castells, 2009).

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JEFFREY C. ALEXANDER

58. REAL CIVIL SOCIETIES: DILEMMAS OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Jeffrey C. Alexander (b. 1947) is currently the Lillian Chavenson Saden Professor of Sociology at Yale University and the Director of its Center for Cultural Sociology. His theoretical focus has shifted in recent years. His earlier work constituted an attempt to develop a perspective rooted in but offering a corrective to Parsonian theory that he called neofunctionalism. His more recent work has turned to culture, advancing what he terms a “strong program in cultural sociology.” At the same time, he has made a major contribution to our understanding of civil society in a magisterial work, *The Civil Sphere*, a term he uses to link civil society discourse with Habermas’ idea of the public sphere. In this selection, which constitutes chapter 2 of that work, he discusses three different perspectives on civil society, with the third representing his position. Central to his understanding of the civil sphere is his claim that it represents a space distinct from other institutional realms, one where both solidarity and justice are promoted, and where the promise of democracy as an ongoing project is played out.

Vital concepts enter social science by a striking process of intellectual secularization. An idea emerges first in practical experiences, from the often overwhelming pressures of moral, economic, and political conflict. Only later does it move into the intellectual world of conceptual disputation, paradigm conflict, research program, and empirical debate. Even after they have made this transition, vital concepts retain significant moral and political associations, and they remain highly disputed. What changes is the terrain on which they are discussed, compromised, and struggled over. The intellectual field, after all, has a very distinctive specificity of its own.

This secularization process created such basic concepts as class, status, race, party, religion, and sect. More recently, we can see a similar process at work with the emergence of such concepts as gender, sexuality, and identity. The subject of this book, civil society, is being subjected to the same kind of secularization today.

Civil society enters into intellectual discourse from the ongoing tumult of social and political life for the second time. We must make every effort to refine it in a theoretical manner so that it will not disappear once again. If we fail, the opportunity to incorporate this idea might disappear from intellectual life for another long period of time. Not only normative theory but moral life itself would be impoverished if this opportunity were missed, and empirical social science would be much the worse as well. There is a new theoretical continent to explore, a new empirical domain waiting to be defined. But we will not be able to make out this new social territory unless we can look at it through new theoretical lenses. Our old conceptual spectacles will not do.

To forge these spectacles is the aim of this book. Its ambition is to develop a set of concepts that can illuminate a new kind of social fact and open up a new arena for social scientific study, one much closer to the spirit and aspirations of democratic life.

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Civil society has been conceived in three ideal-typical ways. These have succeeded one another in historical time, though each remains a significant intellectual and social force today. After situating these ideal-types temporally, and evaluating them theoretically, I will introduce the analytical model at the core of this book, a model which aims to define the relationship between civil society and other kinds of institutional spheres. Only by understanding the boundary relations between civil and uncivil spheres can we push the discussion of civil society from the normative into the empirical realm. And only by understanding civil society in a more “realist” manner can we lay the basis for a critical normative theory about the incompleteness of civil society in turn.

CIVIL SOCIETY I

It is well known that in its modern, post-medieval, post-Hobbesian form, “civil society” entered into social understanding only in the late 17th century, with the writings of figures like Locke and James Harrington.¹ Developed subsequently by such Scottish moralists as Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith, by Rousseau and Hegel, and employed energetically for the last time by Tocqueville, “civil society” was a rather diffuse, umbrella-like concept referring to a plethora of institutions outside the state. It included the capitalist market and its institutions, but it also denoted what Tocqueville called voluntary religion (non-established Protestant covenantal denominations), private and public associations and organizations, and virtually every form of cooperative social relationship that created bonds of trust—for example, currents of public opinion, legal norms and institutions, and political parties.

It is vital to see that in this first period of its modern understanding, civil society was endowed with a distinctively moral and ethical force. As Albert Hirschman showed in *The Passions and the Interests*, the civilizing qualities associated with civil society most definitely extended to the capitalist market itself, with its bargaining and trading, its circulating commodities and money, its shopkeepers and private property. Identified by such terms as *le doux commerce*, the processes and institutions of the capitalist market were benignly

conceived—particularly by the progressive thinkers of the day—as helping to produce qualities associated with international peace, domestic tranquility, and increasingly democratic participation. Capitalism was understood as producing self-discipline and individual responsibility. It was helping to create a social system antithetical to the vainglorious aristocratic one, where knightly ethics emphasized individual prowess through feats of grandeur, typically of a military kind, and ascriptive status hierarchies were maintained by hegemonic force. Montesquieu provided high ethical praise for capitalism in this early phase.² Benjamin Franklin’s influential *Autobiography*, which identifies public virtue with the discipline and propriety of market life, might be said to provide an equally important example of a more popular, more bourgeois, but perhaps not less literary kind.³

The decidedly positive moral and ethical tone that CSI attributed to market society underwent a dramatic transformation in the early middle of the nineteenth century. The development of capitalism’s industrial phase made Mandeville’s famous fable of capitalism’s bee-like cooperation seem completely passé.⁴ The pejorative association of capitalism with inhumane instrumentality, domination, and exploitation first emerged among radical British political economists like Thomas Hodgskin in the 1820s and 1830s.⁵ Marx encountered this Manichean literature in the early 1840s, and he provided it with a systematic economic and sociological theory. His voice, while by far the most important in theoretical terms, was for contemporaries only one among many.

The emerging hatred of capitalism, its identification with all the evils of feudal domination and worse, was expressed among a wide and growing chorus of utopians, socialists, and republicans. It is noteworthy that, for their part, the new industrial capitalists and their liberal economic spokesmen did not shy away from this new view of capitalism as an antisocial force. Brandishing the doctrine of *laissez-faire* in a decidedly un-Smithian way, their motto seemed to be, “society be damned!” There exists no better representation of this self-understanding of the supposedly inherent and ineradicable antagonism between an evil, egotistical market, and “society” in the moral and collective sense, than Karl Polanyi’s *The Great Transformation*,⁶

which dramatically took the side of “society” against the market. Despite its interpretive power and normative force, however, Polanyi’s influential book has reinforced the very theoretical understandings I wish to make problematic here.

CIVIL SOCIETY II

In social theory, this dramatic transformation of the moral and social identity of market capitalism had fateful effects on the concept of civil society. As Keane⁷ and Cohen⁸ were among the first to point out, the connotations of this fecund concept became drastically narrowed. Shorn of its cooperative, democratic, associative, and public ties, in this second version (CSII), civil society came to be pejoratively associated with market capitalism alone.⁹ Marx’s writings between 1842 and 1845 reflected and crystallized this reduction in a fateful way. Not only does civil society come to be treated simply as a field for the play of egoistical, purely private interests, but it is now viewed as a superstructure, a legal and political arena that camouflages the domination of commodities and the capitalist class. For Marx, industrial capitalism seemed only to consist of markets, the social groups formed by markets, and market-protecting states. Society in the collective and moral sense had dissolved into a morass of particularistic interests. Only the submerged and repressed cooperative ties that defined the proletariat’s true economic interest could provide a counterbalancing universalism. Only the collectively-binding social organization of the bourgeoisie’s class enemy could sustain a social alternative to selfishness that the ideals of civil society provided only in name.

As Cohen¹⁰ observed in her devastating critique, in Marx’s theory of civil society “social, political, private, and legal institutions were treated as the environment of the capitalist system, to be transformed by its logic but without a dynamism of their own.” Nothing more clearly illustrates the paradigm shift from CSI to CSII than the accusations Marx made against Hegel, namely, that he had sought, in a reactionary manner, to justify just such a privatized, selfish vision of civil society, that he had identified the civil sphere only with the ‘system of needs’ that became the mode of production Marx’s own work.¹¹ But Hegel actually never did any such

thing. To the contrary, he sought to rework the liberal line of CSI in a more communal, solidaristic way. It is true that the available linguistic resources and the peculiarities of German history had led Hegel, as it had led Kant before him, to translate the English term, civil society, as *Bürgerlich Gesellschaft*, literally ‘burger’ but more broadly ‘bourgeois’ or ‘middle class’ society.¹² But Marx’s contention that Hegel, and non-socialists more generally, had identified civil society simply with capitalist class structures was an ahistorical distortion reflecting the sense of crisis that marked the birth of industrial society. For Hegel, the civil sphere was not only the world of economic needs but also the sphere of ethics and law, and other intermediate groupings that we would today call voluntary organizations.¹³

It is not surprising that in this social and intellectual situation, in the middle of the nineteenth century, civil society as an important concept in social theory shortly disappeared. If it was no more than an epiphenomenon of capitalism, then it was no longer necessary, either intellectually or socially. In the context of the ravages of early industrial capitalism, social and intellectual attention shifted to the state. Substantive rather than formal equality became the order of the day. Issues of democratic participation and liberty, once conceived as inherently connected to equality in its other forms, became less important. Strong state theories emerged, among both radicals and conservatives, and bureaucratic regulation appeared as the only counterbalance to the instabilities and inhumanities of market life.¹⁴ In the newly emerging social sciences, mobility, poverty, and class conflict became the primary topics of research and theory. In social and political philosophy, utilitarian and contract theories assumed prominence, along with the neo-Kantian emphasis on justice in terms of formal rationality and proceduralism at the expense of ethical investigations into the requirements of the good life.

The legacy of this century-long distortion of the capitalism-civil society relationship has had regrettable effects. Identifying society with the market, ideologists for the right have argued that the effective functioning of capitalism depends on the dissolution of social controls. Secure in the knowledge that civil society is the private market, that economic processes by themselves will produce the institutions necessary

to promote democracy and mutual respect, they have labored righteously to disband the very public institutions that crystallize social solidarity outside the market place. Such efforts have continued to this day.¹⁵

Yet if, for the right, the capitalism-civil society identification suggested abolishing society, for the left it suggested abolishing markets and private property itself. If civility and cooperation were perverted and distorted by capitalism, the latter would have to be abolished for the former to be restored. In this way, the big state became the principal ally of the left, and progressive movements became associated not only with equality but with stifling and often authoritarian bureaucratic control.

This was by no means confined to the Marxist left. For thinkers from Walter Lippman and John Dewey to C. Wright Mills, Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, and most recently Robert Putnam, the disappearance of public life became axiomatic to any thoughtful consideration of twentieth century modernity.¹⁶ Captives of the historical shift in intellectual presuppositions which I have described as CSII, these influential thinkers were unable to think reflexively about it. They were convinced that capitalism was destroying public life, that in democratic mass societies an all-powerful market was pulverizing social bonds, converting citizens into egoists, and allowing oligarchies and bureaucracies full sway. Capitalism and mass societies were conceived as social worlds in which privacy ruled. That this was, in fact, far from the case had become for even the most acute social observers very difficult to see. Because CSI had given way to CSII, they could no longer draw upon the idea of an independent civil sphere. The social conditions that had triggered the demise of CSI still held sway.

In a paradoxical manner, the civil society thinking of Antonio Gramsci, which differed significantly from the reductive understandings of traditional CSII, actually seemed to buttress these fateful lapses in critical democratic thought, whether liberal or socialist. Drawing on a less reductive reading of Hegel, in the early decades of the 20th century Gramsci had developed his own, thoroughly anti-individualistic and anti-economistic approach to civil society. He defined it as the realm of political, cultural, legal, and public life that occupied an intermediate zone between

economic relations and political power.¹⁷ With this idea, Gramsci meant to challenge the evolutionary line of Marxist thinking, which held that socialist revolution would be triggered automatically, by a crisis in the economy alone. Broadening Lenin's earlier critique of economism, Gramsci suggested that civil society itself would have to be challenged, and transformed, independently of the strains created by capitalism's economic base. Yet, even while Gramsci challenged the instrumentalism of Marx's thinking about the civil sphere, he reinforced CSII by insisting that, within the confines of capitalist market society, there would never be the space for institutionalizing solidarity of a more universalistic and inclusive kind. Gramsci did not associate civil society with democracy. It was a product of class-divided capitalism understood in the broad sociocultural and economic sense. The values, norms, and institutions of civil society were opposed to the interest of the mass of humanity, even if they did provide a space for contesting their own legitimacy in a public, counter-hegemonic way. Civil society was inherently capitalist. It was a sphere that could be entered into but not redefined. Its discourse could not be broadened and redirected. It was a sphere that would have to be overthrown. In this book, my argument is directed in an opposite way.

RETURN TO CIVIL SOCIETY I?

In recent decades a series of social and cultural events has created the circumstances for a renewed intellectual engagement with civil society. Big state theory has lost its prestige, economically with the falling productivity of command economies, morally and politically with the overthrow of state Communism and bureaucratic authoritarian regimes.¹⁸ Within social science, there is now more interest in informal ties, intimate relationships, trust, cultural and symbolic processes, and the institutions of public life.¹⁹ In political and moral philosophy, there has not only been a return to democratic theory, but renewed interest in Aristotle, Hegel, critical hermeneutics and Pragmatism—all marking a return to investigations of the lifeworld ties of local culture and community.²⁰

The problem is that this re-engagement with civil society has largely meant a return to CSI. In *Democracy*

and *Civil Society*, a path-breaking work in many ways, John Keane defines civil society broadly as “the realm of social activities,” a realm that includes “privately owned,” “market-directed,” “voluntarily run,” and “friendship-based” organizations, phenomena that are by no means necessarily theoretically complementary or practically congenial. Keane goes on to assert, moreover, that such civil activities are at once “legally recognized” and “guaranteed by the state,” even as they form an “autonomous [sphere of] social life.” Civil society is said to be “an aggregate of institutions whose members are engaged primarily in a complex of non-state activities—economic and cultural production, household life and voluntary association,” seemingly private activities that Kane identifies as distinctly “sociable” and at the same time “public spheres.”²¹ Similarly, when Andrew Arato²² first employed civil society in his important articles on the Solidarity movement in the early 1980s, he suggested that the civil sphere in its Western form was tied to private property, a traditional understanding that not only contradicts the broad range of references employed by Keane but threatens to render the concept useless for distinguishing democratic from nondemocratic capitalistic societies. A decade later, in their major philosophical rethinking of civil society theory, Cohen and Arato²³ severed this connection, and in its place they offered a substantially improved three-part model of society that went well beyond CSI and CSII. Nonetheless, perhaps by relying so heavily on Hegel, this major work failed to define the civil sphere as distinctive vis-à-vis such arenas as family life, and neglected entirely the relation between the civil sphere and such arenas as culture, religion, ethnicity, and race.²⁴ Here they were following Habermas, who insists on separating rational discourse in the public sphere from the traditions of cultural life.²⁵

The same tendency toward diffuseness marked Alan Wolfe’s²⁶ identification of civil society with the private realm of family and voluntary organization, and Adam Seligman’s²⁷ insistence that it corresponds to the rule of reason in the Enlightenment sense. Carole Pateman²⁸ claims civil society to be inextricably linked to patriarchal family relations, and Shils²⁹ and Walzer³⁰, while disagreeing with Pateman in virtually every other way, likewise revert to an understanding

of civil society that reflects its earlier diffuse and umbrella-like form. Victor Perez-Diaz³¹ argues, indeed, that only such a ‘maximalist’ approach to civil society can maintain the necessary linkages between a democratic public sphere and particular forms of economy, state, family, and cultural life. Though Robert Putnam’s model for strengthening democracy through voluntary associations does not focus explicitly on the civil society idea, this neo-Tocquevillian approach looks backward to CSI in very much the same way.³²

It is most definitely a good thing that the destructive and overly narrow understandings of CSII have been undermined by the recent revival of democratic thought. But social life at the beginning of the twenty-first century is much more complex and more internally differentiated than the early modern societies that generated CSI. The old umbrella understanding will no longer do. We need a much more precise and delimited understanding of the term. Private property, markets, family life, and religious ideals might all be necessary at some point or another to create the capacities of the civil sphere, but they are by no means sufficient to sustain it. Rejecting the reductionism of CSII, but also the diffuse inclusiveness of CSI, we must develop a third approach to civil society, one that reflects both the empirical and normative problems of contemporary life.

TOWARD CIVIL SOCIETY III

We need to understand civil society as a sphere that can be analytically independent, empirically differentiated, and morally more universalistic vis-à-vis the state and the market and from other social spheres as well. Building upon important directional signals from empirical theoretical traditions in sociology and normative traditions in political theory and philosophy . . . I would like to suggest that civil society should be conceived as a solidary sphere, in which a certain kind of universalizing community comes to be culturally defined and to some degree institutionally enforced. To the degree that this solidary community exists, it is exhibited and sustained by public opinion, deep cultural codes, distinctive organizations—legal, journalistic and associational—and such historically specific interactional practices as civility, criticism, and mutual

respect.³³ Such a civil community can never exist as such; it can only be sustained to one degree or another. It is always limited by, and interpenetrated with, the boundary relations of other, noncivil spheres.

The solidarity that sustains the civil sphere amidst the complex and highly conflictual spheres of contemporary life draws from long-standing cultural and institutional traditions that have sustained individual and collective obligation. CSII theories were quite mistaken to link not only individualism (its emergence) but the collective sense of social obligation (its decline) with market society. The individuality that sustains civil society has a long history in Western societies, as a moral force, an institutional fact, and a set of inter-actonal practices. It has a non-economic background in the cultural legacy of Christianity, with its emphasis on the immortal soul, conscience, and confession; in aristocratic liberty and Renaissance self-fashioning; in the Reformation's insistence on the individual relation to God; in the Enlightenment's deification of individual reason; in Romanticism's restoration of expressive individuality. Institutions that reward and model individuality can be traced back to English legal guarantees for private property in the eleventh century; to the medieval parliaments that distinguished the specificity of Western feudalism; to the newly independent cities that emerged in late medieval times and played such a powerful historical role until the emergence of absolutist states. The economic practices of market capitalism, in other words, did not invent either moral or immoral individualism. They should be viewed, rather, as marking a new specification and institutionalization of it, along with other newly emerging forms of social organization, such as religious sect activity, mass parliamentary democracy, and romantic love.³⁴

Just as individualism in its moral and expressive forms preceded, survived, and in effect surrounded the instrumental, self-oriented individualism institutionalized in capitalist market life, so did the existence of "society." Civil ties and the enforcement of obligations to a community of others were part of the fundamental structure of many British towns centuries before the appearance of contemporary capitalist life.³⁵ The notion of a "people" rooted in common lineage, of the community as an *ethnos*, formed the early basis for an ethically binding, particularist conception of

nationhood from at least the fifteenth century.³⁶ Karl Polanyi well described the "double movement" that characterized the emergence of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century, pitting "moral forces" representing "the moral entity 'man'" against the egoistical, impersonal, and degrading practices of the market. The upshot of this struggle was that the "general interests of the community" created "protectionist measures" regulating the conditions of land, labor, and productive organization inside the very bowels of economic life. "Once we rid ourselves of the obsession that only sectional, never general, interest can become effective," Polanyi writes, "as well as the twin prejudice of restricting the interests of human groups to their monetary income, the breadth and depth of the protectionist movement lose their mystery."³⁷ Still, Polanyi is wrong to describe this "countermovement" as of a "purely practical and pragmatic nature," as producing measures that "simply responded to the needs of an industrial civilization with which market methods were unable to cope."³⁸ The protectionist movement did not simply grow naturally in response to a moral violation that was there for all to see. Rather, this defensive moral response emerged precisely because there had already existed strongly institutionalized and culturally mandated reservoirs of non-market, non-individualistic force in Western social life. It was from these sources that there emerged protests against capitalism on behalf of "the people."³⁹

To identify civil society with capitalism (CSII) is to degrade its universalizing moral implications and the capacity for criticism and repair that the existence of a relatively independent solidary community implies. The civil sphere and the market must be conceptualized in fundamentally different terms. We are no more a capitalist society than we are a bureaucratic, secular, rational one, or indeed a civil one. Yet, to suggest the need to acknowledge the environment outside of economic life is not to embrace the kind of relativism that the pluralism of CSI implies. Michael Walzer has argued eloquently that there are as many spheres of justice as there are differentiated social spheres.⁴⁰ Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thevenot, in a parallel argument, suggest that complex societies contain several "regimes of justification," each of which must be respected in its own right.⁴¹ As these American

and French theories persuasively remind us, no social sphere, not even the economic, should be conceived in anti-normative terms, as governed only by interest and egoism. They have immanent moral structures in their own right. It remains vital, nonetheless, to specify and differentiate the “regime of justification” or the “sphere of justice” that makes a clear and decisive reference to the common good in a democratic way. This is the criterion of justice that follows from ideals that regulate the civil sphere. The codes and narratives, the institutions, and the interactions that underlay civil solidarity clearly depart from those that regulate the world of economic cooperation and competition, the affectual and intimate relations of family life, and the transcendental and abstract symbolism that form the media of intellectual and religious interaction and exchange.

When the domination of one sphere over another, or the monopolization of resources by elites within the individual spheres themselves, has been forcefully blocked, it has been by bringing to bear the cultural codes and regulative institutions of the civil sphere. This, at least, is the thesis that informs this book. Civil and noncivil spheres do not merely co-exist in a kind of harmonious interchange, as functionalist theories of differentiation from Spencer and Durkheim to Parsons and Luhmann imply. It is not only the pluralization of spheres that guarantees a good society, nor the free play and good will of interlocutors willing to compromise their interests in the face of competing and persuasive claims for moral justification. To maintain democracy, and to achieve justice, it is often necessary for the civil to ‘invade’ noncivil spheres, to demand certain kinds of reforms, and to monitor them through regulation in turn. In modern times, aggrieved parties have demanded justice by pointing angrily to what they come to see as destructive intrusions into the civil realm, intrusions whose demands they construct as particularistic and self-serving. In response, the forces and institutions of civil society have often initiated repairs that aim to mend the social fabric.

In terms of the normative mandates established by democratic societies, it is the *civil* sphere of justice that trumps every other. The universality that is the ambition of this sphere, its demands to be inclusive, to fulfill collective obligations while at the same time protecting individual autonomy—these qualities have

persistently made the civil sphere the court of last resort in modern, modernizing, and postmodernizing societies.⁴² For the last two centuries explicitly, and implicitly for many centuries before, it has been the immanent and subjunctive demands of the civil sphere that have provided possibilities for justice.

As we will see in our later analysis of the tense and shifting boundaries between civil and uncivil spheres, CSIII allows us to revisit the ‘capitalism problem’ in a more productive way.⁴³ When exploitation leads to widening class conflict, it signals strains and inequalities in economic life. When class conflict leads to wide public discussion, to the formation of legal trade unions, to urgent appeals for sympathy and support, to scandals and parliamentary investigations, such expansion signals that market conflicts have entered into the civil sphere. In such situations, the mandate of solidarity, the presumptions of collective obligation and autonomy, come face to face with the demands for efficiency and hierarchy. These conflicts are not accidental; they are systematic to every society that opens up a civil sphere, and they make justice a possibility, though not in any sense a necessary social fact. In real civil societies, extending solidarity to others depends on the imagination. The counter-factual “original position” that inspired Rawls’ philosophy of justice is assumed in fantasy, as an idealization, via metaphor and symbolic analogy, not through pragmatic experience or logical deduction. It is a matter of cultural struggle, of social movement, of demands for incorporation, of broken and reconstructed dialogue, of reconfiguring institutional life.

Such tense and permeable boundary relationships between capitalist markets and the civil sphere, barely visible during the early reign of CSI, were denied in principle by CSII. Only if we develop a new model, CSIII, can we understand why capitalistic and civil society must not be conflated with one another. If these realms are separated analytically, we gain empirical and theoretical purchase, not only on the wrenching economic strains of the last two centuries, but on the extraordinary repairs to the social fabric that have so often been made in response. Markets are not, after all, the only threats or even the worst threats that have been levied against the democratic possibilities of civil life. Far from the mere existence of plural spheres providing the skeleton key to justice, each of the diverse

and variegated spheres of modern societies has created distortions and undermined civil promises. Religious hatreds and repression, gender misogyny and patriarchy, the arrogance of expert knowledge and the secrecy of political oligarchy, racial and ethnic hatreds of every sort—each of these particularistic and anti-civil forces has deeply fragmented the civil domain. The identification of capitalism with civil society, in other words, is just one example of the reductive and circumscribing conflation of civil society with a particular kind of noncivil realm.

Social and cultural movements of every kind, whether old or new, economic or religious, have organized to expose the pretensions of civil society and the hollowness of its promises. The theorists and ideologists who have led these rebellious and critical movements have often concluded, in their desperation and frustration, that civil society has no real force at all. Whether such radical arguments focus on class, gender, race, or religion, their argument is much the same. Justice is impossible; revolution and flight are

the only options left. I will suggest that these radical, and radically despairing, arguments for emancipation from civil society are not empirically accurate, even if they are sometimes morally compelling. Generalizing from distorted and oppressive boundary relations, they draw the false conclusion that the civil sphere must invariably be distorted in this manner, not only now but in the future as well. Building on this faulty line of reasoning, they have outlined utopian projects that reject universalizing solidarity as a social goal or have proposed a reconstructed social order in which only peaceable relations will reign. There is no way to avoid conflicts over boundary relations. They reflect the pluralism and complexity that mark modern and postmodern life, especially in its democratic forms. Between civil society and the other social spheres there is a theoretically open and historically indeterminate relation. Sometimes, the power of noncivil spheres has overwhelmed the universalistic aspirations of the civil sphere. At other times, its relative autonomy has provided the possibility for justice.

NOTES

1. Seligman, *Idea of Civil Society*.
2. Hirschman, *Passions and the Interests*.
3. Franklin, *Autobiography and Selection from Other Writings*. Franklin's equivalence of capitalistic thrift with virtue was related to the influence of Puritanism by Max Weber in *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 48–57, and derided by Lawrence in his *Studies in Classic American Literature*, pp. 9–22, for the same association. Neither Weber nor Lawrence, however, highlighted the association of Franklinitian virtue with democratic and civil life. See Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*.
4. See Dumont, *From Mandeville to Marx*.
5. For the manner in which Hodgskin's critique of Ricardo and his innovative concepts adumbrated and facilitated Marx's own radical political economy, see Elie Halévy, *Thomas Hodgskin (1787–1869)*.
6. Polanyi, *Great Transformation*.
7. Keane, *Democracy and Civil Society*.
8. Jean Cohen, *Class and Civil Society*.
9. Easton and Guddat, *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*; and Alexander, *Antinomies of Classical Thought*, pp. 11–40.
10. Jean Cohen, *Class and Civil Society*, pp. 5, 24.
11. K. Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right."
12. Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, appeared in 1767; in the German translation that appeared the following year, "civil society" was written as *Bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (Bobbio, "Gramsci and the Concept of Civil Society," p. 80).

13. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Part III, section ii: a–c. In addition to Jean Cohen's *Class and Civil Society*, see the argument about Hegel in Jean Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, pp. 91–116. For other arguments that develop the nonegoistic interpretation of Hegel, see Pelczynski, *State and Civil Society: Studies in Hegel's Political Philosophy*; and Reidel, *Between Tradition and Revolution*. The problem with these interpretive discussions is that they are so concerned to save Hegel from Marx—and, quite rightly, to provide an alternative to the reductionistic implications of civil society II—that they tend to credit Hegel with too much originality, suggesting, at least by implication, that he virtually invented the nonindividualistic conception of civil society from whole cloth. As the present discussion suggests, however, this underplays the Scottish, British, and French contributions to the earlier creation of civil society I and neglects the importance of discussions by Hegel's non-German contemporaries such as Tocqueville.
14. It was Keane who was the first to present this historical account of strong state versus civil society theory, in "Despotism and Democracy," pp. 35–71.
15. For the historical origins and traces of this conservative conflation, see Polanyi's *Great Transformation*, pp. 135–200, and Hirschman's *Passions and the Interests*, pp. 100–113; for comparisons between historical and contemporary conservative conflations, see Hirschman, *Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy*; and Somers and Block, "From Poverty to Perversity."
16. For a discussion of the disappearing public in the writings of the American pragmatists, see chapter 9 of this book; and for a discussion of Putnam's claims about democratic declension, see the section on "Civil Associations" in chapter 5.
17. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, e.g., pp. 12–13 and 234, 263, 268. See also Jean Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, pp. 142–174.
18. Alexander, "Bringing Democracy Back In." This intellectual critique of big-state theory from a progressive, civil society perspective first appeared in a series of philosophical articles written by eastern Europeans, e.g., Kolakowski, "Hope and Hopelessness"; Michnik, "New Evolutionism"; Tesar, "Totalitarian Dictatorships."
19. See, for example, Sztompka, *Trust*; Seligman, *Problem of Trust*; and for an earlier and still important treatment, see Barber, *Logic and Limits of Trust*.
20. E.g., Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*; Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*; Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*; Taylor, *Hegel and Sources of the Self*.
21. Keane, *Democracy and Civil Society*, pp. 3, 14. The same kind of broad, civil society approach informs such later work by Keane as *Civil Society: Old Images, New Visions*, e.g., pp. 6, 17–19, 53–55. This book presents, at the same time, an informative overview of the wide-ranging international discussions that the revival of civil society has triggered. M. Emirbayer and M. Sheller take up a CSI approach that resembles Keane's, defining it as including "willed communities" and "voluntary associations, on the one hand, and families, schools, churches, and other cultural or socializing institutions, on the other" ("Publics in History," p. 152).
22. Arato, "Civil Society against the State," p. 23.
23. Jean Cohen and Arato, *Civil Society*.
24. For a development of this criticism, see my review of Jean Cohen and Arato, "Return to Civil Society."
25. E.g., Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, pp. 352–387. As my argument unfolds, it will become clear that although with the idea of civil society III I am calling for a sharp analytic separation between civil society and these other spheres, I am in no sense arguing for their empirical separation. The different possibilities for empirical separation and overlap are explored throughout the rest of this book and are presented systematically as a model of "the contradictions of civil society" in chapter 8.

26. A. Wolfe, *Whose Keeper?*
27. Seligman, *Idea of Civil Society*.
28. Pateman, "Fraternal Social Contract," in Keane, *Civil Society and the State*.
29. Shils, "Virtue of Civil Society."
30. Walzer, "Rescuing Civil Society."
31. Perez-Diaz, "Public Sphere and a European Civil Society."
32. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work* and *Bowling Alone*. For a critical discussion of Putnam's ideas in relation to the civil society III alternative which I am proposing here, see the section "Civil Associations" in chapter 5 of this book.
33. Though the cultural and institutional sources of the civil sphere and their interrelation with noncivil spheres form the main topic of this book, I will not have the opportunity to explore such historically specific interactional practices. Such an examination would build upon Freud's understanding, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, of civilization as a distinctive kind of psychological structure; Elias's analysis of the historical origins of the mannerisms marking civility, in *Civilizing Process* (the dark side of which he explored in "Violence and Civilization"; cf. Keane, "Uncivil Society," in *Civil Society*, pp. 115–156); and Erving Goffman, a great theorist of civil face-to-face relations in contemporary social science, in, e.g., *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and *Interaction Ritual*. For contemporary empirical studies of the interactional level of civil society, see Phillips and P. Smith, "Emotional and Behavioral Responses to Everyday Incivility" and "Everyday Incivility"; N. Eliasoph and P. Lichterman, "Culture in Interaction"; and G. Fine and B. Harrington, "Tiny Publics."
34. For the religious origins: Troeltsch, *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*; Jelinek, *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens*; M. Weber, "'Churches' and 'Sects' in North America"; and Taylor, *Sources*, esp. pp. 127–142. For individualism in the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment: J. Burckhardt, *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, esp. pp. 143–174; Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*; Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, M. Walzer, *Revolution of the Saints*; and Gay, *Enlightenment: An Interpretation*. For the sources of individuality in romanticism, see Taylor, *Sources*, pp. 368–390, and his book *Ethics of Authenticity*. For the eleventh-century roots of English individualism and its reflection in citizenship law, see Somers, "Citizenship and the Place of the Public Sphere"; and Colin Morris, *Discovery of the Individual: 1050–1200*. For medieval parliaments and Western feudalism, see M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, pp. 1038–1039, and, for their relation to individualism in modern times, pp. 1381–1469; and Bendix, *Kings or People*, pp. 200–217. For the distinctiveness of Western cities and individuality, see M. Weber, "The City," 1212–1372. For religious sect activity and individuality, see P. Miller, *Life of the Mind in America*; and M. Weber, "'Churches' and 'Sects'" and "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism," *From Max Weber*, pp. 302–322. For individualism and romantic love, see Bloch, "Untangling the Roots of Modern Sex Roles."
35. Somers, "Citizenship and the Place of the Public Sphere."
36. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Greenfeld, *Nationalism*; and Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*. For discussions that emphasize solidarity but are less focused specifically by the national reference, see M. Weber, *City*, and Bendix, *Kings or People*.
37. Polanyi, *Great Transformation*, pp. 168, 73, and 154.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 146, 154. At the same time that Polanyi insisted on the purely pragmatic and practical origins of these protest movements, however, he said that they "almost invariably" also involved such concerns as "professional status," "the form of a man's life," and "the breadth of his existence" (p. 154).

39. For discussion of the noneconomic, religious, and political-cultural origins of the collective obligations that generated earlier working-and middle-class critiques of industrial capitalism, see R. Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780–1950*; E. P. Thompson, *Origins of the British Working Class*; Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France*; Joyce, *Visions of the People*; Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*; and Biernacki, *Fabrication of Labor*. More generally, see Hess's discussion of "the semantics of stratification" in his *Concepts of Social Stratification*, pp. 1–9 and 168–174.
40. Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*.
41. Boltanski and Thevenot, *De la justification*.
42. Though this is the same kind of critique as the one Ronald Dworkin leveled against Walzer when *Spheres of Justice* first appeared ("To Each His Own"), I do not agree with Dworkin's argument that the alternative is Rawlsian universalism. Dworkin fails to recognize Walzer's hermeneutic achievement vis-à-vis Rawls, which was, per my argument in chapter 1, to ground justice in cultural meaning. For the most developed statement of this position, see Walzer, *Interpretation and Social Criticism*.
43. In chapter 8, I will develop a model of the temporal, spatial, and functional contradictions of civil society and the three ideal-typical forms of boundary relations that mediate them.

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SECTION XII

1. Summarize in your own words what Tilly means when he characterizes protection as double-edged. Give an example to illustrate the point.
2. What does Agamben mean by "bare life?" How is the concept relevant to campaigns of genocide? How is it relevant to the ways Western nations have conducted their "war on terrorism?"
3. Identify the main factors leading to Streeck's conviction that we are witnessing the rapid unravelling of capitalism? One factor is the ecological crisis, which he thinks is not being adequately addressed. Explain why you either agree or disagree with his basic argument.
4. Wright offers a somewhat optimistic view of the potential for progressive change by identifying examples of alternatives to capitalism. Do you shared his tempered optimism, or would you concur with pessimistic critics that his examples are unlikely to be models for change?
5. What does Castells mean by a network society?
6. Summarize the argument Castells makes about the various forms of power in a network society, offering concrete examples to illustrate the respective roles of programmers and switchers.
7. Summarize Alexander's Civil Society III and describe the ways in which it is similar to and different from Civil Society I and II.
8. Explain in your own words how it is that what Alexander calls the "civil sphere" is the social space that makes possibly societal solidarity.

XIII. MODERNITY

NORBERT ELIAS

59. SHAME AND REPUGNANCE

Not too many years before his death, Norbert Elias (1897–1990) was “discovered” by sociology, and since then he has been viewed as one of the most important historical sociologists of the century. Another émigré who left Germany during the Hitler years, Elias published *The Civilizing Process* in 1939, just before the world plunged into war. The timing of its release sealed the fate of the book, as it would be read by only a few, and Elias would teach in England in relative obscurity for decades. This changed in the 1970s; since that time theorists have paid considerable attention to his work. The overarching focus of Elias’ work is the way Western civilization has developed and in particular the varied ways that people have been transformed psychologically and behaviorally. Of particular concern to Elias are the ways that self-restraint has become a characteristic feature of the “civilized” person. This selection from *Power and Civility* (Part II of *The Civilizing Process*) offers insights into the ways in which the development of notions of shame and repugnance have been an integral part of this process.

No less characteristic of a civilizing process than “rationalization” is the peculiar moulding of the drive economy that we call “shame” and “repugnance” or “embarrassment”. Both these, the strong spurt of rationalization and the (for a time) no less strong advance of the threshold of shame and repugnance that becomes more and more perceptible in the make-up of Western men broadly speaking from the sixteenth century onwards, are different sides of the same transformation of the social personality structure. The feeling of shame is a specific excitation, a kind of anxiety which is automatically reproduced in the individual on certain occasions by force of habit. Considered superficially, it is fear of social degradation or, more generally, of other people’s gestures of superiority. But it

is a form of displeasure or fear which arises characteristically on those occasions when a person who fears lapsing into inferiority can avert this danger neither by direct physical means nor by any other form of attack. This defencelessness against the superiority of others, this total exposure to them does not arise directly from a threat from the physical superiority of others actually present, although it doubtless has its origins in physical compulsion, in the bodily inferiority of the child in face of its parents or teachers. In adults, however, this defencelessness results from the fact that the people whose superiority one fears are in accord with one’s own superego, with the agency of self-constraint implanted in the individual by others on whom he was dependent, who possessed power and superiority

Norbert Elias, *Power and Civility*, pp. 292–300. Copyright 1939, 1969, 1976 by Norbert Elias. English translation copyright 1982 by Basil Blackwell, Publisher. Permission conveyed through the Copyright Clearance Center. ♦

over him. In keeping with this, the anxiety that we call "shame" is heavily veiled to the sight of others; however strong it may be, it is never directly expressed in noisy gestures. Shame takes on its particular coloration from the fact that the person feeling it has done or is about to do something through which he comes into contradiction with people to whom he is bound in one form or another, and with himself, with the sector of his consciousness by which he controls himself. The conflict expressed in shame-fear is not merely a conflict of the individual with prevalent social opinion; the individual's behaviour has brought him into conflict with the part of himself that represents this social opinion. It is a conflict within his own personality; he himself recognizes himself as inferior. He fears the loss of the love or respect of others, to which he attaches or has attached value. Their attitude has precipitated an attitude within him that he automatically adopts towards himself. This is what makes him so defenceless against gestures of superiority by others which somehow trigger off this automatism within him.

This also explains why the fear of transgression of social prohibitions takes on more clearly the character of shame the more completely alien constraints have been turned into self-restraints by the structure of society, and the more comprehensive and differentiated the ring of self-restraints have become within which a person's conduct is enclosed. The inner tension, the excitement that is aroused whenever a person feels compelled to break out of this enclosure in any place, or when he has done so, varies in strength according to the gravity of the social prohibition and the degree of self-constraint. In ordinary life we call this excitement shame only in certain contexts and above all when it has a certain degree of strength; but in terms of its structure it is, despite its many nuances and degrees, always the same event. Like self-constraints, it is to be found in a less stable, less uniform and less all-embracing form even at simpler levels of social development. Like these constraints, tensions and fears of this kind emerge more clearly with every spurt of the civilizing process, and finally predominate over others—particularly the physical fear of others. They predominate the more, the larger the areas that are pacified, and the greater the importance in the moulding of people of the more even constraints that come to the fore in society when the

representatives of the monopoly of physical violence normally only exercise their control as it were standing in the wings—the further, in a word, the civilization of conduct advances. Just as we can only speak of "reason" in conjunction with advances of rationalization and the formation of functions demanding foresight and restraint, we can only speak of shame in conjunction with its sociogenesis, with spurts in which the shame-threshold advances or at least moves, and the structure and pattern of self-constraints are changed in a particular direction, reproducing themselves thenceforth in the same form over a greater or lesser period. Both rationalization and the advance of the shame and repugnance thresholds are expressions of a reduction in the direct physical fear of other beings, and of a consolidation of the automatic inner anxieties, the compulsions which the individual now exerts on himself. In both, the greater, more differentiated foresight and long-term view which become necessary in order that larger and larger groups of people may preserve their social existence in an increasing differentiated society, are equally expressed. It is not difficult to explain how these seemingly so different psychological changes are connected. Both, the intensification of shame like the increased rationalization, are different aspects of the growing split in the individual personality that occurs with the increasing division of functions; they are different aspects of the growing differentiation between drives and drive-controls, between "id" and "ego" or "super-ego" functions. The further this differentiation of individual self-steering advances, the more clearly that sector of the controlling functions which in a broader sense is called the "ego" and in a narrower the "super-ego", takes on a twofold function. On the one hand this sector forms the centre from which a person regulates his relations to other living and non-living beings, and on the other it forms the centre from which a person, partly consciously and partly quite automatically and unconsciously, controls his "inner life", his own affects and impulses. The layer of psychological functions which, in the course of the social transformation that has been described, is gradually differentiated from the drives, the ego or super-ego functions, has in other words, a twofold task within the personality: they conduct at the same time a domestic policy and a foreign policy—which, moreover, are not always in

harmony and often enough in contradiction. This explains the fact that in the same socio-historical period in which rationalization makes perceptible advances, an advance in the shame and repugnance threshold is also to be observed. It also explains the fact that here, as always—in accordance with the sociogenetic ground rule—a corresponding process is to be observed even today in the life of each individual child: the rationalization of conduct is an expression of the foreign policy of the same super-ego formation whose domestic policy is expressed in an advance of the shame threshold.

From here many large trains of thought lead off in different directions. It remains to be shown how this increased differentiation within the personality is manifested in a transformation of particular drives. Above all, it remains to be shown how it leads to a transformation of sexual impulses and an advance of shame feelings in the relations of men and women.¹ It must be enough here to indicate some of the main connections between the social processes described above and this advance of the frontier of shame and repugnance.

Even in the more recent history of the West itself, shame feelings have not always been built into the personality in the same way. To mention only one difference, the manner in which they are built in is not the same in a hierarchical society made up of estates as in the succeeding bourgeois industrial order.

The examples quoted earlier, above all those showing differences in the development of shame on the exposure of certain bodily parts,² give a certain impression of such changes. In courtly society shame on exposing certain parts is, in keeping with the structure of this society, still largely restricted within estate or hierarchical limits. Exposure in the presence of social inferiors, for example by the king in front of a minister, is placed under no very strict social prohibition, any more than the exposure of a man before the socially weaker and lower-ranking woman was in an earlier phase. Given his minimal functional dependence on those of lower rank, exposure as yet arouses no feeling of inferiority or shame; it can even be taken, as Della Casa states, as a sign of benevolence towards the inferior. Exposure by someone of lower rank before a superior, on the other hand, or even before people of

equal rank, is banished more and more from social life as a sign of lack of respect; branded as an offence, it becomes invested with fear. And only when the walls between estates fall away, when the functional dependence of all on all increases and all members of society become several degrees more equal, does such exposure, except in certain narrower enclaves, become an offence in the presence of any other person. Only then is such behaviour so profoundly associated with fear in the individual from an early age, that the social character of the prohibition vanishes entirely from his consciousness, shame appearing as a command coming from within himself.

And the same is true of embarrassment. This is an inseparable counterpart of shame. Just as the latter arises when someone infringes the prohibitions of his own self and of society, the former occurs when something outside the individual impinges on his danger zone, on forms of behaviour, objects, inclinations which have early on been invested with fear by his surroundings until this fear—in the manner of a conditioned reflex—is reproduced automatically in him on certain occasions. Embarrassment is displeasure or anxiety which arises when another person threatens to breach, or breaches, society's prohibitions represented by one's own super-ego. And these feelings too become more diverse and comprehensive the more extensive and subtly differentiated the danger zone by which the conduct of the individual is regulated and moulded, the further the civilization of conduct advances.

It was shown earlier by a series of examples how, from the sixteenth century onwards, the frontier of shame and embarrassment gradually begins to advance more rapidly. Here, too, the chains of thought begin slowly to join up. This advance coincides with the accelerated courtization of the upper class. It is the time when the chains of dependence intersecting in the individual grow denser and longer, when more and more people are being bound more and more closely together and the compulsion to self-control is increasing. Like mutual dependence, mutual observation of people increases; sensibilities, and correspondingly prohibitions, become more differentiated; and equally more subtle, equally more manifold become the reasons for shame and for embarrassment aroused by the conduct of others.

It was pointed out above that with the advancing division of functions and the greater integration of people, the major contrasts between different classes and countries diminish, while the nuances, the varieties of their moulding within the framework of civilization multiply. Here one encounters a corresponding trend in the development of individual conduct and sentiment. The more the strong contrasts of individual conduct are tempered, the more the violent fluctuations of pleasure or displeasure are contained, moderated and changed by self-control, the greater becomes the sensitivity to shades or nuances of conduct, the more finely attuned people grow to minute gestures and forms, and the more complex becomes their experience of themselves and their world at levels which were previously hidden from consciousness through the veil of strong affects.

To clarify this by an obvious example, "primitive" people experience human and natural events within the relatively narrow circle which is vitally important to them—narrow, because their chains of dependence are relatively short—in a manner which is in some respects far more differentiated than that of "civilized" people. The differentiation varies, depending on whether we are concerned with farmers or hunters or herdsmen, for example. But however this may be, it can be stated generally that, insofar as it is of vital importance to a group, the ability of primitive people to distinguish things in forest and field, whether it be a particular tree from another, or sounds, scents or movements, is more highly developed than in "civilized" people. But among more primitive people the natural sphere is still far more a danger zone; it is full of fears which more civilized men no longer know. This is decisive for what is or is not distinguished. The manner in which "nature" is experienced is fundamentally affected, slowly at the end of the Middle Ages and then more quickly from the sixteenth century onwards, by the pacification of larger and larger populated areas. Only now do forests, meadows and mountains gradually cease to be danger zones of the first order, from which anxiety and fear constantly intrude into individual life. And now, as the network of roads becomes, like social interdependence in general, more dense; as robber-knights and beasts of prey slowly disappear; as forest and field cease to be the scene of unbridled

passions, of the savage pursuit of man and beast, wild joy and wild fear; as they are moulded more and more by intertwining peaceful activities, the production of goods, trade and transport; now, to pacified men a correspondingly pacified nature becomes visible, and in a new way. It becomes—in keeping with the mounting significance which the eye attains as the mediator of pleasure with the growing moderation of the affects—to a high degree an object of visual pleasure. In addition, people—more precisely the town-people for whom forest and field are no longer their everyday background but a place of relaxation—grow more sensitive and begin to see the open country in a more differentiated way, at a level which was previously screened off by danger and the play of unmoderated passions. They take pleasure in the harmony of colour and lines, become open to what is called the beauty of nature; their feelings are aroused by the changing shades and shapes of the clouds and the play of light on the leaves of a tree.

And, in the wake of this pacification, the sensitivity of people to social conduct is also changed. Now, inner fears grow in proportion to the decrease of outer ones—the fears of one sector of the personality for another. As a result of these inner tensions, people begin to experience each other in a more differentiated way which was precluded as long as they constantly faced serious and inescapable threats from outside. Now a major part of the tensions which were earlier discharged directly in combat between man and man, must be resolved as an inner tension in the struggle of the individual with himself. Social life ceases to be a danger zone in which feasting, dancing and noisy pleasure frequently and suddenly give way to rage, blows and murder, and becomes a different kind of danger zone if the individual cannot sufficiently restrain himself, if he touches sensitive spots, his own shame-frontier or the embarrassment-threshold of others. In a sense, the danger zone now passes through the self of every individual. Thus people become, in this respect too, sensitive to distinctions which previously scarcely entered consciousness. Just as nature now becomes, far more than earlier, a source of pleasure mediated by the eye, people too become a source of visual pleasure or, conversely, of visually aroused displeasure, of different degrees of repugnance. The direct fear inspired in men

by men has diminished, and the inner fear mediated through the eye and through the super-ego is rising proportionately.

When the use of weapons in combat is an everyday occurrence, the small gesture of offering someone a knife at table (to recall one of the examples mentioned earlier) has no great importance. As the use of weapons is restricted more and more, as external and internal pressures make the expression of anger by physical attack increasingly difficult, people gradually become more sensitive to anything reminiscent of an attack. The very gesture of attack touches the danger zone; it becomes distressing to see a person passing someone else a knife with the point towards him.³ And from the most highly sensitized small circles of high courtly society, for whom this sensitivity also represents a prestige value, a means of distinction cultivated for that very reason, this prohibition gradually spreads throughout the whole of civilized society. Thus aggressive associations, infused no doubt with others from the layer of elementary urges, combine with status tensions in arousing anxiety.

How the use of a knife is then gradually restricted and surrounded, as a danger zone, by a wall of prohibitions, has been shown through a number of examples. It is an open question how far, in the courtly aristocracy, the renunciation of physical violence remains an external compulsion, and how far it has already been converted into an inner constraint. Despite all restrictions, the use of the table knife, like that of the dagger, is still quite extensive. Just as the hunting and killing of animals is still a permitted and commonplace amusement for the lords of the earth, the carving of dead animals at table remains within the zone of the permitted and is as yet not felt as repugnant. Then, with the slow rise of bourgeois classes, in whom pacification and the generation of inner constraints by the very

nature of their social functions is far more complete and binding, the cutting up of dead animals is pushed back further behind the scenes of social life (even if in particular countries, particularly England, as so often, some of the older customs survive incorporated in the new) and the use of the knife, indeed the mere holding of it, is avoided wherever it is not entirely indispensable. Sensitivity in this direction grows.

This is one example among many of particular aspects of the structural transformation of society that we denote by the catchword "civilization". Nowhere in human society is there a zero-point of fear of external powers, and nowhere a zero-point of automatic inner anxieties. Although they may be experienced as very different, they are finally inseparable. What takes place in the course of a civilizing process is not the disappearance of one and the emergence of the other. What changes is merely the proportion between the external and the self-activating fears, and their whole structure. People's fears of external powers diminish without ever disappearing; the never-absent, latent or actual anxieties arising from the tension between drives and drive-control functions become relatively stronger, more comprehensive and continuous. The documentation for the advance of the shame and embarrassment frontiers. . . . consists in fact of nothing but particularly clear and simple examples of the direction and structure of a change in the human personality which could be demonstrated from many other aspects too. A very similar structure is exhibited, for example, by the transition from the medieval-Catholic to the Protestant superego formation. This, too, shows a pronounced shift towards the internalization of fears. And one thing certainly should not be overlooked in all this: the fact that today, as formerly, all forms of adult inner anxieties are bound up with the child's fears of others, of external powers.

NOTES

1. This particular problem, important as it is, must be left aside for the time being. Its elucidation demands a description and an exact analysis of the changes which the structure of the family and the whole relationship of the sexes have undergone in the course of Western history. It demands, furthermore, a general study of changes in the upbringing of children and the development of adolescents. The material which has been collected to elucidate this aspect of the civilizing process, and the analyses it made possible have proved too extensive; they threatened

to dislocate the framework of this study and will find their place in a further volume. The same applies to the middle-class line of the civilizing process, the change it produced in bourgeois-urban classes and the non-courtly landed aristocracy. While this transformation of conduct and of the structure of psychological functions is certainly connected in these classes, too, with a specific historical restructuring of the *whole* Western social fabric, nevertheless—as already pointed out on a number of occasions—the non-courtly middle-class line of civilization follows a different pattern to the courtly one. Above all, the treatment of sexuality in the former is not the same as in the latter—partly because of a different family structure, and partly because of the different kind of foresight which middle-class professional functions demand. Something similar emerges if the civilizing transformation of Western religion is investigated. The change in religious feeling to which sociology has paid most attention hitherto, the increased inwardness and rationalization expressed in the various Puritan and Protestant movements, is obviously closely connected to certain changes in the situation and structure of the middle classes. The corresponding change in Catholicism, as shown, for example, in the formation of the power position of the Jesuits, appears to take place in closer touch with the absolutist central organs, in a manner favoured by the hierarchical and centralist structure of the Catholic Church. These problems, too, will only be solved when we have a more exact overall picture of the intertwining of the non-courtly, middle-class and the courtly lines of civilization, leaving aside for the time being the civilizing movement in worker and peasant strata which emerges more slowly and much later.

2. *The Civilizing Process*, vol. 1, pp. 207ff. On the general problem of shame feelings cf. *The Spectator* (1807), vol. 5, no. 373: "If I was put to define Modesty, I would call it, The reflection of an ingenuous Mind, either when a Man has committed an Action for which he censures himself, or fancies that he is exposed to the Censure of others." See also the observation there on the difference of shame feelings between men and women.
3. *The Civilizing Process*, vol. 1, pp. 122ff.

60. SPECTACULAR TIME

The thought of French theorist Guy Debord (1931-1994) was shaped by Marx and subsequent Marxist thinkers, including Lucien Goldman and Henri Lefebvre. A political activist, he was one of the founding members of the Situationist International and an influential figure during the student revolts of May 1968. His major work, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), is actually a brief, aphoristic book devoted to specifying what he meant by spectacle and how this term can be seen as characterizing modern life. His central claim is that the spectacle refers to social relations mediated by images. The book contains 221 theses, ranging in length from a sentence to page-long paragraphs. The selection included here is devoted to what he refers to as "spectacular time." Time in contemporary capitalist society is seen as a commodity. If traditional societies could be seen in terms of cyclical time, today it has become "pseudo-cyclical." In these theses, Debord shifts between a focus on what spectacular time means for production and how it shapes modern patterns of consumption. The chapter ends with a fairly traditional Marxist assertion that this alienating type of time can be overcome in "the revolutionary project of realizing a classless society." Stripped of these Marxist claims, Debord's ideas have percolated into some currents of postmodernism.

We have nothing of our own but time, which is enjoyed precisely by those who have no place to stay.

—Baltasar Gracian, *L'Homme de cour*

147

The time of production, commodity-time, is an infinite accumulation of equivalent intervals. It is the abstraction of irreversible time, all of whose segments must prove on the chronometer their merely quantitative equality. This time is in reality exactly what it is in its *exchangeable* character. In this social domination by commodity-time, "time is everything, man is nothing; he is at most the carcass of time" (*Poverty of Philosophy*). This is time devalued, the complete inversion of time as "the field of human development."

148

The general time of human non-development also exists in the complementary form of *consumable* time

which returns as *pseudo-cyclical* time to the daily life of the society based on this determined production.

149

Pseudo-cyclical time is actually no more than the *consumable disguise* of the commodity-time of production. It contains the essential properties of commodity-time, namely exchangeable homogeneous units and the suppression of the qualitative dimension. But being the by-product of this time which aims to retard concrete daily life and to keep it retarded, it must be charged with pseudo-valuations and appear in a sequence of falsely individualized moments.

150

Pseudo-cyclical time is the time of consumption of modern economic survival, of increased survival, where daily life continues to be deprived of decision and remains bound, no longer to the natural order, but to

"Society of the Spectacle," Guy Deboard. Black & Red Books. Reprinted with permission by Black & Red Books. ♦

the pseudo-nature developed in alienated labor; and thus this time *naturally* reestablishes the ancient cyclical rhythm which regulated the survival of preindustrial societies. Pseudo-cyclical time leans on the natural remains of cyclical time and also uses it to compose new homologous combinations: day and night, work and weekly rest, the recurrence of vacations.

151

Pseudo-cyclical time is a time *transformed by industry*. The time which has its basis in the production of commodities is itself a consumable commodity which includes everything that previously (during the phase of dissolution of the old unitary society) was differentiated into private life, economic life, political life. All the consumable time of modern society comes to be treated as a raw material for varied new products which impose themselves on the market as uses of socially organized time. "A product which already exists in a form which makes it suitable for consumption can nevertheless in its turn become a raw material for another product" (*Capital*).

152

In its most advanced sector, concentrated capitalism orients itself towards the sale of "completely equipped" blocks of time, each one constituting a single unified commodity which integrates a number of diverse commodities. In the expanding economy of "services" and leisure, this gives rise to the formula of calculated payment in which "everything's included": spectacular environment, the collective pseudo-displacement of vacations, subscriptions to cultural consumption, and the sale of sociability itself in the form of "passionate conversations" and "meetings with personalities." This sort of spectacular commodity, which can obviously circulate only because of the increased poverty of the corresponding realities, just as obviously fits among the pilot-articles of modernized sales techniques by being payable on credit.

153

Consumable pseudo-cyclical time is spectacular time, both as the time of consumption of images in the narrow sense, and as the image of consumption of time

in the broad sense. The time of image-consumption, the medium of all commodities, is inseparably the field where the instruments of the spectacle exert themselves fully, and also their goal, the location and main form of all specific consumption: it is known that the time-saving constantly sought by modern society, whether in the speed of vehicles or in the use of dried soups, is concretely translated for the population of the United States in the fact that the mere contemplation of television occupies it for an average of three to six hours a day. The social image of the consumption of time, in turn, is exclusively dominated by moments of leisure and vacation, moments presented *at a distance* and desirable by definition, like every spectacular commodity. Here this commodity is explicitly presented as the moment of real life, and the point is to wait for its cyclical return. But even in those very moments reserved for living, it is still the spectacle that is to be seen and reproduced, becoming ever more intense. What was represented as genuine life reveals itself simply as more *genuinely spectacular life*.

154

The epoch which displays its time to itself as essentially the sudden return of multiple festivities is also an epoch without festivals. What was, in cyclical time, the moment of a community's participation in the luxurious expenditure of life is impossible for the society without community or luxury. When its vulgarized pseudo-festivals, parodies of the dialogue and the gift, incite a surplus of economic expenditure, they lead only to deception always compensated by the promise of a new deception. In the spectacle, the lower the use value of modern survival-time, the more highly it is exalted. The reality of time has been replaced by the *advertisement* of time.

155

While the consumption of cyclical time in ancient societies was consistent with the real labor of those societies, the pseudo-cyclical consumption of the developed economy is in contradiction with the abstract irreversible time of its production. While cyclical time was the time of immobile illusion, really lived, spectacular time is the time of self-changing reality, lived in illusion.

156

What is constantly new in the process of production of things is not found in consumption, which remains the expanded repetition of the same. In spectacular time, since dead labor continues to dominate living labor, the past dominates the present.

157

Another side of the deficiency of general historical life is that individual life as yet has no history. The pseudo-events which rush by in spectacular dramatizations have not been lived by those informed of them; moreover they are lost in the inflation of their hurried replacement at every throb of the spectacular machinery. Furthermore, what is really lived has no relation to the official irreversible time of society and is in direct opposition to the pseudo-cyclical rhythm of the consumable by-product of this time. This individual experience of separate daily life remains without language, without concept, without critical access to its own past which has been recorded nowhere. It is not communicated. It is not understood and is forgotten to the profit of the false spectacular memory of the unmemorable.

158

The spectacle, as the present social organization of the paralysis of history and memory, of the abandonment of history built on the foundation of historical time, is the *false consciousness of time*.

159

The preliminary condition required for propelling workers to the status of "free" producers and consumers of commodity time was *the violent expropriation of their own time*. The spectacular return of time became possible only after this first dispossession of the producer.

160

The irreducibly biological element which remains in labor, both in the dependence on the natural cycle of waking and sleep and in the existence of irreversible time in the expenditure of an individual life, is a mere *accessory* from the point of view of modern production;

consequently, these elements are ignored in the official proclamations of the movement of production and in the consumable trophies which are the accessible translation of this incessant victory. The spectator's consciousness, immobilized in the falsified center of the movement of its world, no longer experiences its life as a passage toward self-realization and toward death. One who has renounced using his life can no longer admit his death. Life insurance advertisements suggest merely that he is guilty of dying without ensuring the regularity of the system after this economic loss; and the advertisement of the *American way of death* insists on his capacity to maintain in this encounter the greatest possible number of *appearances* of life. On all other fronts of the advertising onslaught, it is strictly forbidden to grow old. Even a "youth-capital," contrived for each and all and put to the most mediocre uses, could never acquire the durable and cumulative reality of financial capital. This social absence of death is identical to the social absence of life.

161

Time, as Hegel showed, is the *necessary* alienation, the environment where the subject realizes himself by losing himself, where he becomes other in order to become truly himself. Precisely the opposite is true in the dominant alienation, which is undergone by the producer of an *alien present*. In this *spatial alienation*, the society that radically separates the subject from the activity it takes from him, separates him first of all from his own time. It is this surmountable social alienation that has prohibited and petrified the possibilities and risks of the *living* alienation of time.

162

Under the visible *fashions* which disappear and reappear on the trivial surface of contemplated pseudo-cyclical time, the *grand style* of the age is always located in what is oriented by the obvious and secret necessity of revolution.

163

The natural basis of time, the actual experience of the flow of time, becomes human and social by existing *for man*. The restricted condition of human practice, labor

at various stages, is what has humanized and also dehumanized time as cyclical and as separate irreversible time of economic production. The revolutionary project of realizing a classless society, a generalized historical life, is the project of a withering away of the social measure of time, to the benefit of a playful model of irreversible time of individuals and groups, a model in which *independent federated times* are simultaneously

present. It is the program of a total realization, within the context of time, of communism which suppressed all that exists independently of individuals.

164

The world already possesses the dream of a time whose consciousness it must now possess in order to actually live it.

61. THE REFLEXIVITY OF MODERNITY

The former director of the London School of Economics and Political Science and early on a key promoter of Prime Minister Tony Blair's New Labour platform as an instance of "the third way," Anthony Giddens (b. 1938) has taught at Cambridge University as well as in the United States. He is known for his insightful exegetical examinations of both the classical social theorists and contemporary approaches. In this passage from *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990), it is clear that his approach stakes out a position in opposition to postmodernists who have claimed that we have entered a new state of development beyond the modern. On the contrary, Giddens thinks we have entered "late modernity." As he sees it, part of the problem with the idea of postmodernity is that it fails to adequately appreciate how the modern project, although it does develop historically and changes over time, signifies a singular break with tradition. In other words, the stages of modernity are part of a larger whole. Here he focuses on the fact that modernity encourages a reflexivity that is quite unlike what is found in traditional society. He sketches out some of the implications of reflexivity, particularly as it becomes even more implicated in the way that the social system reproduces itself.

THE REFLEXIVITY OF MODERNITY

Inherent in the idea of modernity is a contrast with tradition. As noted previously, many combinations of the modern and the traditional are to be found in concrete social settings. Indeed, some authors have argued that these are so tightly interlaced as to make any generalised comparison valueless. But such is surely not the case, as we can see by pursuing an enquiry into the relation between modernity and reflexivity.

There is a fundamental sense in which reflexivity is a defining characteristic of all human action. All human beings routinely "keep in touch" with the grounds of what they do as an integral element of doing it. I have called this elsewhere the "reflexive monitoring of action," using the phrase to draw attention to the chronic character of the processes involved.¹ Human action does not incorporate chains of aggregate interactions and reasons, but a consistent—and, as Erving Goffman above all has shown us,

never-to-be-relaxed—monitoring of behaviour and its contexts. This is not the sense of reflexivity which is specifically connected with modernity, although it is the necessary basis of it.

In traditional cultures, the past is honoured and symbols are valued because they contain and perpetuate the experience of generations. Tradition is a mode of integrating the reflexive monitoring of action with the time-space organisation of the community. It is a means of handling time and space, which inserts any particular activity or experience within the continuity of past, present, and future, these in turn being structured by recurrent social practices. Tradition is not wholly static, because it has to be reinvented by each new generation as it takes over its cultural inheritance from those preceding it. Tradition does not so much resist change as pertain to a context in which there are few separated temporal and spatial markers in terms of which change can have any meaningful form.

The Consequences of Modernity, Anthony Giddens. pp. 36–45. Stanford University Press. Polity. ♦

In oral cultures, tradition is not known as such, even though these cultures are the most traditional of all. To understand tradition, as distinct from other modes of organising action and experience, demands cutting into time-space in ways which are only possible with the invention of writing. Writing expands the level of time-space distanciation and creates a perspective of past, present, and future in which the reflexive appropriation of knowledge can be set off from designated tradition. However, in pre-modern civilisations reflexivity is still largely limited to the reinterpretation and clarification of tradition, such that in the scales of time the side of the “past” is much more heavily weighed down than that of the “future.” Moreover, since literacy is the monopoly of the few, the routinisation of daily life remains bound up with tradition in the old sense.

With the advent of modernity, reflexivity takes on a different character. It is introduced into the very basis of system reproduction, such that thought and action are constantly refracted back upon one another. The routinisation of daily life has no intrinsic connections with the past at all, save in so far as what “was done before” happens to coincide with what can be defended in a principled way in the light of incoming knowledge. To sanction a practice because it is traditional will not do; tradition can be justified, but only in the light of knowledge which is not itself authenticated by tradition. Combined with the inertia of habit, this means that, even in the most modernised of modern societies, tradition continues to play a role. But this role is generally much less significant than is supposed by authors who focus attention upon the integration of tradition and modernity in the contemporary world. For justified tradition is tradition in sham clothing and receives its identity only from the reflexivity of the modern.

The reflexivity of modern social life consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character. We should be clear about the nature of this phenomenon. All forms of social life are partly constituted by actors’ knowledge of them. Knowing “how to go on” in Wittgenstein’s sense is intrinsic to the conventions which are drawn upon and reproduced by human activity. In all cultures, social practices are routinely altered in the light of ongoing discoveries which feed into them. But only in the era of modernity is the

revision of convention radicalised to apply (in principle) to all aspects of human life, including technological intervention into the material world. It is often said that modernity is marked by an appetite for the new, but this is not perhaps completely accurate. What is characteristic of modernity is not an embracing of the new for its own sake, but the presumption of wholesale reflexivity—which of course includes reflection upon the nature of reflection itself.

Probably we are only now, in the late twentieth century, beginning to realise in a full sense how deeply unsettling this outlook is. For when the claims of reason replaced those of tradition, they appeared to offer a sense of certitude greater than that provided by preexisting dogma. But this idea only appears persuasive so long as we do not see that the reflexivity of modernity actually subverts reason, at any rate where reason is understood as the gaining of certain knowledge. Modernity is constituted in and through reflexively applied knowledge, but the equation of knowledge with certitude has turned out to be misconceived. We are abroad in a world which is thoroughly constituted through reflexively applied knowledge, but where at the same time we can never be sure that any given element of that knowledge will not be revised.

Even philosophers who most staunchly defend the claims of science to certitude, such as Karl Popper, acknowledge that, as he expresses it, “all science rests upon shifting sand.”² In science, *nothing* is certain, and nothing can be proved, even if scientific endeavour provides us with the most dependable information about the world to which we can aspire. In the heart of the world of hard science, modernity floats free.

No knowledge under conditions of modernity is knowledge in the “old” sense, where “to know” is to be certain. This applies equally to the natural and the social sciences. In the case of social science, however, there are further considerations involved. We should recall at this point the observations made earlier about the reflexive components of sociology.

In the social sciences, to the unsettled character of all empirically based knowledge we have to add the “subversion” which comes from the reentry of social scientific discourse into the contexts it analyses. The reflection of which the social sciences are the formalised version (a specific genre of expert knowledge) is quite fundamental to the reflexivity of modernity as a whole.

Because of the close relation between the Enlightenment and advocacy of the claims of reason, natural science has usually been taken as the preeminent endeavour distinguishing the modern outlook from what went before. Even those who favour interpretative rather than naturalistic sociology have normally seen social science as the poor relation of the natural sciences, particularly given the scale of technological development consequent upon scientific discoveries. But the social sciences are actually more deeply implicated in modernity than is natural science, since the chronic revision of social practices in the light of knowledge about those practices is part of the very tissue of modern institutions.³

All the social sciences participate in this reflexive relation, although sociology has an especially central place. Take as an example the discourse of economics. Concepts like “capital,” “investment,” “markets,” “industry,” and many others, in their modern senses, were elaborated as part of the early development of economics as a distinct discipline in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These concepts, and empirical conclusions linked to them, were formulated in order to analyse changes involved in the emergence of modern institutions. But they could not, and did not, remain separated from the activities and events to which they related. They have become integral to what “modern economic life” actually is and inseparable from it. Modern economic activity would not be as it is were it not for the fact that all members of the population have mastered these concepts and an indefinite variety of others.

The lay individual cannot necessarily provide formal definitions of terms like “capital” or “investment,” but everyone who, say, uses a savings account in a bank demonstrates an implicit and practical mastery of those notions. Concepts such as these, and the theories and empirical information linked to them, are not merely handy devices whereby agents are somehow more clearly able to understand their behaviour than they could do otherwise. They actively constitute what that behaviour is and inform the reasons for which it is undertaken. There cannot be a clear insulation between literature available to economists and that which is either read or filters through in other ways to interested parties in the population: business leaders, government officials, and members of the public. The economic environment is constantly being altered in the light of these

inputs, thus creating a situation of continual mutual involvement between economic discourse and the activities to which it refers.

The pivotal position of sociology in the reflexivity of modernity comes from its role as the most generalised type of reflection upon modern social life. Let us consider an example at the “hard edge” of naturalistic sociology. The official statistics published by governments concerning, for instance, population, marriage and divorce, crime and delinquency, and so forth, seem to provide a means of studying social life with precision. To the pioneers of naturalistic sociology, such as Durkheim, these statistics represented hard data, in terms of which the relevant aspects of modern societies can be analysed more accurately than where such figures are lacking. Yet official statistics are not just analytical characteristics of social activity, but again enter constitutively into the social universe from which they are taken or counted up. From its inception, the collation of official statistics has been constitutive of state power and of many other modes of social organisation also. The coordinated administrative control achieved by modern governments is inseparable from the routine monitoring of “official data” in which all contemporary states engage.

The assembling of official statistics is itself a reflexive endeavour, permeated by the very findings of the social sciences that have utilised them. The practical work of coroners, for example, is the basis for the collection of suicide statistics. In the interpretation of causes/motives for death, however, coroners are guided by concepts and theories which purport to illuminate the nature of suicide. It would not be at all unusual to find a coroner who had read Durkheim.

Nor is the reflexivity of official statistics confined to the sphere of the state. Anyone in a Western country who embarks upon marriage today, for instance, knows that divorce rates are high (and may also, however imperfectly or partially, know a great deal more about the demography of marriage and the family). Knowledge of the high rate of divorce might affect the very decision to marry, as well as decisions about related considerations—provisions about property and so forth. Awareness of levels of divorce, moreover, is normally much more than just consciousness of a brute fact. It is theorised by the lay agent in ways pervaded by sociological thinking. Thus virtually everyone contemplating marriage has some idea of how

family institutions have been changing, changes in the relative social position and power of men and women, alternations in sexual mores, etc.—all of which enter into processes of further change which they reflexively inform. Marriage and the family would not be what they are today were they not thoroughly “sociologised” and “psychologised.”

The discourse of sociology and the concepts, theories, and findings of the other social sciences continually “circulate in and out” of what it is that they are about. In so doing they reflexively restructure their subject matter, which itself has learned to think sociologically. *Modernity is itself deeply and intrinsically sociological.* Much that is problematic in the position of the professional sociologist, as the purveyor of expert knowledge about social life, derives from the fact that she or he is at most one step ahead of enlightened lay practitioners of the discipline.

Hence the thesis that more knowledge about social life (even if that knowledge is as well buttressed empirically as it could possibly be) equals greater control over our fate is false. It is (arguably) true about the physical world, but not about the universe of social events. Expanding our understanding of the social world might produce a progressively more illuminating grasp of human institutions and, hence, increasing “technological” control over them, if it were the case either that social life were entirely separate from human knowledge about it or that knowledge could be filtered continuously into the reasons for social action, producing step-by-step increases in the “rationality” of behaviour in relation to specific needs.

Both conditions do in fact apply to many circumstances and contexts of social activity. But each falls well short of that totalizing impact which the inheritance of Enlightenment thought holds out as a goal. This is so because of the influence of four sets of factors.

One—factually very important but logically the least interesting, or at any rate the least difficult to handle analytically—is differential power. The appropriation

of knowledge does not happen in a homogeneous fashion, but is often differentially available to those in power positions, who are able to place it in the service of sectional interests.

A second influence concerns the role of values. Changes in value orders are not independent of innovations in cognitive orientation created by shifting perspectives on the social world. If new knowledge could be brought to bear upon a transcendental rational basis of values, this situation would not apply. But there is no such rational basis of values, and shifts in outlook deriving from inputs of knowledge have a mobile relation to changes in value orientations.

The third factor is the impact of unintended consequences. No amount of accumulated knowledge about social life could encompass all circumstances of its implementation, even if such knowledge were wholly distinct from the environment to which it applied. If our knowledge about the social world simply got better and better, the scope of unintended consequences might become more and more confined and unwanted consequences rare. However, the reflexivity of modern social life blocks off this possibility and is itself the fourth influence involved. Although least discussed in relation to the limits of Enlightenment reason, it is certainly as significant as any of the others. The point is not that there is no stable social world to know, but that knowledge of that world contributes to its unstable or mutable character.

The reflexivity of modernity, which is directly involved with the continual generating of systematic self-knowledge, does not stabilise the relation between expert knowledge and knowledge applied in lay actions. Knowledge claimed by expert observers (in some part, and in many varying ways) rejoins its subject matter, thus (in principle, but also normally in practice) altering it. There is no parallel to this process in the natural sciences; it is not at all the same as where, in the field of microphysics the intervention of an observer changes what is being studied.

NOTES

1. Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method* (London: Hutchinson, 1974).
2. Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (London: Routledge, 1962), p. 34.
3. Anthony Giddens, *Constitution of Society* (Cambridge, Eng.: Polity, 1984), ch. 7.

62. REDISTRIBUTION

Bruno Latour (b. 1947) is currently a professor at Sciences Po Paris, but for many years he was affiliated with the École Nationale Supérieure des Mines. He is one of the most influential figures associated with new approaches to the study of science. Beginning with *Laboratory Life* (1979, with Steve Woolgar), he has published extensively on science and technology, including *Science in Action* (1987), *The Pasteurization of France* (1988), and *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (1999). He operates from a social constructionist perspective that bears a resemblance to other theoretical approaches—especially ethnomethodology—but offers its own distinctive twists. Actor-network theory (or ANT) was developed by Latour and British colleague, John Law. A particularly intriguing aspect of ANT is the claim that nonhuman entities can be actants—a claim that raises questions about Latour's understanding of intentionality. The article below, which is an excerpt from *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993), indicates that not all of Latour's work has been devoted to the study of science per se even if it is deeply embedded in it. In this provocative essay, he argues for a reconsideration of the way the linkages between humans and nature are generally conceptualized, as well as the question of God. In so doing, Latour challenges not only the claims of modernity, but the presumed challenges of postmodernism. His alternative is a call for a “nonmodern constitution.”

5.1 THE IMPOSSIBLE MODERNIZATION

I now tackle a most difficult question: the question of the nonmodern world that we are entering, I maintain, without ever having really left it.

Modernization, although it destroyed the near-totality of cultures and natures by force and bloodshed, had a clear objective. Modernizing finally made it possible to distinguish between the laws of external nature and the conventions of society. The conquerors undertook this partition everywhere, consigning hybrids either to the domain of objects or to that of society. The process of partitioning was accompanied by a coherent and continuous front of radical revolutions in science, technology, administration, economy and religion, a veritable bulldozer operation behind which the past disappeared for ever, but in front of which, at least, the future opened up. The past was a barbarian

medley; the future, a civilizing distinction. To be sure, the moderns have always recognized that they too had blended objects and societies, cosmologies and sociologies. But this was in the past, while they were still only premodern. By increasingly terrifying revolutions, they have been able to tear themselves away from that past. Since other cultures still mix the constraints of rationality with the needs of their societies, they have to be helped to emerge from that confusion by annihilating their past. Modernizers know perfectly well that even in their own midst islands of barbarianism remain, in which technological efficacy and social arbitrariness are excessively intertwined. But before long they will have achieved modernization, they will have liquidated those islands, and we shall all inhabit the same planet; we shall all be equally modern, all equally capable of profiting from what, alone, forever

We Have Never Been Modern, Bruno Latour. pp. 130–145. Harvard University press. ♦

escapes the tyranny of social interest: economic rationality, scientific truth, technological efficiency.

Certain modernizers continue to speak as if such a fate were possible and desirable. However, one has only to express it to see how self-contradictory this claim is. How could we bring about the purification of sciences and societies at last, when the modernizers themselves are responsible for the proliferation of hybrids thanks to the very Constitution that makes them proliferate by denying their existence? For a long time, this contradiction was hidden by the moderns' very increase. Permanent revolutions in the State, and sciences, and technologies, were supposed to end up absorbing, purifying and civilizing the hybrids by incorporating them either into society or into nature. But the double failure that was my starting point, that of socialism—at stage left—and that of naturalism—at stage right—has made the work of purification less plausible and the contradiction more visible. There are no more revolutions in store to impel a continued forward flight. There are so many hybrids that no one knows any longer how to lodge them in the old promised land of modernity. Hence the postmoderns' abrupt paralysis.

Modernization was ruthless toward the premoderns, but what can we say about postmodernization? Imperialist violence at least offered a future, but sudden weakness on the part of the conquerors is far worse for, always cut off from the past, it now also breaks with the future. Having been slapped in the face with modern reality, poor populations now have to submit to postmodern hyperreality. Nothing has value; everything is a reflection, a simulacrum, a floating sign; and that very weakness, they say, may save us from the invasion of technologies, sciences, reasons. Was it really worth destroying everything to end up adding this insult to that injury? The empty world in which the postmoderns evolve is one they themselves, and they alone, have emptied, because they have taken the moderns at their word. Postmodernism is a symptom of the contradiction of modernism, but it is unable to diagnose this contradiction because it shares the same upper half of the Constitution—the sciences and the technologies are extrahuman—but it no longer shares the cause of the Constitution's strength and greatness—the proliferation of quasi-objects and the multiplication of intermediaries between humans

and nonhumans allowed by the absolute distinction between humans and nonhumans.

However, the diagnosis is not very difficult to make, now that we are obliged to consider the work of purification and the work of mediation symmetrically. Even at the worst moments of the Western imperium, it was never a matter of clearly separating the Laws of Nature from social conventions once and for all. It was always a matter of constructing collectives by mixing a certain type of nonhumans and a certain type of humans, and extracting in the process Boyle-style objects and Hobbes-style subjects (not to mention the crossed-out God) on an ever-increasing scale. The innovation of longer networks is an interesting peculiarity, but it is not sufficient to set us radically apart from others, or to cut us off for ever from our past. Modernizers are not obliged to continue their revolutionary task by gathering their forces, ignoring the postmoderns' predicament, gritting their teeth, and continuing to believe in the dual promises of naturalism and socialism no matter what, since that particular modernization has never got off the ground. It was never anything but the official representation of another much more profound and different work that had always been going on and continues today on an ever-increasing scale. Nor are we obliged to struggle against modernization—in the militant manner of the antimoderns or the disillusioned manner of the postmoderns—since we would then be attacking the upper half of the Constitution alone, which we would merely be reinforcing while remaining unaware of what has always been the source of its vitality.

But does this diagnosis allow any remedy for the impossible modernization? If, as I have been saying all along, the Constitution allows hybrids to proliferate because it refuses to conceptualize them as such, then it remains effective only so long as it denies their existence. Now, if the fruitful contradiction between the two parts—the official work of purification and the unofficial work of mediation—becomes clearly visible, won't the Constitution cease to be effective? Won't modernization become impossible? Are we going to become—or go back to being—premodern? Do we have to resign ourselves to becoming antimodern? For lack of any better option, are we going to have to continue to be modern, but without conviction, in the twilight zone of the postmoderns?

5.2 FINAL EXAMINATIONS

To answer these questions, we must first sort out the various positions I have outlined in the course of this essay, to bring the nonmodern to terms with the best those positions have to offer. What are we going to retain from the moderns? Everything, apart from exclusive confidence in the upper half of their Constitution, because this Constitution will need to be amended somewhat to include its lower half too. The moderns' greatness stems from their proliferation of hybrids, their lengthening of a certain type of network, their acceleration of the production of traces, their multiplication of delegates, their groping production of relative universals. Their daring, their research, their innovativeness, their tinkering, their youthful excesses, the ever-increasing scale of their action, the creation of stabilized objects independent of society, the freedom of a society liberated from objects—all these are features we want to keep. On the other hand, we cannot retain the illusion (whether they deem it positive or negative) that moderns have about themselves and want to generalize to everyone: atheist, materialist, spiritualist, theist, rational, effective, objective, universal, critical, radically different from other communities, cut off from a past that is maintained in a state of artificial survival due only to historicism, separated from a nature on which subjects or society would arbitrarily impose categories, denouncers always at war with themselves, prisoners of an absolute dichotomy between things and signs, facts and values.

Westerners felt far removed from the premoderns because of the External Great Divide—a simple exportation, as I have noted, of the Internal Great Divide. When the latter is dissolved, the former disappears, to be replaced by differences in size. Symmetrical anthropology has redistributed the Great Divide. Now that we are no longer so far removed from the premoderns—since when we talk about the premoderns we have to include a large part of ourselves—we are going to have to sort them out as well. Let us keep what is best about them, above all: the premoderns' inability to differentiate durably between the networks and the pure poles of Nature and Society, their obsessive interest in thinking about the production of hybrids of Nature and Society, of things and signs, their certainty that transcendences

abound, their capacity for conceiving of past and future in many ways other than progress and decadence, the multiplication of types of nonhumans different from those of the moderns. On the other hand, we shall not retain the set of limits they impose on the scaling collectives, localization by territory, the scapegoating process, ethnocentrism, and finally the lasting nondifferentiation of natures and societies.

But the sorting seems impossible and even contradictory in the face of what I have said above. Since the invention of longer networks and the increase in size of some collectives depends on the silence they maintain about quasi-objects, how can I promise to keep the changes of scale and give up the invisibility that allows them to spread? Worse still, how could I reject from the premoderns the lasting nondifferentiation of natures and societies, and reject from the moderns the absolute dichotomy between natures and societies? How can size, exploration, proliferation be maintained while the hybrids are made explicit? Yet this is precisely the amalgam I am looking for: *to retain the production of a nature and of a society that allow changes in size through the creation of an external truth and a subject of law, but without neglecting the co-production of sciences and societies*. The amalgam consists in using the premodern categories to conceptualize the hybrids, while retaining the moderns' final outcome of the work of purification—that is, an external Nature distinct from subjects. I want to keep following the gradient that leads from unstable existences to stabilized essences—and vice versa. To accomplish the work of purification, but as a particular case of the work of mediation. To maintain all the advantages of the moderns' dualism without its disadvantages—the clandestineness of the quasi-objects. To keep all the advantages of the premoderns' monism without tolerating its limits—the restriction of size through the lasting confusion of knowledge and power.

The postmoderns have sensed the crisis of the moderns and attempted to overcome it; thus they too warrant examination and sorting. It is of course impossible to conserve their irony, their despair, their discouragement, their nihilism, their self-criticism, since all those fine qualities depend on a conception of modernism that modernism itself has never really practised. As soon, however, as we add the lower part of the Constitution to the upper part, many of the intuitions of

postmodernism are vindicated. For instance, we can save deconstruction—but since it no longer has a contrary, it turns into constructivism and no longer goes hand in hand with self-destruction. We can retain the deconstructionists' refusal of naturalization—but since Nature itself is no longer natural, this refusal no longer distances us from the sciences but, on the contrary, brings us closer to sciences in action. We can keep the postmoderns' pronounced taste for reflexivity—but since that property is shared among all the actors, it loses its parodic character and becomes positive. Finally, we can go along with the postmoderns in rejecting the idea of a coherent and homogeneous time that would advance by goose steps—but without retaining their taste for quotation and anachronism which maintains the belief in a truly surpassed past. Take away from the postmoderns their illusions about the moderns, and their vices become virtues—nonmodern virtues!

Regrettably, in the antimoderns I see nothing worth saving. Always on the defensive, they consistently believed what the moderns said about themselves and proceeded to affix the opposite sign to each declaration. Antirevolutionary, they held the same peculiar views as the moderns about time past and

tradition. The values they defended were never anything but the residue left by their enemies; they never understood that the moderns' greatness stemmed, in practice, from the very reverse of what the antimoderns attacked them for. Even in their rearguard combats, the antimoderns never managed to innovate, occupying the minor role that was reserved for them. It cannot even be said in their favour that they put the brakes on the moderns' frenzy—those moderns for whom the antimoderns were always, in effect, the best of stooges.

The balance sheet of this examination is not too unfavourable. We can keep the Enlightenment without modernity, provided that we reintegrate the objects of the sciences and technologies into the Constitution, as quasi-objects among many others—objects whose genesis must no longer be clandestine, but must be followed through and through, from the hot events that spawned the objects to the progressive cool-down that transforms them into essences of Nature or Society.

Is it possible to draw up a Constitution that would allow us to recognize this work officially? We must do this, since old-style modernization can no longer absorb either other peoples or Nature; such, at least, is the conviction on which this essay is based. For its

	What is retained	What is rejected
From the moderns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –long networks –size –experimentation –relative universals –final separation between objective nature and free society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –separation between nature and society –clandestineness of the practices of mediation –external Great Divide –critical denunciation –universality, rationality
	Commercial edge	
From the premoderns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –non-separability of things and signs –transcendence without a contrary –multiplication of nonhumans –temporality by intensity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –obligation always to link the social and natural orders –scapegoating mechanism • ethnocentrism • territory –limits on scale
From the post moderns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –multiple times –constructivism –reflexivity –denaturalization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> –belief in modernism –critical deconstruction –ironic reflexivity –anachronism

FIGURE 62.1 What is retained and what is rejected

own good, the modern world can no longer extend itself without becoming once again what it has never ceased to be in practice—that is, a nonmodern world like all the others. This fraternity is essential if we are to absorb the two sets of entities that revolutionary modernization left behind: the natural crowds that we are longer master, the human multitudes that no one dominates any longer. Modern temporality gave the impression of continuous acceleration by relegating ever-larger masses of humans and nonhumans together to the void of the past. Irreversibility has changed sides. If there is one thing we can no longer get rid of, it is those natures and multitudes, both equally global. The political task starts up again, at a new cost. It has been necessary to modify the fabric of our collectives from top to bottom in order to absorb the citizen of the eighteenth century and the worker of the nineteenth. We shall have to transform ourselves just as thoroughly in order to make room, today, for the nonhumans created by science and technology.

5.3 HUMANISM REDISTRIBUTED

Before we can amend the Constitution, we first have to relocate the human, to which humanism does not render sufficient justice. Here are some of the magnificent figures that the moderns have been able to depict and preserve: the free agent, the citizen builder of the Leviathan, the distressing visage of the human person, the other of a relationship, consciousness, the *cogito*, the hermeneut, the inner self, the thee and thou of dialogue, presence to oneself, intersubjectivity. But all these figures remain asymmetrical, for they are the counterpart of the object of the sciences—an object that remains orphaned, abandoned in the hands of those whom epistemologists, like sociologists, deem reductive, objective, rational. Where are the Mouniers of machines, the Lévinases of animals, the Ricoeurs of facts? Yet the human, as we now understand, cannot be grasped and saved unless that other part of itself, the share of things, is restored to it. So long as humanism is constructed through contrast with the object that has been abandoned to epistemology, neither the human nor the nonhuman can be understood.

Where are we to situate the human? A historical succession of quasi-objects, quasi-subjects, it is impossible

to define the human by an essence, as we have known for a long time. Its history and its anthropology are too diverse for it to be pinned down once and for all. But Sartre's clever move, defining it as a free existence uprooting itself from a nature devoid of significance, is obviously not one we can make, since we have invested all quasi-objects with action, will, meaning, and even speech. There is no longer a practico-inert where the pure liberty of human existence can get bogged down. To oppose it to the crossed-out God (or, conversely, to reconcile it with Him) is equally impossible, since it is by virtue of their common opposition to Nature that the modern Constitution has defined all three. Must the human be steeped in Nature, then? But if we were to go looking for specific results of specific scientific disciplines that would clothe this robot animated with neurons, impulses, selfish genes, elementary needs and economic calculations, we would never get beyond monsters and masks. The sciences multiply new definitions of humans without managing to displace the former ones, reduce them to any homogeneous one, or unify them. They add reality; they do not subtract it. The hybrids that they invent in the laboratory are still more exotic than those they claim to break down.

Must we solemnly announce the death of man and dissolve him in the play of language, an evanescent reflection of inhuman structures that would escape all understanding? No, since we are no more in Discourse than we are in Nature. In any event, nothing is sufficiently inhuman to dissolve human beings in it and announce their death. Their will, their actions, their words are too abundant. Will we have to avoid the question by making the human something transcendental that would distance us for ever from mere nature? This would amount to falling back on just one of the poles of the modern Constitution. Will we have to use force to extend some provisional and particular definition inscribed in the rights of man or the preambles of constitutions? This would amount to tracing out once again the two Great Divides, and believing in modernization.

If the human does not possess a stable form, it is not formless for all that. If, instead of attaching it to one constitutional pole or the other, we move it closer to the middle, it becomes the mediator and even the intersection of the two. The human is not a constitutional pole to be opposed to that of the nonhuman. The two

expressions “humans” and “nonhumans” are belated results that no longer suffice to designate the other dimension. The scale of value consists not in shifting the definition of the human along the horizontal line that connects the Object pole to the Subject pole, but in sliding it along the vertical dimension that defines the nonmodern world. Reveal its work of mediation, and it will take on human form. Conceal it again, and we shall have to talk about inhumanity, even if it is draping itself in the Bill of Rights. The expression “anthropomorphic” considerably underestimates our humanity. We should be talking about morphism. Morphism is the place where technomorphisms, zoomorphisms, phusimorphisms, ideomorphisms, theomorphisms, sociomorphisms, psychomorphisms, all come together. Their alliances and their exchanges, taken together, are what define the *anthropos*. A weaver of morphisms—isn’t that enough of a definition? The closer the *anthropos* comes to this distribution, the more human it is. The farther away it moves, the more it takes on multiple forms in which its humanity quickly becomes indiscernible, even if its figures are those of the person, the individual or the self. By seeking to isolate its form from those it churns together, one does not defend humanism, one loses it.

How could the *anthropos* be threatened by machines? It has made them, it has put itself into them, it has divided up its own members among their members, it has built its own body with them. How could it be threatened by objects? They have all been quasi-subjects circulating within the collective they traced. It is made of them as much as they are made of it. It has defined itself by multiplying things. How could it be deceived by politics? Politics is its own making, in that it reconstructs the collective through continual controversies over representation that allow it to say, at every moment, what it is and what it wants. How could it be dimmed by religion? It is through religion that humans are linked to all their fellows, that they know themselves as persons. How could it be manipulated by the economy? Its provisional form cannot be assigned without the circulation of goods and obligations, without the continuous distribution of social goods that we concoct through the goodwill of things. *Ecco homo*: delegated, mediated, distributed, mandated, uttered. Where does the threat come from?

From those who seek to reduce it to an essence and who—by scorning things, objects, machines and the social, by cutting off all delegations and senders—make humanism a fragile and precious thing at risk of being overwhelmed by Nature, Society, or God.

Modern humanists are reductionist because they seek to attribute action to a small number of powers, leaving the rest of the world with nothing but simple mute forces. It is true that by redistributing the action among all these mediators, we lose the reduced form of humanity, but we gain another form, which has to be called irreducible. The human is in the delegation itself, in the pass, in the sending, in the continuous exchange of forms. Of course it is not a thing, but things are not things either. Of course it is not a merchandise, but merchandise is not merchandise either. Of course it is not a machine, but anyone who has seen machines knows that they are scarcely mechanical. Of course it is not of this world, but this world is not of this world either. Of course it is not in God, but what relation is there between the God above and the God below? Humanism can maintain itself only by sharing itself with all these mandatees. Human nature is the set of its delegates and its representatives, its figures and its messengers. That symmetrical universal is worth at least as much as the moderns’ doubly asymmetrical one. This new position, shifted in relation to the subject/society position, now needs to be underwritten by an amended Constitution.

5.4 THE NONMODERN CONSTITUTION

In the course of this essay, I have simply reestablished symmetry between the two branches of government, that of things—called science and technology—and that of human beings. I have also shown why the separation of powers between the two branches, after allowing for the proliferation of hybrids, could no longer worthily represent this new third estate. A constitution is judged by the guarantees it offers. The moderns’ Constitution included four guarantees that had meaning only when they were taken together but also kept strictly separate. The first one guaranteed Nature its transcendent dimension by making it distinct from the fabric of Society—thus contrary to the continuous connection between the natural order and the social order found among

the premoderns. The second guaranteed Society its immanent dimension by rendering citizens totally free to reconstruct it artificially—as opposed to the continuous connection between the social order and the natural order that kept the premoderns from being able to modify the one without modifying the other. But as that double separation allowed in practice for the mobilization and construction of Nature (Nature having become immanent through mobilization and construction)—and, conversely, made it possible to make Society stable and durable (Society having become transcendent owing to the enrolment of ever more numerous non-humans), a third guarantee assured the separation of powers, the two branches of government being kept in separate, watertight compartments: even though it is mobilizable and constructed, Nature will remain without relation to Society; Society, in turn, even though it is transcendent and rendered durable by the mediation of objects, will no longer have any relation to Nature. In other words, quasi-objects will be officially banished—should we say taboo?—and translation networks will go into hiding, offering to the work of purification a counterpart that will nevertheless continue to be followed and monitored—until the postmoderns obliterate it entirely. The fourth guarantee of the crossed-out God made it possible to stabilize this dualist and asymmetrical mechanism by ensuring a function of arbitration, but one without presence or power.

In order to sketch in the nonmodern Constitution, it suffices to take into account what the modern Constitution left out, and to sort out the guarantees we wish to keep. We have committed ourselves to providing representation for quasi-objects. It is the third guarantee of the modern Constitution that must therefore be suppressed, since that is the one that made the continuity of their analysis impossible. Nature and Society are not two distinct poles, but one and the same production of successive states of societies-natures, of collectives. The first guarantee of our new draft thus becomes the nonseparability of quasi-objects, quasi-subjects. Every concept, every institution, every practice that interferes with the continuous deployment of collectives and their experimentation with hybrids will be deemed dangerous, harmful, and—we may as well say it—immoral. The work of mediation becomes the very centre of the double power, natural and social. The networks come

out of hiding. The Middle Kingdom is represented. The third estate, which was nothing, becomes everything.

As I have suggested, however, we do not wish to become premoderns all over again. The nonseparability of natures and societies had the disadvantage of making experimentation on a large scale impossible, since every transformation of nature had to be in harmony with a social transformation, term for term, and vice versa. Now we seek to keep the moderns' major innovation: the separability of a nature that no one has constructed—transcendence—and the freedom of manoeuvre of a society that is of our own making—immanence. Nevertheless, we do not seek to inherit the clandestineness of the inverse mechanism that makes it possible to construct Nature—immanence—and to stabilize Society durably—transcendence.

Can we retain the first two guarantees of the old Constitution without maintaining the now-visible duplicity of its third guarantee? Yes, although at first this looks like squaring the circle. Nature's transcendence, its objectivity, and Society's immanence, its subjectivity, stem from the work of mediation without depending on their separation, contrary to what the Constitution of the moderns claims. The work of producing a nature or producing a society stems from the durable and irreversible accomplishment of the common work of delegation and translation. At the end of the process, there is indeed a nature that we have not made, and a society that we are free to change; there are indeed indisputable scientific facts, and free citizens, but once they are viewed in a nonmodern light they become the double consequence of a practice that is now visible in its continuity, instead of being, as for the moderns, the remote and opposing causes of an invisible practice that contradicts them. The second guarantee of our new draft thus makes it possible to recover the first two guarantees of the modern Constitution but without separating them. All concepts, all institutions, all practices that interfere with the progressive objectivization of Nature—incorporation into a black box—and simultaneously the subjectivization of Society—freedom of manoeuvre—will be deemed harmful, dangerous and, quite simply, immoral. Without this second guarantee, the networks liberated by the first would keep their wild and uncontrollable character. The moderns were not mistaken in seeking

objective nonhumans and free societies. They were mistaken only in their certainty that that double production required an absolute distinction between the two terms and the continual repression of the work of mediation.

Historicity found no place in the modern Constitution because it was framed by the only three entities whose existence it recognized. Contingent history existed for humans alone, and revolution became the only way for the moderns to understand their past—by breaking totally with it. But time is not a smooth, homogeneous flow. If time depends on associations, associations do not depend on time. We are no longer going to be confronted with the argument of time that passes for ever based on a regrouping into a coherent set of elements that belong to all times and all ontologies. If we want to recover the capacity to sort that appears essential to our morality and defines the human, it is essential that no coherent temporal flow comes to limit our freedom of choice. The third guarantee, as important as the others, is that we can combine associations freely without ever confronting the choice between archaism and modernization, the local and the

global, the cultural and the universal, the natural and the social. Freedom has moved away from the social pole it had occupied exclusively during the modern representation into the middle and lower zones, and becomes a capacity for sorting and recombining socio-technological imbroglios. Every new call to revolution, any epistemological break, any Copernican upheaval, any claim that certain practices have become outdated for ever, will be deemed dangerous, or—what is still worse in the eyes of the moderns—outdated!

But if I am right in my interpretation of the modern Constitution, if it has really allowed the development of collectives while officially forbidding what it permits in practice, how could we continue to develop quasi-objects, now that we have made their practice visible and official? By offering guarantees to replace the previous ones, are we not making impossible this double language, and thus the growth of collectives? That is precisely what we want to do. This slowing down, this moderation, this regulation, is what we expect from our morality. The fourth guarantee—perhaps the most important—is to replace the clandestine proliferation of hybrids by their

Modern Constitution	Nonmodern Constitution
<i>1st guarantee:</i> Nature is transcendent but mobilizable (immanent).	<i>1st guarantee:</i> nonseparability of the common production of societies and natures.
<i>2nd guarantee:</i> Society is immanent but it infinitely surpasses us (transcendent)	<i>2nd guarantee:</i> continuous following of the production of Nature, which is objective, and the production of Society, which is free. In the last analysis, there is indeed a transcendence of Nature and an immanence of Society, but the two are not separated.
<i>3rd guarantee:</i> Nature and Society are totally distinct, and the work of purification bears no relation to the work of mediation.	<i>3rd guarantee:</i> freedom is redefined as a capacity to sort the combinations of hybrids that no longer depend on a homogeneous temporal flow.
<i>4th guarantee:</i> the crossed-out God is totally absent but ensures arbitration between the two branches of government.	<i>4th guarantee:</i> the production of hybrids, by becoming explicit and collective, becomes the object of an enlarged democracy that regulates or slows down its cadence.

FIGURE 62.2 Modern/nonmodern constitutions

regulated and commonly-agreed-upon production. It is time, perhaps, to speak of democracy again, but of a democracy extended to things themselves. We are not going to be caught by Archimedes' coup again.

Do we need to add that the crossed-out God, in this new Constitution, turns out to be liberated from the unworthy position to which He had been relegated? The question of God is reopened, and the nonmoderns no longer have to try to generalize the improbable metaphysics of the moderns that forced them to believe in belief.

5.5 THE PARLIAMENT OF THINGS

We want the meticulous sorting of quasi-objects to become possible—no longer unofficially and under the table, but officially and in broad daylight. In this desire to bring to light, to incorporate into language, to make public, we continue to identify with the intuition of the Enlightenment. But this intuition has never had the anthropology it deserved. It has divided up the human and the nonhuman and believed that the others, rendered premoderns by contrast, were not supposed to do the same thing. While it was necessary, perhaps, to increase mobilization and lengthen some networks, this division has now become superfluous, immoral, and—to put it bluntly—anti-Constitutional! We have been modern. Very well. We can no longer be modern in the same way. When we amend the Constitution, we continue to believe in the sciences, but instead of taking in their objectivity, their truth, their coldness, their extraterritoriality—qualities they have never had, except after the arbitrary withdrawal of epistemology—we retain what has always been most interesting about them: their daring, their experimentation, their uncertainty, their warmth, their incongruous blend of hybrids, their crazy ability to reconstitute the social bond. We take away from them only the mystery of their birth and the danger their clandestineness posed to democracy.

Yes, we are indeed the heirs of the Enlightenment, whose asymmetrical rationality is just not broad enough for us. Boyle's descendants had defined a parliament of mutes, the laboratory, where scientists, mere intermediaries, spoke all by themselves in the name of things. What did these representatives say? Nothing but what

the things would have said on their own, had they only been able to speak. Outside the laboratory, Hobbes's descendants had defined the Republic in which naked citizens, unable to speak all at once, arranged to have themselves represented by one of their number, the Sovereign, a simple intermediary and spokesperson. What did this representative say? Nothing but what the citizens would have said had they all been able to speak at the same time. But a doubt about the quality of that double translation crept in straight away. What if the scientists were talking about themselves instead of about things? And if the Sovereign were pursuing his own interests instead of reciting the script written for him by his constituents? In the first case, we would lose Nature and fall back into human disputes; in the second, we would fall back into the State of Nature and into the war of every man against every man. By defining a total separation between the scientific and political representations, the double translation-betrayal became possible. We shall never know whether scientists translate or betray. We shall never know whether representatives betray or translate.

During the modern period, the critics will continue to sustain themselves on that double doubt and the impossibility of ever putting an end to it. Modernism consisted in choosing that arrangement, nevertheless, but in remaining constantly suspicious of its two types of representatives without combining them into a single problem. Epistemologists wondered about scientific realism and the faithfulness of science to things; political scientists wondered about the representative system and the relative faithfulness of elected officials and spokespersons. All had in common a hatred of intermediaries and a desire for an immediate world, emptied of its mediators. All thought that this was the price of faithful representation, without ever understanding that the solution to their problem lay in the other branch of government.

In the course of this essay, I have shown what happened once science studies re-examined such a division of labour. I have shown how fast the modern Constitution broke down, since it no longer permitted the construction of a common dwelling to shelter the societies-natures that the moderns have bequeathed us. There are not two problems of representation, just one. There are not two branches, only one, whose products

can be distinguished only late in the game, and after being examined together. Scientists appear to be betraying external reality only because they are constructing their societies and their natures at the same time. The Sovereign appears to be betraying his constituents only because he is churning together both citizens and the enormous mass of nonhumans that allow the Leviathan to hold up. Suspicion about scientific representation stemmed only from the belief that without social pollution Nature would be immediately accessible. "Eliminate the social and you will finally have a faithful representation," said some. "Eliminate objects and you will finally have a faithful representation," declared others. Their whole debate arose from the division of powers enforced by the modern Constitution.

Let us again take up the two representations and the double doubt about the faithfulness of the representatives, and we shall have defined the Parliament of Things. In its confines, the continuity of the collective is reconfigured. There are no more naked truths, but there are no more naked citizens, either. The mediators have the whole space to themselves. The Enlightenment has a dwelling-place at last. Natures are present, but with their representatives, scientists who speak in their name. Societies are present, but with the objects that have been serving as their ballast from time immemorial. Let one of the representatives talk, for instance, about the ozone hole, another represent the Monsanto chemical industry, a third the workers of the same chemical industry, another the voters of New Hampshire, a fifth the meteorology of the polar regions; let still another speak in the name of the State; what does it matter, so long as they are all talking about the same thing, about a quasi-object they have all created, the object-discourse-nature-society whose new properties astound us all and whose network extends from my refrigerator to the Antarctic by way of chemistry, law, the State, the economy, and satellites. The imbrolios and networks that had no place now have the whole place to themselves. They are the ones that have to be represented; it is around them that the Parliament of Things gathers henceforth. "It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone" (Mark 12:10).

However, we do not have to create this Parliament out of whole cloth, by calling for yet another revolution. We simply have to ratify what we have always

done, provided that we reconsider our past, provided that we understand retrospectively to what extent we have never been modern, and provided that we rejoin the two halves of the symbol broken by Hobbes and Boyle as a sign of recognition. Half of our politics is constructed in science and technology. The other half of Nature is constructed in societies. Let us patch the two back together, and the political task can begin again.

Is it asking too little simply to ratify in public what is already happening? Should we not strive for more glamorous and more revolutionary programmes of action, rather than underlining what is already dimly discernible in the shared practices of scientists, politicians, consumers, industrialists and citizens when they engage in the numerous sociotechnological controversies we read about daily in our newspapers? As we have been discovering throughout this essay, the official representation is effective; that representation is what allowed, under the old Constitution, the exploration and proliferation of hybrids. Modernism was not an illusion, but an active performing. If we could draft a new Constitution, we would, similarly, profoundly alter the course of quasi-objects. Another Constitution will be just as effective, but it will produce different hybrids. Is that too much to expect of a change in representation that seems to depend only on the scrap of paper of a Constitution? It may well be; but there are times when new words are needed to convene a new assembly. The task of our predecessors was no less daunting when they invented rights to give to citizens or the integration of workers into the fabric of our societies. I have done my job as philosopher and constituent by gathering together the scattered themes of a comparative anthropology. Others will be able to convene the Parliament of Things.

We scarcely have much choice. If we do not change the common dwelling, we shall not absorb in it the other cultures that we can no longer dominate, and we shall be forever incapable of accommodating in it the environment that we can no longer control. Neither Nature nor the Others will become modern. It is up to us to change our ways of changing. Or else it will have been for naught that the Berlin Wall fell during the miraculous year 1989, offering us a unique practical lesson about the conjoined failure of socialism and naturalism.

63. ON LIVING IN A LIQUID MODERN WORLD

Zygmunt Bauman (1925–2017), who has lived for many years in England and taught there until his retirement, witnessed as a Polish Jew the authoritarian regimes of both the Nazis and Communists, as they consecutively ruled his native land. He observed first-hand the potent threat of anti-Semitism. While some contemporary intellectuals have seen these ideological movements as anomalies, repudiations of the general trends inherent in modernity, Bauman does not see them as accidents, but rather as emblematic of modernity's darker side. He has been drawn to postmodern theory, but unlike more radical exponents, he did not think that a complete break had occurred between the worlds of modernity and postmodernity. In recent work, including the selection included here, which is the introduction to his book, *Liquid Life* (2005), he uses the term "liquid" to describe what distinguishes contemporary social life from what preceded it. Liquid modernity—essentially another word for the postmodern condition—is characterized by rapid change that prevents the establishment of established patterns of thought and action, thereby forcing actors to continually adapt and adjust to new circumstances and situations without being able to rely on solid frames of reference.

In skating over thin ice, our safety is in our speed.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson, *On Prudence*

"Liquid life" and "liquid modernity" are intimately connected. "Liquid life" is a kind of life that tends to be lived in a liquid modern society. "Liquid modern" is a society in which the conditions under which its members act change faster than it takes the ways of acting to consolidate into habits and routines. Liquidity of life and that of society feed and reinvigorate each other. Liquid life, just like liquid modern society, cannot keep its shape or stay on course for long.

In a liquid modern society, individual achievements cannot be solidified into lasting possessions because, in no time, assets turn into liabilities and abilities into disabilities. Conditions of action and strategies designed to respond to them age quickly and become obsolete before the actors have a chance to learn them properly. Learning from experience in order to rely on strategies and tactical moves deployed

successfully in the past is for that reason ill advised: past tests cannot take account of the rapid and mostly unpredicted (perhaps unpredictable) changes in circumstances. Extrapolating from past events to predict future trends becomes ever more risky and all too often misleading. Trustworthy calculations are increasingly difficult to make, while foolproof prognoses are all but unimaginable: most if not all variables in the equations are unknown, whereas no estimates of their future trends can be treated as fully and truly reliable.

In short: liquid life is a precarious life, lived under conditions of constant uncertainty. The most acute and stubborn worries that haunt such a life are the fears of being caught napping, of failing to catch up with fast-moving events, of being left behind, of overlooking "use by" dates, of being saddled with possessions that are no longer desirable, of missing the moment that calls for a change of tack before crossing the point of no return. Liquid life is a succession of new

Liquid Life, Zygmunt Bauman. pp. 1–14, Cambridge UK: Polity. ♦

beginnings—yet precisely for that reason it is the swift and painless endings, without which new beginnings would be unthinkable, that tend to be its most challenging moments and most upsetting headaches. Among the arts of liquid modern living and the skills needed to practise them, getting rid of things takes precedence over their acquisition.

As the *Observer* cartoonist Andy Riley puts it, the annoyance is “reading articles about the wonders of downshifting when you haven’t even managed to upshift yet.”¹ One needs to hurry with the “upshifting” if one wants to taste the delights of “downshifting.” Getting the site ready for “downshifting” bestows meaning on the “upshifting” bit, and becomes its main purpose; it is by the relief brought by a smooth and painless “downshifting” that the quality of “upshifting” will be ultimately judged. . . .

The briefing which the practitioners of liquid modern life need most (and are most often offered by the expert counsellors in the life arts) is not how to start or open, but how to finish or close. Another *Observer* columnist, with a tongue only halfway to his cheek, lists the updated rules for “achieving closure” of partnerships (the episodes no doubt more difficult to “close” than any other—yet the ones where the partners all too often wish and fight to close them, and so where there is unsurprisingly a particularly keen demand for expert help). The list starts from “Remember bad stuff. Forget the good” and ends with “Meet someone new,” passing midway the command “Delete all electronic correspondence.” Throughout, the emphasis falls on forgetting, deleting, dropping and replacing.

Perhaps the description of liquid modern life as a series of new *beginnings* is an inadvertent accessory to a conspiracy of sorts; by replicating a commonly shared illusion it helps to hide its most closely guarded (since shameful, if only residually so) secret. Perhaps a more adequate way to narrate that life is to tell the story of successive *endings*. And perhaps the glory of the successfully lived liquid life would be better conveyed by the inconspicuousness of the graves that mark its progress than by the ostentation of gravestones that commemorate the contents of the tombs.

In a liquid modern society, the waste-disposal industry takes over the commanding positions in liquid life’s economy. The survival of that society and the

well-being of its members hang on the swiftness with which products are consigned to waste and the speed and efficiency of waste removal. In that society nothing may claim exemption from the universal rule of disposability, and nothing may be allowed to outstay its welcome. The steadfastness, stickiness, viscosity of things inanimate and animate alike are the most sinister and terminal of dangers, sources of the most frightening of fears and the targets of the most violent of assaults.

Life in a liquid modern society cannot stand still. It must modernize (read: go on stripping itself daily of attributes that are past their sell-by dates and go on dismantling/shedding the identities currently assembled/put on)—or perish. Nudged from behind by the horror of expiry, life in a liquid modern society no longer needs to be pulled forward by imagined wonders at the far end of modernizing labours. The need here is to run with all one’s strength just to stay in the same place and away from the rubbish bin where the hindmost are doomed to land.

“Creative destruction” is the fashion in which liquid life proceeds, but what that term glosses over and passes by in silence is that what this creation destroys are other forms of life and so obliquely the humans who practise them. Life in the liquid modern society is a sinister version of the musical chairs game, played for real. The true stake in the race is (temporary) rescue from being excluded into the ranks of the destroyed and avoiding being consigned to waste. And with the competition turning global, the running must now be done round a global track.

The greatest chances of winning belong to the people who circulate close to the top of the global power pyramid, to whom space matters little and distance is not a bother; people at home in many places but in no one place in particular. They are as light, sprightly and volatile as the increasingly global and extraterritorial trade and finances that assisted at their birth and sustain their nomadic existence. As Jacques Attali described them, “they do not own factories, lands, nor occupy administrative positions. Their wealth comes from a portable asset: their knowledge of the laws of the labyrinth.” They “love to create, play and be on the move.” They live in a society of volatile values, carefree about the future, egoistic and hedonistic. They “take novelty as good tidings, precariousness

as value, instability as imperative, hybridity as “richness.”² In varying degrees, they all master and practise the art of “liquid life”: acceptance of disorientation, immunity to vertigo and adaptation to a state of dizziness, tolerance for an absence of itinerary and direction, and for an indefinite duration of travel.

They try hard, though with mixed success, to follow the pattern set by Bill Gates, that paragon of business success, whom Richard Sennett described as marked by “his willingness to destroy what he has made” and his “tolerance for fragmentation,” as “someone who has the confidence to dwell in disorder, someone who flourishes in the midst of dislocation” and someone positioning himself “in a network of possibilities,” rather than “paralysing” himself in “one particular job.”³ Their ideal horizon is likely to be Eutopia, one of Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities* whose inhabitants, the day they “feel the grip of weariness and no one can any longer bear his job, his relatives, his house and his life,” “move to the next city” where “each will take a new job, a different wife, will see another landscape on opening the window, and will spend his time with different pastimes, friends, gossip.”⁴

Looseness of attachment and revocability of engagement are the precepts guiding everything in which they engage and to which they are attached. Presumably addressing such people, the anonymous columnist of the *Observer* who hides under the penname of the Barefoot Doctor counselled his readers to do everything they do “with grace.” Taking a hint from Lao-tzu, the oriental prophet of detachment and tranquillity, he described the life stance most likely to achieve that effect:

Flowing like water. . . you swiftly move along, never fighting the current, stopping long enough to become stagnant or clinging to the riverbank or rocks—the possessions, situations or people that pass through your life—not even trying to hold on to your opinions or world view, but simply sticking lightly yet intelligently to whatever presents itself as you pass by and then graciously letting it go without grasping. . .⁵

Faced with such players, the rest of the participants of the game—and particularly the involuntary ones among them, those who don’t “love” or cannot afford “to be on the move”—stand little chance. Joining in

the game is not a realistic choice for them—but neither have they the choice of not trying. Flitting between flowers in search of the most fragrant is not their option; they are stuck to places where flowers, fragrant or not, are rare—and so can only watch haplessly as the few that there are fade or rot. The suggestion to “stick lightly to whatever presents itself” and “graciously let it go” would sound at best like a cruel joke in their ears, but mostly like a heartless sneer.

Nevertheless, “stick lightly” they must, as “possessions, situations and people” will keep slipping away and vanishing at a breathtaking speed whatever they do; whether they try to slow them down or not is neither here nor there. “Let them go” they must (though, unlike Bill Gates, with hardly any pleasure), but whether they do it graciously or with a lot of wailing and teeth-gnashing is beside the point. They might be forgiven for suspecting some connection between that comely lightness and grace paraded by those who glide by and their own unchosen ugly torpidity and importance to move.

Their indolence is, indeed, unchosen. Lightness and grace come together with freedom—freedom to move, freedom to choose, freedom to stop being what one already is and freedom to become what one is not yet. Those on the receiving side of the new planetary mobility don’t have such freedom. They can count neither on the forbearance of those from whom they would rather keep their distance, nor on the tolerance of those to whom they would wish to be closer. For them, there are neither unguarded exits nor hospitably open entry gates. They *belong*: those to whom or with whom they belong view their belonging as their non-negotiable and incontrovertible *duty* (even if disguised as their inalienable *right*)—whereas those whom they would wish to join see their belonging rather as their similarly non-negotiable, irreversible and unredeemable *fate*. The first wouldn’t let them go, whereas the second wouldn’t let them in.

Between the start and the (unlikely ever to happen) arrival is a desert, a void, a wilderness, a yawning abyss into which only a few would muster the courage to leap of their own free will, unpushed. Centripetal and centrifugal, gravitational and repelling forces combine to keep the restless in place and stop the discontented short of restlessness. Those hot-headed or desperate

enough to try to defy the odds stacked against them risk the lot of outlaws and outcasts, and pay for their audacity in the hard currency of bodily misery and psychical trauma—a price which only a few would choose to pay of their own free will, unforced. Andrzej Szahaj, a most perceptive analyst of the highly uneven odds in contemporary identity games, goes as far as to suggest that the decision to leave the community of belonging is in quite numerous cases downright unimaginable; he goes on to remind his incredulous Western readers that in the remote past of Europe, for instance in ancient Greece, exile from the *polis* of belonging was viewed as the ultimate, indeed capital, punishment.⁶ At least the ancients were cool-headed and preferred straight talk. But the millions of *sans papiers*, stateless, refugees, exiles, asylum or bread-and-water seekers of our times, two millennia later, would have little difficulty in recognizing themselves in that talk.

At both extremes of the hierarchy (and in the main body of the pyramid locked between them in a double-bind) people are haunted by the problem of identity. At the top, the problem is to choose the best pattern from the many currently on offer, to assemble the separately sold parts of the kit, and to fasten them together neither too lightly (lest the unsightly, outdated and aged bits that are meant to be hidden underneath show through at the seams) nor too tightly (lest the patchwork resists being dismantled at short notice when the time for dismantling comes—as it surely will). At the bottom, the problem is to cling fast to the sole identity available and to hold its bits and parts together while fighting back the erosive forces and disruptive pressures, repairing the constantly crumbling walls and digging the trenches deeper. For all the others suspended between the extremes, the problem is a mixture of the two.

Taking a hint from Joseph Brodsky's profile of materially affluent yet spiritually impoverished and famished contemporaries, tired like the residents of Calvino's Eutopia of everything they have enjoyed thus far (like yoga, Buddhism, Zen, contemplation, Mao) and so beginning to dig (with the help of state-of-the-art technology, of course) into the mysteries of Sufism, kabbala or Sunnism to beef up their flagging desire to desire, Andrzej Stasiuk, one of the most perceptive archivists of

contemporary cultures and their discontents, develops a typology of the "spiritual lumpenproletariat" and suggests that its ranks swell fast and that its torments trickle profusely down from the top, saturating ever thicker layers of the social pyramid.⁷

Those affected by the "spiritual lumpenproletarian" virus live in the present and by the present. They live to survive (as long as possible) and to get satisfaction (as much of it as possible). Since the world is not their home ground and not their property (having relieved themselves of the burdens of heritage, they feel free but somehow disinherited—robbed of something, betrayed by someone), they see nothing wrong in exploiting it at will; exploitation feels like nothing more odious than stealing back the stolen.

Flattened into a perpetual present and filled to the brim with survival-and-gratification concerns (it is gratification to survive, the purpose of survival being more gratification), the world inhabited by "spiritual lumpenproletarians" leaves no room for worries about anything other than what can be, at least in principle, consumed and relished on the spot, here and now.

Eternity is the obvious outcast. Not infinity, though; as long as it lasts, the present may be stretched beyond any limit and accommodate as much as once was hoped to be experienced only in the fullness of time (in Stasiuk's words, "it is highly probable that the quantity of digital, celluloid and analogue beings met in the course of a bodily life comes close to the volume which eternal life and resurrection of the flesh could offer"). Thanks to the hoped-for infinity of mundane experiences yet to come, eternity may not be missed; its loss may not even be noticed.

Speed, not duration, matters. With the right speed, one can consume the whole of eternity inside the continuous present of earthly life. Or this at least is what the "spiritual lumpenproletarians" try, and hope, to achieve. The trick is to compress eternity so that it may fit, whole, into the timespan of individual life. The quandary of a mortal life in an immortal universe has been finally resolved: one can now stop worrying about things eternal and lose nothing of eternity's wonders—indeed one can exhaust whatever eternity could possibly offer, all in the timespan of one mortal life. One cannot perhaps take the time-lid off mortal life; but one can (or at least try to) remove all limits

from the volume of satisfactions to be experienced before reaching that other, irremovable limit.

In a bygone world in which time moved much slower and resisted acceleration, people tried to bridge the agonizing gap between the poverty of a short and mortal life and the infinite wealth of the eternal universe by hopes of reincarnation or resurrection. In our world that knows or admits of no limits to acceleration, such hopes may well be discarded. If only one moves quickly enough and does not stop to look back and count the gains and losses, one can go on squeezing into the timespan of mortal life ever more lives; perhaps as many as eternity could supply. What else, if not to act on that belief, are the unstoppable, compulsive and obsessive reconditioning, refurbishment, recycling, overhaul and reconstitution of identity for? "Identity," after all, is (just as the reincarnation and resurrection of olden times used to be) about the possibility of "being born again"—of stopping being what one is and turning into someone one is not yet.

The good news is that this replacement of worries about eternity with an identity-recycling bustle comes complete with patented and ready-to-use DIY tools that promise to make the job fast and effective while needing no special skills and calling for little if any difficult and awkward labour. Self-sacrifice and self-immolation, unbearably long and unrelenting self-drilling and selftaming, waiting for gratification that feels interminable and practising virtues that seem to exceed endurance—all those exorbitant costs of past therapies—are no longer required. New and improved diets, fitness gadgets, changes of wallpaper, parquets put where carpets used to lie (or vice versa), replacements of a mini with an SUV (or the other way round), a T-shirt with a blouse and monochromatic with richly colour-saturated sofa covers or dresses, sizes of breasts moved up or down, sneakers changed, brands of booze and daily routines adapted to the latest fashion and a strikingly novel vocabulary adopted in which to couch public confessions of intimate soul-stirrings . . . these will do nicely. And, as a last resort, on the vexingly far horizon loom the wonders of gene overhaul. Whatever happens, there is no need to despair. If all those magic wands prove not to be enough or, despite all their user-friendliness, are found too cumbersome or too slow, there are drugs promising an instant, even if brief, visit

to eternity (hopefully with other drugs guaranteeing a return ticket).

Liquid life is consuming life. It casts the world and all its animate and inanimate fragments as objects of consumption: that is, objects that lose their usefulness (and so their lustre, attraction, seductive power and worth) in the course of being used. It shapes the judging and evaluating of all the animate and inanimate fragments of the world after the pattern of objects of consumption.

Objects of consumption have a limited expectation of useful life and once the limit has been passed they are unfit for consumption; since "being good for consumption" is the sole feature that defines their function, they are then unfit altogether—useless. Once unfit, they ought to be removed from the site of consuming life (consigned to biodegradation, incinerated, transferred into the care of waste-disposal companies) to clear it for other, still unused objects of consumption.

To save yourself from the embarrassment of lagging behind, of being stuck with something no one else would be seen with, of being caught napping, of missing the train of progress instead of riding it, you must remember that it is in the nature of things to call for vigilance, not loyalty. In the liquid modern world, loyalty is a cause of shame, not pride. Link to your internet provider first thing in the morning, and you will be reminded of that sober truth by the main item on the list of daily news: "Ashamed of your Mobile? Is your phone so old that you're embarrassed to answer it? Upgrade to one you can be proud of." The flipside of the commandment "to upgrade" to a state-of-consumer-correctness mobile is, of course, the prohibition any longer to be seen holding the one to which you upgraded last time.

Waste is the staple and arguably the most profuse product of the liquid modern society of consumers; among consumer society's industries waste production is the most massive and the most immune to crisis. That makes waste disposal one of the two major challenges liquid life has to confront and tackle. The other major challenge is the threat of being consigned to waste. In a world filled with consumers and the objects of their consumption, life is hovering uneasily between the joys of consumption and the horrors of the rubbish heap. Life may be at all times a

living-towards-death, but in a liquid modern society living-towards-the-refuse dump may be a more immediate and more energy-and-labour-consuming prospect and concern of the living.

For the denizen of the liquid modern society, every supper—unlike that referred to by Hamlet in his reply to the King's inquiry about Polonius's whereabouts—is an occasion "where he eats" *and* "where he is eaten."⁸ No longer is there a disjunction between the two acts. "And" has replaced the "either-or." In the society of consumers, no one can escape being an object of consumption—and not just consumption by maggots, and not only at the far end of consuming life. Hamlet in liquid modern times would probably modify Shakespeare's Hamlet's rule, denying the maggots' privileged role in the consumption of the consumers. He would perhaps start, like the original Hamlet, stating that "We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves . . ."—but then conclude: "to fat other creatures."

"Consumers" and "objects of consumption" are the conceptual poles of a continuum along which all members of the society of consumers are plotted and along which they move, to and fro, daily. Some may be cast most of the time particularly near to the commodities' pole—but no consumer can be fully and truly insured against falling into its close, too close for comfort, proximity. Only as commodities, only if they are able to demonstrate their own use-value, can consumers gain access to consuming life. In liquid life, the distinction between consumers and objects of consumption is all too often momentary and ephemeral, and always conditional. We may say that role reversal is the rule here, though even that statement distorts the realities of liquid life, in which the two roles intertwine, blend and merge.

It is not clear which of the two factors (attractions of the "consumer" pole, or the repulsion of the "waste" pole) is the more powerful moving force of liquid life. No doubt both factors cooperate in shaping the daily logic and—bit by bit, episode by episode—the itinerary of that life. Fear adds strength to desire. However attentively it focuses on its immediate objects, desire cannot help but remain aware—consciously, half-consciously or subconsciously—of that other awesome stake hanging on its vigour, determination and resourcefulness. However intensely concentrated on the *object* of desire,

the eye of the consumer cannot but glance sideways at the commodity value of the desiring *subject*. Liquid life means constant self-scrutiny, self-critique and self-censure. Liquid life feeds on the self's dissatisfaction with *itself*.

Critique is self-referential and inward directed; and so is the reform which such self-critique demands and prompts. It is in the name of such inward-looking and inward-targeted reform that the outside world is preyed upon, ransacked and ravaged. Liquid life endows the outside world, indeed everything in the world that is not a part of the self, with a primarily instrumental value; deprived of or denied a value of its own, that world derives all its value from its service to the cause of self-reform, and by their contribution to that self-reform the world and each of its elements are judged. Parts of the world unfit to serve or no longer able to serve are either left outside the realm of relevance and unattended, or actively discarded and swept away. Such parts are but the waste from self-reforming zeal, the rubbish tip being their natural destination. In terms of liquid life's reasoning their preservation would be irrational; their right to be preserved for their own sake cannot be easily argued, let alone proved, by liquid life's logic.

It is for that reason that the advent of liquid modern society spelled the demise of utopias centred on society and more generally of the idea of the "good society." If liquid life prompts an interest in societal reform at all, the postulated reform is aimed mostly at pushing society further towards the surrender, one by one, of all its pretences to a value of its own except that of a police force guarding the security of self-reforming selves, and towards the acceptance and entrenchment of the principle of compensation (a political version of a "money back guarantee") in case the policing fails or is found inadequate. Even the new environmental concerns owe their popularity to the perception of a link between the predatory misuse of the planetary commons and threats to the smooth flow of the self-centred pursuits of liquid life.

The trend is self-sustained and self-energizing. The focusing on self-reform self-perpetuates; so does the lack of interest in, and the inattention to, the aspects of common life that resist a complete and immediate translation into the current targets of self-reform.

Inattention to the conditions of life in common precludes the possibility of renegotiating the setting that makes individual life liquid. The success of the pursuit of happiness—the ostensible purpose and paramount motive of individual life—continues to be defied by the very fashion of pursuing it (the only fashion in which it can be pursued in the liquid modern setting). The resulting unhappiness adds reason and vigour to a self-centred life politics; its ultimate effect is the perpetuation of life's liquidity. Liquid modern society and liquid life are locked in a veritable perpetuum mobile.

Once set in motion, a perpetuum mobile will not stop rotating on its own. The prospects of the perpetual motion arresting, already dim by the nature of the contraption, are made still dimmer by the amazing ability of this particular version of the self-propelling mechanism to absorb and assimilate the tensions and frictions it generates—and to harness them to its service. Indeed, by capitalizing on the demand for relief or cure which the tensions incite, it manages to deploy them as high-grade fuel that keeps its engines going.

A habitual answer given to a wrong kind of behaviour, to conduct unsuitable for an accepted purpose or leading to undesirable outcomes, is education or re-education: instilling in the learners new kinds of motives, developing different propensities and training them in deploying new skills. The thrust of education in such cases is to challenge the impact of daily experience, to fight back and in the end defy the pressures arising from the social setting in which the learners operate. But will the education and the educators fit the bill? Will they themselves be able to resist the pressure? Will they manage to avoid being enlisted in the service of the self-same pressures they are meant to defy? This question has been asked since ancient times, repeatedly answered in the negative by the realities of social life, yet resurrected with undiminished force following every successive calamity. The hopes of using education as a jack potent enough to unsettle and ultimately to dislodge the pressures of "social facts" seem to be as immortal as they are vulnerable . . .

At any rate, the hope is alive and well. Henry A. Giroux dedicated many years of assiduous study to the chances of "critical pedagogy" in a society reconciled to the overwhelming powers of the market. In a recent

conclusion, drawn in cooperation with Susan Searls Giroux, he restates the centuries-old hope:

In opposition to the commodification, privatization, and commercialization of everything educational, educators need to define higher education as a resource vital to the democratic and civic life of the nation. The challenge is thus for academics, cultural workers, students, and labour organizers to join together and oppose the transformation of higher education into a commercial sphere . . .⁹

In 1989, Richard Rorty spelled out, as desirable and fulfillable aims for the educators, the tasks of "stirring the kids up" and instilling "doubts in the students about the students' own self-images, about the society in which they belong."¹⁰ Obviously, not all the people employed in the educator's role are likely to take up the challenge and adopt these aims as their own; the offices and the corridors of academia are filled with two kinds of people—some of them "busy conforming to well-understood criteria for making contributions to knowledge," and the others trying "to expand their own moral imagination" and read books "in order to enlarge their sense of what is possible and important—either for themselves as individuals or for their society." Rorty's appeal is addressed to the second kind of people, as only in that category are his hopes vested. And he knows well against what overwhelming odds the teacher likely to respond to the clarion call will need to battle. "We cannot tell boards of trustees, government commissions, and the like, that our function is to stir things up, to make our society feel guilty, to keep it off balance," or indeed (as he suggests elsewhere) that higher education "is also not a matter of including or educating truth. It is, instead, a matter of inciting doubt and stimulating imagination, thereby challenging the prevailing consensus."¹¹ There is a tension between public rhetoric and the sense of intellectual mission—and that tension "leaves the academy in general, and the humanistic intellectuals in particular, vulnerable to heresy hunters." Given that the opposite messages of the promoters of conformity are powerfully backed by the ruling *doxa* and the daily evidence of commonsensical experience, it also, we may add, makes the "humanistic intellectuals" sitting targets for the advocates of the end of history, rational choice, "there is no alternative" life policies and other

formulae attempting to grasp and convey the current and postulated impetus of an apparently invincible societal dynamic. It invites charges of unrealism, utopianism, wishful thinking, daydreaming—and, adding insult to injury in an odious reversal of ethical truth, of irresponsibility.

Adverse odds may be overwhelming, and yet a democratic (or, as Cornelius Castoriadis would say, an autonomous) society knows of no substitute for education and self-education as a means to influence the turn of events that can be squared with its own nature, while that nature cannot be preserved for long

without “critical pedagogy”—education sharpening its critical edge, “making society feel guilty” and “stirring things up” through stirring human consciences. The fates of freedom, of democracy that makes it possible while being made possible by it, and of education that breeds dissatisfaction with the level of both freedom and democracy achieved thus far, are inextricably connected and not to be detached from one another. One may view that intimate connection as another specimen of a vicious circle—but it is within that circle that human hopes and the chances of humanity are inscribed, and can be nowhere else.

NOTES

1. See *Observer Magazine*, 3 Oct. 2004.
2. Jacques Attali, *Chemins de sagesse. Traité du labyrinthe* (Fayard, 1996), pp. 79-80, 109.
3. See Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (W. W. Norton, 1998), p. 62.
4. Italo Calvino, *Le città invisibili*, quoted here after the translation by William Weaver, *Invisible Cities* (Vintage, 1997), p. 64.
5. See ‘Grace under pressure’, *Observer Magazine*, 30 Nov. 2003, p. 95.
6. Andrzej Szahaj, *E pluribus unum*, (Universitas, 2004), p. 81.
7. See Andrzej Stasiuk, “Duchowy lumpenproletariat” (“Spiritual lumpenproletariat”) and “Rewolucja czyli zagłada” (“Revolution, or extermination”), in *Tekturowy Samolot* (Wydawnictwo Czarne, 2002).
8. See Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act IV, scene iii.
9. See Henry A. Giroux and Susan Searls Giroux, *Take Back Higher Education* (Palgrave, 2004), pp. 119–20.
10. See Richard Rorty, “The humanistic intellectual: eleven theses,” in *Philosophy and Social Hope* (Penguin, 1999), pp. 127-8.
11. In “Education as socialization and as individualization,” in *Philosophy and Social Hope*, p. 118.

64. THE POSTMODERN CONDITION: A REPORT ON KNOWLEDGE

Jean-François Lyotard's (1924–1998) *The Postmodern Condition*, published in France in 1979, is considered one of the earliest and subsequently most widely cited statements on postmodern culture. As with some other French intellectuals who made the postmodern turn, Lyotard engaged in militant leftist politics during the 1950s and '60s, including being involved with the militants who founded the journal *Socialisme ou Barbarie*. He served as its expert on matters related to the political struggle in Algeria, seeking to determine whether the situation was ripe for socialist revolution. Splitting with that group, he continued his activism with a splinter group called *Pouvoir Ouvrier* (Worker's Power) and played a role in the 1968 movement for radical change. In the aftermath of that year of revolt, he abandoned Marxist politics. All this background is relevant to his understanding of the culture of postmodern society. His beginning assumption is that just as the economies of the developed world were becoming postindustrial, so the culture was entering a new epoch beyond the modern. In this excerpt from the introductory sections of *The Postmodern Condition*, Lyotard calls into question what he refers to as metanarratives, by which he means totalizing accounts of social change and the advancement of knowledge. In particular, he takes aim at accounts promoting ideas of historical progress and treating society as a unified totality.

1. THE FIELD: KNOWLEDGE IN COMPUTERISED SOCIETIES

Our working hypothesis is that the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as the postindustrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age. This transition has been under way since at least the end of the 1950s, which for Europe marks the completion of reconstruction. The pace is faster or slower depending on the country, and within countries it varies according to the sector of activity: the general situation is one of temporal disjunction which makes sketching an overview difficult. A portion of the description would necessarily be conjectural. At any rate, we know that it is unwise to put too much faith in futurology.

Rather than painting a picture that would inevitably remain incomplete, I will take as my point of departure a single feature, one that immediately defines our object of study. Scientific knowledge is a kind of discourse. And it is fair to say that for the last forty years the "leading" sciences and technologies have had to do with language: phonology and theories of linguistics, problems of communication and cybernetics, modern theories of algebra and informatics, computers and their languages, problems of translation and the search for areas of compatibility among computer languages, problems of information storage and data banks, telematics and the perfection of intelligent terminals, to paradoxology. The facts speak for themselves (and this list is not exhaustive).

The Postmodern Condition, Jean-Francois Lyotard, translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. University of Minnesota Press. pp. 3–17. ♦

These technological transformations can be expected to have a considerable impact on knowledge. Its two principal functions—research and the transmission of acquired learning—are already feeling the effect, or will in the future. With respect to the first function, genetics provides an example that is accessible to the layman: it owes its theoretical paradigm to cybernetics. Many other examples could be cited. As for the second function, it is common knowledge that the miniaturisation and commercialisation of machines is already changing the way in which learning is acquired, classified, made available, and exploited. It is reasonable to suppose that the proliferation of information-processing machines is having, and will continue to have, as much of an effect on the circulation of learning as did advancements in human circulation (transportation systems) and later, in the circulation of sounds and visual images (the media).

The nature of knowledge cannot survive unchanged within this context of general transformation. It can fit into the new channels, and become operational, only if learning is translated into quantities of information. We can predict that anything in the constituted body of knowledge that is not translatable in this way will be abandoned and that the direction of new research will be dictated by the possibility of its eventual results being translatable into computer language. The “producers” and users of knowledge must now, and will have to, possess the means of translating into these languages whatever they want to invent or learn. Research on translating machines is already well advanced. Along with the hegemony of computers comes a certain logic, and therefore a certain set of prescriptions determining which statements are accepted as “knowledge” statements.

We may thus expect a thorough exteriorisation of knowledge with respect to the “knower,” at whatever point he or she may occupy in the knowledge process. The old principle that the acquisition of knowledge is indissociable from the training (*Bildung*) of minds, or even of individuals, is becoming obsolete and will become ever more so. The relationships of the suppliers and users of knowledge to the knowledge they supply and use is now tending, and will increasingly tend, to assume the form already taken by the relationship of commodity producers and consumers to the

commodities they produce and consume—that is, the form of value. Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorised in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange.

Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself, it loses its “use-value.”

It is widely accepted that knowledge has become the principle [sic] force of production over the last few decades, this has already had a noticeable effect on the composition of the work force of the most highly developed countries and constitutes the major bottleneck for the developing countries. In the postindustrial and postmodern age, science will maintain and no doubt strengthen its preeminence in the arsenal of productive capacities of the nation-states. Indeed, this situation is one of the reasons leading to the conclusion that the gap between developed and developing countries will grow ever wider in the future.

But this aspect of the problem should not be allowed to overshadow the other, which is complementary to it. Knowledge in the form of an informational commodity indispensable to productive power is already, and will continue to be, a major—perhaps the major—stake in the worldwide competition for power. It is conceivable that the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory, and afterwards for control of access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labor. A new field is opened for industrial and commercial strategies on the one hand, and political and military strategies on the other.

However, the perspective I have outlined above is not as simple as I have made it appear. For the mercantilisation of knowledge is bound to affect the privilege the nation-states have enjoyed, and still enjoy, with respect to the production and distribution of learning. The notion that learning falls within the purview of the State, as the brain or mind of society, will become more and more outdated with the increasing strength of the opposing principle, according to which society exists and progresses only if the messages circulating within it are rich in information and easy to decode. The ideology of communicational “transparency,” which goes hand in hand with the commercialisation of knowledge, will begin to perceive the State as a factor of opacity and

“noise.” It is from this point of view that the problem of the relationship between economic and State powers threatens to arise with a new urgency.

Already in the last few decades, economic powers have reached the point of imperilling the stability of the state through new forms of the circulation of capital that go by the generic name of *multi-national corporations*. These new forms of circulation imply that investment decisions have, at least in part, passed beyond the control of the nation-states. The question threatens to become even more thorny with the development of computer technology and telematics. Suppose, for example, that a firm such as IBM is authorised to occupy a belt in the earth’s orbital field and launch communications satellites or satellites housing data banks. Who will have access to them? Who will determine which channels or data are forbidden? The State? Or will the State simply be one user among others? New legal issues will be raised, and with them the question: “who will know?”

Transformation in the nature of knowledge, then, could well have repercussions on the existing public powers, forcing them to reconsider their relations (both *de jure* and *de facto*) with the large corporations and, more generally, with civil society. The reopening of the world market, a return to vigorous economic competition, the breakdown of the hegemony of American capitalism, the decline of the socialist alternative, a probable opening of the Chinese market these and many other factors are already, at the end of the 1970s, preparing States for a serious reappraisal of the role they have been accustomed to playing since the 1930s: that of, guiding, or even directing investments. In this light, the new technologies can only increase the urgency of such a re-examination, since they make the information used in decision making (and therefore the means of control) even more mobile and subject to piracy.

It is not hard to visualise learning circulating along the same lines as money, instead of for its “educational” value or political (administrative, diplomatic, military) importance; the pertinent distinction would no longer be between knowledge and ignorance, but rather, as is the case with money, between “payment knowledge” and “investment knowledge”—in other words, between units of knowledge exchanged in a daily maintenance framework (the reconstitution of

the work force, “survival”) versus funds of knowledge dedicated to optimising the performance of a project.

If this were the case, communicational transparency would be similar to liberalism. Liberalism does not preclude an organisation of the flow of money in which some channels are used in decision making while others are only good for the payment of debts. One could similarly imagine flows of knowledge travelling along identical channels of identical nature, some of which would be reserved for the “decision makers,” while the others would be used to repay each person’s perpetual debt with respect to the social bond.

2. THE PROBLEM: LEGITIMATION

That is the working hypothesis defining the field within which I intend to consider the question of the status of knowledge. This scenario, akin to the one that goes by the name “the computerisation of society” (although ours is advanced in an entirely different spirit), makes no claims of being original, or even true. What is required of a working hypothesis is a fine capacity for discrimination. The scenario of the computerisation of the most highly developed societies allows us to spotlight (though with the risk of excessive magnification) certain aspects of the transformation of knowledge and its effects on public power and civil institutions—effects it would be difficult to perceive from other points of view. Our hypotheses, therefore, should not be accorded predictive value in relation to reality, but strategic value in relation to the question raised.

Nevertheless, it has strong credibility, and in that sense our choice of this hypothesis is not arbitrary. It has been described extensively by the experts and is already guiding certain decisions by the governmental agencies and private firms most directly concerned, such as those managing the telecommunications industry. To some extent, then, it is already a part of observable reality. Finally, barring economic stagnation or a general recession (resulting, for example, from a continued failure to solve the world’s energy problems), there is a good chance that this scenario will come to pass: it is hard to see what other direction contemporary technology could take as an alternative to the computerisation of society.

This is as much as to say that the hypothesis is banal. But only to the extent that it fails to challenge

the general paradigm of progress in science and technology, to which economic growth and the expansion of sociopolitical power seem to be natural complements. That scientific and technical knowledge is cumulative is never questioned. At most, what is debated is the form that accumulation takes—some picture it as regular, continuous, and unanimous, others as periodic, discontinuous, and conflictual.

But these truisms are fallacious. In the first place, scientific knowledge does not represent the totality of knowledge; it has always existed in addition to, and in competition and conflict with, another kind of knowledge, which I will call narrative in the interests of simplicity (its characteristics will be described later). I do not mean to say that narrative knowledge can prevail over science, but its model is related to ideas of internal equilibrium and conviviality next to which contemporary scientific knowledge cuts a poor figure, especially if it is to undergo an exteriorisation with respect to the “knower” and an alienation from its user even greater than has previously been the case. The resulting demoralisation of researchers and teachers is far from negligible; it is well known that during the 1960s, in all of the most highly developed societies, it reached such explosive dimensions among those preparing to practice these professions—the students—that there was noticeable decrease in productivity at laboratories and universities unable to protect themselves from its contamination. Expecting this, with hope or fear, to lead to a revolution (as was then often the case) is out of the question: it will not change the order of things in postindustrial society overnight. But this doubt on the part of scientists must be taken into account as a major factor in evaluating the present and future status of scientific knowledge.

It is all the more necessary to take it into consideration since—and this is the second point—the scientists’ demoralisation has an impact on the central problem of legitimation. I use the word in a broader sense than do contemporary German theorists in their discussions of the question of authority. Take any civil law as an example: it states that a given category of citizens must perform a specific kind of action. Legitimation is the process by which a legislator is authorised to promulgate such a law as a norm. Now take the example of a scientific statement: it is subject to the rule that a statement must fulfil a given set of conditions

in order to be accepted as scientific. In this case, legitimation is the process by which a “legislator” dealing with scientific discourse is authorised to prescribe the stated conditions (in general, conditions of internal consistency and experimental verification) determining whether a statement is to be included in that discourse for consideration by the scientific community.

The parallel may appear forced. But as we will see, it is not. The question of the legitimacy of science has been indissociably linked to that of the legitimation of the legislator since the time of Plato. From this point of view, the right to decide what is true is not independent of the right to decide what is just, even if the statements consigned to these two authorities differ in nature. The point is that there is a strict interlinkage between the kind of language called science and the kind called ethics and politics: they both stem from the same perspective, the same “choice” if you will—the choice called the Occident.

When we examine the current status of scientific knowledge at a time when science seems more completely subordinated to the prevailing powers than ever before and, along with the new technologies, is in danger of becoming a major stake in their conflicts—the question of double legitimation, far from receding into the background, necessarily comes to the fore. For it appears in its most complete form, that of reversion, revealing that knowledge and power are simply two sides of the same question: who decides what knowledge is, and who knows what needs to be decided? In the computer age, the question of knowledge is now more than ever a question of government.

3. THE METHOD: LANGUAGE GAMES

The reader will already have noticed that in analysing this problem within the framework set forth I have favoured a certain procedure: emphasising facts of language and in particular their pragmatic aspect. To help clarify what follows it would be useful to summarise, however briefly, what is meant here by the term *pragmatic*.

A denotative utterance such as “The university is sick,” made in the context of a conversation or an interview, positions its sender (the person who utters the statement), its addressee (the person who receives it), and its referent (what the statement deals with) in a

specific way: the utterance places (and exposes) the sender in the position of “knower” (he knows what the situation is with the university), the addressee is put in the position of having to give or refuse his assent, and the referent itself is handled in a way unique to denotatives, as something that demands to be correctly identified and expressed by the statement that refers to it.

If we consider a declaration such as “The university is open,” pronounced by a dean or rector at convocation, it is clear that the previous specifications no longer apply. Of course, the meaning of the utterance has to be understood, but that is a general condition of communication and does not aid us in distinguishing the different kinds of utterances or their specific effects. The distinctive feature of this second, “performative,” utterance is that its effect upon the referent coincides with its enunciation. The university is open because it has been declared open in the above-mentioned circumstances. That this is so is not subject to discussion or verification on the part of the addressee, who is immediately placed within the new context created by the utterance. As for the sender, he must be invested with the authority to make such a statement. Actually, we could say it the other way around: the sender is dean or rector that is, he is invested with the authority to make this kind of statement—only insofar as he can directly affect both the referent, (the university) and the addressee (the university staff) in the manner I have indicated.

A different case involves utterances of the type, “Give money to the university”; these are prescriptions. They can be modulated as orders, commands, instructions, recommendations, requests, prayers, pleas, etc. Here, the sender is clearly placed in a position of authority, using the term broadly (including the authority of a sinner over a god who claims to be merciful): that is, he expects the addressee to perform the action referred to. The pragmatics of prescription entail concomitant changes in the posts of addressee and referent.

Of a different order again is the efficiency of a question, a promise, a literary description, a narration, etc. I am summarising. Wittgenstein, taking up the study of language again from scratch, focuses his attention on the effects of different modes of discourse; he calls the various types of utterances he identifies along the way (a few of which I have listed) *language games*. What he means by this term is that each of the various

categories of utterance can be defined in terms of rules specifying their properties and the uses to which they can be put—in exactly the same way as the game of chess is defined by a set of rules determining the properties of each of the pieces, in other words, the proper way to move them.

It is useful to make the following three observations about language games. The first is that their rules do not carry within themselves their own legitimation, but are the object of a contract, explicit or not, between players (which is not to say that the players invent the rules). The second is that if there are no rules, there is no game, that even an infinitesimal modification of one rule alters the nature of the game, that a “move” or utterance that does not satisfy the rules does not belong to the game they define. The third remark is suggested by what has just been said: every utterance should be thought of as a “move” in a game.

This last observation brings us to the first principle underlying our method as a whole: to speak is to fight, in the sense of playing, and speech acts fall within the domain of a general agonistics. This does not necessarily mean that one plays in order to win. A move can be made for the sheer pleasure of its invention: what else is involved in that labor of language harassment undertaken by popular speech and by literature? Great joy is had in the endless invention of turns of phrase, of words and meanings, the process behind the evolution of language on the level of *parole*. But undoubtedly even this pleasure depends on a feeling of success won at the expense of an adversary—at least one adversary, and a formidable one: the accepted language, or connotation.

This idea of an agonistics of language should not make us lose sight of the second principle, which stands as a complement to it and governs our analysis: that the observable social bond is composed of language “moves.” An elucidation of this proposition will take us to the heart of the matter at hand.

4. THE NATURE OF THE SOCIAL BOND: THE MODERN ALTERNATIVE

If we wish to discuss knowledge in the most highly developed contemporary society, we must answer the preliminary question of what methodological representation to apply to that society. Simplifying to the

extreme, it is fair to say that in principle there have been, at least over the last half-century, two basic representational models for society: either society forms a functional whole, or it is divided in two. An illustration of the first model is suggested by Talcott Parsons (at least the postwar Parsons) and his school, and of the second, by the Marxist current (all of its component schools, whatever differences they may have, accept both the principle of class struggle and dialectics as a duality operating within society).

This methodological split, which defines two major kinds of discourse on society, has been handed down from the nineteenth century. The idea that society forms an organic whole, in the absence of which it ceases to be a society (and sociology ceases to have an object of study), dominated the minds of the founders of the French school. Added detail was supplied by functionalism; it took yet another turn in the 1950s with Parsons's conception of society as a self-regulating system. The theoretical and even material model is no longer the living organism; it is provided by cybernetics, which, during and after the Second World War, expanded the model's applications.

In Parsons's work, the principle behind the system is still, if I may say so, optimistic: it corresponds to the stabilisation of the growth economies and societies of abundance under the aegis of a moderate welfare state. In the work of contemporary German theorists, *systemtheorie* is technocratic, even cynical, not to mention despairing: the harmony between the needs and hopes of individuals or groups and the functions guaranteed by the system is now only a secondary component of its functioning. The true goal of the system, the reason it programs itself like a computer, is the optimisation of the global relationship between input and output, in other words, performativity. Even when its rules are in the process of changing and innovations are occurring, even when its dysfunctions (such as strikes, crises, unemployment, or political revolutions) inspire hope and lead to belief in an alternative, even then what is actually taking place is only an internal readjustment, and its result can be no more than an increase in the system's "viability." The only alternative to this kind of performance improvement is entropy, or decline.

Here again, while avoiding the simplifications inherent in a sociology of social theory, it is difficult

to deny at least a parallel between this "hard" technocratic version of society and the ascetic effort that was demanded (the fact that it was done in name of "advanced liberalism" is beside the point) of the most highly developed industrial societies in order to make them competitive—and thus optimise their "irrationality"—within the framework of the resumption of economic world war in the 1960s.

Even taking into account the massive displacement intervening between the thought of a man like Comte and the thought of Luhmann, we can discern a common conception of the social: society is a unified totality, a "unicity." Parsons formulates this clearly: "The most essential condition of successful dynamic analysis is a continual and systematic reference of every problem to the state of the system as a whole. . . . A process or set of conditions either 'contributes' to the maintenance (or development) of the system or it is 'dysfunctional' in that it detracts from the integration, effectiveness, etc., of the system." The "technocrats" also subscribe to this idea. Whence its credibility: it has the means to become a reality, and that is all the proof it needs. This is what Horkheimer called the "paranoia" of reason.

But this realism of systemic self-regulation, and this perfectly sealed circle of facts and interpretations, can be judged paranoid only if one has, or claims to have, at one's disposal a viewpoint that is in principle immune from their allure. This is the function of the principle of class struggle in theories of society based on the work of Marx.

"Traditional" theory is always in danger of being incorporated into the programming of the social whole as a simple tool for the optimisation of its performance; this is because its desire for a unitary and totalising truth lends itself to the unitary and totalising practice of the system's managers. "Critical" theory, based on a principle of dualism and wary of syntheses and reconciliations, should be in a position to avoid this fate. What guides Marxism, then, is a different model of society, and a different conception of the function of the knowledge that can be produced by society and acquired from it. This model was born of the struggles accompanying the process of capitalism's encroachment upon traditional civil societies. There is insufficient space here to chart the vicissitudes of these struggles, which fill more than a century of social, political, and ideological

history. We will have to content ourselves with a glance at the balance sheet, which is possible for us to tally today now that their fate is known: in countries with liberal or advanced liberal management, the struggles and their instruments have been transformed into regulators of the system; in communist countries, the totalising model and its totalitarian effect have made a comeback in the name of Marxism itself, and the struggles in question have simply been deprived of the right to exist. Everywhere, the Critique of political economy (the subtitle of Marx's *Capital*) and its correlate, the critique of alienated society, are used in one way or another as aids in programming the system.

Of course, certain minorities, such as the Frankfurt School or the group *Socialisme ou barbarie*, preserved and refined the critical model in opposition to this process. But the social foundation of the principle of division, or class struggle, was blurred to the point of losing all of its radicality; we cannot conceal the fact that the critical model in the end lost its theoretical standing and was reduced to the status of a "utopia" or "hope," a token protest raised in the name of man or reason or creativity, or again of some social category such as the Third World or the students—on which is conferred in extremes the henceforth improbable function of critical subject.

The sole purpose of this schematic (or skeletal) reminder has been to specify the problematic in which I intend to frame the question of knowledge in advanced industrial societies. For it is impossible to know what the state of knowledge is—in other words, the problems its development and distribution are facing today—without knowing something of the society within which it is situated. And today more than ever, knowing about that society involves first of all choosing what approach the inquiry will take, and that necessarily means choosing how society can answer. One can decide that the principal role of knowledge is as an indispensable element in the functioning of society, and act in accordance with that decision, only if one has already decided that society is a giant machine.

Conversely, one can count on its critical function, and orient its development and distribution in that direction, only after it has been decided that society does not form an integrated whole, but remains haunted by a principle of oppositions. The alternative seems

clear: it is a choice between the homogeneity and the intrinsic duality of the social, between functional and critical knowledge. But the decision seems difficult, or arbitrary.

It is tempting to avoid the decision altogether by distinguishing two kinds of knowledge. One, the positivist kind, would be directly applicable to technologies bearing on men and materials, and would lend itself to operating as an indispensable productive force within the system. The other—the critical, reflexive, or hermeneutic kind—by reflecting directly or indirectly on values or aims, would resist any such "recuperation."

5. THE NATURE OF THE SOCIAL BOND: THE POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVE

I find this partition solution unacceptable. I suggest that the alternative it attempts to resolve, but only reproduces, is no longer relevant for the societies with which we are concerned and that the solution itself is still caught within a type of oppositional thinking that is out of step with the most vital modes of postmodern knowledge. As I have already said, economic "redeployment" in the current phase of capitalism, aided by a shift in techniques and technology, goes hand in hand with a change in the function of the State: the image of society this syndrome suggests necessitates a serious revision of the alternate approaches considered. For brevity's sake, suffice it to say that functions of regulation, and therefore of reproduction, are being and will be further withdrawn from administrators and entrusted to machines. Increasingly, the central question is becoming who will have access to the information these machines must have in storage to guarantee that the right decisions are made. Access to data is, and will continue to be, the prerogative of experts of all stripes. The ruling class is and will continue to be the class of decision makers. Even now it is no longer composed of the traditional political class, but of a composite layer of corporate leaders, high-level administrators, and the heads of the major professional, labor, political, and religious organisations.

What is new in all of this is that the old poles of attraction represented by nation-states, parties, professions, institutions, and historical traditions are losing

their attraction. And it does not look as though they will be replaced, at least not on their former scale. The Trilateral Commission is not a popular pole of attraction. "Identifying" with the great names, the heroes of contemporary history, is becoming more and more difficult. Dedicating oneself to "catching up with Germany," the life goal the French president [Giscard d'Estaing at the time this book was published in France] seems to be offering his countrymen, is not exactly exciting. But then again, it is not exactly a life goal. It depends on each individual's industriousness. Each individual is referred to himself. And each of us knows that our *self* does not amount to much.

This breaking up of the grand Narratives leads to what some authors analyse in terms of the dissolution of the social bond and the disintegration of social aggregates into a mass of individual atoms thrown into the absurdity of Brownian motion. Nothing of the kind is happening: this point of view, it seems to me, is haunted by the paradisaic representation of a lost "organic" society.

A *self* does not amount to much, but no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before. Young or old, man or woman, rich or poor, a person is always located at "nodal points" of specific communication circuits, however tiny these may be. Or better: one is always located at a post through which various kinds of messages pass. No one, not even the least privileged among us, is ever entirely powerless over the messages that traverse and position him at the post of sender, addressee, or referent. One's mobility in relation to these language game effects (language games, of course, are what this is all about) is tolerable, at least within certain limits (and the limits are vague); it is even solicited by regulatory mechanisms, and in particular by the self-adjustments the system undertakes in order to improve its performance. It may even be said that the system can and must encourage such movement to the extent that it combats its own entropy, the novelty of an unexpected "move," with its correlative displacement of a partner or group of partners, can supply the system with that increased performativity it forever demands and consumes.

It should now be clear from which perspective I chose language games as my general methodological

approach. I am not claiming that the *entirety* of social relations is of this nature—that will remain an open question. But there is no need to resort to some fiction of social origins to establish that language games are the minimum relation required for society to exist: even before he is born, if only by virtue of the name he is given, the human child is already positioned as the referent in the story recounted by those around him, in relation to which he will inevitably chart his course. Or more simply still, the question of the social bond, insofar as it is a question, is itself a language game, the game of inquiry. It immediately positions the person who asks, as well as the addressee and the referent asked about: it is already the social bond.

On the other hand, in a society whose communication component is becoming more prominent day by day, both as a reality and as an issue, it is clear that language assumes a new importance. It would be superficial to reduce its significance to the traditional alternative between manipulatory speech and the unilateral transmission of messages on the one hand, and free expression and dialogue on the other.

A word on this last point. If the problem is described simply in terms of communication theory, two things are overlooked: first, messages have quite different forms and effects depending on whether they are, for example, denotatives, prescriptives, evaluatives, performatives, etc. It is clear that what is important is not simply the fact that they communicate information. Reducing them to this function is to adopt an outlook which unduly privileges the system's own interests and point of view. A cybernetic machine does indeed run on information, but the goals programmed into it, for example, originate in prescriptive and evaluative statements it has no way to correct in the course of its functioning—for example, maximising its own performance, how can one guarantee that performance maximisation is the best goal for the social system in every case. In any case the "atoms" forming its matter are competent to handle statements such as these—and this question in particular.

Second, the trivial cybernetic version of information theory misses something of decisive importance, to which I have already called attention: the agonistic aspect of society. The atoms are placed at the crossroads of pragmatic relationships, but they are also

displaced by the messages that traverse them, in perpetual motion. Each language partner, when a “move” pertaining to him is made, undergoes a “displacement,” an alteration of some kind that not only affects him in his capacity as addressee and referent, but also as sender. These moves necessarily provoke “counter-moves”—and everyone knows that a countermove that is merely reactionary is not a “good” move. Reactional countermoves are no more than programmed effects in the opponent’s strategy; they play into his hands and thus have no effect on the balance of power. That is why it is important to increase displacement in the games, and even to disorient it, in such a way as to make an unexpected “move” (a new statement).

What is needed if we are to understand social relations in this manner, on whatever scale we choose, is not only a theory of communication, but a theory of games which accepts agonistics as a founding principle. In this context, it is easy to see that the essential element of newness is not simply “innovation.” Support for this approach can be found in the work of a number of contemporary sociologists, in addition to linguists and philosophers of language. This “atomisation” of the social into flexible networks of language games may seem far removed from the modern reality, which is depicted, on the contrary, as afflicted with bureaucratic paralysis. The objection will be made, at least, that the weight of certain institutions imposes limits on the games, and thus restricts the inventiveness of the players in making their moves. But I think this can be taken into account without causing any particular difficulty.

In the ordinary use of discourse—for example, in a discussion between two friends—the interlocutors use any available ammunition, changing games from one utterance to the next: questions, requests, assertions, and narratives are launched pell-mell into battle. The

war is not without rules, but the rules allow and encourage the greatest possible flexibility of utterance.

From this point of view, an institution differs from a conversation in that it always requires supplementary constraints for statements to be declared admissible within its bounds. The constraints function to filter discursive potentials, interrupting possible connections in the communication networks: there are things that should not be said. They also privilege certain classes of statements (sometimes only one) whose predominance characterises the discourse of the particular institution: there are things that should be said, and there are ways of saying them. Thus: orders in the army, prayer in church, denotation in the schools, narration in families, questions in philosophy, performativity in businesses. Bureaucratisation is the outer limit of this tendency.

However, this hypothesis about the institution is still too “unwieldy”: its point of departure is an overly “reifying” view of what is institutionalised. We know today that the limits the institution imposes on potential language “moves” are never established once and for all (even if they have been formally defined). Rather, the limits are themselves the stakes and provisional results of language strategies, within the institution and without. Examples: Does the university have a place for language experiments (poetics)? Can you tell stories in a cabinet meeting? Advocate a cause in the barracks? The answers are clear: yes, if the university opens creative workshops; yes, if the cabinet works with prospective scenarios; yes, if the limits of the old institution are displaced. Reciprocally, it can be said that the boundaries only stabilise when they cease to be stakes in the game.

This, I think, is the appropriate approach to contemporary institutions of knowledge.

65. MULTIPLE MODERNITIES

S. N. Eisenstadt (1923–2010) was one of the preeminent theorists of modernity during the second half of the twentieth century. Born in Warsaw, he was raised in Palestine and occupied a position at Hebrew University from 1959 until his retirement in 1990. He continued to be a productive scholar until the end of his life. His thinking on modernity and modernization was initially influenced by a structural-functionalist theoretical foundation. However, as this selection from his 2000 article on “Multiple Modernities” reveals, Eisenstadt disputed the idea that modernization was a distinctly European phenomenon and that it occurred in a singular way due to a convergence of societies once impacted by industrialization. If modernity entailed the construction of new collective identities, it did so in distinctive ways predicated on unique cultural and social structural constellations. Eisenstadt notes that although modernity first took form in Western terms and they inflect developments elsewhere, those developments amount to novel iterations of modernity.

I

The notion of “multiple modernities” denotes a certain view of the contemporary world—indeed of the history and characteristics of the modern era—that goes against the views long prevalent in scholarly and general discourse. It goes against the view of the “classical” theories of modernization and of the convergence of industrial societies prevalent in the 1950s, and indeed against the classical sociological analyses of Marx, Durkheim, and (to a large extent) even of Weber, at least in one reading of his work. They all assumed, even if only implicitly, that the cultural program of modernity as it developed in modern Europe and the basic institutional constellations that emerged there would ultimately take over in all modernizing and modern societies; with the expansion of modernity, they would prevail throughout the world.¹

The reality that emerged after the so-called beginnings of modernity, and especially after World War II, failed to bear out these assumptions. The actual developments in modernizing societies have refuted the homogenizing and hegemonic assumptions of this

Western program of modernity. While a general trend toward structural differentiation developed across a wide range of institutions in most of these societies—in family life, economic and political structures, urbanization, modern education, mass communication, and individualistic orientations—the ways in which these arenas were defined and organized varied greatly, in different periods of their development, giving rise to multiple institutional and ideological patterns. Significantly, these patterns did not constitute simple continuations in the modern era of the traditions of their respective societies. Such patterns were distinctively modern, though greatly influenced by specific cultural premises, traditions, and historical experiences. All developed distinctly modern dynamics and modes of interpretation, for which the original Western project constituted the crucial (and usually ambivalent) reference point. Many of the movements that developed in non-Western societies articulated strong anti-Western or even antimodern themes, yet all were distinctively modern. This was true not only of the various nationalist and traditionalist movements that emerged in these

Article in *Dadealus*, 129(1), 2000, pp. 1–29; we will use section I (pp. 1–3); section v (pp. 7–8); Section x (pp. 14–15). ♦

societies from about the middle of the nineteenth century until after World War II, but also, as we shall note, of the more contemporary fundamentalist ones.

The idea of multiple modernities presumes that the best way to understand the contemporary world—indeed to explain the history of modernity—is to see it as a story of continual constitution and reconstitution of a multiplicity of cultural programs. These ongoing reconstructions of multiple institutional and ideological patterns are carried forward by specific social actors in close connection with social, political, and intellectual activists, and also by social movements pursuing different programs of modernity, holding very different views on what makes societies modern. Through the engagement of these actors with broader sectors of their respective societies, unique expressions of modernity are realized. These activities have not been confined to any single society or state, though certain societies and states proved to be the major arenas where social activists were able to implement their programs and pursue their goals. Though distinct understandings of multiple modernity developed within different nation-states, and within different ethnic and cultural groupings, among communist, fascist, and fundamentalist movements, each, however different from the others, was in many respects international.

One of the most important implications of the term “multiple modernities” is that modernity and Westernization are not identical; Western patterns of modernity are not the only “authentic” modernities, though they enjoy historical precedence and continue to be a basic reference point for others.

In acknowledging a multiplicity of continually evolving modernities, one confronts the problem of just what constitutes the common core of modernity. This problem is exacerbated and indeed transformed with the contemporary deconstruction or decomposition of many of the components of “classical” models of the nation and of revolutionary states, particularly as a consequence of globalization. Contemporary discourse has raised the possibility that the modern project, at least in terms of the classical formulation that held sway for the last two centuries, is exhausted. One contemporary view claims that such exhaustion is manifest in the “end of history.”² The other view best

represented is Huntington’s notion of a “clash of civilizations,” in which Western civilization—the seeming epitome of modernity—is confronted by a world in which traditional, fundamentalist, antimodern, and anti-Western civilizations—some (most notably, the Islamic and so-called Confucian groupings) viewing the West with animus or disdain—are predominant.³

II

Modernity entailed also a distinctive mode of constructing the boundaries of collectivities and collective identities.⁴ New concrete definitions of the basic components of collective identities developed—civil, primordial and universalistic, transcendental or “sacred.” Strong tendencies developed toward framing these definitions in absolutist terms, emphasizing their civil components. At the same time, connections were drawn between the construction of political boundaries and those of cultural collectivities. This made inevitable an intensified emphasis on the territorial boundaries of such collectivities, creating continual tension between their territorial and/or particular components and those that were broader, more universalistic. In at least partial contrast to the axial civilizations, collective identities were no longer taken as given, preordained by some transcendental vision and authority, or sanctioned by perennial custom. They constituted foci of contestation and struggle, often couched in highly ideological terms.

III

The variability of modernities was accomplished above all through military and economic imperialism and colonialism, effected through superior economic, military, and communication technologies. Modernity first moved beyond the West into different Asian societies—Japan, India, Burma, Sri Lanka, China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia—to the Middle Eastern countries, coming finally to Africa. By the end of the twentieth century, it encompassed nearly the entire world, the first true wave of globalization.

In all these societies the basic model of the territorial state and later of the nation-state was adopted, as were the basic premises and symbols of Western modernity. So, too, were the West's modern institutions—representative, legal, and administrative. But at the same time the encounter of modernity with non-Western societies brought about far-reaching transformations in the premises, symbols, and institutions of modernity—with new problems arising as a consequence.

The attraction of many of modernity's themes and institutional forms for many groups in these societies was caused first by the fact that it was the European (later the Western) pattern, developed and spread throughout the world by Western economic, technological, and military expansion, that undermined the cultural premises and institutional cores of these ancient societies. The appropriation of these themes and institutions permitted many in non-European societies—especially elites and intellectuals—to participate actively in the new modern universal (albeit initially

Western) tradition, while selectively rejecting many of its aspects—most notably that which took for granted the hegemony of the Western formulations of the cultural program of modernity. The appropriation of themes of modernity made it possible for these groups to incorporate some of the Western universalistic elements of modernity in the construction of their own new collective identities, without necessarily giving up specific components of their traditional identities (often couched, like the themes of Western modernity, in universalistic, especially religious terms). Nor did it abolish their negative or at least ambivalent attitudes toward the West. Modernity's characteristic themes of protest, institution-building, and the redefinition of center and periphery served to encourage and accelerate the transposition of the modern project to non-European, non-Western settings. Although initially couched in Western terms, many of these themes found resonance in the political traditions of many of these societies.⁵

NOTES

1. Eugene Kamenka, ed., *The Portable Karl Marx* (New York: Viking Press, 1983); Max Weber, *Die Protestantische Ethik: Kritiken und Antikritiken* (Gutersloh, Germany: Guetersloher Verlagshaus, 1978); Weber, *Politik als Beruf* (Berlin: Dunker and Humblot, 1968); Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building: Selected Papers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); Weber, *The Rational and Social Foundations of Music* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1958); W. G. Runciman, ed., *Max Weber: Selections in Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Robert N. Bellah, ed., *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society: Selected Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973); Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984).
2. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).
3. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).
4. S. N. Eisenstadt and B. Giesen, "The Construction of Collective Identity," *European Journal of Sociology* 36 (1) (1995): 72–102; Edward Shils, "Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties," in *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*, ed. Edward Shils (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 111–126.
5. Eisenstadt, "The Axial Age: The Emergence of Transcendental Visions and the Rise of Clerics"; Eisenstadt, ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial-Age Civilizations*.

66. MODERNITY AS A PROJECT OF EMANCIPATION AND THE POSSIBILITY OF POLITICS

Peter Wagner (b. 1956) is a German-born social theorist who has held positions in numerous European countries and is currently based at the University of Barcelona. His work has sought to develop a novel understanding of modernity that calls into question the long-standing assumption that modern societies were characterized by pluralistic democratic political systems, market economies, and cultures that valorized rationality. In *Modernity as Experience and Interpretation* (2008), he argues that modernity is more unstable and variable than that perspective realizes. Thus, he calls for attention being paid to the ways people in such societies, as the title indicates, both experience and interpret contemporary social life. In this excerpt from the book, Wagner focuses on the politics of the modern, with an explication of what emancipation might mean, moving from a philosophical to a sociological answer. He contends that any politics that can lay claim to emancipatory potential must succeed in fusing critique with a project of political reconstruction.

'1968' was seen by many of its participants as a beginning: 'This is only a beginning . . .', as one said in Paris in May, and what was referred to was a struggle for emancipation, even if often of a yet diffuse, ill-defined kind. Later, when the tides had turned, many rather looked back at it as an end—the end, most importantly, of some political project of change, or more precisely, and more devastatingly, of the possibility of any political project of, in whatever way, progressive change, of some form of collective emancipation. '1968' and its aftermath will here be looked at in this light—'1968' itself will be read as a project of emancipation, trying to interpret retrospectively that which was strangely both clear and opaque at the time; and societal developments in its aftermath will be investigated in terms of the fate of emancipation.¹

EMANCIPATION FROM WHAT? THE PHILOSOPHICAL ANSWER

To do so, it is useful to first gain more distance from the events by enlarging the temporal horizon. If '1968' was in important respects a movement for emancipation, it

could not but refer to a two-to-three-century-old tradition in European intellectual history, the Enlightenment. Immanuel Kant's 'Answer to the Question: What is the Enlightenment?' (1965 [1784]) famously starts with a definition of Enlightenment as emancipation: 'Enlightenment is the exit of the human being from self-incurred immaturity'. Despite—or because of—its clarity, this claim begs further questions. What is the meaning of 'from'? What is the state of the human condition before emancipation, what is the 'immaturity' human beings strive to exit from? And where will they find themselves after the exit? The precise meaning of this assertion has remained rather widely open to interpretation.

First, and most commonly, Kant was read as having pointed towards the end of immaturity that was brought about by the so-called democratic revolutions. Those revolutions started in Kant's own era but remained a long time in the making until they led towards what was widely regarded as the full advent of modernity, of a modern society and a

Peter Wagner, *Modernity as Experience and Interpretation: A New Sociology of Modernity*, Polity, 2008, 62–68. ♦

modern political order. In this interpretation, emancipation had largely been accomplished in these revolutions, at least as a matter of principle, and was only in need of completion there where reality still fell short of the Enlightenment promises. '1968', then, would be at best a catching-up, a step towards completion there where the Enlightenment promise was not yet fulfilled. This view on its own, however, does not describe well the self-understanding of the *soixante-huitards*.

Indeed, second, Kant's view was also often seen as superseded by a later critique, namely the Marxian one, that suggested that, in the way in which it had occurred, the advent of political modernity—the bourgeois revolution—had resulted in an illusion, in an emancipation that resulted in a new kind of immaturity, of serfdom. From then on, critique had to be directed against capitalism. One had to move from political emancipation to human emancipation, as Marx had said earlier. '1968' marked the beginning of an albeit short-lived revival of Marxian thought in Western societies, and this not least because of the conviction that those societies were in a rather fundamental sense falling short of realizing human capacities and were thus in need of another revolution.

Thus, two ways of reading Kant on emancipation had been established by the time of 1968, after the history of the nineteenth and of most of the twentieth century. Emancipation was either basically accomplished, only in need of completion—and the liberation from colonialism or women's emancipation, important struggles during the 1960s, could easily be interpreted in this perspective. Or emancipation could be seen as only having taken the first of several steps. The obstacles to its accomplishments were then more deeply rooted than all political thinking that traces its origins to the Enlightenment had envisaged. Both these interpretations are part of the discourse of '1968', although both were elaborated much earlier and were rather revived with '1968'. But there is a third reading of Kant, of which we may more properly say that it emerged with '1968'.

Michel Foucault's (1984) interpretation of Kant's essay places the emphasis on the word 'exit'. If Enlightenment is the exit from self-incurred immaturity, then

it is neither the state before nor the one after, it is the in-between, the moment of leaving. Thus, Foucault sceptically reviews conceptions of Enlightenment as an era, and prefers to see it as an ethos. There is no accomplished new phase or state, the one of emancipation, after leaving immaturity, exiting from it. Such state does not actually exist, as an epoch of political modernity. Nor is it even thinkable, in any normative way, as the state after the overthrow of capitalism. Emancipation rather is an ongoing demand, an exigency, precisely, an ethos.

Regardless of the actual importance of *la pensée* Foucault for '1968' (as widely debated in France after Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut's *La pensée* 68), this reading of the Enlightenment seems to capture much of the specificity of '1968', that is, of that which makes it distinct from other protest movements. There were, for instance, new forms of political events, like the sit-in or the happening, later to be helplessly described by political scientists as 'unconventional political participation'. There was the (re-)creation of a connection between artistic expression and political expression that was later often denounced as 'the aestheticization of the political'. The direct link was provided by situationism, but surrealism and the whole tradition of artistic modernism in literature and the visual arts stood in the background (Bohrer 1997). More broadly, one can identify here an 'artistic critique' of capitalism that always co-existed and in 1968 merged with the 'social critique', as advocated in the mainstream of the workers' movement, to form an explosive mixture (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999). There was a connection between the lives of the activists and their political ideas in such a way that the realization of one's own self was to mean the accomplished fusion of the two. Feminists problematically referred to this aspect as the personal having become political; sociologists derogatorily related it to the youthful lack of realism in '1968' (thus, in absolute incomprehension, to the immaturity of its protagonists). And there was a refusal to define and determine the political forms that were to issue from the contestation. The political was the revolt, the contestation, as exemplified in interminable assembly meetings, based on the rejection of exclusion and of representation. Emancipation was the 'exit from'; every attempt to define the path to follow was

subject to a critique of power. In turn, such a conception of the political can be—and has been—subjected to critique. At the end of my observations I will return explicitly to the question of the political and its forms ‘after 1968’. First, however, and against the frequent attempts at prematurely discarding the political perspectives that emerged from ‘1968’, the protest has to be located in its own socio-historical context.

EMANCIPATION FROM WHAT? THE SOCIOLOGICAL ANSWER

In other words, the philosophical answer to the question ‘emancipation from what?’ needs to be complemented by a socio-historical answer to the same question. Every reader of Kant’s ‘answer to the question’ will immediately recognize that his philosophy retained its vitality, his observations on how to translate it into political maxims of the time though much less so. A political interpretation of the Enlightenment, thus, requires an analysis of the specific, historically concrete forms of ‘self-incurred immaturity’ (for the following, see also Wagner 1994, pp. 141–5; Boltanski and Chiapello 1999, pp. 241–90; Stråth 2002; and Boltanski 2002).

If there can be little doubt that the idea of emancipation was a key element of the discourse of ‘1968’, this idea, however, appeared from the beginning in two distinct forms. On the one hand, protest was directed against conventions and institutions that appeared firmly and unchangeably established, against the rules and regulations of that ‘organized modernity’ that had been established over the preceding decades in the course of often violent conflicts and oppression.² The older generation, that is, those who had experienced the rise of totalitarianism and the Second World War and who were in fact administering the ‘administered society’ (Adorno) of the 1960s, tended to see those conventions and institutions as accomplishments that were gained during the difficult first half of the century and that should not be endangered without good reason.

This basic attitude explains a number of features of the societies of post-war restoration: the denial of the earlier deep divide between supporters and opponents of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes; the integration of the latter even in top administrative positions in post-war institutions; the ban of ‘extremist’ parties

in some societies and the long-term exclusion of the opposition parties from power as well as their increasing pacification, i.e., their unwillingness to underline points of disagreement with the governments; the return to cultural models of hierarchy and domination in personal and work relations, even though some of these models had already been shaken during the inter-war period; the elevation of Soviet socialism to the status of an—external as well as internal—enemy and the alliance with authoritarian regimes in alleged defence against that enemy; the emphasis on economic development as the primary objective of politics and, concomitantly, the elevation of private well-being, *les petits bonheurs*, over ‘public happiness’, i.e., substantive political goals; clear preference given to the stabilization of a societal situation, which prominently included broad-ranging attempts to provide income stability by means of Keynesian demand management, generous pension reforms, agricultural protectionism and subsidies, and the expansion of the welfare state, over any reasoning about profound reform needs or even any wider opening of political debate.

Current historical revisionism tends to reopen the question whether some of these conventions and institutions were indeed justifiable under the conditions of the time. The question is, from a democratic point of view, a truly open one at best for some of the practices under consideration, certainly not for all of them. Regardless of that matter, though, for the purposes of analysis here it suffices to state that, all variations notwithstanding, it is precisely this configuration of conventions that was considered by the activists of 1968 as unbearable. As a result of a constellation in which that which was plainly self-evident and not open for debate for much of the older generation was self-evidently intolerable any longer for much of the younger generation, an apparently irreconcilable opposition between protesters and ‘the establishment’ formed quickly. In this antagonism, the protesters argued in the name of a new freedom, of the right to a diversity of life-forms, of doubt as to the necessity of many rules and conventions. Even though it was directed against existing political forms, the institutions and conventions of the various nation-states, emancipation in this sense did not head in any direct way for new political forms. Rather, it meant the right to realize one’s own idiosyncratic self,

thus predominantly the emancipation of the individual from constraining rules and conventions.

This, however, was only one aspect of the events. On the other hand, the protest against the established conventions and institutions also elaborated conceptions of new forms of social and political organization, thus of an alternative to the existing social order. While this alternative included the idea of individual emancipation, it nevertheless was a project of collective emancipation. Drawing on the tradition of critical theorizing that had developed since the middle of the nineteenth century, the idea of a collective subject resurfaced. Such a subject in a new form would re-found and drive forward the project of collective emancipation, after its earlier incarnation, the workers' movement, had—as the view was—been integrated into bourgeois society. The most highly organized expression of such thinking was the founding of groups that referred in their practice to traditions of Marxism and saw their own interpretation—disregarding the ideas of plurality and diversity—each as the only viable one. However, references to a collective subject as the actor in a political transformation can also be found in other areas of activities related to '1968', such as in feminist debates or in action-oriented sociologies like the one Alain Touraine proposed.

If it is true, then, that an emphasis on emancipation from conventions that appeared as oppressive co-existed in '1968' with the desire for a collective re-orientation after those conventions would have been successfully challenged (as captured in Passerini 2002), the awareness that there was a considerable tension between these two longings was but little developed among the activists. Such lack of awareness can possibly be understood against the background of two features of '1968' consciousness. First, as discussed above, the oppressive features of contemporary society were seen as self-evident. The intellectual activities around '1968' consisted in revealing ever more forms of oppression that had remained concealed before but that appeared clearly once critical consciousness—generalizing the 'hermeneutics of suspicion'—had been gained. The main and over-whelming task, thus, was the identification and destruction of those forms of oppression. Secondly, in this light, '1968' consciousness was marked by some kind of unexplicated Enlightenment faith as

regards the aftermath of effective critical action, of the practice of reason. Implicitly, the view was that autonomous, reason-endowed human beings will unproblematically organize a free society once the obstacles are removed that stand in the way of such a project. Certainly, the removal of the obstacles was a task that was increasingly seen as difficult. The founding of avant-garde parties and the resort to terrorism were—misguided—conclusions drawn from such insight. But even in those highly organized expressions of '1968', the views about society after successful liberation were either weak or even non-existent or they were very—sometimes grotesquely—remote from the conditions prevailing in Western societies.

The tension between the two elements of a political project, critique and reconstruction, was thus de facto resolved by a strong neglect of the latter element. Saying this does not—or, at least, not necessarily—lead into a revisionist criticism of '1968'; the positive significance of the effective challenging of the conventions of organized modernity remains, in my view, beyond doubt. Those who judge '1968' negatively either in terms of practices that emerged from it (such as limitations to free speech at universities during the 1970s, or terrorism) or in terms of deplorable long-term consequences have to bear the onus of the argument. They would need to respond to the question whether the maintenance of the conventions of organized modernity, if it had been possible at all, was to be preferred to the struggles and new kinds of problems from the 1970s and 1980s up to the present. In this sense, the normative assessment of the structure and conflicts of pre-1968 European societies is the hidden central theme in the recurrent debates about '1968' in France, Germany and elsewhere. As in other realms of contemporary political debate, such as about the creation of a European policy, nostalgic longings assert themselves in a new form and with a new target period, the 1950s and early 1960s—when society was coherent, when families were intact and when the nation-state was strong (and also when there was still a working class as a political subject). Beyond the rejection of such nostalgia, however, there is also a need to point to the shortcomings of any political critique that disregards the issue of political reconstruction.

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SECTION XIII

1. How does Elias assess the role that feelings of shame and repugnance have played in the development of notions of self-restraint? In what ways has this contributed to what he describes as the "civilizing process?"
2. What does Debord mean by "pseudo-cyclical time?" Why does he think that this is an apt characterization of contemporary societies? How is this concept related to the other concept he discusses in his aphorisms, the idea of the spectacle?
3. What, according to Giddens, is reflexivity, and why is it a characteristic feature of modernity?
4. According to Giddens, modernity is "deeply and intrinsically sociological." What does he mean by this claim, and why does he think this is the case?
5. Latour's provocative thesis is that we have never been modern and are not postmodern. On what grounds does he make his case, and what does he offer as a more appropriate depiction of our present condition? Do you find him convincing? Why or why not?
6. Why does Bauman think that the term "liquid" is an apt characterization of the postmodern world? Does he think that a liquid world is preferable to a "solid" world? Do you agree or disagree with him? Why?
7. Compare and contrast Bauman's imagery of a liquid modern world with Marx and Engels's assertion in *The Communist Manifesto* that "all that is solid melts into air."
8. Compare Lyotard's understanding of the nature of the social bond in both modern and postmodern perspectives.
9. What does Eisenstadt mean by "multiple modernities," and why is this idea significant? What is he reacting to, and why?
10. Emancipation is a central feature of modernity, according to Wagner, and it is important to analyze it in sociological terms in order to effect emancipatory change. What do you think he has in mind in when he writes about a "project of political reconstruction?"

XIV. FRENCH CRITICAL THEORY: STRUCTURALISMS AND POSTSTRUCTURALISMS

PIERRE BOURDIEU

67. STRUCTURES AND HABITUS

Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002) was the chair at the prestigious Collège de France, and from that position he commanded authority as one of the premier social theorists in the world in the later decades of the twentieth century. Late in his life, from the mid-1990s until his death, he became known as a significant public intellectual challenging neoliberal globalization. Influenced by both Marxism and structuralism, his work has built on these traditions while simultaneously serving as a corrective to the tendency in both paradigms to exhibit a lack of theoretical regard for the role of social actors. In this passage from *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977), Bourdieu discusses three of the terms that are of central importance to his own contributions to theory: structure, habitus, and practice. Structure refers to the external constraints that impinge on actors, practice to human agency, and habitus to cognitive structures through which people orient themselves toward the world. Together they are used in an attempt to find a path between structuralism and extreme social constructionism.

The habitus, the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective, conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus. It follows that these practices cannot be directly deduced either from the objective conditions, defined as the instantaneous sum of the stimuli which may appear to have directly triggered them, or from the conditions which produced the durable principle of their production. These practices can

be accounted for only by relating the objective *structure* defining the social conditions of the production of the habitus which engendered them to the conditions in which this habitus is operating, that is, to the *conjuncture* which, short of a radical transformation, represents a particular state of this structure. In practice, it is the habitus, history turned into nature, i.e. denied as such, which accomplishes practically the relating of these two systems of relations, in and through the production of practice. The “unconscious” is never anything other than the forgetting of history which history itself produces by incorporating the objective structures it produces in the second natures of habitus:

Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp. 78–87. ♦

... in each of us, in varying proportions, there is part of yesterday's man; it is yesterday's man who inevitably predominates in us, since the present amounts to little compared with the long past in the course of which we were formed and from which we result. Yet we do not sense this man of the past, because he is inveterate in us; he makes up the unconscious part of ourselves. Consequently we are led to take no account of him, any more than we take account of his legitimate demands. Conversely, we are very much aware of the most recent attainments of civilization, because, being recent, they have not yet had time to settle into our unconscious.¹

Genesis amnesia is also encouraged (if not entailed) by the objectivist apprehension which, grasping the product of history as an *opus operatum*, a *fait accompli*, can only invoke the mysteries of pre-established harmony or the prodigies of conscious orchestration to account for what, apprehended in pure synchrony, appears as objective meaning, whether it be the internal coherence of works or institutions such as myths, rites, or bodies of law, or the objective co-ordination which the concordant or conflicting practices of the members of the same group or class at once manifest and presuppose (inasmuch as they imply a community of dispositions).

Each agent, wittingly or unwittingly, willy nilly, is a producer and reproducer of objective meaning. Because his actions and works are the product of a *modus operandi* of which he is not the producer and has no conscious mastery, they contain an "objective intention", as the Scholastics put it, which always outruns his conscious intentions. The schemes of thought and expression he has acquired are the basis for the intentionless invention of regulated improvisation. Endlessly overtaken by his own words, with which he maintains a relation of "carry and be carried", as Nicolai Hartmann put it, the virtuoso finds in the *opus operatum* new triggers and new supports for the *modus operandi* from which they arise, so that his discourse continuously feeds off itself like a train bringing along its own rails.² If witticisms surprise their author no less than their audience, and impress as much by their retrospective necessity as by their novelty, the reason is that the *trouvaille* appears as the simple unearthing, at

once accidental and irresistible, of a buried possibility. It is because subjects do not, strictly speaking, know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning than they know. The habitus is the universalizing mediation which causes an individual agents practices, without either explicit reason or signifying intent, to be none the less "sensible" and "reasonable". That part of practices which remains obscure in the eyes of their own producers is the aspect by which they are objectively adjusted to the structures of which the principle of their production is itself the product.³

One of the fundamental effects of the orchestration of habitus is the production of a commonsense world endowed with the *objectivity* secured by consensus on the meaning (*sens*) of practices and the world, in other words the harmonization of agents' experiences and the continuous reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression, individual or collective (in festivals, for example), improvised or programmed (commonplaces, sayings), of similar or identical experiences. The homogeneity of habitus is what—within the limits of the group of agents possessing the schemes (of production and interpretation) implied in their production—causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted. This practical comprehension obviates the "intention" and "intentional transfer into the Other" dear to the phenomenologists, by dispensing, for the ordinary occasions of life, with close analysis of the nuances of another's practice and tacit or explicit inquiry ("What do you *mean*?") into his intentions. Automatic and impersonal, significant without intending to signify, ordinary practices lend themselves to an understanding no less automatic and impersonal: the picking up of the objective intention they express in no way implies "reactivation" of the "lived" intention of the agent who performs them.⁴ "Communication of consciousnesses" presupposes community of "unconsciousnesses" (i.e. of linguistic and cultural competences). The deciphering of the objective intention of practices and works has nothing to do with the "reproduction" (*Nachbildung*, as the early Dilthey puts it) of lived experiences and the reconstitution, unnecessary and uncertain, of the personal singularities of an "intention" which is not their true origin.

The objective homogenizing of group or class habitus which results from the homogeneity of the conditions of existence is what enables practices to be objectively harmonized without any intentional calculation or conscious reference to a norm and mutually adjusted *in the absence of any direct interaction* or, *a fortiori*, explicit co-ordination.

'Imagine', Leibniz suggests, 'two clocks or watches in perfect agreement as to the time. This may occur in one of three ways. The first consists in mutual influence; the second is to appoint a skilful workman to correct them and synchronize them at all times; the third is to construct these clocks with such art and precision that one can be assured of their subsequent agreement.'⁵

So long as, retaining only the first or at a pinch the second hypothesis, one ignores the true principle of the conductorless orchestration which gives regularity, unity, and systematicity to the practices of a group or class, and this even in the absence of any spontaneous or externally imposed organization of individual projects, one is condemned to the naive artificialism which recognizes no other principle unifying a groups or class's ordinary or extraordinary action than the conscious co-ordination of a conspiracy.⁶ If the practices of the members of the same group or class are more and better harmonized than the agents know or wish, it is because, as Leibniz puts it, "following only [his] own laws", each "nonetheless agrees with the other".⁷ The habitus is precisely this immanent law, *lex insita*, laid down in each agent by his earliest upbringing, which is the precondition not only for the co-ordination of practices but also for practices of co-ordination, since the corrections and adjustments the agents themselves consciously carry out presuppose their mastery of a common code and since undertakings of collective mobilization cannot succeed without a minimum of concordance between the habitus of the mobilizing agents (e.g. prophet, party leader, etc.) and the dispositions of those whose aspirations and world-view they express.

So it is because they are the product of dispositions which, being the internalization of the same objective structures, are objectively concerted that the practices of the members of the same group or, in a differentiated society, the same class are endowed with

an objective meaning that is at once unitary and systematic, transcending subjective intentions and conscious projects whether individual or collective.⁸ To describe the process of objectification and orchestration in the language of *interaction* and mutual adjustment is to forget that the interaction itself owes its form to the objective structures which have produced the dispositions of the interacting agents and which allot them their relative positions in the interaction and elsewhere. Every confrontation between agents in fact brings together, in an *interaction* defined by the *objective structure* of the relation between the groups they belong to (e.g. a boss giving orders to a subordinate, colleagues discussing their pupils, academics taking part in a symposium), systems of dispositions (carried by "natural persons") such as a linguistic competence and a cultural competence and, through these habitus, all the objective structures of which they are the product, structures which are active only when *embodied* in a competence acquired in the course of a particular history (with the different types of bilingualism or pronunciation, for example, stemming from different modes of acquisition).⁹

Thus, when we speak of class habitus, we are insisting, against all forms of the occasionalist illusion which consists in directly relating practices to properties inscribed in the situation, that "interpersonal" relations are never, except in appearance, *individual-to-individual* relationships and that the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction. This is what social psychology and interactionism or ethnomethodology forget when, reducing the objective structure of the relationship between the assembled individuals to the conjunctural structure of their interaction in a particular situation and group, they seek to explain everything that occurs in an experimental or observed interaction in terms of the experimentally controlled characteristics of the situation, such as the relative spatial positions of the participants or the nature of the channels used. In fact it is their present and past positions in the social structure that biological individuals carry with them, at all times and in all places, in the form of dispositions which are so many marks of *social position* and hence of the social distance between objective positions, that is, between social persons conjuncturally brought together (in physical space, which is not the same thing as social space)

and correlatively, so many reminders of this distance and of the conduct required in order to “keep one’s distance” or to manipulate it strategically, whether symbolically or actually, to reduce it (easier for the dominant than for the dominated), increase it, or simply maintain it (by not “letting oneself go”, not “becoming familiar”, in short, “standing on one’s dignity”, or on the other hand, refusing to “take liberties” and “put oneself forward”, in short “knowing one’s place” and staying there).

Even those forms of interaction seemingly most amenable to description in terms of “intentional transfer into the Other”, such as sympathy, friendship, or love, are dominated (as class homogamy attests), through the harmony of habitus, that is to say, more precisely, the harmony of ethos and tastes—doubtless sensed in the imperceptible cues of body *hexis*—by the objective structure of the relations between social conditions. The illusion of mutual election or predestination arises from ignorance of the social conditions for the harmony of aesthetic tastes or ethical leanings, which is thereby perceived as evidence of the ineffable affinities which spring from it.

In short, the habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history. The system of dispositions—a past which survives in the present and tends to perpetuate itself into the future by making itself present in practices structured according to its principles, an internal law relating the continuous exercise of the law of external necessities (irreducible to immediate conjunctural constraints)—is the principle of the continuity and regularity which objectivism discerns in the social world without being able to give them a rational basis. And it is at the same time the principle of the transformations and regulated revolutions which neither the extrinsic and instantaneous determinisms of a mechanistic sociology nor the purely internal but equally punctual determination of voluntarist or spontaneist subjectivism are capable of accounting for.

It is just as true and just as untrue to say that collective actions produce the event or that they are its product. The conjuncture capable of transforming practices objectively co-ordinated because subordinated to partially or wholly identical objective necessities, into *collective action* (e.g. revolutionary action)

is constituted in the dialectical relationship between, on the one hand, a *habitus*, understood as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions* and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes permitting the solution of similarly shaped problems, and thanks to the unceasing corrections of the results obtained, dialectically produced by those results, and on the other hand, an *objective event* which exerts its action of conditional stimulation calling for or demanding a determinate response, only on those who are disposed to constitute it as such because they are endowed with a determinate type of dispositions (which are amenable to reduplication and reinforcement by the “awakening of class consciousness”, that is, by the direct or indirect possession of a discourse capable of securing symbolic mastery of the practically mastered principles of the class habitus). Without ever being totally co-ordinated, since they are the product of “causal series” characterized by different structural durations, the dispositions and the situations which combine synchronically to constitute a determinate conjuncture are never wholly independent, since they are engendered by the objective structures, that is, in the last analysis, by the economic bases of the social formation in question. The hysteresis of habitus, which is inherent in the social conditions of the reproduction of the structures in habitus, is doubtless one of the foundations of the structural lag between opportunities and the dispositions to grasp them which is the cause of missed opportunities and, in particular, of the frequently observed incapacity to think historical crises in categories of perception and thought other than those of the past, albeit a revolutionary past.

If one ignores the dialectical relationship between the objective structures and the cognitive and motivating structures which they produce and which tend to reproduce them, if one forgets that these objective structures are themselves products of historical practices and are constantly reproduced and transformed by historical practices whose productive principle is itself the product of the structures which it consequently tends to reproduce, then one is condemned to reduce the relationship between the different social agencies

(*instances*), treated as “different translations of the same sentence”—in a Spinozist metaphor which contains the truth of the objectivist language of “articulation”—to the logical formula enabling any one of them to be derived from any other. The unifying principle of practices in different domains which objectivist analysis would assign to separate “sub-systems”, such as matrimonial strategies, fertility strategies, or economic choices, is nothing other than the *habitus*, the locus of practical realization of the “articulation” of fields which objectivism (from Parsons to the structuralist readers of Marx) lays out side by side without securing the means of discovering the real principle of the structural homologies or relations of transformation objectively established between them (which is not to deny that the structures are objectivities irreducible to their manifestation in the *habitus* which they produce and which tend to reproduce them). So long as one accepts the canonic opposition which, endlessly reappearing in new forms throughout the history of social thought, nowadays pits “humanist” against “structuralist” readings of Marx, to declare diametrical opposition to subjectivism is not genuinely to *break* with it, but to fall into the fetishism of social laws to which objectivism consigns itself when in establishing between structure and practice the relation of the virtual to the actual, of the score to the performance, of essence to existence, it merely substitutes for the creative man of subjectivism a man subjugated to the dead laws of a natural history. And how could one underestimate the strength of the ideological couple subjectivism/objectivism when one sees that the critique of the *individual* considered as *ens realissimum* only leads to his being made an epiphenomenon of hypostatized structure, and that the well-founded assertion of the primacy of objective relations results in products of human action, the structures, being credited with the power to develop in accordance with their own laws and to determine and overdetermine other structures? Just as the opposition of language to speech as mere execution or even as a preconstructed object masks the opposition between the objective relations of the language and the dispositions making up linguistic competence, so the opposition between the structure and the individual against whom the structure has to be won and endlessly rewon stands in the way of construction of the

dialectical relationship between the structure and the dispositions making up the *habitus*.

If the debate on the relationship between “culture” and “personality” which dominated a whole era of American anthropology now seems so artificial and sterile, it is because, amidst a host of logical and epistemological fallacies, it was organized around the relation between two complementary products of the same realist, substantialist representation of the scientific object. In its most exaggerated forms, the theory of “basic personality” tends to define personality as a miniature replica (obtained by “moulding”) of the “culture”, to be found in all members of the same society, except deviants. Cora Du Bois’s celebrated analyses on the Alor Island natives provide a very typical example of the confusions and contradictions resulting from the theory that “culture” and personality can each be deduced from the other: determined to reconcile the anthropologist’s conclusions, based on the postulate that the same influences produce the same basic personality, with her own clinical observations of four subjects who seem to her to be “highly individual characters”, each “moulded by the specific factors in his individual fate”, the psychoanalyst who struggles to find individual incarnations of the basic personality is condemned to recantations and contradictions.¹⁰ Thus, she can see Mangma as “the most typical” of the four (“his personality corresponds to the basic personality structure”) after having written: “It is difficult to decide how typical Mangma is. I would venture to say that if he were typical, the society could not continue to exist.” Ripalda, who is passive and has a strong super-ego, is “atypical”, So is Fantan, who has “the strongest character formation, devoid of inhibitions toward women” (extreme heterosexual inhibition being the rule), and “differs from the other men as much as a city-slicker differs from a farmer”. The fourth, Malekala, whose biography is typical at every point, is a well-known prophet who tried to start a revivalist movement, and his personality seems to resemble that of Ripalda, another sorcerer who, as we have seen, is described as atypical. All this is capped by the analyst’s observation that “characters such as Mangma, Ripalda and Fantan can be found in any society”. Anthony F. Wallace, from whom this critique is taken,¹¹ is no doubt right in pointing out that the notion of modal personality has

the advantage of avoiding the illogicalities resulting from indifference to differences (and thus to statistics) usually implicit in recourse to the notion of basic personality. But what might pass for a mere refinement of the measuring and checking techniques used to test the validity of a theoretical construct amounts in fact to the substitution of one object for another: a system of hypotheses as to the *structure* of personality, conceived as a homeostatic system which changes by reinterpreting external pressures in accordance with its own logic, is replaced by a simple description of the central tendency in the distribution of the values of a variable or rather a combination of variables. Wallace thus comes to the tautological conclusion that in a population of Tuscarora Indians, the modal personality type defined by reference to twenty-seven variables is to be found in only 37 per cent of the subjects studied. The construction of a class *ethos* may, for example, make use of a reading of statistical regularities treated as *indices*, without the principle which unifies and explains these regularities being reducible to the regularities in which it manifests itself. In short, failing to see in the notion of "basic personality" anything other than a way of pointing to a directly observable "datum", i.e. the "personality type" shared by the greatest number of members of a given society, the advocates of this notion cannot, in all logic, take issue with those who submit this theory to the test of statistical critique, in the name of the same realist representation of the scientific object.

The habitus is the product of the work of inculcation and appropriation necessary in order for those products of collective history, the objective structures (e.g. of language, economy, etc.) to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely, in the form of durable dispositions, in the organisms (which one can, if one wishes, call individuals) lastingly subjected to the same conditionings, and hence placed in the same material conditions of existence. Therefore sociology treats as identical all the biological individuals who, being the product of the same objective conditions, are the supports of the same habitus: social class, understood as a system of objective determinations, must be brought into relation not with the individual or with the "class" as a *population*, i.e. as an aggregate of enumerable, measurable bio-logical individuals,

but with the class habitus, the system of dispositions (partially) common to all products of the same structures. Though it is impossible for *all* members of the same class (or even two of them) to have had the same experiences, in the same order, it is certain that each member of the same class is more likely than any member of another class to have been confronted with the situations most frequent for the members of that class. The objective structures which science apprehends in the form of statistical regularities (e.g. employment rates, income curves, probabilities of access to secondary education, frequency of holidays, etc.) inculcate, through the direct or indirect but always convergent experiences which give a social environment its *physiognomy*, with its "closed doors", "dead ends", and limited "prospects", that "art of assessing likelihoods", as Leibniz put it, of anticipating the objective future, in short, the sense of reality or realities which is perhaps the best-concealed principle of their efficacy.

In order to define the relations between class, habitus and the organic individuality which can never entirely be removed from sociological discourse, inasmuch as, being given immediately to immediate perception (*intuitus personae*), it is also socially designated and recognized (name, legal identity, etc.) and is defined by a *social trajectory* strictly speaking irreducible to any other, the habitus could be considered as a subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class and constituting the precondition for all objectification and apperception: and the objective coordination of practices and the sharing of a world-view could be founded on the perfect impersonality and interchangeability of singular practices and views. But this would amount to regarding all the practices or representations produced in accordance with identical schemes as impersonal and substitutable, like singular intuitions of space which, according to Kant, reflect none of the peculiarities of the individual ego. In fact, it is in a relation of homology, of diversity within homogeneity reflecting the diversity within homogeneity characteristic of their social conditions of production, that the singular habitus of the different members of the same class are united; the homology of world-views implies the systematic differences

which separate singular world-views, adopted from singular but concerted standpoints. Since the history of the individual is never anything other than a certain specification of the collective history of his group or class, *each individual system of dispositions* may be seen as a *structural variant* of all the other group or class habitus, expressing the difference between trajectories and positions inside or outside the class. “Personal” style, the particular stamp marking all the products of the same habitus, whether practices or works, is never more than a *deviation* in relation to the *style* of a period or class so that it relates back to the common style not only by its conformity—like Phidias, who, according to Hegel, had no “manner”—but also by the difference which makes the whole “manner”.

The principle of these individual differences lies in the fact that, being the product of a chronologically ordered series of structuring determinations, the habitus, which at every moment structures in terms of the structuring experiences which produced it the structuring experiences which affect its structure, brings about a unique integration, dominated by the earliest experiences, of the experiences statistically common to the members of the same class. Thus, for example, the habitus acquired in the family underlies the structuring of

school experiences (in particular the reception and assimilation of the specifically pedagogic message), and the habitus transformed by schooling, itself diversified, in turn underlies the structuring of all subsequent experiences (e.g. the reception and assimilation of the messages of the culture industry or work experiences), and so on, from restructuring to restructuring. Springing from the encounter in an integrative organism of relatively independent causal series, such as biological and social determinations, the habitus makes coherence and necessity out of accident and contingency: for example, the equivalences it establishes between positions in the division of labour and positions in the division between the sexes are doubtless not peculiar to societies in which the division of labour and the division between the sexes coincide almost perfectly. In a class society, all the products of a given agent, by an essential *overdetermination*, speak inseparably and simultaneously of his class—or, more precisely, his position in the social structure and his rising or falling trajectory—and of his (or her) body—or, more precisely, all the properties, always socially qualified, of which he or she is the bearer—sexual properties of course, but also physical properties, praised, like strength or beauty, or stigmatized. . . .

NOTES

1. E. Durkheim, *L'évolution pédagogique en France* (Paris: Alcan, 1938). p. 16.
2. R. Ruyer, *Paradoxes de la conscience et limites de l'automatisme* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1966), p. 136.
3. This universalization has the same limits as the objective conditions of which the principle generating practices and works is the product. The objective conditions exercise simultaneously a universalizing effect and a particularizing effect, because they cannot homogenize the agents whom they determine and whom they constitute into an objective group, without distinguishing them from all the agents produced in different conditions.
4. One of the merits of subjectivism and moralism is that the analyses in which it condemns, as inauthentic, actions subject to the objective solicitations of the world (e.g. Heidegger on everyday existence and “*Das Man*” or Sartre on the “spirit of seriousness”) demonstrate, *per absurdum*, the impossibility of the authentic existence that would gather all pregiven significations and objective determinations into a project of freedom. The *purely ethical* pursuit of authenticity is the privilege of the leisured thinker who can afford to dispense with the economy of thought which “inauthentic” conduct follows.
5. G. W. Leibniz, “Second éclaircissement du système de la communication des substances” (1696), in *Oeuvres philosophiques*, ed. P. Janet (Paris: de Lagrange, 1866), vol. II, p. 548.
6. Thus, ignorance of the surest but best-hidden foundation of group or class integration leads some (e.g. Aron, Dahl, etc.) to deny the unity of the dominant class with no proof than the

impossibility of establishing empirically that the members of the dominant class have an explicit *policy*, expressly imposed by explicit co-ordination, and others (Sartre, for example) to see the awakening of class consciousness—a sort of revolutionary cogito bringing the class into existence by constituting it as a “class for itself”—as the only possible foundation of the unity of the dominated class.

7. Leibniz, “Second éclaircissement”, p. 548.
8. Were such language not dangerous in another way, one would be tempted to say, against all form of subjectivist voluntarism, that class unity rests fundamentally on the “class unconscious”. The awakening of “class consciousness” is not a primal act constituting the class in a blaze of freedom; its sole efficacy, as with all actions of primal symbolic: reduplication, lies in the extent to which it brings to consciousness all that is implicitly assumed in the unconscious mode in the class habitus.
9. This takes us beyond the false opposition in which the theories of acculturation have allowed themselves to be trapped with, on the one hand, the *realism of the structure* which represents cultural or linguistic contact as contacts between cultures or languages, subject to generic laws (e.g. the law of the restructuring of borrowings) and specific laws (those established by analysis of the structures specific to the languages or cultures in contact) and on the other hand the *realism of the element*, which emphasizes the contacts between the *societies* (regarded as populations) involved or, at best, the structures of the relations between those societies (domination, etc.).
10. *The People of Alor*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1944.
11. *Culture and Personality* (New York: Random House, 1965) p. 86.

JEAN BAUDRILLARD

68. ADVERTISING

Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007), a French social thinker, taught sociology at the University of Nanterre during the tumultuous days of 1968, when student revolts nearly toppled the government of Charles DeGaulle. In the aftermath of those events, Baudrillard left the university, turned from Marxism, and emerged as one of the most radical proponents of postmodernism. Central to his vision of contemporary social life was the notion that our cultures have been thoroughly saturated by the media and entertainment industries such that the differences between the real and the images, signs, and simulations have dissolved. The result was the emergence of what he referred to as "hyperreality." In this essay (published in 1968, at the beginning of his transition from Marxism to postmodernism) he explores from various angles the significance of advertising in shaping modern consumerism.

DISCOURSE ON OBJECTS AND DISCOURSE-AS-OBJECT

Any analysis of the system of objects must ultimately imply an analysis of discourse about objects—that is to say, an analysis of promotional 'messages' (comprising image and discourse). For advertising is not simply an adjunct to the system of objects; it cannot be detached therefrom, nor can it be restricted to its 'proper' function (there is no such thing as advertising strictly confined to the supplying of information). Indeed, advertising is now an irremovable aspect of the system of objects precisely by virtue of its disproportionateness. This lack of proportion is the 'functional' apotheosis of the system. Advertising in its entirety constitutes a useless and unnecessary universe. It is pure connotation. It contributes nothing to production or to the direct practical application of things, yet it plays an integral part in the system of objects, not merely because it relates to consumption but also because it itself becomes an object to be consumed. A clear distinction must be drawn in connection with advertising's dual status as a discourse on the object and as an object in its own right. It is as a useless,

unnecessary discourse that it comes to be consumable as a cultural object. What achieves autonomy and fulfillment through advertising is thus the whole system that I have been describing at the level of objects: the entire apparatus of personalization and imposed differentiation; of proliferation of the inessential and subordination of technical requirements to the requirements of production and consumption; of dysfunctionality and secondary functionality. Since its function is almost entirely secondary, and since both image and discourse play largely allegorical roles in it, advertising supplies us with the ideal object and casts a particularly revealing light upon the system of objects. And since, like all heavily connoted systems, it is self-referential,¹ we may safely rely on advertising to tell us what it is that we consume *through* objects.

ADVERTISING IN THE INDICATIVE AND IN THE IMPERATIVE

Advertising sets itself the task of supplying information about particular products and promoting their sale. In principle this 'objective' function is still its

The System of Objects, Jean Baudrillard. pp. 164–167, 172–178. Verso. ♦

fundamental purpose.² The supplying of information has nevertheless given way to persuasion—even to what Vance Packard calls ‘hidden persuasion’, the aim of which is a completely managed consumption. The supposed threat this poses of a totalitarian conditioning of man and his needs has provoked great alarm. Studies have shown, however, that advertising’s pervasive power is not as great as had been supposed. A saturation point is in fact soon reached: competing messages tend to cancel each other out, and many claims fail to convince on account of their sheer excessiveness. Moreover, injunctions and exhortations give rise to all kinds of counter-motivations and resistances, whether rational or irrational, among them the refusal of passivity, the desire not to be ‘taken over’, negative reactions to hyperbole, to repetition, and so on. In short, the discourse of advertising is just as likely to dissuade as to persuade, and consumers, though not entirely immune, appear to exercise a good deal of discretion when it comes to the advertising message.

Having said this, let us not be misled by the *avowed* aim of that message; while advertising may well fail to sell the consumer on a particular brand—Omo, Simca or Frigidaire—it does sell him on something else, something much more fundamental to the global social order than Omo or Frigidaire—something, indeed for which such brand names are merely a cover. Just as the object’s function may ultimately amount merely to the provision of a justification for the latent meanings that the object imposes, so in advertising (and all the more so inasmuch as it is the more purely connotative system) the product designated—that is, its denotation or description—tends to be merely an effective mask concealing a confused process of integration.

So even though we may be getting better and better at resisting advertising in the *imperative*, we are at the same time becoming ever more susceptible to advertising in the *indicative*—that is, to its actual *existence* as a product to be consumed at a secondary level, and as the clear *expression* of a culture. It is in this sense that we do indeed ‘believe’ in advertising: what we consume in this way is the luxury of a society that projects itself as an agency for dispensing goods and ‘transcends itself’ in a culture. We are thus taken over at one and the same time by an established agency and by that agency’s self-image.

THE LOGIC OF FATHER CHRISTMAS

Those who pooh-pooh the ability of advertising and of the mass media in general to condition people have failed to grasp the peculiar logic upon which the media’s efficacy reposes. For this is not a logic of propositions and proofs, but a logic of fables and of the willingness to go along with them. We do not believe in such fables, but we cleave to them nevertheless. Basically, the ‘demonstration’ of a product convinces no one, but it does serve to rationalize its purchase, which in any case either precedes or overwhelms all rational motives. Without ‘believing’ in the product, therefore, *we believe in the advertising that tries to get us to believe in it*. We are for all the world like children in their attitude towards Father Christmas. Children hardly ever wonder whether Father Christmas exists or not, and they certainly never look upon getting presents as an effect of which that existence is the cause: rather, their belief in Father Christmas is a rationalizing confabulation designed to extend earliest infancy’s miraculously gratifying relationship with the parents (and particularly with the mother) into a later stage of childhood. That miraculous relationship, though now in actuality past, is internalized in the form of a belief which is in effect an ideal extension of it. There is nothing artificial about the romance of Father Christmas, however, for it is based upon the shared interest that the two parties involved have in its preservation. Father Christmas himself is unimportant here, and the child only believes in him precisely because of that basic lack of significance. What children are actually consuming through this figure, fiction or cover story (which in a sense they continue to believe in even after they have ceased to do so) is the action of a magical parental solicitude and the care taken by the parents to continue colluding with their children’s embrace of the fable. Christmas presents themselves serve merely to underwrite this compromise.³

Advertising functions in much the same way. Neither its rhetoric nor even the informational aspect of its discourse has a decisive effect on the buyer. What the individual does respond to, on the other hand, is advertising’s underlying leitmotiv of protection and gratification, the intimation that its solicitations and attempts to persuade are the sign, indecipherable at

the conscious level, that somewhere there is an agency (a social agency in the event, but one that refers directly to the image of the mother) which has taken it upon itself to inform him of his own desires, and to foresee and rationalize these desires to his own satisfaction. He thus no more 'believes' in advertising than the child believes in Father Christmas, but this in no way impedes his capacity to embrace an internalized infantile situation, and to act accordingly. Herein lies the very real effectiveness of advertising, founded on its obedience to a logic which, though not that of the conditioned reflex, is nonetheless very rigorous: a logic of belief and regression.⁴ . . .

THE FESTIVAL OF BUYING POWER

This gratificatory, infantilizing function of advertising, which is the basis of our belief in it and hence of our collusion with the social entity, is equally well illustrated by its playful aspect. We are certainly susceptible to the reassurance advertising offers by supplying an image that is never negative, but we are equally affected by advertising as a fantastic manifestation of a society capable of swamping the mere necessity of products in superfluous images: advertising as a show (again, the most democratic of all), a game, a *mise en scène*. Advertising serves as a permanent display of the buying power, be it real or virtual, of society overall. Whether we partake of it personally or not, we all live and breathe this buying power. By virtue of advertising, too, the product exposes itself to our view and invites us to handle it; it is, in fact, eroticized—not just because of the explicitly sexual themes evoked⁵ but also because the purchase itself, simple appropriation, is transformed into a manoeuvre, a scenario, a complicated dance which endows a purely practical transaction with all the traits of amorous dalliance: advances, rivalry, obscenity, flirtation, prostitution—even irony. The mechanics of buying (which is already libidinally charged) gives way to a complete eroticization of choosing and spending.⁶ Our modern environment assails us relentlessly, especially in the cities, with its lights and its images, its incessant inducements to status-consciousness and narcissism, emotional involvement and obligatory relationships. We live in a cold-blooded carnival atmosphere, a formal yet

electrifying ambience of empty sensual gratification wherein the actual process of buying and consuming is demonstrated, illuminated, mimicked—even frustrated—much as the sexual act is anticipated by dance. By means of advertising, as once upon a time by means of feasts, society puts itself on display and consumes its own image. An essential regulatory function is evident here. Like the dream, advertising defines and redirects an imaginary potentiality. Like the dream's, its practical character is strictly subjective and individual.⁷ And, like the dream, advertising is devoid of all negativity and relativity: with never a sign too many nor a sign too few, it is essentially superlative and totally immanent in nature.⁸ Our night-time dreams are uncaptioned, whereas the one that we live in our waking hours via the city's hoardings, in our newspapers and on our screens, is covered with captions, with multiple subtitling. Both, however, weave the most colourful of narratives from the most impoverished of raw materials, and just as the function of nocturnal dreams is to protect sleep, so likewise the prestige of advertising and consumption serves to ensure the spontaneous absorption of ambient social values and the regression of the individual into social consensus.

Festival, immanence, positivity—to use such terms amounts to saying that *in the first instance advertising is itself less a determinant of consumption than an object of consumption*. What would an object be today if it were not put on offer both in the mode of discourse and image (advertising) and in the mode of a range of models (choice)? It would be psychologically nonexistent. And what would modern citizens be if objects and products were not proposed to them in the twin dimensions of advertising and choice? They would not be *free*. We can understand the reactions of the two thousand West Germans polled by the Allenbach Demoscopic Institute: 60 percent expressed the view that there was too much advertising, yet when they were asked, 'Would you rather have too much advertising (Western style) or minimal—and only socially useful—advertising (as in the East)?', a majority favoured the first of these options, taking an excess of advertising as indicative not only of affluence but also of freedom—and hence of a basic value.⁹ Such is the measure of the emotional and ideological collusion that advertising's spectacular mediation creates between the individual and society

(whatever the structures of the latter may be). If all advertising were abolished, individuals would feel frustrated by the empty hoardings. Frustrated not merely by the lack of opportunity (even in an ironic way) for play, for dreaming, but also, more profoundly, by the feeling that they were no longer somehow 'being taken care of'. They would miss an environment thanks to which, in the absence of active social participation, they can at least partake of a travesty of the social entity and enjoy a warmer, more maternal and more vivid atmosphere. One of the first demands of man in his progression towards well-being is that his desires be attended to, that they be formulated and expressed in the form of images for his own contemplation (something which is a problem, or becomes a problem, in socialist countries). Advertising fills this function, which is futile, regressive and inessential—yet for that very reason even more profoundly necessary.

GRATIFICATION/REPRESSION: A TWO-SIDED AGENCY

We need to discern the true imperative of advertising behind the gentle litany of the object: 'Look how the whole of society simply adapts itself to you and your desires. It is therefore only reasonable that you should become integrated into that society.' Persuasion is hidden, as Vance Packard says, but its aim is less the 'compulsion' to buy, or conditioning by means of objects, than the subscription to social consensus that this discourse urges: the object is a service, a personal relationship between society and you. Whether advertising is organized around the image of the mother or around the need to play, it always aims to foster *the same tendency to regress to a point anterior to real social processes*, such as work, production, the market, or value, which might disturb this magical integration: the object has not been bought by you, you have voiced a desire for it and all the engineers, technicians, and so on, have worked to gratify your desire. With the advent of industrial society the division of labour severs labour from its product. Advertising adds the finishing touch to this development by creating a radical split, at the moment of purchase, between *products* and consumer *goods*; by interpolating a vast maternal image between labour and the product of labour,

it causes that *product* no longer to be viewed as such (complete with its history, and so on), but purely and simply as a good, as an *object*. And even as it separates the producer and the consumer within the one individual, thanks to the material abstraction of a highly differentiated system of objects, advertising strives inversely to re-create the infantile confusion of the object with the desire for the object, to return the consumer to the stage at which the infant makes no distinction between its mother and what its mother gives it.

In reality advertising's careful omission of objective processes and the social history of objects is simply a way of making it easier, by means of the imagination as a social agency, to impose the *real* order of production and exploitation. This is where, behind the psychology of advertising, it behoves us to recognize the demagogy of a *political* discourse whose own tactics are founded on a splitting into two—on the splitting of social reality into a real agency and an image, with the first disappearing behind the second, becoming indecipherable and giving way to nothing more than a pattern of absorption into a material world. When advertising tells you, in effect, that 'society adapts itself totally to you, so integrate yourself totally into society', the reciprocity thus invoked is obviously fake: what adapts to you is an imaginary agency, whereas you are asked in exchange to adapt to an agency that is distinctly real. Via the armchair that 'weds the shape of your body', it is the entire technical and political order of society that weds *you* and takes you in hand. Society assumes a maternal *role* the better to preserve the rule of *constraint*.¹⁰ The immense political role played by the diffusion of products and advertising techniques is here clearly evident: these mechanisms effectively replace earlier moral or political ideologies. Indeed, they go farther, for moral and political forms of integration were never unproblematical and always had to be buttressed by overt repression, whereas the new techniques manage to do without any such assistance: the consumer internalizes the agency of social control and its norms in the very process of consuming.

This effectiveness is reinforced by the status accorded the signs advertising manipulates and the process whereby these are 'read'.

Signs in advertising speak to us of objects, but they never (or scarcely ever) explain those objects from

the standpoint of a *praxis*: they refer to objects as to a world that is absent. These signs are literally no more than a 'legend': they are there primarily for the purpose of being read. But while they do not refer to the real world, neither do they exactly replace that world: their function is to impose a specific activity, a specific kind of reading. If they did carry information, then a *full* reading, and a transition to the practical realm, would occur. But their role is a different one: to draw attention to the absence of what they designate. To this extent the reading of such signs is intransitive—organized in terms of a specific system of *satisfaction* which is, however, perpetually determined by the absence of reality, that is to say, by *frustration*.

The image creates a void, indicates an absence, and it is in this respect that it is 'evocative'. It is deceptive, however. It provokes a cathexis which it then immediately short-circuits at the level of reading. It focuses free-floating wishes upon an object which it masks as much as reveals. The image disappoints: *its function is at once to display and simultaneously to disabuse*. Looking is based on a presumption of contact; the image and its reading are based on a presumption of possession. Thus advertising offers neither a hallucinated satisfaction nor a practical mediation with the world. Rather, what it produces is dashed hopes: unfinished actions, continual initiatives followed by continual abandonments thereof, false dawnings of objects, false dawnings of desires. A whole psychodrama is quickly enacted when an image is read. In principle, this enables the reader to assume his passive role and be transformed into a consumer. In actuality, the sheer profusion of images works at the same time to counter any shift in the direction of reality, subtly to fuel feelings of guilt by means of continual frustration, and to arrest consciousness at the level of a phantasy of satisfaction. In the end the image and the reading of the image are by no means the shortest way to the object, merely the shortest way to another image. The signs of advertising thus follow upon one another like the transient images of hypnagogic states.

We must not forget that the image serves in this way to avoid reality and create frustration, for only thus can we grasp how it is that *the reality principle omitted from the image nevertheless effectively re-emerges therein as the continual repression of desire* (as the spectacularization,

blocking and dashing of that desire and, ultimately, its regressive and visible transference onto an object). This is where the profound collusion between the advertising sign and the overall order of society becomes most evident: it is not in any mechanical sense that advertising conveys the values of society; rather, more subtly, it is in its ambiguous *presumptive* function—somewhere between possession and dispossession, at once a designation and an indication of absence—that the advertising sign 'inserts' the social order into its system of simultaneous determination by gratification on the one hand and repression on the other.¹¹

Gratification, frustration—two indivisible aspects of social integration. Every advertising image is a key, a *legend*, and as such reduces the anxiety-provoking polysemy of the world. But in the name of intelligibility the image becomes impoverished, cursory; inasmuch as it is still susceptible of too many interpretations, its meaning is further narrowed by the addition of discourse—of a subtitle, as it were, which constitutes a second legend. And, by virtue of the way it is read, the image always refers only to other images. In the end advertising soothes people's consciousness by means of a controlled social semantics—controlled, ultimately, to the point of focusing on a single referent, namely the whole society itself. Society thus monopolizes all the roles. It conjures up a host of images whose meanings it immediately strives to limit. It generates an anxiety that it then seeks to calm. It fulfils and disappoints, mobilizes and demobilizes. Under the banner of advertising it institutes the reign of a freedom of desire, but desire is never truly liberated thereby (which would in fact entail the end of the social order): desire is liberated by the image only to the point where its emergence triggers the associated reflexes of anxiety and guilt. Primed by the image only to be defused by it, and made to feel guilty to boot, the nascent desire is co-opted by the agency of control. There is a profusion of freedom, but this freedom is imaginary; a continual mental orgy, but one which is stage-managed, a controlled regression in which all perversity is resolved in favour of order. If gratification is massive in consumer society, repression is equally massive—and both reach us together via the images and discourse of advertising, which activate the repressive reality principle at the very heart of the pleasure principle.

NOTES

1. See Roland Barthes's account of the system of fashion: *Système de la mode* (Paris: Seuil, 1967).
2. We should not forget, however, that the earliest advertisements were for miracle cures, home remedies, and the like; they supplied information, therefore, but information only of the most tendentious kind.
3. One is reminded of the neutral substances or placebos that doctors sometimes prescribe for psychosomatic patients. Quite often these patients make just as good a recovery after the administration of such inactive elements as they do after taking real medicine. What is it that such patients derive or assimilate from the placebo? The answer is the idea of medicine *plus* the presence of the physician: the mother and the father simultaneously. Here too, then, belief facilitates the retrieval of an infantile situation, the result being the regressive resolution of a psychosomatic conflict.
4. Such an approach might well be extended to mass communications in general, though this is not the place to attempt it.
5. Some common leitmotives (breasts, lips) should perhaps be deemed less erotic than 'nurturing' in character.
6. The literal meaning of the German word for advertising, '*die Werbung*', is erotic exploration. '*Derumworbene Mensch*', the person won over by advertising, can also mean a person who is sexually solicited.
7. Advertising campaigns designed to alter group behaviour or modify social structures (for example, those against alcohol abuse, dangerous driving, etc.) are notoriously ineffective. Advertising resists the (collective) reality principle. The only imperative that may be effective in this context is 'Give!'—for it is part of the reversible system of gratification.
8. Negative or ironic advertisements are mere antiphrasis—a well-known device, too, of the dream.
9. Naturally the existing political situation of the two Germanies must be taken into account, but there can be little doubt that the absence of advertising in the Western sense is a real contributing factor to West German prejudice against the East.
10. What is more, behind this system of gratification we may discern the reinforcement of all the structures of authority (planning, centralization, bureaucracy). Parties, States, power structures—all are able to strengthen their hegemony under cover of this immense mother-image which renders any real challenge to them less and less possible.
11. This account may also be applied to the system of objects, because the object too is ambiguous, because it is never *merely* an object but always at the same time *an indication of the absence of a human relationship* (just as the sign in advertising is an indication of the absence of a real object)—for these reasons, the object may likewise play a powerful integrative role. It is true, however, that the object's practical specificity means that the indication of the absence of the real is less marked in the case of the object than in that of the advertising sign.

69. THE SUBJECT AND SOCIETAL MOVEMENTS

Alain Touraine (b.1925) is a French social theorist and public intellectual rooted in the democratic socialist tradition. His overarching theoretical project has sought to position his work in contrast to functionalism and as a manifestation of a post-Marxist theory that builds on the Marxist tradition while transcending its limitations and problems. His work represents a unique blend of Marxist and non-Marxist sources. This project has variously been called “sociology of action” and “the self-production of society.” Unlike theorists such as Anthony Giddens, who have attempted to link agency and structure in a coherent theoretical framework, Touraine tends to pay little attention to structure per se, treating action as antecedent to structure, which is therefore constitutive of action. In this aspect his work is not entirely distinctive. However, as this essay on social movements illustrates, his concern with collective rather than individual action does serve to distinguish his contribution to theory from those of most theoretical currents. Like resource mobilization theorists, he views contemporary social movements as rational responses to various types of discontent on the part of the subordinated sectors of society. Touraine goes beyond resource mobilization by arguing that progressive social movements contain transformative potential; if successful, they can change the course of social development. In this regard, they can be conceived as subjects of history.

It is initially essential to distinguish three types of collective action. The first type of collective action involves social demands, and occurs at the level of organizations; and the second involves political crisis and occurs at the level of institutions and decision-making centers. The third, which is increasingly important and with which I am concerned, is one that responds to conditions in a deinstitutionalized society in which common beliefs no longer unify and where the Self is fractured. These conditions give rise to societal movements that involve the personal and collective struggle for the unification of the Subject. In contrast with collective action involving social demands, which are based on economic calculation, or those involving political crisis, which lead to political demands, a societal movement relies on a collective determination to acquire a fundamental cultural

resource, such as knowledge, recognition, a model of morality, and, most especially, the will to become a Subject.

To make this more concrete, in collective actions involving social demands or under a political crisis, the language is political, even though the collective action may occur in an industry, firm, hospital, university or neighborhood. For example, whenever a recession throws people out of work and lowers wages, a population may rise up with strong demands, but they have few chances of raising consciousness by fostering an understanding of the situation or even an ideology. The actors' consciousness focuses on their own situation, on calculations for proving the validity of their claims, justifying demands about living standards or the strain of their work, or making comparisons with people in other socioeconomic categories. There is no reference

to power relationships, or to the society's basic cultural orientations. Nor is there a reference to a social Subject, or to conflictive relations about the social uses of a cultural model, or to shared cultural orientations.

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF SOCIETAL MOVEMENTS

Just as the sociology of rational choice and interests has diligently studied social demands, and functionalist sociology has dwelled on institutions in crises, the third type of collective action requires analyses that center attention on how actors aim to change a society's key cultural models and how they are managed. Such a movement is recognizable because it brings together three characteristics: a conflict between social actors contending over the social relations whereby a society reproduces itself; a positive reference to the cultural values at stake in the conflict; and an idea as to how the Subject is joined to the societal movement.

It is never easy to detect whether a collective action contains a societal movement, with long-lasting consequences. The long, massive strike of May 1968 (with its demonstration on May 13, for which a million persons turned out) appeared at the time to have been a political crisis with only short-term effects. Yet a quarter of a century afterwards, there is no denying that it changed society and introduced cultural themes into politics. Therefore, we must consider it to have been a major societal movement with continuing consequences.

A societal movement is based on neither an economic calculation nor political pressure. It relies on the will to acquire a fundamental cultural resource (knowledge, a model of morality such as socialism or equality) and on the will to become a Subject. This will is not expressed in a vacuum—not in the solitude of a personal experience but in social relations and in a way that respects and advances personal and collective freedoms. Societal movements criticize social relations involving inequality, domination, and power, but they go beyond that in appealing to an ethics of collective responsibility.

Many sociologists have concentrated on how societal movements mobilize resources. This approach is useful insofar as a movement's orientations can be reduced to the collective pursuit of individual interests.

But why does the pursuit of individual interests spawn collective action? This question is especially pertinent given the strong temptation to be a free-rider, as Olson (1965) pointed out in his now classical analysis. This we might consider to be a sociology of resource mobilization, and involves actors and their objectives. Also, by focusing on societal movements, I am also not considering rebellions, namely actions taken against suffering, poverty, or slavery. Rebellions are defined by what they reject—by what they designate as unbearable—whereas societal movements have a positive orientation and accompany political, cultural, or social objectives. A rebellion is centered on its own suffering, whereas, in a societal movement, we find both conflict and hope.

In considering the role of hope, idealism, and an altered conscience, which are the seeds of societal movements, I can refer to some concrete examples. These would include: the popular movements that put an end to apartheid in South Africa; the Polish and Czech solidarity movements that prepared the fall of the Soviet system; the Tiananmen uprising; ongoing student actions in Korea, Taiwan, and Iran; and, also, as I indicated, the French student movement of May 1968. Societal movements are the real place where liberation and liberty join together. Although the public (sometimes with the help of the media) have recognized the importance of these movements, sociology has usually resisted interpreting them, except in the most reductionist of ways. A main emphasis in sociology since Olson's (1965) earlier work has been to state that such movements involve the rational pursuit of ends. This implies that many or most stay out of the conflict so they can benefit from those who take risks without taking risks themselves. But how can we explain that so many men and women have taken risks—have fought and made sacrifices in the hope of achieving goals, a hope in which they themselves could not believe?

As I have defined societal movements as those that are transformative, and infused by shared energy, they involve subjective elements. Although it must be recognized that societal movements, such as the ones I have mentioned, accompany anti-social and sometimes destructive behaviors, it is important not to attach too much importance to such behaviors. The active Subject that lies within the societal movement

and its concrete expressions has helped to erode the state's logic of power and the reproduction of inequality within the state, and, thereby, societal movements have further global consequences.

Two ways of thinking have obscured the very idea of a social movement. The first, which has always prevailed in France, only considers anything having to do with the state's power as important. Accordingly, only political actions have a broad scope, whereas social actions are always confined in narrow bounds. This, I believe, stems from historical features in France, and the fact that the French demanded, early on, a political democracy but have lagged behind in building a social democracy. The preference of the people in France, and in other Latin countries, for revolutionary radicalism stems from the strong bonds that, in these lands, united the state with the traditional oligarchy and, even more, with the Catholic Church. This has set the revolutionary tone of politics, a tone that has often had (and can still have) ringing effects. As a consequence, so many observers enthusiastically saluted the long workers' strike in May 1968 but scorned the students' cultural movement, which they qualified as *petit bourgeois*.

The second way of thinking that has obscured the nature of social movements seems the opposite of the foregoing. It is based on completely splitting the social apart from the political systems. It is then easy to show how, in order to attain its objectives or grow, a political action must mobilize social resources but without a connection with the objectives or conceptions of social actors. This way of thinking is just as political as the first, but it endows politics with a different meaning. From this vantage point, social action is subordinate to political action, which aims specifically at acquiring or maintaining power. Such thinkers see social movements nearly everywhere, since, constantly (especially in democracies), politicians strengthen their hand by presenting themselves as the only actors capable of responding to social pressure. The extreme form of this is Leninism, which, by assigning the political vanguard the central role, places directly under its control movements or organizations, which are soon reduced to being relay mechanisms for the party.

The idea of a societal movement is different from these two conceptions. Above all else, it asserts that,

under certain circumstances at least, social actors can define a central social cause and oppose opponents in the name of dominant cultural values, while also defending their particular interests. To talk about a societal movement is to affirm that social actors have pre-eminence over political authorities. This entails the idea of representative democracy and, in particular, of social democracy, wherein the party is the union's political muscle. To detect societal movements means inquiring into the conditions under which, at the level of conflicting social relations, actions emerge that have a general scope and are capable of commanding political actors and resources instead of being used by them.

In contrast with political conceptions of a revolutionary or a strategic sort, for which only political action can broaden the scope of demands that are always particularistic, the idea of a societal movement is based on the idea that there exists a central conflict. This is particularly the case in the contemporary world, which we could describe as postindustrial, computerized, and information-based. As I analyze the current situation, social conflicts in our society pit the Subject against the triumph of the marketplace and technology and also against authoritarian communitarian (exclusive) powers. For me, this cultural conflict seems as central as the economic conflict was in industrial society or the political conflict was during the first centuries of the modern era. If we reject the idea of a social movement from the start or use this phrase to refer only to demands or to reactions in a political crisis, we keep ourselves from corroborating, or even understanding, it.

SOCIETAL MOVEMENTS AND THE SUBJECT

A societal movement exists only if it combines a social conflict with a cultural cause defined with reference to a Subject. The Subject has assumed religious and political forms, and even taken on the form of a class or nation. I would like to argue that the Subject can emerge "finally as it is in itself"—as the personal Subject—only in our type of society. In all societies, however, the Subject reveals itself through moral values that oppose the social order. A societal movement defends a way of putting moral values to use that is different from the one its social opponent defends

and tries to impose. Moral references and the consciousness of direct conflict with a social opponent who is defined by its way of appropriating common values and cultural resources are two inseparable aspects of a societal movement. This reference to morals should not be confused with claims based on needs or working conditions. Such claims back up demands for modifying the ratio of costs to benefits, whereas the moral discourse of a societal movement refers to freedom, a cause, fairness, justice, and the respect for fundamental rights.

Specifically, as we pass from the depiction of the working-class movement as a reaction to capitalism's contradictions to the image of a working-class movement with a cause that is both defensive and offensive, we see the growing importance of freedom, justice, and social rights. But we must go much further to detect and then understand contemporary societal movements during this transition period involving the postindustrial society. We must give up defining the social actor objectively as a socioeconomic category, because a societal movement does not aim at changing the relative positions of individuals on a scale of revenue or power. It seeks, instead, to rally a dominated, alienated, "fragmented" Subject. In this sense, the word "consciousness" must be used not to refer to the consciousness that a class or nation develops of its own situation but to emphasize the emergence of the actor.

But how does the actor constitute its own self? This question lies at the heart of a sociology that has stopped analyzing systems in order to understand the Subject. For some sociologists, reflection of the Subject upon itself leads it to seek a principle of order and control over the prevailing disorder and arbitrariness. For others, the Subject can assert itself only by referring to common values, a general interest. Sociologists of the first sort are often called "liberals"; those of the second, "communitarians." The first try to discover rules, procedures, and laws; the second, the contents, or substantial definition, of the Good. But the two are not so clearly or fully opposed as it seems, since laws transcribe a conception of the Good, and procedures never stay neutral whenever social interests come into play. The opposition between liberals and communitarians is played out within an objectivist conception of society, even though this conception is more

traditional among communitarians (who may be traditionalists or even Tocquevillians). Quite different are those sociologists, such as Habermas (1989) or Taylor (1989), who, in contrast with both liberals and communitarians, assign a central place to the construction of the Subject. What must be added to their different approaches is the idea that the Subject constitutes itself only through social conflict.

Every societal movement has two sides: the one, Utopian; the other, ideological. As Utopian, the actor identifies the self in terms of the Subject's rights. As ideological, the actor concentrates on the struggle with a social opponent. Without a doubt, the class struggle is ideological. It emphasizes social conflict more than shared issues. On the other hand, the student movements of 1964 and 1968 in France were so Utopian that they defined their opponent in excessively vague terms. Even though every societal movement is lopsided, stressing Utopian or ideological aspects at the expense of the other, a societal movement requires both.

In contemporary social thought, we see two conceptions of individualism opposing each other. The one defends the multiplicity of choices offered to the large majority of individuals by our society of consumption and mass communications. For it, the market is the place of freedom, since it takes the place of the power of faith, doctrine, or established hierarchies. Opposite this conception, the second argues for the idea of a personal and collective Subject capable of endowing its situations and experiences with a general meaning. The first conception refers to freedom of choice; the second to autonomy and meaningful life experiences. These two conceptions form the grounds for social movements that, though opposite, both defend the individual.

Nothing sheds a brighter light on the Subject than the analysis of societal movements, because both the Subject and movements involve a moral principle about social relations. A societal movement cannot be reduced to moral protest; nor can the Subject be reduced to the pursuit of individual interests or pleasure. The Subject cannot be separated from a societal movement. They form two sides of a single reality. We thus see how much the idea of the Subject differs from that of conscience, especially when the latter, as classically formulated, means self-control or skeptical self-detachment

(as in the case of Montaigne). The Subject is neither a being, nor a place, nor an autonomous space and time. It is a call to protest and to self-assertion.

A societal movement only exists if it succeeds in defining a conflictual social relation and the broad, societal issues underlying this conflict. It thus links together the assertion of an identity, a definition of the opponent, and an understanding of the issues that underlie contention. Can we draw the conclusion that a societal movement is more thoughtful, better controlled, and more responsible than protest or crisis behavior? Not at all. The degree of violence of a collective action has nothing to do with its nature. The violence depends on whether or not there is room for negotiations. A societal movement may assume a revolutionary form; but it stops being a movement only if it loses its autonomy and becomes a social resource in the hands of political leaders whose objectives are quite different from those of the original movement.

At this point, a historical question crops up: can societal movements still exist in societies under the sway of the market economy? Or does the marketplace tend to eliminate what I have called the system of historical action and, consequently, replace societal movements with simple demands or occasional political crises? Many postmodernists, reflecting on the contemporary global economy, contend that hyper-industrialized societies that have moved beyond historicity can only experience chaos or make adjustments to limited, controlled change. Clearly, this pessimistic view is shortsighted and ignores the human capacity for reflection and for possessing an historical awareness. I take the view that societal movements emerge in all types of societies, and, in particular, they emerge in those endowed with historicity—capable of cognitively, economically, and morally investing in themselves. For that reason, contemporary neoliberalism, even on a near global scale, does not preclude societal movements.

SOCIETAL MOVEMENTS AND DEMOCRACY

One of the reasons why I have analyzed societal movements for such a long time is that I felt it necessary to radically and intellectually criticize revolutionary actions and ideologies, which, from the Reign of Terror to Leninism, have always resulted in essentially

totalitarian governments or even in fascism. My central thesis is that we cannot separate the forming of social actors and, therefore, of societal movements from the autonomy of the issues underlying their actions—hence from the political mediation that constitutes democracy's central, indispensable element. The Subject, societal movements, and democracy are as inseparable as historical necessity, revolutionary action, and totalitarianism, which represent their darker side. Societal movements, of whatever sort, bear them within democratic aspirations. They seek to give a voice to those who have no voice and bring them into political and economic decision-making. In contrast, revolutionary actors dream of cultural, ethnic, political, or social purification, of a unified and transparent society, of creating a new mankind, and of eradicating whatever counters a unanimity that soon has no other reason for being than to organize political support for a totalitarian power.

This general conception leads us, as sociologists, to maintain that the presence of a societal movement is linked neither to a revolutionary situation nor to the force of an ideological discourse or line of politics. Rather, it is linked to the actor's capacity for working out a praxis—to a commitment to societal conflict and the defense of societal values, i.e. values that cannot be reduced to interests and, consequently, that cannot lead to the annihilation of one's opponent. A movement's meaning lies neither in the situation where the movement forms nor in the consciousness that ideologists ascribe to it or impose on it. The meaning is in its ability to undertake a certain type of action and place social conflict and issues on a certain level. In opposition to an "economicist" tradition often linked to Marxism, I have constantly defended the idea of a societal movement and a historical actor. In my first study of the working-class movement (Touraine, 1965), I stated that this movement was defending workers' autonomy. We would be caricaturing the study of the consciousness of social movements were we to reduce it to its most ideological forms. In effect, the latter often lie the furthest from praxis; and when they do not, the movement has, in fact, turned into an authoritarian or totalitarian anti-movement. All forms of absolute ideological mobilization—the identification of a social actor with God, Reason, History or the Nation—entail

the destruction of societal movements. The latter are open to conflict, debate, and democracy, whereas ideological movements risk replacing plurality with unanimity, conflict with homogeneity, and participation with manipulation. Revolutionary intellectuals and leaders, demagogues and fundamentalists, are the active agents in the destruction of social movements. How can this escape our notice at the end of a century teeming with neo-communitarian movements, the most powerful of which call for a theocratic society?

Nowadays, given the globalization of the economy, we see arising, on the one hand, societal movements for minority rights, immigrant rights, and, more generally, human rights, but we are also witnessing anti-movements, which are giving birth to sects and cults in democratic lands and to new totalitarian movements on a national, ethnic, or religious basis. Here I am using a notion that many commentators—without giving it much thought—have avoided because they wish to ignore the difficulties of comparing the Nazi and communist systems with contemporary nationalist and religious fundamentalist movements. Is it so hard to admit that each totalitarian system, despite its specific aspects, belongs to a general type? Recourse to a “faith,” whether Islam, Christianity, or Hinduism, leads to religious warfare, which communism and the revolutionary Mexican system, despite their violently anti-religious campaigns, avoided. Beyond the specific aspects of each totalitarian system, all of them share one characteristic, namely an absolute political power that speaks in the name of a people (a particular historical, national, or cultural group) and an assertion of absolute superiority (as being representative of a reality above politics and the economy). A totalitarian system is always popular, national, and doctrinaire. It subordinates social practices to a power that claims to incarnate the idea that a people represent and defends a faith, race, class, history, or territory.

Obviously, totalitarianism destroys democracy, but it also annihilates social, cultural, and historical movements and actors. It reduces historicity by using economic or cultural resources for constructing a closed mythical identity, itself reduced in practice to the justification of an absolute power. The idea of a people has always been a disguise for an absolutist state. It is no accident that the totalitarian, then authoritarian,

governments in the communist countries dependent on the Soviet Union chose to call themselves “people’s” republics. Totalitarianism is the central problem of the twentieth century. In like manner, when political activists reject elections or bring excessive moral or material pressure to bear on those who do not share their point of view, they destroy the social movement for which they claim to be speaking. They act like the demagogues (or Red Guards) rather than like the vanguard leading a class, nation or socioeconomic category. In short, a societal movement is praxis and not just a consciousness, and is fully linked to the affirmation that there is no societal movement without democracy, and vice versa.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN A NON-DEMOCRATIC SITUATION

An objection immediately comes to mind. Does this vision not focus solely on developed lands, where modernization is self-sustaining? Does it not overlook situations where democracy does not exist, because of the arbitrary power imposed by a national or foreign state or an oligarchy interested in speculation and social power more than in economic rationality? This is such an important objection that the answers to it serve to guide the analysis of social movements. It calls for two complementary answers.

The first answer is that there can be no development without popular societal movements and democracy. Development results from combining three major factors: the abundance and quality of investment; the distribution of the fruits of growth; and public consciousness of the political unit. In effect, nation and modernization cannot be separated, since a developed economy is a dense, coherent, convergent network of exchanges, transactions, and interactions among all societal sectors. More simply, development supposes a ruling elite accumulating resources and making long-term decisions; but it also requires redistributive and leveling forces, universal participation in the process of modernization, and the reduction of social and cultural privileges. These forces, born out of popular mobilization, have recourse to political institutions. Instead of saying, as many do, that development is a condition for democracy, I contend that democracy is a condition for development.

The inability of the Soviet Union to really develop and its increasing paralysis provided evidence in support of this. But is the fast growth of China and of other lands in Asia, or elsewhere, not counter-evidence? We must answer no. In China, we observe the breakup of a totalitarian system and, in the coastal provinces, the rapid growth of a market economy under the leadership of decision-making centers located abroad. This breakup has positive effects, especially coming as it does after the Cultural Revolution's destructive violence. But if social movements do not form, if democracy is not born, the historical process under way in China will disintegrate into a new authoritarianism or else into chaos. The Soviet Union's former satellites and former Yugoslavia, too, are looking for a way between democratic development and regression into authoritarianism. Such regression has had tragic consequences in Serbia and has negatively affected Romania and several other ex-Soviet countries. Meanwhile, the communists . . . come back in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Lithuania, and their success in elections in Russia and elsewhere, cannot—at present—be interpreted as a defeat for democracy and modernization.

Self-sustaining growth is a worthy objective, but this conception must be broadened to take into account other factors. When the dominant mode of development is of a domestic sort, there is a risk that authoritarian agencies will attempt to control the people or reduce them to mere resources. And when the dominant mode of development is of a market sort, social movements inevitably disintegrate into a multitude of pressure groups whose demands make social inequality worse. Can social movements exist in non-democratic situations? Let us push these questions even further. Are there democratic elements, hence movements, whose actions tend toward a despotic or market model instead of a democratic one?

This second answer takes us back to the analysis of the Subject, which can assert itself only through struggling against both the marketplace and commodified community. This means that the Subject arises as a form of opposition and liberation within the world of the marketplace and within the universe of the community. Indeed, societal movements, like the Subject itself, arise within a mode of development or even in forms of social power.

The major historical case is that of collective movements in authoritarian societies ruled by a despotic power, a national oligarchy, or a foreign colonial power. In this case, movements are forced to combine the defense of the oppressed and the demands for democracy with a revolutionary action for destroying the powers that be. Even in democratic lands, the working-class movement has always borne its share of violence in reaction to the violence of employers or governments. The strategy of a collective movement and of its leaders consists in combining actions for breaking with the existing order with democratic actions—the “logic” of the struggle against the powers that be with actions for defending freedom and, thus, political consciousness. This combination often fails. For instance, the labor movement has sometimes been an instrument, lacking autonomy, in the service of a new political power; and, sometimes, it has only defended relatively privileged socioeconomic categories. But these failures, however many times they have happened, must not keep us from realizing that a cultural, historical, or societal movement was present, despite the non-democratic outcome. True, the Algerian national movement has led to a military dictatorship that quells popular opposition. Nonetheless, it was an anti-colonial movement for national liberation. Nor does the horror of the Reign of Terror detract from the events of June 1789 that introduced democracy in France. A movement is never purely democratic, nor does a revolution ever entirely lack democratic contents.

DESPAIR OR HOPE?

We would weaken the idea of a societal movement were we to reduce it to naming a particular—more ideal than real—type of collective action. It is a concept or theoretical formulation. The idea of a societal movement (and, more broadly, of a social movement) forces us to give up the too easy quests of conservative thought, which looks for factors of integration, and of revolutionary thought, which denounces a system of domination as incapable of being either restrained or reformed.

This idea also protects us against the fragmentation that menaces collective action and, indeed, all aspects of social life. On the one hand, social movements seem to be less focused on being interest groups currently

than on efforts for defending social integration from “social fractures” and ruptures of social bonds. The theme of exclusion, which has replaced exploitation, contains this idea. On the other hand, “identity movements” are abounding, in the United States where women, homosexuals, African Americans, and ethnic or national communities are asserting cultural autonomy while also fighting against discrimination, but also in countries obsessed with ideas of purity and homogeneity. The increasing separation between these two types of collective action, which are foreign to each other, is not just a given fact. It is a reality as pathological as the wider separation between the world of instrumentality and the world of identity, a separation that entails the collapse of social and especially political mediation between the economy and cultures.

There is a risk of too easily defining the idea of a societal movement only in terms of its twofold refusal of communitarianism and of economic globalization, and also some risk of considering any pressure group or identity movement as a significant societal movement. It is also important for sociologists to look for such movements underneath extreme ideologies where they are often hidden. Let us take two opposite examples. In Algeria (and other Islamic countries, Egypt in particular), there are political groups that use Islam to attain power and construct a fundamentally anti-modern, Iranian type of society. To survive, they use the techniques of modernity. However, we should not forget that this also gives expression to an uprooted population, to young people without jobs who use the *trabendo* (black market), or sports, as a means of forcing open the doors of the society of consumption. Those who oppose lay reactions to the dangerous politics of religious mobilization are right up to a point, but they are wrong in that they fail to see that many movements draw their force from the culture and society they defend because they feel threatened. The second example is the 1995 strike in the French public services. The events that took place then cannot be reduced to a defense of vested interests or privileges. They manifested a popular rejection of an economic policy that subordinated all of social life to deficit reduction, considered to be the key for developing a single European currency (which, in and of itself, is supposed to bring prosperity and jobs for all).

Let us try to clear up, at least a little, our confusion by recalling the “natural history” of any movement. It starts when the denunciation of misery goes along with a moral appeal to the dignity of everyone and the solidarity of all. Only thereafter is the opponent identified; and the conflict becomes central, before being institutionalized—as the organized social movement turns into a political force or party, which intervenes in economic and social policy-making. This ultimate phase usually accompanies a return to ideological discourses that, cut off from strategic actions, call for a return either to open conflict or to the denunciation of misery. In each phase, this history may be interrupted. This natural history teaches us useful lessons, even if these are too general to account for the wide diversity of historical situations. But these lessons are of less use for understanding the present than is a historical reflection that pays more attention to the effects of demodernization.

How could the split between the economic and cultural worlds not affect societal movements? The “civil/civic” movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries worked for the creation of a national, republican political order. The working-class movement has drawn its strength from its consciousness that it was a means of progress, that it was pulling society “history-wise” through its struggle against the irrationality of capitalistic profit-seeking. These movements were borne by collective actors, which we label as social classes because they were defined by their political, economic, or social situations. This linkage between an objective meaning and a consciousness necessarily tears apart in the current situation of demodernization. Such movements are becoming increasingly moral, while fighting an opponent that is defined less as a power or class than as an agent of “dehumanization” and of domination through globalized networks of production, consumption, and communication. In this very concrete sense, the identity between the Subject and social movements compels recognition. In industrialized nations particularly, movements are less and less instrumental but more and more expressive.

The awareness of exclusion has spread with poverty, segregation, and joblessness. The societal movement against exclusion is arising out of the efforts of persons who, working in humanitarian organizations,

increasingly think and act in terms not of the crisis of capitalism but of the conditions for the destruction or creation of the individual as Subject. There is no evidence that, in France, the leaders of the 1995 protests will be the forerunners of a movement that will organize, undertake a strategic action, and change into a party (as environmentalists have done in Germany). These groups, associations, and movements seem to be constituting themselves as historical, independent actors who mobilize volunteers, who actively use and criticize the media, but who critically stand aloof from a political system that, in their eyes, is subject to the constraints of the international economy. Meanwhile, the weak and threatened sectors of the vast middle class are organizing political actions for defending their vested interests. More diffuse, “everyday” movements—which are also more enthusiastic and more generous—are undertaking exemplary actions, decrying the denial of truth and justice, and combining the personal with collective solidarity. How can we not see in them the already constituted force of a new societal movement? To do so fits into a broader reflection on the conditions for political action and, therefore, for social control over both globalization and technological revolutions, in particular over the effects directly bearing on personality and culture.

Neither liberals nor revolutionaries believe in the capacity of social actions for producing their history through their cultural orientations and social conflicts. In contrast, I maintain that we should recognize the importance of demands for a sense of identity or of strategies for pressing demands. But only the idea of a societal movement enables us to recognize the existence of actions combining a fundamental social conflict with the pursuit of societal objectives (such as modernization, social integration or the respect for human rights) defined in concrete situations and social relations. The idea of a societal movement is not satisfied with completing a sociology that is mainly oriented toward the quest for social integration. It associates integration with conflict, and, as a consequence, takes the central place in analyzing the social organization and social change. It is indispensable for any political sociology.

I am not insisting on placing the idea of the Subject at the center of analysis in order to “desocialize”

societal movements, i.e. to separate them from the conflictual social relations where they have their origins. On the contrary, this insistence is intended to distinguish a societal movement from the political instruments and ideological apparatuses that keep us from seeing that a societal movement always appeals to the Subject’s liberty. These appeals are not situated in the social vacuum of natural law, but in the social relations of domination, property, and power. A societal movement is thus both a struggle for and a struggle against.

Societal movements are important not just because they reveal the contradictions within modern societies, which is defined by their historicity, by the concentration of the means for changing society, and by the distance between the rulers and ruled. What best defines a societal movement is the linkage it establishes between cultural orientations and a social conflict bearing demands that are political and societal. If a societal movement does not form, all these elements separate from each other and, doing so, degrade. On the one hand, cultural orientations, when they are split off from social and political conflicts, turn into moral principles of belonging or of exclusion, mechanisms of cultural control, and norms of social conformity. On the other hand, political conflicts, when they are split off from societal movements, are reduced to struggles for power. Finally, demands, left to themselves, tend to reinforce established inequalities, since the most powerful and influential have the most vested interests to defend and are best equipped to press demands. We thus see a juxtaposition of pressure groups; movements of rejection that comprise categories defined as minorities, deviants or foreigners; and a communitarian populism that appeals to an indeterminate people against leaders and intellectuals. Each of these aspects of social or political life could, it initially seems, be studied by itself, but that is impossible. All collective actions bear evidence of an absent or disintegrated societal movement.

Societal movements do not always exist; but they do represent a hypothesis that must be worked out in order to understand contemporary collective life. Sociological positivism that takes as starting point not social relations and historicity but principles of order (whether based on personal interests or communitarian values) provides poor explanations that are insufficient because

positivists place nothing between the individual and society. In actual fact, however, neither the individual nor society exists as principles that can be isolated from social relations and processes that constantly join order with change, and integration with conflict.

Our need for these concepts and principles of analysis is all the greater now, in that we are living in a "fragmented" society that has been deprived of a consciousness of itself. Under these conditions, issues and actors of historical change are obscure, and discourses and ideologies lag behind practices or become artificially radicalized practices. Our societies are not

just hypermodern; they lack meaning, since they suffer from the dissociation of practices from consciousness, and of acts from discourses. Nowadays, the center of society is an empty field where are scattered the remains of past combats and old discourses, which have become second-hand merchandise acquired by the merchants of power and ideologies. For this reason, the idea of a societal movement must be defended because it interprets this emptiness and gives a coherent meaning to all the behaviours, contradictory with each other, that originate in the disappearance and breakup or breakdown of the former social movements.

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MICHEL FOUCAULT

70. PANOPTICISM

Michel Foucault (1926–1984) is a central figure among poststructuralists. Like other French thinkers of his generation, he was profoundly affected by the events of 1968, as well as by his personal experiences with LSD, San Francisco's gay scene in the 1970s, and the advent of the AIDS epidemic (Foucault died of AIDS). Central to Foucault's vision was a concern for the connections between power and knowledge; with his interest in sexuality, he also wanted to understand the body in relation to power/knowledge. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), he examines the transition in prisons in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when torture and other cruel punishments were replaced by more rationalized forms of punishment. Whereas earlier writers have typically described this change as a move toward more humane forms of punishment, Foucault sees it as an example of the growing power of authorities. The Panopticon discussed in this selection from the book is the prime example of the wedding of knowledge and power into a new system of heightened surveillance and control.

Bentham's *Panopticon* is the architectural figure of this composition. We know the principle on which it was based: at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other: All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible. The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately. In short, it reverses the principle of the

dungeon; or rather of its three functions—to enclose, to deprive of light and to hide—it preserves only the first and eliminates the other two. Full lighting and the eye of a supervisor capture better than darkness, which ultimately protected. Visibility is a trap.

To begin with, this made it possible—as a negative effect—to avoid those compact, swarming, howling masses that were to be found in places of confinement, those painted by Goya or described by Howard. Each individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by the supervisor; but the side walls prevent him from coming into contact with his companions. He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication. The arrangement of his room, opposite the central tower, imposes on him an axial visibility; but the divisions of the ring, those separated cells, imply a lateral invisibility. And this invisibility is a guarantee of order. If the inmates are convicts, there is no danger of a plot, an attempt at collective escape, the planning of new crimes for the future, bad reciprocal influences;

Discipline and Punish by Michael Foucault. By permission of Georges Borchardt, Inc. pp. 200–210. ♦

if they are patients, there is no danger of contagion; if they are madmen there is no risk of their committing violence upon one another; if they are schoolchildren, there is no copying, no chatter, no waste of time; if they are workers, there are no disorders, no theft, no coalitions, none of those distractions that slow down the rate of work, make it less perfect or cause accidents. The crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities. From the point of view of the guardian, it is replaced by a multiplicity that can be numbered and supervised; from the point of view of the inmates, by a sequestered and observed solitude (Bentham, 60–64).

Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. To achieve this, it is at once too much and too little that the prisoner should be constantly observed by an inspector: too little, for what matters is that he knows himself to be observed; too much, because he has no need in fact of being so. In view of this, Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at at any one moment, but he must be sure that he may always be so. In order to make the presence or absence of the inspector unverifiable, so that the prisoners, in their cells, cannot even see a shadow, Bentham envisaged not only venetian blinds on the windows of the central observation hall, but, on the inside, partitions that intersected the hall at right angles and, in order to pass from one quarter to the other, not doors but zig-zag openings; for the slightest noise, a gleam of light, a brightness in a half opened door would betray the presence of the guardian.¹ The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating

the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen.²

It is an important mechanism, for it automatizes and disindividualizes power. Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes, in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up. The ceremonies, the rituals, the marks by which the sovereign's surplus power was manifested are useless. There is a machinery that assures dissymmetry, disequilibrium, difference. Consequently, it does not matter who exercises power. Any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine: in the absence of the director, his family, his friends, his visitors, even his servants (Bentham, 45). Similarly, it does not matter what motive animates him: the curiosity of the indiscreet, the malice of a child, the thirst for knowledge of a philosopher who wishes to visit this museum of human nature, or the perversity of those who take pleasure in spying and punishing. The more numerous those anonymous and temporary observers are, the greater the risk for the inmate of being surprised and the greater his anxious awareness of being observed. The Panopticon is a marvellous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power.

A real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation. So it is not necessary to use force to constrain the convict to good behaviour, the madman to calm, the worker to work, the schoolboy to application, the patient to the observation of the regulations. Bentham was surprised that panoptic institutions could be so light: there were no more bars, no more chains, no more heavy locks; all that was needed was that the separations should be clear and the openings well arranged. The heaviness of the old 'houses of security', with their fortress-like architecture, could be replaced by the simple, economic geometry of a 'house of certainty'. The efficiency of power, its constraining force have, in a sense, passed over to the other side—to the side of its surface of application. He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously

plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. By this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight; it tends to the non-corporal; and, the more it approaches this limit, the more constant, profound and permanent are its effects: it is a perpetual victory that avoids any physical confrontation and which is always decided in advance.

Bentham does not say whether he was inspired, in his project, by Le Vaux's menagerie at Versailles: the first menagerie in which the different elements are not, as they traditionally were, distributed in a park (Loisel, 104–7). At the centre was an octagonal pavilion which, on the first floor, consisted of only a single room, the king's *salon*; on every side large windows looked out onto seven cages (the eighth side was reserved for the entrance), containing different species of animals. By Bentham's time, this menagerie had disappeared. But one finds in the programme of the Panopticon a similar concern with individualizing observation, with characterization and classification, with the analytical arrangement of space. The Panopticon is a royal menagerie; the animal is replaced by man, individual distribution by specific grouping and the king by the machinery of a furtive power. With this exception, the Panopticon also does the work of a naturalist. It makes it possible to draw up differences: among patients, to observe the symptoms of each individual, without the proximity of beds, the circulation of miasmas, the effects of contagion confusing the clinical tables; among schoolchildren, it makes it possible to observe performances (without there being any imitation or copying), to map aptitudes, to assess characters, to draw up rigorous classifications and, in relation to normal development, to distinguish 'laziness and stubbornness' from 'incurable imbecility'; among workers, it makes it possible to note the aptitudes of each worker, compare the time he takes to perform a task, and if they are paid by the day, to calculate their wages (Bentham, 60–64).

So much for the question of observation. But the Panopticon was also a laboratory; it could be used as a laboratory; it could be used as a machine to carry out experiments, to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals. To experiment with medicines and monitor their effects. To try out different punishments on prisoners, according to their crimes and character, and to seek

the most effective ones. To teach different techniques simultaneously to the workers, to decide which is the best. To try out pedagogical experiments—and in particular to take up once again the well-debated problem of secluded education, by using orphans. One would see what would happen when, in their sixteenth or eighteenth year, they were presented with other boys or girls; one could verify whether, as Helvetius thought, anyone could learn anything; one would follow 'the genealogy of every observable idea'; one could bring up different children according to different systems of thought, making certain children believe that two and two do not make four or that the moon is a cheese, then put them together when they are twenty or twenty-five years old; one would then have discussions that would be worth a great deal more than the sermons or lectures on which so much money is spent; one would have at least an opportunity of making discoveries in the domain of metaphysics. The Panopticon is a privileged place for experiments on men, and for analysing with complete certainty the transformations that may be obtained from them. The Panopticon may even provide an apparatus for supervising its own mechanisms. In this central tower, the director may spy on all the employees that he has under his orders: nurses, doctors, foremen, teachers, warders; he will be able to judge them continuously, alter their behaviour, impose upon them the methods he thinks best; and it will even be possible to observe the director himself. An inspector arriving unexpectedly at the centre of the Panopticon will be able to judge at a glance, without anything being concealed from him, how the entire establishment is functioning. And, in any case, enclosed as he is in the middle of this architectural mechanism, is not the director's own fate entirely bound up with it? The incompetent physician who has allowed contagion to spread, the incompetent prison governor or workshop manager will be the first victims of an epidemic or a revolt. "By every tie I could devise", said the master of the Panopticon, 'my own fate had been bound up by me with theirs'" (Bentham, 177). The Panopticon functions as a kind of laboratory of power. Thanks to its mechanisms of observation, it gains in efficiency and in the ability to penetrate into men's behaviour; knowledge follows the advances of power, discovering new objects of knowledge over all the surfaces on which power is exercised.

The plague-stricken town, the panoptic establishment—the differences are important. They mark, at a distance of a century and a half, the transformations of the disciplinary programme. In the first case, there is an exceptional situation: against an extraordinary evil, power is mobilized; it makes itself everywhere present and visible; it invents new mechanisms; it separates, it immobilizes, it partitions; it constructs for a time what is both a counter-city and the perfect society; it imposes an ideal functioning, but one that is reduced, in the final analysis, like the evil that it combats, to a simple dualism of life and death: that which moves brings death, and one kills that which moves. The Panopticon, on the other hand, must be understood as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men. No doubt Bentham presents it as a particular institution, closed in upon itself. Utopias, perfectly closed in upon themselves, are common enough. As opposed to the ruined prisons, littered with mechanisms of torture, to be seen in Piranese's engravings, the Panopticon presents a cruel, ingenious cage. The fact that it should have given rise, even in our own time, to so many variations, projected or realized, is evidence of the imaginary intensity that it has possessed for almost two hundred years. But the Panopticon must not be understood as a dream building: it is the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form; its functioning, abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction, must be represented as a pure architectural and optical system: it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use.

It is polyvalent in its applications; it serves to reform prisoners, but also to treat patients, to instruct schoolchildren, to confine the insane, to supervise workers, to put beggars and idlers to work. It is a type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons. Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behaviour must be imposed, the panoptic schema may be used. It is—necessary modifications apart—applicable 'to all establishments whatsoever, in which, within a space

not too large to be covered or commanded by buildings, a number of persons are meant to be kept under inspection' (Bentham, 40; although Bentham takes the penitentiary house as his prime example, it is because it has many different functions to fulfil—safe custody, confinement, solitude, forced labour and instruction).

In each of its applications, it makes it possible to perfect the exercise of power. It does this in several ways: because it can reduce the number of those who exercise it, while increasing the number of those on whom it is exercised. Because it is possible to intervene at any moment and because the constant pressure acts even before the offences, mistakes or crimes have been committed. Because, in these conditions, its strength is that it never intervenes, it is exercised spontaneously and without noise, it constitutes a mechanism whose effects follow from one another. Because, without any physical instrument other than architecture and geometry, it acts directly on individuals; it gives 'power of mind over mind'. The panoptic schema makes any apparatus of power more intense: it assures its economy (in material, in personnel, in time); it assures its efficacy by its preventative character, its continuous functioning and its automatic mechanisms. It is a way of obtaining from power 'in hitherto unexampled quantity', 'a great and new instrument of government . . . ; its great excellence consists in the great strength it is capable of giving to *any* institution it may be thought proper to apply it to' (Bentham, 66).

It's a case of 'it's easy once you've thought of it' in the political sphere. It can in fact be integrated into any function (education, medical treatment, production, punishment); it can increase the effect of this function, by being linked closely with it; it can constitute a mixed mechanism in which relations of power (and of knowledge) may be precisely adjusted, in the smallest detail, to the processes that are to be supervised; it can establish a direct proportion between 'surplus power' and 'surplus production'. In short, it arranges things in such a way that the exercise of power is not added on from the outside, like a rigid, heavy constraint, to the functions it invests, but is so subtly present in them as to increase their efficiency by itself increasing its own points of contact. The panoptic mechanism is not simply a hinge, a point of exchange between a mechanism of power and a function; it is a way of making power relations function in a function, and of making

a function function through these power relations. Bentham's Preface to *Panopticon* opens with a list of the benefits to be obtained from his 'inspection-house': *'Morals reformed—health preserved—industry invigorated—instruction difused—public burthens lightened—Economy seated, as it were, upon a rock—the gordian knot of the Poor-Laws not cut, but united—all by a simple idea in architecture!'* (Bentham, 39).

Furthermore, the arrangement of this machine is such that its enclosed nature does not preclude a permanent presence from the outside: we have seen that anyone may come and exercise in the central tower the functions of surveillance, and that, this being the case, he can gain a clear idea of the way in which the surveillance is practised. In fact, any panoptic institution, even if it is as rigorously closed as a penitentiary, may without difficulty be subjected to such irregular and constant inspections: and not only by the appointed inspectors, but also by the public; any member of society will have the right to come and see with his own eyes how the schools, hospitals, factories, prisons function. There is no risk, therefore, that the increase of power created by the panoptic machine may degenerate into tyranny; the disciplinary mechanism will be democratically controlled, since it will be constantly accessible 'to the great tribunal committee of the world'.³ This Panopticon, subtly arranged so that an observer may observe, at a glance, so many different individuals, also enables everyone to come and observe any of the observers. The seeing machine was once a sort of dark room into which individuals spied; it has become a transparent building in which the exercise of power may be supervised by society as a whole.

The panoptic schema, without disappearing as such or losing any of its properties, was destined to spread throughout the social body; its vocation was to become a generalized function. The plague-stricken town provided an exceptional disciplinary model: perfect, but absolutely violent; to the disease that brought death, power opposed its perpetual threat of death; life inside it was reduced to its simplest expression; it was, against the power of death, the meticulous exercise of the right of the sword. The Panopticon, on the other hand, has a role of amplification; although it arranges power, although it is intended to make it more economic and more effective, it does so not for power itself, nor for the immediate

salvation of a threatened society: its aim is to strengthen the social forces—to increase production, to develop the economy, spread education, raise the level of public morality; to increase and multiply.

How is power to be strengthened in such a way that, far from impeding progress, far from weighing upon it with its rules and regulations, it actually facilitates such progress? What intensifier of power will be able at the same time to be a multiplier of production? How will power, by increasing its forces, be able to increase those of society instead of confiscating them or impeding them? The Panopticon's solution to this problem is that the productive increase of power can be assured only if, on the one hand, it can be exercised continuously in the very foundations of society, in the subtlest possible way, and if, on the other hand, it functions outside these sudden, violent, discontinuous forms that are bound up with the exercise of sovereignty. The body of the king, with its strange material and physical presence, with the force that he himself deploys or transmits to some few others, is at the opposite extreme of this new physics of power represented by panopticism; the domain of panopticism is, on the contrary, that whole lower region, that region of irregular bodies, with their details, their multiple movements, their heterogeneous forces, their spatial relations; what are required are mechanisms that analyse distributions, gaps, series, combinations, and which use instruments that render visible, record, differentiate and compare: a physics of a relational and multiple power, which has its maximum intensity not in the person of the king, but in the bodies that can be individualized by these relations. At the theoretical level, Bentham defines another way of analysing the social body and the power relations that traverse it; in terms of practice, he defines a procedure of subordination of bodies and forces that must increase the utility of power while practising the economy of the prince. Panopticism is the general principle of a new 'political anatomy' whose object and end are not the relations of sovereignty but the relations of discipline.

The celebrated, transparent, circular cage, with its high tower, powerful and knowing, may have been for Bentham a project of a perfect disciplinary institution; but he also set out to show how one may 'unlock' the disciplines and get them to function in a diffused,

multiple, polyvalent way throughout the whole social body. These disciplines, which the classical age had elaborated in specific, relatively enclosed places—barracks, schools, workshops—and whose total implementation had been imagined only at the limited and temporary scale of a plague-stricken town, Bentham dreamt of transforming into a network of mechanisms that would be everywhere and always alert, running through society without interruption in space or in time. The panoptic arrangement provides the formula for this generalization. It programmes, at the level of an elementary and easily transferable mechanism, the basic functioning of a society penetrated through and through with disciplinary mechanisms.

* * *

There are two images, then, of discipline. At one extreme, the discipline-blockade, the enclosed institution, established on the edges of society, turned inwards towards negative functions: arresting evil, breaking communications, suspending time. At the other extreme, with panopticism, is the discipline-mechanism: a functional mechanism that must improve the exercise of power by making it lighter, more rapid, more effective, a design of subtle coercion for a society to come. The

movement from one project to the other, from a schema of exceptional discipline to one of a generalized surveillance, rests on a historical transformation: the gradual extension of the mechanisms of discipline throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, their spread throughout the whole social body, the formation of what might be called in general the disciplinary society.

A whole disciplinary generalization—the Benthamite physics of power represents an acknowledgement of this—had operated throughout the classical age. The spread of disciplinary institutions, whose network was beginning to cover an ever larger surface and occupying above all a less and less marginal position, testifies to this: what was an islet, a privileged place, a circumstantial measure, or a singular model, became a general formula; the regulations characteristic of the Protestant and pious armies of William of Orange or of Gustavus Adolphus were transformed into regulations for all the armies of Europe; the model colleges of the Jesuits, or the schools of Batencour or Dernia, following the example set by Sturm, provided the outlines for the general forms of educational discipline; the ordering of the naval and military hospitals provided the model for the entire reorganization of hospitals in the eighteenth century. . . .

NOTES

1. In the *Postscript to the Panopticon*, 1791 [1843], Bentham adds dark inspection galleries painted in black around the inspector's lodge, each making it possible to observe two storeys of cells.
2. In his first version of the *Panopticon*, Bentham had also imagined an acoustic surveillance, operated by means of pipes leading from the cells to the central tower. In the *Postscript* he abandoned the idea, perhaps because he could not introduce into it the principle of dis-symmetry and prevent the prisoners from hearing the inspector as well as the inspector hearing them. Julius tried to develop a system of dis-symmetrical listening (Julius, 18).
3. Imagining this continuous flow of visitors entering the central tower by an underground passage and then observing the circular landscape of the Panopticon, was Bentham aware of the Panoramas that Barker was constructing at exactly the same period (the first seems to have dated from 1787) and in which the visitors, occupying the central place, saw unfolding around them a landscape, a city or a battle? The visitors occupied exactly the place of the sovereign gaze.

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71. THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

In their major coauthored book, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (published in French in 1999 and translated into English in 2005), Luc Boltanski (b. 1940) and Eve Chiapello (b. 1965) attempt to specify what is novel about the contemporary phase of capitalism. They both hold professorships at the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* (EHESS) in Paris. The idea of the spirit of capitalism was made famous by Max Weber (see his essay herein). Whereas for Weber the spirit in question concerned the earliest stage in the history of capitalist development, Boltanski and Chiapello are concerned with changes they see taking off by the 1970s. The empirical grounding for their work were the management texts from the era, in which they see reflected a concern with overcoming alienation—a theme derived in part from the 1960s New Left’s critique of capitalism. In this excerpt from the book’s introduction, the authors articulate their understanding of a basic definition of capitalism, followed by a discussion of why capitalism needs an ideological justification or, in other words, a spirit.

Of the different characterizations of capitalism (or, today frequently, *capitalisms*) over the last century and a half, we shall employ the minimal formula stressing an imperative to unlimited accumulation of capital by formally peaceful means. The constant reintroduction of capital into the economic circuit with a view to deriving a profit—that is to say, increasing the capital, which will in turn be reinvested—is the basic mark of capitalism, endowing it with the dynamic and transformative power that have fascinated even the most hostile of observers.

Capital accumulation does not consist in amassing riches—that is to say, objects desired for their use-value, their ostentatious function, or as signs of power. The concrete forms of wealth (property, plant, commodities, money, etc.) have no interest in and of themselves and can even, by dint of their lack of liquidity, represent an obstacle to the only objective that really matters: the constant transformation of capital, plant and various purchases (raw materials, components, services, etc.) into output, of output into money, and of money into new investments.¹

This detachment of capital from material forms of wealth gives it a genuinely abstract character, which helps make accumulation an interminable process. In so far as enrichment is assessed in accounting terms, the profit accumulated in a span of time being calculated as the difference between the balance-sheets of two different periods,² there exists no limit, no possible satiation,³ contrary to when wealth is directed towards consumer needs, including luxuries.

No doubt there is another reason for the insatiable character of the capitalist process, underlined by Heilbroner.⁴ Because capital is constantly reinvested and can expand only in circulation, the capitalist’s ability to recover his outlay with a profit is under constant threat, particularly as a result of the actions of other capitalists with whom he competes for consumers’ spending power. This dynamic creates constant anxiety, and offers the capitalist a very powerful self-preservation motive for continuing the accumulation process interminably.

The rivalry between traders seeking to make a profit, however, does not necessarily yield a market in the

Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiaopello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, Verso, 2005, pp. 4–12. ♦

classical sense, where the conflict between a multiplicity of agents taking decentralized decisions is resolved by transactions disclosing equilibrium prices. In the minimal definition employed here, capitalism is to be distinguished from market self-regulation based upon conventions and institutions, particularly of a legal and political character, aimed at ensuring equal terms between traders (pure, perfect competition), transparency, symmetry of information, a central bank guaranteeing a stable exchange rate for credit money, and so on. Capitalism is indeed based on transactions and contracts, but these contracts can only sustain discreet arrangements to the advantage of the parties, or contain *ad hoc* clauses, without publicity or competition. Following Fernand Braudel, we shall therefore distinguish between capitalism and the market economy. On the one hand, the market economy was constructed 'step by step', and predates the appearance of capitalism's norm of unlimited accumulation.⁵ On the other hand, capitalist accumulation cedes to market regulation only when more direct routes to profit are closed to it. Accordingly, recognition of the beneficent powers of the market, and acceptance of the rules and constraints on which its 'harmonious' operation depends (free trade, prohibition of cartels and monopolies, etc.), may be regarded as pertaining to a form of self-limitation by capitalism.⁶

In the framework of the minimal definition of capitalism employed here, the capitalist is, in theory, anyone who possesses a surplus and invests it to make a profit that will increase the initial surplus. The archetypal example is the shareholder who puts money into a firm and expects a return. But investment does not necessarily take this legal form: think, for example, of investment in rental property, or the purchase of Treasury bonds. Small shareholders, savers who do not want their 'money to lie idle' but 'to make a little bit on it'—as popular parlance has it—thus belong to the group of capitalists by the same token as the big property-owners who come more readily to mind under this description. In its broadest sense, the capitalist group thus encompasses all those who possess a property income⁷—a group, however, that constitutes a minority only beyond a certain level of savings. Although it is difficult to estimate, given existing statistics, it can be reckoned that it represents only around 20 per cent of French households, in what is one of the wealthiest

countries in the world.⁸ As one can easily imagine, on a world scale the percentage is much lower.

In this essay, we shall nevertheless reserve the term 'capitalists' first and foremost for the main actors responsible for the accumulation and expansion of capital, who directly pressurize firms to make maximum profit. Obviously, their numbers are much smaller. They comprise not only big shareholders, private individuals who are able to affect the running of business single-handedly by virtue of their influence, but also legal entities (represented by a few influential individuals, primarily the directors of firms), which, via their shareholdings, own or control the most substantial portions of global capital (holding companies and multinationals—including banks—through the mechanism of subsidiaries and interests, investment funds, or pension funds). Major employers, the salaried directors of large firms, fund managers, or large shareholders—the influence of such people on the capitalist process, the practices of firms, and the profit rates extracted is beyond doubt, unlike that of the small shareholders mentioned above. Although they constitute a population that is itself characterized by significant asset inequalities, albeit on the basis of a very advantageous situation on average, they deserve to be called capitalists inasmuch as they make the requirement of profit maximization their own, and relay its constraints to the people and legal entities over whom they exercise controlling power. Leaving to one side for the moment the issue of the systemic constraints upon capitalists and, in particular, the question of whether the directors of firms can do anything other than conform to the rules of capitalism, we shall merely note that they do so conform, and that their action is guided largely by the pursuit of substantial profits for their own capital and that entrusted to them.⁹

We shall also characterize capitalism by the wage-earning class. Marx and Weber alike place this form of organizing labour at the centre of their definition of capitalism. We shall consider the wage-earning class independently of the contractual legal forms it can assume. What matters is that part of the population—possessing little or no capital, and to whose benefit the system is not naturally geared—derives income from the sale of its labour (not the sale of the products of its labour); that it does not possess means of production, and hence depends upon the decisions of those who do in order to work (for, by

virtue of property rights, the latter can refuse use of these means to them); and, finally, that in the framework of the wage relation, and in exchange for its remuneration, it surrenders all property rights over the fruits of its efforts, which are said to accrue in their entirety to the owners of capital.¹⁰ A second important feature of the wage-earning class is that the wage-earner is theoretically free to refuse to work on the terms offered by the capitalist, just as the latter is free not to offer work on the terms demanded by the worker. The upshot is that, while the relation is unequal in the sense that the worker cannot survive for long without working, it is nevertheless markedly different from forced labour or slavery, and thus always involves a certain amount of voluntary subjection.

In France, as on a world scale, the wage-earning class has gone on expanding throughout the history of capitalism, to the point where today it involves an unprecedented percentage of the working population.¹¹ On the one hand, it gradually replaces self-employed labour, in the front rank of which, historically, was agriculture.¹² On the other hand, the working population has itself greatly expanded as a result of the entry into the wage-earning class of women, who perform work outside the home in growing numbers.¹³

THE NECESSITY OF A SPIRIT FOR CAPITALISM

In many respects, capitalism is an absurd system: in it, wage-earners have lost ownership of the fruits of their labour and the possibility of pursuing a working life free of subordination. As for capitalists, they find themselves yoked to an interminable, insatiable process, which is utterly abstract and dissociated from the satisfaction of consumption needs, even of a luxury kind. For two such protagonists, integration into the capitalist process is singularly lacking in justifications.

Now, albeit to an unequal extent depending upon the direction in which profit is sought (greater, for example, in the case of industrial than commercial or financial profits), capitalist accumulation demands the mobilization of a very large number of people whose prospects of profit are low (especially when their initial capital is small or nonexistent), and each of whom is assigned only minute responsibility—or, at any rate, responsibility that is difficult to assess—in

the overall accumulation process. Consequently, when they are not downright hostile to capitalist practices, they are not particularly motivated to engage in them.

Some people can invoke a material motive for participating—more obviously in the case of wage-earners who need their wages in order to live than in that of large property owners whose activity, above a certain threshold, is no longer bound up with satisfying personal needs. On its own, however, this does not prove much of a spur. Work psychologists have regularly emphasized that pay is insufficient to induce commitment and stimulate enthusiasm for the task, the wage constituting at most a motive for staying in a job, not for getting involved in it.

Similarly, duress is insufficient to overcome actors' hostility or indifference, especially when the commitment demanded of them assumes active engagement, initiative and voluntary sacrifices, as is ever more frequently the case not simply with cadres but with all wage-earners. Thus, the hypothesis of 'enforced commitment' under the threat of hunger and unemployment does not seem to us to be very plausible. For if the 'slave' factories that still exist the world over are unlikely to disappear in the short term, reliance on this form of setting people to work seems problematic, if for no other reason than that most of the new ways of profit-making and new occupations invented in the last thirty years, which today generate a substantial portion of global profits, stress what human resources management calls 'workforce participation'.

In fact, the quality of the commitment one can expect depends upon the arguments that can be cited to bring out not only the advantages which participation in capitalist processes might afford on an individual basis, but also the collective benefits, defined in terms of the common good, which it contributes to producing for everyone. We call the ideology that justifies engagement in capitalism 'spirit of capitalism'.

This spirit is currently undergoing a significant crisis, demonstrated by growing social confusion and scepticism, to the extent that safeguarding the accumulation process, which is ultimately threatened by any narrowing of its justification to a minimal argument in terms of compulsory submission to economic laws, presupposes the formation of a new, more inspiring ideological corpus. At all events, this is valid

for the developed countries, which remain at the core of the accumulation process and reckon on remaining the main suppliers of skilled personnel, whose positive involvement is imperative. Capitalism must be in a position to guarantee these people a minimum of security in sheltered zones—places to live in, have a family, bring up children, and so on—like the residential quarters of the commercial cities of the northern hemisphere, shop windows of capitalist success for new arrivals from the periphery, and hence a crucial element in the global ideological mobilization of the sum total of productive forces.

For Max Weber, the ‘spirit of capitalism’ refers to the set of ethical motivations which, although their purpose is foreign to capitalist logic, inspire entrepreneurs in activity conducive to capital accumulation.¹⁴ Given the singular, even transgressive character of the kinds of behaviour demanded by capitalism when compared with the forms of life exhibited in most human societies,¹⁵ Weber was led to defend the idea that the emergence of capitalism presupposed the establishment of a new moral relationship between human beings and their work. This was defined in the manner of a vocation, such that, regardless of its intrinsic interest and qualities, people could devote themselves to it firmly and steadily. According to Weber, it was with the Reformation that the belief became established that people performed their religious duty in the first instance by practising an occupation in the world, in temporal activities, in contrast to the extra-mundane religious life favoured by the Catholic ethos. This new conception made it possible to circumvent the question of the purpose of effort in work (boundless enrichment) at the dawn of capitalism, and thereby overcome the problem of commitment posed by the new economic practices. The conception of work as *Beruf*—a religious vocation demanding fulfilment—furnished a normative support for the merchants and entrepreneurs of nascent capitalism, and gave them good reasons—a ‘psychological motivation’, as Weber puts it¹⁶—for devoting themselves tirelessly and conscientiously to their task; for undertaking the pitiless rationalization of their affairs, inextricably bound up with the pursuit of maximum profit; and for pursuing material gain, a sign of success in fulfilling their vocation.¹⁷ It also served them in so far as workers imbued with the same ideal proved

obedient, tireless in their work, and—convinced as they were that man must perform his duty where Providence has placed him—did not seek to question the situation in which they found themselves.

We shall leave to one side the important post-Weberian debate, essentially revolving around the actual influence of Protestantism on the development of capitalism and, more generally, of religious beliefs on economic practices, and draw above all from Weber’s approach the idea that people need powerful moral reasons for rallying to capitalism.¹⁸

Albert Hirschman reformulates the Weberian question ([h]ow then does it come about that activity which, in the most favourable case, is barely morally tolerable, becomes a “calling” in the manner practiced by Benjamin Franklin?) as follows: ‘[h]ow did commercial, banking, and similar money-making pursuits become honorable at some point in the modern age after having stood condemned or despised as greed, love of lucre, and avarice for centuries past?’¹⁹ Rather than appealing to psychological motives and the search by new elites for a means of guaranteeing their personal salvation, however, Hirschman evokes grounds that touched on the political sphere before impinging upon the economy. Profitable activities had been highly esteemed by elites in the eighteenth century on account of the sociopolitical benefits they anticipated from them. In Hirschman’s interpretation, the secular thinking of the Enlightenment justifies profit-making activities in terms of society’s common good. Hirschman thus shows how the emergence of practices in tune with the development of capitalism was interpreted as conducive to a mellowing of manners and a perfecting of modes of government. Given the inability of religious morality to quell human passions, the powerlessness of reason to govern human beings, and the difficulty of subjugating the passions by means of sheer repression, there remained the solution of using one passion to counter the others. In this way, lucre, hitherto first-placed in the order of disorders, was awarded the privilege of being selected as the innocuous passion which the task of subjugating aggressive passions henceforth rested upon.²⁰

Weber’s works stressed capitalism’s need to furnish individual reasons, whereas Hirschman’s emphasize justifications in terms of the common good. For our

part, we shall employ both dimensions, construing the term 'justification' in a sense that makes it possible to encompass both individual justifications (wherein a person finds grounds for engaging in capitalist enterprise) and general justifications (whereby engagement in capitalist enterprise serves the common good).

The question of the moral justifications of capitalism is not only relevant historically, for shedding light on its origins or, in our day, for arriving at a better understanding of the ways in which the peoples of the periphery (developing countries and former socialist countries) are converted to capitalism. It is also of the utmost importance in Western countries like France, whose population is nevertheless integrated into the capitalist cosmos to an unprecedented extent. In fact, systemic constraints on actors are insufficient on their own to elicit their engagement.²¹ Duress must be internalized and justified; and this is the role sociology has traditionally assigned to socialization and ideologies. Contributing to the reproduction of the social order, they have in particular the effect of enabling people not to find their everyday universe uninhabitable—one of the conditions of a durable world. If, contrary to prognoses regularly heralding its collapse, capitalism has not only survived, but ceaselessly extended its empire, it is because it could rely on a number of shared representations—capable of guiding action—and justifications, which present it as an acceptable and even desirable order of things: the only possible order, or the best of all possible orders. These justifications must be based on arguments that are sufficiently strong to be accepted as self-evident by enough people to check, or overcome, the despair or nihilism which the capitalist order likewise constantly induces—not only in those whom it oppresses but also, on occasion, in those who have responsibility for maintaining it and, via education, transmitting its values.

The spirit of capitalism is precisely the set of beliefs associated with the capitalist order that helps to justify this order and, by legitimating them, to sustain the forms of action and predispositions compatible with it. These justifications, whether general or practical, local or global, expressed in terms of virtue or justice, support the performance of more or less unpleasant tasks and, more generally, adhesion to a lifestyle conducive to the capitalist order. In this instance, we may indeed speak

of a dominant ideology, so long as we stop regarding it as a mere subterfuge by the dominant to ensure the consent of the dominated, and acknowledge that a majority of those involved—the strong as well as the weak—rely on these schemas in order to represent to themselves the operation, benefits and constraints of the order in which they find themselves immersed.²²

While, following the Weberian tradition, we put the ideologies on which capitalism rests at the centre of our analyses, we shall employ the notion of the spirit of capitalism in a way that departs from canonical usages. In fact, in Weber the notion of spirit takes its place in an analysis of the 'types of practical rational behaviour', the 'practical incentives to action',²³ which, constitutive of a new ethos, made possible a break with traditional practices, generalization of the tendency to calculation, the lifting of moral condemnations of profit, and the switch to the process of unlimited accumulation. Our perspective—intent not upon explaining the genesis of capitalism but on understanding the conditions in which it can once again secure for itself the actors required for profit creation—will be different. We shall set aside the predispositions towards the world required to participate in capitalism as a cosmos—means–end compatibility, practical rationality, aptitude for calculation, autonomization of economic activities, an instrumental relation to nature, and so on—as well as the more general justifications of capitalism produced in the main by economic science, which we shall touch on later. Today, at least among economic actors in the Western world, they pertain to the common skills which, in accordance with institutional constraints imposed as it were from without, are constantly reproduced through processes of familial and educational socialization. They constitute the ideological platform from which historical variations can be observed, even if we cannot exclude the possibility that changes in the spirit of capitalism sometimes involve the metamorphosis of certain of its most enduring aspects. Our intention is to study observed variations, not to offer an exhaustive description of all the constituents of the spirit of capitalism. This will lead us to detach the category of spirit of capitalism from the substantial content, in terms of ethos, which it is bound up with in Weber, in order to treat it as a form that can contain different things at different

points in the development of the modes of organizing firms and processes of extracting capitalist profit. We shall thus seek to integrate some very diverse historical expressions of the spirit of capitalism into a single framework, and pose the question of their transformation. We shall highlight the way in which an existence attuned to the requirements of accumulation must be marked out for a large number of actors to deem it worth the effort of being lived.

We shall, however, remain faithful throughout this historical journey to the methodology of Weberian ideal types in systematizing and underlining what seems to us to be specific about one epoch by

comparison with those that preceded it, and in attaching more importance to variations than constants, but without ignoring the more stable features of capitalism.

Thus, the persistence of capitalism, as a mode of co-ordinating action and a lived world, cannot be understood without considering the ideologies which, in justifying and conferring a meaning on it, help to elicit the good will of those on whom it is based, and ensure their engagement—including in situations where, as is the case with the developed countries, the order they are integrated into appears to rest virtually in its entirety on mechanisms congruent with capitalism.

NOTES

1. See Robert Heilbroner, *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism*, Norton, New York and London 1985.
2. The balance-sheet is the accounting instrument which, at a given point in time, inventories all the wealth invested in a concern. The importance of the accountancy tool for the functioning of capitalism—to the point that some have made its sophistication one of the origins of capitalism—is a feature very generally emphasized by analysts. See, for example, Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Stephen Kalberg, Fitzroy Dearborn, Chicago and London 2001, pp. 25–6; or *General Economic History*, trans. Frank H. Knight, George Allen & Unwin, London 1927, p. 276.
3. As Georg Simmel observes, in effect money alone never holds any disappointment in store, on condition that it is intended not for expenditure but for accumulation as an end in itself: 'as a thing absolutely devoid of quality, [money] cannot hide either surprise or disappointment as does any object, however miserable' (quoted in A.O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1977, p. 56). If satiation accompanies the realization of desire in an intimate knowledge of the thing desired, this psychological effect cannot be created by a calculable figure that remains abstract.
4. See Heilbroner, *The Nature and Logic of Capitalism*, pp. 53 ff.
5. Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce*, trans. Sian Reynolds, Harper and Row, New York 1982, p. 228.
6. Examples of the way in which capitalist agents infringe market rules in order to make profits, which is beyond any possible comparison with ordinary commercial activities, abound in Braudel, for whom '[t]he capitalist game only concerned the unusual, the very special, or the very long distance connection—sometimes lasting months or even years': the use of protection 'to break into a resistant circuit' and 'ward off rivals'; privileged information and circuits of confidential information, as well as 'the acquiescence of the state', making it possible 'regularly, quite naturally and without any qualms, to bend the rules of the market economy'; and so on (*The Wheels of Commerce*, pp. 456, 384, 400).

Similarly, the *grande bourgeoisie* of the nineteenth century, despite its apparent adherence to the 'liberal credo', as Karl Polanyi puts it (*Origins of Our Time: The Great Transformation*, Victor Gollancz, London 1945), is only really in favour of *laissez-faire* in the labour market. As for the rest, in their struggle with one another capitalists use all the means at their disposal and, in

particular, political control of the state, in order to restrict competition, to curb free trade when it is unfavourable to them, to occupy monopoly positions and retain them, and to benefit from geographical and political imbalances in such a way as to drain maximum profit towards the centre. See Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le Libéralisme économique. Histoire de l'idée de marché*, Seuil, Paris 1979, pp. 208–12; Immanuel Wallerstein, *Historical Capitalism*, Verso, London 1983.

7. According to the INSEE's definition, this notion covers 'the totality of physical and financial investments made by private individuals when they put buildings, money, land at someone else's disposition in exchange for a monetary payment', and excludes property for use (main residence, liquid cash and cheques) and the professional property of self-employed persons (farmers, liberal professionals, artisans, shopkeepers).
8. In January 1996, 80 per cent of households possessed a savings account, but the amounts in them rapidly reached a ceiling and were intended for popular savings first and foremost; 38 per cent had a housing plan or savings account (most with a view to purchasing their main residence). On the other hand, typical capitalist investments involved around only 20 per cent of households: 22 per cent possessed stocks and shares (bonds, government loans, SICAV (Société d'Investissement à Capital Variable) or FCP (Fonds Communs de Placement), shares outside SICAV), and 19 per cent property other than their main residence. See *INSEE Première*, no. 454, May 1996. That said, the households able to draw from their rental property an income equal to the average French income, assimilating them to fairly comfortable rentiers (or better), represent less than 5 per cent of the totality of households, and are doubtless closer to 1 than to 5 per cent (see Alain Bihr and Roland Pfefferkorn, 'Peut-on définir un seuil de richesse?', *Alternatives économiques*, special issue no. 25, 'Les riches', autumn 1995).
9. Since the work of Berle and Means, it has been recognized that if the behaviour of managers is not necessarily to maximize shareholder interests, at the very least they behave in such a way as to provide them with a satisfactory return, if not the maximum.
10. Moreover, according to Heilbroner (*The Nature and Logic of Capitalism*, pp. 65–77), this last aspect is the best concealed form of capitalist exploitation, since the whole remaining margin made on the product, whatever the amount, reverts to the capitalist by virtue of the property rules pertaining to the labour contract.
11. According to the figures cited by Gérard Vindt ('Le salariat avant guerre: instabilité et précarité', *Alternatives économiques*, no. 141, October 1996, pp. 58–61), the wage-earning class represented 30 per cent of the active population in 1881, 40 per cent in 1906, 50 per cent in 1931, and stands at more than 80 per cent today. The INSEE (*Annuaire statistique de la France*, Paris 1998 [CD-ROM version]) gives a figure of 76.9 per cent of wage-earners in the population for 1993, to which must be added the 11.6 unemployed (table C.01-1).
12. Thévenot has offered a very fine-grained analysis by socio-professional category of the development of the wage-earning class in the 1970s. In 1975, wage-earners represented 82.7 per cent of total employment, as against 76.5 per cent in 1968. The only category of non-wage-earners to expand was that of liberal professions—even though it grew slowly on account of the barriers to entry into these professions—while all the other categories (employers in industry and commerce, artisans and small shopkeepers—i.e. employing fewer than three wage-earners—farmers, home helps) contracted. And the wage-earning class likewise grew in traditional liberal professions such as doctors, almost as many of whom in 1975 were wage-earners (in hospitals especially) as private practitioners, whereas wage-earners represented little more than a half of medical personnel seven years earlier. The expansion of the wage-earning class is linked in part to the appearance of large firms in traditional sectors like commerce that destroy the

- small independents. The significant reduction in the number of wage-earners in agriculture and household employees likewise confirms that the majority of the growth in the wage-earning class is related to growth in activity of an employer class that is ever more 'anonymous' and less 'personal'—i.e. in industrial and service companies—but also to the development of public services (particularly teaching). See Laurent Thévenot, 'Les catégories sociales en 1975: l'extension du salariat', *Économie et statistique*, no. 91, July/August 1977, pp. 3–31.
13. Women today represent 45 per cent of the working population, as against 35 per cent in 1968. Their rate of activity (percentage of those over fifteen years of age belonging to the active population) has continually increased over the last thirty years (François Jeger-Madiot, 'L'emploi et le chômage des familles professionnelles', *Données statistiques 1996*, INSEE, Paris 1996, pp. 117–23).
 14. It appears that the expression 'spirit of capitalism' was used for the first time by Werner Sombart, in the first edition of his *The Quintessence of Capitalism*. But in Sombart, for whom it is generated 'from the conjunction of the "Faustian spirit" and the "bourgeois spirit"', it assumes a very different sense from that given it by Weber. The spirit of capitalism is more focused on the demiurgic character of the big businessman in Sombart, whereas Weber lays greater stress on the work ethic. See Hinnerk Bruhns, 'Économie et religion chez Werner Sombart et Max Weber', in Gérard Raullet, ed., *L'éthique protestante de Max Weber et l'esprit de la modernité*, Éditions de la MSH, Paris 1997, pp. 95–120.
 15. '[O]nly a human lifetime in the past it was futile to double the wages of an agricultural laborer in Silesia who mowed a certain tract of land on a contract in the hope of inducing him to increase his exertions. He would simply have reduced by half the work expected because with this half he would have been able to earn twice as much as before': Weber, *General Economic History*, p. 355. See also Polanyi, *Origins of Our Time*, on the transformation of land and labour into commodities.
 16. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.
 17. '[A]sceticism . . . defined the pursuit of riches, if viewed as an *end* in itself, as the peak of reprehensibility. At the same time, it also viewed the acquisition of wealth, when it was the *fruit* of work in a vocational calling, as God's blessing. Even more important for this investigation, the religious value set on restless, continuous, and systematic work in a vocational calling was defined as absolutely the highest of all ascetic means for believers to testify to their elect status, as well as simultaneously the most certain and most visible means of doing so. Indeed, the Puritan's sincerity of belief must have been the most powerful lever conceivable working to expand the life outlook that we are here designating as the spirit of capitalism': *ibid.*, p. 116.
 18. The main sources and presentation of these polemics are to be found in Philippe Besnard, *Protestantisme et capitalisme. La controverse post-weberienne*, Armand Colin, Paris 1970; Malcom H. MacKinnon, 'The Longevity of the Thesis: A Critique of the Critics', in H. Lehmann and G. Roth, eds, *Weber's Protestant Ethic: Origins, Evidence, Contexts*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 211–44; Annette Disselkamp, *L'éthique protestante de Max Weber*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1994; in the introduction by Jean-Claude Passeron and the presentation by J.-P. Grossein of a volume of works by Weber devoted to the sociology of religions (*Sociologies des religions*, Gallimard, Paris 1996); and in the collective work of the Research Group on Weimar Culture published under the direction of Gérard Raullet, *L'éthique protestante de Max Weber et l'esprit de la modernité*, which also supplies an abundance of information on the intellectual climate in which *The Protestant Ethic* was composed. Moreover, this controversy, doubtless one of the most prolific in the entire history of the social sciences, is not over: it has focused above all on the validity of the link between motives of religious inspiration and

economic practices. To critical arguments that challenge the correlation between Protestantism and capitalism, maintaining (in K. Samuelson and Joseph Schumpeter, for example) that capitalism developed before the emergence of Protestantism or in regions of Europe where the influence of the Reformation was weak, and, consequently, under the impact of a constellation of phenomena unrelated to religion (not to mention the Marxist critique, which makes capitalism the cause of the emergence of Protestantism), defence of Weber has replied with arguments that stress the distinction between *causes* and *affinities* (Weber is argued not to have sought to provide a causal explanation, but simply to have demonstrated the affinities between the Reformation and capitalism—for example, in Reinhard Bendix and Raymond Aron), as well as the difference between *capitalism* and *the spirit of capitalism* (Weber's subject was not the causes of capitalism, but the moral and cognitive changes that favoured the emergence of a mentality exploited by capitalism—for example, in Gordon Marshall).

19. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 34; Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, p. 9.
20. This reversal was possible thanks to the transformation of this passion into an 'interest', an amalgam of egoism and rationality, with the virtues of constancy and predictability. Trade was deemed liable to induce a certain moderation of behaviour, the merchant desiring peace for the prosperity of his business and maintaining benevolent relations during his transactions with the customers whom it is in his interest to satisfy. The passion for money thus emerges as a good deal less destructive than the search for glory or great deeds. It is also the case that traditionally only the nobility was deemed capable of the latter: 'anyone who did not belong to the nobility could not, *by definition*, share in heroic virtues or violent passions. After all, such a person had only interests and not glory to pursue, and everybody *knew* that this pursuit was bound to be *doux* in comparison with the passionate pastimes and savage exploits of the aristocracy' (Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, p. 63). The idea of a modern erosion of the violent, noble passions in favour of an exclusive interest in money was rather widespread, and also sufficiently valid, it seems, to provoke at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth the Romantic critique of the bourgeois order as empty, cold, mean, 'materialist', and precisely stripped of all passionate character, of all features hitherto judged positively on account of their political advantages. As for theses about *le doux commerce*, developed in the eighteenth century, if they seem old-fashioned to us today, it is because it became obvious in the course of the nineteenth century, particularly given the poverty of the working-class housing estates and colonization, that bourgeois passion had nothing gentle about it, but on the contrary produced unprecedented devastation.
21. Here we distance ourselves from the Weberian position according to which when capitalism is firmly in the saddle, it has less need of moral justification (*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, pp. 18–19), which his contemporary Werner Sombart also subscribed to (*The Quintessence of Capitalism*, trans. M. Epstein and T. Fisher Unwin, London 1915), while remaining faithful to an interpretative sociology that stresses the meaning which social organization possesses for actors and, consequently, the importance of justifications and ideological constructs.
22. The issue of whether the beliefs associated with the spirit of capitalism are true or false, which is key in many theories of ideology, especially when dealing with an object as conflictual as capitalism, is not central to our reflection, which seeks to describe the formation and transformation of the justifications of capitalism, not to assess their intrinsic truth. To temper this relativism, let us add that a dominant ideology in a capitalist society remains rooted in the reality of things, inasmuch as it helps to inflect people's action, and thus fashion the world they act in,

but where it is transformed depending on their experience, positive or negative, of their action. As Louis Dumont observes, a dominant ideology can therefore just as easily be declared 'false' in view of its incomplete character, because it is better suited to the interests of some social groups than others, or its tendency to amalgamate constructs of diverse origins and antiquity without articulating them in a coherent fashion, as it can be declared 'true' in the sense that each of the elements composing it has been (and still can be) pertinent in a given time or place, under certain conditions. Here we adopt Hirschman's solution: confronted with seemingly irreconcilable theories about the impact of capitalism on society, he shows that they can be made to coexist in the same representation of the world once it is acknowledged that capitalism is a contradictory phenomenon, with the ability simultaneously to limit and strengthen itself. He suggests that, however incompatible, each of the theories can possess its 'moment of truth' or its 'country of truth' and be pertinent in a country, or group of countries, for a certain period (see A. O. Hirschman, *L'économie comme science morale et politique*, Hautes Études-Gallimard-Seuil, Paris 1984, p. 37).

23. Weber, quoted in Pierre Bouretz, *Les Promesses du monde. Philosophie de Max Weber*, Gallimard, Paris 1996, pp. 205–6.

SECTION XIV

1. Central to Bourdieu's sociology are three concepts: structure, habitus, and practice. Define each of these in your own words and use them in assessing a topic currently in the news.
2. What does Baudrillard mean when he describes the function of advertising as the promotion of gratification and infantilization? Offer an example of what he has in mind. Do you find his argument convincing? Why or why not?
3. How does Touraine differentiate his idea of social movements from what he describes as "revolutionary actions and ideologies?"
4. Provide a summary of the new spirit of capitalism described by Boltanski and Chiapello.
5. How does the new spirit of capitalism differ from the one Weber describes as at work during the formative period of capitalism? What does this imply about capitalism's recurring need to justify its existence?

XV. WORLD SYSTEMS AND GLOBALIZATION

ROLAND ROBERTSON

72. MAPPING THE GLOBAL CONDITION

Roland Robertson (b. 1938) is an emeritus professor at the University of Pittsburgh and lecturer at the University of Aberdeen. He is one of the most important theorists of globalization. He thinks that an adequate theory of globalization must go beyond rather than merely be subsumed under either world-systems or modernization theory. Robertson seeks to sketch out the contours of contemporary globalization, which is depicted in terms of a compressed and united, but not integrated, system. He begins with the claim that globalization has been happening for some time but that the pace has dramatically accelerated in recent decades, thereby deepening and widening globalization's impact. In this effort aimed at "mapping the global condition," he articulates five stages of development: the germinal, which dates to the fifteenth century; the incipient, which commenced around 1750; the take-off phase, a half-century phase beginning around 1870; the struggle-for-hegemony phase; and finally the current "uncertainty" stage.

Nothing will be done anymore, without the whole world meddling in it.

—Paul Valéry in *Lesourne*, 1986:103

We are on the road from the evening-glow of European philosophy to the dawn of world philosophy.

—Karl Jaspers, 1957:83–4

Insofar as [present realities] have brought us a global present without a common past [they] threaten to render all traditions and all particular past histories irrelevant.

—Hannah Arendt, 1957:541

The transformation of the medieval into the modern can be depicted in at least two different ways. In one sense it represents the trend towards the consolidation and strengthening of the territorial state. . . . In another sense it represents a reordering in the priority of international and domestic realms. In the medieval period the world, or transnational, environment was primary, the domestic secondary.

—Richard Rosencrance, 1986:77

My primary concern here is to continue the discussion of the analytical and empirical aspects of globalization. I also want to raise some general questions about social theory. As far as the main issue is concerned, I set out the grounds for systematic analysis and interpretation of globalization since the mid-fifteenth century, indicating the major phases of globalization in recent world history and exploring some of the more salient aspects of the contemporary global circumstance from an analytical point of view. On the general-theoretical front I argue again that much of social theory is both a product of and an implicit reaction to, as opposed to a direct engagement with, the globalization process.

While there is rapidly growing interest in the issue of globalization, much of it is expressed very diffusely. It has become a widely used term in a number

Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, Sage, 1992, pp. 49–60. Permission conveyed through the Copyright Clearance Center. ♦

of theoretical, empirical and applied areas of intellect inquiry, including the various 'policy sciences,' such as business studies and strategic studies. There is also a danger that 'globalization' will become an intellectual 'play zone,' a site for the expression of residual social-theoretical interests, interpretive indulgence, or the display of world-ideological preferences. I think we must take very seriously Immanuel Wallerstein's (1987:309) contention that 'world-systems' analysis is not a theory about the world. 'It is a protest against the ways in which social scientific inquiry was structured for all of us at its inception in the middle of the nineteenth century.' Even though I do not, as I have said, subscribe to world-systems theory in the conventional sense of the term, primarily because of its economism, and am not pessimistic about the possibility of our being able to accomplish significant theoretical work *vis-à-vis* the world as a whole, I consider it to be of the utmost importance for us to realize fully that much of the conventional sociology which has developed since the first quarter of the twentieth century has been held in thrall by the virtually global institutionalization of the idea of the culturally cohesive and sequestered national society during the main phase of 'classical' sociology. Ironically, the global aspect of that phenomenon has received relatively little attention (Meyer, 1980).

GLOBALIZATION AND THE STRUCTURATION OF THE WORLD

The present discussion, in this and the following chapters, is a continuation of previous efforts to theorize the topic of globalization, a task made all the more difficult by the recent and continuing events in the territories of the old USSR, Eastern and Central Europe, China and elsewhere, which have disrupted virtually all of the conventional views concerning 'world order.' At the same time those events and the circumstances they have created make the analytical effort even more urgent. We have entered a phase of what appears to us in the 1990s to be great global uncertainty—so much so that the very idea of uncertainty promises to become globally institutionalized. Or, to put it in a very different way, there is an eerie relationship between post-modernist theories and the idea of postmodernity, on the one hand, and the geopolitical 'earthquakes' that

we (the virtually *global we*) have recently experienced, on the other.

We need to enlarge our conception of 'world politics' in such a way as to facilitate systematic discussion, but not conflation, of the relationship between politics in the relatively narrow sense and the broad questions of 'meaning' which can only be grasped by wide-ranging, empirically sensitive interpretations of the global-human condition as a whole. Specifically, I argue that what is often called world politics has in the twentieth century hinged considerably upon the issue of the interpretation of and the response to modernity, aspects of which were politically and internationally thematized as the standard of 'civilization' (Gong, 1984) during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with particular reference to the inclusion of non-European (mainly Asian) societies in Eurocentric 'international society' (Bull and Watson, 1984).

Communism and 'democratic capitalism' have constituted alternative forms of acceptance of modernity (Parsons, 1964), although some would now argue that the recent and dramatic ebbing of communism can in part be attributed to its 'attempt to preserve the integrity of the premodern system' (Parsons, 1967: 484–5) by invoking 'socialism' as the central of a series of largely 'covert gestures of reconciliation . . . toward both the past and the future' (Parsons, 1967: 484).¹ On the other hand fascism and neo-fascism have, in spite of their original claims to the establishment of *new* societal and international 'orders' (as was explicitly the case with the primary Axis powers of World War II: Germany and Japan), been directly interested in *transcending or resolving* the problems of modernity. That issue has certainly not disappeared. The world politics of the global debate about modernity has rarely been considered of relevance to the latter and yet it is clear that, for example, conceptions of the past by the major belligerents in World War I illustrated a sharp contrast between 'the temporalities of the nations of each alliance system and underlying causes of resentment and misunderstanding' (Kern, 1983:277), with the nations whose leaders considered themselves to be relatively deprived—notably Germany and Japan—being particularly concerned to confront the problem of modernity in political and military terms.² Sociologists and philosophers are familiar with many intellectual developments of the 1920s and

1930s, but these have not been linked to the broad domain of *Realpolitik*. It may well be that the Cold War that developed after the defeat of great-power Fascism constituted an interruption and partial freezing of the world-cultural politics of modernity and that with the ending of the Cold War as conventionally understood those politics will now be resumed in a situation of much greater global complexity, in the interrelated contexts of more intense globalization, the growing political presence of Islam, the discourse of postmodernity and 'the ethnic revival' (A. D. Smith, 1981), which itself may be considered as *an aspect* of the contemporary phase of globalization (Lechner, 1984).

Any attempt to theorize the general field of globalization must lay the grounds for relatively patterned discussion of the politics of the global-human condition, by attempting to indicate the structure of any visible discourse about the shape and 'meaning' of the world as a whole. I regard this as an urgent matter partly because much of the explicit intellectual interpretation of the global scene is being conducted by academics operating under the umbrella of 'cultural studies' with exceedingly little attention to the issue of global complexity and structural contingency, except for frequently invoked labels such as 'late capitalism,' 'disorganized capitalism,' or the salience of 'the transnational corporation. This is not at all to say that the 'textual,' 'power-knowledge,' or 'hegemonic' aspects of the 'world system' are of minor significance. Rather, I am insisting that both the economics and the culture of the global scene should be analytically connected to the general structural and actional features of the global field.

I maintain that what has come to be called globalization is, in spite of differing conceptions of that theme, best understood as indicating the problem of *the form* in terms of which the world becomes 'united,' but by no means integrated in native functionalist mode (Robertson and Chirico, 1985). Globalization as a topic is, in other words, a conceptual entry to the problem of 'world order' in the most general sense—but, nevertheless, an entry which has no cognitive purchase without considerable discussion of historical and comparative matters. It is, moreover, a phenomenon which clearly requires what is conventionally called interdisciplinary treatment. Traditionally the general field of the study of the world as a whole has

been approached via the discipline of international relations (or, more diffusely, international studies). That discipline (sometimes regarded as a subdiscipline of political science) was consolidated during particular phases of the overall globalization process and is now being reconstituted in reference to developments in other disciplinary areas, including the humanities (Der Derian and Shapiro, 1989). Indeed, the first concentrated thrust into the study of the world as a whole on the part of sociologists, during the 1960s (discussed in Nettl and Robertson, 1968), was undertaken, as has been seen, mainly in terms of the idea of the sociology of international relations. There can be little doubt that to this day the majority of social scientists still think of 'extra-societal' matters in terms of 'international relations' (including variants thereof, such as transnational relations, nongovernmental relations, supernational relations, world politics and so on). Nonetheless that tendency is breaking down, in conjunction with considerable questioning of what Michael Mann (1986) has called the unitary conception of society. While there have been attempts to carve out a new discipline for the study of the world as a whole, including the long-historical making of the contemporary 'world system' (e.g. Bergesen, 1980), my position is that it is not so much that we need a new discipline in order to study the world as a whole but that social theory in the broadest sense—as a perspective which stretches across the social sciences and humanities (Giddens and Turner, 1987: 1) and even the natural sciences—should be refocused and expanded so as to make concern with 'the world' a central hermeneutic, and in such a way as to constrain empirical and comparative-historical research in the same direction.

Undoubtedly, as we have already seen, there *have* been various attempts in the history of social theory to move along such lines but the very structure of the globalization process has inhibited such efforts from taking off into a fully fledged research program, mostly notably during the crucial take-off period of globalization itself, 1870–1925. So we are led to the argument that exerting ourselves to develop *global* social theory is not merely an exercise demanded by the transparency of the processes rendering the contemporary world as a whole as a single place but also that our labors in that regard are crucial to the empirical understanding

of the bases upon which the matrix of contemporary disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity rests. There has been an enormous amount of talk in recent years about self-reflexiveness, the critical-theoretic posture, and the like; but ironically much of that talk has been about as far removed from discussion of the real world—in the twofold sense of quotidian contemporary realities and differences and the concrete global circumstance—as it could be. Much of fashionable social theory has favored the abstract and, from a simplistic global perspective, ‘the local’ to the great neglect of the global and civilizational contours and bases of Western social theory itself. The distinction between the global and the local is becoming very complex and problematic, to the extent that we should now perhaps speak in such terms as the global institutionalization of the life-world and the localization of globality.

In the second half of the 1980s ‘globalization’ (and its problematic variant, ‘internationalization’) became a commonly used term in intellectual, business, media and other circles, in the process acquiring a number of meanings, with varying degrees of precision. This has been a source of frustration, but not necessarily a cause for surprise or alarm, to those of us who had sought earlier in the decade to establish a relatively strict definition of globalization as part of an attempt to come to terms systematically with major aspects of contemporary ‘meaning and change’ (Robertson, 1978). Nevertheless a stream of analysis and research *has* been developed around the general idea, if not always the actual concept, of globalization. It is my intention here to indicate some of the most pressing issues in this area—not so much by surveying and evaluating different approaches to the making of the contemporary world system, world society, the global ecumene, or whatever one chooses to call the late twentieth-century world as a whole; but rather by considering some relatively neglected analytical and historical themes.

I deal here with relatively recent aspects of globalization, although I want to emphasize as strongly as possible that in doing so I am not suggesting for a moment that moves and thrusts in the direction of global unicity are unique to relatively recent history. I also argue that globalization is intimately related to modernity and modernization, as well as to postmodernity and ‘postmodernization’ (in so far as the latter

pair of motifs have definite analytical purchase). In attempting to justify that proposal I am by no means suggesting that work within the frame of ‘the globalization paradigm’ should be limited to the relatively recent past. All I am maintaining is that the concept of globalization per se is most clearly applicable to a particular series of relatively recent developments concerning the *concrete structuration of the world as a whole*. The term ‘structuration’ has been deliberately chosen. Although I will shortly consider some aspects of Anthony Giddens’s work on ‘the global scene,’ I cannot address here the general problems which arise from the concept of structuration (Cohen, 1989; Bryant and Jary, 1991). I will say only that if the notion of structuration is to be of assistance to us analytically in the decades ahead it has to be moved out of its quasi-philosophical context, its confinement within the canonical discourses about subjectivity and objectivity, individual and society, and so on (Archer, 1988). It has to be made directly relevant to *the world* in which we live. It has to contribute to the understanding of how the global ‘system’ has been and continues to be *made*. It has to be focused on the production and reproduction of ‘the world’ as the most salient plausibility structure of our time (Wuthnow, 1978: 65). The same applies to the cultural-agency problematic which Margaret Archer (1988) has recently theorized.

Human history has been replete with ideas concerning the physical structure, the geography, the cosmic location and the spiritual and/or secular significance of the world (Wagar, 1971); movements and organizations concerned with the patterning and/or the unification of the world as a whole have intermittently appeared for at least the last two thousand years; and ideas about the relationship between the universal and the particular have been central to all of the major civilizations. Even something like what has recently been called ‘the global-local nexus’ (or the ‘local-global nexus’) was thematized as long ago as the second century BC when Polybius, in his *Universal History*, wrote with reference to the rise of the Roman empire: ‘Formerly the things which happened in the world had no connection among themselves. . . . But since then all events are united in a common bundle’ (Kohn, 1971: 121).³ However, the crucial considerations are that it has not been until relatively recent times that

it has been realistically thought that 'humanity is rapidly becoming, physically speaking, a single society' (Hobhouse, 1906: 331), and that it has not been until quite recently that considerable numbers of people living on various parts of the planet have spoken and acted in direct reference to the problem of the 'organization' of the entire, heliocentric world. It is in relation to this heavily contested problem of the concrete patterning and consciousness of the world, including resistance to globality, that I seek to center the concept and the discourse of globalization.

The world as a whole could, in theory, have become the reality which it now is in ways and along trajectories other than those that have actually obtained (Lechner, 1989). The world could, in principle, have been rendered as a 'singular system' (Moore, 1966) via the imperial hegemony of a single nation or a 'grand alliance' between two or more dynasties or nations; the victory of 'the universal proletariat'; the global triumph of a particular form of organized religion; the crystallization of 'the world spirit'; the yielding of nationalism to the ideal of 'free trade'; the success of the world-federalist movement; the worldwide triumph of a trading company; or in yet other ways. Some of these have in fact held sway at certain moments in world history. Indeed, in coming to terms analytically with the contemporary circumstance we have to acknowledge that some such possibilities are as old as world history in any meaningful sense of that phrase and have greatly contributed to the existence of the globalized world of the late twentieth century. Moreover, much of world history can be fruitfully considered as sequences of 'miniglobalization,' in the sense that, for example, historic empire formation involved the unification of previously sequestered territories and social entities. There have also been shifts in the opposite direction, as with the deunification of medieval Europe, of which Rosencrance (1986) has spoken—although the rise of the territorial state also promoted imperialism and thus conceptions of the world as a whole.

Nonetheless, when all is said and done no single possibility has, or so I claim, been more continuously prevalent than another. There may have been periods in world history when one such possibility was more of a 'globalizing force' than others—and that must certainly be a crucial aspect of the discussion

of globalization in the long-historical mode—but we have not as a world-people moved into the present global-human circumstance along one or even a small cluster of these particular trajectories. Yet in the present climate of 'globality' there is a strong temptation for some to insist that the single world of our day can be accounted for in terms of one particular process or factor, such as 'Westernization,' 'imperialism' or, in the dynamic and diffuse sense, 'civilization.' As I argue more specifically in later chapters, the problem of globality is very likely to become a basis of major ideological and analytical cleavages of the twenty-first century, as the idea of 'the new world order' in its political, military and economic senses, not least because the connotations of that term as used in pre-Axis and Axis contexts are so negative. While I do not subscribe to the view that social theorists should at all costs attempt to be neutral about these and other matters, I am committed to the argument that one's moral stance should be realistic and that one should have no intrinsically vested interest in the attempt to map this or any other area of the human condition. More precisely, I argue that systematic comprehension of the structuration of world order is essential to the viability of any form of contemporary theory and that such comprehension must involve analytical separation of the factors that have facilitated the shift towards a single world—for example the spread of capitalism, Western imperialism and the development of a global media system—from the *general and global* agency-structure (and/or culture) theme. While the empirical relationship between the two sets of issues is of great importance (and, of course, complex), conflation of them leads us into all sorts of difficulties and inhibits our ability to come to terms with the basic but shifting terms of the contemporary world order, including the 'structure' of 'disorderliness.'

Thus we must return to the question of the actual form of recent and contemporary moves in the direction of global interdependence and global consciousness. In posing the basic question in this way we immediately confront the critical issue of the period during which the move towards the world as a singular system became more or less inexorable. If we think of the history of the world as consisting for a very long time in the *objectiveness* of a variety of different

civilizations existing in varying degrees of separation from each other, our main task now is to consider the ways in which the world 'moved' from being merely 'in itself' to the problem or the possibility of its being 'for itself'. Before coming directly to that vital issue I must attend briefly to some basic analytical matters. This I do via the statement of Giddens (1987: 255–93) on 'Nation-States in the Global State System.'

Giddens makes much of the point that 'the development of the sovereignty of the modern state from its beginnings depends upon a reflexively monitored set of relations between states' (Giddens, 1987: 263). He argues that the period of treaty making following World War I 'was effectively the first point at which a reflexively monitored system of nation-states came to exist globally' (1987:256). I fully concur with both the emphasis on the importance of the post-World War I period and Giddens's claim that 'if a new and formidably threatening pattern of war was established at this time, so was a new pattern of peace' (1987:256). More generally, Giddens's argument that the development of the modern state has been guided by increasingly global norms concerning its sovereignty is, if not original, of great importance. However, he tends to conflate the issue of the homogenization of the state (in Hegel's sense)—what Giddens calls 'the universal scope of the nation-state' (1987: 264)—and the issue of relationships between states.

It is important to make a distinction between the diffusion of expectations concerning the external legitimacy and mode of operation of the state and the development of regulative norms concerning the relationships between states; while readily acknowledging that the issue of the powers and limits of the state has been *empirically* linked to the structuring of the relationships between states and, moreover, that it constitutes a crucial axis of globalization. James Der Derian (1989) has recently drawn attention to an important aspect of that theme by indicating the proximity of the formal 'Declaration of the Rights of Man' that sovereignty resides in the nation to Jeremy Bentham's declaration in the same year of 1789 that there was a need for a new word—'international'—which would express, in a more significant way, the branch of law which goes commonly under the name of the law of nations (Bentham, 1948: 326).

So while the two issues upon which I have been dwelling via Giddens's analysis undoubtedly have been and remain closely interdependent, it is crucial to keep them analytically apart in order that we may fully appreciate variations in the nature of the empirical connections between them. In sum, the problem of contingency arising from state sovereignty and the development of relational rules between sovereign units is not the same as the issue of the crystallization and diffusion of conceptions of national statehood (A. D. Smith, 1979). Nor is it the same as the development and spread of conceptions of the shape and meaning of 'international society' (Gong, 1984). The second set of matters is on a different 'level' than that addressed by Giddens.

My primary reason for emphasizing this matter is that it provides an immediate entry to what I consider the most pressing general problem in the contemporary discussion of globalization. Giddens's analysis is a good example of an attempt to move toward the global circumstance via the conventional concerns of sociological theory. While readily conceding that it was his specific, initial concern to talk about the modern nation state and the internal and external violence with which its development has been bound up, the fact remains that in spite of all of his talk about global matters at the end of his analysis, Giddens is restricted precisely by his having to center 'the current world system' within a discussion of 'the global *state* system' (Giddens, 1987: 276–7; emphasis added). Even though he eventually separates, in analytical terms, the nation-state system (with the ambiguity I have indicated) as the political aspect of the world system from the 'global information system' (as relating to 'symbolic orders/modes of discourse'); the 'world-capitalist economy' (as the economic dimension of the world system); and the 'world military order' (as concerning 'law/modes of sanction')—along lines reminiscent of approaches of the 1960s (Nettl and Robertson, 1968) and, ironically, of a general Parsonian, functional-imperative approach—Giddens ends up with a 'map' of what he reluctantly calls the world system, which is centered upon his conflated characterization of the rise of the modern state system. Giddens (1990) has of course expanded upon, and modified his thinking about what he now

calls globalization, in relation to modernity and the idea of postmodernity. . . .

'Mapping' the world social-scientifically is, of course, a common procedure; it crystallized during the 1960s both with the diffusion of perceptions concerning the existence of the Third World and with polarized First (liberal-capitalist) and Second (industrializing-communist) Worlds. Ever since that period—the beginning of the current phase of contemporary, late twentieth-century globalization—there has proliferated a large number of different and, indeed, conflicting ideological and/or 'scientific' maps of the world-system of national societies, so much so that it is reasonable to say that the discourse of mapping is a vital ingredient of global-political culture, one which fuses geography (as in the use of North-South and East-West terminology) with political, economic, cultural and other forms of placement of nations on the global-international map. Much of this overall effort has resulted in significant work—for example Johan Galtung's *The True Worlds* (1980) and Peter Worsley's (1984) lengthy discussion of the cultures of 'the three worlds.' Indeed, the kind of work which has strongly reminded us of the major cleavages and discontinuities in the world as a whole is a significant antidote to those who now speak blithely in 'global village' terms of a single world. Nonetheless there can be no denying that the world is much more singular than it was as recently as, say, the 1950s. The crucial question remains of the basic form or structure in terms of which that shift has occurred. That that form has been *imposed* upon certain areas of the world is, of course, a crucial issue, but until the matter of form (more elaborately, structuration) is adequately thematized our ability to comprehend the dynamics of the making of the world as a whole will be severely limited.

A MINIMAL PHASE MODEL OF GLOBALIZATION

I offer here what I call and advocate as a necessarily minimal model of globalization. This model does not make grand assertions about primary factors, major mechanisms, and so on. Rather, it indicates the major constraining tendencies which have been operating in relatively recent history as far as world order and the compression of the world in our time are concerned.

One of the most pressing tasks in this regard is to confront the issue of the undoubted salience of the unitary nation state—more diffusely, the national society—since about the mid-eighteenth century and at the same time to acknowledge its historical uniqueness, in a sense its abnormality (McNeil, 1986). The homogeneous nation state—homogeneous here in the sense of a culturally homogenized, administered citizenry (B. Anderson, 1983)—is a construction of a particular form of life. That we ourselves have been increasingly subject to its constraints does not mean that for analytical purposes it has to be accepted as *the* departure point for analyzing and understanding the world. This is why I have argued not merely that national societies should be regarded as constituting but one general reference point for the analysis of the global-human circumstance, but that we have to recognize even more than we do now that the prevalence of the national society in the twentieth century is an aspect of globalization (Robertson, 1989)—that the diffusion of *the idea* of the national society as a form of institutionalized societalism (Lechner, 1989) was central to the accelerated globalization which began to occur just over a hundred years ago. I have also argued more specifically that the two other major components of globalization have been, in addition to national systems and the system of international relations, conceptions of individuals and of humankind. It is in terms of the shifting relationships between and the 'upgrading' of these reference points that globalization has occurred in recent centuries. This pattern has certainly been greatly affected by and subject to all sorts of economic, political and other processes and actions; but my task here is to legitimize the need for an overall comprehension of the global circumstance.

I now propose, in skeletal terms, that the temporal-historical path to the present circumstance of a very high degree of global density and complexity can be delineated as follows:

Phase I: The Germinal Phase. Lasting in Europe from the early fifteenth until the mid-eighteenth century. Incipient growth of national communities and downplaying of the medieval 'transnational' system. Expanding scope of the Catholic church. Accentuation of concepts of

the individual and of ideas about humanity. Heliocentric theory of the world and beginning of modern geography; spread of Gregorian calendar.

Phase II: The Incipient Phase. Lasting—mainly in Europe—from the mid-eighteenth century until the 1870s. Sharp shift towards the idea of the homogeneous, unitary state; crystallization of conceptions of formalized international relations, of standardized citizenly individuals and a more concrete conception of humankind. Sharp increases in legal conventions and agencies concerned with international and transnational regulation and communication. International exhibitions. Beginning of problem of ‘admission’ of non-European societies to ‘international society.’ Thematization of nationalism-internationalism issue.

Phase III: The Take-off Phase. Lasting from the 1870s until the mid-1920s. ‘Take-off’ here refers to a period during which the increasingly manifest globalizing tendencies of previous periods and places gave way to a single, inexorable form centered upon the four reference points, and thus constraints, of national societies, generic individuals (but with a masculine bias), a single ‘international society,’ and an increasingly singular, but not unified conception of humankind. Early thematization of ‘the problem of modernity.’ Increasingly global conceptions of the ‘correct outline’ of an ‘acceptable’ national society; thematization of ideas concerning national and personal identities; inclusion of a number of non-European societies in ‘international society’; international formalization and attempted implementation of ideas about humanity. Globalization of immigration restrictions. Very sharp increase in number and speed of global forms of communication. The first ‘international novels.’ Rise of ecumenical movement. Development of global competitions—for example the Olympics and Nobel prizes. Implementation of world time and near-global adoption of Gregorian calendar. First world war.

Phase IV: The Struggle-for-Hegemony Phase. Lasting from the mid-1920s until the late-1960s. Disputes and wars about the fragile terms of the dominant globalization process established by the end of the take-off period. Establishment of the League of Nations and then the United Nations. Principle of national independence established. Conflicting conceptions of modernity (Allies v. the Axis), followed by high point of the Cold War (conflict within ‘the modern project’). Nature of and prospects for humanity sharply focused by the Holocaust and use of the atomic bomb. The crystallization of the Third World.

Phase V: The Uncertainty Phase. Beginning in the late 1960s and displaying crisis tendencies in the early 1990s. Heightening of global consciousness in late 1960s. Moon landing. Accentuation of ‘post-materialist’ values. End of the Cold War and manifest rise of the problem of ‘rights’ and widespread access to nuclear and thermonuclear weaponry. Number of global institutions and movements greatly increases. Sharp acceleration in means of global communication. Societies increasingly facing problems of multi-culturality and polyethnicity. Conceptions of individuals rendered more complex by gender, sexual, ethnic and racial considerations. Civil rights become a global issue. International system more fluid—end of bipolarity. Concern with humankind as a species-community greatly enhanced, particularly via environmental movements. Arising of interest in world civil society and world citizenship, in spite of ‘the ethnic revolution.’ Consolidation of global media system, including rivalries about such. Islam as a deglobalizing/reglobalizing movement. Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

This is merely an outline, with much detail and more rigorous analysis and interpretation of the shifting relationships between and the relative autonomization of each of the four major components to be worked out. Some of this is attempted in the following chapters. Clearly one of the most important empirical questions has to do with tire extent to which the form of

globalization which was set firmly in motion during the period 1870–1925 will ‘hold’ in the coming decades. In more theoretical vein, much more needs to be done to demonstrate the ways in which the selective responses of relevant collective actors, particularly societies, to globalization play a crucial part in the making of the world as a whole. Different forms of societal participation in the globalization process make a crucial difference to its precise form. My main

point is that there is a general autonomy and ‘logic’ to the globalization process, which operates in *relative* independence of strictly societal and other more conventionally studied sociocultural processes. The global system is not simply an outcome of processes of basically intrasocietal origin (contra Luhmann, 1982) or even a development of the inter-state system. Its making has been and continues to be much more complex than that.

NOTES

1. It is of more than passing interest to note that in speaking of communism as a radical branch of one of ‘the great “reform” movements of post-medieval Western history’—socialism—Talcott Parsons said in 1964 that ‘it seems a safe prediction that Communism will, from its own internal dynamics, evolve in the direction of the restoration—or where it has yet not existed, the institution—of political democracy’ (1964: 396–7). On the other hand, Parsons insisted, problematically, that the *internationalism* of communism had made a crucial contribution to world order.
2. Ronald Inglehart (1990: 33) observes in the course of his empirical analysis of culture in advanced industrial societies ‘that the publics of the three major Axis powers, Germany, Japan, and Italy, all tend to be underachievers in life satisfaction. The traumatic discrediting of their social and political systems that accompanied their defeat in World War II may have left a legacy of cynicism that their subsequent social change and economic success has still not entirely erased.’
3. I owe the precise phrases ‘local-global nexus’ and ‘global-local nexus’ to Chadwick Alger (1988).

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73. THE THREE INSTANCES OF HEGEMONY IN THE HISTORY OF THE CAPITALIST WORLD-ECONOMY

Immanuel Wallerstein (1930–2019) is the most influential exponent of world-systems theory. This macro-sociological theory, rooted in the Marxist tradition, is intent on viewing capitalism as a world-wide system from a perspective that emphasizes the *longue durée* and the operation of long-term cycles of development. This means that rather than viewing capitalism as essentially arising during the nineteenth century's Industrial Revolution, Wallerstein seeks to trace its rise to dominance from 1450 forward, with his more recent writings examining what he sees as the gradual demise of the system. He contends that there have been only two world systems in human history: the world empires of the ancient world and the modern capitalist world-economy that is undergirded by political and military domination. Indeed, he thinks it is a serious mistake to contend that capitalism can be understood solely in economic terms; it is at once an economic and a political system. In this essay, Wallerstein discusses the conceptual salience of "hegemony" in making sense of the way the modern world-system links its core exploiting nations to the nations on the periphery and semi-periphery. He identifies three points at which hegemonic states rose to prominence and notes the significance that was played in a process that resulted in a restructuring of international relations.

When one is dealing with a complex, continuously evolving, large-scale historical system, concepts that are used as shorthand descriptions for structural patterns are only useful to the degree one clearly lays out their purpose, circumscribes their applicability, and specifies the theoretical framework they presuppose and advance.

Let me therefore state some premises which I shall not argue at this point. If you are not willing to regard these premises as plausible, you will not find the way I elaborate and use the concept of hegemony very useful. I assume that there exists a concrete singular historical system which I shall call the "capitalist world-economy," whose temporal boundaries go from the long sixteenth century to the present. Its spatial boundaries originally included Europe (or most of it) plus Iberian America but they subsequently expanded

to cover the entire globe. I assume this totality is a *system*, that is, that it has been relatively autonomous of external forces; or to put it another way, that its patterns are explicable largely in terms of its internal dynamics. I assume that it is a *historical* system, that is, that it was born, has developed, and will one day cease to exist (through disintegration or fundamental transformation). I assume lastly that it is the dynamics of the system itself that explain its historically changing characteristics. Hence, insofar as it is a system, it has structures and these structures manifest themselves in cyclical rhythms, that is, mechanisms which reflect and ensure repetitious patterns. But insofar as this system is historical, no rhythmic movement ever returns the system to an equilibrium point but instead moves the system along various continua which may be called the secular trends of this system. These trends eventually

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must culminate in the impossibility of containing further reparations of the structured dislocations by restorative mechanisms. Hence the system undergoes what some call “bifurcating turbulence” and others the “transformation of quantity into quality.”

To these methodological or metaphysical premises, I must add a few substantive ones about the operations of the capitalist world-economy. Its mode of production is capitalist; that is, it is predicated on the endless accumulation of capital. Its structure is that of an axial social division of labor exhibiting a core/periphery tension based on unequal exchange. The political superstructure of this system is that of a set of so-called sovereign states defined by and constrained by their membership in an interstate network or system. The operational guidelines of this interstate system include the so-called balance of power, a mechanism designed to ensure that no single state ever has the capacity to transform this interstate system into a single world-empire whose boundaries would match that of the axial division of labor. There have of course been repeated attempts throughout the history of the capitalist world-economy to transform it in the direction of a world-empire, but these attempts have all been frustrated. However, there have also been repeated and quite different attempts by given states to achieve hegemony in the interstate system, and these attempts have in fact succeeded on three occasions, if only for relatively brief periods.

The thrust of hegemony is quite different from the thrust to world empire; indeed it is many ways almost its opposite. I will therefore (1) spell out what I mean by hegemony, (2) describe the analogies in the three purported instances, (3) seek to decipher the roots of the thrust to hegemony and suggest why the thrust to hegemony has succeeded three times but never lasted too long, and (4) draw inferences about what we may expect in the proximate future. The point of doing all this is not to erect a Procrustean category into which to fit complex historical reality but to illuminate what I believe to be one of the central processes of the modern world-system.

(1) Hegemony in the interstate system refers to that situation in which the ongoing rivalry between the so-called “great powers” is so unbalanced that one power

can largely impose its rules and its wishes (at the very least by effective veto power) in the economic, political, military, diplomatic, and even cultural arenas. The material base of such power lies in the ability of enterprises domiciled in that power to operate more efficiently in all three major economic arenas—agro-industrial production, commerce, and finance. The edge in efficiency of which we are speaking is one so great that these enterprises can not only outbid enterprises domiciled in other great powers in the world market in general, but quite specifically in very many instances within the home markets of the rival powers themselves.

I mean this to be a relatively restrictive definition. It is not enough for one power’s enterprises simply to have a larger share of the world market than any other or simply to have the most powerful military forces or the largest political role. I mean hegemony only to refer to situations in which the edge is so significant that allied major powers are *de facto* client states and opposed major powers feel relatively frustrated and highly defensive vis-à-vis the hegemonic power. And yet while I want to restrict my definition to instances where the margin or power differential is really great, I do not mean to suggest that there is ever any moment when a hegemonic power is omnipotent and capable of doing anything it wants. Omnipotence does not exist within the interstate system.

Hegemony therefore is not a state of being but rather one end of a fluid continuum which describes the rivalry relations of great powers to each other. At one end of this continuum is an almost even balance, a situation in which many powers exist, all somewhat equal in strength, and with no clear or continuous groupings. This is rare and unstable. In the great middle of this continuum, many powers exist, grouped more or less into two camps, but with several neutral or swing elements, and with neither side (nor a *fortiori* any single state) being able to impose its will on others. This is the statistically normal situation of rivalry within the interstate system. And at the other end lies the situation of hegemony, also rare and unstable.

At this point, you may see what it is I am describing but may wonder why I am bothering to give it a name and thereby focus attention upon it. It is because I suspect hegemony is not the result of a random

reshuffling of the cards but is a phenomenon that emerges in specifiable circumstances and plays a significant role in the historical development of the capitalist world-economy.

(2) Using this restrictive definition, the only three instances of hegemony would be the United Provinces in the mid-seventeenth century, the United Kingdom in the mid-nineteenth, and the United States in the mid-twentieth. If one insists on dates, I would tentatively suggest as maximal bounding points: 1625–72, 1815–73, 1945–67. But of course, it would be a mistake to try to be too precise when our measuring instruments are both so complex and so crude.

I will suggest four areas in which it seems to me what happened in the three instances was analogous. To be sure, analogies are limited. And to be sure, since the capitalist world-economy is in my usage a single continuously evolving entity, it follows by definition that the overall structure was different at each of the three points in time. The differences were real, the outcome of the secular trends of the world-system. But the structural analogies were real as well, the reflection of the cyclical rhythms of this same system.

The first analogy has to do with the sequencing of achievement and loss of relative efficiencies in each of the three economic domains. What I believe occurred was that in each instance enterprises domiciled in the given power in question achieved their edge first in agro-industrial production, then in commerce, and then in finance.¹ I believe they lost their edge in this sequence as well (this process having begun but not yet

having been completed in the third instance). Hegemony thus refers to that short interval in which there is *simultaneous* advantage in all three economic domains.

The second analogy has to do with the ideology and policy of the hegemonic power. Hegemonic powers during the period of their hegemony tended to be advocates of global “liberalism.” They came forward as defenders of the principle of the free flow of the factors of production (goods, capital, and labor) throughout the world-economy. They were hostile in general to mercantilist restrictions on trade, including the existence of overseas colonies for the stronger countries. They extended this liberalism to a generalized endorsement of liberal parliamentary institutions (and a concurrent distaste for political change by violent means), political restraints on the arbitrariness of bureaucratic power, and civil liberties (and a concurrent open door to political exiles). They tended to provide a high standard of living for their national working classes, high by world standards of the time.

None of this should be exaggerated. Hegemonic powers regularly made exceptions to their anti-mercantilism, when it was in their interest to do so. Hegemonic powers regularly were willing to interfere with political processes in other states to ensure their own advantage. Hegemonic powers could be very repressive at home, if need be, to guarantee the national “consensus.” The high working-class standard was steeply graded by internal ethnicity. Nevertheless, it is quite striking that liberalism as an ideology did flourish in these countries at precisely the moments of their hegemony, and to a significant extent only then and there.

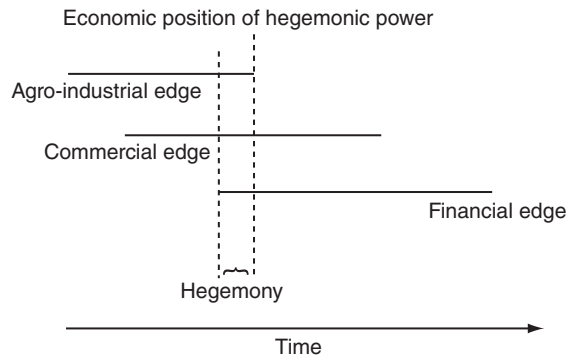


CHART 73.1 Capitalist World-Economy

The third analogy is in the pattern of global military power. Hegemonic powers were primarily sea (now sea/air) powers. In the long ascent to hegemony, they seemed very reluctant to develop their armies, discussing openly the potentially weakening drain on state revenues and manpower of becoming tied down in land wars. Yet each found finally that it had to develop a strong land army as well to face up to a major land-based rival which seemed to be trying to transform the world-economy into a world-empire.

In each case, the hegemony was secured by a thirty-year-long world war. By a world war, I shall mean (again somewhat restrictively) a land-based war that involves (not necessarily continuously) almost all the major military powers of the epoch in warfare that is very destructive of land and population. To each hegemony is attached one of these wars. World War Alpha was the Thirty Years' War from 1618–48, when Dutch interests triumphed over Hapsburg in the world-economy. World War Beta was the Napoleonic Wars from 1792–1815, when British interests triumphed over French. World War Gamma was the long Euroasian wars from 1914–45 when U.S. interests triumphed over German.

While limited wars have been a constant of the operations of the interstate system of the capitalist world-economy (there having been scarcely any year when there was not some war some place within the system), world wars have been, by contrast, a rarity. In fact their rarity and the fact that the number and timing seem to have correlated with the achievement of hegemonic status by one power brings us to the fourth analogy.

If we look to those very long cycles that Rondo Cameron has dubbed "logistics," we can see that world wars and hegemony have been in fact related to them. There has been very little scholarly work done on these logistics. They have been most frequently discussed in the comparisons between the A–B sequences of 1100–1450 and 1450–1750. There are only a few discussions of the logistics that may exist after the latter point in time. But if we take the prime observation which has been used to define these logistics—secular inflation and deflation—the pattern seems in fact to have continued.

It therefore might be plausible to argue the existence of such (price) logistics up to today using the following dates: 1450–1730, with 1600–1650 as a flat peak; 1730–1897, with 1810–17 as a peak; and 1897 to ?,

with an as yet uncertain peak. If there are such logistics, it turns out that the world war and the (subsequent) hegemonic era are located somewhere around (just before and after) the peak of the logistic. That is to say, these processes seem to be the product of the long competitive expansion which seemed to have resulted in a particular concentration of economic and political power.

The outcome of each world war included a major restructuring of the interstate system (Westphalia; the Concert of Europe; the U.N. and Bretton Woods) in a form consonant with the need for relative stability of the now hegemonic power. Furthermore, once the hegemonic position was eroded economically (the loss of the efficiency edge in agro-industrial production), and therefore hegemonic decline set in, one consequence seemed to be the erosion of the alliance network which the hegemonic power had created patiently, and ultimately a serious reshuffling of alliances.

In the long period following the era of hegemony, two powers seemed eventually to emerge as the "contenders for the successions"—England and France after Dutch hegemony; the U.S. and Germany after British; and now Japan and western Europe after U.S. Furthermore, the eventual winner of the contending pair seemed to use as a conscious part of its strategy the gentle turning of the old hegemonic power into its "junior partner"—the English *vis-à-vis* the Dutch, the U.S. *vis-à-vis* Great Britain . . . and now?

(3) Thus far I have been primarily descriptive. I realize that this description is vulnerable to technical criticism. My coding of the data may not agree with everyone else's. I think nonetheless that as an initial effort this coding is defensible and that I have therefore outlined a broad repetitive pattern in the functioning of the interstate question. The question now is how to interpret it. What is there in the functioning of a capitalist world-economy that gives rise to such a cyclical pattern in the interstate system?

I believe this pattern of the rise, temporary ascendancy, and fall of hegemonic powers in the interstate system is merely one aspect of the central role of the political machinery in the functioning of capitalism as a mode of production.

There are two myths about capitalism put forward by its central ideologues (and, strangely, largely

accepted by its nineteenth-century critics). One is that it is defined by the free flow of the factors of production. The second is that it is defined by the non-interference of the political machinery in the "market." In fact, capitalism is defined by the *partially* free flow of the factors of production and by the *selective* interference of the political machinery in the "market." Hegemony is an instance of the latter.

What defines capitalism most fundamentally is the drive for the endless accumulation of capital. The interferences that are "selected" are those which advance this process of accumulation. There are however two problems about "interference." It has a cost, and therefore the benefit of any interference is only a benefit to the extent it exceeds this cost. Where the benefits are available without any "interference," this is obviously desirable, as it minimizes the "deduction." And secondly, interference is always in favor of one set of accumulators as against another set, and the latter will always seek to counter the former. These two considerations circumscribe the politics of hegemony in the interstate system.

The costs to a given entrepreneur of state "interference" are felt in two main ways. First, in financial terms, the state may levy direct taxes which affect the rate of profit by requiring the firm to make payments to the state, or indirect taxes, which may alter the rate of profit by affecting the competitiveness of a product. Secondly, the state may enact rules which govern flows of capital, labor, or goods, or may set minimum and/or maximum prices. While direct taxes always represent a cost to the entrepreneur, calculations concerning indirect taxes and state regulations are more complex, since they represent costs both to the entrepreneur and to (some of) his competitors. The chief concern in terms of individual accumulation is not the absolute cost of these measures, but the comparative cost. Costs, even if high, may be positively desirable from the standpoint of a given entrepreneur, if the state's actions involve still higher costs to some competitor. Absolute costs are only of concern if the loss to the entrepreneur is greater than the medium-run gain which is possible through greater competitiveness brought about by such state actions. It follows that absolute cost is of greatest concern to those entrepreneurs who would do best in open market competition in the absence of state interference.

In general, therefore, entrepreneurs are regularly seeking state interference in the market in multiple forms—subsidies, restraints of trade, tariffs (which are penalties for competitors of different nationality), guarantees, maxima for input prices and minima for output prices, etc. The intimidating effect of internal and external repression is also of direct economic benefit to entrepreneurs. To the extent that the ongoing process of competition and state interference leads to oligopolistic conditions within state boundaries, more and more attention is naturally paid to securing the same kind of oligopolistic conditions in the most important market, the world market.

The combination of the competitive thrust and constant state interference results in a continuing pressure towards the concentration of capital. The benefits of state interference inside and outside the state boundaries is cumulative. In political terms, this is reflected as expanding world power. The edge a rising power's economic enterprises have vis-à-vis those of a competitive rising power may be thin and therefore insecure. This is where the world wars come in. The thirty-year struggle may be very dramatic militarily and politically. But the profoundest effect may be economic. The winner's economic edge is expanded by the very process of the war itself, and the post-war interstate settlement is designed to encrust that greater edge and protect it against erosion.

A given state thus assumes its world "responsibilities" which are reflected in its diplomatic, military, political, ideological, and cultural stances. All conspire to reinforce the cooperative relationship of the entrepreneurial strata, the bureaucratic strata, and with some lag the working-class strata, of the hegemonic power. This power may then be exercised in a "liberal" form—given the real diminution of political conflict within the state itself compared to earlier and later periods, and to the importance in the interstate arena of delegitimizing the efforts of other state machineries to act against the economic superiorities of the hegemonic power.

The problem is that global liberalism, which is rational and cost effective, breeds its own demise. It makes it more difficult to retard the spread of technological expertise. Hence over time it is virtually inevitable that entrepreneurs coming along later will be able to enter the most profitable markets with the

most advanced technologies and younger “plant,” thus eating into the material base of the productivity edge of the hegemonic power.

Secondly, the internal political price of liberalism, needed to maintain uninterrupted production at a time of maximal global accumulation, is the creeping rise of real income of both the working strata and the cadres located in the hegemonic power. Over time, this must reduce the competitive advantage of the enterprises located in this state.

Once the clear productivity edge is lost, the structure cracks. As long as there is a hegemonic power, it can coordinate more or less the political responses of all states with core-like economic activities to all peripheral states, maximizing thereby the differentials of unequal exchange. But when hegemony is eroded, and especially when the world-economy is in a Kondratieff downturn, a scramble arises among the leading powers to maintain their shares of the smaller pie, which undermines their collective ability to extract surplus via unequal exchange. The rate of unequal exchange thereby diminishes (but never to zero) and creates further incentive to a reshuffling of alliance systems.

In the period leading to the peak of a logistic, which leads towards the creation of the momentary era of hegemony, the governing parable is that of the tortoise and the hare. It is not the state that leaps ahead politically and especially militarily that wins the race, but the one that plods along improving inch by inch its long-term competitiveness. This requires a firm but discreet and intelligent organization of the entrepreneurial effort by the state-machinery. Wars may be left to others, until the climactic world war when the hegemonic power must at least invest its resources to clinch its victory. Thereupon comes “world responsibility” with its benefits but also its (growing) costs. Thus the hegemony is sweet but brief.

(4) The inferences for today are obvious. We are in the immediate post-hegemonic phase of this third logistic of the capitalist world-economy. The U.S. has lost its productive edge but not yet its commercial and financial superiorities; its military and political power edge is no longer so overwhelming. Its abilities to dictate to its allies (western Europe and Japan), intimidate its foes, and overwhelm the weak (compare the Dominican Republic in 1965 with El Salvador today) are vastly impaired. We are in the beginnings of a major reshuffling of alliances.² yet, of course, we are only at the beginning of all this. Great Britain began to decline in 1873, but it was only in 1982 that it was openly challenged by Argentina, a middle-ranking military power.

The major question is whether this third logistic will act itself out along the lines of the previous ones. The great difference of this third logistic from the first two is that the capitalist world-economy has now entered into a structural crisis as an historical system. The question is whether this fact will obliterate these cyclical processes. I do not believe it will obliterate them but rather that it will work itself out in part through them.³

We should not invest more in the concept of hegemony than is there. It is a way of organizing our perception of process, not an “essence” whose traits are to be described and whose eternal recurrences are to be demonstrated and then anticipated. A processual concept alerts us to the forces at play in the system and the likely nodes of conflict. It does not do more. But it also does not do less. The capitalist world-economy is not comprehensible unless we analyze clearly what are the political forms which it has engendered and how these forms relate to other realities. The interstate system is not some exogenous, God-given, variable which mysteriously restrains and interacts with the capitalist drive for the endless accumulation of capital. It is its expression at the level of the political arena.

NOTES

1. I have described this in empirical detail for the first instance in *The Modern World-System, II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600–1750* (New York: Academic, 1980), ch.2.
2. See my “North Atlanticism in Decline,” *SAIS Review*, No.4, Summer, 1982, 21–26.
3. For a debate about this, see the Conclusions of S. Amin, G. Arrighi, A. G. Frank, and I. Wallerstein, *Dynamics of Global Crisis* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1982).

74. THE COSMOPOLITAN CONDITION: WHY METHODOLOGICAL NATIONALISM FAILS

Most recently a professor at both the University of Munich (where he directs a center on reflexive modernization) and the London School of Economics, Ulrich Beck (1944–2015) is a wide-ranging social theorist who has contributed to our understanding of modernity, particularly the significance of risk in modern societies; to the varied impacts of globalization; and most recently to cosmopolitanism. All of these themes are intertwined in this essay on the “cosmopolitan condition,” the specific focus of which is to suggest that the implications of this new social landscape wherein the interconnections across national boundaries expand dramatically. As Beck notes at the outset, cosmopolitanism is a term with varied meanings. He seeks to distinguish his position from what he sees as the normative approach of figures such as Jürgen Habermas, his alternative being to articulate what it means for doing sociological research, which includes how to examine new modes of addressing diversity. In making a case for his version of Cosmopolitan Sociology, Beck takes aim at what he refers to as methodological nationalism, arguing for the necessity of replacing it with a methodological cosmopolitanism.

At the beginning of the 21st century, we are witnessing a global transformation of modernity, which calls for a re-thinking of cosmopolitanism for the social sciences. The newly awakened interest in cosmopolitanism is fed by various sources: globalization research, mobility and migration research, international relations, international law, postcolonial studies, post-feminism, global cultural studies, geography, ethnography, actor-network and science and technology studies, the debates on ‘new wars’ and human rights as well as mass media communication science, to mention only the most important. In sociology, at present, these analyses are condensing into the paradigm of a ‘Cosmopolitan Sociology’ (Beck, 2006; Beck and Sznaider, 2006). At its centre there is, on the one hand, the search for new research methods and strategies and, on the other, the question as to new forms of dealing with otherness in society in an increasingly

globalized world. Dealing with otherness includes the otherness of nature and the materiality of threats which is not the focus of this article, but an essential part of the programme of cosmopolitan sociology (Latour, 2003).

Both tendencies can be clearly distinguished from the philosophical-normative cosmopolitanism dominant until now, whose authors (e.g. Jürgen Habermas [2001] and David Held [1995]) read Kant’s world citizenship sociologically. Cosmopolitanism is, of course, a contested term; there is no uniform interpretation in the growing literature. The boundaries separating it from competing terms like globalization, transnationalism, universalism, glocalization, etc. are not distinct; but there is an identifiable intellectual movement—working on ‘New Cosmopolitanism’ or ‘Realistic Cosmopolitanism’—united by at least three interconnected commitments: (1) a shared critique of

methodological nationalism; (2) the shared diagnosis that the 21st century is an age of cosmopolitanism; and (3) the shared assumption that for this reason we need some kind of methodological cosmopolitanism.

First, a *shared critique of methodological nationalism*, which subsumes society under the nation-state. There are two dimensions of this: a historical and a systematic understanding of methodological nationalism.

It is evident that, in the 19th century, European sociology was formulated within a nationalist paradigm and that any cosmopolitan sentiments were snuffed out by the horrors of the Great Wars. Responding to the 'ghost of Marx', it was class and in particular the rise of the working class, which was seen as the great social problem and the solidarity of the nation-state was seen as the solution. In the methodological nationalism of Émile Durkheim, fraternity became solidarity and national integration.

Max Weber's sociology involved a comparative study of economic ethics of world religions, but the political inspiration for his sociology was nationalistic. Indeed, in the Freiburg Inaugural Lecture, Weber employed a Darwinistic view of international relations in which he observed that future generations would hold his generation responsible for not creating sufficient 'elbow room' in East Germany to support a strong German state.

In North America, the same national paradigm is evident. Of course, Talcott Parsons adopted a comparative sociological approach and was a student of European social thought, but his sociological interest and approach was American. In his *The System of Modern Societies* (1971: 1), Parsons starts with the admission that the thesis that informs his work

is that the modern type of society has emerged in a single evolutionary area, the West, which is a century of Europe that fell heir to the Western part of the Roman Empire north of the Mediterranean. The society of western Christendom, then, provided the base for which we shall call the 'system' of modern societies 'took off'.

Most classical sociology today is the study of the 'national society' under the umbrella of 'society'. We should not forget that classical sociology was the product of national struggles, the Franco-German War of

1870 and the First World War at the beginning of the 20th century.

Systematically, methodological nationalism takes the following ideal premises for granted: it equates society with nation-state societies, and sees states and their governments as the cornerstones of a social sciences analysis. It assumes that humanity is naturally divided into a limited number of nations, which on the inside, organize themselves as nation-states, and on the outside, set boundaries to distinguish themselves from other nation-states. It goes even further: this outer delimitation, as well as the competition between nation-states, presents the most fundamental category of political organization. Indeed, the social science stance is rooted in the concept of the nation-state. It is a nation-state outlook on society and politics, law, justice and history, that governs the sociological imagination. And it is exactly this methodological nationalism that prevents the social science from getting at the heart of the dynamics of modernization and globalization, both past and present; the *unintended* result of the radicalization of modernity is a disempowerment of Western states, in sharp contrast to their empowerment before and during the 19th-century wave of globalization (Beck, 2005).

Second, *the shared diagnosis that the 21st century is becoming an age of cosmopolitanism*. In the 1960s, Hannah Arendt (1958) analysed the Human Condition, in the 1970s, Jean-François Lyotard (1984) the Postmodern Condition; now at the beginning of the 21st century we have to discover, map and understand the *Cosmopolitan Condition*.

Third, *there is a shared assumption that for that reason we need some kind of 'methodological cosmopolitanism'*. Of course, there is a lot of controversy about what this means. We can distinguish three phases in how the code word 'globalization' has been used in the social sciences: first, denial; second, conceptual refinement and empirical research; and, third, epistemological shift.

To the extent that the second phase was successful, the insight began to gain ground that the nation-state unit of research has become arbitrary when the distinctions between national and international, local and global, us and them, lose their sharp contours. The question for the research agenda following the epistemological turn is: what happens when the premises and boundaries that define the units of empirical

research and theory disintegrate? The answer is that the whole conceptual world of the 'national outlook' becomes disenchanting, stripped of its necessity. We need an alternative which replaces ontology with methodology: what are alternative, non-national units of research? What are post-national concepts of the social and the political? How can we invent a methodology of 'cosmopolitan understanding' in order to decode the multi-ethnic, multi-religious conflicts insight of France, of Germany, and on a global scale? How does cosmopolitanism relate to universalism, relativism, nationalism, etc.? In other words, the sociology for the 21st century has to be reinvented.

As prisoners of methodological nationalism we do not understand Europeanization, we do not understand the new global meta-power game. We do not understand that the nation-state legitimacy of social inequalities is being challenged to its core by universalized human rights, we do not understand the 'global generation' and its transnational fragments, and so on. This is because we are captured by zombie categories, sociology is threatening to become a zombie science, a museum piece of antiquated ideas.

THE COSMOPOLITAN CONDITION

The Cosmopolitan Condition can be explained, for example, in relation to global risks. The experience of global risks—Chernobyl, 9/11, BSE or the mass media, the experience of the Asian tsunami which induced a planetary torrent of sorrow—is an occurrence of abrupt and full confrontation of the apparently excluded other. Global risks tear down national boundaries and jumble together the native with the foreign. The distant other is becoming the inclusive other. Everyday life is becoming cosmopolitan. Human beings must find a meaning of life in the exchange with others and no longer in the encounter with the like. This is what I call 'enforced cosmopolitanization': global risks activate and connect actors across borders, who otherwise don't want to have anything to do with one another.

I propose, in this sense, that a clear distinction is to be made between the philosophical and normative ideas of cosmopolitanism, on the one hand, and the *impure actual enforced cosmopolitanization*, on the other. The crucial point about this distinction is that cosmopolitanism

cannot, for example, only become real deductively in a translation of the sublime principles of philosophy, but also and above all through the back door of global risks, unseen, unintended, enforced. Down through history, cosmopolitanism was detained of being elitist, idealistic, imperialistic, capitalist; today, however, we see that reality itself has become cosmopolitan. Cosmopolitanism, then, does not mean—as it did for Immanuel Kant—an asset, a task, that is to order the world. Cosmopolitanization in world risk society opens our eyes to the uncontrollable liabilities that something might happen to us, might befall us and, which at the same time could stimulate us, to make borders transcend new beginnings. Risks cut through the self-absorption of cultures, languages, religions and systems as well as the national and international agenda of politics; they overturn their priorities and create contexts for action between camps, parties and quarrelling nations, which ignore and oppose one another.

What is meant by that can be explained with reference to Hannah Arendt. The existential shock of danger—therein lies the fundamental ambivalence of global risks—opens up unintentionally (and often also unseen and underutilized) the (mis)fortune of a possible new beginning (which is no reason for false sentimentality). How to live in the shadow of global risks? How to live, when old certainties are shattered or are now revealed as lies? Arendt's answer anticipates the ambivalence of risk. The expectation of the unexpected requires that the self-evident is no longer taken as self-evident. The shock of danger is a call for a new beginning. Where there is a new beginning, action is possible. Human beings enter into relations across borders. This common activity by strangers across borders means freedom. All freedom is contained in this ability to begin.

IS THERE A HISTORIC ALTERNATIVE OF POLITICAL ACTION?

It is precisely this question that I have tried to answer in my book *Power in the Global Age* (Beck, 2005). Here I can outline only two premises: (1) world risk society brings a new, historic key logic to the fore: No nation can cope with its problems alone. (2) A realistic political alternative in the global age is possible, which counteracts the loss to globalized capital of the

commanding power of state politics. The condition is, that globalization must be decoded not as economic fate, but as a strategic game for world power.

(1) The nation-state, which attempts to deal with global risks in isolation, resembles a drunk man, who on a dark night is trying to find his lost wallet in the cone of light from a street lamp. To the question: Did you actually lose your wallet here?, he replies, 'No, but in the light of the street lamp I can at least look for it.' In other words, global risks are producing 'failed states'—even in the West (latest example: the Iraq war). The state structure evolving under the conditions of world risk society could be characterized in terms of both inefficiency and post-democratic authority. A clear distinction, therefore, has to be made between rule and inefficiency. It is quite possible that the end result could be the gloomy perspective, that we have totally ineffective and authoritarian state regimes (even in the context of the Western democracies).

(2) But this is normal sociology. There is a nostalgia and '*kulturkritischer Pessimismus*' built into the foundations of sociological thought which has never disappeared—starting with Max Weber and today including Foucault, system theory and postmodernism. Perhaps this nostalgia can be overcome by the theory of world risk society. My aim is a non-nostalgic New Critical Theory to look at both the past and the future of modernity. The word for this is neither 'utopianism' nor 'pessimism' but 'ambivalence'. Yes, there is a historic alternative of political action. The new global domestic politics that is already at work here and now, beyond the national-international distinction, has become a meta-power game, whose outcome is completely open-ended. It is a game in which boundaries, basic rules and basic distinctions are renegotiated—not only those between the national and the international spheres, but also those between global business and the state, transnational civil society movements, supranational organizations and national governments and societies. No single player or opponent can ever win on their own; they all are dependent on alliances. This is the way, then, in which the *hazy power game of global domestic politics* opens up its own immanent alternatives and oppositions.

The first one, which is dominant today, gives the priority of power to global capital. The goal of the

strategies of capital is, in simplified terms, to merge capital with the state in order to open up new sources of legitimacy in the form of the *neo-liberal state*. Its orthodoxy says: There is only one revolutionary power, which rewrites the rules of the global power order, and that is capital, while the other actors—nation-states and civil society movements remain bound by the limited options of action and power of the national and international order. This dominant coalition of capital and national minimal state is in no position to respond to the challenges of world risk society.

The strategies of action, which global risks open up, overthrow the order of power that has formed in the neo-liberal capital-state coalition: global risks *empower states and civil society movements*, because they reveal new sources of legitimation and options for action for these groups of actors; they *disempower globalized capital*, on the other hand, because the consequences of investment decisions contribute to creating global risks, destabilizing markets and activating the power of that sleeping giant, the consumer. Conversely, the goal of global civil society and its actors is to achieve a connection between civil society and the state, that is, to bring about what I call a *cosmopolitan form of statehood* (including a cosmopolitan form of democracy).

This is not wishful thinking, on the contrary, it is an expression of a *cosmopolitan realpolitik*. In an age of global crises and risks, a politics of 'golden handcuffs'—the creation of a dense network of transnational interdependencies—is exactly what is needed in order to regain *national* autonomy, not least in relation to a highly mobile world economy. The maxims of nation-based *realpolitik*—that national interests must necessarily be pursued by national means—must be replaced by the maxims of *cosmopolitan realpolitik*: the more cosmopolitan our political structures and activities, the more successful they will be in promoting national interests and the greater our individual power in this global age will be. The historic examples of globally empowered individuals are transnational actor-networks and movements, including terrorist networks.

Global risks are the expression of a new form of global interdependence, which cannot be adequately addressed by way of national politics, nor by the available forms of international co-operation. All the past

and present practical experiences of human beings in dealing with uncertainty now exist side by side, without offering any ready solution to the resulting problems. Not only that: key institutions of modernity such as science, business and politics, which are supposed to guarantee rationality and security, find themselves confronted by situations in which their apparatus no longer has purchase and the fundamental principles of modernity no longer automatically hold good. Indeed, the perception of their rating changes—from trustee to suspect. They are no longer seen only as instruments of risk *management*, but also as a *source* of risk.

TRAGIC INDIVIDUALIZATION

As a consequence, everyday life in world risk society is characterized by a new variant of individualization. The individual must cope with the uncertainty of the global world by him- or herself. Here individualization is the default outcome of a *failure* of expert systems to manage risks. Neither science, nor the politics in power, nor the mass media, nor business, nor the law or even the military are in a position to define or control risks rationally. The individual is forced to mistrust the promises of rationality of these key institutions. As a consequence, people are thrown back onto themselves, they are alienated from expert systems but have nothing else instead. *Disembedding without embedding*—this is the formula for this dimension of individualization: the individual, whose senses fail him in the face of ungraspable threats, who, thrown back on himself, is blind to dangers, remains at the same time unable to escape the power of definition of expert systems, whose judgement he cannot, yet must, trust. Sustaining an individual self of integrity in world risk society is indeed a tragic affair.

Of course, there are fundamental ambivalences. I am talking here about only one large transnational fraction of everyday life in world risk society. At the same time we observe the rise of (what might be called) the ‘individualization of war’: the transnational super-empowerment of the individual vis-à-vis the super-state power. But that is a different story.

CONSEQUENCES FOR SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY AND RESEARCH

How does this relate to the basic conceptual ideas of international sociology which have appeared since the 1970s, such as ‘world system theory’ (Wallerstein, 2004) and ‘world polity’ (Drori et al., 2006)? Immanuel Wallerstein’s ‘world system theory’ is still captured by an enlarged methodological nationalism, because it presupposes the national-international dualism—as does John Meyer’s concept of ‘world polity’. Even though both concepts are powerful in producing extremely interesting empirical interpretations, they both ignore the historical fact that the distinction, which underpins their view of the world, namely, that between national and international spheres, is now dissolving. Nonetheless, it was this duality that helped to shape the world of the first modernity, including the key concepts (and theories) of society, state, sovereignty, legitimacy, class, solidarity, generation, and so on.

We then have to ask: How might we conceptualize a world in a set of global dynamics in which the problematic consequences of radicalized modernization effectually eliminate cornerstones and logics of action—certain historically produced fundamental distinctions and basic institutions—of its nation-state order? Thus my theory of ‘reflexive or second modernity’ is about the unintended consequences and challenges of the *success* of modernity. It is about *more* modernity and the crises it produces, but *not* about *post*-modernity.

How does this renewed cosmopolitan curiosity and sociological imagination relate to the post-Second World War period of sociological thinking? In the 1960s, the *Frankfurt School* and the *Critical Theory* dominated the intellectual movements. In the 1980s, this role was assumed by the *French post-modernists*; and now a cosmopolitan mixture in global sociology could give birth to a cosmopolitan vision for the humanities. This opens up the horizon for a *new Cosmopolitan Critical Theory* which investigates the social and political grammar of the Cosmopolitan Condition and therefore has a strong standing against the retrogressive idealism of the national perspective in politics, research and theory.

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75. DISJUNCTION AND DIFFERENCE IN THE GLOBAL CULTURAL ECONOMY

Despite differences among globalization theorists, there is a general consensus that globalization is a consequence of the reduction in the constraints of geography on economic, political, social, and cultural social arrangements—the result of a process that geographer David Harvey has called “time-space compression.” While these various aspects of globalization are interconnected, they also need to be analytically distinguished. In this excerpt from *Modernity at Large* (1996), anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (b. 1949) focuses on globalization’s cultural dimensions. More specifically, he is concerned with providing a framework intended to assist in our understanding of disjunctures in the global culture. He does so by defining five “dimensions of cultural flows,” giving them the following distinctive names: ethnoscapas, mediascapas, technoscapas, financescapas, and ideoscapas.

It takes only the merest acquaintance with the facts of the modern world to note that it is now an interactive system in a sense that is strikingly new. Historians and sociologists, especially those concerned with translocal processes (Hodgson 1974) and the world systems associated with capitalism (Abu-Lughod 1989; Braudel 1981–84; Curtin 1984; Wallerstein 1974; Wolf 1982), have long been aware that the world has been a congeries of large-scale interactions for many centuries. Yet today’s world involves interactions of a new order and intensity. Cultural transactions between social groups in the past have generally been restricted, sometimes by the facts of geography and ecology, and at other times by active resistance to interactions with the Other (as in China for much of its history and in Japan before the Meiji Restoration). Where there have been sustained cultural transactions across large parts of the globe, they have usually involved the long-distance journey of commodities (and of the merchants most concerned with them) and of travelers and explorers of every type (Helms 1988; Schafer 1963). The two main forces for sustained cultural interaction before

this century have been warfare (and the large-scale political systems sometimes generated by it) and religions of conversion, which have sometimes, as in the case of Islam, taken warfare as one of the legitimate instruments of their expansion. Thus, between travelers and merchants, pilgrims and conquerors, the world has seen much long-distance (and long-term) cultural traffic. This much seems self-evident.

But few will deny that given the problems of time, distance, and limited technologies for the command of resources across vast spaces, cultural dealings between socially and spatially separated groups have, until the past few centuries, been bridged at great cost and sustained over time only with great effort. The forces of cultural gravity seemed always to pull away from the formation of large-scale ecumenes, whether religious, commercial, or political, toward smaller-scale accretions of intimacy and interest.

Sometime in the past few centuries, the nature of this gravitational field seems to have changed. Partly because of the spirit of the expansion of Western maritime interests after 1500, and partly because of the

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relatively autonomous developments of large and aggressive social formations in the Americas (such as the Aztecs and the Incas), in Eurasia (such as the Mongols and their descendants, the Mughals and Ottomans), in island-Southeast Asia (such as the Buginese), and in the kingdoms of precolonial Africa (such as Dahomey), an overlapping set of ecumenes began to emerge, in which congeries of money, commerce, conquest, and migration began to create durable cross-societal bonds. This process was accelerated by the technology transfers and innovations of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (e.g., Bayly 1989), which created complex colonial orders centered on European capitals and spread throughout the non-European world. This intricate and overlapping set of Eurocolonial worlds (first Spanish and Portuguese, later principally English, French, and Dutch) set the basis for a permanent traffic in ideas of peoplehood and selfhood, which created the imagined communities (Anderson 1983) of recent nationalisms throughout the world.

With what Benedict Anderson has called “print capitalism,” a new power was unleashed in the world, the power of mass literacy and its attendant large-scale production of projects of ethnic affinity that were remarkably free of the need for face-to-face communication or even of indirect communication between persons and groups. The act of reading things together set the stage for movements based on a paradox—the paradox of constructed primordialism. There is, of course, a great deal else that is involved in the story of colonialism and its dialectically generated nationalisms (Chatterjee 1986), but the issue of constructed ethnicities is surely a crucial strand in this tale.

But the revolution of print capitalism and the cultural affinities and dialogues unleashed by it were only modest precursors to the world we live in now. For in the past century, there has been a technological explosion, largely in the domain of transportation and information, that makes the interactions of a print-dominated world seem as hard-won and as easily erased as the print revolution made earlier forms of cultural traffic appear. For with the advent of the steamship, the automobile, the airplane, the camera, the computer, and the telephone, we have entered into an altogether new condition of neighborliness, even with those most distant from ourselves. Marshall McLuhan,

among others, sought to theorize about this world as a “global village,” but theories such as McLuhan’s appear to have overestimated the communitarian implications of the new media order (McLuhan and Powers 1989). We are now aware that with media, each time we are tempted to speak of the global village, we must be reminded that media create communities with “no sense of place” (Meyrowitz 1985). The world we live in now seems rhizomic (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), even schizophrenic, calling for theories of rootlessness, alienation, and psychological distance between individuals and groups on the one hand, and fantasies (or nightmares) of electronic propinquity on the other. Here, we are close to the central problematic of cultural processes in today’s world.

Thus, the curiosity that recently drove Pico Iyer to Asia (1988) is in some ways the product of a confusion between some ineffable McDonaldization of the world and the much subtler play of indigenous trajectories of desire and fear with global flows of people and things. Indeed, Iyer’s own impressions are testimony to the fact that, if a global cultural system is emerging, it is filled with ironies and resistances, sometimes camouflaged as passivity and a bottomless appetite in the Asian world for things Western.

Iyer’s own account of the uncanny Philippine affinity for American popular music is rich testimony to the global culture of the hyperreal, for somehow Philippine renditions of American popular songs are both more widespread in the Philippines, and more disturbingly faithful to their originals, than they are in the United States today. An entire nation seems to have learned to mimic Kenny Rogers and the Lennon sisters, like a vast Asian Motown chorus. But *Americanization* is certainly a pallid term to apply to such a situation, for not only are there more Filipinos singing perfect renditions of some American songs (often from the American past) than there are Americans doing so, there is also, of course, the fact that the rest of their lives is not in complete synchrony with the referential world that first gave birth to these songs.

In a further globalizing twist on what Fredric Jameson has recently called “nostalgia for the present” (1989), these Filipinos look back to a world they have never lost. This is one of the central ironies of the politics of global cultural flows, especially in the arena of

entertainment and leisure. It plays havoc with the hegemony of Eurochronology. American nostalgia feeds on Filipino desire represented as a hypercompetent reproduction. Here, we have nostalgia without memory. The paradox, of course, has its explanations, and they are historical; unpacked, they lay bare the story of the American missionization and political rape of the Philippines, one result of which has been the creation of a nation of make-believe Americans, who tolerated for so long a leading lady who played the piano while the slums of Manila expanded and decayed. Perhaps the most radical postmodernists would argue that this is hardly surprising because in the peculiar chronicities of late capitalism, pastiche and nostalgia are central modes of image production and reception. Americans themselves are hardly in the present anymore as they stumble into the mega-technologies of the twenty-first century garbed in the film-noir scenarios of sixties' chills, fifties' diners, forties' clothing, thirties' houses, twenties' dances, and so on ad infinitum.

As far as the United States is concerned, one might suggest that the issue is no longer one of nostalgia but of a social *imaginaire* built largely around reruns. Jameson was bold to link the politics of nostalgia to the postmodern commodity sensibility, and surely he was right (1983). The drug wars in Colombia recapitulate the tropical sweat of Vietnam, with Ollie North and his succession of masks—Jimmy Stewart concealing John Wayne concealing Spiro Agnew and all of them transmogrifying into Sylvester Stallone, who wins in Afghanistan—thus simultaneously fulfilling the secret American envy of Soviet imperialism and the rerun (this time with a happy ending) of the Vietnam War. The Rolling Stones, approaching their fifties, gyrate before eighteen-year-olds who do not appear to need the machinery of nostalgia to be sold on their parents' heroes. Paul McCartney is selling the Beatles to a new audience by hitching his oblique nostalgia to their desire for the new that smacks of the old. *Drag-net* is back in nineties' drag, and so is *Adam-12*, not to speak of *Batman* and *Mission Impossible*, all dressed up technologically but remarkably faithful to the atmospherics of their originals.

The past is now not a land to return to in a simple politics of memory. It has become a synchronic warehouse of cultural scenarios, a kind of temporal central

casting, to which recourse can be taken as appropriate, depending on the movie to be made, the scene to be enacted, the hostages to be rescued. All this is par for the course, if you follow Jean Baudrillard or Jean-François Lyotard into a world of signs wholly unmoored from their social signifiers (all the world's a Disneyland). But I would like to suggest that the apparent increasing substitutability of whole periods and postures for one another, in the cultural styles of advanced capitalism, is tied to larger global forces, which have done much to show Americans that the past is usually another country. If your present is their future (as in much modernization theory and in many self-satisfied tourist fantasies), and their future is your past (as in the case of the Filipino virtuosos of American popular music), then your own past can be made to appear as simply a normalized modality of your present. Thus, although some anthropologists may continue to relegate their Others to temporal spaces that they do not themselves occupy (Fabian 1983), post-industrial cultural productions have entered a postnostalgic phase.

The crucial point, however, is that the United States is no longer the puppeteer of a world system of images but is only one node of a complex transnational construction of imaginary landscapes. The world we live in today is characterized by a new role for the imagination in social life. To grasp this new role, we need to bring together the old idea of images, especially mechanically produced images (in the Frankfurt School sense); the idea of the imagined community (in Anderson's sense); and the French idea of the imaginary (*imaginaire*) as a constructed landscape of collective aspirations, which is no more and no less real than the collective representations of Émile Durkheim, now mediated through the complex prism of modern media.

The image, the imagined, the imaginary—these are all terms that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: *the imagination as a social practice*. No longer mere fantasy (opium for the masses whose real work is elsewhere), no longer simple escape (from a world defined principally by more concrete purposes and structures), no longer elite pastime (thus not relevant to the lives of ordinary people), and no longer mere contemplation (irrelevant for new forms of desire and subjectivity), the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form

of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibility. This unleashing of the imagination links the play of pastiche (in some settings) to the terror and coercion of states and their competitors. The imagination is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order. But to make this claim meaningful, we must address some other issues.

HOMOGENIZATION AND HETEROGENIZATION

The central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization. A vast array of empirical facts could be brought to bear on the side of the homogenization argument, and much of it has come from the left end of the spectrum of media studies (Hamelink 1983; Mattelart 1983; Schiller 1976), and some from other perspectives (Gans 1985; Iyer 1988). Most often, the homogenization argument subspecies into either an argument about Americanization or an argument about commoditization, and very often the two arguments are closely linked. What these arguments fail to consider is that at least as rapidly as forces from various metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenized in one or another way: this is true of music and housing styles as much as it is true of science and terrorism, spectacles and constitutions. The dynamics of such indigenization have just begun to be explored systemically (Barber 1987; Feld 1988; Hannerz 1987, 1989; Ivy 1988; Nicoll 1989; Yoshimoto 1989), and much more needs to be done. But it is worth noticing that for the people of Irian Jaya, Indonesianization may be more worrisome than Americanization, as Japanization may be for Koreans, Indianization for Sri Lankans, Vietnamization for the Cambodians, and Russianization for the people of Soviet Armenia and the Baltic republics. Such a list of alternative fears to Americanization could be greatly expanded, but it is not a shapeless inventory: for polities of smaller scale, there is always a fear of cultural absorption by polities of larger scale, especially those that are nearby. One man's imagined community is another man's political prison.

This scalar dynamic, which has widespread global manifestations, is also tied to the relationship between nations and states, to which I shall return later. For the moment let us note that the simplification of these many forces (and fears) of homogenization can also be exploited by nation-states in relation to their own minorities, by posing global commoditization (or capitalism, or some other such external enemy) as more real than the threat of its own hegemonic strategies.

The new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (even those that might account for multiple centers and peripheries). Nor is it susceptible to simple models of push and pull (in terms of migration theory), or of surpluses and deficits (as in traditional models of balance of trade), or of consumers and producers (as in most neo-Marxist theories of development). Even the most complex and flexible theories of global development that have come out of the Marxist tradition (Amin 1980; Mandel 1978; Wallerstein 1974; Wolf 1982) are inadequately quirky and have failed to come to terms with what Scott Lash and John Urry have called disorganized capitalism (1987). The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics that we have only begun to theorize.

I propose that an elementary framework for exploring such disjunctures is to look at the relationship among five dimensions of global cultural flows that can be termed (a) *ethnoscapes*, (b) *mediascapes*, (c) *technoscapes*, (d) *financescapes*, and (e) *ideoscapes*. The suffix-scape allows us to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes, shapes that characterize international capital as deeply as they do international clothing styles. These terms with the common suffix *-scape* also indicate that these are not objectively given relations that look the same from every angle of vision but, rather, that they are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as subnational groupings and movements (whether religious, political, or economic), and even intimate face-to-face groups, such as villages, neighborhoods, and families. Indeed, the individual actor is the last locus

of this perspectival set of landscapes, for these landscapes are eventually navigated by agents who both experience and constitute larger formations, in part from their own sense of what these landscapes offer.

These landscapes thus are the building blocks of what (extending Benedict Anderson) I would like to call *imagined worlds*, that is, the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe. . . . An important fact of the world we live in today is that many persons on the globe live in such imagined worlds (and not just in imagined communities) and thus are able to contest and sometimes even subvert the imagined worlds of the official mind and of the entrepreneurial mentality that surrounds them.

By *ethnoscapes*, I mean the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree. This is not to say that there are no relatively stable communities and networks of kinship, friendship, work, and leisure as well as of birth, residence, and other filial forms. But it is to say that the warp of these stabilities is everywhere shot through with the woof of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move. What is more, both these realities and fantasies now function on larger scales, as men and women from villages in India think not just of moving to Poona or Madras but of moving to Dubai and Houston, and refugees from Sri Lanka find themselves in South India as well as in Switzerland, just as the Hmong are driven to London as well as to Philadelphia. And as international capital shifts its needs, as production and technology generate different needs, as nation-states shift their policies on refugee populations, these moving groups can never afford to let their imaginations rest too long, even if they wish to.

By *technoscapes*, I mean the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology and the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries. Many countries now are the roots of multinational enterprise: a huge

steel complex in Libya may involve interests from India, China, Russia, and Japan, providing different components of new technological configurations. The odd distribution of technologies, and thus the peculiarities of these technoscapes, are increasingly driven not by any obvious economies of scale, of political control, or of market rationality but by increasingly complex relationships among money flows, political possibilities, and the availability of both un- and highly skilled labor. So, while India exports waiters and chauffeurs to Dubai and Sharjah, it also exports software engineers to the United States—indentured briefly to Tata-Burroughs or the World Bank, then laundered through the State Department to become wealthy resident aliens, who are in turn objects of seductive messages to invest their money and know-how in federal and state projects in India.

The global economy can still be described in terms of traditional indicators (as the World Bank continues to do) and studied in terms of traditional comparisons (as in Project Link at the University of Pennsylvania), but the complicated technoscapes (and the shifting ethnoscapes) that underlie these indicators and comparisons are further out of the reach of the queen of social sciences than ever before. How is one to make a meaningful comparison of wages in Japan and the United States or of real-estate costs in New York and Tokyo, without taking sophisticated account of the very complex fiscal and investment flows that link the two economies through a global grid of currency speculation and capital transfer?

Thus it is useful to speak as well of *financescapes*, as the disposition of global capital is now a more mysterious, rapid, and difficult landscape to follow than ever before, as currency markets, national stock exchanges, and commodity speculations move megamonies through national turnstiles at blinding speed, with vast, absolute implications for small differences in percentage points and time units. But the critical point is that the global relationship among ethnoscapes, technoscapes, and financescapes is deeply disjunctive and profoundly unpredictable because each of these landscapes is subject to its own constraints and incentives (some political, some informational, and some technoenvironmental), at the same time as each acts as a constraint and a parameter for movements in

the others. Thus, even an elementary model of global political economy must take into account the deeply disjunctive relationships among human movement, technological flow, and financial transfers.

Further refracting these disjunctures (which hardly form a simple, mechanical global infrastructure in any case) are what I call *mediascapes and ideoscapes*, which are closely related landscapes of images. *Mediascapes* refer both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film-production studios), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world, and to the images of the world created by these media. These images involve many complicated inflections, depending on their mode (documentary or entertainment), their hardware (electronic or preelectronic), their audiences (local, national, or transnational), and the interests of those who own and control them. What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide (especially in their television, film, and cassette forms) large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapings to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed. What this means is that many audiences around the world experience the media themselves as a complicated and interconnected repertoire of print, celluloid, electronic screens, and billboards. The lines between the realistic and the fictional landscapes they see are blurred, so that the farther away these audiences are from the direct experiences of metropolitan life, the more likely they are to construct imagined worlds that are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects, particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other imagined world.

Mediascapes, whether produced by private or state interests, tend to be image-centered, narrative-based accounts of strips of reality, and what they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of elements (such as characters, plots, and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives, their own as well as those of others living in other places. These scripts can and do get disaggregated into complex sets of metaphors by which people live (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) as they help to constitute

narratives of the Other and protonarratives of possible lives, fantasies that could become prolegomena to the desire for acquisition and movement.

Ideoscapings are also concatenations of images, but they are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counterideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it. These ideoscapes are composed of elements of the Enlightenment worldview, which consists of a chain of ideas, terms, and images, including *freedom, welfare, rights, sovereignty, representation*, and the master term *democracy*. The master narrative of the Enlightenment (and its many variants in Britain, France, and the United States) was constructed with a certain internal logic and presupposed a certain relationship between reading, representation, and the public sphere. (For the dynamics of this process in the early history of the United States, see Warner 1990.) But the diaspora of these terms and images across the world, especially since the nineteenth century, has loosened the internal coherence that held them together in a Euro-American master narrative and provided instead a loosely structured synopticon of politics, in which different nation-states, as part of their evolution, have organized their political cultures around different keywords (e.g., Williams 1976).

As a result of the differential diaspora of these keywords, the political narratives that govern communication between elites and followers in different parts of the world involve problems of both a semantic and pragmatic nature: semantic to the extent that words (and their lexical equivalents) require careful translation from context to context in their global movements, and pragmatic to the extent that the use of these words by political actors and their audiences may be subject to very different sets of contextual conventions that mediate their translation into public politics. Such conventions are not only matters of the nature of political rhetoric: for example, what does the aging Chinese leadership mean when it refers to the dangers of hooliganism? What does the South Korean leadership mean when it speaks of discipline as the key to democratic industrial growth?

These conventions also involve the far more subtle question of what sets of communicative genres are valued in what way (newspapers versus cinema, for

example) and what sorts of pragmatic genre conventions govern the collective readings of different kinds of text. So, while an Indian audience may be attentive to the resonances of a political speech in terms of some keywords and phrases reminiscent of Hindi cinema, a Korean audience may respond to the subtle codings of Buddhist or neo-Confucian rhetoric encoded in a political document. The very relationship of reading to hearing and seeing may vary in important ways that determine the morphology of these different ideoscapes as they shape themselves in different national and transnational contexts. This globally variable synaesthesia has hardly even been noted, but it demands urgent analysis. Thus *democracy* has clearly become a master term, with powerful echoes from Haiti and Poland to the former Soviet Union and China, but it sits at the center of a variety of ideoscapes, composed of distinctive pragmatic configurations of rough translations of other central terms from the vocabulary of the Enlightenment. This creates ever new terminological kaleidoscopes, as states (and the groups that seek to capture them) seek to pacify populations whose own ethnoscapescapes are in motion and whose mediascapescapes may create severe problems for the ideoscapes with which they are presented. The fluidity of ideoscapes is complicated in particular by the growing diasporas (both voluntary and involuntary) of intellectuals who continuously inject new meaning-streams into the discourse of democracy in different parts of the world.

This extended terminological discussion of the five terms I have coined sets the basis for a tentative formulation about the conditions under which current global flows occur: they occur in and through the growing disjunctures among ethnoscapescapes, technoscapescapes, financescapescapes, mediascapescapes, and ideoscapes. This formulation, the core of my model of global cultural flow, needs some explanation. First, people, machinery, money, images, and ideas now follow increasingly nonisomorphic paths; of course, at all periods in human history, there have been some disjunctures in the flows of these things, but the sheer speed, scale, and volume of each of these flows are now so great that the disjunctures have become central to the politics of global culture. The Japanese are notoriously hospitable to ideas and are stereotyped as inclined to export (all) and import (some) goods, but

they are also notoriously closed to immigration, like the Swiss, the Swedes, and the Saudis. Yet the Swiss and the Saudis accept populations of guest workers, thus creating labor diasporas of Turks, Italians, and other circum-Mediterranean groups. Some such guest-worker groups maintain continuous contact with their home nations, like the Turks, but others, like high-level South Asian migrants, tend to desire lives in their new homes, raising anew the problem of reproduction in a deterritorialized context.

Deterritorialization, in general, is one of the central forces of the modern world because it brings laboring populations into the lower-class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies, while sometimes creating exaggerated and intensified senses of criticism or attachment to politics in the home state. Deterritorialization, whether of Hindus, Sikhs, Palestinians, or Ukrainians, is now at the core of a variety of global fundamentalisms, including Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism. In the Hindu case, for example, it is clear that the overseas movement of Indians has been exploited by a variety of interests both within and outside India to create a complicated network of finances and religious identifications, by which the problem of cultural reproduction for Hindus abroad has become tied to the politics of Hindu fundamentalism at home.

At the same time, deterritorialization creates new markets for film companies, art impresarios, and travel agencies, which thrive on the need of the deterritorialized population for contact with its homeland. Naturally, these invented homelands, which constitute the mediascapescapes of deterritorialized groups, can often become sufficiently fantastic and one-sided that they provide the material for new ideoscapes in which ethnic conflicts can begin to erupt. The creation of Khalistan, an invented homeland of the deterritorialized Sikh population of England, Canada, and the United States, is one example of the bloody potential in such mediascapescapes as they interact with the internal colonialisms of the nation-state (e.g., Hechter 1975). The West Bank, Namibia, and Eritrea are other theaters for the enactment of the bloody negotiation between existing nation-states and various deterritorialized groupings.

It is in the fertile ground of deterritorialization, in which money, commodities, and persons are involved in ceaselessly chasing each other around the world,

that the mediascapes and ideoscapes of the modern world find their fractured and fragmented counterpart. For the ideas and images produced by mass media often are only partial guides to the goods and experiences that deterritorialized populations transfer to one another. In Mira Nair's brilliant film *India Cabaret*, we see the multiple loops of this fractured deterritorialization as young women, barely competent in Bombay's metropolitan glitz, come to seek their fortunes as cabaret dancers and prostitutes in Bombay, entertaining men in clubs with dance formats derived wholly from the prurient dance sequences of Hindi films. These scenes in turn cater to ideas about Western and foreign women and their looseness, while they provide tawdry career alibis for these women. Some of these women come from Kerala, where cabaret clubs and the pornographic film industry have blossomed, partly in response to the purses and tastes of Keralites returned from the Middle East, where their diasporic lives away from women distort their very sense of what the relations between men and women might be. These tragedies of displacement could certainly be replayed in a more detailed analysis of the relations between the Japanese and German sex tours to Thailand and the tragedies of the sex trade in Bangkok, and in other similar loops that tie together fantasies about the Other, the conveniences and seductions of travel, the economics of global trade, and the brutal mobility fantasies that dominate gender politics in many parts of Asia and the world at large.

While far more could be said about the cultural politics of deterritorialization and the larger sociology of displacement that it expresses, it is appropriate at this juncture to bring in the role of the nation-state in the disjunctive global economy of culture today. The relationship between states and nations is everywhere an embattled one. It is possible to say that in many societies the nation and the state have become one another's projects. That is, while nations (or more properly groups with ideas about nationhood) seek to capture or co-opt states and state power, states simultaneously seek to capture and monopolize ideas about nationhood (Baruah 1986; Chatterjee 1986; Nandy 1989). In general, separatist transnational movements, including those that have included terror in their methods, exemplify nations in search of states. Sikhs,

Tamil Sri Lankans, Basques, Moros, Quebecois—each of these represents imagined communities that seek to create states of their own or carve pieces out of existing states. States, on the other hand, are everywhere seeking to monopolize the moral resources of community, either by flatly claiming perfect coequality between nation and state, or by systematically museumizing and representing all the groups within them in a variety of heritage politics that seems remarkably uniform throughout the world (Handler 1988; Herzfeld 1982; McQueen 1988).

Here, national and international mediascapes are exploited by nation-states to pacify separatists or even the potential fissiparousness of all ideas of difference. Typically, contemporary nation-states do this by exercising taxonomic control over difference, by creating various kinds of international spectacle to domesticate difference, and by seducing small groups with the fantasy of self-display on some sort of global or cosmopolitan stage. One important new feature of global cultural politics, tied to the disjunctive relationships among the various landscapes discussed earlier, is that state and nation are at each other's throats, and the hyphen that links them is now less an icon of conjuncture than an index of disjuncture. This disjunctive relationship between nation and state has two levels: at the level of any given nation-state, it means that there is a battle of the imagination, with state and nation seeking to cannibalize one another. Here is the seedbed of brutal separatisms—majoritarianisms that seem to have appeared from nowhere and microidentities that have become political projects within the nation-state. At another level, this disjunctive relationship is deeply entangled with the global disjunctures discussed throughout this chapter: ideas of nationhood appear to be steadily increasing in scale and regularly crossing existing state boundaries, sometimes, as with the Kurds, because previous identities stretched across vast national spaces or, as with the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the dormant threads of a transnational diaspora have been activated to ignite the micropolitics of a nation-state.

In discussing the cultural politics that have subverted the hyphen that links the nation to the state, it is especially important not to forget the mooring of such politics in the irregularities that now characterize disorganized capital (Kothari 1989; Lash and Urry 1987).

Because labor, finance, and technology are now so widely separated, the volatilities that underlie movements for nationhood (as large as transnational Islam on the one hand, or as small as the movement of the Gurkhas for a separate state in Northeast India) grind against the vulnerabilities that characterize the relationships between states. States find themselves pressed to stay open by the forces of media, technology, and travel that have fueled consumerism throughout the world and have increased the craving, even in the non-Western world, for new commodities and spectacles. On the other hand, these very cravings can become caught up in new ethnoscaples, mediascapes, and, eventually, ideoscapes, such as democracy in China, that the state cannot tolerate as threats to its own control over ideas of nationhood and peoplehood. States throughout the world are under siege, especially where contests over the ideoscapes of democracy are fierce and fundamental, and where there are radical disjunctures between ideoscapes and technoscapes (as in the case of very small countries that lack contemporary technologies of production and information); or between ideoscapes and finanscapes (as in countries such as Mexico or Brazil, where international lending influences national politics to a very large degree); or between ideoscapes and ethnoscapes (as in Beirut, where diasporic, local, and translocal filiations are suicidally at battle); or between ideoscapes and mediascapes (as in many countries in the Middle East and Asia) where the lifestyles represented on both national and international TV and cinema completely overwhelm and undermine the rhetoric of national politics. In the Indian case, the myth of the law-breaking hero has emerged to mediate this naked struggle between the pieties and realities of Indian politics, which has grown increasingly brutalized and corrupt (Vachani 1989).

The transnational movement of the martial arts, particularly through Asia, as mediated by the Hollywood and Hong Kong film industries (Zarilli 1995) is a rich illustration of the ways in which long-standing martial arts traditions, reformulated to meet the fantasies of contemporary (sometimes lumpen) youth populations, create new cultures of masculinity and violence, which are in turn the fuel for increased violence in national and international politics. Such violence is in turn the spur to an increasingly rapid and amoral arms

trade that penetrates the entire world. The worldwide spread of the AK-47 and the Uzi, in films, in corporate and state security, in terror, and in police and military activity, is a reminder that apparently simple technical uniformities often conceal an increasingly complex set of loops, linking images of violence to aspirations for community in some imagined world.

Returning then to the ethnoscapes with which I began, the central paradox of ethnic politics in today's world is that primordia (whether of language or skin color or neighborhood or kinship) have become globalized. That is, sentiments, whose greatest force is in their ability to ignite intimacy into a political state and turn locality into a staging ground for identity, have become spread over vast and irregular spaces as groups move yet stay linked to one another through sophisticated media capabilities. This is not to deny that such primordia are often the product of invented traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) or retrospective affiliations, but to emphasize that because of the disjunctive and unstable interplay of commerce, media, national policies, and consumer fantasies, ethnicity, once a genie contained in the bottle of some sort of locality (however large), has now become a global force, forever slipping in and through the cracks between states and borders.

But the relationship between the cultural and economic levels of this new set of global disjunctures is not a simple one-way street in which the terms of global cultural politics are set wholly by, or confined wholly within, the vicissitudes of international flows of technology, labor, and finance, demanding only a modest modification of existing neo-Marxist models of uneven development and state formation. There is a deeper change, itself driven by the disjunctures among all the landscapes I have discussed and constituted by their continuously fluid and uncertain interplay, that concerns the relationship between production and consumption in today's global economy. Here, I begin with Marx's famous (and often mined) view of the fetishism of the commodity and suggest that this fetishism has been replaced in the world at large (now seeing the world as one large, interactive system, composed of many complex subsystems) by two mutually supportive descendants, the first of which I call production fetishism and the second, the fetishism of the consumer.

By *production fetishism* I mean an illusion created by contemporary transnational production loci that masks translocal capital, transnational earning flows, global management, and often faraway workers (engaged in various kinds of high-tech putting-out operations) in the idiom and spectacle of local (sometimes even worker) control, national productivity, and territorial sovereignty. To the extent that various kinds of free-trade zones have become the models for production at large, especially of high-tech commodities, production has itself become a fetish, obscuring not social relations as such but the relations of production, which are increasingly transnational. The locality (both in the sense of the local factory or site of production and in the extended sense of the nation-state) becomes a fetish that disguises the globally dispersed forces that actually drive the production process. This generates alienation (in Marx's sense) twice intensified, for its social sense is now compounded by a complicated spatial dynamic that is increasingly global.

As for the *fetishism of the consumer*, I mean to indicate here that the consumer has been transformed through commodity flows (and the mediascapes, especially of advertising, that accompany them) into a sign, both in Baudrillard's sense of a simulacrum that only asymptotically approaches the form of a real social agent, and in the sense of a mask for the real seat of agency, which is not the consumer but the producer and the many forces that constitute production. Global advertising is the key technology for the worldwide dissemination of a plethora of creative and culturally well-chosen ideas of consumer agency. These images of agency are increasingly distortions of a world of merchandising so subtle that the consumer is consistently helped to believe that he or she is an actor, where in fact he or she is at best a chooser.

The globalization of culture is not the same as its homogenization, but globalization involves the use of a variety of instruments of homogenization

(armaments, advertising techniques, language hegemones, and clothing styles) that are absorbed into local political and cultural economies, only to be repatriated as heterogeneous dialogues of national sovereignty, free enterprise, and fundamentalism in which the state plays an increasingly delicate role: too much openness to global flows, and the nation-state is threatened by revolt, as in the China syndrome; too little, and the state exits the international stage, as Burma, Albania, and North Korea in various ways have done. In general, the state has become the arbitrageur of this *repatriation of difference* (in the form of goods, signs, slogans, and styles). But this repatriation or export of the designs and commodities of difference continuously exacerbates the internal politics of majoritarianism and homogenization, which is most frequently played out in debates over heritage.

Thus the central feature of global culture today is the politics of the mutual effort of sameness and difference to cannibalize one another and thereby proclaim their successful hijacking of the twin Enlightenment ideas of the triumphantly universal and the resiliency particular. This mutual cannibalization shows its ugly face in riots, refugee flows, state-sponsored torture, and ethnocide (with or without state support). Its brighter side is in the expansion of many individual horizons of hope and fantasy, in the global spread of oral rehydration therapy and other low-tech instruments of well-being, in the susceptibility even of South Africa to the force of global opinion, in the inability of the Polish state to repress its own working classes, and in the growth of a wide range of progressive, transnational alliances. Examples of both sorts could be multiplied. The critical point is that both sides of the coin of global cultural process today are products of the infinitely varied mutual contest of sameness and difference on a stage characterized by radical disjunctures between different sorts of global flows and the uncertain landscapes created in and through these disjunctures.

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SECTION XV

1. How does Robertson define globalization, and what does he see are its historical stages?
2. Although globalization has been emerging for several centuries, according to Robertson, why does he think that it is only in recent times that it has accelerated rapidly? Do you think we remain in what he calls an “uncertainty phase,” or have we moved beyond it?
3. What, according to Wallerstein, are the three instances of hegemony in the history of the capitalist world system, and how did each instance emerge?
4. What does Beck mean by methodological nationalism? Do you agree or disagree with his claim that it is an impediment to understanding globalization?
5. Summarize Beck’s understanding of cosmopolitanism in your own words and provide an example of the cosmopolitan condition.
6. What does Appadurai mean by “mediascapes?” How do they differ from and how are they related to “ideoscapes?”