

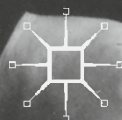
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# Time, Science and the Critique of Technological Reason

*Essays in Honour of  
Hermínio Martins*

Edited By José Esteban Castro,  
Bridget Fowler, and Luís Gomes

St Antony's Series



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José Esteban Castro  
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# Time, Science and the Critique of Technological Reason

Essays in Honour of Hermínio Martins

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## About the Book

This festschrift commemorates the legacy of UK-based Portuguese sociologist Hermínio Martins (1934–2015). It introduces Martins' wide-ranging contributions to the social sciences, encompassing seminal works in the fields of philosophy and social theory, historical and political sociology, studies of science and technology, and Luso-Brazilian studies, among others. The book features an in-depth interview with Martins, short memoirs and twelve chapters addressing topics that were central to his intellectual and political interests. Among these stands out his critique of Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific revolutions and his work on the significance of time in social theory, cultural revolutions in art and science, and the interweaving between technoscientific developments and socio-cultural transformations, including the impact of communication and digital technologies, and of market-led eugenics. Other themes covered are Martins' work on patrimonialism and social development in Portugal and Brazil, and his analysis of the state of the social sciences in Portugal, which reflects his highly critical appraisal of the ongoing marketization and neoliberalization of academic life and institutions worldwide.



Herminio Martins, 1975, Lisbon, Portugal  
Photograph taken by Margaret Martins

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**Bridget Fowler** is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the University of Glasgow. Having had the good fortune to be introduced to sociology by Hermínio Martins and a few other great teachers, she now specializes in social theory, Marxist-feminism and the sociology of culture. Her publications include *The Alienated Reader* (1991), *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory: Critical Investigations* (1997), *The Obituary as Collective Memory* (2007), Pierre Bourdieu: Unorthodox Marxist? in ed Simon Susen and Bryan Turner, *The Legacy of Pierre*

*Bourdieu* (2011) and a co-edited volume (with Matt Dawson, David Miller and Andrew Smith) *Stretching the Sociological Imagination* (2015).

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**Luís Gomes** participated in Hermínio Martins' weekly Portuguese Tables at St Antony's, Oxford, from which university he gained his DPhil. He is Deputy Director of the Stirling Maxwell Centre for the Study of Text/Image Cultures, an authority on Portuguese literature in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and the author of many publications on Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo, as well as works on learning Portuguese. He is University Lecturer in Hispanic studies at the University of Glasgow, UK.

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*Frankfurt School* (1979, reissued 2014), *Culture, Modernity and Revolution: Essays in Honour of Zygmunt Bauman* (eds. with Ian Varcoe), *The Sociological Revolution: From the Enlightenment to the Global Age* (1998, paperback 2002), *Norbert Elias: Post-philosophical Sociology* (2007) and, as editor or co-editor, several volumes of *The Collected Works of Norbert Elias* (2006–2014) as well as numerous articles on sociological theory and the sociology of knowledge. He is also an active member of the *Figurational Research Network of the Norbert Elias Foundation* (<http://www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/network/index.php>).

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**Leslie Sklair** studied for his B.A. in Sociology and Philosophy at Leeds, where he was taught by Hermínio Martins. He is now Emeritus Professor of Sociology at LSE. Among other publications, his books in the new millennium include *The Transnational Capitalist Class* (2001) and *Globalization: Capitalism and Its Alternatives* (2002). His new book, *The Icon Project: Architecture, Cities, and Capitalist Globalization* was published in 2017. He is now working on the Anthropocene and a world without capitalism.

**Charles Turner** graduated from Durham, completed his PhD at Goldsmiths College, University of London and is Associate Professor at the University of Warwick. His research interests are in the areas of social and political theory, collective memory and history, and Europe after communism. His publications include *Modernity and Politics in the Work of Max Weber* (1992) and *Investigating Sociological Theory* (2010), whilst he has edited (with Robert Fine) *Social Theory After the Holocaust* (2000), (with Ralf Rogowski) *The Shape of The New Europe* (2006) and (with Mark Erickson) *The Sociology of Wilhelm Baldamus: Paradox and Inference* (2010).

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# Introduction

Bridget Fowler

Hermínio Martins (1934–2015) was an exemplary academic. He had, quite simply, a great mind: he was analytically penetrating, extraordinarily well-read and endowed with a remarkable memory. He had acquired—perhaps from his early exile—an unerring sense of what was ethically or politically important. Both original and rigorous, Martins was also effortlessly amusing in his dissection of fashionable intellectual trends. In brief, he was a distinguished social theorist. A highly acclaimed professor in the Iberian-Brazilian academic world, he deserves to be much better known in Anglophone social science.

The contributions gathered together in this festschrift recapitulate some of his major well-known themes whilst further developing and elaborating on his thought in significant ways. Both newcomers to his work and those who remember him fondly will enjoy Helena Jerónimo's

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I am very grateful to my fellow editor, Esteban Castro, for reading and rereading this introductory essay and making invaluable comments for its improvement. Needless to say, the final responsibility for its content is my own.

B. Fowler (✉)  
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excellent interview, in which his voice comes through with particular clarity and power. The present introductory chapter aims to offer a further perspective on his chief accomplishments.

Martins' thought was endlessly fertile right up to his death. But four concerns emerge consistently over the years—patrimonialism and development in Portugal and Brazil; the conceptualisation of time, social transformation and the theory of scientific revolutions; technoscientific and digital advances; and finally, marketisation, particularly of the neo-liberal public university. The works dealing with these main themes show the progression of a thinker from being a dissident functionalist to a Western Marxist with structuralist leanings, underpinned by an enduring allegiance to Weber and a left-Durkheimian historical sociology. Throughout this odyssey, he honed his own radical humanism whilst exploding current theoretical delusions. Not least amongst his targets were the ultra-individualism of contemporary evolutionary biologists and the discursive idealism of extreme social constructionists.

## **Patrimonialism and Development in Portugal and Brazil**

Born in Mozambique in 1934, then a Portuguese colony, Martins' first publications (1967, 1968, 1969 and 1971) were devoted to the Portuguese and Brazilian political regimes. These early studies in historical sociology, enriched by a wide-ranging conceptual framework, trace closely the rise and structural base of the Estado Novo [New State] Portuguese dictatorship, which took power in 1929, became consolidated under António de Oliveira Salazar as P. M. in 1932 and was reinforced in 1968 by Marcelo Caetano. This was the regime that had forced Martins into exile in Britain, in 1951. He charts vividly the swelling ranks of resistance to this anti-democratic government despite the heavy penalties of torture, death and imprisonment. Subsequent to his writing, it was these opposition forces, headed by the military, which deposed and exiled Caetano in the Carnation Revolution of 1974.

Amongst their significant sociological features is, firstly, his argument that repressive social structures are not unique to 'totalitarian' societies,

like Nazi Germany or Stalin's USSR, but are found also in authoritarian dictatorships such as the Estado Novo regime, with its corporatist ideology of 'integralismo Lusitano' [Lusitanian integralism] (1968: 303–06; 1969). In particular, the pervasive censorship—especially the blocking of critical history—was not specific to Nazi Germany or Stalinism. The Salazarian regime banned opposition, strikes and any discussion of alternative visions of society. The State deployed both 'negative coefficients' and 'positive coefficients' to retain power. Thus what he calls the 'optimum coefficient of terror', between 500 and 2000 annual executions, was sufficient to repress active sources of resistance (1968: 329). Alongside this, the regime ensured the doxic hold of official collective memory, not least via the emotional appeals of its charismatic leaders and the ceremonies of its compulsory youth movement (1969).

Secondly, Martins was prescient in demonstrating how a traditionalist regime such as Estado Novo was able to modernise the economy in a capitalist direction. For Portugal was slowly opened up to foreign capital, including industrial investment, although its greatest beneficiaries were still the large feudal landowners from whom the integralist leaders came (1968: 307, 331; 1971: 67). This theoretical interest in a 'reactionary modernism' or 'reactionary nationalism' (1968: 335) was to become one of the distinctive hallmarks of his work (see also 1998). But he also recognised that such modernisation possessed inner contradictions or limits. Most notably, the military investments to sustain the large Portuguese Empire were economically irrational: in later years, between 40% and 45% of annual budgets were dedicated to colonial war (1968: 331) (cf. Anderson 1962: 90).

For Martins, Portugal's singularity in relation to Northern European societies originated from the frailty of its urban bourgeoisie in pioneering a hegemonic, anti-traditional civic ethos (1971: 63). That the middle class was kept weak was due partly to the scarcity of medium-size towns, partly to the absence of a 'sturdy yeoman class' or rural gentry. Indeed, Martins portrays this as a 'neoliberal' (1971: 63) social order in which capitalism was adopted and *fostered from above* to suit the needs of the upper-class elite. It was a 'classist' rather than an 'apparatic' dictatorship, one in which State contracts, 'familistic oligopolies', cooptation mechanisms and a complicit Catholic hierarchy blocked agrarian transformations (1971: 63).

Portugal thus lacked the rational bourgeois ethos and the collective economic goals adopted in British, French or American modernisation: ‘This’, he stresses, was a ‘parasitic involution of capitalism’ (1971: 69).

Thirdly, by mapping the international stratification order with its highly developed centre and dependent peripheries onto the internal structures and class composition of the Portuguese regime, Martins revealed a ‘bipolar’ society, resembling the characterisation that scholars like William Davidson (1947) and others had applied to Latin American countries from the 1940s (1971: 75). In this dual social structure, the bulk of the population was consigned to the internal periphery, whilst the area of modernisation was confined largely to the capital, Lisbon and the north-western seaboard (Porto) (1971: 75–77). Consequently, the property-owning peasantry within this market-oriented, kleptocratic regime saw their main hope for escape from poverty as lying in emigration. Indeed, certain cities abroad—Paris (the second or third biggest ‘Portuguese’ city) and Caracas—acquired the aura of ‘heterotopia’ (1971: 85), spaces of hope which substituted for the collective utopia and socialist goals found in societies with a larger and more autonomous working-class formation.

Lastly, Martins depicted Portugal under Estado Novo as a society that was distinguished by its *homogeneity*, despite the class and gender divisions and the dualistic elements that he had identified. It had an ethnically, linguistically, religiously and culturally unified social structure. Specifically, it lacked those disaffected aristocrats, religious minorities and Jewish intellectuals who elsewhere have been ‘sources of aid to subordinate classes in the early, critical stages of class conflict particularly before the consolidation of strong, autonomous, class organizations’ (1971: 61), whilst it had ‘failed to absorb any significant fraction of its colonial or ex-colonial subjects’ (1971: 60). Yet the opposition also possessed secret resources of organisational techniques keeping alive dissent: indeed, we might see Martins’ depiction here as similar to novels such as Saramago’s *Raised from the Ground* with its unforgettable representation of peasant rebellions against latifundist exploitation ([1980] 2013). The slowly increasing professional classes and urbanised ex-peasant working classes strengthened these opposition forces, producing, after Salazar, a degree of liberalisation (1969: 263). But the requisite

strength of the Portuguese opposition lay in recognising ‘the problem of the long haul’ so as to avoid being caught in the ‘imminence trap’ (1969: 257).

In his earliest work, Martins also turned to Latin America (1967). Writing about Brazil with great metaphysical pathos, he charted a world that had just been lost: a distinctively Brazilian ‘proto-Keynesian’ ‘developmental nationalism’. This developmentalism (‘desenvolvimentismo’) galvanised the country from 1956. With its roots in new structural forces and a new cultural configuration, it was ended summarily by the barbarity of the 1964–1985 military rule: the absent presence of this essay. Made feasible by an unprecedented alliance of Brazilian industrialists, entrepreneurs, planners and the skilled working class, developmentalism aimed at instituting a distinctively national capitalism (we might call it a ‘bourgeois revolution’ (Davidson 2012)). This entailed radical, bottom-up reforms which aimed to break the power of the coffee-growing latifundist elite, as well as the stagnating force of the externally facing metropolitan capitalist class. Politically, it inaugurated a ‘generalised ideological effervescence’ to use Martins’ Durkheimian language: ‘a national developmental *definition of reality*’ (1967: 155 (my italics)). Such a movement inaugurated a new ‘macrotime’, reorganising the nation for rapid modernisation. This, in turn, generated an altered ‘microtime’ or everyday world, in which clocks, calendars and diaries all testified to a changed quality of national lived experience.

Martins conveyed vividly this sense of altered political possibilities, deploying the Aristotelian language of ‘potential’. But his sociological stance was always also a critical realist one: he noted the massive structural obstacles which had to be surmounted—from the power of the landowning elite and their ‘patrimonial norms’ to the varied impediments of a segmentary division of labour, the hostility of media and the antagonistic interests of the global centre towards the periphery (1967: 160–162). Tellingly, despite an area of consensus permitting the nationalisation of coal and steel, there was no sustained opposition to the direction favoured by liberal international economists. Instead, developmentalism became deflected into a quasi-millennial movement, with charismatic leaders brushing aside the structural barriers to change.

## Time, Social Transformation and the Theory of Scientific Revolutions

Martins' first major epistemological essay (1972) was a masterly analysis of Thomas Kuhn's epoch-making philosophy of science (Kuhn 1966 (1962)). It is difficult to recall now the extraordinary impact of Kuhn's theory of the development of natural science via sudden episodic paradigm shifts, sweeping aside, as it did, the earlier critical rationalism of Karl Popper. Martins' distinction was to accept the general historical existence of paradigm changes whilst challenging Kuhn's specific propositions as to the nature and significance of scientific communities. Most specifically, he questioned the contention that a change of paradigm necessarily leads to a change in epistemology and research instrumentation. Martins, like Lakatos, preserved certain key aspects of the critical rationalist epistemological tradition: Kuhn's theory, on the other hand, postulated the radical incommensurability of 'infallible' paradigm constructions.

The synthesis of Martins' earlier historical sociological studies and his study of Kuhn appeared in his well-known *Time and Theory in Sociology* (1974). Here, as Charles Turner points out in his essay, he approaches the central paradox of the period: functionalism was being criticised for 'the bias towards synchrony, atemporality and ahistoricism' but its successor movements, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism and phenomenology were equally unadapted to addressing wider historical parameters; even Marxism's newest theoretical developments were 'precisely those of anti-historicism and structuralism' (1974: 247, 249). His argument progresses in two stages: in the first section, he makes a case for a 'functionalist revisionism' or what we might label a 'dissident functionalism'. Within this framework, he aims to chart the emergent functions that go beyond mere tension management but rather look towards a 'future system' even 'functionalist transformation' to end the 'generative instability' (1974: 248). He helps to generate an anti-evolutionist frame of reference with new concepts like 'asynchronisms', 'dysrhythms' and 'breakdown of modernisation', indeed (perhaps bearing contemporary Portuguese society in mind) he stresses that tradition and modernity can coexist in one society. Casting aside the 'cognitivist inflationism' of contemporary microsociology,

he seeks to theorise macrostructures afresh. Ideally he would build bridges from this endeavour to microtheory, with its rigorous pursuit of subjective meanings—although ‘there is clearly no immediate prospect of such a sociological millennium’ (1974: 252). The key, he suggests, is the ‘pluritemporalism’ on which Lévi-Strauss places such weight, following Cournot, that is, the different times occurring in different fields (see Martins 1998: 152–158, also Bourdieu 1988: 180).

He memorably addresses the weakness of much contemporary sociological thought, particularly its ‘methodological nationalism’, despite this being an age of multinational companies. If a break with such a narrow conceptual framework was to be made, then cross-national interrelations needed to be explored, as in dependency theory. Historical social change should neither be understood purely exogamously nor endogamously but both (‘isogenously’). It is particularly unacceptable, he aptly remarks, to treat Western societies as possessing purely endogenous changes and non-Western societies as possessing solely exogenous changes.

The final part of *Time and Theory* [...] focuses on ‘caesural’ or ruptural theories of change, including theories of ‘the great transformation’: in other words, alternatives to functionalism. Perhaps the most favourably endorsed by Martins is Gellner’s sophisticated conceptions of the great, irreversible transition towards urbanisation, industrialisation and a vernacular high culture, although he also points approvingly to Barrington Moore’s persuasive and monumental *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1966). In *Time and Theory* [...], however, he takes up again some of the themes that he had developed so brilliantly in his chapter on Thomas Kuhn (Martins 1972). In addressing ‘caesura’ in the form of scientific revolutions, he also opposes Kuhn’s anti-rationalist implications that there can be no growth of knowledge:

But to characterise such discontinuities as essentially and inherently akin to religious conversion [...] to imply the minimal import of trans-revolutionary, break-overriding invariants; to deny the growth of knowledge in the sense of increasing approximations to reality which does not simply cancel out and replace earlier states of scientific thought, is indeed to embrace a strict and radically caesural theory of scientific process and history. (Martins 1974: 283)

Thus, for Martins in *Time and Theory*, sociology must be—as Gouldner had proposed—a reflexive discipline:

*Sociology is a historicophilosophically reflexive discipline.* To say this is not to assert or imply historical relativism or some stultifying social determinant of truth. The sociology of knowledge need not entail such beliefs [,] as Durkheim's concern with the social epistemology of reason so dramatically showed. (Martins 1974: 287, his italics)

## The Technoscientific Ethos, Communications and Digital Media: The Approach from Sociological Theory

Martins published in the early 1990s a pioneering analysis of technological change, strangely entitled *Hegel, Texas: Issues in the Sociology and Philosophy of Technology* (1993). It starts by charting the little-known work of the left-Hegelian, Ernst Kapp, a German exile to Texas, who expanded the Hegelian theory of social transformation by incorporating technological growth. For Kapp, the overall criterion for assessing the efficacy of sociotechnical change was its success in ameliorating humans' imperfections via the improvement of wheelchairs, prosthetic limbs, spectacles and suchlike. This reasserted what Martins designates a tradition of 'finite Prometheanism' (see also 1996: 236, 1998: 156–163). In contrast, a different tradition has emerged since Kapp which Martins diagnoses as a 'Faustian [...] technological expressivism' (1998: 168, also 1993: 228–231). Its major interwar exponents, Spengler, Heidegger and Scheler, adopt a productionist perspective in which technology represents the sovereign will of the ethnoculture, the objectified form of a pure drive to world mastery. The Faustian vision—dismissive of any concerns for democracy, solidarity or justice—invests Western technology with the power of domination over both nature and humankind. Thus, where the Promethean drive envisages reducing the impact of accidents or impairments, the Faustian view of technology aims ultimately at transcending the human species or body altogether, creating a meta-human or transhuman (Martins 2007). In Martins' view, its logical



culmination is immortality, as anticipated in Bernal's extraordinary *The World, the Flesh and the Devil* which envisages certain brains being retained permanently in a cylindrical container after biological death (Bernal 1970 [1929]: 39–46, Martins 2007: 27, 33, fn. 46, 34).

This second, Faustian tradition differs crucially from the first in its 'technological Gnosticism' (2007: 37)—where Gnosticism is defined in part through its aversion to the natural human body ('somatophobia' (2001: 21)) or to nature in general. Predicted as early as the 1920s by the socialist biologist and Oxford-based Bloomsbury Group member, J. B. S. Haldane, this biotechnological project is characterised by innovations such as cerebral implants to gain microscopic or megaloscopic sight, ectogenetic gestation, human cloning and genetic selection (in popular culture, 'designer babies') (Dronamraju 1985: 3, 106–07). Martins explores the potential of this Faustian 'second creation' not just in terms of its capacity for fundamentally altering the human-machine interface but in terms of its hidden epistemological and ethical premises (see 1993, 1996: 237–240, 2001, 2007, 2013). In particular he extracts from its key exponents' works a covert possessive individualism and ethical nihilism, often masked by their iconoclastic atheism (2001, 2007, n.d.-a, n.d.-b).

Martins' successive studies of these themes, such as *Technology, Modernity, Politics* (1998) and the often wryly humorous *Goodbye Body!*, offer also a 'metatheoretical' framework situating his historical sociology of technology (2001). The Ancient Greeks contrasted the corporealist, continuist and plenist outlook of the Stoics, with its abhorrence of a vacuum and emphasis on abundance, against classical atomism which led directly to mechanical materialism. The former, more attractively, posit human needs and the wholeness—or holism—of the human. Indeed, a crucial line of descent connects the Stoic corporealist view to Renouvier's holism of the human and from that to Durkheim and Mauss's 'total social phenomenon'. In contrast, the classical atomistic view has chiefly identified the human with the mind and the mind with the brain; all are reductively considered in the purely *physicalist* terms of information processing, genetic transmission and so on (see Ells' memoir beneath).

Martins then addresses the economics of the body or rather its notable absence (2001: 16). For neither current mainstream economics nor its dissenting rivals - post-Keynesian, Kaleckian, Marxist, radical - have analysed

the new markets for sperm, ova and other body parts, the ‘universal body shop’ or ‘genetic supermarket’ (2001: 17, 2007, 2013: 32–33). He seeks to contrast this globalised, legal, ‘black’ or ‘red’ market for the body with alternative modes of supplying urgent needs. Of these, the paramount model, as he rightly says, is the generalised altruism implicit in the British blood donation model, theorised, following Mauss, in Titmuss’s classic *The Gift Relationship* (1970). It might be preferable to call this ‘reciprocity’ rather than ‘altruism’, but the essential difference of both from the marketisation for needs remains obvious. What specifically characterises the market for such products now is the globalisation of trade, leading to unanticipated matches in which infertile women may be supplied with eggs from those they regard as ‘others’. In a series of vivid accounts, Martins discusses the nature and implications of the new technologically facilitated market, moving from the sale even of kidneys in India for Western patients to the possible future Rawlsian ‘ethical’ imperative: the duty to reproduce oneself with the best genetic selection available (2007: 18)!

In this respect, another underlying dichotomy powers his later thought: that we are moving from ‘forced political eugenics’ (of the Nazi era or 1960s’ Sweden) to ‘a market in future bodies [an obligation to pursue] perfectionism [in bodily] genetic enhancement’ (2001: 18, 2007: 35). More succinctly, we are moving into an era of ‘microutopia of microeugenics’. (2001: 18) At the moment, hip and knee replacements (etc.) are offered in many countries on the basis of need, via socialised medicine. The key question for Martins is whether we will move forward into a ‘macrobiotic medical state’ on an *egalitarian* foundation or whether recipients will become a ‘macrobiotic caste’, recruited in the future solely by their ability to pay. He poignantly labels the latter prospect a new human ‘apartheid’<sup>1</sup> where the positional goods will be various forms of genetic and bodily enhancement, leading to relative deprivation for those denied them (2001: 18 fn. 41, 2007: 30, fn. 43).

Perhaps the most trenchant of his analyses is that of the ‘reprogenetic revolution’ in synthetic biology. Explored through the leitmotif of a biographical trajectory of potential technological choices, Martins pursues once again the dichotomy between the Promethean and the Faustian in his *Paths to the Post-Human* (2007)<sup>2</sup> and *Firms, Markets, Technology* (2013). For what has opened up in the Promethean tradition are the

medical advances in IVF that allow infertile couples to have one or even more than one child. The recent advance, however, is both socially and medically more of a novelty: where a *fertile* heterosexual woman uses IVF:

because being economically and professionally independent, they want to have children with the maximum freedom, whenever they want, without sex, without partners, without love, without the vexations of personal relationships. (Martins 2013: 4)

Martins is right, but he fails to comment that they may indeed have wanted love but not found it; moreover, even in many societies such as the USA, despite a proud self-image of gender equality, the brevity of maternity leave still makes ordinary reproduction hazardous.

The advent of both genetic counselling and IVF has meant that on the emerging market for sperm and eggs, a search for certain criteria for the hierarchy of desirable matches has emerged, inevitably relating to prices. Indeed, in a nice riff on this point, Martins suggests that a much quicker and easier solution to the problem of hierarchically ranking the quality of universities' research output, as in the British REF (Research Excellence Framework), would just be to take the relative prices of their female students' eggs as the rationale:

The oocytes of Harvard undergraduettes (sic) fetch the highest price by far in the relevant marketplace in the USA [...] relative to those of other women students in other American universities: in fact, there appears to be a strong correlation between this list and the international ranking of universities in the North American case. That being the case, it might be cheaper and far less time-consuming to determine the ranking of universities, at least of American ones [...] by this price list, than by the tedious procedures that have been set up in the last decade for this purpose. (Martins 2013: 40–41)

Underlying Martins' explorations of the 'new Copernican Revolution' with its merger of information science and technology are wider sociological issues. First, as in the caesura of *Time and Theory* and the exploration of the meanings of development in *Technology, Modernity, Politics*, there is a continued concern for the nature of social change or

what in the nineteenth century was called ‘progress’. He argues persuasively that whilst there is undoubtedly no such thing as aesthetic progress and, so far at least, no moral progress, it is indeed reasonable to talk of technological progress. But the development of technology cannot be understood on a gradualist model—rather as well as ‘piecemeal modifications’ [...] ‘bursts of radical invention and innovation take place and the pace of techno-economic change is accelerated’ (n.d-a: 6). Technological change can even be halted: he points to Japan in the seventeenth century where gunpowder and printing were prohibited. Of paramount importance, some new technologies may cease altogether: collective memory of the indispensable *tacit* knowledge that had underpinned their invention may be deliberately eradicated. Martins cites Donald MacKenzie and Graham Spinardi who have argued compellingly for this potential in the case of nuclear weapon technology (1998: ch. 10) (cited n.d-a: 11).

In his last works, Martins addresses Darwin’s conception of evolution as ‘endless forms of life most beautiful’ (Darwin, cited: n.d-a: 8, 19) but which is in fact likely to be shaped by the new and final Copernican Revolution, the new eugenics (2007: 19–20). Recent evolutionary biology, with its reprobogenic revolution, has been advanced by two rival theories, molecular and molar genetics (2001). Molecular genetics is a ‘physicalist’ theory based on ultra-determinist and atomist premises vis-à-vis nature and society, whilst the molar (mass) genetics is based on the probabilistic revolution, the acceptance of limits to determinism and reproduction as the consequence of both genes and non-genetic processes. The current genetic debate (or war) with the ‘selfish gene’ pitted against the ‘selfless gene’ is waged on the one side by molecular theorists like Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett, militant irreligionists who are also *scientistic* (or positivist) in their worldview, and on the other side by the protagonists of molar genetics, like the late Jacques Monod, concerned with the nature of both the Anthropocene age and the planet (cf 2007: 41). The former are blinkered by their physicalist metaphysic, adopting an atomistic ontology, an ethical nihilism and an extreme individualism: the vocabulary of computing supplies their key metaphor (n.d.-a). Crucially, they possess no model of the causal powers of the social—for institution making or collective creativity (n.d.-b: 8). Their worldview has indeed certain social affinities to the proliferation of flexible social

arrangements, zero-hour contracts and temporary employment which testify to the ‘enduring capacity of market democracy’ (n.d.-b: 8). In brief, Martins isolates a new form of possessive individualism in the radical evolutionism of molecular genetic biologists, with its pursuit of flexible short-term market outcomes.

Interestingly, this argument is expanded to the social sciences. For Martins has also developed a powerful critique of recent theoretical assessments of the body, viewing social constructionism as adopting an extreme version of the ‘sociocentric predicament’ (2001: 23). Social constructs, he argues, now incorporate the whole of the society, economy and even aspects of nature, downgrading the material elements of the body:

The contemporary world is full of materialists who rejoice that matter has finally been abolished (instead of matter, information and everything is information), cornucopian economists who claim that wealth is immaterial (in one sense), professed sensualists who loath monkish or Calvinist asceticism and yet want to overcome the grossness of the (organic) body once and for all [...]. (Martins 2001: 21)

Thus whilst he would certainly accept that culture feels like a second skin or second nature (see, e.g., Bourdieu 2001: 3–28), he is also concerned that the brute materiality of life, especially bodies, is being disregarded (see also Wainwright and Turner 2006).<sup>3</sup> At root, argues Martins, *radical* social constructionism is based on an ‘over-socialised view of the body’ (‘no extra-discursive bodies here!’).<sup>4</sup> But it is also crucial to avoid a twin theoretical distortion: an ‘over-strategic image of human beings’ encapsulated in Gary Becker and rational choice theory, as well as games theory (n.d.-a: 16). Based on these foundations, Martins has advanced a critical sociology of the body, prompted by contemporary trends to ‘technogenesis’, coupled with what Brenner has usefully conceptualised as ‘market fundamentalism’ (Brenner 2006). Indeed, he has convincingly extrapolated from the post-1970s’ turbo-charged capitalism (Brenner 2006) and the emergent international genetic supermarket, the rise of a physicalist biological individualism complicit with a new market-based eugenics (2007). He has warned us poignantly of the biotechnologists’

‘hubris’: ‘[M]oral imagination and civic courage of a high order will be needed to resist the tyranny of technological possibilities’ (1998: 174 (see also 2007: 41)).

A ‘precautionary ethic’ about new syntheses of man and machine lies behind his critique (see 1996). But he also has a different, radical humanist vision, more in tune with the needs of the climate and the Enlightenment. Against extreme social constructivism, relationship-free reproduction and repressive desublimation, he imagines a Kapp-like future. In this, technology might assist those with impairments and sterility rather than developing designer babies for the elite, ectogenetic pregnancies to save the figure, cloned humans to feed narcissism and brains in a vat to evade death (2007: 18, 20). Indeed, in a Bloch-like exploration of an alternative ‘principle of hope’, his use of Trotsky’s Promethean image of a humankind liberated from poverty, oppression, inequality and a stultifying division of labour is what stands out. Hence the memorable ending to his *Hegel, Texas* essay, in which he cites *Literature and Revolution* [1925] and the potential for many to become like Aristotle, Goethe or Marx, rather than the present flowering of the few alone, a tiny minority of ‘geniuses’ (1993: 236).

## Digital Democracy, the Neoliberal University and Marketisation

Martins broaches the transformed relations between the market and other social institutions in various works, including those governing the latest information technologies. Perhaps the most arresting is his indictment of the so-called university reforms, particularly in the light of the university depicted by Kant, Humboldt and other Enlightenment philosophers. This earlier public university served several ends, amongst them, the cultivation of individuality, the pursuit of knowledge and the formation of members of the professions. The contemporary university, on the other hand, is understood by governments and media as pre-eminently training students for the needs of the professional and skilled labour market, along with the provision of the basic research

required by private companies. Hence the uneasy relationship of all universities to the nation-state and corporations in which pressure is mounted on the:

already business-steeped and business-oriented university to reshape itself as an organisation, a business organisation serving other business organisations (as well, of course, as the defence establishment) dealing above all in intellectual property and intellectual capital, knowledge-as-commodity and knowledge-as-capital, as the price of survival. (Martins 2004: 12)

However, he adds, with a certain metaphysical pathos: ‘in surviving, thus, it will surely die as a university’.

There is an ongoing enclosure of the ‘global knowledge commons’ within the restructured university: a transformation that has been developing at different rhythms internationally.<sup>5</sup> Thus, echoing earlier theorists of development, he detects ‘a law of combined and uneven marketisation’ which operates, so that South African and other peripheral universities are the most advanced in marketisation practices. In brief, for Martins, we have entered a distinctive epoch of ‘academic turbo-capitalism’ (Martins 2004: 9) within the ‘biotech-merchant-state’ in which the existing relics of academic feudalism and ‘[welfare] statism’ become progressively eliminating. In this respect, he notices certain consequences, such as the reduction of the relationships between universities (‘knowledge providers’) and students (‘customers’) to those of the cash nexus (2004: 23).

It is the wider cultural contradictions of the new mode of academic capitalism that Martins excels in disclosing. Very schematically, these can be outlined as a new academic *stratification* with a ‘bimodal’ distribution of resources—externally, between elite and mass universities: internally, between a ‘super-professoriat’ and an ‘academic underclass’. The increasingly casualised underclass is becoming precarised on a long-term basis. These highly qualified staff have become the long-term workers in ‘academic Mcjobs’ (2004: 23). Here he notes—very presciently for the time of writing (2004)—the part-time employment, ‘zero-hours contracts’ and the other attributes of flexibility associated with casualised workers. Alongside this has gone an outsourcing of academic jobs to

once peripheral university franchises beyond Britain: indeed, he remarks, Vice-Chancellors could ‘delocalise the whole [academic] business from the UK to China’ (2004: 29).

Further, alongside the shifting orientation towards ‘universities as business, for business’ have emerged certain other trends, a movement towards privatisation, the new ascendancy of managerialism and a ‘*labour code for academics*’ notably, the emergence of managerial systems for regularly assessing academic work, like the British Research Excellence Framework [REF] (2004: 29 his italics). Taken together, these processes increasingly eliminate, for academics, the time to learn, *slow research*, matured reflections.

The consequences of these are various, including the shift to the much-vaunted heroes of entrepreneurial research production, adept at success in metricised criteria of achievement. This represents nothing other than re-education: a shift from ‘the autonomous citizen under the Moral Law to the person-as-firm or the market-as-one person’ (2004: 24 fn. 50).

The wider consequences of this new accountancy emerge most crucially in the tension between *academic intellectual success* and subject-area *financial solvency*. This, for Martins, is a ‘winner take all’ system—if one chemistry department comes out top, all the remaining departments are threatened by closure (2004: 30). Moreover, given the two measures of success, REF and student numbers, a department may be outstanding on REF measures but without enough paying students, can still be closed down, as in the case of the Music Department at University of Exeter or the Philosophy Department at Middlesex University.

The whole top-managed system of ‘market monism’ has now become driven in the UK by this ‘absurdly called *exercise*’: absurd, perhaps, yet a bureaucratic imperative to which are attached all too real financial deprivations, as he realises. He summarises it graphically:

[D]epartments were injured, individuals distressed, morale undermined, opportunities denied, intellectual life further degraded. More a scientific Grand Guignol performance, a technocratic version of the Visitations of the Inquisition, an academic enactment of a kind of Modern Times, than something fitting for the House of Intellect. (Martins 2004: 30)



Martins' trenchant but often witty analysis belongs to a mounting series of important works on the nature and consequences of the neoliberal capitalist order (Mirowski 2013; Piketty 2014; Macnicol 2015). It is all the more valuable coming from an emeritus fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford, a university whose primacy in global league tables might have elicited from all its staff a 'a theodicy (or sociodicy) of academic good fortune'. His account has certain notable omissions. He has said nothing about the dizzying salaries of Vice-Chancellors and Principals: supported by a highly paid senior management, they determine the key performance indicators advocated initially by McKinsey et al. for *non-academic* businesses. He has written too little about the precise ways in which business corporations are now sitting on academic research councils and guiding the disbursing of funds (Slaughter and Rhoades 2004). He died too early to witness how academic positions and specifically, promotion to professorships have become closely linked to grant capture. Yet this still represents an excoriating, brilliant and often passionate analysis.

## Contributions to this Festschrift

The chapters beneath take up and develop many of these points. We set the scene with a rare interview between Martins and Helena Jerónimo, an incomparable account of what he himself saw as his most valuable scholarly achievements. This is succeeded by four short memoirs all of which illuminate aspects of Martins' life—his public life as enfolded within his wider private existence, recounted by his widow, Margaret, his virtuoso teaching at a time when he was still in the Parsonian research tradition (Leslie Sklair), his presence as a formidable colleague who opened many new intellectual doors (Roland Robertson) and his enduring effort to formulate an alternative to both physicalism and idealism (Peter Ells). Various chapters amongst the 12 contributions that follow give us vivid insights into Martins as a man and a social theorist, and in doing so, discuss wider substantive ideas. We can only provide the briefest of précis to suggest their main themes.

William Outhwaite's *Kuhn and Social Science* offers a remarkable overview of the area of Martins' initial theoretical publication on Kuhn and the sociology of knowledge. Outhwaite shares Lakatos's critique of Popper's early naive falsificationism but then goes on to discuss the merits of Martins' distinctive approach towards the critique of Kuhn's 'irrationalism' (Lakatos 1970: 93), an assessment which shares some important common ground with Lakatos. Outhwaite's essay is path breaking in offering a distinctive combination of both Martins and Lakatos, together with their respective accounts of progressive and degenerating research programmes.

Despite Martins' critical strictures, Kuhn's later *Reflections on my Critics* legitimates further the analysis of scientific communities bearing diverse paradigms, even in a period lacking paradigmatic monopoly. Outhwaite notes that with respect to the social sciences, Martins had seen the possibility of articulating together, within a higher-level pluralistic theory, the approaches of Durkheim, Marx and Parsons. But Outhwaite is surely right in noting that a different, more purist approach rejects such syntheses in the name of a 'paradigmatic nationalism' ('my paradigm right or wrong'): a position that Outhwaite unambiguously repudiates.

His chapter then reviews the debates over paradigms subsequent to Martins' intervention, notably over the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK). Crucially, Outhwaite takes up the perceptive observation from Shapin that whilst Kuhn is conservative in identifying how scientists' membership of communities creates a set of regulative norms, he is dubiously radical in his break with the earlier sociological tradition that held that *society* influences knowledge.

Outhwaite illuminates further sources of hostility to SSK, including to the 1970s' theoretical development at Starnberg of a fertile application/finalisation stage in the elaboration of paradigms. Martins, he argues, was pursuing 'some of the most controversial areas of contemporary science in his incisive and inimitable style'. But 'in the social sciences', he contends, 'the relations between opposed theoretical paradigms [...] have been largely pacified, as the rest of the world becomes more warlike and dangerous'. This is a poignant conclusion, but we might doubt whether these theoretical struggles *have* ceased. Martins, before his death, points

himself to the difficulties with two such paradigm candidates—anti-realist social constructivism and neoDarwinism (2001, 2013).

Fowler's chapter addresses the sociology of Martins and Bourdieu. It starts with a critical assessment of Bourdieu's failure to foresee the extension of the artistic canon to photography, which he regarded as ruled out principally because of its dependence on technology. She views Martins' theory of historical changes in artistic genre as less limited in this respect. She goes on further to outline the significant contributions made by Martins and Bourdieu to the theories of paradigm change in scientific fields. The chapter ends by claiming that Bourdieu's theory of symbolic revolutions, similarly to paradigm change, reveals the capacity of his general theory to explain sociocultural change.

Luís Gomes's essay is the only one in this collection to cast light on the ideological character of the Portuguese Estado Novo regime. Taking up Martins' analysis (1969: 258) of the Dictatorship's vigilant censorship of history and its dual focus on imperialism and internal integration, Gomes demonstrates how even securely canonised authors such as Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo (1570–1631) could be regarded as unpatriotic under the Estado Novo. His rigorous case study of Quevedo and the poet's successive readerships serves to expose and demystify the character of nationalism under Portuguese authoritarianism. The case study is especially illuminating not only because it shows how *literary* reception can be affected over the passage of centuries by hostile evaluations from the political guardians of ideological purity but also how nationalism—under certain political and economic conditions—can show the dark side of its Janus faces, fostering an exclusivist doctrine. Thus, for the Estado Novo elite, denigration of the Spanish could serve to demarcate the essential character of the Portuguese 'race' (sic) and act as a focus of internal integration, just as in earlier centuries, anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic discrimination had played this role (cf. Simmel 1955).

José Luís Garcia's *Martins' Philosophical Sociology of Technology*, like the contributions of Robertson and Whitehead, is derived from its author's collegial closeness to Martins. It yields invaluable details about the latter's trajectory and intellectual stature. It also discusses the originality of Martins' early scholarly work on Kuhn's theory of paradigms: an assessment that sought to develop both the sociology of scientific knowledge and to

situate paradigms within wider rationalist traditions. Martins, he informs us, became the first sociologist to be invited to join the board of the British Society for the Philosophy of Science.

Garcia's chapter proceeds to situate Martins' critique of the contemporary technological imperative in the history of ideas. He shows how for Martins this new technogenesis ('second creation') had usurped the older principle of plenitude, with its concern for the expansion and education of much wider human desires, the twentieth-century exponents of which were writers such as Ernst Bloch and Georg Lukács. Instead, the 'second creation' is based on an unrestricted mastery of nature and on the imperative to invent and produce technologically everything that *could* be made. Taking often dematerialised or disembodied forms, this mode of 'technognosis' is rarely linked to a rational appraisal of ends. Rather it is pursued as a present-centred technological 'activism', which, as Garcia shows, is closely linked in Martins' view to long-term detrimental effects, including ecological damage. Thus, the critique of technological reason is essential to avoid our 'biocidal, biophobic techno-biological age' (Martins 2001: 21–23).

Charles Turner's *Time and Tide in Sociology* is a fresh and incisive sketch of the leading trends in sociology since Martins' *Time and Theory in Sociology* (1974), a work of synthesis which, he aptly comments, was a '15,000 word tour de force produced as a mere book chapter'! What was distinctive about Martins' essay, he argues, was its encyclopaedic quality, knowledge of the most recent developments, distinctive style and terminological inventiveness. It had two ideas that eventually caught the attention. The first was the importance of exploring 'caesural changes' or 'ruptures'—not so much internally within theories (e.g., as attributed by Althusser to Marx) but rather historically, in societies, as with the emergence of totalitarianism or authoritarianism. The second key idea is the notion of 'methodological nationalism'. This, he emphasises, was taken up much later, but not so much as the metatheoretical imperative for comparative, cross-societal research, which Martins had intended, rather as a more substantively Eurocentric sociology.

In relation to historical sociological theories about time, Charles Turner argues that there has since been a *macrosociological renewal* with figures such as Perry Anderson and Barrington Moore. He also illuminatingly

draws attention to the wide range of writers in philosophy, sociology and history who have been conceptually engaged with the social passage of time—notably Foucault, Giddens, Koselleck, Oakeshott, Pocock and Ricoeur. He invites controversy by claiming that (with the exception of Gellner) they have not also been involved in systematic type construction like that of Weber's *Economy and Society*.

Charles Turner's perceptive essay also interrogates current works dealing with key moral and political questions, such as Baumann's *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Beck's *Risk Society* and Sennett's later works on character, such as *The Craftsman*. These satisfy some of Wright Mills' hopes for the sociological imagination. Yet this current middle-range theorising—he claims—is neither linked to an extended and sustained conceptual armoury nor to a theoretical framework at a higher level of abstraction.

Martins' concern with neoDarwinism, biotechnology and market-led eugenics is addressed further by Steve Fuller in his *Transhumanism's Fabian Backstory: A Companion to Martins' Later Work*. Making a crucially important distinction between post-humanism and transhumanism, Fuller traces the latter to the founder of nineteenth-century eugenics, Francis Galton, and his twentieth-century follower, Julian Huxley, the scientist who coined the term 'transhumanism'. Yet transhumanism's true 'political progenitor', he shows, was the Fabian Society. Huxley, a leading member, sought to implement Galtonian eugenics as one means, amongst others, of changing the social order: moving from one in which inheritance was arbitrary to one in which it was planned.

A key Fabian 'fellow traveller' and leading Prohibitionist, the American, Irving Fisher, also had a salient role. It was Fisher who first elaborated on neo-classical economic concepts to include the notion of 'human capital'. For him, investment in each individual's human capital through education as well as abstention became part of an aspirational ideology, a return to Victorian 'self-help'. In turn, it was Fisher and the Austrian, Ludwig von Mises, who (along with others) initiated neoliberalism, bringing about eventually an inner transformation of Fabian socialism itself. Fuller's history of neoDarwinism concludes by turning to the American contender for the 2016 Presidency, Zoltan Istvan, the main campaigner for the Transhumanist Bill of Rights, whose politics reflect everything

Martins feared when he warns of the dangers of a ‘speciesquake’ (Martins 2007: 13, 27; n.d.-b: 15).<sup>6</sup>

Martins’ distinctive essays on technology and modernity are also addressed again in Peter McMylor’s chapter, enquiring further about what prompts critical intellectuals to seek to understand the conditions under which the new enters the world, as in the onset of digital globalisation. McMylor takes up the reflexive historical sociology of Árpád Szakolczai, who, in a series of highly significant works, has elucidated the social and political conditions for conceptual breakthroughs and visionary insights. Szakolczai is especially valuable for the latter’s fruitful elaboration of Elias’s ‘figurations’, including his application of these intellectual ‘figurations’ to the experience of liminality. McMylor’s own focus is on theorists of technology, like Martins, notably two very different theorists of media technology, Marshall McLuhan and Régis Debray.

Both these theorists fit into Szakolczai’s reworking of the idea of liminality, the conceptual prism through which Szakolczai himself had perceived Weber and Foucault. Thus, McLuhan is approached in terms of his liminal experiences of the country and the city, the British and American Empires, Protestantism and Catholicism and embattled schools of literary criticism. This distinctive trajectory, McMylor argues, facilitated his acute insights into the ramifying social consequences of different media technologies: print culture, television and the digital internet.

Régis Debray, the son of bourgeois parents and educated at the great *École Normale Supérieure*, had a very different experience of liminality. He travelled in the 1960s to Cuba and then Bolivia, becoming there the prisoner of the combined Bolivian Army and CIA forces. Having come close to death under torture, Debray was released after four years in prison, returning immediately to France. McMylor argues that his subsequent theories of the successive developments from the logosphere to the graphosphere and finally the videosphere owed much not just to his experience of the liminal but specifically to the Durkheimian tradition, with its theories of the sacred, the French element of his wider radicalism. In contrast, McLuhan’s technological determinism fits more that of reactionary modernism, outlined elsewhere by Eagleton and Jameson.

Richard Kilminster’s *Karl Marx: New Perspectives* also alludes to Martins’ emphasis on theorising historical caesura: social discontinuities

producing new social formations (Martins 1974). Hence his concern to re-evaluate Marx, stripping him especially of the distinctive scientific status attributed to him by the German Social Democrats. This, he argues, ‘masked how arcane and visionary [Marxism] actually was, both in its method and as a secularised, politicised world-historical vision of human freedom’.

Kilminster provides valuable new scholarship on the period before 1848, elucidating the conceptual foundations of ‘capital’, ‘labour’, ‘class antagonisms’ and ‘the proletariat’ (etc.) shared by Victor Considerant, Constantin Pecqueur, Auguste Comte, Henri Saint-Simon and Lorenz von Stein along with Marx. Martins had labelled many of these figures ‘finite Prometheans’ (1998). Kilminster then distinguishes between Marx’s relatively few published works in his lifetime and his posthumously published works. Amongst the second category is the *Theses on Feuerbach* which Kilminster contends has been ‘over-interpreted’, seeking to demystify it.

His essay aims also to provide a sociology of Marxisms. Firstly, in this vein, sociology departments in Britain, institutionalised in the 1960s and 1970s, were, in his view, the scene of a contest for paradigmatic control between various theoretical groups, amongst them Marxists. Thus, in both a generational struggle and a playing out of the Cold War, the importation of Marx into Britain occurred without the crises and revolutions typical of the Continent, which were the crucial context to his thought.<sup>7</sup> He goes on to offer a number of cogent relational points addressing the significance of the Althusserian scientific rupture and its explicit *anti-humanism*. This he links persuasively to the French Communist Party’s calculated stance of distancing its members from the humanist roots of Marx’s *Early Writings*, precisely due to the dangerous uses of these works by the young Lukács and other Lukácsian Marxists in East European societies.

Stephen Mennell’s chapter provides an unrivalled perspective on Martins’ teaching at Harvard in the 1960s, where Mennell was a research fellow. Noting Martins’ extraordinary flair as a lecturer, he acknowledges that—like Norbert Elias—Martins gained only limited recognition within Britain. Mennell then turns to Elias himself, notably his *Excursus on The Modelling of Speech at Court*, elaborating persuasively on Elias’s

analysis of pronunciation in France to compare with that in America and Britain. Elias points to the historical origins of the French legitimate language in the court and the aristocracy rather than the bourgeoisie, the seventeenth-century aristocratic forms being then ratified by the seventeenth-century Académie française. It was this legitimate language of the ancien régime that was then spread via lawyers, writers and politicians, within the state formation processes of the French Revolution.

In Britain, the process of regulation occurred in the late eighteenth rather than the seventeenth century, via a Received Pronunciation that became hegemonic through the agency of nineteenth-century public schools and the twentieth-century BBC. This should be understood, Mennell comments, as the evolution of a ‘fully fledged class accent rather than a regional one’.

American speech always contrasted with both the French and British cases, a nineteenth-century proposal for an American Academy being rejected, whilst influential opinion leaders advocated a democratic yet unified modelling of speech. Mennell demonstrates that despite some differences of speech in the USA on a class basis, British phonetic differences on this basis are much more marked. Moreover, it is largely from the highly absorptive American *middle* class that linguistic changes originate to become the new standard. The unified American ‘middling style’, diffused chiefly by schoolteachers, has also embraced certain new usages derived from successive groups of immigrants, as in the case of Yiddish.

One of the works that Martins uses as historical evidence of the transition to academic capitalism in the USA is Buchanan and Devletoglou’s *Academia in Anarchy* (1971). This study also features in Mike Gane’s distinctive history of the 1960s student movement in the UK and the USA, where it is approached as a pivotal resource for the understanding the neoliberal reaction in the USA to 1960s university radicalism. Gane’s chapter memorably charts the 1960s as the first period in which the younger generation were defined as a distinctive group, unified by age. It usefully interrogates current simplistic myths about generations as passive or active *as a totality*: ‘In France, are Sartre and Aron educated in the same year at the E. N. S. the same generation “for itself”?’ In particular, by mining as archival sources the autobiographies of male and female former students, it adds in-depth knowledge of lived experience to other



forms of historical and theoretical documentation. Gane also provides a history of the student rebellions, which in the USA focused particularly on the draft of 18-year-olds and on the fight for black rights.

Gane is original in showing how the American governmental reaction was to explain academic protests in terms of students' alleged undervaluing of their then free public education, coupled with the effect of security of tenure, bestowing on staff inviolable academic freedom. Thus he notes that alongside the rise of the Chicago Boys (Friedmanites), there were also the Virginia Public Choice Boys (Buchanan et al.), who advocated a neoliberal academia. In brief, Gane regards the exceptionally large number of US colleges where protests occurred—and from which a 'cultural revolution' was initiated—as the hidden key to explaining this shift in official policy. Universities were no longer to be 'in loco parentis' but to serve *students as customers*; new practices for academic staff were set in motion, orchestrated around individualisation, accountancy and constant performance ranking.

The last essay on technology and its social implications is by Laurence Whitehead: it is enriched by the author's collegial relationship with Martins over many years. Whitehead engages in particular with Martins' first book *Experimentum Humanum*. One theme within this is the acceleration of technical change. Whitehead draws attention to the explosive growth of mobile phones and other internet connections, debating the nature of the information revolution and its consequences for democracies, both older (like the USA and UK) and newer (Mexico). The infosphere contrasts with earlier technologies—print, railways, telegraph, radio and television, in being 'global, instantaneous, horizontal and interactive'.

He then considers the consequences of the new 'infosphere', noting the overblown claims about the end of material ontologies, the birth of immaterial informational technologies and the evisceration of the old party political organisations. Whitehead persuasively challenges these fashionable accounts: he accepts that *some* changes will flow from the new technology but counsels caution about how much, not least because of the well-known 'digital divide', especially striking and pervasive in a society like Mexico. Thus, he accepts that certain supranational organisations (such as the EU) will be more easily mobilised by digital communication

technologies, just as some sub-state actors will also be facilitated by it, such as those fighting for independence in Scotland or Catalonia. Extraordinary inclusiveness has, of course, been attributed to the infosphere, but Whitehead, in more sceptical but persuasive tones, doubts the imminent disappearance of classes, ethnic divisions or the older political parties.

The final essay is Stephen Turner's *Thinking about Think Tanks: Politics by Techno-scientific Means*, which has its origins in Martins' *Technology, Modernity, Politics* (1998). Here Martins addresses Cournot's view that the future lies with conclusions deriving from statistically based studies rather than from the meanings of historical narratives. Taking up Martins' distinction between Promethean and Faustian deployment of technology, Turner paraphrases Weber's *Protestant Ethic* to contend that whereas Prometheans may have chosen to live in a world of technical mastery, we are forced to do so. One such realm (as Cournot foresaw) is that of 'social technology'—the current transformation of politics by the introduction of evidence-based policies. Moreover, one such body, the object of Turner's fruitful study, was a pioneering form of think tank, the Massachusetts Bureau of Labour. From as early as 1869 until 1920, the Bureau gathered extensive statistics on the labour market and work conditions by the unprecedented use of postal and interview-based questionnaires. Its director, Wright, was seen as sympathetic to the perspective of labour, indeed, possibly for that reason, the Bureau gained a global influence. Turner argues that the legislation that ensued from this data gathering should not be seen as following that alone but must be linked also to the often-clashing material interests and ideas in the arena of social policy. Thus, in areas in which Wright undertook independent statistical enquiry, such as research into 'the Negro in Philadelphia', legislation was blocked by the absence of consensus. Yet the Bureau itself, as an organisation acquired a reputation for balanced reports and the power to mould the agenda for action.

Turner shows effectively how the American institutionalisation of think tanks differed from the British pattern, where similar organisations for debating policy were much more orientated to political parties. He concludes that currently in the USA: 'Parties no longer set the agenda. They react to the agenda setting of others. This is an epochal change'.

Yet the pre-eminence of think tanks has been made unexpectedly outdated by a new era of populist challenges: the politics of expertise have been explicitly rivalled by a resurgent right-wing charismatic politics.

To conclude, the chapters beneath expand on many of Martins' analytical and evaluative concerns whilst also contributing the authors' specialised bodies of knowledge. In this respect, they offer a form of homage to him. Our hope is that readers will be attracted to read more of his work, will appreciate his stature and will follow him in the 'historicophilosophical reflexive discipline' that he envisaged sociology to be.

## Notes

1. Such a 'new apartheid' is arguably already present in terms of disparity of health outcomes: to cite one case only, in 2014, males' average expectation of life differed by as much as 12.5 years (82.4 vs 69.9 years) between the least and the most deprived areas of Scotland, with one ward as low as 54 years (Glasgow Calton). Martins envisages a future where the *market* distribution of health benefits would only grossly accentuate this.
2. Here he makes an important distinction between the neohuman, the meta-human and the transhuman (2007: 16).
3. In a brilliant aside, skewering effectively an excess of Foucauldian discursive archaeology, he argues that an *assertion* is made in such theories as to belief in the existence of reality but that this is an 'otiose reality'—leading to nothing—just as certain theologies are premised on an 'otiose God' (2001: 23, fn 49).
4. From the vantage point of women and historically oppressed groups, not least transgender people, binary classification has been rightly viewed as a bulwark of patriarchal power. Martins fully acknowledges that there has been an emancipatory critique of traditional essentialist categories, such as gender or right-handedness. But a social hyper-constructivism is in danger of seeking to destroy *all* binaries, whereas we might, more fruitfully, choose between them.
5. The enclosure of the 'global knowledge commons', 'knowledge as commodity' and other concepts suggests a parallel with Marx's *Capital*. However, it should be noticed that Martins' interest in marketisation is also derived from Simmel's *The Philosophy of Money*, see *Goodbye Body!* (2001: 6, fn 8).

6. Re iconoclastic irreligionism, Martins writes: ‘A Durkheimian sociologist might well say that the end of religion (though it is not altogether clear what this actually means) would be tantamount to the end of society [...] But before then the logically prior question [...] of the technological modifiability (biotechnological “enhancement”) of the human being [...] raises more urgent and even more disturbing questions for all, religionists or not. We are entering [...] an age of technological turbulence as far as the identity of the human being, and possibly even the unicity of the human species [are concerned], which I have called elsewhere a sort of speciesquake (by analogy with the recent neologism, genderquake) [...]’ (n.d.-b: 15).
7. This might, however, be said to underestimate the significance of the British Civil War and Chartism, particularly for the ‘culturalist Marxists’—E. P. Thompson, Christopher Hill, Raymond Williams and others.

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# Part I

In Celebration of the Writings of  
Hermínio Martins



# Hermínio Martins and the State of the Social Sciences: An Interview with the Author

Helena Mateus Jerónimo

The interview with Hermínio Martins published here was originally conducted in 2011, to celebrate the 200th issue of *Análise Social*, the oldest Portuguese social science journal, published by the *Instituto de Ciências Sociais* [Institute of Social Sciences] of the University of Lisbon (ICS, Universidade de Lisboa). Even though seven years have passed, and the interview focuses mainly on the history and trajectory of the social sciences in Portugal, Martins' replies are so wide-ranging and learned, as was characteristic of him, and contain so much valuable thinking on the theoretical and institutional state of the social sciences in general that the interview is of undeniable interest for the present volume.

The institute which publishes *Análise Social* is the same body which invited Martins to be a senior research fellow (the equivalent to a full professor), following his retirement from the University of Oxford. The ICS also sponsored the award of an honorary doctorate degree by the University of Lisbon and in 2006 published a *Festschrift* entitled *Razão, Tempo e Tecnologia: Estudos em Homenagem a Hermínio Martins* [Reason,

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*Time and Technology: Studies in Honour of Hermínio Martins*] edited by Manuel Villaverde Cabral, José Luís Garcia, and Helena Mateus Jerónimo (Cabral et al. 2006).

When he joined the ICS-Universidade de Lisboa and the Portuguese university for the first time in 2001, Martins found interlocutors with whom he began an intense period of joint intellectual endeavour, particularly in the field of the sociology of science and technology. In this area, to which he devoted himself vigorously in the last twenty years of his life, Martins, together with José Luís Garcia and other younger colleagues, organized seminars and jointly edited books and special issues of journals. He also supervised theses, having been a member of several master's degrees and PhD exam boards. As part of this process, he published his *magnum opus* in 'the philosophical sociology of technology' in 2011—the book *Experimentum Humanum: Civilização Tecnológica e Condição Humana* [*Experimentum Humanum: Technological Civilization and the Human Condition*] (Martins 2011). This work was published in Brazil in the following year, with two additional chapters (Martins 2012).

The aim of the 200th issue of *Análise Social* was to provide a forum for significant figures in Portuguese social science, thinkers and scholars whose work was crucial for an understanding of not only the intellectual climate in which the journal had evolved but also the path taken by the social sciences in Portugal. Hermínio Martins was an obvious choice among the academics chosen, as the author of some of the earliest historical and sociological essays on Portugal for international academic audiences.

Among the various topics covered in the interview, Martins inveighs against the sociological mainstream and criticizes the lack of theoretical thinking and attention to epistemology and temporality in the social sciences. He distances himself from the marketization of the university and the 'officialization of scientism', from 'the *dirigisme* in relation to production of knowledge' and the 'frenzy of "article-ism"', referring to the fact that academics are tending to write quantities of articles which are ever shorter and limited in scope. He favours an inter-disciplinary dialogue, and is looking to horizons beyond a mere 'theory-franchise', defending his own contribution to a theory of social action which incorporates the notion of uncertainty.

The version of the interview published here recovers two-thirds of the original (in *Análise Social* 200/56: 460–483). The main lines of his argument are retained, and even if, in some sections, the focus is on Portugal, his vision is always extendable to other contexts: it is indeed the true vision of an exceptional teacher and thinker.

## Appendix

Helena Mateus Jerónimo, who conducted and edited the interview, is a sociologist with a PhD from the University of Cambridge and an assistant professor at the School of Economics and Management of the University of Lisbon (ISEG, Universidade de Lisboa). Her research in the field of the sociology of science, technology, and environment led her to the writings of Hermínio Martins. She took part in various joint endeavours with Hermínio Martins and José Luís Garcia. When she did this interview she was one of the assistant editors of the *Análise Social* journal. She is grateful to the current editor of *Análise Social*, Professor José Manuel Sobral, for the grant of copyright for publication of the interview in English. She also thanks Richard Wall, who has translated the interview.

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## Interview

1. **Hermínio, you were for many years an intellectual exile, but you always followed intellectual thought and political life in Portugal closely. What are your thoughts on the consolidation of the social sciences in Portugal?**

As an exile I not only followed Portugal's situation with attention, bitterness, and anxiety, especially during the time of the colonial war, but at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s I also in fact wrote various academic articles on modern Portugal. Some of these were published in British compendia and academic journals.

Partly as a result of the circumstances in which I found myself, as a university professor of sociology in the United Kingdom, at the time possibly the only Portuguese to be titular professor in any branch of the social sciences in that country (how different is the situation today!), those essays were very well received (I was lucky—and luck, as Popper always insisted, has much more to do with academic careers than academics would like to think). They were seen as pioneering works, both by the British academic research community and by various Portuguese intellectuals in exile at the time (a fair number of them doing doctorates in French, Belgian, and Swiss universities, very few in England), as I found out years later.

The essay on the *Estado Novo* and its origins was [...] ‘the kick-starter’ for research work on the authoritarian regime [...]. The study on social stratification [...] is still mentioned today, but its neo-Weberian approach, the first such by any Portuguese on any topic, if I’m not mistaken, does not seem to have garnered much of a close following in Portugal in this field, where various forms of neo-Marxist and Bourdieusian approaches prevail, quite legitimately. The article on the opposition also continues to be cited and searched for. These three essays were finally republished in Portugal—some twenty-five years later!—in the book entitled *Classe, Status e Podere Outros Ensaios sobre o Portugal Contemporâneo* [*Class, Status and Power, and Other Essays on Modern Portugal* – Martins 1998] with another unpublished study written in 1970, when it was presented at an international conference organized by Juan Linz and Al Stepan, on the collapse of the First Republic [...].

In any event, these articles were the only ones in the English-language academic literature on Portugal and continued to be so for a fair length of time. Their longevity, in terms of citations and readings, is of course gratifying to me: there are not that many articles in the social sciences which have a lifespan of three or four decades, within Portugal and without. The research I had to do, which was difficult because sources were few at that time, and the obvious restrictions on my access to whatever there was, not to mention the aim of ensuring maximum objectivity on such emotive issues, I saw as a civic duty (even though my Portuguese passport had been confiscated). That was much more important to me than any contribution to a professional CV.

In connection with the first essay I mentioned, Manuel de Lucena<sup>1</sup> said he felt in it 'the visceral hatred' of dictatorship: an inference drawn from outside the actual text, in my opinion. It was following publication of that first essay that American researchers like the historian Douglas Wheeler and the political scientist Philippe Schmitter, whose contributions to Portuguese studies are well known today, got in touch and talked with me when they visited the UK. It should be recalled that American researchers, historians, political scientists, anthropologists, etc., who turned their attention to the study of modern Portugal at the end of the 60s, in general started by studying Africa and Latin America (mainly, but not exclusively Brazil) before devoting themselves to studying Portugal in the final years of the dictatorship. At that time Portugal was a kind of *terra incognita* in international academe, a situation which nobody today can probably imagine. [...]

Nevertheless, I admit that I had a single utopian vision of [the consolidation of the social sciences in Portugal over the last thirty years] which I allowed myself to dream of for a short time after the revolution of 25 April 1974. That vision was that some of the limitations of the division of academic work in social and cultural studies that I was familiar with first-hand in the UK and North America might be overcome in Portugal. I am referring here to hyper-specialization, to the lack of communication between disciplines or even sub-disciplines, and to the linguistic, cultural, and historical provincialism of the intellectual world of the social sciences (the lack of general historical culture among sociologists seemed to me to be even more shocking in the UK than in the US, at least as far as the more prestigious American universities are concerned). My utopian hopes were dashed: the defects attending the division of intellectual labour in the English-speaking social sciences were not only mimicked but reproduced with veritable and even exaggerated enthusiasm. How zealous Portuguese researchers turned out to be in their policing of cognitive, disciplinary, doctrinal, ideological, institutional, and corporate borders! Fortunately there are still some academics who are multidisciplinary, polyglot, and possessed of a general culture in the social sciences, and indeed are exceptionally cultured in historical terms, but many of these have reached retirement age or will be retiring in the next few years (although they will continue to be active and serve as good examples to

future generations). Will this generation have successors to match them, with the same willingness to take on and create links between different disciplinary perspectives?

**2. Given your in-depth knowledge of other countries, in particular the UK, how do you see social science institutions in Portugal, in comparative terms? [...]**

The few with which I am reasonably familiar seem to be comparable to those in other countries [...]. One of the real tests of Portuguese academic social science's innovative ability will be precisely how well and how positively it responds to emerging proposals and projects and which will transcend disciplinary limitations and move away from preselected foreign 'labels'.

Note university administrators' and other established authorities' obsession with foreign working models (especially certain supposedly North American models). That obsession not only affects the indispensable financial support required for research work today, as if those models—or rather the very limited subset of those models which they consider to be the best—enjoyed exclusive and unquestioned normative superiority. They see internationalization from a very provincial, acritical, asymmetric, and bureaucratic point of view, in the worst sense of the term. Their insistence on being placed in the rankings of worldwide academic journals, based on obscure criteria, imitating the hard sciences in a servile and mechanical way, and other standards and rules which make little sense in most of the human and social sciences, is one of the worst things to have happened in recent years. For example, the Harvard bibliographical referencing system, designed for the hard sciences alone, has become practically compulsory in the social sciences, with no intellectual justification at all for that transfer, but with undesirable effects on knowledge. The harm it does is so obvious, the practice so indefensible, the absurdity of it so clear, that it becomes impossible to understand why people persist in such practices: is their continuation due merely to inertia? Or maybe the enjoyment of administrative power is its own justification....

The primary duty of administrators is to let us work in peace, with full intellectual freedom, and not to dictate what we should do, where we

should publish, the length of research articles, authorial requirements, the language in which articles are published, or the spelling of the language in which they are written. That which we might call the ‘officialization of scientism’ and the *dirigisme* in relation to production of knowledge in the academy is one of the most surprising developments of recent decades in states which still call themselves liberal democracies, including Portugal, of course.

Any day now, if present trends in academic policy continue, they will insist that social science articles should consist of only a few pages, as happens in the hard sciences, and that, as with the hard sciences, they be signed not by one author alone, but by many, the more the merrier, like those articles signed by 160 ‘authors’ or more, or by a similar number, as occurs in certain branches of physics! Nobody cares about the attribution of epistemic responsibility in such cases, something which was once a key criterion. We live in an age which proclaims the sovereignty of the ‘absolute individual’, in which the supremacy of economic, political, moral, and religious individualism is asserted and methodological and ontological individualism tends to prevail among social scientists. But, at the same time, academic research work is being collectivized and even formally massified as never before, subject to rigid writing protocols, to unprecedented demands for uniformity, to the monopoly of a single language for international academic communication, teamwork is valued above all, and the research author as the attributable epistemic subject is giving way to the ‘author function’.

**3. [On being asked about the main lines of theoretical and empirical development in the social sciences over recent decades, Martins offered a critical opinion on the tendencies he called ‘the frenzy of “article-ism”’ and ‘analyticism’.]**

[...] In the unceasing race to produce articles, which are ever shorter, more specific, and limited—which we might call ‘the frenzy of “article-ism”’—exacerbated by the existential conditions in which research work is carried out today, [there is another] type of work<sup>2</sup> that is not very appealing. It takes up a lot of time, demands great dedication, and, when it is done in a non-partisan way and is not used as a weapon in academic political

infighting, to 'shaft' one's enemies (which does happen), is a form of research altruism which has become almost entirely discredited and is perhaps even harmful to an author's career. No doubt there are worthy exceptions [to their general disappearance], and we should be pleased to have them, but they are just that, exceptions.

[...] As Schumpeter said in his great book on the history of 'economic analysis', there can be no analysis, however sophisticated, exact, and precise it may be, without a view or vision of society as a whole. Even if that view is eclectic and confused, there has to be a vision which embodies a particular image of Man, or a particular overall conception of History, or a general conception of knowledge, of its sources, criteria, and limitations, underlying that analysis, even mathematical analysis (the increasing mathematization of economics was one of the topics of the book). That underlying view may be more or less consciously articulated by the author, but it has to be reconstructed by historians and critics. We may label the idea of research work as the production, almost exclusively, of what are regarded as 'analyses' and certainly the favouring of that kind of study over other types as 'analyticism'. The result of this dominant and specious analyticism is that the visions underlying the analyses—and there is always an underlying vision in any analysis—are never properly articulated, outlined, and discussed. In other words, they are not subjected to a rational critique. The best way of clarifying, comparing, correcting, and perfecting the informal visions underlying the immense analytical efforts which are published is by making theories explicit. It is only by the consequential formulation of theories that we can defend or reject the overall worldviews which inform the research work set out in 'analytical' articles. It is precisely in this area that we have to identify a 'theory deficit' in the social sciences in Portugal: it is not so much that there are not any theoretical interests, or vast knowledge of theories or theoretical systems formulated outside Portugal, or even that theoretical developments internationally are not followed in Portugal, because they are, and often very swiftly, and even defended enthusiastically as the *dernier cri*. And Portuguese authors have in fact produced some remarkable studies on theory and on thinkers relevant to the social sciences: Portuguese sociologists have written excellent books on Althusser, Saussure, and G. H. Mead, for example, and communication studies

researchers have produced fine studies on the Frankfurt School. Even so, many theoretical references operate as ornaments, or as pointers to an author's belonging to a particular school (like a uniform), as badges of intellectual affinity, or simply as pointers to further reading, rather than as work tools, suggestions for further research, or sets of hypotheses to be tested or reviewed (except for theories which are restricted in scope to specific fields). Theories are not explicitly discussed, the demand is almost solely for 'analytical' articles: the end result is a kind of diffuse, ubiquitous, and eclectic crypto-dogmatism in the social sciences in Portugal, in which many theoretical prejudices, many widely used concepts, are left out of the discussion. Be that as it may, a country where conventional Marxist-Leninism and its heresies held such sway is not necessarily a country opposed to theory, at least when theory is presented as an overall world view and as an orthodoxy or orthopraxy....

But actually, instead of talking about a theory deficit, we should really be talking about a deficit of theorization. Very few dare to publish theoretical ideas which are not copied from theories formulated by recognized foreign authors. Worse than that, the few who do dare to do independent theoretical work are ignored (well, there are not so few of them, but they are isolated), or they are not recognized as thinkers, being condemned to remain invisible, at least as thinkers [...]. The thinkers we have are far more often cited and commented on in Brazil than in Portugal. That is what has happened to me, and I could mention the names of several colleagues in the same position [...].

Citing, commenting on, adopting (at any rate, generally speaking), and referencing theories produced internationally, almost exclusively in four countries (the UK, the US, Germany, France), because those from other countries hardly count, all right—you could even easily set up a *theory-franchise* in Portugal, based on one or other of those theories [...].

In the fields of sociology, anthropology, political science, and probably in other areas, the major currents of international thinking are well known in Portugal, if not necessarily followed, and are professed as research programmes [...]. But there are some curious exceptions, which should briefly be noted: they are exceptions not because those schools are unknown and admirably presented to students, at least by some lecturers, but because they do not seem to have dedicated and systematic practitioners, and none



of those currents produced the shocks which occurred when they had their first impact on sociology in other national contexts. I will mention just four examples:

1. Ethnomethodology does not seem to have reached Portugal, although we should acknowledge that it has also not reached other Euro-Latin or Latin American countries. This is surprising, bearing in mind how they have been affected for years by cultural or countercultural 'Californization' in various ways, including the ideologies associated with the new information and communication technologies (Ernest Gellner regarded ethnomethodology as a Californian phenomenon, but in my opinion he exaggerated here). However, while I do not profess to be a follower of this school (nor of any others I will mention), we should acknowledge that it was an important current of thought, and its research into the deep structures of common sense represents a fundamental contribution to the social sciences: at the very least, a major challenge which cannot be refused. Its critique of normal sociology, especially that which is made up of survey after survey ('surveys' in the sense of *survey research*), because it is easy, rather than out of any well-founded methodological conviction, deserves consideration, even if it is not acceptable in full.
2. As for social phenomenology, which actually played a crucial role in the formation of ethnomethodology, the only studies on Schutz which I am aware of in Portugal were done by non-sociologists: it is incomprehensible that no-one has published an anthology of some of that writer's essays, which are so illuminating and stimulating; moreover, he has been taken up very slowly in Latin countries [...].
3. The programme normally called 'rational choice theory', which has practically become the dominant programme in North American political science, but has also had a major impact on sociology and, surprisingly, on the sociology of religion, on anthropology, even on economic anthropology and other disciplines, never achieved the central position in Portugal which it had until recently, at least in English-speaking countries, nor has it been discussed much [...].
4. The research programme in sociobiology, now called 'evolutionary psychology', which is offered as a truly scientific programme ('scientific'

in the sense of the hard sciences, according to them), against what its advocates call the Standard Social Science Model, downgrading the principle of explaining society by the criteria governing that standard model and insisting on the biogenetic and evolutionary foundations of human life in society as the basic explanatory matrix in the social sciences, has no professed representatives in the social sciences in Portugal, as far as I know. Given what happened to the few American sociologists who converted to this programme—they were ostracized by their academic colleagues, simply for that reason, I'm not surprised that the temptation to study this alternative to conventional social science in-depth was resisted, perhaps for the good of all.

I would like to offer one final thought, if I may [...]. Unlike what happened in several other countries, Portugal never had a major shock, a major intellectual/disciplinary/professional crisis affecting the whole of the discipline. Here I'm thinking of the successive or simultaneous crises, of various types and origins, which hit sociology—and actually social anthropology as well, even though that discipline enjoyed far greater prestige and widespread intellectual influence than sociology for a long time in the UK and elsewhere, over the last thirty or forty years. These crises arose first following the rejection of functionalism, then by a kind of 'babelization' of multiple schools of thought, including Marxist schools, warring amongst themselves, all claiming the right to the hegemony which functionalism had allegedly enjoyed previously and which never happened (a number of researchers identified a good few dozen schools or tendencies in contemporary general sociology). Then came the shock of ethnomethodology, which questioned so many sacrosanct research practices; there were also the epistemological crises brought on by the impact of Popper, Kuhn and the debates on these and other writers on the philosophy of science, the manifest inability of conventional sociology to understand the whole series of upheavals in the country's politics and economics from the 1970s on, the shock of feminism not just as a social movement but as a many-faceted theoretical movement, the attacks on all forms of 'collectivism' (a pejorative term for many) which seemed to subvert the fundamental principles of both sociology and anthropology (even Keynesian economics was impugned as 'collectivist'), and the

imminent quasi-decomposition of the discipline, which was only avoided at one point by the work of Anthony Giddens and others in synthesizing the theory and producing manuals of sociology. I mention the British case because I know it better than any other, but the discipline went through similar crises in other European and American countries: an American sociologist, Irving Louis Horowitz, the author of an excellent biography of C. Wright Mills, even published a book entitled *The Decomposition of Sociology*.

This absence of intellectual and professional crises of the kind which sociology repeatedly suffered in Britain and other European countries may explain that which I dare to call a certain intellectual somnolence of the discipline in Portugal, speaking in general terms. No doubt this state of affairs is due to the late consolidation of sociology in Portugal, after the Great Debates of earlier decades [...].

Finally, I would add that a history or a sociology of Portuguese sociology, as of any other country, must not neglect the study of exclusion and marginalization mechanisms, of silences, of failures to pursue the great traditions, of non-receptivity to writers and ideas. Nor the topic of how academic empires were built in the social sciences. That topic could be the object of a nice comparative study of how charisma, knowledge, and power have asserted themselves in the Portuguese academy, within the national political and cultural system [...]. The crisis in the universities on the other hand, the attacks on the traditional university, the progressive commodification of research work, and the lack of resources are factors affecting all disciplines, not specifically sociology.

- 4. The social sciences have developed on two different levels: internally on the one hand, with the consolidation of sub-disciplines, like anthropology, sociology, political science, etc., and externally on the other, in particular in relation to disciplines on their margins, like medicine, philosophy, linguistics, etc. What comments do you have regarding this dual process?**

I regard sociology, anthropology, and political science as disciplines and not sub-disciplines. Sociology of the family and urban sociology can more correctly be termed sub-disciplines of sociology. Social anthropology

and political science should also be seen as arrays of sub-disciplines. In recent years, International Relations finally got to be seen as an independent discipline, outside the realm of political science. Other fields of study, like social geography, social psychology, and social biology are generally not part of Social Science faculties but, in a way, belong to the social science system.

Regarding relationships with the disciplines on the margin which you mention, I would say that I am surprised in particular that only now is the sociology of medicine achieving institutional recognition in Portugal, because the UK already had excellent manuals at the end of the 1960s, written jointly by anthropologists and sociologists. Portugal has sufficient human resources and intellectual capital for the sociology of medicine to be established as a research field like other already consolidated sub-disciplines of sociology [...].

As for Philosophy, allow me to recall my personal experience. I was one of the founders of a new degree course in Sociology and Philosophy at the University of Leeds in the late 1960s. During that course I met some of the most brilliant degree students I have ever had in my whole university teaching career. Actually, that course was praised by an eminent British philosopher, Bernard Williams, then at the University of London, when he was an external examiner for it. Circumstances did not permit me to repeat that experience, but if I had had that opportunity, it would certainly have been one of my priorities as a university lecturer in Portugal, which I never did become. I would like to think that that degree course might still be set up in Portugal one day, along with degree courses in Anthropology and Philosophy or Economics and Philosophy. Political science without political philosophy or the history of political thought makes no sense to me. As a former student of Michael Oakeshott and careful reader of Eric Voegelin, whose monumental opus on the history of Western political thought overshadows all others, I cannot understand how you can take a political science course without at least an introduction to this field of study. There is a strong tendency everywhere to reduce political science, and indeed sociology too, to the status of *policy sciences*, research assistants for the design of public policies. As somebody said in connection with the LSE today, the concern with *evidence-based policies* leads rapidly to the limitation of *policy-based evidence*, in search of facts

which will basically provide legitimacy for public policy which has already been decided or which it is desired to promote. This is the negation of critical rationality! [...]

5. **[On being asked about the influence of his theoretical work on Portuguese sociology, Martins outlined some of his most important studies, as follows.]**

My first long theoretical article published in English was on Kuhn's famous book and the discussion surrounding it, especially on the philosophy of science [Martins 1972]. I had commented on and critiqued that book and stressed its importance in classes, seminars, and conferences practically from the moment it was published in 1962, and I was the first to present the issues it raised in a conference of the British Sociological Association, at which Ernest Gellner was present (he had not read Kuhn at that time). An opportunity arose to publish an essay on it, and I wrote a long piece, of almost 100 pages, which had to undergo a fair amount of editing. It was the first long article on the subject to be published by a sociologist, at least in English: in a lengthy bibliography of studies on the subject published in *American Sociologist*, my study appears right at the beginning, while most of the articles listed there were only published a decade later. It was the first article, certainly the first long academic essay, on the author of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* to be published by a Portuguese writer (it is probably safe to say, even more broadly, that it was the first by a Portuguese-speaking or Iberian writer). It seems to me these are facts which should be recorded in a history of Portuguese sociology, for example, all the more so because Kuhn continues to be a significant author, and the issues he raised remain open.

My essay sought to take into account the main contributions to the Great Debate on the philosophy of science in relation to Kuhn's work and its implications, possibly the most intense and lasting discussion ever held in this discipline—the more prominent names were Michael Polanyi, Popper, N. R. Hanson, Imre Lakatos, and Paul Feyerabend. Why did a sociologist 'intervene' in this Great Debate, particularly as early as I did? On the one hand, because of my long-standing interest in the philosophy of science. On the other hand, because the existing sociology of science

at that time was the Merton school, which seemed very limited to me (I was not the only one who thought this, of course). The first sentence of my essay pinpointed the disconnect between the sociology of knowledge, which analysed the content of knowledge, and the sociology of conventional science, which ignored that content, treating it as something to be overcome. What I suggested was that we needed a sociology of scientific knowledge, and this required discussion of the relationship between sociology and epistemology, a topic which, as is well known, had already been discussed by Durkheim in his greatest work (I am referring, of course, to the book *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, published in 1912). My article paved the way for a number of young British sociologists, some of whom, following this philosophical Great Debate, formed a school, or schools, in the sociology of scientific knowledge (my influence in this regard was confirmed in a book by a Spanish sociologist, published a few years ago, based in part on interviews with those sociologists). As tends to happen, they radicalized and re-radicalized the sociology of scientific knowledge, formulating a version of social constructivism (as it later came to be known), and which I, quoting Parsons, call 'sociological solipsism', variants of the epistemological relativism which I always rejected (but anyone interested in Kuhn at that time was always accused of that, a nasty libel). I disagreed with the Mertonian and relativist currents of thought and became one of the founders of a series of volumes based on annual conferences, the *Sociology of Sciences Yearbook*, which is still published today. Here we hosted various kinds of sociological studies which diverged from both from the Mertonian sociology of science and the epistemological relativism of the Edinburgh and Bath 'schools'. We were privileged to be among the first to give international public prominence to the work of Norbert Elias, which at the time was still little acknowledged in the UK, by publishing a long article of his. It was the first European forum for social studies on science and technology, at least in the theoretical realm. This too is worth recording.

On another occasion, I was fortunate to be able to take part (the Althusserian language is irresistible) in another Great Debate, in general sociology, with an essay entitled 'Time and Theory in Sociology', also written in English and published in a compendium edited by John Rex [Martins 1974]. This essay had some impact internationally [...]. The international

situation was very interesting: functionalism had ceased to be dominant, there was a struggle for the succession to functionalism as the main way of looking at sociological theory, and the master programme for research in sociology for at least the following decades was being developed. This was a particularly important issue on account of the expansion of British and European sociology after some years of American predominance. Not all the most often repeated critiques of functionalism were well-founded, as I sought to demonstrate (everyone, even Marxists of the different schools, accused everyone else of functionalist errors) and some of its limitations were common to many other schools. In this connection, I discussed various concepts relating to social and historical time. I outlined a number of concepts which were discussed by several commentators, such as 'inflationary cognitivism', 'caesurism', 'pluritemporalism', and 'methodological nationalism', in addition to what seemed to me to be an innovative discussion on the relationship between narrative and analysis in historiographical discourse, well before the explosion in studies on narrative, narratology, and narrativism in the eighties and nineties, and an analytical typology of the relationships between sociology and history, which seems to me to be equally significant, but received less attention.

At the time, that essay was very well received and commented on in the international sociological literature. It was highly praised by the North American sociologist Dennis Wrong and the British anthropologist Peter Worsley, among others, cited by European authors such as Franco Ferrarotti and Niklas Luhmann (I was the only Portuguese sociologist to be cited by the latter), and translated into Spanish in a collection of studies, some from classical sociology, on 'Time and Society'. Several British sociologists see it as a 'classic' (the author himself can never say this, but he can quote others' opinions!). It continues to be cited, decades after its original publication, even in South Korea and Japan, especially on account of the concept of 'methodological nationalism' I devised, as is widely recognized today, in articles both within and outside the field of sociology, by social scientists in various disciplines and of different nationalities. A very famous sociologist, Ulrich Beck, used to say that the concept of methodological nationalism was the most important concept in sociology in the twentieth century. But since I was the one who originally formulated the concept, and not he,

although he adopted it in his own way, maybe just a bit of his fame might rub off on me... [...]

It is easy to understand that my essays on risk and uncertainty, and on the processes of acceleration in modern societies, among others, deal with questions which are fundamental from the point of view of social theory. Risk and uncertainty are basic categories of human existence and human action which were never fully integrated into the theories of social action of writers such as Weber, Parsons, and Giddens (who seem to follow Beck in his concept of risk subsuming uncertainty, which is precisely what I questioned in my essay on the subject). I think I contributed in some measure to this process of enriching the theory of social action, fairly considering these categories, taking into account Peirce and Popper's [contribution to] fallibilist thought, the Austrian School and the 'indeterminism of Vienna', as well as Keynes and Knight, beyond the generally accepted and very limited conception of risk, whether technological or not. I also demonstrated the intimate connection between conventional studies on probabilistic risk and ethical utilitarianism, especially preference utilitarianism, which is particularly prevalent in the Anglo-Saxon countries. My critique of the concept of risk and its ubiquitous application stressed this crucial point by drawing attention to this ethical bias, which it is so important to question for the defence of the environment and in order to develop alternatives to neoliberal public policies and to the ideology which legitimates commodity techno-science, as I called it.<sup>3</sup>

In my study on acceleration, which is not just scientific or technological, I discussed a number of issues related to 'social time'. This was also the subject of my essays entitled 'Tristes durées' [*Sad Durations*] [Martins 1983] and 'Time and Explanation' [Martins 2009], which discuss concepts critical to the explanatory task of historical sociology or 'social dynamics', as one used to say. And my essay on the sociology of calamities, which sought to recover the legacy of an important sociologist, P. A. Sorokin [Martins 2011, chapter VII], is obviously connected with some of the topics of 'Time and Theory' and cannot simply be catalogued as another study on science and technology. The epistemological questions discussed in my study on Kuhn were also present in my essay on theories of truth and my long study on Vico's principle (the *verum-factum* principle) (Martins 2001), which is crucial for a proper



understanding of techno-science but not only that, as the discussion on the history of that principle in that study makes clear.

My general theoretical interests remain alive and well, even if I have mostly written on issues relating to science, technology, and the university (which is increasingly, and by force if necessary, incorporated into the ‘capitalism of knowledge’, as I showed in a 2004 essay [Martins 2004], much expanded in 2007, both of which were sadly prophetic in relation to what is currently happening), rather than on issues ostensibly related to social theory. I acknowledge that it is possible to do theoretical work which is highly relevant to sociological theory in any domain, whether it be the sociology of the family, of religion, of work or urban sociology, etc., provided that the issues in question are viewed through a sophisticated prism of theorization. However, in the present situation, it seemed to me, bearing in mind the contributions of historical and philosophical studies, as well as the sociological, that the study of science and technology, despite being very demanding, and my knowing that it would not enable me to publish dozens of articles in quick succession, could take me deeper into the issues which had always interested me. I am referring here to issues such as social time (‘social temporalities’), the interrelationship of action and knowledge, the human significance of the social sciences (in a way, the status of the social sciences as ‘moral sciences’ and the discussion of ethical utilitarianism), and its philosophical (metaphysical and epistemological) assumptions and implications.

Other sociologists may have felt the same way about the transversal and fertile nature of wide-ranging theoretical questions in other domains, some of them very close to my concerns with technology and techno-science, such as environmental or ecological sociology, or the sociology of globalization as a world-historical process, and maybe they were as justified as I was, or even more so, but this was the path I chose. [...].

**6. [In this part of the interview I asked Martins about the most urgent questions facing sociology in Portugal. In his reply he made the following observations on the future of the social sciences in general.]**

One of the most obvious dangers is the increasing instrumentalization of research, at the behest of public authorities. Social studies have already

gone beyond the cameralistic (public accounting) phase, but sometimes we have the feeling we are going back to that stage: we went from the classic cameralistics of the *Polizeistaat* (police state) to the neo-cameralistics of the *policy State*, whose public policies demand the instrumentalization of the social sciences. With electronic digital technologies and a hitherto undreamed of capacity for the accumulation of data, even in real time, for some researchers, the dream of a totally data-driven and theory-free social science, which uses only econometric models or computer simulations, is coming true. This may also reflect the increasing demand for quantitative data for all and sundry and the rise of simply digital or, in the words of a great expert in mathematical economics and pioneer of ecological economics, N. Georgescu-Roegen 'arithmo-morphic' standards of knowledge.

Alongside this whole process the science bureaucrats, or rather the scientism bureaucrats, demand that the social sciences copy the hard sciences or, more precisely and even worse, the image they have of the hard sciences (their ignorance of the philosophy, history, and sociology of science is considerable). The tendency will be to transform the social sciences into *policy sciences*, pushing to the margins theoretical and speculative work, those free forms of investigative research which do not meet administrative requirements or market demands. Frankly I do not even know if they will continue to be called 'social sciences'—what for? There are economists who do not regard economics as a social science.

As I've already mentioned, the demand for collective work, and the preference for short articles by multiple authors belonging to laboratories, or simulacra of laboratories, is the logical outcome of the techno-bureaucratic scientism entrenched in the national, international, and pan-European bodies which regulate academic research work. With the ongoing process whereby public universities are being stripped of their character, commodified, and even abolished, what is likely to happen, and indeed has already happened with economists, is that the intellectual type of the academic social scientist, with a long career in research and lecturing in the universities, as has existed until recently, will eventually disappear.

Saint-Simon's famous remark which pointed to the transition from a government of people to an administration of things, a motto of the

nineteenth century, which was even taken up by Engels, has to be reconsidered. If there was indeed ever a time when we committed to the 'administration of things', there is no doubt that today we are in a third phase, the government of things. Today we *govern* things, Earth, Nature, the biosphere—we do not *administer* them in purely rational scientific terms guided by the common good, but through political decision-making by States and businesses, with the universities in increasingly symbiotic or promiscuous association with the business corporations. For example, some American universities already own agricultural land in Africa, part of the great wave of ownership or rental of lands in Africa by States and businesses from Asia, Arabia, and America.

If we continue along the paths we are on today, all the sciences will be incorporated into the mercantile State or the market State. Of course the disciplines which are favoured, using the English abbreviations, are the STEM disciplines (*science, technology, engineering, mathematics*), complemented by the TEDM disciplines (*technology, engineering, design, marketing*). In this connection, the social sciences may certainly contribute to marketing the products of the 'techno-science of commodities' and perhaps help to mitigate or prevent the disasters arising from technological systems designed according to engineering criteria constrained by the demands of profitability and productivity. Any critique of the technological society is only officially recognized if it comes from scientists or engineers, like the chemist Paul Crutzen, who coined the term 'Anthropocene', which equates more or less to that I have called the 'government of things', in which the scale of anthropogenic action on the planet is such, at least since the end of the eighteenth century, that it defines a new geological or geogenic era.

Increasingly biology itself is openly defined by cutting-edge biologists no longer as a 'science of discoveries' but as a universal project for the engineering and re-engineering of life. Even if, for centuries, the Heideggerian theory of science as being guided by technological *apriorism* achieved few results of technical interest, as in the case of biology, here it has acquired empirical confirmation, because it not only subjects existing forms of life to the manipulations of bioengineering but also enables the recreation of life itself in the laboratory. A surprise? Yes, even

this ancient mythological or alchemical dream, of the ‘onturgical’ [concerning being] type, as I have called it in some of my writings, is on the agenda for some geneticists. I heard an eminent Portuguese specialist say that the genetics industry, which is oriented to conventional genetic engineering, has become so important that, like the big banks which have done so much to ruin us, it is regarded as being too big to fail. The desirable alternatives, or at least those which could and should be explored for the good of science and all of us, remain beyond the horizon. Here is a flagrant example of how science is governed, of the practically irreversible monopoly of certain research guidelines, which may be reproduced, mutatis mutandis, in the social sciences. The outlook is dark. However, I have no doubt that young rebels here and there will continue to think for themselves, and do good social science, against everything and everyone. That was what happened in the past, even when science and knowledge were facing their darkest days [...].

## Notes

1. Manuel de Lucena (1938–2015) was a historian and political scientist and a notable figure at the ICS-ULisboa. His first book—*A Evolução do Sistema Corporativo Português*, vol. I: *O Salazarismo*; vol II: *O Marcelismo* [*The Development of the Portuguese Corporatist System*, vol. I: *Salazarism*; vol. II: *Marcelism*—written in exile and published in Portugal in 1976, is an influential view of *Estado Novo*.
2. Martins is referring here to the need for articles which would give an account, on a regular basis, of trends in publications and ideas in any given area of the social sciences. He believed those articles to be essential for understanding the state of the art in any given area and thus avoid unjustifiable selectivity, the exclusion of certain works, and simple ignorance of alternative points of view and studies.
3. Martins undertook a broader critique of the notions of risk and uncertainty in two long essays published in Portuguese at the end of the 1990s. These two essays were subsequently merged, with additions, to appear as one of the chapters (chapter V: ‘Risk, uncertainty and eschatology’) in his book *Experimentum Humanum* (2011: 173–231).

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# Memoirs of His Widow

Margaret Martins

Hermínio and I had only one chance to meet—the mutual friend who introduced us was about to leave the LSE—and we seized it. Ten days after our initial meeting, at the end of June 1957, we met in the early afternoon at the then Academy Cinema in Oxford Street and saw Robert Bresson’s film *Un condamné à mort s’est échappé*, set in occupied France during World War II. Hermínio then took me to one of the then existing cartoon cinemas at Leicester Square, and then I took him to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where Verdi’s *Il trovatore*, with its suitably Iberian setting, was being performed. The next day we went to see the film of Heinrich Harrer’s *Seven Years in Tibet*, also set in World War II. And so we have continued—more or less—ever since.

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A slightly different version of the following memoir first appeared, in Portuguese, in a previous festschrift (Margaret Martins (2015), Uma Única Chance de Encontro, in *Domínio das Tecnologias: Ensaios em Homenagem a Hermínio Martins*, ed. Maria Ângela D’Incao, São Paulo: Letras à Margem, 295–301). Margaret Martins wishes to retain the use of the present tense for this new volume, since the original text was written when Hermínio was still with us.

M. Martins (✉)  
Oxford, UK

For the next two years, while I continued my sociology degree and he was a graduate student under the supervision of Professor Ernest Gellner, I gradually unpicked his origins and early life. Born in 1934, in Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, he was the only child of Anibal and Olívia Martins, whose families both originated in the interior Portuguese region of Beira Alta, just south of the Douro, on the Spanish frontier. Anibal had been born in Mozambique while Olívia had gone there as a small child with her family.

When Hermínio was five, his life changed forever as his mother Olívia died very suddenly of pneumonia in Nampula, where his father worked on the railway. Hermínio was, in effect, adopted by his mother's sister Silvina and her husband Hermínio Almeida, who was a land surveyor in the plantations around Quelimane and who had no children of their own.

The following year his father took Hermínio to Portugal by ship through the wartime Atlantic. While in Portugal, Anibal met and married his second wife, Maria, who thereby became Hermínio's stepmother. Anibal and Maria went on to have two daughters, Hermínio's sisters Beatriz and Anisabel. Hermínio, however, returned to live with his aunt and uncle in Quelimane, Mozambique, often visiting friends in the countryside for weekends. When he began to attend the only secondary school in the country, the Liceu Salazar in Lourenço Marques, he stayed with his maternal grandparents, returning by plane to Quelimane for the school holidays.

At the Liceu Salazar he specialized in science and modern languages and was very well taught—his teachers included former university academics who had been exiled from Portugal for political reasons. He was part of a very stimulating group of students, which included the future filmmaker Ruy Guerra, the philosopher Fernando Gil, the medical researchers Hugo Aires Lopes David and Artur Galdes, and the future army captain Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho. Marxism was *de rigeur*.

Hermínio's visit to Portugal at the age of six had opened the wider world beyond Mozambique to him—and he had developed a very strong preference for an Allied victory in World War II, when Portugal had been neutral. He had also become convinced that the Portuguese would be expelled from Mozambique and 'didn't belong there'. His family expected and wished that he should continue his education in South Africa, but he

detested that country's regime and very much preferred to return to Europe to study. And so, at the age of 17 years and 3 months he sailed to Lisbon via Cape Town. He stayed briefly in Lisbon and then took the ship 'Highland Princess' to London, arriving at Tilbury on the north shore of the Thames Estuary on 18 October 1951. He was going to an address in Bayswater, West London.

Why England and not France has never been totally clear to me and arrival in England could not have been easy—it rarely is. At least he felt safe from the PIDE, the Portuguese secret police—his school group had been interrogated by the PIDE in Lourenço Marques, and Hermínio made a scapegoat as he was already abroad. Another reason may have been that one of his school friends, a Goanese, Abel Miranda, was also coming to England at around the same time hoping to study physics and already had family in London, well established in the Portuguese opposition. Perhaps the decisive factor, however, was the presence in England of leading Marxist intellectuals who were prominent scientists, notably J.B.S Haldane and J.D. Bernal.

Hermínio was obliged to take O and A level exams—the basic university entrance requirements—as his Portuguese school-leaving 'Bac' qualification was not accepted. He applied in Oxford to study philosophy and was awarded a scholarship, which he was unable to take up as he did not have the requisite Latin. Instead he got into the LSE to study for an economics degree and was taught by professors who included Karl Popper. At the end of the second year, he was awarded as first in various papers, including economics, public finance, and the arcane subject of the British Constitution. In his third year he decided to specialize in sociology, and he had just finished his finals when he and I met at the end of June 1957.

For the next two years he was a graduate student, being supervised by Professor Ernest Gellner and working on the philosophy and sociology of Durkheim. He also began applying for academic jobs—in the UK and Commonwealth—at that time very few and far between. In June 1959 he was appointed to teach Sociological Theory in the Sociology Department of University of Leeds—fortuitous timing as we were about to marry.

We were married in July 1959 at St Ethelreda's Church in Holborn—I was still then a practising Catholic—followed by a reception at the Catholic Chaplaincy in Devonshire Place. Then family and friends



departed—weddings then were normally quite simple—and Hermínio and I continued as we had started, by going to the cinema and seeing Jacques Tati's *Mon Oncle*. We then went by train to Italy for an extravagant five weeks in Rome, Sicily, Amalfi, and Florence, finishing in Paris for a few days with my parents. An idyllic summer!

Leeds, where we arrived in early September to look for somewhere to live, was a shock. I had been born and grown up in the south-west—Bristol, Bath, and the North Somerset rural coalfield—and had never been further north than the Midland town of Burton on Trent, where my father came from. While I was thoroughly familiar with the history and sociology of the north, I was shocked by the sheer filthiness of the air, buildings, and rivers—the Town Hall in Leeds then was literally black all over with soot and as for the fogs....

During the five years that we lived there, our two sons, Paul and Nicholas, were born, and we made some lifelong friends, among the students as well as the faculty. The faculty included the South African sociologist and race relation expert John Rex and Peter Nettel, who had published a major study of Rosa Luxemburg and also Roland Robertson. We also got to know the feminist theorist, Juliet Mitchell, who was teaching literature, and her then husband, Perry Anderson, who had been setting up the *New Left Review*.

In the summer of 1961, I travelled by train to Portugal with our son Paul, who was 1—my first visit and, in retrospect, a completely mad thing to do and against all sensible advice. We were met in Guarda by Hermínio's Aunt Aldora, who had returned to Portugal from Mozambique a few years earlier with her husband, Abílio Quadrado. The only brother of Hermínio's mother Olívia and Aunt Silvina, he had died some time before. She took us to stay with her in the historic walled village of Castelo Rodrigo—my first glimpse of rural Portugal. I was very struck by one of the street names, 'Rua da Sinagoga', and later discovered that it was one of the five towns or villages where Jews expelled from Spain were permitted to settle after 1492.

Aunt Aldora, Paul, and I then went by train to Lisbon for a few days, where we met some of Hermínio's school friends. We stayed in a pensão full of angry *returnees* from Angola, where the uprising that would lead to the end of Portuguese rule in Africa 14 years later had recently begun.

Paul and I then went overnight to Madrid, where a Spanish friend from Leeds was staying and then took trains back to London and Leeds.

At this time, in the early 1960s, Government recognition of an urgent need to increase the provision of higher education led to the setting up of a number of new universities, generally with ‘county’ names rather than the ‘city’ names of the older universities. Hermínio applied to Essex and was appointed there, beginning with the first student intake in September 1964. And so we moved to Colchester, a town of pre-Roman origin 60 miles north-east of London.

Essex was generous with sabbatical leave, and Hermínio was very keen to visit the United States. He was awarded a visiting Lectureship at Harvard for the academic year 1966–1967, to take over Talcott Parsons’ teaching while he himself was on sabbatical. We sailed from Southampton to New York on the ‘France’ in mid-September 1966 and then took the train to Boston. We found an apartment in Cambridge within walking distance of the William James multi-storey building, where the Department of Social Relations was located. It was a very interesting and stimulating year to be there, and we decided to stay for another year, if possible. Hermínio managed to get a similar visiting Lectureship at the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia.

We left Cambridge in June 1967 and went camping for three weeks on Cape Cod and then moved to Philadelphia to find accommodation. We then flew to Mexico—a country I had long wanted to visit—staying three weeks in Mexico City and then going via Cuernavaca to Acapulco for a week. During that week in Acapulco, 25 copra workers were shot from inside their union building, and the funerals dominated the town during the following days—a dramatic and tragic end to our summer.

Philadelphia was racially very tense during the year that we lived there—there had been serious race riots in a number of major cities in the summer of 1967, and the city was heavily policed. The news was completely dominated by the war in Vietnam—which was going badly—and the threat of the Draft became very real. These were two sharply contrasting years to be in the United States: in the first people were still very confident, but during the second the public mood changed dramatically, and it was not an easy country or a happy one to be living in.

We returned to England in the summer of 1968 on the liner ‘United States’, and arrival back in England was also not easy. The students had transformed Essex into a version of a guerrilla encampment, and two shocks within a couple of weeks that autumn were a terrible blow, particularly to Hermínio: his Uncle Hermínio was knocked down and killed by a car in Lourenço Marques, and our good friend, Peter Nettel, died in a plane crash in the United States.

In addition, Hermínio was himself being threatened by the draft—the Portuguese Consul in London refused to renew his passport and was only willing to give him a document valid for 90 days to enable him to go to Lisbon and register for military service. The colonial war, like the war in Vietnam, was going badly. He felt quite unable to register, and so he applied for, and was given, a stateless person’s travel document by the British Home Office, valid for all countries *except Portugal*. This did at least enable him to travel—we had become accustomed to visiting the Continent every year—but it was not without problems. He was told, on departing from Bilbao in 1970, that ‘he should not have been let in’ and he was actually refused entry at Calais in 1972 without a visa, which it was too late to get that day, so we returned and went to Wales instead.

Becoming increasingly unhappy at Essex, Hermínio was looking for another job and was appointed to Oxford in 1971, to teach the sociology of Latin America, with a Fellowship at St Antony’s College. Eurico de Figueiredo was there, and he was followed by a succession of brilliant students from Brazil, Portugal, and other countries during the years that Hermínio was teaching and supervising in Oxford. Brazilian students included Antonieta and Leo Leopoldi, Ana Skef Fernandes, and Maurício Rands. Distinguished visiting scholars included Laymert dos Santos, Moisés, Maria Quinteiro, and Angela d’Incao who was with Trajano. Professor Darrell Posey virtually settled in Oxford before his untimely death. A rich and very stimulating intellectual environment!

In 1973 I was appointed to a job at Oxfordshire County Council, in Oxford, to work on the 1971 Census employment and housing statistics for the Oxfordshire Structure Plan. I stayed there, doing a mixture of research and administrative jobs until I retired.

The 25th of April 1974 came as a huge relief and pleasure, though Hermínio did not get a Portuguese passport until the Spring of 1975 and

he was then able to visit for the first time since 1951. In the summer of 1975, we all went, by train, and I began to notice the vivid political imagery and started photographing it the following year. With Portuguese rule ending in Africa and under the threat of re-education camps, Hermínio's father, stepmother, and Aunt Silvina all left Mozambique, with not a lot more than they could carry in suitcases, and set about remaking their lives in Portugal—father and stepmother in Coimbra and Aunt Silvina in Lisbon.

If their lives had been radically changed, in a paradoxical way, our lives became more stable—what we had wanted to happen for so long had finally happened. We were able and did go to Portugal, and there were always Portuguese students and researchers in Oxford—Manuel Villaverde Cabral in the late 1970s, as well as more permanent residents, who included Ana Waissbein and Lia Raitt. Hermínio started an annual Portuguese Workshop together with David Goldey, who, with his wife Patricia, shared a love of and interest in Portugal. The Goldeys had already bought a house, at Biscaia, Cabo da Roca. We continued staying with the family or in hotels until, in 1987, Aunt Silvina needed accommodation, and we bought a smaller house in Oxford and a small apartment at Carcavelos, between Lisbon and Cascais. She lived in the apartment until 2000 and then moved to a nearby home where she died in 2003. We became very attached to the apartment, and for Hermínio especially it became and remained a very important emotional base in Portugal.

In July 1989 the most painful and difficult experience of our lives devastated us—the suicide of our younger son, Nicky, at the age of 25, as the result of an unhappy and very jealous love affair with the singer in his band. He became obsessed with music as a teenager, and after dropping out of Ravensbourne Art College in London, where he had been studying technical illustration, he had become the bass guitarist of a rock band which was beginning to perform in Oxford, and then for him everything went horribly and tragically wrong.

We, and our families, somehow survived, with great difficulty and the support of very kind friends, and slowly recovered over the next years. Fortunate indeed are the parents who never have any anxiety or fear about their children.

Our elder son Paul and his wife Christine were a huge source of strength. Paul's ambition had been to be a manager, and also to be independent, and he had set up a car accessories shop in Banbury, which has been very successful. In 1990 Christine gave birth to a son, Daniel, and joy began, very slowly at first, to return to our lives.

Daniel grew up and became a web, and then an app designer, and is currently working for Skype in London.

Hermínio and I began to recover, and through the 1990s we travelled more extensively and further afield—including California, Canada, Hong Kong, and Macau. I retired and started to research an article on a distant family connection, John Stanbridge, a teacher whose Latin texts were the first widely used printed school books in England in the early 1500s. I was very pleased when it was published in *Oxoniensia*, the annual journal of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society.

Hermínio continued teaching until retirement age in Oxford and then was elected to the Institute of Social Sciences in Lisbon until he had to retire there also. He was enormously pleased to receive a Doctorate *Honoris Causa* from the University of Lisbon in 2006 and to be presented with a festschrift in 2007. 'Retirement' did not, however, mean 'inactivity', but more time for writing and editing, and also travelling—journeys to Japan, Argentina, Chile, and a number of European cities, including Paris, and several visits to Brazil.

And so Hermínio and I continue, curious and interested, particularly in politics, economics, and history, rarely totally agreeing, but almost always with some overlap. A rich cultural life is very important to us both—during the weeks when I was first thinking about this piece, we visited two exhibitions in London—*Masterpieces of Chinese Painting 700–1900* at the Victoria and Albert Museum and *Daumier: Visions of Paris* at the Royal Academy—and attended two chamber music concerts in Oxford.

Hermínio is kind, generous, and courageous, as well as very intelligent, and I feel enormously privileged to have shared so much of my life with him.

Margaret Martins, 20 February 2014



# Hermínio Martins: Memoir of a Colleague

Roland Robertson

To the best of my recollection, I first met Hermínio Martins in a dark, gloomy building not far from the centre of Leeds in late October 1961. This was the building in which the Department of Social Studies was at that time located. This first meeting with Hermínio gave me some immediate comfort that I had not left the London School of Economics for the academic ‘sticks’ (I had been constrained to move from London to Leeds for rather private reasons and been encouraged by the offer of a post-graduate scholarship from the University of Leeds.)

I was soon to be struck by the presence in the university, of a considerable number of outstanding sociologists, philosophers, historians, and members of other disciplines at this time. It was Hermínio who introduced me to many of these. In retrospect, however, it is surprising how many members of the teaching and research staff became disillusioned so quickly and left for seemingly greener pastures. In the case of Hermínio and myself, our strong reservation about our own department was that

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the sociology encouraged and taught there was much too empirical in a rather disorganized way and not at all, for the most part, theoretical or analytical. This circumstance had arisen in large part because Bryan Wilson and John Rex had recently left. In fact, I had become a replacement for one of them almost immediately afterwards.

Early in that first academic year 1961–1962 of my presence in Leeds, I came to know Hermínio and his wife, Margaret, rather well. His intellectual interests overlapped considerably with my own. Although I hasten to add that in a sense he was a somewhat daunting academic presence in my life, not least because he knew much more about philosophy than I did, while his reading in the social sciences and history had been much more thorough than mine. Indeed, I have come to realize over the years that Hermínio was almost certainly one of two or three people who has influenced me most in the course of a long career.

More particularly, when Peter Nettl arrived in the department, we came to form a kind of threesome with interlocking interests. Theoretically speaking it was Talcott Parsons who lay at the centre of these shared interests, a circumstance which exposed us to British sociologists in general as allegedly conservative, right-wing academics! This judgement, of course, ran completely in the wrong direction although I suppose that we rather mischievously enjoyed the negativity that was thrown at us.

The years that followed were, for the most part, very enjoyable. Hermínio and I shared many students and taught courses in complementary ways. Many of the students that we had were friends with each other and developed apparently lasting bonds. In fact, from time to time, I still encounter students from the days of Martins and Robertson at Leeds. I even came across this kind of student during my more than thirty years at the University of Pittsburgh. One of the most enjoyable and fruitful aspects of our collegiality was the development of a seminar programme that took place on Saturday mornings. Another was the enthusiasm of the excellent students that we had (in spite of it being extremely rare—at least in those days—for any student to get a first-class degree). Several of the students who *only* obtained lower-second degrees would by today's standards have received clear-cut first-class degrees. Hermínio and I were also successful in persuading senior staff to facilitate invitations to important

overseas scholars, who were visiting the UK, to visit the Department of Social Studies at Leeds.

During my time in Leeds I was tempted by Hermínio himself to follow him to the newly founded University of Essex. The latter was initially very attractive intellectually for various reasons, not least its ambition with respect to its cosmopolitanism, in the sense that it had leaders whose interests were transnational and spread across much of the globe. In fact, looking back, I can easily see that my own global interests were greatly consolidated in the Essex department. I distinctly remember, and this was not at all unusual, that Hermínio drew my attention to a crucial book that greatly enhanced my ability to link my own research in modernization and development, on the one hand, and the world as a single place, on the other. The book was Gustavo Lagos, *International Stratification and Underdeveloped Countries* (1963). What was particularly interesting about this book was that it promoted the idea that one could fruitfully apply what had heretofore been regarded as an intrasocietal perspective to the global circumstance. In fact, this was an all too typical Martins' gesture, one that fully enabled me to pursue the work that I came to undertake in the field of globalization.

In fact, it is one of the least known aspects of the odyssey of the theme of globalization that Leeds and Essex were at the very centre of this kind of work. Had Peter Nettl not died in a plane crash in New Hampshire in the autumn of 1968, shortly after he had migrated to the USA, it is likely that work on the global arena would have been accomplished even faster than it eventually was. In this connection, it should be said that the name of Hermínio Martins should be added to the list of the very early proponents of globalization theory. However, I have one particular reservation in this regard. In the early period of globalization theory, it was thought of as a multidimensional phenomenon involving economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions. This feature stands, of course, in very sharp contrast to the *politicoeconomic* meaning currently ascribed to the word globalization. A second, less important, reservation is that as far as I know Hermínio himself never explicitly used the precise term, globalization, except en passant, let alone the newer concept of 'glocalization'. Having noted these more or less superficial differences between Hermínio



and myself, it should be emphasized that I was frequently encouraged by him in my work on matters global.

During our periods together in Leeds and Essex, Hermínio introduced me to a great variety of strands of social scientific effort and accomplishment. Randomly I can remember work in such fields as feudalism (considered comparatively), the study of empires, revolutions, millennial movements, the newly emerging work on celebrity, culture and knowledge, organization theory, as well as adjacent arts and sciences, including the very important topic of the cinema. This kind of highly inclusive approach was virtually unknown, I believe, in its breadth and depth in sociology in Britain at that time. Hermínio was indeed a polymath. That period was also in fact, or so many would argue, the high point of American sociology in the second half of the twentieth century. Much of my own and I believe Hermínio's sociological formation was developed around this time, although we by no means neglected continental European sociological and historical work. After all, Hermínio himself had been working on Durkheim and the Durkheimian school while still a student at the LSE. He and I must have used up much of the university budget allotted to photocopying. Indeed, on virtually every working day we exchanged copies or news about recently published articles or chapters in books that one or other of us deemed to be of great importance.

It is interesting to note that Hermínio and I never collaborated on a particular project, although we had planned and nearly did develop a fully fledged reader of social scientific methodology, a project which calculatedly distanced itself from what was usually known at that time in the UK as sociological methods. It was our intention to follow yet another *bête noir* of British sociology—namely, Paul Lazarsfeld—in regarding methodology as the perspective that mediated between sociological methods and the philosophy of science.

Closely involved with our methodological interests was work that brought the name of Hermínio Martins to well-read sociologists in various parts of the world. I refer here particularly to Hermínio's crucial intervention in methodological discourse published in a memorial volume for Peter Nettl in 1972 (T.J. Nossiter et al., eds., *Imagination and Precision in the Social Sciences*). Also constituting a part of this intervention was Hermínio's chapter, 'Time and Theory in Sociology' in John

Rex, ed., *Approaches to Sociology* (1974). These interventions as a whole contained a cogent critique of the methodological nationalism that had dominated sociology and the social sciences generally. In this regard it should be remarked that although we never linked the two ourselves, Hermínio's ideas concerning the limitations and problems concerning methodological nationalism fitted very neatly with my own growing interest in what I came to call global sociology. It should be added that the chapter on time was beautifully sarcastic in Hermínio's underlining of the failure of critics of Parsons—critics of his alleged lack of interest in change—to do anything more than produce 'theories' of non-change.

Shortly before the publication of Hermínio's crucial contribution to the issue of methodological nationalism, he himself had spent some overlapping years with Peter Netti in the USA. Also, Hermínio and I had spent two years in tandem in the Universities of Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh, respectively. Taken as a whole, the period from 1961 through 1970 was the one when I was most closely involved with Hermínio. And it should be said that when we moved in succession from Leeds to Essex (Colchester), we took, so to speak, several students with us. Indeed, two of the latter went on to be with us in the USA, Richard Whitley to the University of Pennsylvania and Frank West to the University of Pittsburgh. Both of them had originally been students of Hermínio.

Apart from intermittent correspondence, Hermínio and I only met directly on two more occasions: once in the early 1970s when he gave a paper at the University of York at my invitation and again in 2007 when I visited the University of Lisbon mainly to present a *festschrift* to Hermínio himself. My visit to Lisbon is one that I shall never forget. Not merely was this a wonderful intellectual occasion it was also full of typical Martins' laughter—in fact, at one point Hermínio virtually fell off his chair as we reminisced about the wonders of British sociology.

While still in Leeds Hermínio had developed a strong interest in the philosophy and sociology of science, and he was to continue with and extend this focus for the remainder of his career. In this respect our careers and intellectual trajectories somewhat diverged, even though we continued to exchange papers with each other and, indeed, followed each other's careers continuously. Hermínio's work in the last twenty years or so

was of the greatest importance with respect to such issues as new technologies and their social implications, including the significance and ramifications of cyborgs. In any case it was, as usual, well ahead of most innovators in the field. Hermínio's interest in the future had also been nurtured for many years, and his concern with this theme had become increasingly inclusive of much of his work as a whole. Without a shadow of doubt, Hermínio Martins was one of the finest scholars I have ever encountered—perhaps *the* finest.



# Alternatives to Physicalism: Memoirs of a Friend

Peter Ells

This memoir recalls friendly discussions with Hermínio Martins regarding the essential character of the furniture of the universe. Physicalism, despite the successes of the natural sciences, fails to account for experiences such as pain. As will be shown, Martins and the writer preferred alternative metaphysical systems that avoid such pitfalls.

There are two pictures we can sketch of a human person: first, in physical terms, as a biological organism—every cell and organ, the brain included, of this complex body obeys exactly the same spatio-temporal laws as any other physical system; second, as a mind that perceives the world as being full of objects that appear rich in qualia—experiential qualities such as our experiences of the blueness of the sky or of a feeling of pain in my elbow. As minds, moreover, we seem to be agents in the world. For example, the choice as to whether or not we take another bite of a delicious cake while we are on a diet appears to originate in and be up to us alone. The mind-body problem asks how these contrasting, incomplete pictures can be related to one another cogently.

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For the past eighty years, physicalism has been the dominant metaphysical position in the West. According to it, everything is ontologically grounded in the true (completed) physics of the world, and as such it takes human beings, regarded as biological organisms, to be included in this foundation. The physicalist mind-body problem then asks: how are we to give an account of human minds on this basis—that is in terms of spatio-temporal goings-on? Many differing answers have been proposed. These range, in order of increasing realism about persons, from: mind does not exist; mind exists solely as an illusion; mind is an epiphenomenon, having no effect on the world; and mind is identical to something physical (perhaps something functional)—but qualia are illusory; mind and qualia exist in their own right because they are ‘emergent.’ The diversity of such answers is a testimony to the lack of consensus among physicalists about the mind-body problem. Almost all physicalists argue that free will, when understood in any strong sense, is an illusion.

I can merely touch here in turn on why each of these physicalist proposals is implausible. The root of all these problems is the reality of our qualia. Hermínio and I agreed that qualia are indisputable facts of our universe (despite the denials of some academics) and that, as Russell affirmed, we are immediately acquainted with our experiences: an excruciating pain remains a fact whether or not it corresponds to a bodily injury. Our sole knowledge of the universe comes through our experiences, so if mind is an illusion, then why is not the universe also? If mind is epiphenomenal, then how can we practise science? How could our experience, as we are acquainted with it, be one and the same as spatio-temporal brain behaviour? (there remains a well-known ‘explanatory gap’ here). Finally, ‘emergence’ is a comforting word that does not amount to an explanation; moreover emergence goes against the spirit of physicalism because it propose a novelty arising that is not a strict deduction from known physical processes or laws.

The major motivation for the denial of qualia is the feeling among academics that physicalism must be true because it is the only metaphysic consistent with science, and one must perforce deny qualia. This note proposes an alternative system that both affirms qualia and respects science.

Pan-idealism is very much a minority position that will first be sketched informally. It is a form of idealism, where idealism is taken to be the metaphysical position that the ontological ground of existence is the mental (broadly construed). Despite this, it is unimpeachably realistic and is not anthropocentric: pan-idealists concur that scientists are appropriate experts to make a catalogue of the concrete furniture *F* of the universe, and thus they agree with physicalists in their listing of what is real. It is in the character of *F* that the position differs.

The members of *F* are called true individuals. Catalogue *F* would be expected to contain, among other things, all physical ultimates (say elementary particles), fields, atoms, molecules, cells, organs, organisms. As is suggested by this list, true individuals can sometimes organise themselves into hierarchies. *F* would probably not contain such things as rocks and galaxies, which can be taken to be merely aggregates of true individuals. The key thesis of pan-idealism is that every true individual is a centre of experience (or experient) that can perceive others and act with a certain lawful agency. The canonical example of such a centre is (this present moment of) your current stream of experience.

The pan-idealist mind-body problem is then to derive the totality of physics—including space, time and the physical properties of all true individuals—in a manner consistent with current scientific knowledge, from this mentalistic foundation. We want to show that physical properties are nothing over-and-above mental properties. Length will be used as an example (science perforce deals solely with phenomena, that is with what can be perceived). Even properties given by theory, such as the diameter of an atom, have their ultimate basis in phenomena. Two scientists are measuring the length of a bone by laying a ruler next to it—for simplicity, we will assume that these items happen to be equal in length. Only if Albert's percepts are compatible with Betty's do they know that their measurement is veridical. We will call this empirical condition intersubjective consilience. One might propose that length is identically such intersubjective consilience, but, as it stands, this suggestion would be hopelessly anthropocentric. However, we can correct this by extending the condition to all experients. Take, for example, a dog. Its perceptual apparatus has similarities to that of humans: the images of the bone and ruler therefore take up equal portions of the dog's visual percept. Its

experience is empirically consilient with the finding of Albert and Betty that the ruler and bone are equal in length. The dog's percept is an effective measurement of the length of the bone, even though it cannot think, and even in the absence of any humans. Although we do not have epistemic access to the dog's percepts, we may be very confident that they do occur as described—they are part of the ontology of our pan-idealist universe. According to pan-idealism, even a photon is a true individual and hence is a primitive experient.

Sketchy definition: the length of an object is identified by maximally combining (and reconciling) structural information from the percepts of all of the experients that perceive it—including the experients that make up the object (if we have a natural unit, such as the Planck length, then length is simply a number). The thesis of pan-idealism is that length is identically such reconciled structural, perceptual information. Length can safely be reduced entirely to the domain of experiences: there is no need to postulate an obscure physical length 'out there,' over-and-above the totality of experiences (because we have no acquaintance with length except through our experiences). Of course, to put such a programme into effect, we would have to be able to characterise the percepts of all experients, and this is an extremely difficult, unsolved problem.

Similarly, time would in principle be identified by reconciling the perceived succession of experiences of each experient. Let us suppose that length and time can be logically identified with certain complex mental properties belonging to a collection of experients. If this is so then the identification of all physical properties as being mental properties follows straightforwardly. Recall that any physical property can be expressed in terms of seven SI base units, which are metre, second, kilogramme, mole, ampere, kelvin and candela. The first two are measures of length and time, respectively, and so have been reduced already. The remaining five can be derived from the first two in terms of certain natural phenomena (Mills 2013) (SI units are somewhat anthropocentric, but we can replace them with related naturalistic units in which, for example, the speed of light equals one). All physical units can be expressed in terms of base units and then in terms of length and time. Moreover, pan-idealism identifies physical laws as being concrete, lawful regularities in the percepts of

all experients (contrast this with the obscure ontological status of physical laws according to physicalism).

Pan-idealism solves, at least in principle, many of the difficulties of the mind-body problem. It is robustly realistic both about the furniture of the universe (atoms, chairs, rocks, other people) and about qualia (pains, the taste of wine). It is monistic in the sense that everything in the universe has the same ontological character.

An example difficulty, the problem of zombies, is that one can conceive of a physical system, identical to a human being in terms of all its physical properties, including behavioural properties, but not possessing any qualia (Chalmers 1996). This is an extremely tough problem for physicalists (leading many either to deny qualia or to made an implausible, arbitrary and brute identity of qualia with certain physical goings-on). In pan-idealism, however, zombies are impossible because to exist concretely as an individual is exactly to be an experient. My brain (physics and all) is nothing over-and-above a hierarchy of experients. So, take away my mind (in particular, that part associated with feelings), and you have, in that very action, annihilated a chunk of my brain.

A second difficulty for physicalism is that there seems to be no way to distinguish our actual universe from a mathematical abstraction (French 2014). Pan-idealism does not have this problem because a realised universe (and it alone) inevitably possesses qualia (Ells 2011).

Pan-idealism, if it can be made precise at all, must necessarily be consistent with science: as was seen, each physical property is identified as being a maximal intersubjective consilience among all experients. So, for example, if a bone has a certain length according to pan-idealism, then a fortiori, it must have the same length according to scientists (all of whose streams of consciousness are sequences of experients and are hence a proper subset of all experients).

A different, more moderate position, panpsychism, holds that every item of the furniture of the universe has experiential in addition to physical properties and that these two kinds of properties have equal status (Nagel 1979; Strawson 2009). This solves the problem of emergence, but it merely moves the mind-body problem down to the level of microphysics without solving it. There remain two competing explanations for the behaviour of elementary particles: one in terms of mind and the other in



terms of physics. Physicists may well ask why there is no sign of these mental properties, especially since the spatio-temporal behaviour is well understood in terms of physical properties and laws alone. Pan-idealism solves this by denying that physical and mental properties have equal status: instead, it contends that physical properties depend upon, and can be entirely reduced to, mental properties.

Hermínio and I had many discussions of these and other matters. He was my mentor and encouraged me greatly in getting my work published. He was a strong critic of physicalists, especially those who were reductionists. On the other hand, we both recognised that any watering down of reductionism was contrary to the tenor of the physicalists' project. Hermínio was therefore keen to see alternative positions explored, which recognised us in the fullness of our humanity.

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# Hermínio Martins at Leeds: A Personal Memoir

Leslie Sklair

One of the many things I learned from Hermínio was that knowledge has its own distinctive sociologies, so I start with how I landed up at Leeds in the early 1960s. After an undistinguished record at a decidedly non-elite but intellectually challenging senior secondary school in Glasgow, my plan to study moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow was aborted by the economic necessity of earning a living, so in 1958 I got a job as a student apprentice at J&P Coats in the Ferguslie Thread Mills in Paisley. Day release meant that I could study the technology of cotton and bring what I learned back to the factory—am I the only professor of sociology with a City & Guilds diploma in cotton spinning? In 1960 the family finances had recovered and, my interest in cotton having been stimulated, I applied to Leeds for a place on the textile technology degree. I soon realized that this was a terrible mistake and, having scraped through my first year exams, managed to get onto the general arts first year BA course—an intoxicating mixture of English literature, philosophy,

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politics, and sociology, about which I knew next to nothing. In my second year I chose to specialize in sociology and philosophy.

The early 1960s at Leeds was a golden age for someone like me. A typical week involved lectures from Arnold Kettle, the poet Jon Silkin, the ethicist Alasdair MacIntyre (a star at Leeds long before *After Virtue*), the Marxist Cliff Slaughter, Peter Nettl (the biographer of Rosa Luxemburg), the blind Hegelian Martin Milligan (translator of the 1844 manuscripts), the philosopher of science Jerry Ravetz, and the Japanese Kantian Hidé Ishiguro. The sociology department was lit up by Roland Robertson, sharp-suited as befitted a sociologist of religion in the era of the Beatles, John Rex whose *key problems* was the prime text for the theoretically minded, Bryan Wilson soon to decamp to All Souls, and, of course, the simultaneously crystal-clear and enigmatic Hermínio Martins.

Hermínio was in his late twenties when our cohort first encountered him (he was at Leeds from 1959 to 1964). He managed to combine a rather boyish persona with rather formidable body language. He spoke beautiful English, albeit in a thick Portuguese accent, so the cohort soon divided into those who were prepared to put in a great deal of effort to understand what he was saying and those who had other priorities.

I still have a notebook labelled 'General Sociology, H. G. Martins 1962–64' from which I quote:

Social Control. Everything we do (or fail to do) can be assessed and evaluated in terms of societal norms. There are two possibilities: conformity and deviance—social controls using negative sanctions (e.g. punishments).

What are the principal types of norms in society?

1. LEGAL, deviance is crime
2. RELIGIOUS, deviance is sin (system of ultimate values)
3. MORAL, deviance is immorality
4. TECHNICAL, deviance is error
5. COGNITIVE, deviance is heresy
6. AESTHETIC, deviance is bad taste
7. ROLE, deviance is illness (psychological roots?)

All of these deviances can be treated (and this is one tendency) as forms of mental illness, e.g. criminals in psychiatric wards—case of Ezra Pound,

illness, and production in Soviet Union—difficult to place homosexuality and so on for 72 pages. It was obvious that, unlike most sociologists in the UK at the time, he took Talcott Parsons very seriously, focusing on the minimal requirements for the survival of a society, especially in times of rapid social change. My notes record three basic ‘functional requisites’<sup>1</sup> as follows:

1. Provision for adequate relationship with the environment (membership must be maintained) society need *not* satisfy the needs of all (or even a majority) of its members.
2. To deal with other societies—e.g. defence and trade.
3. Ensures opportunity and motivation for sex, sufficient level of replacement, e.g. war to reduce male members.<sup>2</sup>

If it sounds a bit garbled in places, that is my notes, not the flow of ideas that tumbled from Hermínio week in, week out, always sending us to the Library (no Google in these days) to find out who Ezra Pound was, what was going on in the Soviet Union, homosexuality (the Wolfenden Report was in the news)—concrete examples from a sometimes bewildering variety of sources, not geologically layer upon layer which is the easy way to explain complex phenomena but more like baking a cake where many ingredients are combined together to produce a satisfying whole. However, when you bite into it there is usually a ‘but Martins thinks’ or a gentle reminder that logic cannot be denied, an invitation to further study and reflection, not necessarily in that order.

The main themes of the lecture course provide, I now think, an in-depth guide to Hermínio’s intellectual journey through the quicksands of Parsonian Action Theory and more generally the structural functionalism of Merton, Smelser et al. Relentlessly my lecture notes record how seriously Hermínio took the North American orthodoxies on a large variety of topics (integration vs. coercion, the logical status of stock statements of sociology, social and cultural change, collective behaviour and social movements, science and cultural creativity, belief systems, knowledge and freedom, cultural diffusion, value systems, social stratification, elite theory, systems of total power, economic institutions, underdeveloped countries, social mobility, complex organizations, consensus and

compliance). Looking back over my notes, I am surprised to find that Marx and the Marxists merit hardly a mention—though *The Political Economy of Communism* by Peter Wiles (1962) was discussed in great detail and substantive examples from Communist societies, especially the Soviet Union, did pop up from time to time. A case in point was the extended discourse on the sociology of science—then a very junior sibling to the dominant sociology of knowledge, with particular reference to Merton's foundational work on the subject—with no reference at all to what I later discovered was a challenging Marxist contribution to the sociology of science. What struck me most at the time was that Hermínio's focus was always on the specific ideas and rarely on the writer, always encouraging us to read for ourselves and not simply ignore those whose ideas his withering criticisms had demolished (Dahrendorf and to some extent Parsons himself featured strongly in this category). Though I took a much more critical stance to Merton, Hermínio's lectures were undoubtedly the inspiration for my second book, *Organised Knowledge* (1973). I acknowledged this at the time as follows: 'My principal indirect debt is to Hermínio Martins who, as a teacher and friend, has set the highest standards of both intellect and enthusiasm in sociology for me'.

The sentence at the end of my notes reads: 'the field is wide open'. I am not sure if these were Hermínio's actual words or my interpretation of his conclusion, but they inspired me then and, though our paths diverged in the last few decades both personally and intellectually, they still inspire me today.

## Notes

1. This set of problems was the inspiration for one of my first published articles—'The fate of the 'functional requisites' in Parsonian Sociology' (*British Journal of Sociology*, XXI (March 1970, 30–42).
2. No comment in my notes, so this may have been a joke that I was too naïve at the time to appreciate.

# Part II

## Thomas Kuhn and the Theory of Scientific Revolutions



# Kuhn and Social Science

William Outhwaite

Martins' essay on 'The Kuhnian "revolution" and its implications for sociology' (1972) was probably the first thing I read by him, and it made a great impression on me, as on so many others. This chapter examines both some important developments in the history of science and science policy and also the impact of Kuhn's work on the self-understanding of social scientists, from the 1968 years (when it was used, for example, to mark the difference between Marxist and 'bourgeois' social science) to the present, when it continues to shape discussions of the classification of the sciences (another theme in Martins' own very wide-ranging work).

At the beginning of the 1970s, the sociology of scientific knowledge was in its infancy (Shapin 1995), and Martins began his chapter by pointing to the gap between the 'sociology of knowledge'—itself a rather marginal activity, as indicated by Martins' scare quotes, and the more institutional sociology of science, which was really a sociology of 'scientific communities'—though Robert Merton covered both, as in his 1945

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‘paradigm’ essay (Merton 1945). After a masterful discussion of Kuhn’s account of science and the issues it raises, Martins turns to Kuhn’s influence on sociology and the other social sciences.

There is something paradoxical in Kuhn’s appeal to sociology, for Kuhn’s work *combines sociology with anti-sociology* [...] It is sociological in that it presents something like a social theory of natural-scientific knowledge [...] On the other hand, it can be used as an ideological tool of anti-sociology, in so far as sociology appears to be lacking in the diagnostic criteria of scientific maturity—paradigmaticness and revolutions. (Martins 1972: 51)

Whereas Martins was concerned to head off a tendency in the social sciences to pursue notions of paradigm and epistemic consensus, shaped by positivism and the growth of technical methodology, arguing instead for the study of controversy, ‘cognitive agonistics’, in both natural and social science, I suggest here that a watered-down and plural notion of paradigm shaped the social sciences, especially sociology, in the following decades, and continues to compete with, to put it paradoxically, a more unitary image of fragmented research linked by a veneration of high-tech methodology.<sup>1</sup>

The Kuhnian paradigm, in the more precise sense of what he later called a ‘disciplinary matrix’, is monopolistic: you cannot have more than one at a time. Kuhn, in his ‘Reflections on my Critics’, backtracked on the sharp division between what he had originally called the pre-paradigm period and the paradigm period:

paradigms have throughout been possessed by any scientific community, including the schools of what I previously called the ‘pre-paradigm period’. My failure to see that point earlier has certainly helped to make a paradigm seem a quasi-mystical entity or property that, like charisma, transforms those infected by it. (Kuhn 1970: 272)

Kuhn, however, retained a somewhat teleological conception of the development of natural science:

The early stages in the development of most sciences are characterized by the presence of a number of competing schools. Later, usually in the



aftermath of a notable scientific achievement, all or most of these schools vanish, a change which permits a far more powerful professional behaviour to the members of the remaining community. (Kuhn 1970: 272 n.1)

Social science, by contrast, is more pluralistic, as Martins pointed out: ‘the same piece of work may conjoin the Marxist theory of alienation, the Durkheimian theory of anomie, the Parsonian pattern variables [...] etc.’.<sup>2</sup> Alternatively, as I shall suggest, sociologists, like nationalists, can use this weaker conception of paradigm<sup>3</sup> as a protection against criticism from outside: ‘my paradigm right or wrong’.<sup>4</sup>

The Marxism of the 1970s was particularly prone to this approach, rejecting (for good reasons) Popperian falsification, but going beyond this to argue for a paradigmatic incompatibility between Marxist and bourgeois economics and, with rather more difficulty, between Marxist and non-Marxist sociology. For Marxists who wanted something more sophisticated than partisanship as a way of marking the difference, Althusserian structuralism provided the answer. In the UK, Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst argued, in the context of their critique of history, ‘what is specified in theoretical discourse can only be conceived through the form of that discourse (or another, complementary, discourse). It cannot be specified extra-discursively’ (Hindess and Hirst 1977: 19).

Though no Marxist, Foucault also argued in terms of an ‘*écart énonciatif*’ or, as Roger Chartier (2009: 228; my translation) summarises it, the ‘regime of enunciation which is specific to the production of this discourse; and a “conceptual network” defined by the rules of concept formation of a given discursive formation’.

In his first book, shaped by the Althusserian approach in which sciences are defined by their ‘object’, Göran Therborn (1976: 428) argued that the division between economics, dominated by an individualistic model of self-interested action in a market, and sociology, focused on values and what he called ‘the ideological community’, was the underlying problem of non-Marxist social science.

Economics and sociology allot no proper space to the object of historical materialism, which is constituted outside their common problematic of self-interest and social values. Economists may speak of capitalism and sociologists of classes and class conflicts, but the former do not see capital

as a relation of production, and the latter do not relate classes and class struggle to particular historical combinations of the forces and relations of production. On the other hand, in historical materialism, the market and the ideological community have a space as irreducible social determinants.

Therborn (1976: 429) argued at that time for 'a *transcendence of sociology*, similar to Marx's transcendence of classical economics, and the development of historical materialism as *the science of society*'.

One of the other underlying themes was the relation between social science and normative analysis or between fact and value. Here Tom Bottomore, following the Austro-Marxists, answered his former coeditor<sup>5</sup> Maximilien Rubel's question: 'Is there a Marxist sociology?' by arguing that Marxism contained both a sociology and a normative programme and that these were independent, although Marx's 'theoretical analysis and his allegiance to the labour movement were congruent and, in a sense, mutually supporting' (Bottomore 1975a: 83). Bottomore was unusual in combining his political commitment with an equally strong commitment to value-free science; more usually, both in 'Frankfurt' critical theory and in more standard versions of Marxism, the concept of critique served to bridge the gap. The same was true of other forms of theory such as feminism and, more recently, what came to be called post-colonial theory.

A third issue revived in the second half of the twentieth century, and particularly with the revival of social theory in the 1970s, was that of the relation between the natural and the social sciences. The conjunction of analytic philosophy of language, 'phenomenological' sociology and philosophical hermeneutics reinforced earlier strands of symbolic interactionism, itself reinvigorated by Erving Goffman's influential work. The question remained open whether naturalistic or antinaturalistic paradigms of social science were simple alternatives or whether they could somehow be combined, for example, in neo-Weberian theory, Habermasian critical theory or in Roy Bhaskar's realist naturalism.

This is all familiar stuff, but Martins brought to these issues his expertise in the new field of social studies of science and an awareness of the historical dimension of the question of the classification of the sciences, which of course goes back at least to the ancient Greeks.<sup>6</sup> He coedited an

early volume in the *Sociology of the Sciences* series (Elias et al. 1982), and his papers in this field are reprinted in Príncipe 2015. The long essay on ‘Images and Imagining in Science’ is a brilliant tour d’horizon of a whole range of topics related to the theme. One is the controversy, in physics and elsewhere, over the role of images in the formation of concepts and theories. The physicist Ludwig Boltzmann, as he notes, spoke of concepts and images or pictures (Bilder) more or less interchangeably (Martins, in Príncipe 2015: 79–80; see also Blackmore 1999), but there was a clear opposition, partly mapped onto the English Channel, between Kelvin and other British physicists and the French approach of Duhem, following Lagrange, who presented algebra without diagrams. Kelvin (1904) was ‘never content until I have constructed a mechanical model of the subject I am studying. If I succeed in making one, I understand; otherwise I do not’. For Duhem (1906: 100; my translation), the ‘English mind’ has ‘an extraordinary skill at imagining very complicated ensembles of concrete facts and an extreme difficulty in conceiving abstract notions and formulating general principles’.

These variations in what Ludwik Fleck (1935) was to call ‘thought styles’ are relevant both to the reception of physics<sup>7</sup> and of the social sciences—the latter torn between the imitation of natural science and alternative antinaturalistic approaches. Martins, ranging sovereignly over the whole field of science, could view the paradigm disputes in sociology from a more intellectually cosmopolitan angle. As an omnivorous reader, he was also alert to any attempts to reinvent wheels over the last three decades of the twentieth century.

Martins did not return, as far as I am aware, to the topic of sociological paradigms which was a prominent theme in the seventies and after. Garry Gutting (1980) brought together some of these contributions in his edited reprint collection of ‘Appraisals and Applications of Thomas Kuhn’s Philosophy of Social Science’. Eckberg and Hill (1979) usefully presented ‘Twelve Sets of Sociological “Paradigms”’ from the previous decade, in an order shaped by the number of paradigms identified. Michael Carroll (1972) discussed a single paradigm candidate, the methodological approach centred on the analysis of variance, but was more concerned to criticise this than to analyse its role as a prospective paradigm. Next came a number of dualistic models, of which the most

lasting, here represented by Walsh (1972), contrasted positivistic and interpretive or ‘phenomenological’ approaches.<sup>8</sup> A triadic variant (Sherman 1974) followed Habermas (1968/1971) in adding a third, ‘critical’ approach, though he was mainly concerned to stress the importance of the then only recently canonised trinity of Marx, Durkheim and Weber (Sherman’s preferred classic). Tom Bottomore (1975b) provided a characteristically insightful and judicious overview of four approaches: structural-functional, historical, structuralist and phenomenological.

The most systematic discussion of the concept of paradigm in the books and papers reviewed by Eckberg and Hill is that by Lehman and Young. They identify in US sociology a ‘pre-paradigm-prophetic period’ (1890–1920), the ‘quest for a scientific sociology’ (1920–1940) in positivist and functionalist approaches, ‘the consolidation of the functionalist paradigm’ (1940–1960) and a move, which they welcome, ‘toward a conflict paradigm’ (1960–1973). This polarisation has generated ‘a revolutionary crisis’ and ‘a state of paradigmatic anarchy’ (Lehman and Young 1974: 15), to be remedied by the further development of the conflict approach. Friedrichs (1970: xxi, 3) also proclaimed his indebtedness to Kuhn’s model and presented it at some length in the first chapter, but it rather drops out of sight in the rest of the book, after being used to frame the ‘revolutionary’ breakdown of the functionalist orthodoxy and the free-for-all which followed in the 1960s. This is partly because he concluded that ‘The system paradigm appeared to be a product of a prior commitment to a paradigmatic image of the sociologist as *value-free*; the conflict paradigm an outcome of the paradigmatic vision of the sociologist as *engagé*’ (Friedrichs 1970: 290–291). This is of course a very different sense of paradigm from any of those in Kuhn’s conception.

The other commentators discussed by Eckberg and Hill are more cautious, suggesting that ‘it is quite problematic whether there are any “paradigms” in sociology as yet’ (Effrat 1972: 3n) or that ‘Sociology (and this applies also to other social and human sciences) has always been [...] a *multi-paradigm science*’ (Bottomore 1975b: 191). Eckberg and Hill (1979: 130) cite approvingly Martins’ observation that ‘Paradigms pertain to fields like the study of heat, optics, mechanics etc.; *there are not and cannot be* paradigms of physics or chemistry’ (emphasis added). They

conclude (p. 132) that 'If paradigms (exemplars) exist in the discipline of sociology, they are difficult to find'. One of the other works they discuss, Nicholas Mullins' very substantial analysis of 'theory groups' and social networks in sociology, contrasts his own approach with those of Friedrichs, Edward Shils (1970) and Alvin Gouldner (1965, 1970); see Mullins 1973: 306–309). Mullins, who had earlier worked on molecular biology (Mullins 1972), offered a more fine-grained analysis of the growth of theory groups from 'networks' through 'clusters' to 'specialties', usefully distinguishing between theories as a whole and specific works which have a status as 'critical landmarks', initiating further research traditions in the same way as paradigmatic theories or, in Kuhn's terminology, 'exemplars' (Mullins 1973: 6).

Mark Blaug, in an essay reprinted in the same volume as Eckberg and Hill's, argues that Imre Lakatos's (1970) model of research programmes and progressive versus degenerative problem shifts fits the Keynesian Revolution, as it gained ground against a background of unemployment and depression, better than Kuhn's model:

the Keynesian theory succeeded because it produced the policy conclusions most economists wanted to advocate anyway, but it produced these as logical inferences from a tightly knit theory and not as endless epicycles on a full-employment model of the economy. (Blaug 1975: 151)

Be that as it may, it is the Kuhnian paradigm model, rather than Lakatos's alternative, which has mostly been drawn on in the past third of a century. The paradigm candidates come and go (no-one now talks about conflict theory, while evolutionary social theory is resurgent), but the paradigm metaphor remains an attractive one.

As so often, it was in Germany that these issues were most fully debated, notably in the *Theorievergleichsdebatte* in (West) German sociology, which recognised a theoretical pluralism encompassing Habermasian communicative theory, Luhmann's system theory, interactionist and phenomenological action theory, neo-behaviourism and historical materialism. Unlike the contemporaneous and extremely acrimonious debate around the 'finalisation' of natural science discussed later, this was conducted at sociological congresses in 1974 and

1976 and in the professional journals. As M. Rainer Lepsius (2008: 125) wrote in a retrospective, politicised currents gave way to alternative paradigms: 'Aus politisierten Richtungen wurden alternative Paradigmen' (see Greshoff 2010: 185). In Germany, the revival of sociological theory and the philosophy of social science began with the discussion around Ralf Dahrendorf's *Homo Sociologicus* (1958), the 'Positivismusstreit' in the early 1960s (Adorno et al. 1971) and the Habermas-Luhmann exchange at the end of the decade (Habermas and Luhmann 1971) (see Greshoff 2010: 183). Greshoff himself founded a discussion journal in 1990, *Ethik und Sozialwissenschaften*, and later (2001–2015) *Erwägen Wissen Ethik (EWE)* with an open-door publishing policy.<sup>9</sup> He and colleagues also proposed a 'conceptual framework' to 'mediate between paradigms' (Greshoff et al. 2007). A thoughtful, if rather negative, explanation of the failure of such initiatives was offered by Hans-Joachim Giegel (1977: 228), who suggested that for the social sciences, in the absence of clear cognitive advances, innovation simply means originality and that this leads to 'irrational pluralism':

The self-sufficient search for new methods, the deviation towards side-issues and irrelevancies, the flight into speculation with no scientific basis, the protection from criticism, the instrumentalisation of scholarly communication for non-scholarly purposes, all this encourages a development which leads to the indifferent coexistence of diverse theories.

This cap is probably a partial fit, though it is also possible to argue, as Claus Offe (1977: 251) did in the same volume, that theories as different as classical sociology, Marxism and contemporary system theory are linked by a common focus on crises of different kinds and a problematisation of unreflective common sense or theoretically limited conceptions.

The critical potential of empirical social research lies not so much in the critique of answers as the critique of questions. Its practical relevance derives from the collection of evidence for the practical irrelevance of the criteria of validity to which it is subjected—whether by state or private research administration or by its own theoretical tradition.

If we have to live with pluralism in the social sciences, we may at least escape some of the naiveties which pervade discussions of the social organisation of natural science. Here again, of course, Kuhn was a crucial source of enlightenment in the philosophy and sociology of science.<sup>10</sup> Kuhn's intervention was rightly perceived as a threat to what had come to be called the 'standard view' in the philosophy of science: a Vienna Circle empiricist model, more or less modified with Popperian epicycles. Although it was possible for Popper and his followers to claim that puzzle-solving normal science was simply not good science by the standards of critical rationalism,<sup>11</sup> this conception of philosophy as a slightly *weltfremd* judge pronouncing on a massively expanding and stupendously successful social practice was not very convincing. A broadly Kuhnian or Lakatosian account of scientific practice therefore fitted into the gradual process of modification and unravelling of the original logical empiricist model (and later its Popperian variant) which began as soon as it was articulated. Like Stalinist economic planning, or the latest innovation by Microsoft, the positivist model was no sooner in place than there were suggestions for what we would now call updates to make it more sophisticated and sensitive. As Peter Halfpenny (1982: 120) summarised the process, positivism 'lives on philosophically, developed until it transmutes into conventionalism or realism'.

Nevertheless, as Steven Shapin (1995) pointed out, 'scientific North American sociological traditions and, to a lesser extent, traditions in Britain and Europe continue actively to disseminate a picture of scientific "method" and scientific knowledge radically at variance with those offered by SSK [sociology of scientific knowledge]'. This latter field, to which Martins was an active contributor, coediting a volume based on an Oxford conference (Elias et al. 1982), seems in retrospect one of the most innovative and impressive features of English-language, and particularly British sociology, yet one which remains marginal in the profession, even within the interdisciplinary area of science and technology studies. Like Martins, in the passage quoted earlier, Shapin points to a paradox:

From a sociological point of view, Kuhnian SSK is at once conservative and radical. On the one hand, it seeks inter alia to answer traditional questions about the grounds of a communal order, and it does so by pointing to the

regulative role of norms. While the regulatory relevance of social maxims ('Be sceptical', 'Be disinterested') is doubted, the significance of norms for ensuring order and for marking the boundaries of communities is vigorously respecified and reaffirmed in a new idiom. The solidarity of specialist communities—or such solidarity as is found to exist—is coordinated through their specialist knowledge. Good and bad, proper and improper, interesting and banal scientific behaviour is recognized and sanctioned by members' knowledge of the natural world. On the other hand, by arguing that the relevant norms are made of the same stuff as the community's technical knowledge, the Kuhnian move overturns the existing sociology-of-knowledge scheme that asks how 'society might influence knowledge' [...] [Thus] SSK's insistence upon a quite elementary feature of the sociological sensibility has seemed to acquire a shockingly radical, even subversive, character. (Shapin 1995: 301–302)

This may partly explain why mainstream sociology in the UK and the USA was unwelcoming to the sociology of scientific knowledge, though other factors, such as the marginality of the sociology of knowledge as a whole and the entry costs of acquiring even a minimal reading knowledge of the relevant areas of natural science, provide a more obvious explanation. More significant is the wider social hostility to any social insight into or oversight of scientific progress. Whereas a historian or sociologist of religion would be laughed at for suggesting that Judaism was succeeded by Christianity and in turn by Islam because that was what God wanted, any social explanation of scientific advance was suspected of 'explaining it away', as if the social explanation somehow undermined an alternative and perhaps complementary explanation in terms of 'internal' criteria of success.<sup>12</sup>

A particularly striking example of hostility to social approaches to science (Böhme et al. 1978) was a controversy in West Germany in the late 1970s around the 'finalisation thesis'. This concerned the practical applications of 'mature' science and was developed by a team of young researchers at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Life in Social-Technical World at Starnberg, just south of Munich, working with the physicist Friedrich von Weizsäcker. The thesis, presented in two articles in the *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* (Böhme et al. 1972, 1973), at a conference I attended in 1974 which brought together researchers from Paris and



Sussex as well as elsewhere in Germany<sup>13</sup> and in another article a little later (van den Daele and Weingart 1975) and a subsequent book publication in German (van den Daele et al. 1978) and English (Schäfer 1983) drew on the history of science to suggest a three-stage model of scientific development. Following a preparadigmatic phase of largely amateur science and a second phase characterised by the consolidation of Kuhnian paradigms or, better, Lakatosian research programmes, there follows a third phase in which the mature science, as Kuhn called it, is applied in a variety of specialist areas, such as steady-state physics drawing on quantum theory.<sup>14</sup> Whereas the emphasis in the second phase is on the development of the research programme, in the third phase, as in the first, science tends to be open to external goals—as, for example, in environmental science with its bases in chemistry, biology, meteorology and so forth. This orientation to external purposes is ‘conditioned [bedingt] by the theoretical development itself’ (Böhme et al. 1973: 136 n.15). ‘We have conceived the third phase in our model not as the application of results of the fundamental theory but as a concretisation of this theory in a particular developmental direction’ (Böhme et al. 1973: 137).

Martins would have had lots to say about this model, though I am not aware of him doing so. My focus here is on the controversy which it unleashed. This apparently innocent thesis in the history of science ran into a blizzard of criticism from the right-wing academics in the Bund Freiheit der Wissenschaft, which had been founded in 1970 in response to the excesses of the student movement of the late 1960s. They saw in the finalisation thesis a plot to subject ‘mature’ science to external political direction of the kind experienced in totalitarian regimes. A conference on science in danger (‘Gefährdete Wissenschaft’) was held in Munich in 1976, followed by a book, *Die politische Herausforderung der Wissenschaft. Gegen eine ideologisch geplante Forschung*, in the same year (Hübner et al. 1976).<sup>15</sup> Partly because of this controversy, the Institute was closed after von Weizsäcker’s retirement, and Habermas returned to Frankfurt in 1981 (see Leendertz 2010, 2013; also Wehrs 2008 and Drieschner 1996). Drieschner, though disenchanted with the organisation of the Institute of which he had been a member, notes that the finalisation theorists ‘in the end only wanted to make a serious contribution to an ongoing discussion

in the history of science'. As one of the Starnberg group, Gernot Böhme (1980: 12) wrote:

The thesis of the finalisation of science was intended to serve the self-enlightenment of scientists. It entered the discourse of *sociologists* of knowledge and the circus of ideology construction in the mass media.

Frank R. Pfetsch (1979) also outlines the intellectual and political context, noting that there was also criticism from the left that the Starnberg group were insufficiently materialist in their account of science (see Hieber 1975).

The bizarre (even if short-lived) controversy over finalisation is, of course, just one example of the controversies over the politics of science which bemuse those of us with an interest, however distanced, in the history and sociology of scientific knowledge, as well as those, like Steve Fuller, centrally concerned with these issues.<sup>16</sup> Martins was himself pursuing some of the most controversial areas of contemporary science in his incisive and inimitable style. In the social sciences, the relations between opposed theoretical 'paradigms', or whatever we choose to call them, have been largely pacified, as the rest of the world becomes more warlike and dangerous.

## Notes

1. A book published in 1997 describes its impact as 'explosive' (Fischer and Hoyningen-Huene 1997: 2) and traces the notion of paradigm through a number of fields, including law, music and moral philosophy as well as the natural and social sciences.
2. See also Sharrock and Read 2002: 126–129.
3. As Martins notes, these are really paradigm *candidates*.
4. Barkin (2010: 1) suggests the image of castles.
5. Bottomore and Rubel (1956).
6. For an overview, see, for example, Trompf (2011).
7. Paul Forman (1971) suggested that quantum theory was welcomed in part in Weimar Germany because it counted against popular critiques of scientific determinism. In the German-language discussion, the key term

was the perceptual accessibility (*Anschaulichkeit*) of physics—particularly that of quantum theory.

8. Two other dualisms were conflict/consensus (Lehman and Young 1974) and priestly/prophetic (Friedrichs 1970).
9. I once sent a contribution with the suggestion that they should leave it out if they felt it did not fit and was reminded that that would be contrary to the policy of the journal.
10. On the disjunction between philosophy of science and historical and sociological studies of scientific knowledge, see, for example, Golinsky 2011.
11. As Popper (1970: 57) put it, ‘to me the idea of turning for enlightenment concerning the aims of science, and its possible progress, to sociology or to psychology (or [...] to the history of science), is surprising and disappointing’.
12. Kuhn addressed this issue in a number of places, for example, in a contribution to symposium on Hempel in 1983 and published that year in *The Journal of Philosophy* (Kuhn 2000: 208–215). See also Bourdieu 2004; I am grateful to Bridget Fowler for this reference.
13. Habermas was codirector of the Institute. Having been invited to comment on the finalisation thesis, we tried to earn our keep by making critical comments, to an extent which rather upset the researchers. ‘Don’t worry’, Habermas said to them, as I recall the discussion; ‘stick to your guns and say what you want; it doesn’t matter if it’s wrong—if it’s criticised, that’s how scholarly progress works’.
14. In other areas of physics, such as particle physics and cosmology, the search for new fundamental theories continues (Böhme et al. 1973: 135).
15. See also the book resulting from a counter-conference, *Konsequenzen kritischer Wissenschaftstheorie* (Hubig and von Rahden (1977)).
16. See also Weingart 1983, 1997 and Leeming 1997. That the Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex University, founded only a little earlier (1966) and working on many of the same topics, survived more or less intact was largely due to the diplomatic approach and personal charisma of its long-standing and founding director, Chris Freeman (see Campos 2016). SPRU’s sister unit, History and Social Studies of Science, was however poorly supported by the University and eventually absorbed into SPRU. The Science Studies Unit at Edinburgh, also established in the 1960s, has survived and recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. For a fuller discussion of science policy at Sussex, see my article in *Zagadnienia Naukoznawstwa*, 2(212) 2017, 149–156.

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# Revolutions in Science and Art: Martins, Bourdieu and the Case of Photography

Bridget Fowler

As far as I know, Hermínio Martins and Pierre Bourdieu never met. But Martins complains about the proliferation of capitals in subsequent writers, so he had clearly read Bourdieu's works (Martins 2013: 39). Much would have brought them together: both were heirs of classical sociology, with a penchant for describing secular processes via transgressive religious analogies, both sought to produce an adequate theory of cultural revolutions and both became deeply critical of neo-liberal marketisation of hitherto uncommodified social life. It is their theorisation of art and, to a lesser extent, science that I will discuss here. I will start by discussing a lacuna in Bourdieu's theory of photographic practice and follow this with his much stronger exploration of artistic symbolic revolutions. I will then argue that Martins avoids the weakness in Bourdieu's theory of photography because of his different view of the social role of technology. Further,

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in the field of the sciences, both he and Bourdieu have complementary critiques of the Kuhnian analysis of symbolic revolutions.

Bourdieu's sociology of cultural production originated many of the key arguments in the contemporary sociology of art. I have in mind here his reiterated critique of the essentialist view of taste, coupled with his strictures against an individualistic or divine presumption of innate genius. Thus just as Feuerbach's discovery that the concept of God originated in the human psyche was supplemented by Marx's *historical* genesis of rational criticism (O'Malley 1970: xxix), so Bourdieu traced the historical genesis of the concept of 'fine artist' and 'the aesthetic' to socio-economic transformations in the eighteenth century, where they were the counterpart to the intensifying orientation of capitalism towards 'profit for profit's sake'. The bifurcation that originated then—between purely material 'interest' and perceived 'disinterestedness' elsewhere—obscured the logic of status or *cultural capital* accumulation (Bourdieu 1983, 1966, 1993b (1971)).

This is a powerful theory of artistic practice, yet it has occasionally misfired at certain targets. One such flawed work is Bourdieu and others' *Photography* (1990 (1965)). Bourdieu concludes that because of the social relations in which photography is enmeshed, it can never become a 'consecrated' art, that is to say, part of the sacralised national heritage or cultural capital. Now, as I argue elsewhere (Fowler 2007: 205–209), photography was already becoming consecrated when he wrote and has since become a permanent feature of the restricted artistic field. To list just a few dates, in 1955, Steichen had mounted *The Family of Man* exhibition at the New York Museum of Modern Art. In France, as early as 1928, the Surrealists had heralded photography as a modernist form: it had been definitively legitimated by the 1982 Sorbonne photography colloquium (see Cartier-Bresson 2004: 107). A year later, the news photographer, Jean-Philippe Charbonnier, was given an extensive retrospective at the National Museum of Modern Art in Paris (Charbonnier obituary, *The Times*, 5.6.04).

I shall resist the implication that Bourdieu's over-schematic assessment of the history and future of photographic canonisation indicates a fatal weakness in his wider sociology of culture. Nor do I accept the claim that his whole project has amounted only to a narrow 'critical sociology',

focusing on domination and distinction (Heinich 1998a: 15, 42). I *shall* argue that Martins offers an alternative reading of photography to Bourdieu's more problematic assessment.

## Situating Bourdieu: The Sociology of Photography

'Positivism, the camera and sociology grew up together' (Berger and Mohr 1982: 99). Their twin birth has led to the false assumption that the camera in the nineteenth century was always put to realist uses: a naïve objectivism derived from the earlier camera obscura which parallels the naïve naturalistic aspirations of much nineteenth-century sociology. Yet more detailed investigation shows greater possibilities for the camera than this (Crary 1992). Indeed, by the 1840s, with the discovery of retinal after-images by Goethe, the role of subjective ocular and mental processes in partially constituting the outside world was clarified. The Renaissance visual device, the mobile version of the 'camera obscura', began now to be thought of as blocking reality, since it presented an upside-down and left-to-right image: an inverted world. Thus in modernity, truth began to be associated with the new technology of the camera. This had already come to be recognised as incorporating subjective perception, or reality viewed from a particular perspective.

To situate the analysis of Bourdieu et al. (1990), a variety of earlier sociological approaches to photography should be sketched, briefly, given spatial constraints. First and classically, photography has been linked to an ethnography of modern experience, in which the camera went hand in hand with the vigilant *unveiling of the mysteries* of the city, an idea summed up graphically in the logo of the Pinkerton detectives: an eye with, underneath, 'We Never Sleep' (Frisby 2001: 66). It is well-known, for example, that a photographer such as Riis—once a police detective—used the camera for realist portrayals of the world of immigrant labour, even bursting into overcrowded New York tenement flats at dead of night to record, via flashlights, the bunked layers of sleeping or half-awake migrants.

This first, *realist*, tradition has been eclipsed by the second, Foucauldian view, interpreting photography as the apparatus of an *official gaze*, part of the wider microcosm of domination (Tagg 1988). Photography became almost exclusively understood in the 1980s and 1990s as perpetrating an alienating assault as an instrument within the field of power: hence the photographic recording of Barnardos' boys, or street children, forced into uncharacteristic postures to accentuate their unkempt, lost and degraded condition. Photographs by colonial officers of nervous native subjects followed the same pattern: the unaccustomed sitters forced to submit to the ignominy of the surveying stare.

Third, within the Frankfurt School, Benjamin's important historical essay on photography contributed a *new theory of the means of visual representation* (1979: 240–255). Benjamin acknowledges that the photographic eye might contribute to the aura of power, as indeed had court or academic artists formerly. The photos of the last third of the nineteenth century enhanced the image of the imperial bourgeoisie, for example, depicting them with an unexpected monumentality and stiff grandeur. But he also saw the invention of photography as the '*first truly revolutionary means of reproduction*' (Eiland and Jennings 2002: 224, my emphasis): the visual symbol of a democratising process that would hasten the end of 'camera obscura'-like ideology. He thus emphasised the early experimental phase of photography and also its later, ingenious use in the hands of photographers like Atget, noting especially the latter's repetition of formal patterns to defamiliarise the unknown areas of the poorest raggickers or to record from strange angles the ornamental bannisters or other neglected decorative crafts in the construction of Parisian tenements. Moreover Benjamin emphasised that photography as a technology had the power to break with the purely cultic or sacralising nature of art: its technological character was not a barrier to its being important culturally, just as it was not to be later, for Martins. Because of its technical reproducibility and the new modes of perception it offered, photography could foster a 'liquidation' of cultural tradition that would encourage a critical gaze on bourgeois society (Phillips 1993: 16). This is arguably the most useful context in which we might situate Bourdieu. Indeed, Bourdieu's sociological study of popular photography might be read as the disenchanting riposte to Benjamin's hopes for a non-auratic mass culture in modernity.

## Bourdieu's Demystifying Gaze

Although, in the twentieth century, photography was simplified and cheapened, it was still subject to social constraints (Bourdieu et al. 1990 (in French:1965)). Bourdieu stresses that photography has been democratised: it is in principle available to everyone for artistic purposes (1990: 30–31; also 2003: 38).<sup>1</sup> Further, the camera shows instantly how ways of seeing vary from different perspectives: this could potentially offer a shift in the general awareness of visual practices (1990: 75). Yet—viewed from his vantage point in the mid-1960s—the actual practice of photography has not resulted in such a democratised artistic activity. On the contrary, neither the haute bourgeoisie nor ordinary peasants and workers take the artistic potential of photography seriously. Strangely echoing Durkheim's view of suicide as the act of those who are peculiarly anomic and isolated, Bourdieu registers only a tiny minority—typically of urban, single men—as the most likely aficionados of photography. They alone commit themselves to camera clubs, although they tend to emulate the styles and techniques of the more consecrated medium, oil painting, in their arrangement of subjects for photographs.

To understand the more general lack of time and trouble, two explanatory principles needed to be introduced. First, Bourdieu argues that the camera is the supreme instrument of 'collective memory': in other words, photography as a popular activity is part of a mass family and community cult (1990: 19, 2003: 136). Consequently, within these groups it is unavailable for less stereotyped uses. Secondly, amongst the affluent social classes, where the availability of technically superior cameras might have permitted engaging in artistic practice, the *low status of photography* diverts energies to more canonised genres. In particular photography is perpetually overshadowed in terms of its potential for consecration because of its 'technological' character. Given time constraints, higher professionals or managers choose concerts or art galleries, at the expense of throwing themselves into autonomous photographic experimentation. Thus photography—like film—remains a strand of the unconsecrated (but in principle consecratable) art forms.<sup>2</sup> As we shall see, Martins never regarded technology as inimical to the development of art.

Since Bourdieu's 1990 translation, photography *has now become consecrated*. The whole process might have been delayed by its democratised availability, but as suggested above, the photograph has now entered the most hallowed museum spaces: from the New York Museum of Modern Art, where it appeared as early as 1937, to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (which had a Cartier-Bresson exhibition in 2000), the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon (Kertesz exhibition 1999) and the London Tate Modern (Robert Frank, 2004–2005).<sup>3</sup> Obituaries or monographs of photographers habitually describe their photographic work as an artistic process.<sup>4</sup> Photography has belatedly entered the 'art institution' (Danto 1964, 1996: 91).

Bourdieu—a photographer himself—never publicly admitted that the fate of photography had altered and that this 'consecratable' art had indeed become consecrated. His general models of cultural stratification continue to have analytical force (1984). Why, then, the reluctance to address the more complex future for photography than he had assumed in 1965 (Bourdieu et al. 1990 (1965))? Indeed, if the assimilation of photography into the art institution has only recently become triumphant, this has, in fact, been no sudden conversion. Already, by 1923, Stieglitz and Strand were identifying 'straight' photography rather than the art photography of Robinson or Steichen as the source and direction of the main canonising channels (Shiner 2001: 251). Moreover, certain practices introduced in the 1940s by Beaumont Newhall in the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York became very rapidly standardised—the frequent selection of photographs from documentary journalism (or 'nonartistic spaces'), the hanging and display of such photographs in black 1-inch frames as individual art works and, most notably, the use of a vocabulary of 'genius' to dignify those photographer who used the full potential of the form (Shiner 2001: 252–253; Phillips 1993: 22–23). Indeed, as early as Newhall's exhibitions of 1940–1947, we can see, pre-figured, the subsequent widespread museum canonisation of photography, premised on a 'formalist reading, the presupposition of creative intent, the announced preciousness of the photographic print' (Phillips 1993: 23). This was a multi-faceted social process: it could be viewed, at least in part, as a *break* with the anti-cultic reception that Benjamin had

desired, which he hoped might stimulate a radically defamiliarised vision of the world and thus foster direct social engagement.

The spectacular late twentieth-century consecration of photography needs to be examined in terms of the fate of contemporary art. The ongoing crises of avant-garde styles have provoked an enlarged space for photography. Moreover, Bourdieu failed to adequately assess *the nature of time* within his characterisation of the artistic field, a problem we do not find with Martins' conception of art. Specifically, Bourdieu's dualistic analysis of the rupture between the commercial, expanded field of cultural production and the restricted avant-garde field (1996: 146) is pitched at too high a level of abstraction; it misses later transitions from the commercial or mass field to the restricted 'artistic' subfield.

Bourdieu rightly revealed the magical social alchemy—such as the substitution of the language of 'gallerist' for that of 'art dealer'—which serves to distance the spectator of modernist art from perceiving artists' material interests (1984, 1993a). Yet he fails to see that certain popular cultural producers who have undoubted market success can make a crossover to art even within their own lifetime, such as the photographers Sebastião Salgado (Miller 1999: 287–288), Luc Delahaye and Melanie Friend,<sup>5</sup> or in other fields, Bob Dylan (Nobel Prize for Literature, 2016). In the case of photography, a specific force for international recognition came from membership of the co-operative established in 1947, Magnum, which, whilst acting as a commercial agency, also operated as a selection board (Miller 1999). Using a rigour equivalent to that of scientific journals, the Magnum collective provided a peer review mechanism permitting the subsequent crossover of photographers into the restricted artistic field, leading to subsequent canonisation. As we have seen, these and other processes have had the long-run consequence of raising the prices of consecrated photographs.

Now, when Bourdieu theorises in *The Rules of Art* (1996) the changed relations of the restricted and the expanded fields, it is to emphasise the dangers to art. He is right that there are inherent threats to autonomous artistic production. These range from the imposition of sponsorship, the removal of public sector support as a buffer to the market, the short-termist attention of the media and the increasingly bureaucratised management of the careers of artists (1996: 344–348).

Yet, despite his fascinating exceptional case revealing the literary consecration of the best-selling Zola, the minor route—the movement from the expanded to the restricted field—is a notable absence in his theory. This is largely because he fears a simplistic populism: the underestimation by sociologists of his wider theory showing the prerequisite of *prolonged education* for *originality* in the field of cultural production.

## Digression: Bourdieu and Manet—A Case Study of Successful Symbolic Revolution

Bourdieu's theory of practice is often held to be rigidly deterministic, a poor reading of his work that he explicitly sought to contest (2000, 2015). Perhaps to counter this, the very late lectures on Manet (1999–2000) (2013)—subtitled 'Une Révolution Symbolique'—are an exemplary case study of a fundamental transformation in cultural production and cultural reception (cf Hobsbawm 2016).

Manet's (1832–1883) modernist painting made a 'revolution'. But in a Western culture dominated by the visual sense (Jay 1994; Martins 2001b: 7–11), it is a revolution in which a 'new, socially constructed eye' challenged the old 'academic eye'. This is a brilliant study of the academic fine arts, charting insightfully the Academy's highly hierarchical 'call to order' and the orthodox mode of educating, commissioning and selecting painters. Yet by the 1860s, neoclassical academic conventions governing the production of paintings had become banalised, so that artists felt increasingly estranged from them. The rupture mounted by Manet for his iconoclastic followers introduced not just a more truthful representation of the world but also a new, more insecure 'institutionalised anomie'. The bohemia of 'Intransigents' that he led became the equivalent of a 'historical laboratory', breaking with the State-backed, bureaucratic artistic orthodoxy of the Second Empire (1852–1870). It would be succeeded by other symbolic revolutions in art, not least that of another artist steeped, like Manet, in art history: Marcel Duchamp (Bourdieu 1996: 244–249).



Importantly, this late work can be distinguished from Bourdieu's earlier publications on Manet (1993a, 1996) by the rejection of a purely internalist or formalist interpretation of his painting (see Fowler 1997: Chap. 5). He now emphasises that Manet's entire body of work is that of a 'realist formalist' (2013: 40): adding that 'the imputation of realism is not exclusive of the imputation of formalism' (2013: 61). Moreover, a sociological explanation of his rupture now requires not just an internal, formal analysis of the break but also an external, materialist analysis. Consequently, Bourdieu for the first time incorporates much of the research undertaken by the more socially sensitive art historians: Meyer Schapiro, Timothy Clark, Linda Nochlin and Robert Herbert. This tradition assesses Manet's realism in light of the rapid expansion of bourgeois market-led industry in France after 1848, the new workforce of women shopworkers, clerks and performers, Haussman's urban renewal and the subsequent much greater class segregation of Paris as well as the extension of petty bourgeois and workers' leisure pursuits. Unlike these historians, however, Bourdieu emphasises also the extraordinary demographic growth of post-1848 Paris as the 'world republic' of the arts, precipitating a major change in the artistic field. It is the *numerical growth* within these professions that provokes the clash over the rigid exclusivity formerly operated by the Academy.

The formalist or internalist analysis demonstrates that Manet is, to use the painter's own term, a 'heresiarch' or, in Bourdieu's terms, a prophet, indeed the 'heretical Pole of the Impressionists', but one who died unrecognised (2013: 18, 280, 647).<sup>6</sup> His early path-breaking works such as *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1862–1863) contravened the academic rules that only a historical or Biblical painting should be undertaken on a large physical scale. It flouted the moral requirements banning the depiction of a young naked woman amongst clothed men. It provoked a sacrilegious indignation, even felt in the body,<sup>7</sup> as did *Olympia* (1863). Further, Manet refused to 'make a pyramid'—to tell a legible story—or to reproduce historical subjects according to established conventions. Thus, even in the case of *The Execution of Emperor Maximilien*<sup>8</sup>—with its 'aristocratic' 'distance' (2013: 727–728)—the various protagonists fail to converge coherently, whilst the brushstrokes remain visible and loose, as though unfinished. The painting possesses a strange flatness, a rejection of

sculptural elements of painting, including chiaroscuro, and a deliberate abnegation of perspective (2013: 63). In brief, Manet broke not just with minor painterly techniques but with the entire 'ethic of the aesthetic' at stake in the impersonal theatricality of academic forms. Such approved paintings by the Classicists in the tradition of Ingres and David—notably Alexandre Cabanel, Jean-Léon Gérôme and Hippolyte Flandrin—were becoming derisively known as 'art pompier' (Pohl 1994: 233, 237). Yet, bound visually to the hegemonic class, gender and racial classification, these mid-century works still went for high prices; they encapsulated the symbolic goods of consumption for bankers, the directors of industry and the officials of the State.

Bourdieu applies his own theory of practice (1990) to Manet as a social actor. This centres neither on the painter's abstract preconceived intentions nor on underlying rules such as those isolated by Levi-Strauss or Foucault: what he calls a 'hard structuralist' approach that allows no space for agents' perspectives and subjective motives (2013: 106). Rather it advances a 'dispositional analysis' of the artist's point of view, identifying Manet's 'new eye', his practised turn of the hand, his unconscious 'feel' for the painting's manufacture. In brief, Manet, in his break with rigid academic classical rules, has a structured gaze, but he also improvises over time. Always capable of acting differently, he possesses an undeniable *margin* of liberty (2013: 121, 138, 142). Thus to fully demystify why Manet did as he did in paintings like *Déjeuner*, you have to understand his work as a product of all the social relations in art—a total social fact (Mauss), including a break, for example, with both Courbet's realism and Couture's academic rules. Bourdieu correctly observes that internalist analyses have more prestige amongst critics and art historians. But he is now persuasive in arguing that images of wider social transformations in urban life must be understood too, as these are retranslated or 'refracted' via the distinctive new rules of the artistic field (cf Adorno). Somewhat disarmingly, he goes so far as to deploy Weber as an advocate for the view that *economic forces* in the last analysis have primacy (2013: 159).

Synthesising both these approaches, Bourdieu's Manet emerges as a 'charismatic' figure who introduces a new way of exhibiting the world (cf Clark 1985). Bizarrely, contemporary critics saw him as a mere plagiarist,

totally ignoring how he telescoped the past and the present into a ‘symbolic collision’ (2013: 55) This vision and division of the world is in some respects profoundly subversive, as in *The Execution of Emperor Maximilien* or in the *Portrait of Henri Rochefort*, an exiled journalist for whom Manet had great sympathy. Given what is at stake, politically, it is hardly surprising that Bourdieu makes an analogy between Manet’s transformative project in painting and other symbolic revolutions—notably, Calvin’s subversion of the Catholic Church and the French crisis of May 1968—thus also bringing into question the nature of legitimate academic higher education: ‘This strategy of collision of all the hierarchies is a strategy of a double blow, a blow at once against the Academy and against the bourgeoisie’ (2013: 39). Or again, in similar terms: ‘Manet made an artistic revolution that is, in addition, a political revolution’ (2013: 133–134) perhaps precipitating the greatest crisis in the entire history of art.

Why did Manet become an artistic revolutionary? Bourdieu here develops the argument that he makes in *Science of Science...* (2004), on symbolic revolutions within autonomous fields. He points specifically to the productive role of a ‘habitus clivé’ (cleft habitus) (2004: 111–113, 2013: 84–5), commenting further on Kuhn:

What is it about those people who whilst totally ‘in’ [in English] are also totally ‘out’ [in English]? It’s they who are symbolic revolutionaries, it’s someone who, completely possessed by a system, comes to take possession of it by returning the mastery he possesses against the system. It’s very strange, in the advanced forms of autonomous universes it’s the only form of revolution. (Bourdieu 2013: 377–378)

That Manet had such a cleft habitus is testified by his artistic rebelliousness: his resolute break with academic rules yet his submerged longing for conformity as in his desire to be shown at the Salon. His habitus clivé emerged also from the social fracture of Manet’s life. The young painter undeniably gained social capital from his father’s position as a judge and his mother’s salon of bankers and politicians, but he was politically estranged from them; he had forged ties to the impoverished lower-class young artists of the new bohemia yet could not be entirely at ease with them either (2013: 461).<sup>9</sup>

In my view, Bourdieu shows here an exemplary analysis of an artistic revolution. This combines an internalist explanation in terms of the field, a materialist analysis in terms of wider socio-economic changes together with the crisis in the overstocked profession and, finally, a personal explanation at the level of Manet as an artist, possessing a very distinctive artistic habitus.

## **Symbolic Revolutions, Paradigms and Digital Art: Martins' Sociology of Culture**

We now turn once again to the conceptual analysis of symbolic revolutions or paradigm changes, analysing Martins' important contributions to the subject. Thomas Kuhn (1966 (1962)) memorably argued that some sciences—notably, sociology—had not yet reached the position of 'normal science', since they lacked both the initial establishment of a reigning paradigm and a series of subsequent paradigm changes with hegemonic force. Indeed, this conclusion can only be strengthened by Martins' rigorous reassessment of Kuhn's theory on its home ground, natural science. I here recapitulate Martins' epistemological analysis of paradigm change before discussing its significance for theorising art and literature.

For Martins, the paradox of Kuhn's paradigm model is the tension within it between its high level of logical consistency, conceptual abstraction or mathematical complexity—and its non-rational foundations: the drives, faith, conversions or simple passive conformity of paradigm-constrained action. Kuhn argues that paradigm reliance leads to the blinkering of scientists, due to their solidaristic membership in their invisible college. Scientists are socialised into a paradigm which, being 'structurally authoritarian and culturally dogmatic', is, in Martins' words, 'a marvellous engine for the production of paradigm-bound and even paradigm-shifting researchers' (Martins 1972: 16). The paradigm in the form of normal science stimulates 'rapid or consequential advance' in an 'esoteric', 'highly technical' 'subtle' 'pursuit' (Martins, quoting Kuhn 1972: 15).

It can be agreed that Kuhn concedes too much to psychological beliefs in the irrational where he might adopt a better-founded sociological and epistemological model. Martins counters Kuhn by reasserting against him both Durkheim's regard for the *rational scientific* principles inherent in modern societies and the *realist rationalism* of Bachelard and Canguilhem. To these, Martins added a defence of the Popperian logic of conjectures and refutations whilst fundamentally stripping it of Popper's own atomistic methodological individualism. Even more tellingly today, Martins contrasts the logic of Kuhnian analysis, not least its slide into relativism, with the alternative 'epistemological meliorism' that he himself favours.<sup>10</sup> Thus for both Kuhn and Martins, scientific crisis is caused by the emergence of paradoxical results which do not fit the theory, hence generating uncertainty. Attempts will be made unsuccessfully to 'save the phenomena' by strategic ad hoc attempts to preserve the master scheme; but, eventually, a major epistemological and theoretical shift is required, at the end of which process a new consensus emerges. But for Martins, unlike Kuhn, the later, successful, paradigm allows the explanation of both new and old results: hence the old results are rarely simply junked, least of all the earlier research instruments. Such 'epistemological meliorism' on Martins' part also has its socio-genesis in modernity but owes much to Renouvier's and Durkheim's post-Enlightenment scientific rationalism (Stedman Jones 2001).<sup>11</sup>

In other words, Kuhn's Achilles heel is that in fact *paradigm-independent* principles persist (Martins 1972). Martins reveals that there are intrinsic limits to the degree of paradigm 'solipsism' or 'isolation' and therefore to its authoritarian control. Crucially, a higher-level commitment to the social order of science exists which is paradoxically conducive both to paradigm compliance and to revolutions. Less abstractly, the specialities (particle physics, etc.) with their reigning paradigms (Newtonian or Einsteinian) are englobed by a world which is constituted by other specialities and sciences that lack their sovereign paradigm.

For Kuhn: 'paradigms are psychologically exclusive [and] historically discrete [...] They are also logically and epistemologically incompatible, incommensurable and non-cumulative' (Martins 1972: 16). But this produces, as it were, an *over-socialised model of scientists' responses to paradigms*. Thus, Martins censures Kuhn for having marginalised a 'systematic

cognitive sociology', which can 'befriend and assist epistemological rationalism' (1972: 18) rather than falling back on philosophical relativism.

Indeed, Kuhn neglects other mechanisms for social control, which stretch across fields to ensure the absence of frauds: peer review, anonymity, the necessity of both experimental results as well as theoretical critique and so on. We might think of these as a negative epistemology. But a positive epistemology also operates here that Martins nicely calls 'metaphysical programmes': at their most extreme 'logotopias', that is, visions of complete knowledge (1972: 21). Thus, in marked opposition to logical empiricism, he outlines the long-lasting *metabeliefs* which are conducive to epistemological rationality, such as the (Platonic) beliefs in the geometrical nature of the world or the explanatory requirement of simplicity. These operate usefully as mechanisms that serve to disrupt the 'presentist' bias of paradigm confinement.

Martins accepts that some paradigms have more visibility and weight than others: in other words, he accepts Kuhn's view that there is an element of scientific cultural stratification, such as the privilege awarded to physics. However, he also warns against 'the idol of the single linear hierarchy of scientific value' (1972: 29), suggesting that Kuhn still had a lingering, unreflexive allegiance to the orthodoxies of dominant classifications. Deploying instead Bachelard and Piaget, Martins argues—as did Bourdieu<sup>12</sup>—for a circle of neighbouring fields that mutually interact, permitting borrowings and reciprocal diffusion, rather than the simple, authoritarian classification of a top-down Kuhnian model.

Indeed, Martins regards Kuhn as operating with a simplistic model of revolutions, overemphasising the degree of intellectual scope of the paradigm and the degree to which *a revolution in one area inevitably spills over into destabilising another*. Not even 'permanent revolutionists', he comments, ironically, would argue that every paradigm change is equally intense and profound (1972: 35). In contrast, he emphasises elements for checking and questioning the new revolutionary paradigm: not just the well-known Popperian refutations—which may take very imaginative forms—but also those arguments which spring, more mundanely, from an epistemological preference for reliability, relevance or even importance (1972: 28). In this manner Martins seeks to elaborate a deeply supportive scientific ethos as well as an analytical separation of science and ideology:

a separation which has been subsequently neglected by excessive social constructivism (Martins 1972: 31, 35, 2001b: 23; cf Canguilhem 1988: 32).

On all these points, Martins points to a further key question in relation to *time*: this muddies the waters of the sharp catastrophist theory. From the standpoint of the players involved, it is always radically uncertain whether a new paradigm will succeed or whether rational reconstruction of the old will command allegiance. From this springs the peculiar attraction of the phenomenological or subjectivist perspective in the study of science. Moreover, Martins recalls, certain sources of heterodoxy are never eradicated whilst a specific Newtonian ‘tacit unconscious’ persists in certain fields. This is at odds with the ‘epistemological infallibilism’—as in papal infallibility—that Kuhn’s paradigms display. Finally, but extremely tellingly in terms of the explanatory logic of science, Martins comments that Kuhn’s is an internalist theory—yet many earlier arguments had connected scientific change also with external institutional factors.<sup>13</sup> I would support Martins’ implication that *ultimately* an internalist and an externalist theory of change are preferable.<sup>14</sup>

Bourdieu has also demanded both external and internal dimensions in his historical socioanalysis of science (2004: 15, 64), arguing convincingly that it is insufficient to explain the logic of scientific development simply by noting mounting internal anomalies and the appearance of new paradigms. Indeed Martins’ penetrating analysis of Kuhn has points of striking convergence with Bourdieu’s very late work *Science of Science...* (2004: 14–18). Most important of all, we notice in both sociologists a stress on the ‘scientific corporation’ such as the French CNRS or the British Royal Society (1662), collective inventions for experimentation *which survive individual paradigm changes*. This latter seventeenth-century institution, which, like Newton’s University of Cambridge professorship, was difficult to disentangle from Anglican conformity, is the main intellectual source of Martins’ epistemological meliorism—instructively, it is also Bourdieu’s main resource in conceptualising the scientific field as against a purely nihilist relativism (2004: 46–8, 82–4).

It is telling that Bourdieu stresses the autonomous nature of both art and science. Yet he does insist—and Martins would surely have agreed—that originality in art is not the same as that in science (‘Scientists are

never the “singular geniuses” that hagiographic history makes of them: they are collective subjects [... who] in the form of incorporated collective history actualise all the relevant history of their science’ (Bourdieu 2004: 70)). Of course, art possesses an intertextual character, added to by the shared experience of a group, thus creating a common artistic habitus or space of the possible. But in the scientific field, original contributions are necessarily based on a markedly more *interdependent* activity, whether via the everyday procedures of normal science (peer review, etc.) or via those accumulated experimental results that throw up a new antagonistic paradigm (see Bourdieu 2004: 69–70 for his opposition to ‘radical relativism’ and his stress on the ‘the arbitration of the real’). This difference again suggests the perils of moving from the acceptable (Bourdieuian) language of *artistic* ‘symbolic revolutions’ to the full-blown Kuhnian language of *artistic* ‘paradigms’ (cf Heinich 1998b).

## The Sociology of Photography: Theorising Technology

I now return—rather briefly—to the sociology of photography. Baudelaire excommunicated the photographer from the sacred island of art because he/she made use of mechanical technology. Bourdieu also regarded this inherently technological element as the explanation for photography’s inferior status as a merely minor art. Yet, as argued above, photography has now been admitted to Art: not only have prices of consecrated photographs mounted like other forms of art (Eldridge 2015), but historical surveys and theoretical readings have been produced for curricular purposes. We still lack sociological theories of photography that might explain this change. Martins has, in my view, provided part of the groundwork for such a project. I shall approach his work in this respect in two stages—first, skeletally, as a general social theory of technology, second as a theory of digital art.

Martins’ fertile and highly illuminating reflections on technology are of a broader scope than can be indicated here: indeed, they offer nothing other than a new sociological approach to instrumental reason (1993,



1996, 1998, 2001b). He explores this in terms of a dichotomy between the Promethean and the Faustian uses of technology (1993: 229, 231–232, 237–239, 241, 1998). A whole series of works aims to examine and ultimately advance a social logic for technology, drawing on inventions aimed at ‘ameliorating [the human condition] and enabling human beings to cope with hostile natural forces’ (1993: 229). This is a ‘finite Prometheanism’ (1993: 231), an approach that neither envisages technical advances as simply creating production for production’s sake—the law of value governing marketisation—nor surrenders to the *anti-technological* pessimism of certain forms of reactionary modernism (Herf 1984). Yet this limited Prometheanism contrasts sharply with the new Faustian ethos: ‘the dreams of radically transcending the human condition [...]. To overcome the basic parameters of the human condition—its finitude, contingency, mortality, embodiment, animality, existential boundaries—appear amongst the drives and even the legitimations of contemporary technoscience, at least in some areas’ (e.g. cryogenics) (Martins 1993: 229).

Martins has also developed the sociology of art by embracing technology as well as (changing) artistic conventions. Time is at the centre of this (Martins 1974): Martins discusses Leibniz ‘the present pregnant with the future’, illuminating precisely what this means in terms of nineteenth-century social and artistic theories (2001a: 52). For these theorists, technology creates forms, but—unlike technological Faustians—distinctively human ends are to be served by them (Martins 1998).

Martins’ central axes in this discussion are the Principles of Plenitude and Artistic Plenitude (2001a). The mediaeval principle of Plenitude embraced not only the continuity of the great Chain of Being but an idea of transformative activism in relation to all possible species and their Becoming. This axiom was to undergo a significant further development into the Renaissance principle of Artistic Plenitude (plenification): this posited the great artist/artisan/engineering genius as equivalent to the divine God.

This fascination with Artistic Plenitude caught the imagination of cultural producers such as the poet, Coleridge, whose interest in the scientific revolution went hand in hand with an interest in the new technology of engraving and with the widespread diffusion of accurately drawn

images of natural objects (Martins 2001a: 53). Hence the mid-nineteenth-century rupture in French art discussed above could be understood not just as a break with the slavish representation of nature but as an opportunity for artists to examine form-giving forces in nature, beyond sensuous appearances. This shift was conditioned by two further changes: first, the dramatic alterations of the landscape following industrialisation, which provoked in German Romanticism and elsewhere a new sense of nature and second, the invention of photography (1839), which would take up the earlier artistic role of detailing mere sensuous appearances (Martins, 2001a: 64). For artists such as Cézanne now turned to an *intuited form* of nature revealed in the play of geometricised forms, a second nature.

The advent of technology and especially photography created both new constraints and also new genres (Martins 2001a: 64–65, 69). A succession of styles and ruptures now opened up: artists showed in each genre a range of possible alternatives. Art historians, such as Riegl, usefully analysed forms in high genres as well as in everyday popular genres, such as carpet design. Despite the lingering grip of the narrow aesthetic discourse of the eighteenth century, and the restrictive sphere of the fine arts, artists were in fact experimenting freely with a ‘productive imagination’, as the Futurists pointed out (Shiner 2001: Chap. 5; Martins 2001a: 62).

It is in this context that Martins alludes intriguingly to the recent growth of a ‘Third Nature’: cyberart as a distinct new period in art. The major opposition here is between the analogue arts of earlier modernity and the digital arts. The latter are manipulable, lack originals for the standard ‘original’ versus ‘copy’ contrast and only possess reality ‘effects’ (Martins 2001a: 65; cf Cray 1992: 1–2). Yet rather than responding to this transformation with technological pathos, Martins argues that the arts allow us to interrelate the two. Analogue and digital forms together ‘may foster the resources of feeling and imagination in an over-digitalised world’ (2001a: 70).

Bourdieu and Martins are at one in seeing modernist art as a distinct epoch, within which a succession of genres unfolds, bounded by institutional ruptures. But instead of seeing photography, like Bourdieu, as outside this ‘restricted field’, Martins sees this *as much a major art as any*

*other*. This importantly shifts our analysis of the whole spectrum of artistic modernisms despite the fact that certain contemporary sociologists of art—such as Heinich (1998b)—fail to discuss adequately technologically advanced later developments, as in cyberart (e.g. William Latham, Lillian Schwartz's *Mona/Leo*) or photography (e.g. Mona Hatoum). Even Bourdieu, despite his personal enjoyment of photography, was too overawed by the cultural heritage of Baudelaire's famous refusal. Hence a paradox: Bourdieu compellingly critiques Heidegger's 'conservative revolution' against modernity; the fulcrum of which is Heidegger's antimodernist stance against technology, metropolitan existence and even the empirical social sciences (Bourdieu 1988b). Yet his own sociological theories about the metamorphoses of contemporary culture have occasionally conceded too much to the continuing influence of such conservatives as Heidegger.<sup>15</sup> This applies especially to his modelling of the autonomous 'island of art' and the potential for photography.

## Conclusion

I have noted analytical weaknesses in detailing future trends within Bourdieu's sociology of photography. Yet, in general, Bourdieu's sociology of practice continues to be of great importance. Indeed, it has been argued persuasively that it should itself be classified as a sociological symbolic revolution.<sup>16</sup>

Less well-known, Martins has been important in strengthening a tradition of sociology of knowledge close to that of Bourdieu and with it, the current of rationalist realism. As we have seen, like Bourdieu (2000, 2013: 48), he avoids the pitfall of epistemological relativism or 'radical scepticism'. However, Martins, also has an understanding of technology which is deeper than that of Bourdieu. In turn, this liberates a fresh view of art for sociology, suggesting innovative applications for Shklovsky's principle, the 'canonisation of the junior branch'. This helps us to understand better the new arenas of photography and especially the era of digital photography.

A final irony has emerged, serving to reinforce my analysis. Bourdieu's own photography has *now entered into the art institution*. His Algerian

photographs have been the subject of solo exhibitions, shown in the Austrian Kunsthau in Graz, in Paris and in London's The Photographer's Gallery, whilst featured in a prominent art magazine, *Camera Austria* (Bourdieu 2003: 15; 212). Unsurprisingly, Bourdieu himself is wary of any such purely 'artistic' identification, pointing out that although these photos were partly intended to record things which were beautiful, they were partly also to intensify his awareness in his fieldwork (Bourdieu 2003: 23–24; 212–213). Like ethnography, photography transcends the familiar binaries of closeness and distance, subjectivity and objectivity. The photographer registers the sort of details on which often only the familiar, affective gaze lingers whilst retaining a certain objective detachment in registering the world before one's eyes (2003: 43).

It is telling that Bourdieu's recurrent critique of the late eighteenth-century limitations within Kantian aesthetics finally surfaces once again in this posthumous work (2003). As Lipstadt emphasises, he made sure that *these* photographs are not simply museumised and submitted to purely a formalist assessment (Lipstadt 2004). Rather they should be understood in their context: that of the Algerian war and the 'upheavals' it produced, forcing traditional peasant Algerians to recognise the collapse of peasant agriculture—'the end of a world' (2003: 205–206). In this respect, his Austrian curator notes the ominous nature of their current reception. He cites specifically the rise in popularity of the racist Freedom Party of Austria, a rise which is especially telling in the light of Bourdieu's double opposition both to neo-liberal economic policies of precarisation and their profane reaction, populism. Martins, too, mounted measured yet impassioned attacks on neo-liberal market ideologies, which he saw as threatening, amongst other areas, crucial spaces of universities' autonomy. Whatever else might divide them, this critique of neo-liberal 'economic fatalism' is one in which the two thinkers, Bourdieu and Martins, are in complete harmony (Lock and Martins 2011; Martins 2004, 2013).

## Notes

1. Since Bourdieu and his team wrote, the inclusion of a camera on mobile phones makes the practice even more commonplace, of course.

2. Chamboredon's essay in *Photography: A Middle-brow Art* briefly indicates the aesthetic recognition (canonisation) of photographers by listing Cartier-Bresson and others; it thus designates photography's potential legitimation (Bourdieu et al. 1990: 145, n38, 203). But recognition of these virtuosos is only weakly integrated with Bourdieu's major claim in the book overall as to photography's impossible consecration.
3. However, there was also institutional resistance to this change: for example, the Whitworth Art Gallery (Manchester) and the Tate (London) *refused* to exhibit photography even in the 1970s.
4. It might also be noted that there was opposition to the label of 'artist', both by individual photographers (McCullin 2002) and collectively, in Magnum's early years (Miller 1999: 10, 23–25, 102, 241, 271).
5. I am grateful to Alison Eldridge for illuminating comments on photographic consecration, which in contemporary terms is marked indelibly by rising prices. As she shows: 'The auction market for fine art photography, which has been driven mostly by contemporary photographers, saw an increase of 22% in 2013 [from 2012]. Total photography sales were up over all by 36% with the collected auction sales of Christie's, Sotheby's and Phillips coming in at \$50.7 million' (Eldridge 2015: 340); 'Vintage prints' by photographers such as Ansel Adams have reached as much as \$518,500 each (2015: 341).
6. Note: the quotations from Bourdieu's Manet that follow are translated by me.
7. For example, Louis Etienne referred to *Déjeuner...* as 'shameless' and 'slipshod'; Theophile Thoré, a socialist critic, was exceptional in praising it (Pohl 1994: 232). On the similarly denigratory reception of *Olympia*, see Clark (1985: 82–98; 109).
8. I would agree that the painting refuses to render heroic the death of the French puppet Emperor and that its coldness contrasts with the emotional evocation of the tragic chaos of war painted in Goya's image of a firing squad (*The Third of May 1808*). But this is surely an appropriate portrayal of such quasi-colonial struggles. Politically dangerous too: by refusing a glorifying representation and a straightforward humanist appeal to indignation, Manet's censored painting proved disastrous, both for him and his lithographer.
9. Bourdieu suggests more tentatively that Manet's temperament might also have been affected by a complex 'family romance' (to use Freud's term)—his father's paternity of a child born to Suzanne Leenhoff, Édouard's piano-teacher, later to become Édouard's wife (2013: 457).

10. In this respect, he has a very similar position to Lakatos's 'sophisticated methodological falsificationism' (1970: 110), although his stance has different epistemological origins (for Lakatos's critique of Kuhn's irrationalism, see 1970: 93, 115, 177).
11. Indeed, it is fascinating within this line of descent how much links Martins and Bourdieu: Durkheim's *The Evolution of Pedagogical Thought* is a crucial text for both (see, for, e.g. Bourdieu 1996: 344), whilst Bachelard, Canguilhem and Piaget were mutually influential.
12. I do not want to overplay their similarities: Martins was for a period (1960s) a 'revisionist' or dissident Parsonian (Martins 1974, Mennell and Sklair in this volume); Bourdieu always kept his distance from Parsons and the entire 'Capitoline Triad', Parsons, Merton and Lazarsfeld (Bourdieu 2004:18).
13. For example, Sohn-Rethel argued plausibly that the Galilean and seventeenth-century Scientific Revolution should be linked not just to the development of mathematics but also to the interrelated changes leading to the disappearance of artisanal production and to the greater circulation of commodities (1978: 118–128).
14. In this respect he differs from the Kuhnian critique mounted by Lakatos (1970), which is strictly internalist in character.
15. It needs hardly be stressed here that Bourdieu's own positions should never be projected onto his sociological exposition of the aristocracy of culture. My highly schematic view of Bourdieu's argument (1990) omits his later, more heterodox interests in forms not yet fully appropriated by the spiritual aristocracy, for example, the conceptual art of Hans Haacke and the controversial photography of Mapplethorpe (Bourdieu and Haacke 1995: 6–13).
16. Addressing the links between the transgressiveness of Manet and Bourdieu, Pascale Casanova cites Flaubert on Mme. Bovary ('Mme. Bovary, c'est moi!') imagining Bourdieu secretly reflecting: 'Manet, c'est moi!' (Bourdieu 2013: 741). Bourdieu himself argues, citing Kuhn, that his own dispositional analysis of practice represents a 'paradigm' change from the analysis of artists' intentions within orthodox aesthetics (2013: 103).

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# **Part III**

## **Patrimonialism and Social Development in Portugal**



# Cultural Identity of the Non-Spain: A Case Study of the Cultural Policies of the Portuguese *Estado Novo* (‘New State’)

Luís Gomes

The nineteenth century was a period of rediscovered (one could say ‘reinvented’) nationalisms, famously popularised by historical novels such as Walter Scott’s ‘Scottishness’ in *Rob Roy* (1817) and ‘Englishness’ in *Ivanhoe* (1820), as well as Alexandre Herculano’s embryonic noble features of Portuguese history implied in the early medieval Iberia of *Eurico, o Presbítero* (1840). Portugal’s nineteenth-century Romantic and, later, Positivist ideals concurred to glorify her medieval and early modern past, a view fully assimilated into the early twentieth-century cultural policies of the *Estado Novo*, where literature continued to be a privileged medium for the optimum dissemination of such ideals. Amongst the various ideological propositions of the regime, the idea of the superiority of a ‘Portuguese race’ (as evidenced by this supposedly ‘glorious’ medieval and early modern past) is conspicuous as far as it underwrites an apparently unequivocal patriotic stance—one that would require complete dedication of the self to the patriotic cause of being Portugal. António de

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Oliveira Salazar would capture the radical essence of this notion of what it was to be ‘truly Portuguese’ in a maxim from a speech to the Municipal Councils of Portugal on 21 October 1929: ‘nada contra a Nação, tudo pela Nação’ [nothing against the Nation, everything for the Nation] (Torgal 2009: 150).

This ideological stance should be understood in the context of the historically convoluted circumstances of a regime change from a Monarchy to a Republic in 1910, followed by the brief military dictatorship of 1917–1918, and finally the regime change to the *Estado Novo* on 28 May 1926. This was to be an authoritarian government that would only be overthrown by the coup d’état that was the 25 April 1974 Revolution (known as the Carnation Revolution). Although towards the end of the regime the discourse of the opposition was of a ‘fascist regime’, the initial power structure was less clearly so: hence the slight misalignment with similar European political movements. The starker contrasts with similar regimes in Europe came, most notably, in the absence of a public speaker like Franco, Hitler or Mussolini—António de Oliveira Salazar, the leader, was far less given to public speaking and moving crowds to conformity. Ideology was promoted differently too: propaganda and censorship were quickly introduced in the 1930s, but books were not subject to prepublication censorship (contrary to periodicals), though fear of sanctions would act, in effect, as self-censorship. Hermínio Martins noted this particularly well in a seminal work (because written and published at the height of the regime) in 1968, especially in referring to the non-publication of an important history of Portugal by the historian António Sérgio: ‘To be sure, national historiography is a highly sensitive area for a regime much of whose ideology is embedded in historical legitimations and imagery...’ that draw on much of the Romantics’ sugar-coated view of a courageous Portuguese imperial expansion (Martins 1968: 326).

There were many arguments that contributed to the ideological stand on ‘race’ and national identity, but we propose to explore a case study that brings together political, cultural and literary perspectives—respectively, patriotism, cultural identity and literature as the medium through which these are conveyed and perpetuated.

We begin with the assertion of a cultural identity by differentiation from the 'other', who, as we will see, in Portugal's case is Spain. A key element of this cultural distinction is, of course, language. As a unifying national medium, it lies at the heart of Portuguese national identity since the formation of the nation, framed by a relationship of varying degrees of approximation and distancing between Portugal and Castile/Spain. The complexity of this political rapport between Iberian nations was never as straightforward as it was made to be by a simplified medievalism and the attribution of a Renaissance Golden Age to Portugal. Indeed, it is possible to follow a trajectory of this argument, from its beginnings to present times, revealing a recurrent *leitmotiv* throughout the centuries, illustrated by the literary, political and aesthetic case of the work of Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo Castelo Branco.

Since its inception Portuguese nationality had affirmed itself as much by its idiosyncrasy as by its differences from the other Iberian nations. While the kingdom was still in its infancy, one of the most decisive and profound indicators of national affirmation came from King Dinis (1261–1325). Heir to the crown from his Portuguese father, King Afonso III of Portugal, and his Castilian mother, Beatrice of Castile, Dinis was a polyglot ruler, speaking Galician-Portuguese fluently (which he used with great mastery in his famous medieval poems, known as 'cantigas'), Portuguese, and Castilian (the language of his mother and maternal family). Of all the languages at his disposal, Dinis institutionalises Portuguese as the official language of his kingdom, then only over 100 years old. It is, incidentally, one of the first non-military actions that mark the position of Portugal as distinctively non-Castile since the foundation of the kingdom in 1128–1143.

King Dinis also epitomises that palpable tension of this curious relationship of approximation and distancing from Spain, which is echoed in the political stage: of the nine kings over Portugal's first two centuries of existence, eight took either a Castilian or Aragonese wife (in first or second nuptials); only Afonso Henriques, the founder of the kingdom, had taken a non-Iberian wife, Mafalda of Savoy. While this would be expected (after all, Afonso Henriques claimed independence from the Kingdom of Leon, which was later annexed into Castile), his descendants, on the contrary, sought to promote closer political ties by marrying into Iberian

royal families. Unsurprisingly, this would lead to the predictable outcome of mutual challenges to the Iberian crowns of either Portugal or Castile. The former came in earnest in 1383: Beatrice of Portugal (daughter of Ferdinand I of Portugal and, his wife, Leonor Teles of Castile) was married to King John I of Castile. Ferdinand's heirless death opened the possibility of a claim to the Portuguese crown by this same John I of Castile, which was only thwarted by the acclamation of John I of Portugal (illegitimate half-brother of Ferdinand I). This crisis, known as the dynastic crisis of 1383–1385, resulted in the reaffirmation of Portuguese nationalism as being, unequivocally, distinct from Castile.

However, the tendency of continuous political alliances through royal marriages between Portugal and Spain (as the joining of all Iberian nations, bar Portugal, was known since the Habsburg king Charles V of Spain) continued after 1383–1385. The zenith of this approximation and distancing was the union, *de facto*, of the two Iberian crowns under Philip II of Spain (who became Philip I of Portugal), in 1580, a dual monarchy that would last the whole of 60 years until the Restoration of the Portuguese independent sovereignty on 1 December 1640. Known as the 'Philippine period' in Portugal, the close contact of Spain and Portugal during the Iberian dual monarchy has since been interpreted according to contemporary prevailing values of each era—perhaps never more strongly voiced than during the *Estado Novo*. It is possible to trace how these interpretations change over time in light of the varying political and cultural views of each period in the reception of the work of Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo Castelo Branco, which reveals the arbitrary nature of these nationalisms and Iberianisms.

The poet Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo Castelo Branco (whom we shall refer to simply as Quevedo) was born in Setúbal, a small coastal town south of Lisbon, probably around 1570, and we know he died after 1631.<sup>1</sup> Little is known of his life, other than he studied both civil and canon law at the University of Coimbra between 1586 and 1596. His earliest surviving poems date from this period, and he continued to write lyric and epic poetry at least up to 1619, alongside his career in Law. His first published work, the *Discurso Sobre a Vida e Morte de Santa Isabel, Rainha de Portugal e Outras Várias Rimas* (Lisbon: Manuel de Lira 1596/1597), is a poem in the Italianate style of *ottava rima* dedicated to

Queen Isabel, wife of King Dinis, and includes a selection of other poems in various genres. It is followed by the epic poem *Afonso Africano, Poema Heróico da Presa d'Arzilla e Tanger* (Lisbon: António Álvares 1611) and, in 1619, by the encomiastic *ottava rima* poem *Triumpho del Monarcha Philippo Tercero en la Felicissima Entrada de Lisboa* (Lisbon: Jorge Rodrigues 1619).

Curiously, the *Estado Novo* saw Quevedo both as the pinnacle of a noble Portuguese 'race' and, simultaneously, as almost single-handedly causing the degeneration of this 'race'. These assertions, as we will see, can be ascribed more to the reception of his different literary works at different times, rather than the words and literary merit of the poet himself.

The hallmark of Quevedo's merit in the context of defender of a Portuguese distinct identity gains traction with the Romantics, though it began in earnest with his seventeenth-century contemporaries. In 1631 Jacinto Cordeiro (the famous commentator of *The Lusians*, by the sixteenth-century poet Luís de Camões) calls Quevedo 'Camoens segundo en muchas opiniones' [a second Camões by various opinions] when referring to Quevedo's *Afonso Africano* (1611).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in 1638, the scholar and poet Manuel de Faria e Sousa is very clear in qualifying the *Afonso Africano* as the best epic poem after Camões' *The Lusians* 'en orden, imitación, y facilidad, y muestras de juicio' [on account of its organisation, imitation and fluency, and judgement].<sup>3</sup> There had been some who even read in the *Afonso Africano* a veiled anachronistic support of the 1640 Restoration and end of the Dual Iberian Monarchy. The *Afonso Africano* describes the epic conquest of Asilah (today in Morocco) in the fifteenth century by King Afonso V (thereby affirming Portuguese supremacy over its adversaries), against the backdrop of the loss of independence following the death of King Sebastian in 1578, while trying to emulate a similar feat. The Restoration supporter, poet and diplomat António de Sousa Macedo picks up on this connection in the introduction to his *Lusitana Liberata*, a poem celebrating (and defending) the Restoration of independence, quoting the first two verses of stanza 43, Canto I, of *Afonso Africano* to support the political claim of the Restorationists: where Quevedo originally refers to the foundation of the kingdom as land conquered from 'Barbarians' (an allusion to the Christian *Reconquista* from

the Moors' occupied Iberia), Macedo refers to the 'reconquest' of the kingdom's independence from Spain—'Não foi herdado, mas ganhado Império | A Bárbaros que a luz de Christo afrontam' [The empire was not inherited, but gained | from Barbarians that offended the light of Christ]. On all accounts, this was a remarkable repudiation of Portugal's neighbours by transposing the dichotomy 'barbarians' and the Christian reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula to the setting of the Restoration of Portuguese sovereignty from Spain.<sup>4</sup>

In the centuries that followed, this epithet becomes almost a *leitmotiv* in the reception to Quevedo's epic poetry, as do the Romantic authors Almeida Garrett and José Maria da Costa e Silva in their surveys of Portuguese literature. This ranking is repeated up to the twentieth century with some variants between second and third place in a post-Camonian chart of 'best Portuguese poets'.<sup>5</sup> The reprint, in 1786 and 1844, of *Afonso Africano* provides further evidence of a continuous interest and appreciation of this work and its author. In fact, the enthusiasm and praise of Quevedo as epitomising the best of Portuguese identity follows the 1844 edition of the *Afonso Africano* closely when, in 1867, Quevedo is chosen to be one of the six figures at the base of the monument to Luís de Camões, in Lisbon. Standing elevated at the centre of this sculptural work, Luís de Camões is surrounded by figures that represent the height of intellect and enterprise of Portugal, amongst names such as the historians Fernão Lopes (author of a famous account of the 1383–1385 dynastic crisis), João de Barros and Fernão Lopes de Castanheda, the cosmographer Pedro Nunes, the chronicler Gomes Eanes de Azurara and the poets Jerónimo Corte-Real, Francisco de Sá de Meneses, and Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo. In their own way, all these men were seen to have made a remarkable, if not fundamental, contribution to the establishment of the early modern Portuguese global empire—in other words, signs of the eminence of a Portuguese 'race'. Just over 20 years later, the town square opposite the Quevedo residence in his hometown of Setúbal changes its name from Praça de Palhais to Praça de Quebedo, in 1878, by public petition (Rodrigues 1999: 83, 110, 128). In short, until late nineteenth century praise of Quevedo is respectable, while the appreciation of the epic poem *Afonso Africano* almost always eclipses his other works.<sup>6</sup>



However, it is also in the nineteenth century that we begin to see a different view of Quevedo—that of a degenerate member of the ‘Portuguese race’, especially when referring to his last published work, the *Triumpho del Monarcha Philipo Tercero*. As a celebration of the royal entrée of Philip III of Spain, II of Portugal, into Lisbon in June 1619, this is part of a group of celebratory works commissioned by different interested parties—not least the king himself, who commissioned the royal surveyor João Baptista Lavanha to write a book commemorating this festive journey and royal entrée, the *Viage de la Catholica Real Magestad del Rei D. Filipe III. N. S. al Reino de Portugal* (Madrid: Thomas Iunti, 1622).<sup>7</sup> These festival books (a genre onto themselves, as written and printed accounts of important festivities often lavishing illustrated with engravings) always conveyed a specific impression of the event, with the objective of expressing adulation, piety (in the case of religious festivals books), or other official turn of events in line with the ideology of the author or sponsor/editor. In this case, Lavanha gives minute details of the royal journey, such as who accompanied the King, where he stopped, what he did, whom he spoke to and what was done to celebrate the event. In the same spirit, other stakeholders sought to ingratiate themselves with the King in recording their own tribute for posterity. Lisbon was adorned with copious ephemeral arches (depicted in great detail in Lavanha), offered by various groups of interests to the King—the guild of German traders, the guild of Flemish traders, the guild of silversmiths and the Society of Jesus, amongst others. No expenses were spared, especially by the Council of the city of Lisbon, who hosted the culmination of the event—the royal entrée of Philip III of Spain, who was also Philip II of Portugal, into the capital of this his other kingdom. It is amongst these celebratory works that we find Quevedo’s *Triumpho del Monarcha Philip Tercero*, commissioned by the City Council, and which Quevedo prepared and delivered still in 1619.

Criticism to Quevedo’s *Triumpho* is sparse prior to the nineteenth century. In his 1854 *Ensaio Biográfico-Crítico Sobre os Melhores Poetas Portugueses* [Critical Biographical Essay of the Best Portuguese Poets], José Maria da Costa e Silva had put Quevedo’s *Afonso Africano* at the pinnacle of Portuguese national literary genius (second only to Camões), adding a further slight allusion to an anti-Spanish feeling that was felt in

the kingdom after Philip III's royal *entrée* when commenting on the *Triumpho* itself. According to Costa e Silva, this work had fallen out of favour with readers because it had been composed for a specific ephemeral occasion (therefore, of little interest beyond the time of the event itself) and also because after the Restoration only a few Portuguese, 'degenerate and partisan towards the usurpation', would find pleasure in spreading such praise of the ousted King. The tone of the language is neutral, if only slightly biased to national praise:

Havendo Portugal sacudido o jugo espanhol, proclamando rei a D. João IV, e achando-se por isso empenhado em uma guerra mortífera e duradoura, só algum português degenerado e partidista da usurpação, que felizmente eram mui raros, podia achar prazer lendo os louvores dos seus inimigos.

[Having Portugal shed the weight of the Spanish subjugation, and having acclaimed John IV as King, and being therefore in a lasting and deadly war that followed, only some degenerate Portuguese, partisans of the usurpation, who luckily were very rare, would find pleasure reading praise of their enemies]. (Costa e Silva 1854: 221)

Note that Costa e Silva only suggests the readers' preference for works that praised the newly restored independence and suggested an antipatriotic longing of those who read works of praise for the deposed monarchs. There is no criticism of Quevedo of the *Triumpho* itself. However, Almeida Carvalho (1817–1897), a contemporary of Costa e Silva and, like Quevedo, a native of the town of Setúbal, is quick to establish a political connection between readership, the author, and the work. Carvalho does not hold back in attacking Quevedo on all counts in terms of what might be denoted as Portuguese patriotism—in Quevedo's case, by criticising what Carvalho read as a 'pro-Spanish' stance:

Precisamente nesses nefastos dias em que Portugal prostrado pela dor chorava a sua má sorte e a mais negra escravidão, é que Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo, satisfeito e prazenteiro, saiu a público, ostentando galas e espargindo flores sobre a cabeça do chefe dos carrascos do seu país! Nos seus cânticos fementidos, hipócritas e vendidos, é ele próprio quem reconhece o infortúnio da sua terra, e ouve os prantos da dor que a consterna.

[Precisely in those dark days when Portugal, prostrated by sorrow was decrying her bad luck and her darkest slavery, it was then that Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo, satisfied and content, comes out in public, flaunting festivities and scattering flowers over the head of the chief of the executioners of his country! In his false, hypocritical and treacherous verses, it is he himself who recognises the misfortune of his land, and hears the weeping of the pain that affects her]. (Carvalho 1968: 27)<sup>8</sup>

Thus, we arrive at the anachronistic attribution to Quevedo of a political view developed only after 1640, which is to say, the post-Restoration public criticism of all things related to the Philips of Spain is transferred, by anachronistic osmosis, into a criticism of authors associated with the period. Interestingly, although the event had also been put into verse by other famous Portuguese authors, such as Francisco Rodrigues Lobo, Gregorio de San Martín and Francisco Matos de Sá, they were not affected by this political slander.<sup>9</sup> The argument of Quevedo as antipatriotic (for not being 'anti-Spanish') does not stand on the grounds of the *Triumpho* alone, and it is, therefore, necessary to investigate how Quevedo came to be singled out in this anti-Spanish affirmation of national identity and how was this used by the *Estado Novo* in its propaganda.

We need to look further back in Quevedo's work to begin to answer this question, particularly to his first published work, the *Discurso sobre a Vida e Morte de Santa Isabel, Rainha de Portugal, e Outras Várias Rimas* (Lisbon: Manuel de Lira, 1596). The first part of this book is hagiographic in nature, praising the saintly Queen of Portugal, Isabel of Aragon. Queen Isabel, wife of King Dinis and buried in Coimbra, where Quevedo is studying at the time, was the object of local veneration and was later canonised as Saint Isabel of Portugal. The second part of the book comprises the *Outras Várias Rimas*. In these 'other various rhymes', we find a collection of 51 sonnets, of which sonnet 3, with the title 'A D. Fernão Martins Mascarenhas quando o fizeram Bispo' [To D. Fernão Martins Mascarenhas, on being made bishop], and sonnet 7, with the title 'A Pedro de Mariz sobre o seu livro' [To Pedro de Mariz, on his book], are central to our argument.

Sonnet 3, although published by Quevedo in 1596, appeared earlier attributed to Luís de Camões in the first posthumous edition of his

lyrical poetry, the *Rhythmas*, with number 19. Importantly, the *Rhythmas* were published by Manuel de Lira, the same publisher as Quevedo, and only one year before, in 1595. The sixteenth-century editor of this posthumous edition (commonly accepted to be Rodrigues Lobo Soropita) is quick to point out the error of attribution in his introduction to the book. However, the issue was far from being resolved. Camões died without having ever printed, in his lifetime, an edition of his lyric poems, for which he was already held in high esteem, and thus unable to set the record straight with authority. The reputation of Camões was such that it has set trends, 'isms' and styles by which poets were compared—a poet would be either 'pre' or 'post-Camonian'. Over the centuries, the lack of a definite authorial edition has left the field of authorial attributions wide open to speculation of what could be attributed to Camões—a matter of debate to the present day.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, this admiration would reach new heights, not only with the celebration of the tercentenary of Camões' death (celebrations had begun as early as 1860s, with the group of sculptures including that of Quevedo), but also in continuous 'discoveries' of new manuscripts attributed to Camões, with various revised editions of his lyric work that expanded and contracted in size with the inclusion or removal of texts as each editor saw fit. Amongst these authors stands Teófilo Braga, a scholar, author, and Republican activist (he would be President of the Republic for the brief period of 29 May to 5 October 1915). Only six years after the statue representing Quevedo as an epitome of Portuguese greatness, Teófilo Braga publishes his *History of Portuguese Poetry* (in 1874), where he begins the gradual discrediting of Quevedo. Braga singles out sonnet 3 in particular as proof that Quevedo had stolen the text from Camões. Even though the title given by Quevedo in his 1596 author's edition is 'A D. Fernão Martins Mascarenhas quando o fizeram Bispo', which is essential to understand the sonnet, Teófilo Braga argues that 'as relações do grande épico [i.e. Camões] com o Bispo Dom Gonçalo Pinheiro, fazem supôr que o plágio está decididamente da parte de Vasco Mousinho' [the relationship of the great epic poet [i.e. Camões] with Bishop Dom Gonçalo Pinheiro gives rise to the assertion that the plagiarism is definitely on Vasco Mousinho's side] (Braga 1874: 309). Not even

different bishops pose an obstacle to Teófilo Braga's obsession with Camões.

Teófilo Braga strengthens his arguments with the other sonnet in question: sonnet 17, which Quevedo dedicates to Pedro de Mariz, the scholar, historian and first biographer of Camões. Quevedo's title to the poem, 'To Pedro de Mariz, on his book', is interpreted by Braga as referring to Mariz's history of Portuguese monarchs up to the Dual Monarchy, the *Diálogos de Vária História*, printed in Coimbra, by Pedro de Mariz's father, the university printer António de Mariz, in 1594 (first censor's licence dated November 1593, dedication dated October 1594).<sup>10</sup> This association of Quevedo and Mariz is seen by Teófilo Braga as unquestionable proof of the 'Camonism' (i.e. poets who plagiarised Camões) of Quevedo's sonnets. Teófilo Braga rests his argument not on valid literary, historical or aesthetic arguments but on having misread the 1596 date of Quevedo's *Discurso* as being '1590'.<sup>11</sup> Thus seeing the *Discurso* as predating Mariz's work by four years, he assumes that Quevedo must have known Mariz's work in manuscript form, which would constitute proof of close friendship. From here, Teófilo Braga weaves a fantastic web of deceit, where Quevedo would have obtained original Camonian poems from Mariz, as the latter worked on Camões' biography; amongst these texts would have been the sonnet to the Bishop—also known by its initial words 'Espanta crecer tanto o crocodilo' [The growth of the crocodile is so amazing]—which Quevedo would then publish under his own name, as sonnet 3 in Quevedo's 1596 edition.<sup>12</sup>

By twists and turns of poorly founded arguments, the thesis that Quevedo was antipatriotic and a usurper of glory from the most prestigious of Portuguese poets gains legitimacy. To this will be added one more accusation: that of enemy of the Portuguese language.

It is true that Quevedo wrote many of his poems in Spanish, as did various other poets of this period (Camões included), both before and after the 1640 Restoration. The preference of Spanish as the language of expression for lyrical poetry had divided Portuguese letters since the early sixteenth century, always regardless of the political landscape of the time. On one side, Spanish was seen as a fashionable language, with a wider international circulation and often argued to be better suited to certain types of poetry (e.g. lyric poetry and *romances*).

On the opposite side, Portuguese was argued to have equal international standing, softer vowels, and a proud historical past. Almost all poets used both languages—with the famous exception of António Ferreira (1538–1569), who wrote exclusively in Portuguese. Celebrated men like Luís de Camões, Sá de Miranda, and Gil Vicente, all of indisputable Portuguese national pedigree, also wrote in Spanish. The truth is, however, that their Spanish language might not have always been of native-like quality, as argued by the Spanish scholar Daniel Rangel-Guerrero in his edition of Gil Vicente's early sixteenth-century plays (1980: 23).<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the fact that Quevedo also wrote poetry in Spanish was not an extraordinary political statement, but rather a traditional stylistic and artistic choice.<sup>14</sup>

It is only from the nineteenth century onwards that a different interpretation of the 'language question' starts to gain a political connotation. The incessant search by the Romantics for autochthonous values that could identify a Portuguese individuality in the international political and cultural stage found an indelible mark of individuality in the resilience of the Portuguese language on the political, linguistic and cultural Iberian stage. It will be a small step to go from being a sign of a healthy cultural identity (one that could operate in various languages) to the conflation of speaking Portuguese with being more patriotic and, conversely, speaking Spanish with being antipatriotic. It is true that Spanish was used by Portuguese poets more frequently from late sixteenth century to late seventeenth century, a period that included the Dual Iberian Monarchy of Spain and Portugal, which was itself a contributing factor to the popularisation of Spanish language in Portugal—as was, no doubt, the feeling that the Portuguese arts had already peaked with Luís de Camões, who had died the same year of the start of the Dual Monarchy. However, the politicalization of the language question was not a prevailing issue.

Not surprisingly, Almeida Garrett (1826: xxx–xxxi)<sup>15</sup> and Teófilo Braga (1874: 316–17) are defenders of this idea of the degeneration of Portuguese literature after Camões along with the increased use of Spanish. There were dissident voices to this syllogism, such as the aforementioned Costa e Silva (1854: 231), the author and critic Luciano Cordeiro (1874: 155–60), and even Camilo Castelo Branco (1876: 28), all defending the clarity of separation of linguistic and ideological arguments. For these authors, if Luís de Camões and Gil Vicente used

Spanish in pre-Dual Monarchy Portugal (therefore arguably still devoid of political connotations), so did António de Sousa Macedo after the separation from Spain, and neither were, at any time, labelled antipatriotic on account of their choice of language of poetic expression.<sup>16</sup>

In the case of Quevedo, and whether it was because of its subject matter (praise of Philip III of Spain) or because of the language used, the writing of the *Triumpho* alone provided sufficient evidence, when conflated, to judge the work and its author as a partisan of Spain. This assertion, we hasten to add, is formulated long after the political context that gave rise to the Restoration, being instead informed by the political perspective that dominated the nineteenth century, and thus interpreted against a political background very different to that of the Dual Monarchy (Bouza Álvarez 2000: 21–22). Quevedo's poetry paints a more complex picture: indeed, in his work he defended a sort of Iberian unity, in as much as he lamented the loss of independence with the death of the heirless King Sebastian in 1578 in North Africa (which had triggered the passing of the succession to Philip II of Spain). The two were not mutually exclusive: the poem to Queen Saint Isabel begins with the poet explaining to the muses where his narrative will begin:

Começar do destorso Lusitano,  
E ruína total da gloria altiva,  
Com que fez rico ao pobre Mauritano  
Sebastião, cuja morte inda hoje é viva.

[Starting from the Lusitan disaster,  
And total ruin of arrogant glory,  
With which the poor Moor became rich  
By Sebastian, whose death is still alive today.]

(Quevedo 1596: 2r, ll. 9–12)

The sorrow for the loss of the King and, subsequently, full independence to Spain in the Dual Monarchy can only be endured by drawing one's mind further back to a time when both Spain, Portugal and all other Iberian nations were united under one common value—that of the early Christian church in the late Roman Empire:

Este rio famoso em que me fundo  
 Que saiu das entranhas do mar alto  
 E que hoje torna ao mar rodeando o mundo,  
 Como se inda estevera d'águas falto,  
 É nosso Portugal, e o mar profundo  
 Castela foi, que com ligeiro salto  
 Deixou como cabeça dominando.

[This famous river in which I set myself,  
 Which came out of the bowels of the high sea  
 And which today returns to the sea around the world,  
 As if it were still seeking water,  
 [this river] is our Portugal, and the deep sea  
 Was Castile, who, with a light hurdle,  
 Left [Portugal] ruling as its head.]

(Quevedo 1596: 9v, ll. 9–15)

Pedro de Mariz, to whom Quevedo had dedicated sonnet 17, also echoes this idea of a return to a Golden Age of unity and peace with the accession of Philip II, who brought ‘este Reino ao seu primeiro e glorioso princípio’ [this Kingdom to its first and glorious beginning] (Mariz 1594: 238v).<sup>17</sup>

But the Romantics were certainly not concerned with historical subtleties, favouring the hard facts that endorsed the neo-medievalism of the affirmation of a national autochthonous identity, which chimed in perfectly well with the event of Portugal’s regained independence in 1640. Following the Restoration, the new Portuguese monarchs sought to overcome the opposing Spanish propaganda in the international stage, used to discredit Portugal and the newly acclaimed King John VI. Portuguese propaganda retaliated in earnest: ambassadors were sent to the most important allies of Portugal to seek political recognition, and judicial and political treatises are written, published and presented to most royal courts in Europe—such as the juridical work *Lusitana Liberata*, by António de Sousa Macedo and published in London in 1645. In the context of the Restoration fervour of the nineteenth century, Quevedo is portrayed simultaneously as second only to Camões in literary merit, as supporter of a well-rooted national identity, and as the vilest of our early modern poets.



This nationalistic and patriotic fervour was further compounded in Quevedo at the turn of the century. In 1890, Domingo García Peres, a Spanish doctor and scholar resident in Setúbal, flaunts the idea that Quevedo had changed the old spelling of his family name from a supposedly Portuguese 'Quebedo' to the Spanish 'Quevedo' as a sign of his Spanish allegiance (Peres 1890: 474–475). No evidence of this was ever found, and the case of the name is, itself, irrelevant—spelling norms were not as fixed as these are today, and we find contemporary references to Quevedo as 'Cabedo', 'Cavedo', 'Quebedo', and 'Quevedo' (often even omitting the surname altogether). Well into the twentieth century Peres' suggestion gains support and is passed as a certainty by Esteves Pereira and Guilherme Rodrigues,<sup>18</sup> and reinforced in an encyclopaedia entry of 1910 by Teófilo Braga: 'Seguindo os portugueses que atraíçoaram a patria quando a Hespanha se apossou de Portugal, aceitou e reconheceu o domínio estrangeiro, escrevendo em hespanhol um poema festivo quando D. Philippe III veio a Portugal' [Following the Portuguese that betrayed the motherland when the Spanish took possession of Portugal, he accepted and recognised the foreign power, writing in Spanish a festive poem when King Philip III came to Portugal] (Lemos and Braga 1910: 165–166).

For early twentieth-century readers, these opposing views of Quevedo as an apex of Portuguese national ideals and, simultaneously, the vilification of his patriotism fed neatly into the ideology of exacerbated nationalism that followed the implementation of the Republic. There is a rapid succession of small and larger parties and political movements, all with variant degrees of radicalism of ideals, but most sharing the same tone of nationalist pride in their titles—*Nacionalismo Lusitano* [Lusitanian Nationalism], *Ação Nacionalista* [Nationalist Action], *Integralismo Lusitano* [Lusitanian Integralism], a trend that had already started in the politico-literary movement of late nineteenth century, the *Renascença Portuguesa* [Portuguese Renaissance]. The propaganda of nationalism commonly attributed to the *Estado Novo* came out of the conflation of these ideologies, often in opposing political and military factions (Costa Pinto 2006: 194). In literary studies, the scholarly *auctoritas* of Teófilo Braga, perhaps fuelled by his political involvement with Republicanism, contributed to the repetition ad nauseam of Quevedo's mixed reputation

(with a greater negative emphasis). In the following century, this baton was taken up by the young scholar Hernâni Cidade (1887–1975).

The political discourse of nationalist ideals, particularly those promoting ideals of a ‘Portuguese race’ that are epitomised in the *Exposição do Mundo Português* [Portuguese World Exhibition] of 1940, were further disseminated and promoted in literary studies by Cidade, one of the advisers of the exhibition. The imperialist discourse becomes clearer in his writing, at a time when questions of nationalism are being discussed in the face of Iberianism and pan-Hispanism (Matos 2009: 15–29). For Cidade, Spain/Castile becomes, once again, the new historical enemy, and being not-Spain becomes, once more, the pinnacle of national identity.

The Exhibition’s main purpose was to show Portugal and her Empire to the Portuguese (foreign visitors were, in the main, by direct invitation), in a daring show of Modernist aesthetics. The artistic directors of the Exhibition had been leading artists of their time (some more successful than others), such as the Director of the Secretariat of National Propaganda, António Ferro, who curated the ‘1940s Portugal’ pavilion and who had been also closely linked with the group of artists behind the cultural phenomenon that was the publication of the *Orpheu* literary magazine in the 1910s. Hernâni Cidade, then already a lecturer at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon, had been invited to present a few public lectures on literature for the Exhibition. As a member of the *Sociedade Histórica da Independência de Portugal* [Independence of Portugal Historical Society], as the 1861 *Comissão Central do 1º de Dezembro de 1640* [1 December 1640 Central Commission] was called since 1927, Cidade centres his lectures around the theme of exultation of nationalism and, inherently, the ‘Portuguese race’. In this framework, the alleged Spanish affiliation of Quevedo enters his lectures. This formed the basis for his famous little book *Literatura Autonomista sob os Filipes* [Autonomist Literature under the Philips], which reiterates unquestionably the flawed critical judgement of Teófilo Braga—a clear case of imposing an orthodox ideology of scientific and literary tradition.

The book is published later in 1948, where Cidade proposes to present a clear and homogeneous autochthonous Portuguese moral stand in the context of seventeenth-century Europe. Although using as a starting point the beginning of the Iberian Dual Monarchy in 1580, Cidade

exults the nationalist traits of the ‘consciência da autonomia espiritual da nação’ [nation’s conscience of spiritual autonomy] (Cidade 1948: 35). As Matos put it:

At a time when the political and cultural panorama in Europe was already dominated by totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, and when there was a sharpening of social and political conflicts, it is not surprising that ethnic and exclusivist nationalisms should reassert themselves with renewed strength. (Matos 2009: 25)

These ideas were to form an important tenet in Cidade’s work, which would continue to designate Quevedo as antipatriotic and pro-Spanish through new revised editions of some of his key studies until, at least, 1975.<sup>19</sup>

In 1948, the year of publication of *Literatura Autonomista sob os Filipines*, the dichotomy of Portugal freeing itself from the ‘tyrant’ Spanish control, would be evocative of post-war Europe’s recent political landscape. The book also echoes nineteenth-century notions of ‘reaportuguesamento’ and ‘portugalidade’ [‘reportuguesement’ and ‘Portugality’],<sup>20</sup> which are further developed in Cidade’s other works. His *Lições de Cultura e Literatura Portuguesas* [Lessons of Portuguese Culture and Literature] were present in university reading lists until at least the 1990s, thus contributing to perpetuating this ideology. Here, Camões always and inevitably stands out as the apex of a Portuguese genius and Portuguese ‘race’ while resorting to Quevedo and other contemporaries as a negative point of contrast—not, we argue, based on literary merit, but on extrinsic, and unfounded, political and ideological perspectives. Almost immediately after Cidade’s 1948 arguments concerning autonomous Portuguese literature, the Spanish scholar Eugénio Asensio is quick to publish a riposte in ‘España en la épica filipina (al redor de un libro de H. Cidade)’ [Spain in Philip’s Epoch (on a book by H. Cidade)], which counters Cidade’s arguments on points of literary aesthetics, setting them apart from political and ideological views (1949: 66–109).

The case of ‘race’ and ‘patriotism’ was a very real one in the *Estado Novo*. In fact, it begun by being enshrined in law and then slightly altered to accommodate the vastness and diversity of the Empire—though the

tone remained similar. In 1919 (during an interim period between the military dictatorship of 1917 and the *Estado Novo* regime of 1926), the national curriculum for Portuguese (as an academic subject), as taught in secondary education at the start of the *Estado Novo*, enshrined these notions in law: pupils were to study Portuguese language and literature from 'lendas e episódios característicos que mais se prestam a gerar no espírito dos alunos o amor pátrio e o orgulho da raça' [legends and specific extracts that are more suitable to instil in pupils a love for the motherland and pride of the race].<sup>21</sup> Early in the *Estado Novo* the wording was reformulated, though it remains similar in substance in that it reminds teachers that the Portuguese class (as a school subject) is the best place where teachers can instil in pupils a sense of nationality and 'amor pátrio e orgulho de ser português' [love for the motherland and pride in being Portuguese].<sup>22</sup> The teaching of specific texts for this purpose was regulated by law and put into practice through suitable editions of the texts to be used in the classroom. The most popular of these texts for compulsory reading is until the present day, Emanuel Paulo Ramos' edition of *Os Lusíadas*, aimed at schoolchildren. It was first published as late as 1952, well over 30 years after the decree-laws softened the official discourse in education from 'race' to 'pride in being Portuguese'. It went through various new editions and reprints, with special editions prepared for Brazil. In the Preface of the third edition (1956), the editor Emanuel Paulo Ramos makes the following bold claim: 'Oxalá o nosso trabalho continue a ser útil aos jovens que dele se servem, obscura mas sincera homenagem do nosso amor ao maior Livro da Raça' [One hopes that our labour will continue to be useful to the young [men and women] who use it, an obscure but sincere homage to our love for the greatest Book of the Race' [i.e. *Os Lusíadas*]] (1980: 4–5). The editor maintained the tradition of reprinting previous Prefaces in subsequent editions of the work, and by 1980 a special edition appears in celebration of the fourth centenary of the death of Camões, which includes five prefaces: that of the first, second and third editions, as well as a preface of the 1974 edition (in commemoration of the publication of the *Os Lusíadas*), and a preface to the current 1980 edition. The text of the 1956 third edition preface (which we quoted above), now replaces 'do nosso amor ao maior Livro da Raça' [our love for the greatest Book of the Race] for 'do nosso amor ao maior

Livro da Comunidade Lusíada espalhada pelo mundo' [our love for the greatest Book of the Portuguese Community dispersed across the world] (1980: 5). Camões, as Quevedo, came to represent ideological political doctrines extraneous to their work.

The onset of the *Estado Novo* regime in 1926 grounded its entitlement in nationalist movements, inspired, though different, from similar European political movements.<sup>23</sup> The drive to define that which separates, and clearly identifies, the Portuguese from other nations rested on historical, cultural, aesthetic and, above all, claims of *racial* standing. The *Estado Novo* merely fostered an ideological drive that had been gaining momentum with the Romantics (especially late Romantics) in the previous century. Inevitably, many of these claims become intertwined and correlated, losing sight of what it was that defined them. The case of Quevedo illustrates this well: his contemporaries saw his poetry as of great merit, especially in the context of his peers and the literature that preceded him. It was only centuries later that the Romantics' patriotic drive imposed anachronistic ideologies on to Quevedo's works with an initial suggestion, repeated to the point of a truism, that reached the twentieth century, in the main, unchallenged. Hernâni Cidade, a student of Teófilo Braga, did much to propagate these unfounded principles that plagued Quevedo's reputation in defining Portugal's national identity in the shadow of Spain, which was, itself, a misunderstanding of 'Spain' of 'Iberia'. Nonetheless, it remains a true mark of the success of the *Estado Novo*'s propaganda and educational policies that, notwithstanding successive regime changes and well into the twenty-first century, concepts of 'race', 'patriotism' and 'nation' continue unchallenged. Whether Portugal continues to define itself as 'not-Spain' or simply as 'Portugal' is an extraliterary concern, as should be noted in political discourse.

## Notes

1. We estimate the year of Quevedo's birth based on the date of his matriculation at the University of Coimbra in 1586 (students were often around 15 or 16 years of age). 1631 is the last known record of his activity as a Judge of the Orphans (see Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa (1931)

*Index das Notas dos Vários Tabeliães de Lisboa, entre os Anos de 1580 e 1747: Subsídios para a Investigação Histórica em Portugal*, 4 vols (Lisbon: Biblioteca Nacional, 2:17, cited in Manuel dos Santos Rodrigues (1999) *O Afonso Africano de Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo: Estudo Histórico-Literário e Edição Crítica*. Lisbon: unpublished doctoral thesis, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, p. 12, n24). Suggestions of other dates for his death in 1627 (*Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana* (1976: s.v.) or after the Restoration in 1640 (Peres 1890: 474–475) lack convincing arguments.

2. Jacinto Cordeiro, *Elogio de Poetas Lusitanos* (Lisbon: Jorge Rodrigues, 1631), stanza 12, vol 4.
3. Faria e Sousa further stresses that he is considering all Portuguese authors up to 1638 when making this statement, having examined them all before reaching this conclusion (Faria e Sousa 1639: 540–541).
4. António de Sousa Macedo, *Lusitana Liberata* (London: Richard Heron, 1645), Proemium I, §2, n° 23, p. 20.
5. Almeida Garrett, ‘Bosquejo da Historia da Poesia e Lingoa Portuguezas’, in *Parnaso Lusitano*, 6 vols (Paris: J. P. Aillaud, 1826–1834), I (1826), vii–lxvi, pp. xxx–xxxii. See also José Maria da Costa e Silva, *Ensaio Biográfico-Crítico Sobre os Melhores Poetas Portuguezes*, ed. by João Pedro da Costa, 10 vols (Lisbon: Imprensa Silviana, 1850–1855), VIII (1854), p. 312, where Costa e Silva even dedicates two whole chapters to Quevedo (pp. 219–312); the odd critic here is Camilo Castelo Branco, who, in his *Curso de Literatura Portuguesa*, 2 vols (Lisbon: Matos Moreira, 1875–1876; 2nd ed. Lisbon: Editorial Labirinto, 1986), pp. 33–35 relegates Quevedo to the last place in terms of quality of post-Camonian poets.
6. A more extensive survey of bibliographic references to Quevedo can be found in the ‘Cronologia das referências à vida e obra de Vasco Mousinho de Quevedo’ (Rodrigues 1999: 124–134); to this list we add those in João Franco Barreto’s manuscript *Bibliotheca Lusitana* (1662–1665), v, fl. 948v and Jorge Cardoso, *Agiólogo Lusitano*, 4 vols (Lisbon: Regia Officina Sylviana e Academia Real, 1651–1566 and 1744), iv (ed. by António Caetano de Sousa), p. 596.
7. The book was subsequently also published in a Portuguese translation in the same year, although it had been conceived originally to be only in Spanish.
8. Almeida Carvalho, influenced by late nineteenth-century Positivism, had written this work in response to a call from the Setúbal city chamber for a history of the city and its surroundings. However, having fallen out of favour because of political disagreements, the task was allocated to Alberto Pimentel (who, although a native of nearby Lisbon, had lived in

Setúbal for many years as a Primary School Inspector). Pimentel's opinions are more moderate (see *Memória Sobre a História e Administração do Município de Setúbal* (1877) and Quintas 1993: 247–250). The editor of Carvalho's work, Óscar Paxeco, also seeks to attenuate Carvalho's strong words and accusation of Quevedo as 'traitor', on account of the troubled times that followed the Restoration (Carvalho 1968: 170–171, note (q)).

9. The works are Francisco Rodrigues Lobo (1623) *La jornada que la Magestad Catholica del Rey Don Phelippe II. de las Hespañas hizo a su Reyno de Portugal; y el Triunpho, y pompa con que le recibió la insigne ciudad de Lisboa el año de 1619: compuesta en varios romances*, Lisbon: Pedro Crasbeeck; Gregorio de San Martín (1624) *El Triunpho mas famoso que hizo Lisboa a la entrada del rey don Phelippe Tercero d España y Segundo de Portugal*, Lisbon: Pedro Craesbeeck and Francisco de Matos de Sá (1620), *Entrada y Triunpho que la ciudad de Lisboa hizo a la C. R. M. del Rey D. Phelipe Tercero de las Españas y Segundo de Portugal: con la explicacion de los arcos triumphales que se levantaron a su felicissima entrada [...]*, Lisbon: Jorge Rodrigues; see further works on the royal entrée in Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly and Anne Simon (2000) *Festivals and Ceremonies: A Bibliography of Works Relating to Court, Civic and Religious Festivals in Europe, 1500–1800*, New York: Mansell.
10. The 1594 edition is very rare; there are subsequent editions of 1597 and 1598 (the latter printed in 1599, containing also a description of Queen Saint Isabel of Portugal). On Pedro de Mariz see António Saraiva de Carvalho (1973), *O Biógrafo de Camões e os Seus Diálogos de Varia História*, Guimarães: Cadernos Gil Vicente and bio-bibliographic information in João Palma-Ferreira (1980: 19–21).
11. Curiously, in the National Library of Portugal copy (call number RES. 832 P.), the upper line of the digit '6' is faded, which could be construed as being a '0'.
12. Braga 1874: 309–312; the accusation of plagiarism is repeated in 1891, in *Camões e o Sentimento Nacional*, Porto: Ernesto Chardron, pp. 121, 127. In the course of Braga's work, even after various revisions and changes of opinion, Braga is adamant in his animosity towards Quevedo.
13. 'Estos autores emplearon un castellano tan lleno de portuguesismos y otras incorrecciones que se puede decir que se trataba de un lenguaje literario especial, diferente en muchos aspectos del de los escritores españoles de la primera mitad del siglo xvi' [These [Portuguese] authors used a Spanish language so full of Portuguese words and other incorrections that one could say that it was a special literary language, different in

- many aspects to that of the Spanish writers of the first half of the sixteenth century].
14. See an in-depth discussion of their ‘language question’, as it is known, in L. Gomes (2002) *La Littérature d’Auteurs Portugais en Langue Castellane*, ed. F. Betthencourt. Arquivos do Centro Cultural Calouste Gulbenkian, 44, Paris: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian.
  15. See especially Chap. 4: ‘Terceira epocha litteraria, principia a corrumper-se o gôsto e a declinar a lingua. Comêço, até o fim do xvii, sec’ [Third literary epoch, taste starts to become corrupted and the language to decline. From the start until the end of the seventeenth century].
  16. Costa e Silva, in particular, makes a clear statement on this matter regarding Quevedo: ‘Em geral quasi todos os Poemas que os nossos Poetas escreveram em Castelhana são pouco conhecidos, e direi mesmo, pouco estimados; mas creio que nenhum deles está em tão completo esquecimento como este [o *Triumpho*], sem embargo da boa versificação, e da poesia, com que o Autor cuidara em adereçá-lo’ [In general, almost all poems that our poets wrote in Castilian are little known, and I would even say little appreciated, but I believe that none is so forgotten as this one [the *Triumpho*], despite the good versification and the poetry with which the author composes it’].
  17. In Rodrigues 1999: 30–32, who quotes from the second edition (1597) of the *Diálogos de Vária História*.
  18. Esteves Pereira and Guilherme Rodrigues (1904–1915), *Portugal: Dicionario Historico, Chorographico, Biographico, Bibliographico, Heraldico, Numismatico e Artístico*, 7 vols, Lisbon: João Romano Torres, vol 6 (1912), s.v. ‘Quevedo e Castel-Branco’.
  19. Hernâni Cidade (1975) *Lições de Cultura e Literatura Portuguesas*, Lisbon: Coimbra Editora. The book was first published in 1933 and went through six subsequent revisions and editions. From the third edition (1950) Cidade includes the subchapter ‘Literatura de intuitos nacionalistas’ (‘Literature with nationalist purposes’), which refers to his 1948 book *Literatura Autonomista sob os Filipes*, which accuses Quevedo very strongly of an antipatriotic stance.
  20. On the notions of ‘reaportuguesamento’ and ‘portugalidade’, see Sérgio Alexandre da R. Gomes (2006–2007), *As Identidades Nacionais nos Regimes Ditatoriais: o Caso da Romanità na Itália Fascista e o Reaportuguesamento Salazarista*, *Revista da Faculdade de Letras: Ciências e Técnicas do Património*, vols 5–6: 189–224.



21. Decree-law 6132, 26 September 1919, *Diário do Governo*, series 1, No 196, 2047–2062 (p. 2048).
22. Decree-law 12594, approved 2 November 1926, *Diário do Governo*, series 1, No. 245, 1774–1788 (pp. 1774–1775).
23. See, amongst others, the convincing clarification of the contrast between these various political movements in Stewart Lloyd-Jones (2003).

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# **Part IV**

## **Social Structures and the Techno- scientific Ethos: The Approach from Sociological Theory**



# Hermínio Martins' Philosophical Sociology of Technology: A Short Introduction

José Luís Garcia

## Martins' Encounter with the Philosophy and Sociology of Science and Technology

When Hermínio Martins arrived in London in 1951, from the then Portuguese African colony of Mozambique, and went to the London School of Economics (LSE) in the following year, he found a philosophical environment in which there was much interest in the problems of the philosophy of science. These came together a few years later in debates whose key participants were Karl Popper, Imre Lakatos, Thomas Kuhn, and Paul Feyerabend. Martins attended Popper's classes on Logic and Scientific Method at the LSE, where the Viennese philosopher, as is well known, sought to give new life in the philosophy of science to thinking based on logical empiricism and Austrian thought. At the LSE, Popper, as he said on more than one occasion, was one of the thinkers who most stimulated Martins at that time, together with logical empiricism,

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analytical epistemology, and the analytical philosophy of science and by extension Austrian thought in its broad sense, which he studied for several years. His interest in Popper and the issues he raised, in particular those relating to the philosophical and sociological questions surrounding science and scientific knowledge, led him to reflect broadly on the world of science, a concern he maintained for the rest of his life. In the same way, he always recalled his attendance at Lakatos' seminars at the LSE as another important influence for his focus on science and the problems of epistemology.<sup>1</sup> It is worth mentioning that he was, at the invitation of Lakatos, the first sociologist to join the board of the British Society for the Philosophy of Science.

At the beginning of his career, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, he taught at the University of Leeds, where he spent three years as professor and was able to interact with that university's Centre for History and Philosophy of Science, part of the Philosophy department. Here he met academics such as Jerry Ravetz and P. M. Rattansi, who stimulated his curiosity regarding the history, philosophy, and sociology of science. During those years he supported the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, a very active political movement in Britain at the height of the Cold War, and became interested in so-called Western Marxism, with careful readings of Antonio Gramsci, Ernst Bloch, Georg Lukàcs, Theodor Adorno, and Louis Althusser, and following the *New Left Review*.<sup>2</sup>

The period following the 1960s witnessed a development which perhaps only now can be satisfactorily understood: the urgent need to rethink societal choices in the face of the merger of science, technology, and power which was taking place in the aftermath of the Second World War and in the context of the Cold War. The new thinking brought on by war-time technological developments, in particular the Manhattan project for building the atomic bomb in the USA, knowledge of the human experiments conducted by members of the medical profession under the National Socialist regime, and the publication of biologist Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*, which discussed the risks associated with insecticides like DDT, irredeemably undermined understandings of the nature of science and technology as being intrinsically beneficial, indicative of progress, and axiologically neutral. It is

also important to highlight the fact that during the 1960s the philosophy of science was a riven by discussion on Kuhn's famous book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, which involved Popper, Lakatos, and Feyerabend, as already mentioned, as well as Michael Polanyi and Norwood Russell Hanson.

It was in this context that academic programmes emerged in the sociology of scientific knowledge involving more or less 'strong' variants of sociological constructivism and a field of studies of science and technology which was going from strength to strength. This field covers various styles of research, sub-disciplines, and areas which, without claiming to be exhaustive, we may generally place under the headings of 'philosophy of technology', 'sociology of technology', and, in a more interdisciplinary context, 'social studies of science and technology'. This field, in which Martins' work on science and technology can be included, contains a great variety of contributions from historians of technology, philosophers, sociologists, communication researchers, and other social scientists also covering a wide range of topics: historical studies of technological culture, conceptual and epistemological reflection on the definition of technology and its relationship to science, analyses of the political implications and problems of modern technology, studies of the risks and uncertainties associated with technology's relationship to nature, ethical issues connected with the limits to technological growth as a function of the human values we wish to preserve and which we believe to be threatened by it, and analyses of the inter-relationship of technology and the economy.

In 1964, Martins moved to the University of Essex, where he stayed for two years and was one of the founders of the Department of Sociology. In 1966, he obtained a position as Visiting Lecturer at Harvard, and in 1967 at the University of Pennsylvania. This was the golden age of sociology at Harvard, which was home to academics he was able to engage in discussion like Talcott Parsons, George Homans, S. M. Lipset, Robert Bellah, Stanley Milgram, John Rawls, David McClelland, David Riesman, Gino Germani, and, as part of a younger generation, Harrison White and Gerald Platt. He then returned to Essex, where he stayed for a further three years. It was around this time that he helped to establish the group which began publishing the *Sociology of the Sciences Yearbook*. Through

this he met Norbert Elias, with whom he would (with Richard Whitley) jointly edit *Scientific Establishments and Hierarchies* (Elias et al. 1982).

In the same period, more precisely in 1972, Martins from his sociological base intervened in the debate on the theories of Kuhn, with the essay entitled ‘The Kuhnian “revolution” and its implications for sociology’ (Martins 1972), as far as we know the first article on Kuhn’s theories published by a sociologist in English. In that year, Martins had already been at St. Antony’s College, Oxford, for a year, having joined in 1971 to lecture in the Sociology of Latin America, and had written four seminal studies in the historical sociology of modern Portugal.<sup>3</sup> He only revisited the issues of science and technology in 1993, in the book he edited as a tribute to John Rex, *Knowledge and Passion: Essays in Honour of John Rex*, with the publication of his ‘Hegel, Texas: issues in the sociology and philosophy of technology’ (Martins 1993). This is an essay on modern technology presaging the intense philosophical and sociological study of science and technology that guided most of his work until his death, making a total of 22 years of research and publications. A substantial part of that work has been published in the Portuguese edition (Martins 2011) and the Brazilian edition (Martins 2012) of his book *Experimentum Humanum, Civilização Tecnológica e Condição Humana* [*Experimentum Humanum, Technological Civilisation and Human Condition*] (nine chapters and 444 pages in the Portuguese edition and 11 chapters and 454 pages in the Brazilian edition). In this connection, he left a very extensive and significant body of work in the philosophy of technology (or of what he liked to call ‘philosophical sociology of technology’), in English and Portuguese, including studies and essays, some of which have not yet been published in book form<sup>4</sup> or remain unpublished, and in the philosophy of science, collected in 2015 in *Évora Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science* (six chapters, 318 pages).<sup>5</sup> In addition to this legacy, he left a major work on social theory (in particular his reflections on the concept of time, risk, and uncertainty, Celestin Bouglé and the Durkheimian school),<sup>6</sup> political studies (particularly on federalism),<sup>7</sup> and what may be described as a historically reflexive sociology of modern Portugal.<sup>8</sup>



## The Rejection of Caesurism and the Centrality of Epistemological Reflexion for Sociology

In 'The Kuhnian "revolution" and its implications for sociology', Martins critiques the theory of discontinuity in cognitive processes, arguing that there are general cognitive orientations (Cartesian rationalism and Baconian inductivism are two examples) which go beyond scientific paradigms and deny the premise that they can only be understood within their own exclusive, closed-in realm of intelligibility, the foundation on which Kuhn was able to build his theory that scientific change was the outcome of an endogenous shift of the paradigm, neglecting the interaction between paradigms in different fields. Two ideas are worth highlighting for their significant implications for his intellectual trajectory: on the one hand, Martins seeks to limit the abstract nature of the Kuhnian paradigm and to establish connections between paradigms and specialisms, a process which creates cross-fertilized rather than watertight disciplinary fields; on the other hand, he notes the separation of the sociology of knowledge, which focuses on the content of knowledge, from Mertonian sociology of science, which neglected it, to argue for a sociology of scientific knowledge based on critical thinking about the relationship between sociology and epistemology.

In advocating the first idea, he moved away from theories and categories which, against the backdrop of the sociology of conflict and the thought of Althusser, accentuated the notions of discontinuity, break, and rupture in processes of change as the privileged 'moment' of experience and reflexive cognition. Martins labelled this trend caesurism in his second major essay, 'Time and Theory in Sociology', published in 1974 (Martins 1974).<sup>9</sup> In this essay he argued that one of the main tasks of intellectual thought was precisely to explore the logic and grammar of caesurial concepts.<sup>10</sup> With this idea, he took up position against sociological approaches based on an epistemological foundation deriving from the empiricist logic of the natural sciences, demarcating himself strongly from those sociologists who think that by excluding philosophy from their thinking, they will be able to bring sociology closer to the hard sciences.

For Martins, sociology is a ‘historical-philosophical reflexive discipline’, reflexivity is inherent in sociology, but already in the 1970s ‘irreflexive sociology’ seemed to him to be the normal condition of sociology. He argued that the logical structure of sociology is akin to that of meta-disciplines like logic, epistemology, perhaps philosophy as a whole. ‘This is so at least’, he writes, ‘in the sense that the social world is constituted by the symbolic meanings and typifications of the actors within it, and hence sociological analysis is perforce a second-order mode of enquiry, a reflection on pre-given constructs. Sociology is or aims at knowledge, but clearly our knowledge of knowledgeable beings is of a higher order — logically speaking—than that of unknowing beings’ (Martins 1974: 284). Martins argued that it was necessary to carry out a floor to ceiling critique of the existing conceptual, theoretical, and methodological *instrumentarium* of sociology and that this would be the task for a time of crisis when the movement for reflexive sociology had become philosophical sociology. He also argued that any adequate conception of scientific knowledge had to involve a profound understanding of its history and that this applies as much in the natural as the social sciences. For this reason, sociology should make a sustained effort to comprehensively understand and re-evaluate the history of sociological thought.

According to Martins, a philosophically reflexive sociology could not emerge from the legacy of the philosophy of science identified with logical empiricism nor from that of the philosophy of the social sciences which, on account of the monocentrism of the philosophy of science, had defined itself as the ‘theodicy of positivism’. Epistemological choice always, and mistakenly, comes down to a choice between a naturalist or positivist general philosophy of science and a non-positivist and non-naturalist philosophy of the cultural and social sciences. The possibility was never considered that positivism, and especially empiricism, might be wrong about the natural sciences and that there may be an alternative in the form of a non-positivist philosophy of the natural sciences and also a non-positivist philosophy of the social sciences. For Martins, this alternative could be ‘formulated in a meta-science in which the conception of a *verstehende Naturwissenschaft* could run parallel to that of a *verstehende Soziologie*’ (Martins 1974: 286), along the lines set out by Michael Polanyi in *Personal Knowledge*. Moving away from the tendencies of relativist

programmes, a movement of epistemological reflection and an alternative such as this did not involve, in his understanding, any kind of historical relativism or any determination that would annihilate truth. His position lay in a context he called 'a historically as well as of course sociologically tempered rationalism' (Martins 1974: 287).

The mentality which owed its all to 'skeletal logico-empiricist meta-science', with the primacy it accords to certain procedures for the quantification and objectification of the subject-matters it deals with, merely gives sociology scientific mannerisms. Over the years Martins verified that this type of thinking was being pursued, felt it was becoming widespread among today's sociologists in particular, and social scientists in general, and that it did not just have consequences but became an actual objective of some universities—the development of a certain 'monoculture of the academic mind' (Martins 2004). This leads, in turn, to the spread of a 'prosaic mentality' (a concept advanced by the North American philosopher George Morgan, who designates as the practical man he who sees life according to a logic of 'problem-solution') not just in the academic community but in day-to-day life, an a-metaphysical, a-poetic, a-literary, a-teleological, anaesthetized view of the world, of 'religious non-musicality', to use a loose interpretation of Weber's concept, and symptomatic of Scheler's 'metaphysical blindness', which stigmatizes all those who diverge from (their) standards (Martins 2004). This mentality can also very appositely be understood in the light of the notion of 'the instrumental mind' advanced by one of Martins' great teachers, Michael Oakeshott, whose model is that of the engineer as 'ideal-type' (in the Weberian sense), a figure who believes in the sovereignty of technology and sees rational behaviour as behaviour which tends exclusively towards a single goal or a specific aim, guided by a conscious calculation of the means necessary to achieve that aim.

Bearing in mind the growth in caesural beliefs in modern Western societies, it seemed to Martins imperative to study caesurism wherever he found it. It is this kind of exploration which guided him in his epistemological and theoretical approach to the social sciences, drawing inspiration from a beautiful thought of Karl Mannheim's: 'The innermost structure of the mentality of a group can never be as clearly grasped as when we attempt to understand its conception of time in the light of its

hopes, yearnings, and purposes' (cited by Martins 1974: 284). And this is also what guided him in the constant attention he would devote to the natural sciences—the 'holy citadel of progress theories'—where 'the more radically caesural views have emerged recently' (Martins 1974: 282) and were given concrete form in large part in accelerating technological innovation.

Martins' epistemological position thus led him to distance himself definitively from mainstream sociology and its radical over-simplification of certain issues, its cognitive channelling and goal-setting within a given school of thought or discipline, its Byzantine over-complication, and its tendency to self-sterilization by methodological or theoretical means. For Martins, that 'prosaic mentality' is concerned with procedures, techniques, and methods and rejects everything which is imprecise, undefined, or not explicit, inhibits the use of cognitive-affective faculties, revealing mechanisms of censorship (or self-censorship). It shows no interest in questions of meaning, those which have to do with the meaning of life, the human condition, human relationships, or ethical and moral questions. On the contrary, the 'practically minded' sociologist, as Martins wrote, claims to study only the measurable facts, which he sees as the only substance of life. Social reality is not, however, made up only of what Ortega y Gasset called *vigencias* (collective usages actually in force) but also of unreal, counterfactual ideals and idealities, as Weber so emphatically taught.

## The Critique of Technological Utopianism as the Main Task of Sociology Today

For Martins, the main task of sociology today, is, to recall an idea of H. G. Wells, to 'critique utopias', ideals, the visions of the future which human beings project and for which they yearn. In spite of this, the direction taken by conventional sociology was the study of '*topias*'—an idea developed by G. Landauer to designate the existing state of affairs at any given moment in any given society, with all its contingencies and particularities. In this way, the state of the societal world is always stud-

ied *post festum*, and in an axiologically neutral way, and this leads Martins to speak of a 'non-critique of topias' and to question the 'methodological topianism' prevailing in modern sociology through the acceptance of the reigning topia, that of Western society, which today is relatively homogenized. Mainstream sociology thus fails to take on the task of 'critiquing utopias' which, in the modern era, are marked by technological advances presaging human empowerment, like the utopia of Progress, and ignores that which should be its principal focus of reflection, 'technological utopianism'. That technological utopianism always accompanied the secular religions, the great mass movements, the 'ideocracies' (or ruling ideas) of the West, and now fills the whole of the potential utopian space, incentivizing the technoscientific transformations whose consequences and impact sociology stubbornly persists in studying only in retrospect.<sup>11</sup>

Martins believed that the methodological topianism of conventional sociology is not open to thinking about utopianism, to the study of social facts over longer timescales, with ways of questioning which go beyond crude empiricism and the theoreticism of a methodological posture today much like Althusserian solipsism of structures, or Luhmannian auto-poietic, and systemic solipsism. Quite harshly, he saw scientific schools of thought as modern sects in which those who remain sensitive to the ultimate issues, to values and ideals, to the utopian imagination, are in a minority, or are even marginalized by the standardizing orthopraxy of the academy, which becomes complicit with the tyranny of the extensive present, with the loss of alternatives, with the shutting off of horizons. He emphasized that Norbert Elias had already criticized hodiocentrism (the focus on the contemporary) for its restrictive perception of social reality, limited in space and time. He condemned the systematic rejection of the long view in social development, forgetting the past, that which may be called the slow breathing of history, but also closing its eyes to future developments and consequences, 'de-futurization' and the 'solipsism of the present moment'. And all this was even more serious at a time when, as never before, it may affect future generations in extraordinary ways.

In his view, already in the 1970s, sociologists should have felt morally shocked at science's lack of moral progress in the West and in the former Soviet Union, where the drift into technoscientific progress led to an

experimentalism which despised humanity and nature. Most sociologists continue to relegate the study of the implications of technoscience to the background and believe that, because classic utopias have failed and political Messianism has run its course, we live in an absolute and 'extensive' present, to use Helga Nowotny's concept, without a future and so without utopias. For Martins, sociology has become very much a presentist form of sociological analysis, seeing the present as a 'present present', expelling past and future, rejecting the long view, and embracing radical axiological hodiocentrism.<sup>12</sup>

Martins opposes those who favour utopian thinking anchored in philosophies of history or in visions of unrestricted mastery of nature and infinite progress. In so doing he belongs to a line of thinkers who, in weighing up the events of the twentieth century and the stubborn persistence in similar projects in the twenty-first, insist on raising the issue of responsibility in the face of an unpredictable future and on the urgency of reconsidering limits and values in the context of a broad temporal and world perspective. Postulating the need to mitigate the shock effects of major transformational projects on the natural world, human life, the biosphere, and the history of Gaia, Martins in his essay 'Risco, Incerteza e Escatologia' [Risk, Uncertainty and Eschatology] stressed the importance of the language of uncertainty in relation to their increasingly incommensurable, unpredictable, broad, widely dispersed, intricate, penetrating, and potentially irreversible and destructive technological, technogenic, and anthropogenic consequences on a world scale and for the whole of existence (Martins 2011: 173–231).

But Martins' sociological questioning of contemporary technology was not limited to dealing with the dangers of the technological civilization for the future of humanity. Rather, he took advantage of the excesses of this emerging civilization to reflect on issues which are decisive for human life, nature, reason, and time, and on the miseries and grandeurs associated with the imprudence, dissatisfaction, ambition, and fantasy with its readiness to act unreasonably, which are characteristic of human beings, not only in our time but in all time. Thus we find in Martins not exactly a vision of the future but rather a reflection on the fundamental characteristics of humanity, deriving from a concern with 'ultimate questions' or 'ultimacy' enmeshed in his meditation on technoscientific

innovation. His thinking reveals something which might be taken for a certain religiosity but which it is more correct to interpret as a sensitivity to 'liminal issues' and 'ultimate ends'.<sup>13</sup> The concern with meaning and destiny of life and death, the meaning of existence, humanity's place in the universe, the value of value, is more philosophical than religious, and there are not many traces of it in conventional social science.<sup>14</sup> A sociologist who is concerned with questions of ultimacy, issues essential to sociological theory, must of necessity study scientific and technological developments, which have many implications for such issues. But he who would wish to examine technology sociologically cannot ignore the relationship between that study and sensitivity to the metaphysical-teleological-religious questions associated with it.

Paradoxically, we end up finding in Martins' work a focus which is truly anchored in the present: in fact, in suggesting that the task of sociology is to examine technological utopianism, Martins is implicitly suggesting that we analyse the society in which we actually live, because we are already transforming that technological utopianism into reality, we are indeed already living in a state of utopia. The prolonging of life, radical changes to nature, behavioural control and the transformation of culture into an environment in which we may live as long as possible in a pleasant way, all these topics which are present in our society today are to be found in the *New Atlantis* envisaged by Francis Bacon. That is why to analyse the technological utopianism is to analyse our society, even when—and especially when—that utopianism has become a kind of dystopia. Of course, the very concept of 'the present' here at issue is not the 'narrow present' but is seen rather in chrono-topical fashion, as present past and present future.

## The Principle of Technological Plenitude

We have already mentioned Martins' critique of the logic of caesural concepts. This is closely related to the attention he gives to changes in modern science and technological utopianism, and can already be seen in his first two essays on the topic of technology, 'Hegel, Texas: issues in the philosophy and sociology of technology' (1993) and 'Technology, modernity and politics' (1998a). In these essays, as in others later, he sought

threads and ties to spiritual, religious, and scientific tendencies and images which cross the ancient with the modern world and are woven into the development of modernity and its various spheres of action. According to Martins, one of the metaphysical meanings of technology resides in the incessant effort to discontinue time, of stopping it in a present. In his earliest essays on technology, he puts forward two conceptions which belong in the gallery of caesural forms which gradually took possession of modernity—technological Gnosticism and the Faustian image of technology. The ancient Gnostic spiritual forces which saw knowledge as salvation now intersect with a conception of technology that has subverted the Promethean commitment to the service of humankind, as in the currents of eighteenth-century thought influenced by Saint-Simon,<sup>15</sup> and today is guided by a blind impulse to unlimited mastery over nature, giving credence to theories ranging from those of Oswald Spengler to Martin Heidegger, from Ernst Jünger to the Frankfurt School. In so far as the plan for unlimited mastery of nature includes the transformation of human nature itself, Martins opens up the discussion on the relationships between certain domains of technology—like biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and new information technologies—and new forms of totalitarianism.

In the very particular sociological universe which Martins built around the topic of technology, he highlights this gnostic propensity which, more or less removed from original Gnosticism, still prevails in Christianity and in the latencies of Christianity. While Voegelin saw in Gnosticism the internal dynamics of many mass movements of modernity, and in the twentieth century, today's gnosticism, in the form of the search for an ideal-type, is publicly acknowledged by many of the advocates of technological propaganda. Worshipers of technology and technophiles argue in favour of techno-gnosis as the explanation for the state of permanent obsolescence in which we currently live. There is already a major current of thought associated with the glorification of technology in its computational, biotechnological, robotic, and nanotechnological forms and in artificial intelligence and artificial life. The limitless expansion of technology is touted as a goal, together with dematerialization, disincarnation, disembodiment, the development of



electronic intelligence, re-engineering, and the reprogramming of artificial and natural beings with no ontological or epistemic restraints.

Industrialized technology and the experimental science which sustains it does not represent cognitive enhancement in relation to previous achievements, but rather a radical break which incorporates, on the one hand, a technological conception of knowledge and, on the other, a technological conception of nature. It is the affinity of these two conceptions that has been reinforced in the modern world.

First, the modern technological adventure is implicitly or explicitly reliant on the (Viconian) axiom that we only understand what we make or achieve, or, in its most limited translation, we understand, or can as a rule understand fully, all that we make or achieve exactly because we make it or achieve it. In this notion of reason, whose tradition unites Vico and Marx, Dewey and Bachelard, it is the epistemic value of the maker's knowledge which is asserted. In 'O Deus dos Artefactos: o Princípio de Vico e a Tecnologia' [The God of Artefacts: Vico's Principle and Technology] (Martins 2011: 70–143), his most important essay on the epistemological foundations of technological reason, he explains how, in modern technoscientific rationalism, cognitive value is assimilated to verification, guided by action, manipulation, controlled change, the future, and the possibilities limited to mechanical invention of an array of present-oriented artefacts. This shows once again how 'technical knowledge' (to invoke once more a concept of Oakeshott's) has assimilated science to engineering, that is, science reduced to the rational solution of practical problems, as an undertaking of making, achieving, and creating things and events. Essentially this type of reason cannot but be subordinate to action because it attributes meaning and sense to the means alone, making it impossible to evaluate ends. It is thus understandable that, in the same way as for the engineer, it is the circumstances (including those dictated by the market economy and ever more assertively by the mass consumer society) which provide science with the latest series of problems to be solved, thus making it hostage to the feeling of the moment and transforming the scientific life into a sequence of crises, ruptures, and caesures, in Martins' words, each of them to be supplanted by applying a rationality which assimilates scientific method to technological method. This scenario becomes consolidated as the dominant

framework in a period of time (recent decades), in which the scientific endeavour has been subject to erosion of the link between truth, realism, and virtue, as science has been transformed into corporatized technoscience, with its affinity to scepticism, nihilism, and epistemological and axiological relativism (Martins 2003; 2015c).

Secondly, the technological concept of nature involves duplicity. If, on the one hand, nature's status is limited to that of being mainly a fount of resources, forgetting that aspect of it which conditions human behaviour, technoscience is involved, on the other hand, in the adventure of building a new (and improved) nature.<sup>16</sup> The current trend of technological and technoscientific innovation seems committed to something like a Second Creation, a movement which can be labelled 'Technogenesis' and which seems to include a new Sapientization. It would place on Earth, for the first time since the advent of *homo sapiens*, intelligent beings created by humans' laboratorial ingenuity. Technoscience thus usurps the status and role of *natura naturans* as the evolutionary matrix for the forms and species of beings (Martins 2001a: 55). In his view, the projection of the technological programme in its entirety generates a framework of technoscientific euphoria that is almost a dream of omnipotence (Martins 2001c: 116).

The tradition of an omnipotent God was maintained in this way in Western societies, as a travesty based on the omnipotent voluntarism of technoscientific power, which spreads aspirations to the trans-human which is purely cognitive, intellective, disembodied, or at least having no organic, carnal, corruptible, and above all mortal, body. The idea that all matter, even physical matter, is programmable leads to the vanquishing of all natural limits. Teleological anthropocentrism would place human beings in the uppermost stage of the Great Chain of Being, putting at humans' disposal all the non-human, irrational animals, endowed only with faculties to serve humanity's interests. In an age of technological possibilities and permanent technological transformation which puts an end to natural, biological evolution, that position at the top of the chain may come to be occupied by those perfect superior beings which some aspire to be, by those new post-human species to whom humans will be irretrievably subjugated, 'engendering a new ontogenesis, producing a new scale of technology superimposed on the classic "natural scale", or a

Great Chain of Technological Beings or Artificial Beings to come' (Martins 2011: 115). Autonomous technological acceleration and hyper-potentialization, says Martins, would be something like the consummation of human history, accepted as inevitable fate or destiny, both by the scientific community and the population at large, setting aside any consideration of other possible scenarios for the future of humanity. Martins talks of a widespread technological fatalism in the face of the exponential development of technology and, for that reason, appeals to the need to take the fatefulness out of that technology (Martins 2001c).

## The Metaphysics of Technoscientific Liberalism

In his reflections on technology, Martins stands out by virtue of having given new life to a concept formulated by Arthur Lovejoy in 1936, the principle of plenitude—a new term for an old idea, which goes back to Plato and Greek antiquity and which shapes a great deal of Western thought (Martins 2001a: 51). According to the principle of plenitude, the world contains everything, in reality or potentially, that is necessary for the perfecting of humanity. In the macro-cosmos as in the micro-cosmos, in nature as in human society, all orders of being, natural species, strata, and potential positions would be, or have already been, realized.

Associated with the idea of plenitude is the concept of continuity, whereby each period contains the seeds of the following period, which is superior, both of them having common and overlapping limits. According to Lovejoy, Aristotle is responsible for introducing the principle of continuity in natural history, highlighting the continuity of physical/corporeal classes and spiritual/non-corporeal classes, whose supreme stage would be the human soul. There is a bond between the lowest and the highest forms of being (the highest possibly being man, the angels and finally God), forming the 'Great Chain of Being', a notion taken up by Lovejoy. Underlying this concept is the idea that lower-order beings would be subordinate to the interests of superior beings, who are more perfect.

It was Leibniz who reformulated ancient and medieval ideas of continuity and plenitude, having also focused his philosophy on the ideas of development and evolution, contributing strongly to the notion of

progress and to the renewal of European thought in the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Three key concepts can be deduced from his writings: the absolute need for everything that exists in the world to exist, and in the way it exists, according to God's design; the infinite nature of potentiality, whereby we will never reach the final stage of progress; and the idea of continuity, whereby things do not all occur at once, but advance gradually.

Martins shows how the principle of plenitude was valued in Western philosophical and scientific thought, from the seventeenth century to the beginning of the First World War, reappearing implicitly and explicitly after the Second World War, even if its first and greatest historian, Lovejoy, thought it was extinct. According to Martins, some radical thinkers who came in Hegel's wake, and various Western Marxists, are radically plenitudinarian, as are Lukàcs (with his idea of 'objective possibility') and Bloch (with his 'principle of hope') (Martins 2011: 80). In line with Martins' hypothesis, it is worth recalling what Robert Nisbet wrote in his *History of the Idea of Progress*: 'The idea of plenitude, with its corollary of self-transcending and self-perfecting fecundity, is one of the most powerful and persisting ideas in the whole of European thought' (Nisbet 1980: 91).

Reflection on modern aesthetics and art reveals the early signs of Leibniz's plenitudinarian possibilism. Martins develops the theory that Leibnizian plenitudinarian possibilism inspired the whole of German metaphysical historicism and that, with the advent of German Romanticism, the principle of plenitude became secularized and was appropriated by artistic and aesthetic thought. The Romantic poets and thinkers, and particularly Coleridge, recovered the concept of *natura naturans* associated with the vision of nature in a process of becoming complete, revealing the traditional artistic interest in making the invisible visible: 'the notion that God is a creator of creators, of being endowed with libertarian free will and the search for perfection not just in themselves but also in creating works of art, despite being implicit in many theories of artistic creation', only arose at this time, through the efforts of the romantic Jules Lequier (more recently, this notion also played a key role in the teachings of Bergson and Teilhard de Chardin) (Martins 2001a: 56–57). Thus the principle of plenitude took the form of the

Principle of Artistic Plenitude, or the Principle of Artistic Plenification which, deduced from the writings of Lovejoy, explicated in the writings of Schelling and possibly also in Schiller, postulates that, as the history of nature realizes in time all the types and species of possible and compossible natural beings, so the history of art is made by updating all artistic possibilities and compossibilities endowed with meaning. The Leibnizian concept of 'possible worlds', which Baumgarten in 1753 associated with the ontological reach of works of art, developed extensively in significant formulations of post-structuralist literary theory and in the philosophy of contemporary art (e.g. in Nelson Goodman, with his doctrine of the 'ways of world-making', according to which there is only one possible world, which is the real world; art, science, and common sense are just versions of the world, and not legitimate worlds in themselves) (Martins 2001a: 57–58).

The Principle of Artistic Plenitude can therefore be understood as the main actual 'research programme' of Western art in the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> There is, however, a crucial sense in which the Principle of Natural Plenitude is not the same as the Principle of Artistic Plenitude. In natural plenitude the key concept was the proliferation of species, it being generally assumed that individual beings were mere examples of a class or *genus*, and could be replaced by others without noticeable loss in terms of natural diversity. In the theory and history of art, however, works of art have a strong element of individuality. Even if styles and genres are the matrices for aesthetic or artistic possibilities, subject to exhaustion or saturation, and in time giving way to new styles and genres as part of a succession with no rigid definitions of periodicity, the important thing is the form in which art materializes and not the corresponding Platonic form (Martins 2001a: 61–62).

For Martins, as has already been seen, Western utopia, the fantasy of perfection, reappears currently in the body of technology. Western perfectibility, the generator of exaggerated utopias, was faced with a crisis following the failure of the great political movements which had announced the perfecting and self-conquest of society, but teleological, Gnostic, Manichean, Joaquimite perfectibility can be felt in the history of biological engineering. The principle of plenitude in Western metaphysics, the rule that all that is possible is or was or will be real, so

important for cosmological thought, for natural history, and for neo-platonic Christian theology, was transferred not only, as we have seen, to the artistic sphere but also to modern technology, in the form of a Principle of Technological Plenitude (Martins 2001a: 13–14).

The Principle of Technological Plenitude becomes associated with a Duty or Imperative of Technological Plenitude (commonly called the ‘technological imperative’)—whereby everything that is technically possible will necessarily have to be realized and incorporated in a technology, in line with, for example, physicist Murray Gell-Mann’s maxim which states that everything which is physically possible is physically necessary or biologist Peter Medawar’s, which states that all that is physically possible is technically possible. Martins refers to technological plenitude because ‘probabilities are pregnant with future’ (Martins 2001c: 121). Technological possibility has an appetite for reality and is quickly transformed into reality, thereby eliminating any possibility of choice—the choice is that which is possible, leading us to want that which it is possible to achieve instead of seeking to realize that which we desire. In this era of technoscientific liberalism, this Principle of Technological Plenitude (or ‘Plenification’) has replaced the Planning Principle which prevailed in the era of scientific socialism (Martins 2001b: 19).

For Martins, one of the dangers of the Principle of Technological Plenitude is the fact that we actualize (or make real) the technological possibilities which are within our reach, with no prior study of their potentially harmful consequences. We are becoming ever more aware of the pernicious effects which irreparably accompany technical inventions applied on a large scale, but we leave the full weight of the impact of that damage to future generations. And curiously, the larger the problems caused by technology, the louder the voices claiming the need for more technology to solve those same problems.

Any principle of plenitude, and particularly the Principle of Technological Plenitude associated with technological gnosticism, inhibits genuinely free and thought-through choices and the human capacity not to do (which Renouvier dubbed *nolonté* [un-will]), crucial for the rational will and even for the definition of that which is properly human, because it calls for absolute activism, the need to act, to make real, to

make, above all, and for rational will, the exercise of freedom and ethical conduct. The Principle of Technological Plenitude emerges precisely in order to avoid any 'non-doing', any unwillingness to act consciously adopted as a posture by those with troubled consciences, which might counteract the drug of irresistible ongoing change, of this camouflaged utopia of technique. Martins points out how current activism paradoxically represents

supreme inertia in carrying on with techno-scientific and techno-economic mega-projects which are ongoing everywhere, of persisting with the techno-scientific mind-set in relation to the human adventure, with the cybernetic monoculture of the mind, despite all the uncertainties, the disasters and the ambiguities, not only related to local change but also global developments, of the trajectory of our biocidal, biophobic and techno-biological age [...] (Martins 2001b: 21–23).

Martins' reflections on technology or, rather, on technological civilization were not only aimed at understanding the underlying aspirations to transcendence in today's technoscientific liberalism, although that issue has been our main focus in this brief article on his thought. It was because he sought to de-naturalize (or delegitimize) the teleological foundation which underpins the joint onward march of political liberalism, capitalism, and technoscience, offered up as the only possible and inevitable destiny that Martins' whole effort was directed to unmasking that metaphysical foundation. In fact, there are entire aspects of Martins' other work which we could describe as visceral sociology on the spectre of new liberal eugenics (Martins 2011: 390–441), the emergence of a commercial ethos among scientists and the university (Martins 2004; Garcia and Martins 2008) and the ongoing hegemony of cyber-technology (Martins 2005, 2010; Martins and Garcia 2013), all of which shows how the dynamics of technoscientific liberalism are forging a new technological-scientific-informational world which is taking over the natural, organic, and social world.<sup>19</sup> For Martins, in our time, adopting the *nolonté* (unwillingness) of rational ethics is perhaps the highest of all virtues, certainly one of the virtues essential for ensuring we are not destined for a harsh future.

## Notes

1. See the preface written by Martins to his book *Experimentum Humanum: Civilização Tecnológica e Condição Humana* (Martins 2011a: 9–11), and Martins (2015a: 251).
2. See Martins (2015a: 255–256).
3. The essay on the *Estado Novo* was written at the request of Stuart J. Woolf, for the collection entitled *European Fascism* (1968), on the recommendation of Perry Anderson of the *New Left Review*, who was very interested in Portugal and encouraged Martins to pursue the topic (Martins 1968). The 1969 article ‘Opposition in Portugal’ (on the opposition to the dictatorship of Salazar’s *Estado Novo*) was written at the request of G. Ionescu, editor of the academic journal *Government and Opposition*, under guidance from Ernest Gellner (Martins 1969). The 1971 article ‘Portugal’ was written at the invitation of the Catalan sociologist Salvador Giner and published in a volume he co-edited with Margaret Archer on class structure in various European countries, *Contemporary Europe: Class, Status and Power*, together with articles by Pierre Naville, Nicos Mouzelis, René König, Frank Parkin, and Giner himself (Martins 1971). The article ‘The collapse of the First Republic’ was written at the request of Juan Linz, for a symposium he organized with Al Stepan, at Yale, on the collapse of democratic regimes in Europe and Latin America. This last study was first published in Martins (1998b), a Portuguese-language work that brings together the above-mentioned four essays on Portugal from that period. At this time he also wrote another article on Portuguese topics, on emigration. This was presented at the first conference of the International Conference Group on Modern Portugal, headed up by Douglas Wheeler, of the University of New Hampshire, in 1973, but was never published.
4. A set of his texts on technology will be published in the book *The Technocene: Reflections on Bodies, Minds, and Markets*, edited by Ravi Rajan with Danielle Crawford (Martins forthcoming).
5. In addition to the republished essay on the Kuhnian revolution, the other five essays cover the following topics: Truth, Realism and Virtue 2.0; Images and Imaging in Science; Thought experiments in science and philosophy; Michael Polanyi and the philosophy of science; and Time and Explanation. The six essays are collected in the volume edited by Príncipe (2015), *Évora Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science* (Martins 2015b, c, d, e, f, g).



6. The article on Celestin Bouglé and the Durkheimian school was handed to me in its final version one month before Martins' death and is almost certainly the last article he wrote in Portuguese. It will be included in the volume *Lições de Sociologia Clássica* (Lectures in Classical Sociology), which Martins and I were co-editing, and will be published in 2018 by Edições 70, Lisbon, Portugal.
7. See Martins (1998c, d).
8. In addition to the book (Martins 1998b), he wrote a long essay on regime changes in modern Portugal which will be published in 2017 by the Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, the publishing arm of the Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa.
9. In the essay entitled 'Time and Theory in Sociology', we also find the invention of the concept of 'methodological nationalism', which may include the broader conception of caesurism. With the sensibility of a Portuguese intellectual in exile from a dictatorship which professed an authoritarian form of nationalism, and of a foreigner working in the social sciences in the 'core' countries where there was not much work done on the idea of the nation-state, Martins shows how, in general, macro-sociological work was subject to nationally predefined views of society, in which the national community was seen, in a limiting way, as the terminal unit and limiting condition within which issues and events were addressed in social science. Methodological nationalism thus presupposes that the nation-state is the necessary form of representation of society and the natural organizing principle for the emergence of modernity, binding itself to it in the study of sociological phenomena. On this concept, Chernilo argues that a first wave of debate on methodological nationalism arose in the 1970s, driven by Martins himself, who coined the term; and a second wave came at the turn of the twentieth century, above all in connection with the issue of globalization, which would overshadow the importance of the nation-state and the controversy over the exhaustion of universalist concepts in the social sciences (Chernilo 2006: 235–237).
10. It should be noted, however, that Martins does not deny the existence of caesurial changes in history, on condition that incisions and breakages are not repeated at random to the extent that they make it impossible to understand the particular characteristics which give meaning to social events, phases, and historical periods. It is in this sense that he accepts Gellner's suggested caesurism based on the undeniable discontinuity between the modern world and the world prior to the industrial and

scientific revolution. In *Thought and Change*, Gellner (1964), lending support to Popperian critiques of historicism, set out a version of caesurism which attracted many sociologists, partly because it placed sociology in a privileged position in relation to history. He defined an episodic model of social change, according to which the object of study for the social sciences is not long-term sequences of historical transformation but rather the historical and delimited specificity of an 'episode'.

11. Martins deals extensively with the issues of technological utopianism in connection with the task of modern sociology, in an extended electronic version of the essay published in the journal *Revista Nada*, following an interview he gave to João Urbano and Paulo Urbano. See Martins (2004a).
12. In a summary on Time, Martins (2006b) observed that there is a significant volume of work on the temporal in human action, by methodological individualists, who drew on Husserl, by Durkheimian sociologists, and by macro-sociological authors. Among the latter, with whom he had the most affinity on account of the type of research he carried out, it is possible to distinguish the importance of great timescales, of 'trendless fluctuations' (Pitirim Sorokin), and of civilizational processes (Norbert Elias), sometimes linked to systemic conceptions (Immanuel Wallerstein's 'world systems'). Martins identified with this form of interpreting the social world with the long duration, or which ties this temporal form to intermediate timescales and events (something which Fernand Braudel did for history and which he felt sociology lacked), and he subscribed in particular to the view set out by Sorokin in *Sociocultural Causality, Space and Time*. In this book, Sorokin (1964) revisits the triple structure of human and social time: *tempus*, time in the ordinary sense, 'of coming into being and passing away' (in the English translation of Aristotle), *aevum*, and *aeternitas*. *Aevum* is the temporal mode of created things, thus having a beginning, at least in one sense (e.g. the discovery of a theorem or a technical invention), but lasting with no defined time-limitation, either in themselves or in their ramifications and implications, which are potentially infinite. *Aeternitas* can be seen as the temporal mode of uncreated things and can be generalized as 'non-temporality', in addition to that which is to come, in a sense of being beyond or outside of time, corresponding more or less to our experiences as epiphanies. But it was in Gabriel Tarde that Martins found the best understanding of the way in which the social present is constituted. In his view this was a social present time which was narrow, formed by the rapid dynamics of ephemeral events and socio-technical

accidents, and with which the main body of sociologists are obsessed (almost to the point of having a 'professional bias' in his opinion), leading them to ignore the social past and their own sociological past and to deny any serious attempt at perspective, missing the significance of time as a radically conditioning factor in its dual status as primordial boundary and scarce good. He saw sociologists as captives, often unconscious ones, of the very movement of time as defined by the momentum of technological and economic change, by the brief transitory nature of fluctuations in taste influenced by the market, and by the lack of historical depth and horizons of the state machines of the world in which we live. Martins is not, however, a radical temporalist, for whom everything is continuous becoming, with a propensity for total metamorphic change, who jumps from hermeneutic hiatus to hermeneutic hiatus, from logical abyss to logical abyss, from incommensurability to incommensurability, with nothing being comprehensible unless it be *in fieri* (coming into existence) and exclusively so.

13. This term was coined by the theologian Paul Tillich and adopted by Parsons to define one of the most important systems of human action, the cultural system, one of the functions of which was to concern itself with the 'frontier-conditions' of the human being.
14. Martins is closer to those authors who escape the prosaic mentality and retain that sensitivity to ultimate issues, which, deriving almost always from contacts with religion, as a result of education or out of intellectual curiosity, are not the sole prerogative of authors who are also believers. Martins offers the examples of the post-modernist Derrida and the Marxist Walter Benjamin, whose 'mystic materialism' derives from an affinity with Judaism, of Ernst Bloch, also a Marxist and Schellingian materialist who was such a strong influence on German Protestant theology, the anarchist Gustav Landauer, and Daniel Bell, whose thought reflects his knowledge of the history of Kabbalism. Some of the profoundest interpreters of political and technological modernity had in-depth knowledge of the history of religions in the West, in particular the Gnostic tradition (both Jewish and Christian), such as Eric Voegelin, for example, who studied in great depth the religious roots of European racism and of political religions, and Hans Jonas, a significant voice in the philosophy of technology and bioethics who, with his 'Responsibility Principle', criticized the work of Bloch as an exponent of radical Marxist technology (Martins 2004a).

15. See Garcia (2016: 1–18).
16. This is the idea of a Third Nature, one of the most recent of a series of planetary technological images which include H. G. Wells' 'brain world', Edouard Le Roy's and Teilhard de Chardin's 'noosphere', Gaston Bachelard's 'radio sphere', Yuri Lotman's 'semiosphere', Peter Russell's 'global brain', the 'infosphere' of many modern technophiles and, more remotely, is present in various writers and poets up to at least Nathaniel Hawthorne, and also in the futurists at the beginning of the twentieth century.
17. The ideas of plenitude and continuity spread above all in the Middle Ages. They are found in Abelard, who in the twelfth century arrived at the deductive conclusion that sufficient reason and plenitude derive from the infinite power of the Creator; or in St. Thomas Aquinas, for whom all things tended to perfection, in a movement of divine and natural origin. Leibniz took up this thought under the strong influence of Espinoza, who believed in Nature's Grand Design, according to which all that may happen in the future is contained in the present. Later on we find these ideas in the writings of the eighteenth-century biologists, and even in Darwin.
18. At the end of the nineteenth century and in the first decade of the twentieth, the realization of all the potential forms of art in a given state of artistic production, and in the transition from one state of artistic production to another, seemed to be the idea animating Western late modernist art which, in the pursuit of originality, experimentation and creativity, freed itself from the more durable aesthetic conventions, and focused on caesurist ideas like variation, rupture, and diversion. The tendency towards aesthetic plenification was encouraged by the pressure of technological innovation, above all those inventions most directly related to the means of artistic production and image creation, starting with photography (Martins 2001b: 63–64).
19. See Lacerda (2015: 221–228), and Oliveira (2015: 13–16).

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# Time and Tide in Sociology

Charles Turner

While giving a paper a few years ago, Hermínio Martins remarked of a book on the topic of time that it contained 64 references to Anthony Giddens and only two to himself and that while Giddens was a clever man, he did not think he was 32 times cleverer. Yet he could hardly have been surprised by the fact that his paper on ‘Time and Theory in Sociology’, published in 1974 in John Rex’s anthology, *Approaches to Sociology*, had received less attention than the numerous monographs by his distinguished colleague (Martins 1974). He subscribed to the more romantic ideal of the seminal paper, written goodness knows when but defining a field of inquiry for decades. And goodness knows where today, when the imperative is to publish in peer-reviewed journals, it is hard to imagine many having the courage or the omnivorousness to research and then produce a 15,000 word *tour de force* as mere ‘book chapter’.

What should we make of it four decades on? Should we make anything of it? While addressing a distinct theme, it has a typically encyclopaedic

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quality, a keen ear for recent trends and an idiosyncratic mode of delivery, including a terminological inventiveness that became if anything more marked as he got older. As such it is not a paper with a distinct argument and is decidedly unprogrammatically. It does contain two formulations that gave it an extended shelf-life: the idea of a 'caesural' conception of historical change and 'methodological nationalism'. The first Hermínio saw exemplified by claims about totalitarianism as a historically unique mode of rule and by Ernest Gellner's claim that industrial society was something so historically unique that only sociology would be equipped to make sense of it (Gellner 1964); it would be taken up explicitly (unacknowledged) by J. G. Merquior in his book on Foucault (Merquior 1991) and also implicitly by several commentaries on Kuhn's history of science (which is consistent with a claim about the growth of knowledge in a way that Foucault's 'regimes of truth' is not). Having gathered dust for 30 years, methodological nationalism was called by Ulrich Beck the most important social science concept of the twentieth century (Beck 2008). That was hyperbole, a confusion of levels of abstraction: 'methodological nationalism' is meta-theoretical term, deployed negatively to refer to some implicit assumptions about primary units of analysis, not to act as a springboard for an ethically motivated quest for political cosmopolitanism. Whether or not the term was quite his own—discussion of it occupies very little space in the essay—Hermínio enjoyed the fact it had led English-speaking scholars to revisit his early work.

Another with a keen eye for theoretical methods, Wilhelm Baldamus, once said that the best places to look for intellectual progress in the social sciences are in strictly theoretical work of the Parsonian sort and in the most empiricist empirical research (Baldamus 1976). Mid-range theorizing, he thought, would always be a child of its times and so of passing interest. One should perhaps bear this in mind when rereading 'Time and theory in sociology', both because there was less mid-range theorizing then than there is now—not so much an index of a lack of progress as of the absence of a way of establishing whether there has been any—and because it assumes throughout that sociology, in the broadest sense, is an enterprise whose most basic problems deserve to be treated as those of a rigorous science and whose practitioners are all in their different ways engaged in a common, unending quest. Thus the failure, as Hermínio

saw it, of the various strands of anti- or post-functionalism to theorize time any better than functionalism itself did is seen nevertheless as a failure that deserves to be taken seriously. The social sciences were not, contrary to what Stanislaw Andreski was suggesting at the time (Andreski 1972), sorcery: 'sociology [...] is notoriously oriented to systematic concept and theory formation, to systematic type construction' (Martins 1974: 272).

'Time and theory in sociology', then, is not only about the success or failure of theory in its efforts to address the problem of temporality, it is also a survey of the state of theory more generally. The retrospective glance notices something about each: that the topic of time has been the object of relentless conceptual engagement from sociology, history and philosophy alike (Giddens 1986; Koselleck 2004; Oakeshott 1983; Pocock 1972; Ricoeur 1990) but that 'systematic type construction' has become something of an optional extra or an eccentric's hobby, innovations and dead ends leading one another a merry dance. By contrast, entire publishers' catalogues are devoted to books on research methods competing to be the one that all students use.

The first thing that strikes the reader today is the concern with 'the microscopic reaction' to functionalism (symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and ethnomethodology) and with '*inflationary cognitivism*', the latter at times abetting the former. 'Inflationary cognitivism' refers to movements in theory that address the growth of knowledge, the knowledge brought to bear by actors in everyday life, experimental psychology, in fact anything that attests to the fact that, as Robert Musil once put it, it is as cognitive animals, far more than as moral or ethical ones, that human beings are at their most creative and can claim to have made any progress (Musil 1979: 291). As for time, Hermínio observed that, however indebted it was to Mead, symbolic interactionism had little to say on it, ditto for ethnomethodology and Husserl. Indeed, despite the clear references to temporality in ethnomethodology's experiments with ad hocing, Norbert Elias had already called it sociology's 'retreat into the present' (Elias 1987). Elias himself would soon become part of what we might call the 'macroscopic restoration' that included the comparative historical sociology inspired by Barrington Moore and the social theory of capitalism and the modern state offered by Giddens (1971), Mann

(1986, 1993), Perry Anderson (1979) and others. Of these only Giddens took ethnomethodology or even Goffman seriously, and did so in order to fit them wherever they would go in his later theory of structuration, just as Jürgen Habermas included them in his *Theory of Communicative Action* (Habermas 1984, 1987). They could do this either because these cognitivist theories were seen as necessary building blocks in something more comprehensive or because they were already themselves theories of moral order and its maintenance. Hermínio appeared to miss this when stating that sociology lacked autonomous traditions of inquiry in morality, as well as in scientific knowledge and the study of technology. I think his point was this: if ethnomethodology was a theory of morality, it was such a theory by default, moral offence being generated among actors by a failure to play by the rules or conventions of cognition or, worse, by making those rules explicit.

Since then the makings of an autonomous tradition in the study of morality have appeared, Boltanski and Thévenot's work on repertoires of justification being a notable advance and having spawned a whole sub-tradition that goes beyond the political sociology of disputes in which it originated (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). Interestingly enough the specific sociology of morality has not been entirely at odds with a more general sociology, and indeed we may compare the special sociology-general sociology relationship with the one between general and special histories that loomed large in 1972: while special histories 'covered the field' and so put the idea of a 'general history' under considerable strain, they were easily captured by attendant sub-disciplines in neighbouring fields, thus art history draws on aesthetics as much as on historiography for its orientation, economic history on econometrics and so on. This sort of thing is generally celebrated as interdisciplinarity, yet for all its virtues one can see how the sense of a general project is easily diluted by the growth of special sub-fields and sub-themes. At any rate, if theorizing finds its way into the sociology's sub-specialisms, it tends to do so today as an initial mode of orientation, as often as not, set alongside whatever is available from neighbouring disciplines. This is reflected in the widespread attitude that sees theory, if it is still taught at all to undergraduates, as merely another branch of inquiry, something of a specialism in itself rather than the custodian of tradition and source of innovation. To be

sure, the degree of systematicity and indebtedness to a general sociology varies with each sub-domain: if political sociology relies on it more than the sociology of leisure, it is because classical general sociology was already political sociology of a sort; yet even in an apparently political area like nationalism, Gellner's framing of the phenomenon of nationalism within a general sociology of industrial society remains an exception, albeit an influential one (Gellner 1998). More often than not theorizing in sociology's numerous sub-fields follows the need for a decidedly in-house, tailor-made theory of X or Y, with the thought that there must be something more systematic on offer hovering in the background. And because the attack on functionalism spawned less a paradigm shift than a proliferation of more or less randomly generated theoretical schools, the more systematic or general sociology on offer is likely to be itself a partial version of what a general sociology might be: rational choice theory, field theory, critical realism, systems theory, network theory and so on are testaments to the way the discipline has abandoned the Parsonian synthesis without shedding the grandiosity of the claims made on behalf of it. The result is a curious intellectual landscape punctured increasingly by case studies that combine rigour with arbitrariness, as specific substantive topics that may or may not be of intrinsic interest are addressed from one theoretical perspective: hence one sees papers pursuing an actor-network theory of cosmopolitanism, a critical realist theory of environmentalism or a rational choice theory of religious conversion. The relationship between theory and research in such papers is less the arduous one that Wilhelm Baldamus called 'double fitting', in which a carpenter shapes the door to fit the frame but also the frame to fit the door (Baldamus 1972) than one of pouring new wine (the object of inquiry) into old bottles (the theory) or old wine into new bottles. The alternative to such theory-driven case studies is our old friend interdisciplinarity, but here one may observe a variation in the degree to which different social science disciplines are comfortable with it. The idea of interdisciplinarity in sociology runs up against the fact that for all its internal fractiousness, sociology has been defined by the promise of being one day the queen or king of the social sciences. The interdisciplinarity work that comes out of sociology can often seem meagre (the giveaway is always book blurbs beginning with 'drawing on insights from [...]') followed by a list of neighbouring

fields): the hard core theoretical work in anthropology, economics, philosophy, political science or art history appears sporadically, the borrowing coming more often than not from empirical studies in those areas; some disciplines, it seems, are simply more inter-disciplinary than others. History is a case in point, and as Max Weber long ago pointed out, the historian is forgiven a measure of conceptual sloppiness by the force of the narrative. Sociology, he thought, had no such luxury and had to define its terms in ways that made them of use beyond the particular case under investigation (Weber 1949). Today we may observe that, in contrast to the situation in 1974, precision in empirical research is provided less by concept formation than by attention to research methods. Indeed, the most notable feature of sociology in the last two decades has been the exponential growth of research methods books, to the point that publishers offer entire catalogues of them. In the UK this *inflationary methodicism* has fed into the undergraduate curriculum, with competence in methods, including quantitative methods, a more pressing requirement for the vocationally oriented student.

It is all the more ironic then that the retreat of theory in the strict and austere sense of it, or the fragmentation of that austere sense into rival, or peacefully co-existing theories that are all the more austere for being partial, has been accompanied in the last three decades by the increasing popularity of thinkers of a broadly sociological disposition bent on diagnosing the modern condition with an urgency last seen in the writings of the nineteenth-century sociological classics. *Inflationary substantivism* we might call it. Zygmunt Bauman, Ulrich Beck, Manuel Castells, Anthony Giddens (after his grand theory phase), Richard Sennett and others became global figures not by suggesting any new theoretical tools or by revolutionizing research methods but through a sort of extended essay laid over the top of a considerable body of empirical material gleaned from here, there and everywhere (Sennett 2009, 2013). The moral and political urgency of these writings, but also the ebb and flow of intellectual fashion, coupled with the global system of academic distinction, has made it difficult to assess their significance. In calling Castells' *The Rise of the Network Society* the *Economy and Society* of its day, Giddens missed the latter's origin as a handbook project to provide social scientists with the tools they needed to study any society at any historical period. The works

of today's heroes lack Weber's conceptual verve, but they do seem to be doing something akin to what Wright Mills thought sociology should do, asking large questions and offering theoretical propositions only if they are specific enough to inspire further work: semantics triumphs over syntax, as Mills thought it should. The conceptual apparatus of *Risk Society* may be less robust than that of Mary Douglas or Niklas Luhmann on the same topic (Douglas 1992; Luhmann 1993); Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust* may only scratch the surface of that monstrous subject, but by occupying the middle ground between conceptual and empirical and moving about in it rather more freely than mid-century middle range theorizing did, and by wearing their scholarship lightly, they command the field. For now.

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# Transhumanism's Fabian Backstory: A Companion to Martins' Later Work

Steve Fuller

I regard Hermínio Martins as a figure in sociology comparable to that of Jorge Luis Borges in literature. Both were quite remarkably prescient, even visionary, figures, whose ideas display an independence of judgement rarely seen in colleagues. Yet at the same time both were quite deeply 'bookish' creatures, not only in their having manifested a breadth of reading but also and more subtly in their having had their minds shaped by the experience of reading. Thus, the narrative flow of their texts reads more like a journey through a library than a targeted search for evidence in support of a hypothesis. This means that one can only get the full measure of what one has read of theirs after the fact—and sometimes it can take a while for it to sink in.

I do not consider myself a scholar of Martins' corpus. But then I do not believe that 'scholarship' is necessarily the best way to do justice to a thinker's work. Scholarship is for those with a taste for the dead, performers of obituaries, taxidermies and autopsies. The rich reward that such

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necrophiles continue to reap in the academy, especially in the humanities, speaks to the worst fears of the logical positivists. Unlike the original positivist, Auguste Comte, who produced a calendar of scientific saints for public consumption, Comte's Viennese descendants did not believe that 'standing on the shoulders of giants' provided the best image for charting the path of human progress. Rather, they advocated a never-ending process of laying conceptual and empirical foundations, whereby knowledge is regularly laundered of its historically contingent features, resulting in representations of reality that are universally accessible and, most importantly, testable.

I find such an astringent hermeneutic strategy to be the best way to approach Martins' superabundance of insights, which can verge on the insouciant manner of the *flâneur* taking a random walk through the literature. Specifically I will try to provide a more general and sociologically familiar framework for making sense of some key texts—most of which remain unpublished in English—that Martins composed in the last ten years of his life, in which he attempted to develop a sociology of human life for what he called the emerging 'technomarket world' and its broadly 'transhumanist' world-view.

In 'Firms, Markets, Technology: Biographies of a Technomarket World' (2013), a work that underwent several versions prior to his death, Martins treats the life cycle of the human as if it were a product life cycle, rather like the way human life is treated in the Fordist eugenic utopia satirized in *Brave New World*. This work follows in the footsteps of a remarkably prescient essay which appeared in 2007, 'Paths to the Posthuman' (published in English, but in a Portuguese journal). What makes the work prescient is its anticipation of the main themes and theorists of the transhumanist movement as it exists today, indeed, to such an extent that it makes these self-styled 'vanguardist' movements appear old.

To be sure, Martins does not clearly distinguish 'posthuman' and 'transhuman' as these terms are increasingly used nowadays—the former standing for a de-centring of the human as the locus of value in the world, the latter for an amplification of the very qualities that distinguish humans from the rest of the world (Fuller 2012: chap. 3). But it is clear that most of Martins' concerns are directed at the transhuman. As Martins

notes in his 2009 paper for the sesquicentennial of Darwin's *Origin of Species* ('Darwinism and the Social Sciences' (n.d.)), at the same time self-anointed 'Neo-Darwinists' such as Richard Dawkins and Daniel Dennett go well beyond modernist anti-clericalism to inveigh against religion *per se*, transhumanists—notwithstanding their own professions of faith in science and technology—appear to be re-purposing much of cutting-edge research in biology and biotechnology (not to mention information sciences and technology) to advance what, for all intents and purposes, is a secular religion with its own distinctive world-view and practices (e.g., digital immortality and physical resurrection).

My entry point into the sociological frame suitable for Martins' understanding of transhumanism is his own entry point into the 'Firms, Markets, Technology ...', namely, *sex* and *reproduction*, which he considers from a broadly political economy perspective. Sex and reproduction are increasingly detached from each other, which in turn alters the character of their relationship. Instead of being seen as two distinct functions performed by the same physical equipment or one function (sex) performed on behalf of the other function (reproduction), the two functions are performed increasingly separately and with different physical equipment, in each case involving either enhancement or replacement of the original equipment. One might regard this as extending the division of labour into human body itself, resulting in a virtualized sense of identity (ranging from 'dressing for a date' to an on-line avatar), as one may appear one way for purposes of sex and another way for purposes of reproduction. On the one hand, the increasingly polymorphous character of sex allows for what transhumanists call 'morphological freedom', which transhumanists have generalized from simply 'transgendering'—the sense which Martins had already picked up in 2007—to cover all manner of transformations, incarnations and virtualizations of the human being (Fuller 2016). On the other hand, reproduction is becoming more strategically targeted to specific interpretations and interventions of the genome. Moreover, as per market logic, both can be subjected to regimes of efficiency: sex becomes cheaper and more plentiful, while reproduction becomes more complicated if not more difficult, at least from the standpoint of the various decisions and associated hazards vis-à-vis the society hosting the new child.

It would be easy to understand this process as simply the latest and perhaps most invasive phase in capitalism's inexorable course of dehumanization. However, transhumanism complicates this Marxist narrative by its open embrace of what that narrative identifies as 'dehumanization'. Liberals criticize Marxists for overstating the existential damage caused by advanced capitalist societies, usually because they do not believe that the advancement of capitalism has such a large effect on human nature. Whatever harms are done along the way, liberals believe, are local and remediable. In contrast, transhumanists largely agree with the Marxists on the magnitude of the changes that are likely to be made to the human condition from overall efficiency gains, greater market penetration, accelerated production schedules and amplified consumer wants. But for the transhumanist, this is a formula for perfection, not enslavement. Recall that *Brave New World* comes across as satire only to the reader. Virtually all the characters in the novel, regardless of social position, think of themselves as living in utopia. The one clearly dysfunctional character, Bernard Marx, effectively suffers from a genetic defect and appears to his fellows as mentally unbalanced, whereas the Shakespeare-spouting John Savage, plucked from a residual 'unenhanced' human community, is regarded more sympathetically as a 'native' who has not been properly acculturated.

It turns out that *Brave New World's* author, Aldous Huxley, was inspired by his brother Julian, now remembered as the main UK architect of the Neo-Darwinian evolutionary synthesis but known in his day as a liberal eugenicist who, as UNESCO's first scientific director, issued the famed 1950 declaration on race as a social construction. Julian Huxley also coined 'transhumanism' and worked with religious leaders to foster an ecumenical 'evolutionary humanism' in the 1960s. Julian Huxley is a kind of 'missing link' between contemporary transhumanism and its proper political progenitor, Fabian socialism, which incorporated Francis Galton's eugenics programme into its long-term strategy to rationalize the human condition, so as to breed a society of what I have called 'natural-born liberals', that is, people with the capacity and desire to give more than they take, which has the happy consequence of increasing the size of their receipts (Fuller and Lipinska 2014: chap. 3). In effect, one's freedom is ideally exercised through the sort of risk-tak-

ing associated with entrepreneurship, not least in terms of the 'risks' involved in employing labour to produce goods which have yet to be proven in the market.<sup>1</sup> For the Fabians, very much in the mould of Saint-Simon and Comte, socialism is the policy of making capitalism altruistic.

Martins intuits that such a sensibility lies behind transhumanism in his 2007 coinage of 'species *Beruf*' to signify humanity's self-understanding as an animal driven by imperatives other than those that can be captured in cross-species empirical regularities or the genetic capacities that underwrite them. But what is the source of this 'vocation' of humanity as a species? When Max Weber—and Heidegger ten years later—appealed to *Beruf* in such a deep way, they were referring to Martin Luther's listening to the voice of God, which had led Luther to assert that he lived in a world—including his own church—whose *modus operandi* increased rather than mitigated the world's corruption. Galtonian eugenics was motivated similarly with regard to UK inheritance laws, in which society as a whole was impoverished by descendants benefitting in perpetuity from the strikingly good fortune of an ancestor. Such a suspicious attitude to the default settings of humanity presumes that until proven otherwise—say, by successive generations of achievement, Galton's case—we are defective, or beset by 'Original Sin', to recall Augustine's phrase for the inherited consequences of Adam's having forfeited his divine entitlement in the Garden of Eden.

To be sure, all the religions that take Genesis seriously—Judaism, Christianity, Islam—believe that some sort of redemption is possible from our fallen state. And all are equally clear that God takes the lead in the process. However, Christianity makes the most tempting offer because in the person of Jesus, God appears to redeem humanity by adopting human form. In this respect, 'altruism'—a word coined by Comte—aims to reinvent and perhaps even regularize this sensibility in society, regardless of divine approval. Julian Huxley, for his part, went one step further in his coinage of 'transhumanism', by which he meant that humans do not simply obey evolution but know what it is that they are obeying. This second-order form of knowledge imposes a normative burden on humanity to recognize and, as much as possible, remedy the deficiencies not only in our own natures but also nature as a whole. Were it not for the

legacy of Original Sin, it is unlikely that this licence for the wholesale transformation of material reality would be so easily granted by so many.

Nevertheless, in its most recent incarnation, more than a half-century after Huxley's coinage, transhumanism has presented itself as a libertarian movement. Its public relations high watermark was reached in Zoltan Istvan's 2016 US presidential campaign, which included a 'Transhumanist Bill of Rights', the headline-grabbing part of which was the 'right to live forever', but the bulk of which was about supporting 'morphological freedom' as an extension of the ordinary freedoms guaranteed by the US Bill of Rights. As of this writing Istvan is the Libertarian Party's candidate for next Governor of California. But beneath the rhetoric is an obligation not only for the state to promote research supportive of human self-improvement and self-transformation but also for citizens to embrace its fruits in their very being. Istvan's distinctive way of casting this matter is inspired by Pascal's Wager, as proposed in his award-winning science fiction novel, *The Transhumanist Wager*. Basically, if you find immortality desirable yet you do nothing about it in this life by promoting the relevant science and technology, then if God does not exist, you most certainly will not be immortal (Fuller 2017).

Between the 'wanting' and the 'requiring' to become immortal lies a Kantian sleight of hand whereby people 'under the guise of reason' embrace duty as desire. This is not libertarianism as normally understood: you are *not* free to refuse the greater freedoms promised by extended longevity. Martins astutely observed that the 'duty to improve' urged by transhumanists was present at the outset of eugenics, both in its technical and popular representations. Indeed, all that distinguished Francis Galton's original vanguardist mentality, which subsequently framed the Fabians' socialist imagination, from the Marx-inspired Leninists was the level of coercion and violence that the Leninists publicly licensed.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding the Soviet Union's notoriously disastrous Neo-Lamarckian agricultural policy known as 'Lysenkoism', which suggested that organisms improve by intelligently adapting to their environments, when it came to humans the Soviets were prone to sort the wheat from the chaff by a brutal selectionist process worthy of the most ruthless Darwinist, whereby failure to heed the call of the revolution resulted in trials and executions.

In contrast, Fabian vanguardism preferred a subtler transformative policy of education and propaganda, a long-term ideological war of attrition that would wear down opponents by acclimatizing them to the inevitability of the desired Fabian future. Social psychologists, following Leon Festinger, speak here of 'adaptive preference formation', the coming to want what one has already come to expect. The idea is that eventually political debate would be defined by the Fabian frame of reference rather than politicians adopting a particular Fabian position. For example, instead of debating whether eugenics should be permitted at all, with Fabians arguing the pro-side, politicians would deliberate over the sort of eugenics policy that should be adopted, implying that they all accepted the Fabian starting point or 'presumption', as the rhetoricians say. By the 1920s, this strategy had become so explicit that Fabian fellow-traveller HG Wells titled one of his books, *The Open Conspiracy*. And insofar as even religiously inspired policymakers nowadays argue about the time and conditions under which antenatal beings of human origins should be permitted to live or die—or, given biotechnology advances, be strategically altered—we have all become part of this 'conspiracy'.

There is a kind of victory that is achieved not by outright defeating the opponent but by shifting the terms of engagement so as to eliminate the possibility for opposition altogether. This is the Fabian Game.

Perhaps the most concrete evidence of the Fabian footprint lies in the existence of think-tanks as vehicles for influencing the direction of ideological travel. While these are often seen as aligned to particular political parties, on closer inspection they push agendas that tend to divide parties, at least in terms of priorities. The UK Fabian Society itself is a good case in point. It is normally seen as aligned to the Labour Party because of the Fabians' founding role in the party. However, over the years the Fabians have not refrained from criticizing official Labour Party policy or, for that matter, giving at least tacit acceptance to agendas pursued by other parties, especially when they wield some significant power. Indeed, the Fabian Society called on the Labour Party to adopt the tone and substance of David Cameron's uplifting 2015 Conservative Party conference speech in the face of the recent election of 'hard left' Jeremy Corbyn as Labour Party leader (Rynsard 2015).

In particular, the Fabians have been uncomfortable with the self-protective tendency of organized labour, which may serve to arrest the sort of ‘upward’ mobility of humans that the Fabians saw as necessitating a regular *re*-organization of labour, as more people passed from ‘blue’ (body-based) to ‘white’ (mind-based) collar work. That the epithet ‘technocrat’ has stuck to the Fabian legacy reflects its bottom line view of labour unions as necessary evils, whose ‘necessity’ rested in their capacity to organize the bulk of the population along common ‘interests’ as defined by common work and life conditions. This in turn made the people easier to govern—certainly much more than had the Fabians to deal with a mass of undifferentiated individuals, aka ‘the masses’. In effect, the Fabians struck a deal with the unions, granting them a *prima facie* right to chunk the population into administratively tractable units, which included nurturing the idea that eventually everyone would belong to some union or other. On this basis, the major labour unions have been able to deliver block votes and funding to the Labour Party, even though the party’s major political leaders have been closer to public intellectuals than shop stewards in spirit and demeanour. In this context, the figure of Keir Hardie, a labour organizer who later adopted Fabianism, does just the right public relations work as the official ‘founder’ of the Labour Party.

As for the ‘evil’ in this ‘necessary evil’ arrangement, it lay in the unions’ guild-based heritage, which harked back to a medieval conception of the intrinsic value of particular forms of work, regardless of their long-term efficiency or value to the larger society. The original virtue of the medieval guilds was that people organized to prevent themselves from being exploited for labour they were already providing that was necessary for the welfare of society. But of course, guild members did not anticipate that their own labour might be subject to technological replacement over time on grounds of greater efficiency and productivity. Indeed, when the guilds thought in more ‘progressive’ terms, they tended to see their specific skills as providing the vanguard of a future world order, as in the Masonic movement, which took the prospect of building a ‘Heaven on Earth’ as a literal albeit esoteric calling of the stone-mason trade. For the most part, however, the medieval guilds were designed to ensure a sense of social justice in a steady-state world, one where the intergenerational



transmission of a form of labour was taken to be the natural order of things. This mentality persisted well into the twentieth century, even as such mainstays of organized labour as coal mining and shipbuilding started to lose their economic relevance in the emerging post-industrial world.

The 'evil' represented by organized labour—the evil of stasis—provided the backdrop against which the Fabians foregrounded education—and the desirability of abandoning one's roots more generally—as the magic bullet to social progress. However, this ideology of 'aspirationalism' received serious pushback starting in the 1960s from the so-called New Left, which re-inscribed much of the original medieval guild sensibility, but now at the ontological level. During this period much of Marx's early 'humanist' (i.e., Hegel-inflected) writings were translated into English, resulting in a more rounded understanding of the founder of historical materialism. In particular, the New Left picked up on Marx's own residual medievalism, as expressed in his *Homo Faber* conception of what it means to be human. Thus, the term *praxis* came into vogue, which shifted the connotation of 'labour' from the instrumental to the existential. To threaten the coal mining industry was to threaten not simply a source of income but a way of life. That semantic shift signalled a schism within progressive academia, the long-term legacy of which has been the rise of 'cultural studies', which valorizes working class and other 'identities', not as stepping stones to some 'better' mode of being but as ends in themselves. From this standpoint, the Fabians' technocratic orientation appears cold and oppressive—and sometimes the subject of ridicule, as in Michael Young's 1958 work, *The Rise of the Meritocracy*. It is an image from which the movement has yet to recover, especially given its enthusiasm for globalization at the dusk of the twentieth century, which arguably reproduces its original enthusiasm for imperialism at the century's dawn.

At an intellectual level, the Fabians' most lasting legacy has been a strongly economic approach to welfare policy that regards the human being as investable capital, whose return to society can be monitored and regulated at various points in the life cycle ('cradle to grave'), from sex education, family planning and healthcare provision to educational testing, vocational training and employment tracking to income redistribution, pension entitlement and, finally, inheritance taxation. Indeed, the

extension of the term 'capital' to cover humans was due to a leading US progressive intellectual and Fabian fellow-traveller, the Yale economist Irving Fisher (1867–1947).

The significance of 'human capital' as an innovation, which has yet to be fully assimilated even with economics, cannot be underestimated. Among the many ways in which so-called neo-classical economics broke with classical political economy (including Marx) was to problematize the medieval custom of treating humans (aka 'labour') as a distinct variable in the production function. Instead humans have come to be increasingly seen as spread across all the variables of the production function—land, labour and capital—alongside other modes of what might be called 'embodied productivity'. Most obviously, the value of human capital can decline as technology can more efficiently replace human labour. This then places humans on an educational treadmill to replenish their degrading capital (aka 'running to stay in place'). But to compensate for such potential losses in human value, the same neo-classical economics also stresses the value of entrepreneurship as a uniquely productive form of labour for its ability to create new markets. In addition, there are even opportunities for new forms of rent as 'intellectual property', an area of the law which extends to an increasing range of mental products and perhaps ultimately even to the brains and bodies that produced them.

Fisher saw all these matters very much in a eugenics frame, one which takes the relationship between 'raising children' and 'raising crops' literally, not metaphorically. Here it is worth recalling that classical political economy, which continues to set the default normative sensibilities of modern economics, began with considerations on how to maintain productivity in the face of declining material resources, specifically the degradation of the land from overuse. This was already a problem by the late eighteenth century, and Thomas Malthus and David Ricardo disagreed over whether we will simply need to live within our means or, instead, endeavour to replace those depleting resources with something of our own creation. Ricardo adopted the latter position, thereby intellectually licensing the transition to a fully industrial society. And while Ricardo granted creative powers to humanity as a species in its battle against the limits imposed by nature, his economics justified the further degradation

and exploitation of the vast majority of human labourers in the process. Marx saw revolutionary potential in this sort of hypocrisy, but the Fabians saw grounds for those already on top to raise through 'public administration' those still on the bottom so as to increase the overall stock of human capital and thereby hasten the Ricardian programme.

In this respect, eugenics and education would be simply complementary ways of dealing with the same problem as part of the same political package. After all, as states required students to attend schools that taught them things that their parents might not know or even disavow, why not extend this policy to cover the 'training' of the bodies of these students? Here it is worth recalling that 'biology' as the name of an academic discipline is not really in currency until the early twentieth century. Prior to that time, it was the name of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's specific evolution-based attempt to set natural history on a scientific basis (compare what 'sociology' meant for Comte and, say, Durkheim). In this respect, eugenics predates our modern understanding of biology. The field was seen both by its founder, Francis Galton and Fisher, as a branch of political economy—a point that is made abundantly clear in Irving's international best-seller, *How to Live*, perhaps the first popular book to promote 'life extension' under that name (Fisher and Fisk 1915). For his part, Fisher publicly advocated policies that he believed would maintain or improve the stock of human capital, including prohibition on alcohol and cigarettes in the 1920s, notwithstanding their palpable benefits to the economy in terms of the revenues that had been generated by spontaneous consumption patterns. This sense of 'austerity', which in our more permissive environment results in 'sin taxes', served to make Fisher one of the fiercest critics of Keynes' pro-consumptionist policies in the 1930s.

Fisher's animus was related to his substantive research focus, the theory of economic interest (Fisher 1930). His innovation was to interpret 'interest' in terms of the borrower paying for a desired future to be realized more quickly—a variable he called 'impatience'—through the currency of opportunities, which is related to expected future income. People routinely decide that they want something so much now that they are willing to undergo a payment regime that restricts their capacity to realize their wants in the future. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Fisher dedicates his major work in this field to Eugen Böhm-Bawerk, who had expressed

scepticism that workers who take wages upfront for what they produce then deserve to share in whatever profits—or, for that matter, liabilities—that result. In today's behavioural economics, this phenomenon is discussed in terms of 'intertemporal choice' (Frederick et al. 2002). But Irving's conception of interest may be also understood more sociologically as reflecting the need to insure the rest of society from the worst unintended consequences of allowing the borrower to live beyond his or her own means. Thus, interest rates should be set low when people are not taking enough risks, but they should be set high when they are taking too many risks. But in any case, Fisher believed that banks had to set the benchmark of fiscal responsibility by ensuring that depositors can always withdraw their funds, regardless of the state of the economy. This topic tends to arise nowadays in terms of policy proposals to break up banks so that their consumer and investment services are regulated differently.

Nowadays talk of 'human capital' is associated with neo-liberalism. But this is less surprising than it may first seem if we focus on the Fabians' 'patient' long-term political vision, especially when contrasted with the Leninists' more impatient brand of socialism. Fabians evolved into neo-liberals as they became persuaded by arguments—most famously from the classical liberal, Ludwig Mises—that the high levels of productivity which made capitalism such an engine of economic growth would be stifled by concentrating information flow in a 'central planner', the policy of the Soviet Union, which was beginning to look to many in the 1920s as 'the shape of things to come', to recall an old HG Wells title. The basic intuition against the central planner is that market agents spontaneously transmit information about their goods in order to secure trade, resulting in 'prices', which are themselves better understood as probes in an ongoing process than non-negotiable facts. While there is still a role for the state in this picture, it is limited to enabling the price mechanism to operate as smoothly as possible, what neo-liberals, following Ronald Coase, call 'minimizing transaction costs' (Coase 1988: chap. 5).

The relevant sense of 'social justice' that applies in this regime is the maximization of interactive freedom. It is the source of the association—less clear in Popper himself than in his admirers—of the 'free market' and the 'open society'. In the first instance, such a sense of justice requires legislation to make transactions transparent. Coase thought about this

matter as literally an exercise in moral bookkeeping, whereby every transaction produces benefits and harms for both parties, especially if opportunity costs are included. For example, one might think that the most straightforward way to deal with the harms caused by industrial pollution would be to stop the polluters altogether. And while Coase might recommend such a course of action in some cases, it would be due to the relatively small overall 'social cost' that would be incurred from the polluter shifting to a cleaner mode of production. However, simply stopping the pollution may be economically prohibitive, not only to the polluter but also, if the polluter is large enough, to the society as a whole. In that case, the law may negotiate a settlement whereby, say, the polluted parties accept compensation, and/or the polluting parties are required to transition into an ecologically sounder mode of production without stopping their operations altogether in the interim.

But equally, and more controversially, accounting for transaction costs requires monitoring the concentration and transmission of capital, insofar as unrestricted capital accumulation might create information bottlenecks in the market just as bad as the ones allegedly created by the hypothetical central planner. However, as we have just seen, this need not be the case, since larger firms, while perhaps more liable to damages, also enjoy greater flexibility with regard to how they manage those damages so that society as a whole ultimately benefits. In this context, Coase's defence of the 'firm' as a corporate entity which emerges through the pooling of functionalities—say, in the supply chain—to minimize transaction costs and allow 'economies of scale' has played a strategic role in the history of advanced capitalism (Coase 1988: chap. 2). This sort of economic justification of the firm allows for the existence of monopolies in business that would be denied to the state vis-à-vis politics. This is because firms tell their histories as occurring bottom-up rather than top-down, unlike the state. Readers can judge for themselves whether this difference amounts to anything more than cosmetic rhetoric.

Similarly important in the Fabian conversion to neo-liberalism was the prospect that whatever short-term successes the Soviet experiment might have achieved in terms of, say, breaking aristocratic control over property arrangements would at best stabilize the lives of the poor without any long-term assurance of overall economic growth. However,

in the volatile business environment of the 1920s, which eventuated in the Great Depression, the Soviet option was widely seen as a reasonably attractive scenario, one that was often accompanied in the West by calls to slow if not halt the advance of science and technology, which was seen as having been instrumental in the making the world less secure. Although there was little evidence that the Soviet Union itself would put an end to science and technology, some Fabians feared that its brand of socialism could well destroy all the incentives to capitalist productivity on which the Fabian vision had been predicated. Among those who defected from Fabianism on just those grounds was another scourge of Keynes, the famed Lionel Robbins, who turned the London School of Economics into a world leader in economics (not least by hiring Friedrich Hayek) and later chaired the commission which led to the creation of new UK universities in the 1960s, including my own, Warwick.

Robbins and other Fabian defectors formed an international club, the Mont Pèlerin Society, which starting in the late 1930s began to seed what by the late 1970s had become the 'neo-liberal revolution' associated with Ronald Reagan in the USA and Margaret Thatcher in the UK, but the ultimate political beneficiaries of which were the left-leaning politicians Bill Clinton and Tony Blair, the latter sufficiently self-conscious to burnish his own Fabian credentials in the process (cf. Mirowski and Plehwe 2009). Coase hints at an interesting story yet to be told of Robbins' role in harmonizing the LSE-Chicago view of freedom and capital, which enabled him, Hayek and others to transit between the two institutions which trained the leaders of the neo-liberal revolution (Coase 1994: chap. 15). In the end, neo-liberalism decisively shifted the role of the state from being the front-line producer to the second-order regulator in the manufacture of public goods. In practice, this meant that the cultivation of human capital associated with healthcare and education was outsourced to markets, subject to terms of engagement set by government, who remained the principal purchaser of their goods. The ultimate aim here—albeit fitfully realized in practice—was to reinvent the state in 'leaner and meaner' form, which is say, subject to the same market-based strictures on efficiency ('doing more with less').

What tends to be overlooked is that this shift in the state's role actually corresponds to the original Fabian attitude towards politics, which was to adopt a second-order position of exerting power through the promulgation of ideas, which ideally would shape the forums in which decisions were taken and actions followed. They regarded this *modus operandi* as much more efficient, especially given the virtualized means that technologies since the printing press had allowed people to affect each other. From the Fabian standpoint, the canonical Marxist strategy of personal conversion at the workplace was an atavism from more religious times that did not allow the flexibility that was needed for a world in which the exact direction of travel is always bound to change. In this respect, the self-identification of the Fabian movement with 'Progressivism' should be understood, in the first instance, as an affirmation of dynamism, which it took to be at the core of capitalism—and which socialism denied at its peril.

It is here that Fabianism ultimately makes common cause with contemporary transhumanism, whose core idea of 'morphological freedom' represents the ultimate extension of human capital as 'capital' in exactly the sense that Marx found at once so fascinating and so frightening—namely, as informed matter subject to an indefinite range of protean transformations. This helps to explain the affinity of transhumanism and libertarianism, as well as why in his 2016 bid to become US President, Zoltan Istvan did not call for the US government to invest heavily in life extension technologies as such, but only as part of a rollback of US overseas military commitments. Indeed, he envisaged that this would result in a shrinkage in federal expenditure overall. But at least as important, he called for the removal of restrictions on such technologies being developed by public and private sector players—including universities, which are now subject to (arguably) onerous research ethics codes. He imagined that an end to such restrictions would unleash a cornucopia of innovations that, notwithstanding their attendant risks, would be broadly embraced by society. Because Istvan has never got anywhere near power, his claims remain simply hypothetical predictions. However, were he to achieve elected office, these claims would turn into imperatives—and here the Fabians would provide a source of both inspiration and concern.

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## Notes

1. This was the context in which the late nineteenth-century Austrian finance minister Eugen Böhm-Bawerk had argued against Marx’s conception of surplus value from labour: the workers get paid even if the entrepreneur goes bankrupt, so the entrepreneur is ‘always already’ helping them.
2. Of course, one might regard such classic eugenic policies as contraception, abortion and sterilization as ‘coercive’ and ‘violent’, but they were generally not publicly represented as such at the time.

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# Liminal Contexts and Critical Insights: The Cases of McLuhan and Debray

Peter McMylor

*Environments are invisible. Their ground rules, pervasive structure, and overall patterns elude easy perception.*

*Marshall McLuhan in *The Medium is the Massage*, 1967*

*'truth is self-sufficient, the collective by its nature is not, so it needs a guarantor outside itself.'*

*Régis Debray *The Critique of Political Reason*, 1983*

*McLuhan, surprisingly enough to someone who has become the prime techno-prophet of the twentieth century distrusted (often despised) technology. In 1950 he did not own an automobile or a vacuum cleaner and throughout his life he avoided driving a car and usually initially resisted adopting new technologies when they first appeared.*

*Donald F. Theall, *The Virtual Marshall McLuhan*,*

*[We witness a] new careerist intelligentsia, created by, and dependent on, a centralised network of editors, producers, and presenters—a hired network which is socially and politically authoritative because of the facts of ownership and control of distribution—it is there—now in command.*

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J. E. Castro et al. (eds.), *Time, Science and the Critique of Technological Reason*,  
St Antony's Series, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71519-3\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71519-3_13)

*Raymond Williams, New Society, 1981 (Review of Debray)  
I was in prison when I began to reflect on the phenomenon of politics towards  
the middle of 1967, some 10 years after my first acts of political  
'commitment'.*

*Régis Debray, The Critique of Political Reason (1983)*

*Evgeny Morozov@evgenymorozov*

*The Gramsci Test (a sequel to Turing): is the news you are reading made by a  
Russian robot or a mere organic intellectual of the bourgeoisie?*

*4:57 PM—25 Nov 2016*

*2 replies 165 retweets 237 likes*

*instead of scurrying into a corner and wailing about what media are doing  
to us, one should charge straight ahead and kick them in the electrodes.*

*Marshall McLuhan*

Hermínio Martins suggested, in perhaps a somewhat apocalyptic mood, that we might now inaugurate a new periodization of world history in terms of ‘BS and AS’ as in Before and After Shannon in honour of Claude Shannon the founder of communications theory and hence of the ‘informational galaxy’ in which we live (Martins 2005: 166). What is most remarkable about the supposed new age is how recent it is—Shannon’s key paper was published in 1948. Thus, we can truly argue, if only for this reason (surely there are others), that we are living through a liminal period. The significance of the new digital information systems is now obvious; however, I want to suggest that cultural and social scientific intellectuals were relatively slow to note and to engage with these phenomena. The reasons for this are fairly obvious when we consider the social environment that these intellectuals operate within. In essence if you teach, write or even research in a university, or teach in a school, you for the most part, operate in what, to use the language of one of the figures I will discuss below, is still a Gutenberg world. Yes, universities and schools have computers, often lots of them, and yes much of the information they make use of is in a digital form, but for the most part these are supplementary and convenient elements that allow the teacher/researcher to carry on much as before. Students read texts, often in digital form, but these forms are closely tied to the forms of a printed book or journal article. Students produce written exams or assessed essays for the most

part, and these documents are often still paper, or, again, if not physically paper, are closely modelled on the paper form. The oral and the pictorial remain secondary elements when placed alongside the texts of words and numbers, so that students know full well that it is their deployment of these traditional elements that will determine academic success or failure. Academics for the most part produce papers for journals that are no doubt digitised but in a form in 2017 that would be recognised, for the most part, by a scholar from 1957.

Such an environment, especially before the mid-1990s and the advent of the internet, was hardly likely to produce sensibilities attuned to the impact of information theory and the new mediated environment which from the 1960s onwards was initially dominated by visual communication in the form of television and continues via the wired interfaces of our multiple screens.

However, some figures did sense that something vital was happening and it is surely worth trying to understand what might predispose, those I will term broadly, critical intellectuals,<sup>1</sup> to the possession of insight and sensitivity towards these new conditions. The argument presented here, as a modest contribution to the sociology of knowledge, is that it is a specific sensitivity to liminal conditions—both biographical and social—that provide a crucial context for such awareness. The conceptual basis for this approach is to be found in the work of the Hungarian sociologist Arpad Szakolczai.

Szakolczai is the author of several interrelated volumes that work through some of the issues concerning the sources of intellectual creativity and ‘prophetic’ insight via the exploration of the intellectual lives of several key social theorists. These volumes are *Max Weber and Michel Foucault: Parallel life-works* (1998a), *Reflexive Historical Sociology* (2000) and *The Genesis of Modernity* (2003). His project concerns the development of a reflexive historical sociology (see also 1998b) for crucially he seeks to explore the social and biographical conditions out of which significant ‘visionary’ insights into the historically conditioned nature of modernity are gained via conceptual breakthroughs which occur within the scholarly working lives of particular social theorists (Szakolczai 1998a, b). At its heart, this project proposes a close fit between the life and thought of the thinker conceptualised as ‘life-works’.

These volumes then defiantly restate the overwhelming significance of the theorist for the theory produced. They cover in some detail a wide range of thinkers, in addition to lengthy engagement with Weber and Foucault, who, along with Eric Voegelin, have pride of place in the work. The others are Norbert Elias, Lewis Mumford and Franz Borkenau who are discussed mainly in Szakolczai (2000). Weber and Foucault are of course discussed in detail (1998a), but two of their works are considered exemplary by Szakolczai, *The Protestant Ethic* and *Discipline and Punish* have chapters devoted to them in the *Reflexive Historical Sociology* volume (2000), whilst in *The Genius of Modernity* volume (2003) a third of the book is devoted to the main three figures—Weber, Foucault and Voegelin.

The purpose of these works can be understood as attempting to provide useful tools for assisting the emergence of a framework for exploring the nature and significance of the intellectual's role: the key reflexive dimension in intellectual practice, the links of this practice to the moral/spiritual/political resources that they draw upon, as well as their potential as incubators for social and institutional innovation (see my earlier discussion in McMylor 2005).

It will be helpful now to say something more about the method underlying Szakolczai's approach and the conception of a reflexive historical sociology that it embodies. On the face of it, this could be seen to be one more claim for the need for interdisciplinary research. However, Szakolczai means something rather more specific than this, rather he describes reflexive historical sociology as a discursive formation, 'not a synthesis of sociology, philosophy and history but a special "figuration" fulfilling a series of conditions.'<sup>2</sup> It has a concrete, empirical and experiential footing in contemporary life, avoiding both mere philosophical speculation and copy of the natural sciences' (1998a: 15). How then is this ambition to be accomplished?

At its centre is a renewed emphasis on the topic of the intellectual life experience of a scholar. This exploration is carried forward by bringing together a range of approaches based on a combination of philosophical, sociological and, very strikingly, anthropological approaches to the biographical information available about a particular scholar/intellectual. Key inspirations for this approach come from a variety of sources, apart from the work of the theorists who are themselves objects of analysis such

as Foucault and Voegelin, they also include the pioneering work of Pierre Hadot (2002) on the spiritual disciplinary practices of ancient Greek philosophers, but, perhaps most significantly, the work of the anthropologist Victor Turner who put the conception of an anthropology of experience at the centre of his work (Turner 1985).

Szakolczai takes from Turner a sense of how he might begin to treat the life of a modern social thinker in a similar manner to the way in which Turner attempted to capture the marks of 'lived experience' within anthropological accounts and findings.

The centrally important concept that Szakolczai takes from Turner's work is the significance in the life of the social actor/intellectual of liminality and liminal experiences—although Szakolczai views the liminal in a much broader context than is conventionally the case in anthropological work and imbues it with much greater significance as an absolutely central concept for understanding modernity (see Szakolczai 2000: 215–226). Indeed, in Szakolczai's account one of the defining features of modernity is that it is caught up in a kind of 'permanent liminality' engaged in endless transitioning, permanently malleable and uncertain, and this can be seen to add a particular pathos and difficulty to the account of prophetic intellectuals (Szakolczai 2000: 215–226). However, in Turner's thought and analysis, the liminal is closely connected to the processes of rites of passage that were involved in the transformation of the social standing and the self-interpretation of those undergoing the process (Turner is, of course, following the classic account in Van Gennep (1960)). This process famously involves three phases: the rite of separation, the rite of transition and thirdly, the rite of incorporation or return and reacceptance. Now for both Szakolczai and Turner, it is the middle phase which is viewed as most significant because the rite of transition is also the point at which the element of liminality is most acute, it is the period of uncertainty, undefined potentiality and the point at which transformation should occur, the point at which you should move from one status to another, say from child to adult. Now within the context of modernity, the application of this model to the lives of the prophetic theorists he is concerned with takes on some very distinctive features, but the model itself needs to be understood in its original anthropological setting if it is to be applied in the context of, as we have noted, a modernity that he

plausibly characterises as one of permanent liminality. It is instructive therefore to see how Szakolczai understands the implications of this anthropological model in such a context. The following quotation gives some interesting insight for as he puts it:

[R]ites of passage offer a conceptual framework combining the dislocation of social structure (socio-political level) and loss of identity (personal level). However the situation is potentially explosive; therefore the period of suspension was strictly limited in time and place and was guided by special 'masters of ceremonies'. Once the ritual was performed, the state of suspension (an equivalent of a 'state of emergency' in modern states) was over, the structural and normative characteristics of order were restored, and everything returned to the same, except for some individuals changing their place within the order, and also their very mode of being. (Szakolczai 1998a: 23)

It is obvious that there are difficulties in applying this model to those living within modern social arrangements. One clear problem, perhaps especially when trying to link this kind of analysis to contemporary scholars or intellectuals, is the apparent absence of visible and widely socially acknowledged rites of passage within modernity. However, Szakolczai plausibly argues that if you look at the details of the biographies of scholars and thinkers, you can, in fact, find analogous aspects that can be understood in a similar manner to the liminal situations that Turner explores (Szakolczai 1998a: 25). Indeed, he suggests that perhaps even that quintessentially modern document the *curriculum vitae* may contain, at least in outline, some of the key information we would need for this kind of exploration, even though in modernity our rather formal processes for the assessment of careers tends to neglect the reality of the vital experiential and emotional aspects of a person's life and career (Szakolczai 2000: 6). So that what in fact we have to hand, at least in outline in a *curriculum vitae*, are details that correspond to the aspects of the personal initiation into a scholarly or literary profession such as timings of appointments, publications, and promotions. Detailed biographical work is of course necessary to make real sense of these issues, and it is not surprising that Szakolczai's most detailed biographical work on the

parallel lives of Weber and Foucault is his most persuasive account where the details of the scholarly lives are presented in rich detail, the crucial liminal moments are explored and the categories of explanation take on real meaning from their application. Central to this is the exploration of childhood schooling and the university experience of the thinker for the details of liminal crisis and the processes of self-understanding and reflexive identity reconstruction. As we turn to our case studies of McLuhan and Debray, we will see that many of the key elements are present for the proposed analysis.<sup>3</sup>

## Marshall McLuhan

Herbert Marshall McLuhan was born in 1911, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, but grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba, when the family moved there whilst he was a small child. This change of location was of some significance for Marshall and perhaps especially more for his mother, Elsie—a moving spirit in his life with whom he had an intense relationship—for whom the more cosmopolitan and culturally sophisticated city, Winnipeg, meant a great improvement in the quality of her life. Marshall attended the University of Manitoba switching from the engineering course he did for a year largely at his father's behest to the much more congenial Arts programme. This proved very successful for he won the University Gold Medal for arts and sciences. Whilst at school Marshall seems to have developed a tremendous passion for English literature and for reading generally and also a tremendous love of language that seems to have been fostered by his mother who spent some of her time as a travelling elocution teacher. He was famous throughout his life for his tremendous verbal dexterity and his ability to speak in almost perfect sentences that could be transcribed, ready to be published. It rapidly became obvious that he would pursue an academic career, and he took an MA at Manitoba in the year immediately following his BA programme and then looked after a short visit to England to pursue postgraduate study at the University of Cambridge in 1934, although he first had to complete another BA at Cambridge to qualify for postgraduate work. Here he seems to have really blossomed as he encountered some of the



more sophisticated versions of the literary criticism available in the English-speaking world in the form of the New Criticism, being taught by I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis. Both Richards and Leavis were significant influences on McLuhan's later work. Leavis in particular encouraged through his example a careful but very critical attitude towards popular culture in works like *Culture and Environment* (1933) which may seem, by today standards, disdainful, nonetheless meant taking the broader cultural milieu seriously. It was also in Cambridge, in the early 1930s, that he encountered G.K. Chesterton's work which he read avidly and which seems to have been a powerful influence on his final conversion to Catholicism in 1937. There can be little doubt that Chesterton's love of paradox and humour as a tool in the analysis of modernity also had a powerful and long-lasting effect on McLuhan.

The social and national context of McLuhan's upbringing is crucial for understanding the conditions of McLuhan's distinctive insights. The Canadian prairie context in the first half of the twentieth century is highly liminal. Canada is caught between two Empires—in a sense, three if you recall the significance and long-term impact of French settlement—it is part of the British Empire, so in one sense can see itself as privileged but also marginal in the British Imperial system, indeed, doubly so because to the south is the growing power of the United States. This latter issue will grow in significance throughout McLuhan's life.<sup>4</sup> Added to this is the marginal status of his home city of Winnipeg compared with Toronto or Montreal.

In 1936 McLuhan returned to North America and took a position as a teaching assistant at the University of Wisconsin in the United States. In certain respects this was a quite crucial experience for McLuhan given that it was his first direct contact with the culture of the United States. His prior experience in Canada and in Britain had not prepared him for the very different world lived by his new American students. He noted later the extraordinary cultural difference that existed between Canada and the United States at this time when he said, 'most Canadians regard Americans as an underprivileged and even inferior group socially and politically [...] I grew up that way. When I arrived at [...] Wisconsin I found that there was probably more culture in that town of Madison than in the whole of Canada. I had to jettison my views of the United

States [and] do it in a hurry' (Marchand 1998: 49). However, there is little doubt that McLuhan found his new students a challenge, and he broke down barriers of understanding between him and them by getting them to use literary critical tools to examine examples of popular culture, looking at adverts, newspapers and popular fiction. In retrospect, it is clear, but this was a crucial liminal moment for McLuhan (his first direct teaching responsibility and in an alien environment), evidently he learnt a good deal from this encounter with US popular culture, and this meant that he was unlikely to remain within the bounds of a narrow literary curriculum in his future work.

In 1937 McLuhan gains a permanent post at the Catholic University of St. Louis, during that same year he took the step of converting to Catholicism—something tempting him for some time despite some family opposition, particularly from his mother. Two years later in 1939 McLuhan marries Corinne Keller Lewis, and the couple embark for England when McLuhan will complete his PhD at Cambridge on the Elizabethan writer Thomas Nashe—which was significantly titled (when finally published) *The Classical Trivium: The Place of Thomas Nashe in the Learning of His Time* and emphasised the broadest possible range of intellectual influence in the formation of its subject with special reference to the educational context of the late mediaeval and early modern university (see McLuhan 2005).

McLuhan did not wish to remain in the United States, especially once it entered the war, and he sought to return to Canada—his war work was essentially teaching the writing of reports to soldiers, and he had no appetite to be drafted as a soldier himself. In 1944 he became head of English at Assumption College in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Then in 1946 he made the move to Toronto, to join the faculty of St. Michael's College, a constituent part of the University of Toronto—it was here that McLuhan was to find his real intellectual home and he stayed in this University for the rest of his academic career.

It is at this point that the cultural matrix that produces the phenomenon 'Marshall McLuhan' becomes fully visible. Biographically, we can see in the cultural processes at work the following: the emergence of the young man from the prairies of Canada—he, like Harold Innis (the communications theorist), had a tremendous sense of the significance of space and

distance, from a family with a mother obsessed with language, who finds in her son an equal preoccupation—and then the exposure to a rich literary education and the encounter with the New Criticism at Cambridge. This was a Cambridge that represented to this Canadian a cultural taproot to his own far-flung home: a centre of Empire. Added to this is the double process of displacement and separation that happened to McLuhan: the temporary post teaching in the United States in between the focussed periods in Cambridge in which he undergoes a religious conversion, mediated by the intense encounter with Chesterton and the intellectual encounters with Richards and Leavis. All these elements are powerful and propitious, but without the context of the University of Toronto and its extraordinary potential—at this particular moment—for intellectual collaboration, it is hard to imagine McLuhan's work becoming the force that it would. In essence what we have is the phenomenon perhaps rather misleadingly called the Toronto School of communication theory—which is taken to include Harold Innis, Northrop Frye, Ted Carpenter, Eric Havelock and, of course, McLuhan. The term 'school' seems rather misleading because, especially in the case of Frye, they by no means agreed with McLuhan's theories. However, it is really striking that the University of Toronto should at that point have within its ranks such significant scholars preoccupied with issues of communication and, more generally, issues around technology, and we could certainly add to this already formidable list the name of George Grant, the main articulator of Canadian-English nationalism in the face of the United States (Grant 1965, 1969).<sup>5</sup> These interconnections are both institutionalised and symbolised by McLuhan's creation in 1953—on receipt of a substantial Ford Foundation grant of \$44,250, worth something in the region of half a million dollars at today's value—of his influential communication and culture seminars which he jointly ran with Ted Carpenter from the Anthropology Department.

This funding and the recognition that went with it was in part a response to McLuhan's first substantial publication outside of conventional literary criticism. This was the remarkable pioneering text, *The Mechanical Bride*, published in 1951. This book which he had been planning for many years, collecting file upon file of clippings from newspapers and advertisements, is a powerful and unconventional account of popular culture developed by explored the effects of the image within

commercial culture. In a sense this book is only the beginning of McLuhan's original contribution because the 1950s sees a tremendous explosion in McLuhan's range and application of ideas about communication and culture. This was marked by a moving away from the content—which had still been the focus of the *Mechanical Bride* book—to look at the form and media of communication itself. These ideas crystallise in his two most famous books *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) and *Understanding Media* (1964).

Although published closely together, these works are by no means identical in approach. *The Gutenberg Galaxy* which essentially argues that the modern educated mind is fundamentally conditioned by the nature of print in the form of the published book is, despite its scope, more focussed than *Understanding Media*, with its revealing subtitle, 'the extensions of man', which extends the whole conception of media to include: clothes, housing, money, and roads, so that McLuhan sees all modern technologies as extensions of the human sensorium. These books, clearly understood or not—one suspects the latter—established a global reputation once and for all. To mark this, the University of Toronto formally set up McLuhan the *Centre for Culture and Technology* which was to be his base of operations for the next 15 or more years. McLuhan became a star and McLuhanism, a kind of fashionable cult with his advocates and, of course, his detractors. Intellectually and internationally we can see his status when one notes that when in 1970 Fontana Press published its first ten *Fontana Modern Masters* books McLuhan was there along with Che Guevara, Herbert Marcuse and Frantz Fanon (Miller 1970). His famous aphorisms such as 'the global village' and 'the medium is the message' including its characteristic punning but perceptive reworking as 'the medium is the massage' did what they were designed to do in a culture of mass electronic communication, that is, put the message into a sound bite so they can stand a chance of gaining a hearing in the cacophony that McLuhan saw around him. For it is crucial to recognise that despite his style and self-presentation, McLuhan was very far from a celebrator of the technological. He deployed the tricks of the satirist and the trickster to find a way to deal with a world he in many ways disliked (D. Theall). He was much taken by the Gnosticism thesis set out by Eric Voegelin in 1952 (Voegelin 1952) and extended by Hermínio Martins in respect of

technology (Martins 1993).<sup>6</sup> His famous deployment of the image of maelstrom from the Edgar Allen Poe story in which a sailor finds a tactic to survive the maelstrom—the quiet eye at the centre of the whirlpool—is at the heart of his project.<sup>7</sup> He is an analyst of ‘permanent liminality’.

## Régis Debray

Debray was born in Paris on the 2 September 1940.<sup>8</sup> He was born into a comfortable middle-class family. His parents were lawyers, generally on the right of this political spectrum, but significantly his mother had been active in the Resistance. Debray did well at school and won at the age of 16 a distinguished national prize in philosophy—the *Concours Général*. Debray was thus born into the confident educational centre of French life—which, of course, thanks to Bourdieu’s classic work is well understood as having enormous significance for future possibilities for any French student. It is no surprise that he went on to study at Lycée Louis-le-Grand and then on almost inevitably for this talented philosophy student, to the Ecole Normale Supérieure. However, there is rather more to this story of childhood and academic success, for Debray also became a political rebel during this period. He was profoundly affected by the colonial war in Algeria. His parents were generally supportive of the French State’s position, but Régis was furious at what was happening and seemed to engage in some personal rebellion, including at some point refusing to sleep anywhere except on the floor in protest. It is clear that a crisis of the French colonial state was also a crisis in Debray’s personal and political formation, and he had little contact with his parents for two decades. At the Ecole he encountered a crucial figure in his life, first as a teacher and then as a lifelong friend: Louis Althusser<sup>9</sup> (Althusser 1993). Despite its elite status, the Ecole had a long left-wing tradition and it seems Althusser’s Marxism had a lasting influence even if Debray’s Marxism become more and more heterodox. It is therefore no surprise that he experienced entering the Ecole as a kind of homecoming. He stated that ‘we jumped into the Promised land with both feet. We have been floundering around for so long that we had barely crossed the threshold when we felt utterly at home’ (quoted in Reid 1992: 843).

In 1959, at the age of 19, Debray visited America—which seems not to have impressed him—and returned to France via a stay in Cuba, shortly after Castro's forces had come to power. He returned to Cuba in 1961 and met Castro and seems to have established good relations with the revolutionary leadership. In 1963 he went on a long tour in Latin America visiting guerrilla camps where he ostensibly acted as a journalist but probably in reality was as an unofficial representative of the Cuban leadership. After returning to France for a period which allowed him to take his final Philosophy exam (*agrégation*), Debray return to Cuba in 1965 ostensibly to take up a university lectureship at the University of Havana in philosophy, but in reality he went to observe and train in the revolutionary guerrilla camps that had been established on the island. It's also in 1965 that Debray publishes his first significant political essay 'Castroism and the Long March in Latin America'. Significantly this essay is published first in Europe in *Les Temps Modernes* (1965) and then in *New Left Review* before it appears in Cuba. This essay is a sweeping analysis of the different political conditions within Latin American countries and the need for revolutionaries to adapt to the particularities of the situation within which they found themselves. It should be noted that Debray, at this time, was no particular enthusiast for violent revolution: in this text and in the ensuing books on revolution, he makes no claim to generalise from Latin America to the situation in European liberal democracies. The later Debray had no cult of infantile leftism to renounce although his writings on the guerrilla movements in Latin America may have inspired some European groups such as the Red Army Faction in Germany (Davey 2015). Certainly with the publication of such works as *The Revolution in the Revolution* (1967), he became a cult figure amongst the radicals of the late sixties and perhaps ironically a figure, even if of necessity an absent one, in the 'Paris Events', of 1968.

In 1967, shortly after the publication of *The Revolution in the Revolution*, it seems that Castro asked Debray to go and try and re-establish contact with Che Guevara in Bolivia. He travelled incognito as a journalist in Latin America, met up with Che Guevara and his group and spent six weeks with him in the mountains of Bolivia. Immediately he left the guerrilla camps; he was picked up by the Bolivian authorities and brutally interrogated, including the use of torture.<sup>10</sup> Debray was tried and

sentenced in Bolivia for revolutionary activities. He was condemned to prison for 30 years, and his case became an international cause célèbre with numerous French politicians on both right and left, and the Pope, calling for his release, as well as leading to a campaign by the progressive intelligentsia of the West to publicise his plight. He served nearly four years in prison but was released in November 1970 when there was a change of regime in Bolivia. Clearly these experiences amount to a very significant liminal moment within his life: torture and years in prison inevitably provoke introspection and self-clarification. There is little doubt that this direct experience of a revolutionary confrontation with the state is a crucial differentiating element within the Debray's biography when compared with that of most of his generation of French radicals. But there is another sense in which this was a liminal moment, in the more exact sense of separation and seclusion, for Debray missed the transformative events of May 1968, and when he returned to France two years after his release from prison—he spent the time in Chile—it was in many respects a transformed France that he was to encounter.

The France he returned to in 1973 was one for which he entertained hopes of a political kind, focused specifically—building upon his Chilean experience—on the prospects of the French Socialist Party. Exile and the liminality of the prison experience brought a new patriotic radicalism to his politics—a commitment to the ideal of the French nation state and French national revolutionary tradition. His prison writings are quite explicit about this and a substantial quotation is very revealing:

You recalled at the same time to what extent you were French, attached to that little land, to that language, to that history, to the chestnut trees, to Gauloises, to Aragon's poems. And also that you had long been in class, at lycée, at school, and that you were a young French intellectual from a bourgeois family [...]. You were nothing more than that—your genesis, your origins, a genealogy—but you had repressed it. From this came the cathartic effect, the emotional release, the relief. You experienced as liberation the discovery of your ties, your moorings, your anchorage. When you accept being a son, issuing from your father by natural generation, your adoptive fathers, your moral fathers evaporated like mirages [...]. To break away in this manner is to begin to be able to militate. To become a lucid, restrained

and therefore efficacious militant, working alongside one's own, communicating in one's maternal language with one's comrades, one's compatriots, there where there is really need [...]. To stop being a stranger [...] the half-responsible, the contact, the intermediary. (Debray 1976: 80, quoted in English in Reid 1992: 851)

However, this clearly idealised vision of his national home—but also the family home—which is also to be the bearer of his political hopes (the commitment to socialism) that he had already paid a heavy personal price for, was to prove to be painfully inadequate. This was to be especially the case with Debray's own reference group of writers and intellectuals. At one level, indeed the most obvious, it was in the political and ideological changes that were happening amongst French intellectuals in the shape of a sharp movement to the right with the emergence of the so called *nouveaux philosophes*, who now saw Marxism as inevitably leading to totalitarianism. However, his sense of unease seems to have been much deeper than this political difference, for despite his continuing commitment to the left, he also seems to be having difficulties in making sense of his discovered commitment to a particular national identity (see the important interview in *New Left Review* (Debray 1977) on the nation state). Indeed, he seems to have been thrown into a philosophical exploration of the conditions from which collective identities emerge and are transmitted—one that he explicitly says began in prison. It is in this context that Debray's attempt at constructing a sociology of intellectuals within the general framework of a mediological analysis has to be understood.

It is tempting to suggest when looking at the philosophical anthropology of Debray and its related project of mediology that if no German thinker ever finally escapes Hegel, then no French intellectual ever escapes Durkheim. This can hardly be seen more clearly than when we look to the text of Debray's that is known in English as the *Critique of Political Reason* (1983) but makes much more sense with its full French title *Critique de la raison politique, ou l'inconscient religieux*, that is, 'or the religious unconscious'. In many respects this book brings Althusser's emphasis on both the materiality and trans-historical character of ideology back into relationship with Durkheim's understanding, in his late work on the sociology of religion, of the significance of the sacred in the formation of groups. It was,



Debray suggests, only when the left acknowledged the significance of the sacred, the moment of affective commitment that lies outside the group, that it would understand its role in the organisational history of any society. Into this theoretical complex Debray develops the conception of ideas and beliefs as a material force in a post-Althusserian radical remodelling of Marxism in which the twin elements of his (Debray's) later work on intellectuals and mediology take their significance. There is little doubt that biographically the work on intellectuals emerges first, but it is already cast in the form of a searching mediological sociology of the sites of academic practice in France in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries successively: the academic 1880–1930, publishing 1920–1960 and media 1968–. The contemporary period is viewed as producing the trivialisation and personalisation of the significance of ideas and argument. This latter phase, of course, coincides with the events of 1968 and later, from which Debray was missing, facing death and privation. Pushing your latest book on TV in the 1970s could hardly fail to seem trivial. This periodization is greatly expanded in the later work on mediology (Debray 1996) in which the post-1968 period is seen as a much more profound watershed in marking the emergence of the *videosphere*, which marks a transition from the post Gutenberg *graphosphere* which following McLuhan, even if hardly acknowledging so doing, he sees as book-based. This is all preceded by the *logosphere* after writing is discovered but operates in a primarily oral context. The materiality of the mode of mediation on the form and effectiveness of the message is at the centre of mediology, but it is the politics of this process that fascinates Debray and also deeply worries him. After all he still writes his books in longhand!<sup>11</sup>

## Conclusion

How are we to assess these two figures—the politically reactionary literary critic<sup>12</sup> turned media guru and the politically revolutionary critic of intellectual integration? One obvious issue to note is their different temporal location within the development of modern media. They are from different generations: McLuhan born in 1911, Debray in 1941. McLuhan is clearly in a sense the more remarkable in that his sensitivity

to the significance of a changing media environment was extraordinarily acute and far seeing.

McLuhan's insights are an expression and symptom of a profound awareness of multiple but related and, in terms he would not have used, overdetermined crises of technological transformation, of identity and of representation. His position with its fascination with, yet repulsion from, modernity and modernism recalls what Marxist critics like Eagleton and Jameson have seen in the work of some of the great reactionary modernists of the twentieth century. As Eagleton noted of Conrad, James, Lawrence, Pound, Wyndham Lewis and T. S. Eliot, they were all political reactionaries and he suggests:

the dangerous paradox: great art because of dreadful politics. [...] In various ways migrant figures caught between different cultures and fully at home in none of them. Displaced, uprooted and insecure they clung to the values of order [...]. They were all personally exposed to a crisis of identity and tradition typical of their times and all this nourished in them more searching ambitious art than in the work of those more insulated from such disruptions. (Eagleton 2005: 178–179, also Eagleton 1978)

We might also venture another claim, following Szokolczai: in the case of McLuhan, the displacement and liminality of his life experience were a condition of his radical intellectual insights, for he was by training a literary critic, but he became a kind of artistic/poetic social scientist attuned to the modernist reactionary sensibility. Displaced from his discipline, he was almost moved, but not quite, into another, because in a sense there was no discipline for him to join. For 'communications studies' was not then a discipline but a creative liminal space in which he could pour his extraordinary self and his abundant learning.

Debray, then, might seem the more intellectually conventional figure compared with McLuhan—though living the life he has lived, conventional is rather inadequate. However, Debray's displacements and real forced exclusions and separations from the life of his *contemporaries* have provoked in him a powerful call for a reflective left to look at the pre-rational sources of its radicalism as well as an acute sensitivity to the changing environment of symbolic communication. Like McLuhan he seems to have needed a free non-disciplinary liminal space, that is, his

creation of mediology, in order to articulate his insights. In the context of its long displacement from power, the left might now find guidance in both Debray's attempt to politically navigate the maelstrom of digital capitalism as well as from McLuhan's self-preserving satiric-seriousness in our new media ecology.

## Notes

1. The idea of critique is clearly under siege now in social thought, as, for example, in Latour's 2004 essay on critique running out of steam; but also see the more wholesale attacks from Boland (2012) which I believe should be answered by retrieving conceptions of judgement, see McMylor 2015.
2. By using the term figuration Szkolczai is following Norbert Elias (1978): the key discussion is on pp. 128–133 where Elias explores the non-reductive claims of the concept. Thus, he seeks to reveal the interdependencies between individuals that produce distinctive figurations such as the relations between card players or students and teacher in a classroom, relations that are neither, in Elias's view, the result of individual psychology nor macro-determinations at the level of the social.
3. It might well be asked why Debray in a comparison with McLuhan rather than the obvious figure of Baudrillard. The answer is partly given by Genosko's study *McLuhan and Baudrillard* (Genosko 1999), simply put, the links between them are so great it is more a matter of influence than anything else. Debray is an autonomous figure who comes to explore what he will call mediology for particular reasons.
4. See Lipset (1990) on the contrasts between the two continental powers and the crucial work of Kroker (1984) in regard to Canadian intellectuals.
5. Grant's key work is *Lament for a Nation* (1965). However, it is easy for critics to falsely contrast Grant and McLuhan given Grant's critique of technology (1968) assumes naively that McLuhan is simply a booster, see Theall (2001) as a useful corrective. Their styles are, of course, fundamentally different, and Grant is the more directly and self-consciously political thinker.
6. The key claim that Voegelin makes in his famous *New Science of Politics* (1952) lectures concerns the centrality of new versions of ancient gnostic beliefs in the radically transformative capacity of a 'secret' saving knowl-

edge, concealed within the character of modernity. This has been an immensely controversial claim and provoked much debate, probably the fullest treatment of this debate is Rossbach (2005). However, Martins (1993b) and others have developed the potential within the gnostic thesis to link 'knowledge as salvation' to elements of modern science, and it does seem to have clear parallels in current discussions of transhumanism and so on.

7. This is explored in Theall (2001, probably the best study we have of McLuhan), where he makes clear that this image is picked up by McLuhan as a consequence of his intensive study of the modernist writers, especially Wyndham Lewis, who McLuhan knew and admired. As Theall puts it the image 'reflected Lewis's conception of the role of vortical artist as a still point in a turning world' (2001: 189). McLuhan was quite serious about the modernist artist as an analyst of the fluxing field of modernity, much superior in his mind to the work of those tied to understanding in terms of efficient causation and linear thinking, as he thought most social scientists were.
8. The biographical information I have made use of in what follows is derived from Reader (1995) and Reid (1992, 1996). Reid's 1992 essay is an indispensable source, and I have no doubt that Szokolczai would consider the title 'Régis Debray's Quest: From France to Bolivia and Back' as deeply significant in respect of the formulation of a life-work's analysis. I take the title and content as evidence that my own analysis is at least congruent with arguments from a specialist scholar.
9. He remained close to Althusser until the end of the philosopher's life. Debray continued to visit him whilst he was incarcerated in a mental institution after Althusser's tragic murder of Héléne Rytman, his wife.
10. He was also interrogated by CIA officers and indeed Debray suggests that their much more subtle techniques of interrogation may well have saved his life, rather than being left in hands of the Bolivian military.
11. See his fascinating essay on socialism (Debray 2007) in which a strong case for the overwhelming textual basis of socialist thought and above all practice is made.
12. McLuhan's politics are perhaps even more reactionary than might be feared; Theall describes a meeting with McLuhan and Harold Innis, 'Innis detested dictators, racism. He was firmly committed to an open society. Marshall was just as firmly committed to a closed society. He thought Blacks, Jews and Protestants would all be happier elsewhere' (Theall 2001: 248).

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# Karl Marx: New Perspectives

Richard Kilminster

*Thinkers are but the scouts of humanity along the unknown paths of the future. It is true that they break the trail, but mankind never travels by the precise way they have prescribed: it takes upon itself to make the breakthrough which best suits its multiple designs.*

(Constantin Pecqueur 1839, cited in Evans 1951: 1)

## Introduction: Marx and Marxism

Of all the major writers widely regarded as the founders of sociology, Karl Marx is unique. He is the only one of the early pioneers whose ideas were selectively codified after his death for political purposes on a wide scale by mass socialist parties. The practice began in Germany when the Social Democratic Party, needing to protect the status of Marx in response to antisocialist laws, adopted a particular, formalised, 'scientific' interpretation of his ideas and linked his work closely to that of Engels. This was

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partly because Engels's own understanding of Marx's thought was readily available to them in the numerous works, prefaces, introductions and editions published by Engels in the 12 years from Marx's death in 1883 to 1895, when Engels died. In that way, as Terrell Carver (2010: 108–109) explains, 'a tradition, framed as philosophical system-building on certain self-styled "materialist" principles was founded'. George Kline (1988: 175) refers to this process as the 'Engelsisation' of Marx. This scientised reading then came to be used in practice as part of an ideology for consolidating state power for Communist Party elites in Russia after 1917 by Lenin and Stalin and further standardised later in the Soviet Union, until its collapse in 1989.

All this is well known. However, one significant consequence of this process was that this reading effectively 'de-Hegelised' Marx's work, something which masked how arcane and visionary it actually was, both in its method and as a secularised, politicised, world-historical vision of universal human freedom manifesting itself (see O'Malley 1977: 22–26; Kilminster 1998: 101–103). In the words of George L. Mosse (1977: 4), 'Marx was riveted to his age'; he was 'a child of Hegelianism and the Enlightenment'. These insights into the nature of Marx's vision came to light much later. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the narrower, scientific model had been embraced as Marxism by the Russian and most other European socialist parties, with the significant exception of the UK (Löwenstein 1980/2010: 187). However, as Maximilien Rubel (1977) has shown, the term 'Marxism' became a political label having been used in radical debates in the 1870s as a stigmatising term by political *adversaries* of the followers of Marx. Engels unfortunately sanctioned the term as the followers' self-description, but it was an epithet that they had not themselves created. With hindsight, this move effectively made Engels 'the godfather of a mythology destined to dominate the twentieth century (Rubel 1977: 45)'.

One important consequence of the organised distillation in an abridged form of what were seen as the essentials of Marx's work and its widespread promotion as embodying scientific truth was that it consolidated the mythical aura surrounding his name which went with that interpretation. As Stedman Jones (2016: 2) has put it: 'Marx was celebrated as communism's epic founder and lawgiver in an increasingly monumental

mythology. He was venerated as the founder of the science of history—“historical materialism”—and together with his friend Engels as the architect of the scientific philosophy to accompany it—“dialectical materialism”. As Lenin famously announced: “The Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true” (Lenin 1913: 23). The subsequent development of the authoritarian Russian state and arrival of Soviet communism would suggest that Lenin’s dictum could plausibly be reversed: the Marxist doctrine was true *because* it was omnipotent. Later, Jean-Paul Sartre even declared that Marxism was the ‘untranscendable philosophy of our time’ (quoted in Habjan and Whyte 2014: 2) apparently meaning that as a closed system it was complete in itself, so it required no further supplementation or elaboration. Whereas today there is a growing chorus of voices saying that precisely what Marxism crucially needs is to be *truly* transcended (e.g., Leopold 2007; Habjan and Whyte 2014). This could be the beginnings of a collective process of reflection and discovery in relation to Marx which continues for some years to come.

Any attempt to make a contribution to this process of reappraisal has to be cognisant of the nature of the texts that come down to us as the collected writings of Marx, the vast majority of which were uncompleted drafts not published in Marx’s lifetime. So, in relation to Marx in particular, there is from the outset a delicate issue of textual interpretation. I am not suggesting that the unpublished material should not be used but that its extent and character in Marx’s case impose on the expositor a different kind of moderation than that required when working with texts that have been polished by the author for publication. In relation to Marx’s early unpublished writings, Kojakowski (1971: 75) gave a warning that is applicable across the broad sweep of Marx’s unfinished manuscripts that is the danger of ‘spinning out suppositions based on unfinished and not unequivocal texts’.

As part of the systematisation of Marx’s ideas as Marxism the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow published his writings in many translations and disseminated them widely. A surprising fact is that excluding journalism, lectures, pamphlets and works written jointly with Engels, the number of scientific books that Marx published in his lifetime solely in his own name is three: *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847), *A Contribution to The Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and *Capital, Volume I* (1865).

All the rest of his voluminous works, the ones we know as Marx's *Collected Works* and which are quoted extensively, were drafts or discursive working notes taken from his reading and were unpublished in his lifetime. Also, the way in which translations of Marx's manuscripts were presented by the Institute was in identically bound volumes, a format which blurred the important difference between which of them had been published in Marx's lifetime and which had not. Since the vast majority had not been published, this elision was in any case probably inevitable. Even though the provenance of the texts was usually mentioned in the editorial material, it was done in such a way as to construct the texts retrospectively as a stage in the development of Marxism. This led sometimes to adjusting texts for doctrinal reasons central to official Marxism. For example, as Carver (2010) has shown in relation to *The German Ideology* manuscripts, its brief opening chapter on Feuerbach was purposely constructed by its Russian editors from a selection of pages from the copious unfinished manuscript to solve the problem posed by an enigmatic reference Marx made in 1859 to the manuscripts which he had produced many years before for 'self-clarification'. The intention was to create an impression of consistency over Marx's intellectual development. Carver comments that *The German Ideology* manuscripts were in fact 'editorially constructed' to produce the book that arguably became one of the most influential texts of twentieth-century philosophy (Carver 2010: 116).

Most of these manuscripts (whatever their merits) might not have seen the light of day had Marx's ideas not become codified as Marxism as part of mass political movements and parties. The publication process took place gradually in the years following the Russian Revolution of 1917 and up until the present day. Just to give an idea of the scale of the problem, here is a long list of Marx's works which were unpublished in his lifetime. They include many famous works: *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, *The Paris Manuscripts*, *The German Ideology*, *Capital, Volumes II and III*, *Theories of Surplus Value*, all three volumes, *Grundrisse* and the *Ethnological Notebooks*. It is worth noting, too, that the original handwritten manuscripts of two pamphlets published under the joint names of Marx and Engels—*The Holy Family* (1845) and *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)—show that Marx wrote nearly all of the two texts

(Stedman Jones 2016: 187, 242). The extensive nature of Marx's manuscripts, their often unfathomable 'dialectical' language, polemical tone and relentless complexity, make the task of reevaluating Marx challenging to say the least.

The issue of textual interpretation is only one aspect of the reappraisal of the scientific status of Marx. A further aspect discussed later is bringing to notice the distorting effect of the overestimations, formalisations and simplifications of Marx's ideas, which were further amplified and complicated during the explosion of Marxist ideas during the 1960s and 1970s. The broader intention in the chapter is offer new perspectives on the work and person of Marx himself, from the point of view of his place in the development of *sociology* as a discipline. That is my overriding concern: the importance of Marx's undoubtedly significant ideas to the continuing development of a relatively detached sociology *as such*. The present period seems to offer an opportune moment to begin a re-examination of Marx's scientific status as many have become aware. David Leopold (2007: 8) has rightly said that: 'The existence of Soviet communism undoubtedly helped distort our knowledge of [Marx's] work, and its subsequent collapse might provide an unexpected opportunity, not to bury Marx, but better to understand him'. This is also the spirit of my approach, which does not dismiss or otherwise minimise Marx's considerable sociological achievements but focuses on the challenge of establishing his standing as a sociological pioneer in his own right.

To achieve a more detached, balanced perspective on these complications and challenges surrounding Marx's work, I think it is advantageous to take a longer view. This means going back in the next subsection into the sociogenesis of Marx's ideas in a formative, transitional phase in European history—that is, the years immediately leading up to the 1848 revolutions when he first formulated his ideas—long before they were selectively transformed into the ideology of Marxism. Looking anew at Marx's long-term contribution from this point of view inevitably also entails reopening the questions of his originality and the explanatory status of his work as a theoretical synthesis. This will be followed by an analysis of Marx's much-quoted, almost mythical, text, The *Theses on Feuerbach* of 1845, which will hopefully focus the issues

more concretely. The section following that will bring the story up-to-date by looking at the reception of Marx in the UK, with a particular focus on the expansion and institutionalisation of sociology from the 1960s onwards, followed by some concluding remarks. Let us now look back to the 1840s.

## The Sociogenesis of Marx's World-View

Marx did not fall from the sky. In order to gain an understanding of the nature of his system and to assess its originality, we need to go back to its genesis to uncover what conceptual resources he had in common with other thinkers of the time and what, if anything, was distinctive about the particular synthesis of those elements which he put together. The pioneers of sociology in the first half of the nineteenth century (including Marx) were all participating in the social reality of the tensions and conflicts of the rapidly emerging industrial society as well as at the same time observing them from different angles and perspectives (see Kilminster 2013b). Unsurprisingly, social observers of all political persuasions (including Marx) in the 1840s inevitably shared a common technical vocabulary, including 'capital', 'labour', 'individualism', 'class antagonisms', 'socialism', 'communism', 'capitalism', 'class struggle', 'bourgeoisie', 'proletariat', 'class interest', 'collectivism', 'industrial society', 'industrial system', 'industrial revolution', 'social science' and 'the state' (Evans 1951: 18–80; Manuel 1965: 310ff).

Some of these concepts had come into currency slightly earlier, but together they formed the working technical vocabulary of social critics, revolutionaries, politicians and the early social scientists of that time. It is not too difficult to see that this common economic and political vocabulary arose from the developing structural features of the dominant relations between social classes of the time, which went back into earlier centuries but which had reached an important turning point in the 1840s in the years leading up to the 1848 revolutions. The people who were living through the social developments which these abstractions articulated and those who were combining them in an effort to understand those developments and their direction all shared a common, interdependent

social life together. Marx was not the only thinker by any means who was aware of this interconnected and increasingly enmeshed social reality.

Furthermore, nor was Marx the only one to have perceived the plight of the multitude of wage labourers in the new factories. Their poverty and the squalor of their living conditions was a cause for widespread concern across the entire political spectrum—liberals, socialists, communists and conservatives. Concern and compassion sometimes went hand in hand with a fear of the revolutionary threat of the proletariat, although obviously less so in communist circles. The German jurist Robert von Mohl caught the anxiety of the time when in 1840 he warned: ‘Fifty to sixty years have sufficed to produce millions of factory workers and to corrupt them at the core; a shorter period may be sufficient to have them confront in closed battle formations the other elements of society’ (quoted in Mengelberg 1964: 33). Marx was right when he said in *The Communist Manifesto* that the ‘powers of old Europe’ were being haunted by the ‘spectre of communism’ because many communists were calling for revolution at this time, which provoked various governments into sending spies into centres of proletarian, communist politics, in Paris, Brussels and other cities.

Marx was an ardent politico from an early age, an observation that is not meant pejoratively. Paradoxically, it was his political passions that enabled him to reach the important insights into class conflict and economic power that are his legacy. The ‘vision’ that Marx had of the socialist destiny of this emerging industrial capitalist society was a fantasy wish image of human equality and freedom which he had formed *prior* to undertaking his extensive researches into political economy. This intense labour was largely intended to confirm and to help realise the image rather than to correct it in a scientific sense. The vision was derived partly from a Saint-Simonian propaganda centre located in his home town of Trier and from his father who belonged to such a group which was dissolved by the police on suspicion of engaging in subversive activities (Evans 1951: 19). Marx also had a Saint-Simonian teacher Eduard Gans at The University of Berlin. Marx’s knowledge of socialist radicalism was deepened through reading socialist writings and by contact with socialists and communists in Paris in the 1840s whilst working on the journal *Rheinische Zeitung*. As Joseph Schumpeter noted, Marx’s vision of history was

conceived as an epic of struggles between classes, 'defined as *haves* and *have-nots*, with exploitation of the one by the other, ever increasing wealth among ever fewer *haves* and ever increasing misery and degradation among the *have-nots*, moving with inexorable necessity towards a spectacular explosion (Schumpeter 1949: 354)'.<sup>1</sup> Marx ended Part I of *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels 1848: 46) with a flourish, claiming that the fall of the bourgeoisie and the victory of the proletariat 'are equally inevitable'. Marx had an unshakeable conviction of the certitude of the outcome of these contradiction-driven social developments and pursued its realisation relentlessly with an unflinching political intransigence<sup>2</sup> and a contempt for compromise.

Since Marx would not allow himself to take seriously a rapprochement of classes, he had no alternative but relentless opposition at all costs. He interprets the situation as one where there is an irreconcilable class antagonism (or 'contradiction') of bourgeoisie and proletariat. Against the model of the imperative of proletarian rule to solve all social problems, there could be no politics of compromise in the present as an end in itself, only wholly negative, intransigent opposition, which eschewed or minimised working for immediate gains for the organised proletariat. Consider, for example, Marx's concluding comments to an address he made on 20 June 1865 to the General Council of the First International in which he castigates trade unions for limiting themselves to 'a guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organized forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system' (Marx 1865: 226). I think it is fair to say that the reform/revolution relationship has often been a knotty problem in the Marxian tradition.

The price Marx paid for his compulsive channelling of all of his immense talents into a politics of total opposition at the expense of everything else is that he neglected to develop issues and fields of inquiry which he hinted at in many manuscripts unpublished in his lifetime. In *The German Ideology* manuscripts of 1845, for example, there are many suggestive remarks on what we would call today the sociology of science, which were undeveloped. The fact that this manuscript was left stored in a cupboard during his lifetime indicates where his priorities lay. It was

published much later by the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow, first appearing in part in Russian in 1924 and in full in German in 1932 (Beecher and Fomichev 2006: 123, 129). Also, in the unpublished *Grundrisse* manuscripts (Marx 1857), there are passages in which he appears to show an awareness of different dimensions of interdependence other than the purely economic ones but does not take issue any further.

Furthermore, Marx's perception of the relationship between social class, power and knowledge was never developed very far beyond his largely polemical critique of political economy and the dualistic, quasi-metaphysical generalities of his base and superstructure model. He is, however, correctly seen as one of the founders of the sociology of knowledge (Remmling 1967: 23; Stark 1977: 99) but which again which he did not develop very far. Karl Mannheim (1929: 278) rightly said that this field emerged with Marx, 'whose profoundly suggestive *aperçus* went to the heart of the matter'. However, Mannheim pointed out the drawbacks of Marx's self-limiting political viewpoint which held him back from taking these matters further, empirically and theoretically. In Marx, the sociology of knowledge is still indistinguishable from the one-sided unmasking of ideologies, since for him social strata and classes were the bearers of ideologies (ibid.).

By the 1840s people from various walks of life and political persuasions—philosophers, diplomats, lawyers, journalists and including Marx, Auguste Comte, Henri Saint-Simon, Victor Considerant, Constantin Pecqueur and others—began to write about what we would today think of as sociological matters of wider scope than those addressed by most political economists. For example, Pecqueur's work in the 1830s and 1840s (from which Marx drew much) marks a definite advance over the classical political economists with his conception of 'social economy' as embracing not only society but 'humanity at large'. Pecqueur writes in 1842:

From our point of view economics embraces all the spiritual, as well as material, factors that can guarantee the ends of solidarity, equality and liberty pursued by the human race [...] in a word, the sum total of elements constitutive of societies will be an integral part of social and political



economy, which accordingly is synonymous with social science. (Cited in Evans 1951: 75)

For these writers, questions for investigation were to do with the motor of change and the overall direction of society as a whole. These were the grand questions formerly addressed by philosophers of history, in particular Hegel and Comte. Marx's contemporary, the Hegelian political economist and writer on public administration, Lorenz von Stein, analysed social developments with a form of economic 'materialism' and class analysis comparable with that of Marx, anticipating him by several years.<sup>3</sup> It was Stein who coined the concepts of a 'social movement' and 'class interest'. He explicitly focused on the proletariat as struggling for power in the pursuit of that 'class interest'. As Werner J. Cahnman (1966: 746) remarked: 'Marx's sociology is [...] as Steinian as his economics is Ricardian'.

The emerging 'social science' had a common ambition, which Stein summarised: 'It is the great path of development itself that we seek' (quoted by Weiss 1963: 80). This was the Holy Grail for many social and political thinkers and writers at this time (including Marx) who were trying to find patterns and sense in the sweeping and disorienting political and economic changes which had brought about the French and Industrial Revolutions. On the question of what is the driving force of historical change, Marx's answer was essentially the same as that of Stein, that is, conflicts arising from 'class interest', produced by 'class struggle'.

The other question was what is its direction? For Marx, the self-moving social 'contradiction' (a Hegelian term also used in the same sense by Stein until he dropped the idea in later work) or antagonism of capital and labour would more or less inevitably lead to communism through a revolution. The interests of the proletariat and bourgeoisie were fundamentally antagonistic and irreconcilable, inevitably leading to an explosive clash between them—a revolution—which, in the mid-1840s, Marx probably believed was imminent. He talked of the opposition of classes as finally culminating in a 'brutal *contradiction*, the shock of body against body' (Marx 1847: 174, italics in original). After the success of this projected revolution, Marx imagined that as the rising class the proletariat would apparently become the new ruling class, something which Stein

flatly rejected as infeasible on a number of grounds, one of which was simply because they did not possess the appropriate administrative, political and diplomatic skills to enable them to do so. Some years later this realisation spurred Mikhail Bakunin's polemics against what he saw as the hidden elitism in Marx's far-fetched idea in *The Communist Manifesto* that at some point after the proletarian revolution they would be 'raised to a governing class' (cited by Stedman Jones 2016: 526).

For all of this scattered grouping of social and political thinkers, the relationship between workers and capitalists constituted an interlocking of interests, which Stein referred to as 'the reality of the human order' (quoted in Mengelberg 1961: 270), which Saint-Simon called the 'industrial system', and Stein termed the 'industrial society'. These new 'social scientists' (except Marx) were committed in various ways to incremental social change through various modes of class cooperation and negotiation, consonant with the nature of the developing enmeshment of classes, a stance which embraced compromise—something abhorrent to Marx. Another telling illustration is provided by Taylor (2015: 53) who has observed that Marx and Engels regarded Saint-Simon, for example, as a fundamentally 'utopian' thinker simply because of his 'belief in a harmony of interests between capitalists and proletarians'. Furthermore, human existence, Stein insisted, was 'unalterably embedded in *society*' (quoted in Mengelberg 1961: 269; original emphasis), something upon which, as a basic truth, he and Marx probably agreed. They had both sensed the social interdependencies lying beneath overt economic, political and military action. But Stein went that little bit further, providing a glimpse of a more nuanced view of interdependence, noting that: '[T]he various orders of society and its classes are linked together so that they supplement and fulfil one another' (quoted in Marcuse 1968: 380).

However, the key difference between Marx and Stein was that for Stein, revolution was not predestined and might be forestalled. Also, that Marx has misconceived the nature of the state, which he thought would eventually disappear along with the bourgeoisie. For Stein, the class conflicts could be managed through reform, that is, politically, for the benefit of all, avoiding the destructive upheaval of revolution with its uncertain consequences. He had a clear early conception of the possibilities of the state as a welfare state, as it would be called today, which could protect its

citizens. Marx, on the other hand, looked for revolution to overturn the entire system as the only thoroughgoing alternative to resolve the unfairnesses of society, something that was for him inevitable anyway as the ‘contradiction’ of the class struggle of capitalists and proletarians would resolve itself in the historical dialectic, as such contradictions always had in the past. As Sidney Hook (1973: 277) pointed out, Marx underestimated the possibility of modifying ‘by politically democratic means’ the unjust and harsh aspects of economic relations in society which brought about suffering for the working class. As I have been arguing, that was because Marx rejected that option *in principle* because it was ‘fighting with effects [...] but not the causes of those effects’. Trade unions, Marx suggested, ‘are applying palliatives, not curing the malady’ (Marx 1865: 78).

Unlike Marx, Stein considered the state to be a necessary institution in social life. A stateless society could only result in increased inequality, social conflict and loss of freedom. The state specifically has to guarantee freedom of the individual against the arbitrariness of socio-economic developments. The misuse of state power by a ruling class, which so angered Marx, does not imply, Stein argued, that we should abolish the state altogether, as Marx advocated (see Benthem van den Bergh 1977). As Elias put it, ‘Marx simply took over the basic conceptual scheme of the liberal ideology, but infused it with negative values’ (Norbert Elias 2009 [1971]: 8). Revolution was also explicitly disavowed as counter-productive by Stein, Pecqueur and Considerant who also rejected Marx’s appeal to only *one* class because it would increase class antagonism. Considerant saw the inequities of the nineteenth century ‘as a threat to *all* classes’ (emphasis added). Democracy must be based not on force but on ‘intellectual combat’ (quoted by Davidson 1977: 82).

## The Theses on Feuerbach Reconsidered

Thus far I have been discussing the general issue of the amnesia that has fallen over the provenance of the Marxian canon, correcting for which affects any reappraisal of his work. I have mentioned the overestimation and mythologisation of Marx, the perils of the overinterpretation of his

often equivocal texts, the suppression of the Hegelian character of his outlook, Marx's failure to develop key insights into the nature of knowledge, and the way in which his political intransigence and dialectical certitude consumed his intellectual effort to the detriment of substantive matters of sociological interest. This section is an attempt to give concrete expression to these themes through the examination of one text by Marx, dating from the formation of his world-view. The *Theses* have been chosen because they are renowned in political history and have a legendary (but unjustified) reputation as an epistemological breakthrough and as the founding document of an entire world outlook that embraced historical truth.

The *Theses on Feuerbach* were published by Engels in 1888 after Marx's death as an Appendix to Engels's book *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*. These 11 aphoristic statements had been 'hurriedly scribbled down' as Engels puts it (Engels 1888: 6) by Marx in one of his notebooks in 1845 whilst he was working on *The German Ideology* manuscripts. The title *Theses on Feuerbach* was given to the document by Engels. The publication of these aphorisms was one of the first steps on the long road of the mythologisation of Marx that was to follow, which I alluded to in my Introduction. Engels assigned a particular theoretical importance to this text, as 'the first document in which is deposited the brilliant germ of a new world outlook'—surely an overstatement, given the sketchy and equivocal nature of the text. This judgement became part of Marxian lore that has been perpetuated for well over 100 years, the main carriers of which have been Social Democratic Parties and Russian and Soviet Communist Parties, which now no longer exist in their previous form. Thesis XI, 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point, however, is to change it', became one of the most famous and much-quoted sayings of the twentieth century. Bearing in mind that it was written by Marx to himself in a personal notebook, it seems to be simply a private voicing of political impatience with certain Hegelians ('the philosophers') who criticised everything but had no plans or intentions to contemplate radical change to the social order in a communist direction.

Further sophistication has been added to the meaning of the statements of the *Theses* by subsequent philosophical and political interpretations

from inside and outside of Marxism. For example, they have been seen as an 'original and new' departure from 'all previous' philosophical definitions of truth as correspondence of concept and reality couched in the traditional dualisms of materialism and idealism and subject/object (Bloch 1971: 81) or as a project to seek in practical politics the unity of the Kantian philosophical realms of theoretical and practical reason (Rotenstreich 1977: 58–82). Referring to Marx's thesis XI, Levine (1995: 224) says that 'In one of his more famous lines, Marx suggested that philosophy had a single point and that point was to change the world. With that he denied any justification for an independent body of theoretical knowledge [...]'. However, it is not justifiable to attribute to thesis XI such a broad and radical epistemological conclusion. If we step back for a moment, it is clear that this remark was an exclamation of political impatience, rhetorically appealing as such, but in fact substantively vacuous.

To repeat, the 'philosophers' Marx referred to were not all philosophers in history, or the leading philosophy professors of his time, but specific Left Hegelian political opponents who were not in their practical politics radical enough for Marx. In these internal reflections Marx did not take up the issue of independent valid knowledge at all, which he certainly would have understood as an issue which philosophers think about. He left this idea untouched and undeveloped because it was irrelevant to what he was concerned about. All his thoughts and efforts were for better or for worse geared to one aim alone—the urgent politics of the proletariat—which took precedence over everything else.

The key point emerging from this discussion is obvious: Marx was not consciously trying to make a contribution to issues within the discourse of philosophical epistemology and ethics. These preoccupations have been projected into the text. The *Theses* are unpublished notes towards a fuller discussion of Feuerbach that Marx planned to include in his unfinished *The German Ideology* manuscripts, a point in fact made by Engels (1888: 6). They are far too ambiguous and cryptic to permit the deduction from them of unequivocal principles or arguments about the relations between knowledge and action. They have been wrongly taken as definitive statements. What we find at work in the *Theses* generally is Marx's intense and focussed political mission, reinforced by the dialectical

certitude of his synoptic vision, deriving from his secularising of the Hegelian dialectic. Thesis XI provides the clue: the *Theses* are in actual fact Hegelised political musings. They are replete with characteristic phrases and concepts from Hegel: for example, ‘reality and power’, ‘prove the truth’, ‘self-contradictoriness’, ‘standpoint’ and other examples of Hegelian terminology such as *Diesseitigkeit* and *gegenständliche* (further analysis in Kilminster 1979: 15–21).

The key to understanding the *Theses* lies in way in which Marx experimentally and speculatively yokes together in his own mind traditional epistemology with the great ideologies of the nineteenth century—liberalism, socialism and conservatism. Like many other writers, Marx realised that materialism<sup>4</sup> is closely bound up with individualism and linked with bourgeois liberalism and ‘civil society’ or, in its reflective mode, with types of socialism involving political education, on the lines of Robert Owen, as Engels suggested. This approach was socially divisive because it sought to regulate people’s lives instead of allowing them to create their own circumstances (see Rotenstreich 1965: 54–55). Thesis X defines Marx’s new anticipatory proposition: ‘The standpoint of the old materialism is “civil society”; the standpoint of the new is *human* society, or socialised humanity’. As MacIntyre (1994: 279) put it, in the *Theses* Marx was trying to ‘transcend the standpoint of civil society’, that is, the individualism of early liberal, industrial society and looking towards a future of collective equality, self-determination and justice.

Marx’s starting point in the *Theses* is the primacy of practical activity in human life. He has a secular stress on the mundane productive activity of people as the world-constituting, real site for understanding history as human history, something that had been ‘metaphysically disguised’ by Hegel, as Marx and Engels put it in *The Holy Family* (1845: 164). It was a finite concrete process that had been presented by Hegel as simultaneously embodying particular determinations of an active, universal, infinite, abstract substance or spirit force. Today, in the twenty-first century the proposal to base social science firmly in the concrete reality of society, including in economic power, is hardly novel, even a truism. But for Marx it was important to maintain this secular, concrete stance politically against conservative and liberal religious opponents who drew on Hegel. They regarded the mundane, real, concrete society as representing a lower,

vulgar form of activity measured against the spiritual reality of the divine level present in all humans, which they, the Hegelians, sincerely believed their own individual consciousness embodied—however preposterous that sounds today.

Once Marx had made the methodological switch in Hegel's historical dialectic to regard social reality as actively constituted *solely* by secular, human activity, which mediated through work the metabolism of man and nature, this suggested that people could actively move to change the world that their active, practical cognition constituted, something urgent in the dire social conditions of the proletariat in the industrial cities of Europe at the time. The religious, spiritual inflection of Hegel had been used to justify a conservative viewpoint which wanted to glorify the status quo—that was the stance of the more conservative Hegelians. The same Hegelian viewpoint with a different emphasis on consciousness informed the radical, liberal politics of swingeing social *critique* associated with Hegelians such as Bruno Bauer. The whole point of Marx's references to materialism and idealism, subjectivity and objectivity in the *Theses*, is that various epistemological positions defined within these polarities carried with them by their very nature, different practical, *political* implications—once Hegel's dialectic had apparently been brought 'down to earth'.<sup>5</sup>

In a word, the *Theses attempt a practical solution to the problem of the justification of political ideals*. He is suggesting that Hegel's objective idealism mystifies the *real* alienation of humans from their secular potential. Marx was very obviously instructed by the way in which Feuerbach had shifted the ground of the post-Hegelian debates of the time towards the problematic issue of the basic assumption of all forms of objective idealism—that is, that socio-natural reality is acknowledged but ultimately conceived as reality in thought. Following Wartenberg's (1986) analysis, for Feuerbach, Hegel's attempt to overcome the contradiction of 'thought' and 'being' is inadequate. The distinction is basic and something that we have to accept and not try to transcend. Idealism is inadequate because in the end it entails 'denying the reality of the real' (p. 20). It does distinguish thought from the real, but the real becomes only the thought of the real. This argument appears to be what Marx found attractive. All he is calling for in the *Theses* is that the 'real', that is concrete socio-economic

relations in the here and now, should be analysed carefully, prior to ‘revolutionising’ them in the direction of communism, equality and freedom. The continuation of Feuerbach’s pragmatic, dualistic strategy for overcoming Hegel can be seen in Marx’s explicit appeal to ‘social being’ and ‘consciousness’ in his later summary of the economic base and legal and political superstructure model of society (Marx 1859: 20–21). This model effectively signals a return to metaphysics, not its transcendence. As Giorgio Agamben has argued, by attributing to the economic level the status of first principle of everything, Marx ‘duplicates the theological conception of God as first cause’. Marx’s theory is ‘the obverse of metaphysics, not its rout’ (quoted in Whyte 2014: 182; see also footnote 4 above).

Few of the interpretations of the *Theses* have drawn attention to the Hegelian logic of Marx’s overall argument. It reveals clearly the depth of Marx’s indebtedness to Hegel, as he sat at his desk jotting down the reflections that come down to us as the *Theses*. Marx later said explicitly, ‘I am a disciple of Hegel [...] [but] adopting toward my master a critical attitude’ (cited by O’Malley 1977: 30). The theoretical ‘standpoints’ discussed in the *Theses* are visualised as oppositions (materialism v idealism, individualism vs. socialism, subject/object). Marx’s methodological switch in Hegel’s dialectic gives rise to a conception of the primacy of secular, sensuous, corporeal practice in real life, hence those standpoints simultaneously coincide with political positions defined along different lines from those of the Hegelians. In technical terms, Marx has reversed the primacy of the infinite over the finite, the general over the particular and the sacred over the profane. Marx’s position, the ‘new materialism’, is the authentication, the ‘truth’ of the other standpoints, having been reached through the Hegelian procedure of traversing them and raising them to a higher standpoint (‘socialised humanity’), whilst none of the overcome positions are ‘false’ (see Hegel 1812: 580).

This form of argumentation enables Marx, as he sees it, to theorise the real, collective politics of the proletariat in the historical dialectic. This is the theoretical source of his total certitude. His conception of the dialectic is of an inevitable process which he says (paraphrasing Hegel) ‘lets nothing impose upon it [...] [it] is in its essence critical and revolutionary’ (Marx 1873: 20). However, it would be highly misleading to read out



of the *Theses*, in particular thesis II, as some have done, a generalised exhortation to go out and *act* politically in unspecified or untested ways, thus 'proving the truth' in practice. And it is also a grave misunderstanding to find in the *Theses* the idea that acting to change something in the social realm provides the only genuine opportunity of reaching an adequate understanding of its nature. From what is known of Marx's scientific outlook, it is clear that he would have regarded that idea as a form of mystical intuitionism. One may come to believe that either of those two above interpretations is cogent and correct, but my point is that thesis II cannot plausibly be regarded as recommending or justifying either of them.

Nor is there any suggestion in the *Theses* of how to determine the all-important *extent* to which certain relations between 'thought' and 'reality' may remain the same whilst others undergo revolutionising change, or of suggesting which relations are more readily subject to being altered by specified forms of practical activity. Also how does the conception of correspondences between 'thinking' and 'reality' apply to knowledge of non-human nature? Its ontological independence from man is left in obscurity. Giles-Peters (1985) rightly describes Marx's conception of activity in the *Theses* as 'objectless'. In short, a great deal could potentially be determined in theory on a number of practical levels which other kinds of practice would not affect. These issues are not raised because they are not what these jottings are about. Marx is simply thinking his way in a Hegelian fashion towards an anticipatory 'standpoint of socialised humanity'. Feuerbach is essentially a bourgeois individualist and a philosopher who has no intellectual resources to analyse the 'contradictions' in the real secular economic structure of society, which he can only conceptualise as a level of 'being' which determines 'consciousness'. To summarise, the *Theses* are working political notes written in the idiom of epistemology which are not intended to be an explicit contribution towards a sociological theory of knowledge, nor to 'philosophical' issues, as such.

Let us now turn to the reception of Marx generally in the UK and into the canon of sociology in particular, which should help us to ascertain what images and interpretations of Marx have been created inside sociology itself and how far, if at all, they perpetuate the myths surrounding

Marx. This further source of influence on the versions of Marx we encounter needs to be recognised and controlled for as necessary.

## Marx and the Institutionalisation of Sociology

In recent years, the latest phase of the British reception of Marx was intertwined with what I have documented and called sociology's Conflict Phase, from about 1965 to 1980s (Kilminster 1998: 155ff). Any reassessment of Marx today has to be cognisant of the legacy of this phase, which has been described as sociology's 'war of the schools' (Bryant 1989: 69, 74–76). During this time rival paradigm groups and schools such as structuralism, Weberianism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism flourished, challenging the structural-functionalist/action theory orthodoxy of Parsons which, although based on European sociological sources, was an analytic synthesis imported from the USA (see Kilminster 1998: chap. 4).

At the same time, British sociologists were absorbing large amounts of 'Continental' philosophy, sociology and Marxism at a fast pace for the first time on a large scale. In addition to the Marxist literature, philosophers such as Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Jaspers, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Nietzsche, Sartre, Adorno and many more became staples of the sociological theory diet. As I said earlier, by the early twentieth century, scientific Marxism had been embraced by most European socialist parties. The UK was an exception, which made the sudden arrival in the 1960s–1970s of erudite Marxist texts from Europe very probably an exciting, but sometimes perhaps confounding, experience for people brought up in the British empiricist philosophical and ameliorist socialist traditions.

Furthermore, until the large expansion of sociology in the 1960s, the discipline of sociology itself had a very limited institutional presence in the UK. As is well known, the dominant social science in the UK was the British social administration tradition, which was a form of Fabian-inspired, policy-orientated, ameliorative inquiry. It was committed to acquiring factual knowledge of social inequality and deprivation to be fed into long-established, receptive political institutions to facilitate reform. The inertia of this tradition should not be underestimated. It was from

European sociology that came the larger questions: what is society? How does it hold together? How can we see through political ideologies? What should be our political commitments, national allegiance and moral choices? These questions—in twentieth-century Europe often asked with an urgency of purpose in a mood of bewilderment and anxiety—arose from continental European experiences of recent social revolution and crisis (Hawthorn 1976: 112) not experienced to anywhere near the same degree here. In the British context these questions, whilst intellectually understandable, were not posed in such a way that sociological categories needed to be developed in order to answer them (see Kilminster and Varcoe 1996: 8–10). Concepts and theories derived from this large variety of new intellectual resources which were pouring into sociology introduced further levels of theoretical complexity and often misunderstanding into the British reception of Marx in the 1960s–1970s.

Different philosophical models of ‘man’ were attributed to Marx and discussions taken up on questions such as whether there are two types of rationality, positivism and ‘dialectics’, whether Marxism needs a separate philosophical anthropology and whether the concept of alienation in *The Paris Manuscripts* is a theme that pervades all of his work and issues of theory and practice. Some groups identified themselves with various politically inflected theoretical combinations and fusions, such as Althusserian Marxism, Gramscian Marxism or phenomenological Marxism. Elements of the New Left tended to regard those in the Western Marxist tradition (Lukács, Gramsci, Korsch, Frankfurt School) as the carriers of the authentic, activist Marxism, shamefully distorted by the deterministic Soviet ideologists. Other scholars focussed on unresolved dilemmas, ambivalences or tensions in Marx’s work, sometimes attributed to his profound perception of a dualism at the core of the human condition or his attempts to solve fundamental philosophical dilemmas such as rationalism versus empiricism, voluntarism versus determinism or ethical relativism versus objective moral superiority of socialism (see Kilminster 1979: 3–5).

The result was a theoretical cacophony, generated by these intricate and often highly emotional political and philosophical debates about the first principles of the human sciences, which shaded over into a generation’s search for new behavioural codes as older ways of life, taboos and

conventions were being fundamentally questioned (Wouters 1986, 1987; Kilminster 1998: 155–162). Again, in outline these developments have been well established. Amidst this tumult the issue of Marx's status as a sociological pioneer in the long-term development of a serious, well-founded, discipline was something rarely raised. It is not too far-fetched to suggest that the prominence in sociology of allegiance to Marxism as a political imperative in this phase meant that to raise the issue of the scientific stature of Marx as a pioneer in the development of an independent, social science was in many sociological circles near inconceivable.

One notable exception was a rarely cited but insightful article by Talcott Parsons (1967) on Marx which did address the subject directly, separated from the political phenomenon of organised Marxism.<sup>6</sup> Otherwise, the question of Marx's scientific stature in his own right—stripped of mythology and political overstatements—was simply not on the sociological agenda. Parsons, whose prestigious institutional base at Harvard was outside the hothouse of European Marxian controversies at this time, was arguably insulated from the largely political appropriations of Marx, both in the USA and in Europe. The layers of interpretation and reinterpretation unwittingly perpetuated some of the myths by adding new levels of theoretical sophistication which obscured the geopolitical function for the communist party and for various dissident groups in Eastern Europe and other political factions elsewhere, which was partly driving the nuanced interpretations of Marx, a reality of which the British sociologists in particular were only just beginning to become aware.

A telling example of British theoretical naiveté at this time surrounds the work of Louis Althusser. Flying in the face of Marx's obvious indebtedness to Hegel's developmental and historical approach, in *For Marx* (Althusser 1969) he deployed a formidable array of convoluted structuralist concepts, ideas from French philosophers of science such as Gaston Bachelard and others, as well as dense and forbidding scholastic argumentation. In a radically *discontinuiste* interpretation producing an entirely synchronic orientation, a genre which Hermínio Martins dubbed as 'caesurism' (Martins 1974: 280), Althusser argued that the early Marx of 'The Paris Manuscripts' represented an ideological form of 'humanism'. Marx made an 'epistemological break' from humanism around 1845 to found in *Das Kapital* the science of historical materialism, in which Marx

had abandoned the dialectical view of societal change. The point is that the connections between this interpretation and the Communist Party's interest in managing the Soviet empire were not always self-evident to his UK readers. His work was effectively orthodox Marxism in structuralist clothes.

Another reason why Althusser's work satisfied the political requirements of communist parties linked to the Soviet Union was because it ruled out as un-Marxian any reliance on Marx's early, so-called pre-scientific, writings. These were precisely the Hegelianised texts frequently drawn upon by dissidents in Eastern Europe (see e.g., Kotakowski 1971) and by elements of the New Left in Western Europe as a stick with which to beat the official, positivistic version of Marxism. Affirming the early work of Marx had political significance because it appeared to cast doubt upon the authority of the scientised, official Soviet historical and dialectical materialism and exposed its ideological function for the communist elites. Soviet unease about the continued fascination with the early writings of Marx in the Eastern countries of the communist bloc and elsewhere in Europe led as recently as the 1960s to the editors of the collected *Marx-Engels-Werke* 'relegating most of them to an unnumbered *Ergänzungsband*, published outside of the chronological sequence of the other volumes' (Leopold 2007: 5).

In the British context, Althusser's formalisation of a politically inflected version of Marx's base and superstructure model ('repressive' and 'ideological' state apparatuses, economy as 'structure in dominance', etc.) was a version which later came to appear in textbooks as an authentic rendering of Marx's theory. Or, if not making that claim, versions of Althusser's arguments are frequently uncritically used in textbooks to illustrate a 'Marxist' perspective, with no reference made to the orthodox Soviet Marxism underpinning their original elaboration. Althusserians also instigated a barren debate around the theme of 'one Marx or two?' which was based on a forced and suspect dichotomy. It had been generated by Althusser's notion of the 'epistemological break' (Bachelard) in Marx's writings which Althusser employed entirely for external reasons. In the context of the reception of Marx, Althusser's interpretation effectively pre-empted any efforts even to consider as a possibility, subject to empirical investigation, that his works might have a nucleus of enduring insights

which have a place in the developing discipline of sociology. The 'two-Marxes' trope was an obstacle to a fuller understanding of Marx's writings as a whole and was a further impediment to any realistic evaluation of his scientific stature in his own right, divorced from the effects of political misrepresentation. Another obstacle was that Althusser's structuralist leanings laid a false trail away Marx's work as a form of 'humanism' in the broadest sense, which it evidently was. It is telling to note that Marx's favourite maxim was from the writings of the Roman playwright Terence: *'Nihil humani a me alienum puto'* or 'Nothing human is alien to me' (quoted in Wheen 2000: 388).

With hindsight it can be seen clearly that the generational and industrial conflicts of the 1960s and 1970s and the highly polarised, ideological battles of the Cold War were played out in the expanding sociology institutions. At that time, it still appeared to some people that socialism, led by the labour movement, was an imminent prospect. In the meantime, within the institutions of sociology, a humanistic, anti-communist 'critical theory' or 'emancipatory' paradigm was developed to attack what was widely seen as the main obstacle: bourgeois ideology. This tension-filled and conflictual situation generated the pervasive and politicised polarisation of two different types of social science: politically committed Marxism *versus* 'value-free' sociology (Kilminster 1979, 1998: 158–162; Kilminster and Varcoe 1996: 8–9) partly reflecting an important level of the conflicts and antagonisms of the time that is between the sociology establishment and younger 'critical' Marxian outsiders.

## Concluding Remarks

This chapter has been a ground clearing exercise, designed to contribute to a reappraisal of the scientific status of Marx as a sociological pioneer. I sought to establish in a preliminary way the need for a new view of Marx's contribution to sociology, as such, correcting for the overestimations of his stature that have accrued from the codification of his ideas for political purposes in mass parties and social movements in the twentieth century. The distorting effect of these overestimations, formalisations and simplifications of Marx's ideas penetrated even into the translations

themselves, to which further attention needs to be paid. The misrepresentations were further amplified and complicated during the explosion of Marxist ideas during the 1960s and 1970s and their absorption into the expanding institutions of sociology, something that has tended to perpetuate them as 'critical theory' or 'critical' sociology.

Looking back to the origins of Marx's ideas in the 1840s, it is clear that he had a great deal more in common with his social science contemporaries than received views of Marx have suggested. Marx drew on the standard socialist and communist propaganda of the time and the available political economy. Virtually all of his analyses of the nature of capitalism and the demands of communists in the *Communist Manifesto*, for example, are to be found in Victor Considerant, Henri Saint-Simon, Lorenz von Stein and Constantin Pecqueur, often in close paraphrase. They had analysed in depth various tendencies of *laissez-faire* capitalism set out in the *Manifesto* which appear to have originated solely from Marx: the growth of monopolies, the concentration of wealth, big business, exploitation of the proletariat, class antagonism, overproduction, imperialism, progressive contamination of society by capitalism, world markets and social developments as arising 'independent of people's wills'. Marx is frequently quoted as having said in a letter to Weydemeyer in 1852 that long before him bourgeois historians and economists had already set out the rudiments of the class struggle and the nature of capitalist expansion. What he did that was new, he claimed, was to show that the class struggle 'necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat' as a transition to 'the abolition of all classes and to a classless society' (Marx 1852). Marx comes over here as proud of his achievement in this respect. These sincere words are clear evidence of just how far Marx was burdened with the teleological aspects of the Hegelian system that he was struggling to overcome, which were carried through into Marx's dialectical image of history as a series of socio-economic formations mediated by the *telos* of communism as the end of the 'prehistory' of humankind. Developing *content* (forces of production) determine changes of *form* (relations of production), which parallels Hegel's categorical unity of content and form (Kilminster 1998: 49).

Whilst Marx did make a significant beginning to the understanding of social classes, the impulse behind the whole edifice of his work is the

world-historical dialectic of Hegel expressed in the socio-economic terms which Hegel's philosophy disguised, according to Marx. Hegel's colossal synthesis provides an invaluable introduction to processual, 'totality' thinking, a movement away from individualism, rigid dualism and abstraction, rooting morality in concrete social relations, a historical approach to the succession of philosophies and much more (see Kilminster 1998: 35–40). My view is, however, that the pioneers of social science realised that the explanatory problems they found in philosophy were potentially better solved if they made a *break* with it. This realisation is very obvious in the works of Auguste Comte, for example, implicit in Marx's politicised work and later explicit in Durkheim, Mannheim and Elias. From the point of view of a post-philosophical, post-metaphysical sociology from which I am arguing (Kilminster 1998: 14–15, 2007: chap. 2) once the more arcane elements in Marx are removed from the reckoning as hangovers, in the context of the nineteenth century, Marx's dynamic model of the class struggle of bourgeoisie and proletariat begins to look less distinctive. Furthermore, if the other premodern metaphysical elements in Marx such as social being (base)/consciousness (superstructure), appearance/reality, dialectical method, teleology and social 'contradictions' are also shed from Marx's synthesis as unserviceable from that sociological point of view, then what is left?

From a *political* point of view, Marx's uncompromising stance was overtaken by social developments he did not foresee but which Lorenz von Stein and others did. As the nineteenth century proceeded into the twentieth, the process which Elias calls 'functional democratization', that is, 'the narrowing of power differentials and the development towards less uneven distribution of power chances' (Elias 2012 [1978]: 64), was far reaching. It had the effect of pulling the rug out from under Marx's class-war mode of revolutionary politics in the developed countries, which was predicated on the deepening polarisation of the main classes towards a final explosion. The relative social levelling process corresponded to the greater *integration* of interdependent strata and institutions within the emerging industrial society (see Loyal 2013: 588ff).

From a *sociological* point of view, Marx's theory of power recognised only one basic dimension, albeit an important one—economic power arising from the relations of production—an insight reached from the



overwhelming experience of an early stage of the development of the factory system and the conflicts between factory owners (bourgeois) and workers (proletarians) viewed in class terms. He realised that economic power was relational, structured and directional, an important and useable insight, once divested of its teleology. Inevitably, other dimensions of power were never systematically considered, since their full significance only emerged as the result of later social developments long after Marx's death. These dimensions include, as relatively independent sources of power, the monopolisation of the means of force, of orientation and of information, bureaucratic and professional power and the shifting balance of power between men and women and global power networks (Loyal 2013: 596). Also, Marx's theory of ideology showed that social classes and belief systems were closely related, and he interpreted political economy within this framework. He is rightly regarded as having thus played a major part in founding the sociology of knowledge, although apart from some underdeveloped asides about the natural sciences, he did not take the field beyond the unmasking of class ideologies, significant though that was (see also footnote 6 above on Marx's lack of a sociological psychology).

The reception of Marx in the 1960s and 1970s in the course of the expansion of the universities confirms that the high level of social and psychological tensions of the time was not ideal for the fostering of a more realistic and balanced picture of Marx's scientific status as a pioneer among others in a developing discipline, which realistically corrected for overstatements, one-sidedness and blind spots in his thinking. The stark polarity of two types of social science—Marxism versus sociology—was widespread in sociological culture for some years and still persists today in a less strident form. In its various forms it is probably the most prevalent, although by no means the most cogent, perspective in the discipline. It is therefore not surprising that there is a conspicuous absence in the culture of institutional sociology of a balanced conception of Marx himself as a pioneer of a relatively detached sociology, separate from Marxism. The version of Marx which has survived in academic sociology today appears to be an adaptation of the politicised intellectual persona derived from versions of Marxism, which tacitly valorises a value-committed, 'critical' sociology as the leading and *only* morally legitimate approach. It

is erroneously presented as the fusion of social science and politics or theory and practice and contrasted with the mainstream, so-called value-free sociology, a viewpoint which fails to distinguish between what Elias calls 'autonomous' and 'heteronomous' evaluations in sociology which takes us beyond the whole problematic of committed versus value-free sociology (further discussion in Kilminster 2004).

In its new garb traditional Marxism is, in a sense, alive and well but pared down to the bare essentials of 'critique'. It now appears minus the proletariat as the liberating agent, minus the authority of the Party and minus the conception of the 'scientifically' proven, law-like necessity of socialism. What is left is a diffuse identification with the underprivileged more generally. From that point of view, a new perspective on Marx is unnecessary and even inconceivable. The codeword 'critical' refers to this generalised political commitment. Together with the image of Marx, it functions for sociologists as a talisman, conveying certain moral and political leanings. It satisfies the writer's conscience as well as signalling to others a broad commitment or allegiance. They will, in turn, recognise that the author is 'one of us', a partially real and partially imagined community of like-minded people who occupy the moral high ground. Even though its advocates are embedded in sociological or similar institutions, they apparently see themselves as at the same time possessing a separate, independent radical identity. The 'critical' tendency constitutes a further obstacle to developing a balanced relatively detached understanding of Marx's scientific status because of the power of its 'We-identity', which becomes life defining. The critical outlook is too closely linked to the innermost meaning of the critics' lives to be given up easily or even suspended.

The 'critical' approach looks forward to a radical, fundamental change in society, in the name of which contemporary society is relentlessly criticised and found wanting in virtually every aspect. The problem is that a self-consciously 'critical' sociology runs the risk of a destructive outcome which I have called 'overcritique' (see Kilminster 2013a, 2017). Another downside is that this moral and political inflection inevitably perpetuates the misleading and divisive either/or opposition of Marxism versus sociology. And just as inevitably it goes hand in hand with the fallacious devaluation of the more distanced tradition in sociology as producing

pseudo-‘value-free’, positivistic, amoral inquiries that are complicit in ‘domination’, as it is often expressed. From this viewpoint, the very idea of sociology as a science is an anathema, so adherents of this perspective propound instead a kind of liberal, socio-political ‘critical’ commentary as the peak of all sociological ambition.

In research practice, this ‘critical’ allegiance shows itself in sociological work on behalf of various groups and factions, which is much to the fore today in feminist research and theorising, disability studies and much of the work in gender, sexuality studies and postcolonialism, to mention only a few areas. There is also the ‘critical realism’ strand associated with the philosopher Roy Bhaskar (2008) and others which developed partly as the antidote to social constructionism. The message of this tendency appears to be that Marx was a critical realist *avant la lettre*. It implicitly endorses a ‘scientific’ version of Marxism as the only valid model for social science in a post-positivist world, something which, in the light of my overall argument in this chapter, is a retrograde step. These developments add a further obstacle to those that I have uncovered which have to be overcome before a more balanced picture of Marx’s status can emerge.

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## Notes

1. The vision of the historical struggle between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ is to be found in at least Henri Saint-Simon, Constantin Pecqueur, Charles Fourier and Victor Considerant, all of whom have been credited with having influenced Marx’s *Communist Manifesto*, where the vision is most trenchantly enunciated (see Beecher 2001; Evans 1951; Schumpeter 1949). Davidson (1977) contends that in the *Communist Manifesto*, particularly part I, the paraphrasing and other derivation from Considerant’s *Manifeste de la démocratie pacifique* of 1843, reissued in 1847, are so extensive as to amount to plagiarism.

2. Marx's intransigence and uncompromising stance have their roots in the habitus of the German intelligentsia, isolated as they were from both aristocratic life and public politics, unlike the French reformers who were within the ethos of the court society. The excluded Marx had no counter-concept to the court society in Germany but simply a comprehensive rejection of it. Contemptuous both of social reform and of courtly 'civilisation', Marx had little alternative but to identify totally with the lower classes. The uncompromising attitude was also linked to the warrior nobility which remained more dominant in Germany than in France. Warriors see social relations in terms of friend/foe or us/them (see Kilminster 2014: 105–107).
3. There is some controversy surrounding how far Marx was influenced by Stein's work directly in the 1840s or perhaps by a review of one of Stein's books by Moses Hess in the *Rheinische Zeitung* (see Mengelberg 1961: 267–8, 1964: 25–32; Strasser 1976: 235; Singelmann and Singelmann 1986: 447–8); Rutgers 1994: 400, 410; Beecher 2001: 132).
4. In a comprehensive linguistic analysis of Marx's theoretical writings, Kline (1988) warns that we should construe Marx's use of the words 'materialism' and 'material' with care. (A similar caveat about the imprecision of the term 'materialism' in Feuerbach has been made by Wartenberg (1986: 22)). Kline shows how in texts of Marx produced under the auspices of the Soviet Union a number of words of widely different meanings have been rendered as '*materiell*', giving a false impression of Marx as an ontological materialist. Kline also makes the important point that because of his central focus on *production*, Marx himself contributed to the conceptual confusion surrounding this term by sometimes using it to mean 'economic'. He was apparently oblivious to the fact that, as Kline says, 'there is nothing peculiarly material [...] about economic activities and institutions' (ibid: 168). For a further discussion of the sociological character of Marx's so-called materialism, see Schmidt (1971).
5. In fact, Hegel did not have to be brought down to earth, as Marx put it (Marx 1873: 20). As a philosophical monist Hegel was, as it were, already there. He had a clear grasp of real social and economic conditions, as did Marx's *bête noire*, Bruno Bauer. Marx's Feuerbachian appeal to a material 'substratum', 'sensuousness' or economic relations, which Hegel allegedly neglected or neutralised was a misconceived, politicised objection. Hegel's system of objective idealism was elaborated with the express intention of understanding the world as without a substratum. Hence to introduce one in the form of forces and relations of production determining all

other levels, misses the point. Space does not permit me to pursue this contentious issue further here (see Kilminster 1979: Part I and *passim*; 1982; and 1998: chaps. 2 and 3).

6. Parsons also perceptively noted the lack of a developed sociological psychology in Marx and in Marxism: ‘Marxian theory was [...] psychologically naïve [...] it has been particularly concerned to avoid involvement with this type of theory’ (Talcott Parsons 1967: 133–134). This hiatus may possibly be part of the legacy of the classical Utilitarian belief that individuals must be the judges of their own utility which will manifest itself in their behaviour, a principle that may have been taken forward by Marx from political economy. It would partly explain why Marx was not interested in people’s personalities, emotions or feeling states and the issue of how these would be shaped and affected by social conflicts and other social phenomena. The work of the neo-Marxist social philosopher Zygmunt Bauman exemplifies the same lack of sustained interest in a sociological psychology or any kind of psycho-dynamic or psychoanalytic approaches. (see Kilminster 2017: 204–208).

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# The 'Modelling of Speech' in America and Britain

Stephen Menzell

## Prefatory Reminiscences

I first met Hermínio Martins at Harvard in September 1966. We had both just arrived from Britain, he on a sort of working sabbatical from Essex and I as a Frank Knox Fellow—which entitled me as a 'Special Student' to roam across the university without registering for a degree. In practice, I attached myself to the Department of Social Relations as an unofficial sort of first-year PhD student; after a year I returned to the UK as an Assistant Lecturer at the University of Exeter, while Hermínio spent the academic year 1967–1968 at the University of Pennsylvania before returning to Essex and shortly thereafter moving to St Antony's College, Oxford. Afterwards, we always kept in touch, and indeed I spent three sabbaticals under Hermínio's sponsorship at St Antony's College, in 1980–1982, 1986–1987, and 1999–2000.<sup>1</sup>

For sociologists of a younger generation, it is hard to credit just how dominant a figure Talcott Parsons then was as the world's pre-eminent

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‘sociological theorist’.<sup>2</sup> No sociologist has since achieved comparable standing. I am not sure whether Hermínio had been drawn to Harvard as much as I had on the strength of Parsons’s reputation. In any case, ‘TP’ was away in Europe when we arrived and did not make his appearance until December. But whatever else remains to his credit, Parsons still deserves to be honoured for his part in the creation of the great and lamented Department of Social Relations, which encompassed not just sociology but cultural anthropology, social psychology, and clinical psychology. The ambition of intellectual synthesis which that represented was very much to Hermínio’s taste and, at a much more naïve level, to mine.

Looking through my student notes from that time, I can see that Hermínio must have gained more from the star-studded cast in William James Hall even than I did. I see that I attended lectures by Talcott Parsons (of course), Robert Bales, Robert Bellah, Kenneth Gergen, Gino Germani, Paul Hollander, George Homans, Seymour Martin Lipset, David Maybury-Lewis, David McClelland, Stanley Milgram, Thomas Pettigrew, David Riesman, and Harrison White. B. F. Skinner was to be seen going up in the lift accompanied by sacks of pigeon food, though it was only years afterwards that I heard him expounding his hard-line behaviourism (which had strongly influenced Homans). That was just the home team. Erving Goffman dropped in for one lecture. So did Timothy Leary, advocate of psychedelic drugs and famous for his slogan, ‘Turn on, tune in, drop out’; when he uttered it in his lecture, his erstwhile PhD supervisor Erik Erikson rose magnificently at the back of the lecture theatre and called out, ‘Excuse me, I’m dropping out’, and slammed the door behind him.

Yet, amid all this 1960s ferment, Hermínio already knew his own mind and seemed always to view the goings-on with a wry smile. His main teaching task was the first-year sociology PhD seminar, in which he began with a series of talks on ‘The nature of theory, explanation and prediction in social science’. I carefully recorded his first words: ‘A cursory reading of the philosophy of science may lead one to the premature conclusion that sociology is a series of abortions. But, like sexual intercourse, you are in the end bound to get it’ (that gave me hope). Until later, when Norbert Elias taught me to limit the attention I paid to

philosophers, I read widely in the philosophy of science, but I never found anything much that had not been covered, and covered better, in these first weeks sitting at Hermínio's feet. He discussed literature in French as well as English, and he even mentioned Louis Althusser before he had been much heard of in the Anglophone world, several years before he became briefly fashionable.

Later, Hermínio lectured to us on Marx, and under his guidance we also took apart Peter Blau's then-recent book *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (1964), an ancestral text of rational choice theory and an unsuccessful attempt to solve the 'macro/micro problem' (which continues to befuddle almost all American sociologists, so deeply imbued as they are with ideological individualism). Hermínio, I now calculate, was only in his early thirties, but the PhD students were already daunted by his learning. One of them commented to me that 'Hermínio is waiting for all the sociology to come in, so that he can synthesise it'.

Years afterwards, I was still rather in awe of Hermínio. In 1980, having dinner one evening in an Oxford restaurant with him, his wife Margaret, and Norbert Elias, I despairingly blurted out, 'How do you ever manage to read so much, Hermínio?' Margaret replied, with some asperity, 'Stephen, if you started reading when you got out of bed in the morning, and carried on reading until you went to bed at night, you too would read a great deal'. His reading provided ample outlets for his mordant wit. For example, in the early 1980s, when Anthony Giddens was publishing book after book, Hermínio described him as 'the ventriloquist of the *Zeitgeist*' (arguably, he should have said 'the ventriloquist's dummy of the *Zeitgeist*', but it is less elegant).

But back to Harvard in 1966–1967. One tends to forget how very British Hermínio seemed back then. Later in his life, he spent a good deal of time back in the Lusophone world from which he had sprung, and where his academic status was at last recognised (in that, and in his very limited recognition in Britain, his experience resembled Elias's). But in the 1960s, in spite of his not-quite-native manner of speech, he seemed very British. And so we shared the task of coming to understand this strange new country in which we found ourselves. I remember him observing that if one did not have a driving licence and a car to go with it, one was excluded from three-quarters of American life; that was a

handicap I rectified upon my return to Britain, but Hermínio never did drive. Even supermarkets were puzzling. They were full of unfamiliar vegetables: it is hard to believe, but I had never before tasted courgettes ('zucchini' in American) or aubergines ('eggplant'). On the other hand, in those days, they appeared to have only two sorts of cheese: one consisted of thin yellow rectangular slices of plastic, sealed in polythene, and called 'American cheese', and the other was exactly the same thing, but with holes in it, called 'Swiss cheese'.

There were more serious linguistic challenges. One was how to understand Talcott Parsons and people who wrote like him. A favourite example of mine is his thanks to his father:

who took upon himself the heavy burden of going through the whole manuscript in an attempt to improve its English style. *Whatever of readability an unavoidably difficult work may possess is to be credited to him.* (Parsons 1937: 7–8; my italics)

By then, C. Wright Mills (1959: 25–31) had already exploded Parsons's verbosity, and Chad Gordon (one of the Assistant Professors at the time) had joked to the first-year PhDs that 'It's easy: you read his sentences backwards, because the verbs come at the end like in German'. Yet it still remained a puzzle why so many people wrote so clumsily. Later, during the Watergate scandal and in connection with the USA's endless wars,<sup>3</sup> the political functions of such clumsy obscurity became widely recognised. But even today, it is less often questioned why ugly syntax and over-abstraction so commonly appeal to sociologists; among other things, they help sociologists to think that they are dealing with a complex social reality 'scientifically'. The phrase 'the Emperor's clothes' comes to mind.

Trying to understand how Americans thought, and how they perceived the world, became an intermittent thread in my own writings, culminating in my book *The American Civilizing Process*, in 2007 ('I don't think many Americans will like your book, Stephen', said Hermínio). It was just as much a question of how the British, and more generally the Europeans, perceived the USA. In among the weightier aspects of this problem, I never lost my interest in the differences between British and

American English. In the paper that follows here, I draw upon research that I carried out for, but did not include in, the book. I dedicate it to the memory of Hermínio and the time, long ago in America, when we became friends.

## American and British English

Linguistic differences and similarities are often sensitive markers for more general social differences and similarities between groups of people. As in the case of political institutions since Independence, American English in the course of its emancipation from British English became remarkably different and yet at the same time remained remarkably similar, depending on how one looks at it.

In his disquisition on the development of table manners in early modern Europe, Elias breaks off to write an 'excursus on the modelling of speech at court' (2012: 111–15). Its purpose is to illustrate not only how a courtly upper class in *ancien régime* France had effectively secured a monopoly of the power to set cultural models but, in particular, how *arbitrary* could be its judgements of exactly what was considered proper. The overall trend of civilising processes might be towards social standards gradually becoming more demanding and the danger of committing a social solecism becoming greater, but the actual character of what constituted an infringement might be virtually random. It is perhaps easier to see that element of arbitrariness in relation to spoken phrases than, say, ways of holding one's knife and fork. Thus, there was no semantic difference between saying 'un mien ami' and saying 'un de mes amis'—both phrases meant exactly the same thing, 'a friend of mine'; yet by the end of the seventeenth century 'un mien ami' had come to be regarded as 'smelling of the bourgeois', while 'un de mes amis' was defined as 'the way people speak at court'. Similarly, with 'defunct mon père' (my deceased father—bourgeois) versus 'le feu mon père' (my late father—courtly), 'Je vous demande excuse' (I beg to be excused – bourgeois) versus 'Je vous demande pardon' (I beg your pardon—courtly), and many other examples. In each of these three cases, it is the courtly version that has survived into modern French to the present day as the standard usage for everyone.

Although, as Pierre Bourdieu (1991: 43–65) pointed out, bourgeois influences on the French language increased later, it is significant that, in linguistic as in nonlinguistic manners, it was to a large extent the usage associated with the court that has survived in France. Indeed one institutional legacy of the absolutist era, the Académie Française, founded by Cardinal Richelieu in 1635, remains to this day the official guardian of what is proper in the French language. It was charged with responsibility to ‘fix the French language, giving it rules, rendering it pure and comprehensible by all’.<sup>4</sup> To the extent that this goal has been achieved, the Académie’s part in it must not be exaggerated: the standardisation of national languages (as again Bourdieu stressed) is generally entangled with long-term processes of state formation. In the case of France, the Revolution aided the spread of the *langue d’oïl* at the expense of the *langue d’oc* and other regional dialects (as they became), particularly by enhancing the influence of lawyers, writers, and politicians. Yet the process was far from complete a century later; as Eugen Weber (1979) showed, the rise of the printed media, the spread of railways, and military conscription were still helping to turn peasants into Frenchmen between the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War.

Nothing quite like the Académie Française ever existed in Britain, although a good deal of social moulding of language occurred there too, through influential institutions like the ‘public schools’ (i.e. *private* schools), the ancient universities, and, later, the BBC. Mugglestone (2003) traces the modelling of speech in British society through a study of a rather specialised genre of ‘manners books’ that describe the socially correct pronunciation of English. Mugglestone’s historical starting point is much the same as Elias’s, in the late Middle Ages. Yet the creation of a single prestigious ‘Received Pronunciation’ (also known in the twentieth century as ‘Public School’, ‘Oxford’, and ‘BBC’ English) only began in earnest in the late eighteenth century:

It was not until the second half of the eighteenth century that writers began to lament the variable state of English pronunciation, and to attempt to impose a fixed standard upon it. Since inconsistency was seen as being at the heart of the language’s decline, a system of correct pronunciation was considered crucial to fixing the language and halting the downward trend.

But while the establishment of a standard accent was promoted in the cause of mutual understanding, the debate was driven by a desire to align oneself with the correct group at a time of rapid social change. [...] Where speaking incorrectly incurred social exclusion, talking properly was a way of demonstrating membership of the most elite social circles. A provincial accent, in contrast, was seen as a barrier to entry to the most prestigious professions, such as the law and the church, where a refined and consistent delivery was considered essential. (Horobin 2016: 83–84)<sup>5</sup>

The process was gradual, of course. Peter Burke (2004) gives examples of the stigmatisation of regional accents in England in the eighteenth century; yet well into the nineteenth many famous people apparently retained their regional accents. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, 'RP' was a fully fledged class accent more than a regional one and was even perceived as the *absence* of accent. Many other languages have a more or less well-defined central or standard accent,<sup>6</sup> but for much of the twentieth century, Britain was especially notorious for its snobbery about accents. In that, it differed strikingly from the USA. Mugglestone (2000: 41) quotes Noah Webster (1758–1843), the pioneer American dictionary-maker and spelling reformer, who perceptively wrote:

While all men are on a footing and no singularities are accounted vulgar and ridiculous, every man enjoys perfect liberty. But when a particular set of men, in exalted stations, undertake to say 'we are the standards of propriety and elegance, and if all men do not conform to our practice, they shall be accounted vulgar and ignorant', they take very great liberty with the rules of the language and the rights of civility. (Webster 1789: 24)

Little wonder that when in 1780 John Adams, by reputation the most aristocratically inclined of the Founding Fathers, proposed the establishment of an American Academy on the French model 'for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English language', the idea was given short shrift (Mencken 1936: 7–8).<sup>7</sup> Webster better articulated the democratic, antielitist spirit of the American Revolution. He wanted to promote a language based on the universal usage of Americans, more regular, more predictable, and even his reformed spellings had a social motivation:



All persons, of every rank, would speak with some degree of precision and uniformity. Such a uniformity in these states is very desirable; it would remove prejudice, and conciliate mutual affection and respect. (Quoted by Cmiel 1990: 52)

In comparison with other large countries, the USA did achieve the high measure of the uniformity Webster desired. European visitors to America in the nineteenth century were struck by a *relative* uniformity of accent throughout the USA.<sup>8</sup> Certainly there were and are quite easily recognisable differences in accent between New England, New York, the South, the Midwest, and the West Coast. But, phonetically, the variation to be found within the small geographical area of the British Isles is vastly greater than in the huge territory of the USA; this was frequently noted by visitors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Bryson 1994: 46). And this relative uniformity arose long before it could be attributed to the influence of the broadcast media. It is all the more remarkable in view of English having been a second language for the growing numbers of immigrants.

In the nineteenth century, British people often commented adversely on Americans 'drawl' and their 'nasal' way of speaking (Larkin 1988: 153). Some of the wealthy Americans who travelled to Europe felt the need to adapt their way of speaking, to gain British approval. That was in accordance with the then-prevailing balance of power between Britain and the USA: Britain, it must be remembered, was then by far the greater power in world affairs—in its colonial empire, in its military and naval strength and, until the 1850s, even in its population—and relative cultural prestige reflected that. But the balance of power steadily changed. By the interwar years of the twentieth century:

For the first time, the great majority of British visitors showed themselves distinctly respectful of the rich, powerful, and exceedingly complex nation beyond the seas. During the period we have described as one of Tory condescension [1825–45], the travellers have tended to look down on the Americans; during the later period we have described as one of analysis [1870–1922], they tended to look at the United States with level gaze; but now they frequently tended to look up at America! (Nevins 1948: 403)

Today, one small symptom of America's hyperpower status is the spread of the American accent throughout the world (most pop singers sing in American). There is irony in nineteenth-century British snobbery, however: rather than American accents (and vocabulary) being in some way 'debased', there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that it was in Britain that changes, especially in upper-class ways of speaking, were the greater (Bryson 1994: 48–9; Horobin 2016: 131–134).

Captain Frederick Marryat, the naval officer and novelist, conceded that 'you may travel through all the United States and find less difficulty in understanding, or being understood, than in some of the counties of England, such as Cornwall, Devonshire, Lancashire, and Suffolk'. He suggested one possible reason:

The peculiar dialect of the English counties is kept up because we are a settled country; the people who are born in a county live in it and die in it, transmitting their sites of labour or of amusement to their descendants, generation after generation, without change; consequently the provincialisms of language are equally hereditary. (Cited by Nevins 1948: 183)<sup>9</sup>

There may be some truth in that: Americans were then, as they still are today, geographically highly mobile compared with the people of many other countries, although Marryat was exaggerating the rustic fixity of the English, for by the eighteenth century as many as one in six of them had had some experience of life in London (Wrigley 1967: 221).

Not only geographical mobility but also social mobility and social mixing influenced the modelling of speech. Tocqueville reported that:

Englishmen of education [...] complain, not only that the Americans have brought into use a number of new words [...] but that these new words are more especially taken from the jargon of parties, the mechanical arts, or the language of trade. They assert, in addition to this [...] that the inhabitants of the United States frequently intermingle their phraseology in the strangest manner, and sometimes place words together which are always kept apart in the language of the mother country. (Tocqueville 1961: II, 76–77)

As usual, Tocqueville saw the question from two angles. 'The genius of a democratic people', he wrote, 'is not only shown by the great number

of words they bring into use, but also by the nature of the ideas these new words represent'. Because most people in such a democratic society were more engaged in business than in study, most of the new words minted or adopted will 'serve to express the wants of business, the passions of party, or the details of public administration' (1961: II, 78–79). On the other hand, more disapprovingly, he noted the 'common expedient' of giving 'some unwonted meaning to an expression already in use', which led to a pervasive ambiguity and was 'a deplorable consequence of democracy' (1961: II, 80).<sup>10</sup>

Others were less charitable—and less analytical—than Tocqueville, seeing only linguistic anarchy in America. Marryat sneered that 'everyone appears to be independent and pronounces just as he pleases', and Matthew Arnold sniffed that 'they reform the spelling of the English language by the insight of their common man' (Nevins 1948: 184, 369). Fun was particularly poked at Americans' malapropisms; Marryat cited a congressman who said 'catamount' instead of 'tantamount' and then confused 'synonymous' and 'anonymus'. More than a century later, at the time of the Watergate scandal, there was merriment at the rise of the word 'burglarisation' in place of the simple old 'burglary'. Intellectuals derived endless enjoyment from the misuse of words by less well-educated people like Sheridan's eponymous Mrs. Malaprop. What made it possible to sneer as if this were a national characteristic of Americans, however, was the fact that—America being for so long more egalitarian and socially open than Britain—Congress was socially less exclusive than the British House of Commons.

None of this is to say that attempts were never made to prescribed standards of 'proper' speech. On the contrary, after the high tide of egalitarianism under Jackson, with the amassing of vast fortunes by a minority of *nouveaux riches* and the experience of 'pressure from below' (Elias 2012: 464–478) by the broader middle ranks of society, Victorian manners books in America laid down such tiny details as how parents should be addressed—'Mother' and 'Father', never 'Ma' and 'Pa' (Collier 1991: 40). Upper-class usages were known to upper-class people, who were aware of middle-class usages and disdained them; but it is less clear how effectively the 'middle class' were made aware that their usages 'smelled of the bourgeois', so to speak. Baltzell, in his study of the Philadelphia upper class (1958: 51), listed a number of differences current in 1940. They included:

	Upper class (usage or silence)	Middle class (upper-class taboos)
The household	The upper classes <i>live</i> in a <i>house</i> and <i>employ servants</i> to wash the <i>curtains</i> and clean the <i>furniture</i> , including a <i>sofa</i> ; they use the <i>toilet</i> , the <i>porch</i> , <i>library</i> , or <i>playroom</i>	The middle classes <i>reside</i> in a <i>home</i> and <i>hire help</i> or <i>domestics</i> to <i>launder</i> the <i>drapes</i> and clean the house <i>furnishings</i> which include a bedroom <i>suite</i> (like a suit) and a <i>davenport</i> ; they use the <i>lavatory</i> , the <i>veranda</i> , <i>den</i> , or <i>rumpus room</i> .
At the table	<i>Delicious vegetables</i> and <i>jam</i> <i>Tomato</i> (as in Otto)	<i>Delectable greens</i> and <i>preserves</i> <i>Tomato</i> (as in potato)
Money	<i>Rich</i> <i>High</i> (the price) <i>Cheap</i>	<i>Wealthy</i> <i>Dear</i> (the price) <i>Inexpensive</i>
In general	<i>Hello</i> (silence) <i>What?</i> <i>Enough</i> , thank you <i>Courting</i> I feel <i>sick</i>	<i>Pleased to meet you</i> <i>Pardon?</i> <i>Sufficient</i> , thank you <i>Dating</i> , <i>going steady</i> I feel <i>ill</i>

Several things are noticeable. First, the upper-class usages of 1940 appear generally—though not consistently—to be closer to British usage.<sup>11</sup> Second, the middle-class usages in several cases appear to be somewhat more pretentious than the upper-class equivalents, using a longer word of Latin etymology rather than a shorter one with Germanic roots (e.g. 'enough' versus 'sufficient').<sup>12</sup> Third, it appears from these examples and others listed by Baltzell that it is in general—though not consistently—the 'middle-class' usage that has become standard American usage more than half a century later.<sup>13</sup>

## Excursus: On the Politics of Euphemism

A contrary example from Baltzell's list, of the middle-class usage of 1940s America giving way to the upper class, is the fate of 'lavatory'. Not only in America, but perhaps especially there, the advance of the threshold of embarrassment and increasing feelings of repugnance towards the 'natural functions' is evident in ways of referring to the places appointed for

that purpose. Of course, both ‘toilet’ and ‘lavatory’ are already euphemisms—etymologically they both relate to washing, not to urination and defecation. But, since Baltzell wrote, most Americans seem to have abandoned first ‘lavatory’ and then ‘toilet’ in favour of ever more euphemistic terms like ‘bathroom’, ‘rest room’, and even ‘comfort station’. They are balanced by more informal, but nonetheless evasive, words like ‘john’ or (in Britain) ‘loo’.

Such euphemisms would seem merely amusing, were it not that similar processes can be observed in another field of human activity in which, according to Elias, the threshold of shame and repugnance has advanced over the generations: violence. George Orwell observed them in the middle of the twentieth century:

political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called *pacification*. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry; this is called *transfer of population* or *rectification of frontiers*. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called *elimination of unreliable elements*. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them. (Orwell 1970 [1946]: 166)

Orwell was writing in the light of what he had seen in his own time of the cruelties of British colonial rule, the Spanish Civil War, and Stalinism. In less extreme circumstances, Tocqueville (1961: II, 82–84) had already contended that ‘democratic societies’ have a predilection for abstract terms. Their insights provide an uncanny anticipation of the rich harvest of euphemisms from the American wars of the early twenty-first century: *contractors* (mercenary soldiers),<sup>14</sup> *extraordinary rendition* (secretly flying captives to countries where they can be tortured), *collateral damage* and *friendly fire* (killing innocent civilians or one’s own people by mistake), *illegal combatants* (prisoners of war denied the protection of the Geneva Conventions), *redaction* (censorship), and so on. These terms, just as

much as 'rest room' and suchlike, are instances of the process of hiding what is unpleasant or repugnant behind the scenes of social and mental life.

On reflection, it appears to be as misleading to talk in a static way about 'euphemism' as it is to speak of 'civilisation' or, still worse, 'civility' as something fixed and finished. What is significant is the *process*, how and how fast the successive socially acceptable terms follow upon each other. For each name sooner or later comes to call up the mental pictures it at first concealed. One should perhaps think of a 'process of euphemisation' or a 'euphemising process', analogous to the concept of civilising process. And the two processes are undoubtedly connected. Perhaps the mental pictures would gradually break through even if the threshold of repugnance, whether in relation to bodily functions or to violence, was no longer advancing. But it seems likely that, because people's feelings have continued to be subjected to civilising pressures, the speed at which new terms are needed to keep the pictures at bay is increased.

## Middling Styles

The tendency in America towards a middling common speech—'middling' in both a social and stylistic sense—has long been noted. Captain Marryat commented on a kind of social flattening of speech: 'If their lower classes are more intelligible than ours, it is equally true that the higher classes do not speak the language so purely or so classically as it is spoken among the well-educated English' (cited in Nevins 1948: 183).

Setting aside the condescension, Marryat came close to an insight that emerges from modern scholarship on the development of American English. Kenneth Cmiel (1990) traces the development of what he calls 'middling styles' of speech and writing. He points out that the American gentry of the revolutionary era inherited the neoclassical traditions of rhetoric, their words were 'refined and not vulgar, well suited for civic (and civil) discussions' (1990: 12). This was upset by the arrival of mass democracy in the nineteenth century. The historical trend in the USA has been towards the middling, at the expense of the vulgar and the grand.

Cultural categories of the cultivated and the vulgar still existed, contends Cmiel, 'but the clear sociological correlations of earlier times eroded'—the 'middling' styles were not simply 'middle-class'. The skill emerged of being able to switch between, and sometimes to mix, registers; Abraham Lincoln is the archetype, being able to express himself both in the folksy style and in eloquence of the very highest order. And finally, in place of the eighteenth century's scorn, there grew up a 'new respect for technical languages, the idioms of expertise'—a tendency that Tocqueville had observed in the 1830s but which Cmiel dates especially to the late nineteenth century.

How did these common 'middling' styles achieve their dominance? Cmiel pays great attention to the influence of grammarians, dictionary-makers, and university-based reformers. Not all of those to whom he refers were American, for intellectual traffic across the Atlantic remained dense. On both sides, they sought to 'create new verbal clues to distinguish high from low' (Cmiel 1990: 36). Some of these distinctions had the arbitrary quality of *un mien amil/un des mes amis*. For instance, with the disappearance of the second person singular personal pronoun *thou* from standard English and the rise of the use of *you* in both the plural and singular, it was for a time common to say *you was* in the singular and *you were* in the plural. Grammarians in the mid-eighteenth century declared *you was* to be a solecism, but it did not disappear from polite speech until early in the nineteenth century (Cmiel 1990: 36). Similarly, a wide range of verbal abbreviations gradually became narrowed down to a few acceptable ones. *It don't signify* gave way to *it doesn't*. More famously, *ain't* came to be considered vulgar, and *aren't* emerged from a whole range of early spellings as the correct form, even though *I aren't going to do that* is questionably grammatical (in that context, *aren't* appears to be a corruption of *amn't*, one of the contractions that became extinct;<sup>15</sup> see Mencken 1936: 202, and Bryson 1994: 47–48).

Given that very few people, even among intellectuals, read books about grammar, it may still be asked how such distinctions came to be absorbed by people at large. Mencken stressed the important influence of the 'schoolmarms' throughout the USA in stamping out what the lexicographers and grammarians considered incorrect in pronunciation and syntax.<sup>16</sup> The people who did have to read grammar books were school-

children, for whom many textbooks were written from the early nineteenth century. Mencken deprecated the schoolmarm's excess of zeal but recognised the benefits of their rule-making too:

They have thrown themselves valiantly against the rise of dialects among us, and with such success that nothing so grossly unpleasant to the ear as the cockney whine or so lunatic as the cockney manhandling of the *h* is now prevalent anywhere in the United States. And they have policed the general speech to such an effect that even on its most pretentious levels it is virtually free from the silly affectations which still mark Standard English. (Mencken 1936: 327)

One must not infer, however, that the grammarians, lexicographers, and schoolmarm were omnipotent. Even Noah Webster's spelling reforms suffered a mixed fate: most of those he introduced in 1828 in his *American Dictionary of the English Language* were dropped in subsequent editions; the ones that survived, such as *center* and *honor*, were already catching on at the time anyway (Cmiel 1990: 83–84). In all cases where the power of ideas or the strength of cultural influences is under discussion, it is necessary also to study the prevalent social circumstances that foster or impede their adoption. Here, Mencken showed great sociological insight when he suggested that, both in England and America, but especially in America, one should pay special attention to 'the influence of a class but lately risen in the social scale and hence a bit unsure of itself—a class intensely eager to avoid giving away its vulgar origin in its speech habits' (1936: 326). And, one may add, not just in speech habits but also in many other aspects of manners.<sup>17</sup> Mencken pointed out that the schoolmarm typically came from such a background:

The average American schoolmarm, the chief guardian of linguistic niceness in the Republic, does not come from a class that has a tradition of culture behind it, but from the class of small farmers and city clerks and workmen. This is true, I believe, even of the average American college teacher. Such persons do not advocate and practice precision of speech on logical grounds alone; they are also moved, plainly enough, by the fact that it tends to conceal their own cultural insecurity. (Mencken 1936: 326–27)



That a large proportion of their pupils—and the parents of their pupils—shared such a social background served no doubt to promote the reception of their message. Again, this is consonant with the late nineteenth-century situation of high social and geographical mobility, growing social and economic inequality, large-scale immigration, and pressure from below.

The outcome, by the late nineteenth century, was a *relative* uniformity, both geographically and socially, in American speech. Yet, it must always be remembered, part of the relatively uniform national standard is that a diversity of styles is the norm, that varied and conflicting idioms are accepted as correct, and that people learn to switch at will between—and sometimes to mix—styles and idioms. Mencken identified one of American English's key characteristics as 'its larger capacity (distinctly larger than that of present-day England) for taking in new words and phrases from outside sources and for manufacturing them of its own materials' (1936: 90). Mass immigration supplied new materials; many terms were taken in from Yiddish, for example, though a barrier still appears to have prevented the large-scale adoption of elements of African-American dialect. Trade, markets, and the professions were a major source of new materials, from which many words and idioms entered everyday language without being disdained by any effective model-monopolising elite, as was the case well into the twentieth century in Britain. Later, the mass media were to prove an even more abundant source of new words and phrases; slang in rapidly changing fashions was increasingly tolerated, even in some fairly formal contexts. Mencken noted the effect of Hollywood in this connection, even before the Second World War (1936: 301). These are instances of what Elias identified as a key trend in modern culture, simultaneously towards 'diminishing contrasts' *and* 'increasing varieties' (2012: 422–427). They are, in particular, symptoms of increasing functional democratisation.<sup>18</sup>

As this functional democratisation proceeded further, it became less and less easy for grammarians or their schoolmarm acolytes to seek to mould popular speech. Mencken quotes a precursor of the 'anything goes' school of thought, from as early as 1934:

The more people make a given mistake, the less it should be corrected. This fundamental principle, recognised by lexicographers and the more liberal grammarians, must be the basis of our thinking on the subject. Unlike arithmetic, where the more frequent an error is, the more attention it needs, the linguist must insist that speech errors proved to be very frequent are thereby proved to be not errors at all. (Dr Janet Rankin Aiken, quoted by Mencken 1936: 422*n*)

## Conclusion

Inspired by Elias's original excursus on the modelling of speech at court, this essay has attempted to show some of the social forces at work in the shaping of the English language in Britain and the USA. There has never been as effective a monopolisation of the modelling of speech in the USA as there has been in France and to a lesser extent in Britain, although in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century some individuals and groups appear to have achieved widespread influence. As in the American economy in the same period, a concentration and centralisation of power is evident, and it helped to produce a relative uniformity of standards across the USA, possibly greater than that achieved in Britain. The development of standard languages and linguistic standards<sup>19</sup> is a good example of the intertwining of 'spontaneous' and 'directed' tendencies in civilising processes. That is to say, taking the long view, the pressures on people to speak and write in more standardised ways across larger and larger geographical areas appear to have increased. These pressures arise both from conscious 'civilising offensives' (Flint et al. 2015) on the part of higher-status groups wishing to 'improve' the lower orders and from the 'blind' unplanned processes that unfold unintentionally within larger webs of interdependence (including the mass media and now social media).

On the other hand, more recently and over a shorter time span, authoritative sources of the modelling of speech appear to have lost influence. In post-Brexit Britain, no one will dare say 'The people have spoken, but they made a grammatical mistake'. More seriously, a process of *informalisation* in language is evident. The theory of informalisation

processes has been developed, notably by Cas Wouters in books and articles over the last four decades. It originated in a discussion among Dutch sociologists about whether Elias's 'civilising process' had 'gone into reverse' with the dramatic changes that became apparent in so many aspects of social life in Western countries from the mid-1960s.<sup>20</sup> The general conclusion from Wouters's sustained research is that there has not been anything as simple as a reversal but rather something much more subtle. As power ratios between important categories of people have become relatively more equal—notably between men and women (Wouters 2004), parents and children, and many traditional elites and nonelites (Wouters 2007)—relations between them have indeed become less rigid and formal, easier and more informal, but these more informalised styles are found to rest on a foundation of even stronger and more reliable habitual levels of self-constraint. Norbert Elias spotted this possibility as long ago as the 1930s, in brief comments on mixed bathing and more revealing bathing clothes, but the 'relaxation within the framework of an already established standard' (2012: 139) has proceeded much further since then.

One advantage of studying these processes in the modelling of language is that the element of arbitrariness in what is deemed superior or inferior and acceptable or unacceptable is more obvious. So the topic tends to be a little less emotive than, say, discussions of trends in the power ratio between the sexes and in their behaviour towards each other. It is a little easier to avoid conflicts over what is 'good' and what is 'bad'. But the underlying processes are not very different.

Let me end, though, by very gently relating this discussion back to Hermínio Martins. Very egalitarian in his relations with his students, he did not object to the informalising trends that were just becoming more marked—and being denounced under the label 'the permissive society'—when he and I met in 1966. Many aspects would have been a 'good thing' in his eyes. Yet at the same time, it could be argued that the shifting of the power balance between academics and students, which began quite dramatically in that period, was in part a 'bad thing' too. Students becoming 'customers' instead of pupils was one of the stepping stones on the way to the neo-liberal, marketised, philistine university system that Hermínio so eloquently denounced in the last decade of his life.

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## Notes

1. Strictly speaking, in one of those periods—the middle one, I think—I was technically hosted by Theodore Zeldin, but I saw more of Hermínio.
2. His claim to that status was disputed by George Homans, who told me (and no doubt many other people) that 'The trouble with Talcott is that he's a fine empirical sociologist, but *he's no good at theory!*'.
3. The Vietnam protest movement was just getting going in 1966–67; I was involved in a very minor way.
4. Quoted from the Academy's website ([www.academie-francaise.fr](http://www.academie-francaise.fr), 28 January 2005). In this context, the word *fixer* is used in the sense of to stabilise—not the American sense of mending or remedying something, although perhaps it amounts to the same thing.
5. Thus 'RP' may be seen to have fulfilled a similar function in imperial Britain to that of *Satisfaktionsfähigkeit*—being judged of adequate social rank to give satisfaction in a duel—which, according to Elias (2013: 49–134), played a part in the formation of a unified upper class in imperial Germany.
6. The 'Algemeen Beschaafd Nederlands' discussed by Goudsblom (1988) is one example. Goudsblom's main thesis is that ABN is a model, serving the two purposes of communication and distinction, which are sometimes at odds. Its history reflects the increasing integration of the Dutch state. Both pronunciation and vocabulary demonstrate its continuously changing characteristics. Current developments correspond to the 'diminishing contrasts, increasing varieties' formula of Elias (2012: 422–427).
7. A similar proposal was actually debated by the US Senate in 1806 but was defeated. The American Academy of Arts and Letters was to take upon itself the task of linguistic policeman early in the twentieth century but pursued it only intermittently and half-heartedly (Mencken 1936: 49, 63).
8. Peter Burke (personal communication) points out that there is similar uniformity in Australia and Brazil, and he is 'tempted to assume that immigration was a key factor, a sort of melting-pot effect, and 500 years

(maximum) is not enough for regional accents to develop'. I am uncertain whether that assumption is compatible with the fact that a *distinctively* Australian accent—different from any British regional accent—was noted as early as the 1820s, only three or four decades after the First Fleet arrived at Botany Bay.

9. David Hackett Fischer (1988) tried to demonstrate—not to all critics' satisfaction (see Bryson 1994: 45–46)—that elements of seventeenth and eighteenth-century British regional dialects have recognisably persisted to this day in certain regions of the USA. Krapp (1925) also argued that Western American English was largely derived from Northern English. See the symposium on Fischer's book in the *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3/48:2, 1991: 223–308.
10. A modern example of this might be the confusion that now prevails between 'uninterested' (taking no interest) and 'disinterested' (being detached or objective or having no pecuniary interest) —although the *Oxford English Dictionary* shows that the two meanings have exchanged places more than once. A second, more specifically American, might be the fusion of 'exhibit' (a particular item on display) and 'exhibition' (a display of many exhibits)—so that 'exhibit' in the singular, British, sense becomes difficult to express in American. Or, again, the disappearance in American English of the distinction between 'alternate' and 'alternative'.
11. One clear exception in the list is 'sick' versus 'ill', the latter (at least at that time) being the British usage in all social classes. The distinction between U (for upper class) and non-U, introduced by Ross (1954) and taken up by Mitford (1956), attracted much attention in 1950s Britain. Baltzell's list of distinctions rather resembles Ross's, although interestingly the social connotations of *lavatory* and *toilet* were reversed in Britain.
12. It should be noted that when Baltzell spoke of the 'middle class', he meant roughly what a British speaker would mean—as opposed to the American usage now current, which has expanded to include at least the 'respectable' working class in steady employment.
13. In this, trends in linguistic usage are symptomatic of many wider cultural trends. For example, in one of his essays on modern trends in the regulation of sexuality, Wouters (2014) speaks of 'the significance of American upper classes losing a cultural battle to the middle classes and to peer groups' and highlights how the social regulation of teenage sexuality is connected with patterns of social competition and mobility. Wouters's reference to peer groups relates to peer group pressure in colleges across the country, which, he has argued, helps explain the spread

of relatively uniform sexual mores across the USA and by extension (in a personal communication) the relative uniformity in American speech.

14. This euphemism is especially poignant in view of the remarks about mercenary soldiers in the Declaration of Independence.
15. However, one still occasionally hears 'amn't' among educated people in Ireland.
16. Mencken (1936: 419–420) lists examples of grammatical mistakes identified in studies of American schoolchildren in the early twentieth century. The grammatical standards by which they were judged were astonishingly demanding by comparison with the standards of a century later; they include, for instance, the failure to use the subjunctive, saying *If I was* instead of *If I were*.
17. Social moulding of handwriting may be mentioned alongside that of language. Thornton (1996) traces the teaching of penmanship from the various styles considered appropriate in colonial days to gentlemen, merchants, and women, to the stress in nineteenth-century schools on uniformity of writing in order to produce model, uniform citizens. Writing instructors even went so far as to use truss-like appliances to force the hand into the proper writing position. To this day, the handwriting of American students is far more uniform than that of their British or Irish counterparts.
18. 'Functional democratisation' is a term used by Norbert Elias to distinguish the process from political democratisation; the two may be imperfectly correlated (and, in the short term, not necessarily at all). The concept has nothing to do with functionalism in the old sense. For Elias, functional democratisation is a possible feature of chains of interdependence of all types, and refers to a broad trend towards the power ratios between categories of people becoming gradually less unequal.
19. I am indebted to Johan Goudsblom for this almost Hegelian turn of phrase.
20. For an historical account of the phases of this discussion from c.1970 to the present, see Wouters and Mennell (2015).

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# The '68 Disobedient Generation' and the Rise of *ChiVirLa*

Mike Gane

*68 'a été une fausse révolution qui a fait peur comme une vraie*  
(Pierre Bourdieu, cited in Audier 2009: 247)

The concept of 'generation' has had a somewhat chequered history in sociology. It is missing altogether in some dictionaries-encyclopaedias of sociology, while in others it is regarded as a concept on a par with that of social class as an analytic tool. And reading texts where the concept is used, it is clear that it is rarely defined with any consistency or precision. Unlike social class a 'generation' is linked directly with time and continues horizontally in the presence of other generations. Thus unlike social class it also directly implicates a parental element: in the 1960s the universities were acting '*in loco parentis*' for students below the age of 21. The 'beat' generation of the 1950s did not centre its own revolt around age-related issues. The 1960s generation, however, defined itself in terms of a

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specific youth culture, and something called the ‘generation gap’ appeared. In the wider sense then, the sixties generation involved a much wider social compass than the ‘student,’ and the many studies of working-class youth culture and popular culture more generally became for a time perhaps to the 1980s a major concern of sociological research. On the other hand it is difficult to conceive a generation as an ‘imagined community’ as such. The particular focus here is the question: does generational experience influence its theoretical formation as many have argued? Is autobiography a privileged method to examine it? Was the sixties generation of students a ‘disobedient generation’ as Alan Sica and Stephen Turner have argued (2005) with a particular legacy in sociological theory? If so how did the experience of this generation embed itself in a new social movement and in a unique time frame?<sup>1</sup>

There have been some wide-ranging historical studies of the student movements in cross-cultural comparative perspectives. Some studies are extremely hostile to what has been called the ‘mega-merde’ by Roger Scruton or ‘La Pensée 68’ by Luc Ferry—the hotly disputed claim that there was a specific complex of anarchist anti-humanist thought that emerged in that decade (Audier 2009, examines these claims in detail and rejects them). Others have argued that there was no specific content to the sixties rebellion or that it was so varied that the idea of a unified movement is a mirage and the revolution was ‘elusive,’ ‘introuvable’ (Aron), and botched (Althusser).<sup>2</sup> Examining the work of Alvin Gouldner who argued in 1970 that the students formed the basis of a new social movement and were important new agents of social change, James J. Chriss has recently written that the students were never a coherent homogeneous generation, they were without a political organization and were simply ‘atomized in the labour market and rendered impotent’ as they left the educational institutions (2015: xxxi). All these claims I suggest have to be looked at in the context of a more general set of claims about the sixties as witnessing a cultural revolution (drugs, sex, and rock ‘n’ roll)<sup>3</sup> even exploding not in 1968 but in 1966: *The Year the Decade Exploded* written by Jon Savage (2015). In this perspective, student ‘disobedience’ was just one element in a much wider scene of cultural differentiation. And in this scenario the other major focus was the active civil disobedience (of the mentor generation’s

Bertrand Russell) to nuclear war, and the disobedience of Norman Mailer and others of the parental generation who inspired and joined the protests to the other war, the 'conventional' war in Vietnam. Unlike the conscription for earlier wars, the US conscription for Vietnam had a very specific generational character. It was also a war that became extremely unpopular and regarded by many as illegal and illegitimate. As conscription began at the age of 18 when at the time the age of majority was 21, this was generation against generation in a spectacular form. The demonstrations against the war became international, and the 'Grosvenor Square' demonstrations in London (the location of the American Embassy) in 1968 were led by students but involved wider public support. Another level of complexity to the enigma of the sixties is the set of contradictory claims about subsequent developments with some arguing that the values and 'spirit of the sixties' continue to be a resource for resistance to neo-capitalism, while others claim that sixties values have been a key resource of post-socialist postmodernism and for neo-capitalism.<sup>4</sup>

It seems easy to answer the question as to what the sixties student rebellion wanted. It wanted very directly and immediately the ending of the system of '*in loco parentis*.' This was indeed granted very quickly, but with the ending of this system, it was demanded that the students be represented on decision-making bodies of the university. And this was also granted very quickly. Politically the students wanted university authorities to disentangle themselves from social inequalities (gender, racial, age, physical handicap, work exploitation, etc.), from imperial involvement (many students in the UK had come from former colonies), and from unsustainable economics (pollution, environmental damage, climate change, etc.). There were also other wider demands—for example, the contraceptive pill be made available to unmarried women at 18 as well as married women, that same sex activity be legalized to 18- and then 16-year-olds (this took a lot longer to achieve). There were a whole range of separate demands emanating from the women's movement. A general questioning of the protestant work ethic in advanced societies led to other demands. Drugs that were legally available in the early 1960s became illegal soon after (1965 in the UK, 1966 in the USA) the moment of LSD tripping was brief. Opposition

to the war in Vietnam was more sustained and lasted to the withdrawal of the US forces in 1975. These were some of the objectives of the students in that period, but there were other more specific histories in each country and each institution. There were also elements of the student movement that, paradoxically, were strongly engaged in protests that had no concretely defined demands, and which some sociologists saw as a purely expressive revolution (Bryan Turner, for example, in Sica and Turner).

It is interesting to note from autobiographical accounts that some students were radicalized and stayed so, but some students were on the other hand de-radicalized by what they saw and witnessed. But it is indeed important to notice as these autobiographies suggest that the specific experience of student revolt was marked by the year class of the student: the 'adult' cohorts after 1970, with one or two exceptions in the UK, quickly lost radicality or on the other hand hyper-radicalized into terrorism (in Germany and Italy). Others, the most theoretically acute became quickly aware that the capitalist enemy began to mutate. This is particularly clear in the writings of Virilio, Foucault, and Baudrillard. But when the politics of neoliberalism eventually triumphed, around 1980, with Reagan and Thatcher, a further split occurred—between those who began to theorize and resist the new political economy such as Stuart Hall (the 'Great Moving Right Show') and those who simply dropped their opposition to capitalism and began to participate in the effervescence of postmodernism (clearly linked to the liberation from socialism). Some identified a shift to a new third stage of modernity, now 'post-hegemonic,' within which old domination patterns no longer existed, and so the concept of resistance itself was to be abandoned (see Nikolas Rose 1999, and even Jean Baudrillard 2010). Subsequently, some members of the continuing 'hard left' (and others) began to talk of the complicity of the libertarian strands from the sixties feeding into the neoliberalism (this whole spectrum has been analysed at length in Audier 2015).<sup>5</sup> It is certainly curious to note that Anthony Giddens was at UCLA 1967–68 and that some have indeed made the connection between this experience and his eventual attempt to beat a path *Beyond Left and Right*.<sup>6</sup>

## The Myth of 'Generation 68'

But first it is important to note that the idea of generation as central in sociology has a pre-history. Perhaps the most important contribution is from Karl Mannheim's well-known texts. But by the 1960s there were others.<sup>7</sup> June Edmunds and Bryan Turner in their synthesizing study *Generations, Culture and Society* (2002), adopt David Wyatt's framework developed in his *Out of the Sixties* (1993) with its suggestion that there are active and passive generations: a generation is marked-out by a traumatic event, it has its own mentors, its own demographic features (down turns after war, or population upturns), privileged intervals between generations bracketing each generation, sacred places are created for each, each generation has a 'happy few' through whom mutual recognition takes place. An active generation is one which brings notable social change, often associated with war. There can in fact therefore be struggles between generations for resources, and a privileged generation can attempt to exercise a form of social closure, in such conditions resentment can arise by one generation against the perceived advantages of another.<sup>8</sup> The problem is complex because even within one generation there can be advantaged and disadvantaged sections (Edmunds and Turner 2002: 17–19). Their discussion tries therefore to develop a comparative approach to identify active and passive generations: thus the 'baby boomers' in Britain were an 'active' generation, while the next generation, 'Generation X,' had 'very little to do' (Edmunds and Turner 2002: 34); in France after Sartre's 'active' generation, 'there was nothing for the Foucault/Derrida generation to do except refine the ideas of their predecessors or deconstruct/undermine them' (Edmunds and Turner 2002: 67). Their thesis also examines and rejects the ideas of Allan Bloom which suggest the sixties left radicals had a profoundly negative impact on American culture (relativism, multiculturalism, lowering of standards, etc.); it finds that in order to sustain this thesis, Bloom had to both ignore the significance of the Vietnam War and that the new right emerged and reversed almost all the left's progressive social programmes. The conclusions reached by Edmunds and Turner are that the changes brought about in the 1960s were 'generally positive'—they argue that on the one hand

Sixties intellectuals [...] used Marxism as a theoretical base for radicalism but quickly saw its limitations and took issue with intellectual Marxists who espoused it but did nothing practical with it [...]. The turmoil of the 1960s, far from weakening intellectual output, was especially fertile for the development of new paradigms in social thought and for influencing the shape of new social movements. (Edmunds and Turner 2002: 42)

On the other hand the sixties generation also developed ‘what could be described as “enlightened entrepreneurialism.” Figures such as Richard Branson, Anita Roddick and Alan Sugar captured the spirit of the sixties in their enterprises [...]. They showed that life could not be all about hip-piedom’ (Edmunds and Turner 2002: 44).

There are, evidently, some very basic theoretical and analytical problems with this approach: fundamentally, there is no convincing analysis of any one generation followed by another. If the New Left and the New Right of the sixties were different sides of a single ‘sixties generation,’ then the assessments of Allan Bloom and the neoconservatives should, if the thesis maintains any coherence, apply to the generation of Young Americans for Freedom (a right-wing organization which supported the Vietnam War) and the emergence of a new generation of Ku Klux Klan members which developed in opposition to the new Black sit-in and jail-in movement enveloping the American South. American youth voted both for and against Nixon in the 1968 presidential election. Generalization about these events and these periods in terms of generations is not just tautological but can be highly misleading.

These issues are actually well brought out in the collection *Disobedient Generation* by the contributors (Andrew Abbot, Jeffrey Alexander, Michael Burawoy, Craig Calhoun, Patricia Hill Collins, Karen Schweers Cook, John Hall, Paolo Jedlowski, Hans Joas, Karin Knorr Cetina, Michel Maffesoli, William Outhwaite, Saskia Sassen, Laurent Thévenot, Bryan Turner, Stephen Turner, Steve Woolgar, Erik Olin Wright). Bryan Turner himself in his contribution admits that he was remote from student protest at Leeds (there was little, he says) and did not sympathize with the extreme student activities in London, Essex, or Paris. His loyalties lay, he says, much more with the Old rather than new New Left that is with Raymond Williams and E. P. Thompson rather than the much

more radical line of Perry Anderson. Although Alan Sica in his introduction to the collection tries vainly to evoke a general ambiance of the 1960s, he reflects the heterogeneity of the experiences of the contributors. The first contributor, Andrew Abbott, was definitively alienated from politics for the rest of his life after experiencing mass demonstrations that reminded him of Nazi parades. Jeffrey Alexander was also alienated from left politics by episodes of extreme student led intolerance he witnessed. Karin Knorr Cetina regarded the idea of a disobedient generation as problematic since she had always been disobedient: and she specifically disliked the egalitarianism left over from the sixties. Some were won over to Marxism, derived from Anderson's New Left publications, they developed through their subsequent career, notably Michael Burawoy, E. O. Wright, and Saskia Sassen, and others moved away and distanced themselves from it. Some contributions recount the complexities of relating to the war and the war draft, others to the complexity of race, or gender, and sometimes both. One or two consider the issue of disobedience, but few relate any specific act of disobedience. In terms of identifying a 'disobedient generation,' there is a notable absence of focus on traumatic event, sacred place, common mentors, shared theoretical frame, structures of solidarity, and common enemy. There is no coherent evocation of New Left or New Right as intellectual positions, only a vague regret:

What is most interesting about [...] ordinary socioeconomic data is the fact that conditions then for the bottom two economic quintiles of the population were not much worse than now, in relative terms, and in some ways even better [...] The difference is one of social conscience. At that time, ordinary people read Michael Harrington's exposé, *The Other America* (1962), in vast numbers, and under the Kennedy/Johnson view of the world, poverty and its attendant ills should be eradicated from the country. Today no such voices exist with any political clout, and that has made all the difference ever since Reagan took office in 1980 and began the stringent Rightist counter-revolution through which we are still living. What took official, governmentally sponsored liberalism only a few years to enact, and the youthful counterculture perhaps a half-dozen years to act out, the Right has spent a quarter of a century dismantling, piece by piece. (Sica and Turner 2005: 11)

It seems here that the Reagan ‘counter-revolution’ appears, suddenly, out of nowhere. In fact the ‘counter-revolution’ began with the triumph of Barry Goldwater in the Republican Convention of 1964 (Goldwater announced that ‘extremism in the defence of liberty is no vice’) and Reagan’s election as Governor of California in 1966 (we have to ‘clean up the mess at Berkeley’ was his order of the day).

What should we make of this?

## The Politics of Student Rebellion<sup>9</sup>

### The USA

The ‘troubles’ in the universities in the USA were the subject, in 1970, of a *Presidential Commission on Campus Unrest*, known as the Scranton Report. This investigation was to consider the whole context of student rebellions and make recommendations. The report benefited from consultations and contributions from with a number of well-known sociologists and other social scientists, like S. M. Lipset, Martin Trow, Jack D. Douglas, Nathan Glazer, and John Searle. Most of these sociologists would now be known as neoconservatives. Many of these academics had also previously written on the University and the troubles.<sup>10</sup> It is interesting that there does not seem to have been any input of ideas from the neoliberal Public Choice School in this 1970 document.

But what was going on? Certainly things were changing. The Scranton Report notes a long history of disobedience before the 1940s in the USA and then the arrival quite exceptionally of a ‘silent generation’ in the period of the 1950s (Scranton 1970: 21).<sup>11</sup> But is this justified? Certainly not in France, where 1950s politics were dominated by decolonialization wars in Vietnam and North Africa. The New Left in Britain was born in the 1950s not the 1960s. It is not true of the USA either, despite the idea that these were the years of the ‘rebel without a cause.’ Reading *New Left Review* no. 5 of 1960 (September–October), there is an article (reproduced from the US journal *The Nation*), by Kenneth Rexroth, called ‘Students Take Over’ (pp. 38–41). The author says ‘anyone with any



sense of travelling about the country lecturing on college campuses during the last five years, could tell you something [...] was cooking. [...] The sit-ins swept the South so rapidly that it was impossible to catch up with them [...]' (Rexroth 1960: 39). The sit-in, followed by the 'jail-in' (producing overflowing jails) was the non-violent civil disobedience technique of black youths against segregated areas. Rexroth notes the 'New Revolt of Youth' was well underway in the South with wide support in the North. The sit-in became by the mid-sixties a well-worn instrument of protest adopted widely in the different context of student protest.

In the USA the Scranton Report noted that: 'In 1964–65, the year of the Berkeley disturbance, there was much more turmoil on campus than the media reported or the public knew of' (Scranton 1970: 29). It estimated that 'of 849 four-year colleges responding to a national survey that year, the great majority reported some kind of protest' even if these were largely protests over local single issue problems. But most of these protests were [...] traditional, single issue protests. By the end of the decade, things had changed: 'In a statement to this commission, J. Edgar Hoover reported that disruptive violent protests resulted in over 4000 arrests during the 1968–69 academic year and about 7200 arrests during 1969–70' (Scranton 1970: 39). There was escalation and radicalization.<sup>12</sup>

In the mid-sixties as the Scranton Report points out, as the Vietnam War escalated, a new phenomenon was invented at the University of Michigan: the teach-in (Scranton 1970: 30). The invention was named by the anthropologist Marshall Sahlins (see his later account in 2009). The Report notes that radicalism resulted in a new wave of intolerance on the campuses: 'When the teach-in reached Berkeley, it was simply a mass demonstration in which no supporters of the war were heard' and those who defended the war 'were shouted down and, at times, physically attacked' (Scranton 1970: 30). As the war escalated, the Report says

the federal government decided to defer college students from the draft on the basis of their academic standing. Draft boards asked universities to provide such information, and students and faculty passionately debated the propriety of compliance. There were major student demonstrations over the question, and some of them borrowed directly from the Berkeley scenario. One of the most notable of these demonstrations occurred at the

University of Chicago, where the administration building was occupied and many demonstrators were later suspended [...] Increasingly, radical groups charged that the university attempts to impose disciplinary sanctions were only further evidence of the university's larger complicity in the evils of American society and the war effort. (Scranton 1970: 31)<sup>13</sup>

The Report investigated the radicalization of black students. In 1965 a black political party was created in Alabama, and in 1966 whites were expelled from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Black power ideas were crystallizing in the summer of 1966 when the Black Panther Party was established in California. In May 1967 at Jackson State College 'students fought with police for two nights. The National Guard was called out, and one person was killed.' There was a change in focus as the new black militancy targeted the university itself as an instrument of black oppression. 'Their attention thus focused not only on curriculum, faculty appointments, and student living conditions, but also on non-academic matters like the university's hiring practices and its impact on local housing conditions' (Scranton 1970: 33).

The escalation of the student movement's radicalization passed from Berkeley to Columbia in 1967–68: the new issues around the university's links with the military and extensions to the university (a gymnasium) in an area that affected the surrounding black community. The logic is outlined in the report: 'occupation, faculty and administration confusion, indignation of the moderate students and faculty, a major strike, and, finally, endless consideration of reforms in administration, governance, and disciplinary procedures' (Scranton 1970: 36). But whereas Berkeley was primarily a protest for civil liberties, Columbia was different says the report: the student movement 'was to transform it into a revolutionary political weapon with which they could attack the system. Furthermore [...] considerable property damage was done, and some students forcibly resisted arrest. For their part, the police reacted to the Columbia disturbances with excessive force and violence' (Scranton 1970: 37). The report indicates further escalation at other colleges: 'black students at Trinity College [...] held the school's trustees captive until their demands were accepted. In November 1968 at San Fernando Valley State College in Los Angeles held officials at knife point' (Scranton 1970: 38). Then the

gradual emergence of terrorism itself: over 8200 bombings 'were attributable to "campus disturbances and student unrest."' In 1969 'a custodian at the University of California at Santa Barbara was killed by a bomb in the faculty club.' The report noted the increasing militancy of minority groups 'other than Blacks, particularly among Puerto Ricans, in the East, and among Chicanos in the West and Southwest' often making 'common cause with black and other students' (Scranton 1970: 38).

## The UK

In the UK the student movement was undergoing extensive radicalization as well, as reported in Sheila Rowbotham's autobiography of those years (2000). Two of her friends from Berkeley arrived to visit in 1964, friends 'who were part of the emerging Berkeley student movement which was to influence the British student protests of the late sixties.' They were, she says, 'my introduction to the new American radicalism. Frank had been arrested for conspiracy (one of the "Oakland Seven").'<sup>14</sup> The international contacts were continued in her account, notably in relation to the Grosvenor Square demonstration of March 17, 1968. She reports a meeting on 16th 'to discuss tactics' where 'Members of the anti-authoritarian German student movement had come over and were clustering at the back of the hall [...] we all spun round to watch them show how to make a human wedge to break through police lines [...] and linking arms and chanting, 'Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh' (Rowbotham 2000: 170).<sup>15</sup> She also reports on the first congress of Revolutionary Socialist Student Federation (RSSF) on June 14, 1968. 'I had never spoken to so many people before. It was a warm, sunny day and I was wearing a black and gold miniskirt. To my horror, as I walked to the mike I was greeted by a tumultuous barrage of wolf whistles and laughter' (Rowbotham 2000: 188); there appears to be nothing in her autobiography on the second congress of the RSSF, November 1968 (Rowbotham 2000: 203)—did she not attend after the 'miniskirt fiasco'?<sup>16</sup>

One of the central ideas that emerged was inspired by accounts of the occupation of the Sorbonne in Paris. These accounts emphasized the opening up of a liberated space within bourgeois society (Glucksmann

1968: 103–107). Such was the euphoria Paul Virilio could reflect on the ‘joy of having been able to sleep in a lecture theatre at the Sorbonne, have breakfast in a box at the Opera, eat lunch in a director’s office, find a nursery in the library, find a games room in the Renault showroom, indeed of having been able to find in France, its stations, airports, schools, shops, as a space to be occupied, thereby reversing the alienated state of everyday life’ (Gane 1999: 91). What puzzled Raymond Aron (1968) was that the May revolution did not seem to have real content: it was best described as a ‘psychodrama.’<sup>17</sup> Later, Alain Badiou and Giorgio Agamben suggested that what a modern state cannot tolerate is ‘the coming community’ symbolized by Tiananmen Square in China, a ‘singularity,’ ‘a being whose community is mediated not by any condition of belonging [...] A herald from Beijing carries the elements of response. What was most striking about the demonstrations of the Chinese May was the relative absence of determinate contents in their demands’ (1993: 85).

The emergence of the RSSF in the UK marked a considerable radicalization of the student movement. At its congress in November 1968 at the LSE, it produced its Manifesto. Its aim (in general the overthrow of capitalism) ‘cannot be achieved through parliamentary means and it therefore constitutes itself as an extra-parliamentary opposition.’ Its specific aims in relation to education were to establish fully ‘comprehensive higher education, the abolition of the binary system, public schools and grammar schools.’ It added that ‘The transformation of this sector requires the generation of a revolutionary socialist culture.’ And, more specifically, it demanded: ‘an end to bourgeois ideology—masquerading as education—in courses and lectures; full democracy in access to higher education; abolition of all exams and grading’ (*NLR* 1969/53: 22). It advocated and attempted to put into practice not soviets but ‘red bases’—an idea taken from the revolution in China, with the idea of occupying the universities for almost continuous teach-ins.<sup>18</sup> But, as Caroline Hoefferle sums up in her account of the RSSF, ‘The New Left, Maoists, Trotskyists, anarchists, libertarians, and independents within it constantly argued over issues, tactics, and goals for the organization. At the November 1968 RSSF conference, actual fist-fights broke out among the student delegates [...] By the end of 1969 the RSSF had a total of only 200 members, and in 1970 it ceased to exist’ (Hoefferle 2013: 107–108).

Rebecca Klatch rightly points out 'When people think of "the sixties," they commonly associate the era with the civil rights protest, with the student, anti-war, and feminist movements, and with the rise of the New Left. Yet the untold story of the 1960s is about the New Right' (Klatch 1999: 1). Thus the organization, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) might be very familiar, the right-wing organization Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) founded in the same year, 1960, remains virtually unknown and unresearched.

## The Reactions to Student Radicalization

The principal reactions to student unrest are perhaps threefold:

### Neoconservative and Authoritarian

It perhaps should be noted that the first reaction to student radicalism in the USA (as far as I know no study of the British case exists) was the systematic work behind the scenes of the FBI. The 'COINTELPRO' (Counter Intelligence Programme) started in 1956 to disrupt the progression of the Communist Party of the USA, and the activity of the FBI spread to any other organization that was suspected of being communist in nature, particularly the civil rights movement and Martin Luther King. Eventually, the FBI's actions became the subject of suspicion, and an inquiry was set up in 1976, known as the Church Commission, which revealed its extensive infiltrations and methods. The FBI was interested in the student movement and particularly New Left activities and activists against the war in Vietnam. The interventions went far beyond information gathering as the Church Report revealed: its actions included many different kinds of harassment, psychological and physical of individuals, even up to beatings and assassinations. All kinds of false information was produced on individuals and events and sent directly by Hoover to political leaders. Yet by the early 1970s Nixon had lost confidence in the FBI and its inability to find communist plots behind the student protests.

Seth Rosenfeld (2012), a student in the 1960s, tracked the FBI through the Freedom of Information Act, and he found there had been a concerted campaign against Clarke Kerr, first at the head of Berkeley, and then president of the University of California as a whole. Thirty agents had been employed by the FBI to investigate the university producing a report which identifying 72 people as ‘security risks’ (individuals who could be arrested in an emergency, or simply sacked). More than this the FBI falsified information about who was a communist or sympathizer; they also fabricated letters from students complaining about lecturers.<sup>19</sup> Clarke Kerr had refused to discipline students in the way Hoover thought right. When in 1966 Reagan became the Governor of California and thus ex officio regent of the university, he had already been primed by Hoover, and at the first meeting of the regents, Kerr was sacked. President Johnson rated Kerr highly and wanted him as secretary of education, but an FBI security check maintained Kerr was ‘pro-communist.’

Ronald Reagan was elected Governor of California in 1966 and immediately put into practice his election promises to clamp down on campus disorder and the growing drug and pornography culture that was spreading among young people. The police were instructed to crack down on the most visible case of drugs and pornography around Sunset Strip. What began as a series of small incidents soon escalated due to maladroit actions of the police, and within a short time there were major riots. Reagan after removing Clark Kerr ordered clampdowns on student protest by brutal policing (Savage 2015: 482ff). The Scranton Report was scathing on such policing. It noted that the police were often ‘undermanned, improperly equipped, poorly trained, and unprepared for campus disturbances [...] Sending civil authorities on to college campus armed as if for war—armed only to kill—has brought tragedy [...]. If this practice is not changed, tragedy will come again’ (Scranton 1970: 12).

## Liberal and Democratic Reactions

Karl Popper made the suggestion that the problem in the USA was that student radicals were not pacifists: it was essential to allow discussion of the validity of the Vietnam War. The solution was to allow conscientious

objections to this specific war: in a paper in 1968 he said 'there are people who feel it their duty to fight for the United States, provided they can see that the war is waged for the defence of the United States, but who feel that they cannot conscientiously fight in Vietnam. Clearly such more scruples should be respected.' He stressed that it was the Nuremberg trials which established that it was 'the conscience of every human being' as 'the ultimate court of appeal with respect to the question whether a certain command is, or is not, to be resisted' (Popper 1994 [1968]: 126–277).

In the UK on June 15 and 16, 1968, 'more than forty vice-chancellors and principals met at Downing College, Cambridge and exclusively discussed the student movement' (Barnett 1969: 46). They backed the NUS to the consternation of the radicalized students: 'On one occasion, NUS did successfully intervene; at Leicester, Geoffrey Martin, NUS President, who happened to be a personal friend of both the vice-chancellor and the Union President, skilfully cooled out both sides and dissolved the confrontation into fruitless negotiations' (Barnett 1969: 46); the administrators and politicians are building up a 'body of experience' in league with the NUS to contain the student movement (Barnett 1969: 47); to launch a 'nation-wide pacification programme [...] promising university reform and student participation. Revolutionary students will have to confront this initiative, which for all its apparent feebleness may prove difficult to handle' (Barnett 1969: 49).

David Martin, Professor of Sociology at the LSE, who later briefed Margaret Thatcher 'on the student revolution' (Martin 2013: 145), recounted the ambiance: Robert MacKenzie 'early on warned us trouble was travelling our way from California, not least because we had so many American students, many seeking exile as dissidents. MacKenzie was very upset when a picture of Lenin was installed in the departmental office, but such was the atmosphere he dared not take it down' (Martin 2013: 149). Martin notes, however, that the 'disruption lasted no more than three years. When a small group of us, Robert MacKenzie, Edward Shils, and Martin Lipset met in Norwich in 1970 to defend the university, another student generation had arrived, anxious to be lawyers and accountants' (Martin 2013: 146). This was not quite true of other universities; for 1970 a new issue arose in the UK: the record-keeping of files on students by university administrations. Once such files had been

discovered at Warwick, other university student bodies demanded access to their own files. When this was refused there were a series of break-ins—at Essex, Hull, London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, and Oxford. When access was denied to the records at Oxford, ‘about 500 students then forced the gates open and began an occupation of the Delegates room,’ and protests ‘involved up to 1200 students in teach-ins, dances, marches and petitions’ (Hoefflerle 2013: 158). Various student actions continued into the 1970s (2013: 170–176).

The liberal response in the USA, direct legislation by mid-1970 ‘over 30 states, had enacted a total of nearly 80 laws dealing with campus unrest’—dealing with financial aid, dismissal of students and faculty, criminalizing the denial of ‘free use of university property and facilities to members of the university community’ (Scranton 1970: 40). In some cases funds were diverted from some colleges to others with ‘fewer protests.’ Gradually the protest movements subsided, as in France, without escalating into terrorism (Germany, Italy).

Theorists like Habermas were cautious: ‘It is difficult to estimate adequately the order of magnitude of the protest movement. On the one hand, the protagonists’ self-estimation seems to me groundless.’ He was particularly clear on the sociology: ‘Students are not a class, they are not even the avant-guard of a class, and they are certainly not leading a revolutionary struggle. In view of the results of actionism, I consider this self-delusion in the grand style pernicious.’ But there was something positive he insisted: ‘I would not reject a broad historical perspective [...]. The only way I see to bring about conscious structural change in a social system organized in an authoritarian welfare state is radical reformism. What Marx called critical-revolutionary activity must take this way today’ (Habermas 1971: 48–49). And E. P. Thompson became highly critical of the growing ‘poverty of theory’ in Marxism particularly in its Althusserian form in the early 1970s.<sup>20</sup> On the basis of his historical studies of the eighteenth century, he began to insist on the importance of the bourgeois achievement of independent law: ‘the notion of the regulation and reconciliation of conflicts through the rule of law—and the elaboration of rules and procedures which, on occasion, made some approximate approach towards the ideal—seems to me a cultural achievement of universal significance’ (Thompson 1977: 265).



## Neoliberal Authoritarian: *ChiVirLa*<sup>21</sup>

The 1971 text by Buchanan and Devletoglou, *Academia in Anarchy*, can be read now as an exercise in the new art of neoliberal 'governmentality' (conceived as reflection on how to govern in a field of free autonomous subjects) by the transformation of these subjects into rational economic actors, entrepreneurs of themselves in a competitive matrix. As it was a new kind of exercise in the late 1960s and applied to higher education, it appears as a particularly clear intervention revealing all the basic assumptions of this mode of analysis. It is possible to argue that Reagan's authoritarian actions as the Governor in California in the field of higher education were compatible with this text and certainly foreshadow the Reaganite revolution in American politics a decade later. In approaching this it seems clear now that the rise of neoliberalism was the result of considerable intellectual effort and propagation. It certainly did not pop up out of the blue and has been the hegemonic ideology of the renewal of the capitalist economies world-wide.<sup>22</sup> Buchanan and Devletoglou simply argue that what they do is to apply 'first year economics' of the most elementary kind in the discipline (anyone who took A level Economics, or a first year University course in Economics in the 1960s, would recognize the conceptual grid). The problem they undertook was to apply their model to a new object: the university. What is interesting then is to examine not what one might expect of an analysis of the economics of a university—where the funding comes from and how it is dispensed to support the educational process—but the project to transform the educational process itself, to revolutionize the university in a new way. Thus it is not just the student who will be transformed but the whole set of relationships from top to bottom: bringing into existence a new kind of academic leadership, administration, funding system, teaching patterns, and above all a new kind of stake of each party in the 'enterprise,' that is, a university.

It is clear in the book that this is no impartial analysis, throughout the text exhibits high level of contempt for liberals, liberal administrators, and liberal faculty. The chaos in higher education, notably in California, is a mess that needs to be cleaned up, in the interest of the taxpayers. On the one hand firm measures need to be taken against student 'terror' by

simply applying the existing penal apparatus more firmly. Where this apparatus is not being applied, the existing academic leadership should be removed. But this would be incomplete without diagnosing the real underlying problem: why did such chaos arise in the first place? Here the book does not want to wander into politics or social issues but wishes to remain on the ground of the economic grid. The problem is simple: education is a free good for the student, and thus it is treated with contempt; the university teachers are sitting on tenure and have no incentive to be guardians of property; the administration is inclined to appeasement as a mode of living comfortably; the governors themselves are nominal, remote, and unskilled in government. Hence there is not one problem but many, and they can all be traced to the fact that here is an institution organized around common property, and therefore de-valued and defended by no one. The diagnosis is that the patient is ill and requires discipline, in this case some kind of equivalent to market discipline. These propositions were developed in what became known as the Public Choice School, around Buchanan and his colleagues.

Buchanan was later to say, however, that 'I do not now rank this book high among my own publications.' It seems he had come to believe that proximity to the events had had a negative effect on the analysis: 'For the only time in my career, I responded to the challenge of the current [...]' (2007: 115). There might be more to it however, and there is a suggestion that there were grave theoretical problems in this text. In fact the neoliberal economists in this period, particularly around Gary Becker, were themselves radicalizing their theories very rapidly. Not only was there the general extension of the theoretical field to any situation where there were 'scarce resources' and 'opportunity costs,' there was also the far more radical idea that economic reason could be applied wherever there was a 'reality' to which an individual would be required to react. Foucault noticed this and commented: Becker's new *Homo oeconomicus* is any conduct that 'accepts reality': 'Rational conduct is any conduct which is sensitive to modifications in the variables of the environment and which responds to this in a non-random way. This is a colossal definition, which obviously economists are far from endorsing [...]' (2008: 269). This new imperial threat of a new general positive science linking economics and psychology to all the other intellectual disciplines was plainly evident.

Buchanan and Devletoglou's 1971 text looks decidedly archaic in this wider optic. And reading it today it is clear that they do not argue for a new definition of the student but that the student as consumer, who already exists, should not be allowed to be an absolute sovereign (for this would make the consumer a terrorist). They object to the new assertion of unlimited power of students as consumers, and appeal for checks and balances—through the development of markets in higher education. They do not apply Gary Becker's model of a consumer as producer, nor the notion of human capital and entrepreneurialism, but remain on the ground of exchange: of buying, selling, and consuming, which they see, naively even bizarrely, as a middle ground between consensual sexual relations on the one hand and violence on the other. This gives the reader of this text a sense of moving from one non sequitur to the next non sequitur, since the student is not primarily a consumer either directly or indirectly in a market of buying and selling. The student has to produce but does not produce his or her own 'satisfaction' (i.e. Becker's model of a consumer), except in the utopian ideal of a university without examinations (and thus qualifications), which Buchanan and Devletoglou resolutely reject. Their project, however, came to be part of a sophisticated political programme that disabled conventional styles of criticism.<sup>23</sup>

The authoritarian matrix of these proposals was revealed not long after the 1971 text on the crisis in the universities was written: the Allende government in Chile was toppled by a military coup which brought Augusto Pinochet to power bringing a dictatorship which lasted 16 years (1973–89). The neoliberals saw this as an overthrow of their number one enemy 'totalitarianism' and came to the support of Pinochet.<sup>24</sup> First they sent in the 'Chicago Boys,' the economists, and then the Public Choice Boys, and Buchanan himself. In 1981 Hayek said 'Don't confuse totalitarianism with authoritarianism. I don't know of any totalitarian governments in Latin America. The only one was Chile under (former Marxist president Salvador) Allende' (Fischer 2009: 327). Terrorism applied by Pinochet did not come in for criticism, this was reserved for socialism. It was later revealed that the CIA organization had played a key role in preparing the coup, and subsequently sustaining it, as they had in Indonesia in the mid-1960s, where there had been mass murders of the Indonesian

Communists (Anderson 2013),<sup>25</sup> followed by the implantation of economists trained in California called ‘the Berkeley Mafia’ (Klein 2008: 68).

## Conclusions

The university ‘troubles’ and student movement activism were actually a bubble. After the initial grievances concerning *in loco parentis*, free speech on campus, and other university issues concerning inequalities, the movement collapsed, as new students arrived. As Rebecca Klatch points out, the leftist organizations declined rapidly, but the right-wing ones did not, and the subsequent period saw a remarkable rise to power of neoconservatives and neoliberals (often at odds with each other). The gains: civil rights legislation against segregation and the 1970s legislation on women’s rights. The gay and women’s lib: movements were kept alive by journals and various mobilizations outside the university. Significantly, the women’s movement split into different factions, egalitarian vs libertarian, heterosexual vs lesbian, socialist vs supremacist, second wave vs third wave, and so on. But the problem of the continuity of a radical movement in the university is that of the transmission of information from cohort to cohort—a considerable amount of information is required to understand the logic of local events between students and university authorities: how much information did a student arriving in 1970 have of the events of the previous two or three years—the activists had left the scene, and there was little documentation as to what had happened? Because the university administration and academic staff were permanent members of the institution, a collective memory, both for and against, the ‘events’ was sustained, as is clear in academic careers of *The Disobedient Generation*. There then followed a struggle over the meaning of these ‘events’ between academics in different disciplines, leading in the 1980s to direct attacks in the national press in Britain on disciplines like sociology and geography and to some extent philosophy and the wider humanities were seen as part of the ‘troubles.’ If there was a particular ‘legacy’ in social theory of a ‘disobedient’ sixties generation, it was highly ambivalent (there were always competing schools) and in the end defensive: the particular matrix of sixties intellectual radicalism did not well prepare

social theory for the scope of the neoliberal revolution to come (as Wolfgang Streeck 2014: 30 has noted).

In this perspective then, it is interesting to look at the formation of the academics influenced by student radicalization: we can take *The Disobedient Generation* as something of indication of the kind of reflecting the New Left were doing. What is clear from this collection is that some student-academics were radicalized further and sustained this in various ways, others were de-radicalized and either moved to the right or abandoned such projects altogether. The idea of a 'disobedient generation' becomes highly problematic. Not only is there no clearly defined identity to the generation, it is also not clear that social theory itself as represented by the majority of these autobiographies relates to 'disobedience' or to anything other than a protest against the Vietnam War and racism, inequality, and the failures of democratic processes and the rule of law. Certainly some of the autobiographies provide an account of continued critical thinking about neo-capitalism, imperialism, but these do not seem to represent a main stream of thinking from the 'disobedient generation.'

It is interesting to compare these autobiographical statements with New Left radicalism today. Wendy Brown, for instance, points out that

while corporations developed research and administrative "campuses", universities have become increasingly corporate in physical appearance, financial structure, evaluation metrics, management style, personnel, advertising, and promotion [...] The UCLA business school, the Anderson School of Management, privatized in 2012. The school chose to forego \$8 million a year in state funds in order to gain flexibility to raise tuition, spurn salary caps, and spurn limitations on fundraising, partnerships, and admissions protocols, all of which compromised its competitiveness with Harvard, Yale and Stanford [...].there is barely a whimper of protest against developments such as corporately sponsored research institutes and schools and even donor-sponsored and donor-organized programs of study and courses. (Brown 2015: 199)

Colin Crouch has written of the way in which the transition from student as citizen to student as consumer has led to new 'distortions' of knowledge itself (Crouch 2016: 132–136). Thomas Docherty, Professor

of English at Warwick University, has also noted the shift from teaching and research based on knowledge to that based on information, in his view a disastrous transition. He was suspended in 2014 for ‘inappropriate sighing’ and making ‘ironic remarks’ and has argued that a new authoritarianism is being installed in educational institutions in order to extend the neoliberal regime: “‘wrongdoing’ now extends to cover anything that can be classed as dissent—including what was once regarded as proper professional duty to debate, argue or criticize. [...] Criticism is now a punishable offence’ (Docherty 2015: 60). This case gives a sharp new contemporary meaning to disobedience, since Docherty was suspended for ‘insubordination.’ Warwick has also seen the significant expansion of teaching by contract (‘zero-hours’) staff with no representation in the university.<sup>26</sup> His judgement is that today ‘the university absolves itself of any proper social responsibility for a world of massive structural inequality, preferring instead to internalize a logic of aggressive competitiveness for individual gain and self-advancement’ (2015: 61). Docherty received considerable support from students, and it is clear that during the recent period students have been far from completely passive.<sup>27</sup>

It is possible now to see that arising in the 1960s a revolution to implant a quite different model from the classical liberal university by stealth over a much longer period was initiated, and is still in process. It had as its aim the radical transformation of the nature of student life in higher education, of the student into *homo oeconomicus*—and this does not mean as Foucault pointed out ‘an anthropological identification of any behaviour whatever with economic behaviour. It means simply that economic behaviour is the grid of intelligibility one will adopt on the behaviour of the new individual. It also means that the individual becomes governmentalizable, that power gets a hold on him to the extent, and only to the extent that he is a *homo oeconomicus*’ (Foucault 2008: 252). Hermínio Martins commented on this via the 1971 book by Buchanan and Devletoglu: “The idea of students as “customer” of their universities and nothing but “customers”, seemed bizarre to me (and I imagine to many other teachers, at least in the UK) at that juncture, certainly as the chief organising concept of university life, but the work turned out to be much more prophetic than I realised [...]. Soon the notion of university students not being customers [...] will in itself appear quaint, if not

unintelligible' (Martins 2012: 38, n63). Academics, write Grahame Lock and Hermínio Martins, 'are driven to redefine themselves as "knowledge entrepreneurs." So, in response to the question "What do you do?", the appropriate answer is, "I am in the knowledge business" (or the knowledge industry), as others might say, "I am in insurance". They are to be seen as producers, recyclers, distributors, advertisers, repackagers, assemblers and disassemblers, merchants, sellers, touts and disc jockeys of "knowledge products"' (2009: 167).

Should one celebrate the 50th anniversary of 1968? Yes, but as Hermínio Martins would say: without any illusions.

## Notes

1. Rather than a simple review of the book *The Disobedient Generation: Social Theorists in the Sixties* by Sica and Turner, I draw on a large range of autobiographies of activists and counter-activists to look at the claims that the sixties were uniquely important. One study even attempts the *Autobiography of a Generation: Italy, 1968*, by Luisa Passerini, a very strange work; Tariq Ali's account (1987) is also sub-titled 'An autobiography of the Sixties.'
2. In his autobiography *The Future Lasts a Long Time*, Althusser admits he did think revolution was possible but the precise moment of opportunity was fleeting and could 'only last a few hours.' It was the Communist Party that actually 'organised the defeat' (1993: 230–231, emphasis by Althusser).
3. During the second Anti-Vietnam War demonstration in London in 1968, I saw, as the march preceded down The Strand, a group of policemen talking. I stood next to them and they were discussing 'the great unwashed' before them.
4. Although I was born in 1943 and thus I am just outside the generation as defined by Sica et al., I was a late arrival at university in 1965–68 (Leicester) and 1968–71 (LSE). I was involved in radical politics at both universities. The character of the anti-student radicals interested me from the start—from the Law Professor at Leicester, Prof. Jan Grodecki, who blocked the student occupation of the Library (the students wanted it open all night) thinking the students were on a Nazi mission to burn books, to anti-student radical supervisors for my doctoral work at the

LSE (Professors David Martin and Donald McCrae) for whom the student rebellion was a form of conformity to an aberrant norm. But James Buchanan and Nicos Devletoglou whose book I read at the time and who regarded old traditional university as ripe for neoliberal transformation I regarded as completely eccentric and with no future.

5. In this chapter I use Mirowski's 13-point identification of neoliberalism as a guide to conceptualization (Mirowski 2013: 53–67).
6. See Bryant and Jary 1997: 5.
7. Lewis S. Feuer, who taught sociology at Berkeley, developed a critique of Marx based on the idea that generations were more significant than class. In his 1969 introduction to his selection of writings by Marx and Engels, he noted Marx's reaction to Bakunin's appeal of anarchism to Russian students.

When Bakunin in 1869 had looked forward to a social revolution led by a phalanx of forty thousand revolutionary student youth at the head of the peasants, Engels commented apprehensively: "How awful for the world [...] that there are 40,000 revolutionary students in Russia without a proletariat or even a peasantry behind them [...]. If there is anything which might ruin the Western European movement, then it would have been this import of 40,000 more or less educated, ambitious, hungry Russian nihilists: all of them officer candidates without an army" [...]. This phenomenon of generational conflict [...] fell outside the purview of Marx's historical materialism. The sons, often from noble families, acted with pure idealism; it was their custom to destroy themselves to prove that their assassinations were deeds of unalloyed altruism. This heightened ethical consciousness, and gravitation to suicide, took one into the innermost core of the human psyche (Feuer 1969: 24).

8. This is a constant theme in journalism on the subject of generations. Tiffanie Darke writes 'Rave, fuelled as it was partly, but not wholly by the dance drug ecstasy, equipped Generation X to rewrite the rulebook for society [...]. So where is Generation X now? All we hear about is millennials, those pesky digital natives with their lumberjack shirts and artisan coffee habits [...]. Or baby boomers, with their big fat final-salary pensions who have decades of Saga holidays ahead' (2017: 8). The problem of *Baby Boomers and Generational Conflict* is dealt with at length in Jennie Bristow's recent study. Her parents both graduated from the LSE in 1969, and she writes as a member of Generation X about the



baby boomers as a 'social problem' (2015). Serge Guérin and Pierre-Henri Tavoillot ask whether *La Guerre des Générations aura-t-elle Lieu?* (2017): their answer is that it is much better to think of the family and schools and universities as institutions of intergenerational solidarity; indeed, this should be ratified in a formal social pact (2017: 227–238).

9. I do not have space here to discuss the politics of sexual revolutions and many other aspects of the major shifts of the 1960s, animal rights, green politics.
10. Habermas points out that these sociologists did not predict the student protest movement. And the neoliberal economists, though claiming to be the only predictive social science, did not either.
11. This observation seemed to be confirmed by the impression of others: 'Throughout the 1950s, magazines and newspapers berated the young as members of a "silent generation"—politically apathetic, intellectually passive, caring less for social causes, than for economic security, preoccupied with their private lives' (R.H. Pells 1985, cited by Furedi 1992: 192, who added that 'there was even concern about the lack of political engagement on the campuses').
12. In the UK: Trevor Fisk, the President of the NUS reported that 'Of 23 instances' of student action in 1968, the *casus belli* that sparked off the trouble varied widely. Five centred around student demands for representation on college governing bodies—Aston, Leicester, Keele, and Birmingham Universities, and Regent Street Polytechnic. Another eight were concerned with a variety of essentially campus issues, ranging from the suitability of the Director and subsequent disciplinary action (LSE), examination reform (Hull), the use of student buildings (Bristol), the activities of campus police (Leeds), academic dissatisfaction and strained communications (Hornsey and Guildford Schools of Art), library facilities (Manchester College of Commerce) to inadequate transport facilities between annexes (Birmingham College of Education). The other ten were universities where visiting students were subjected to violence or stimulated violent demonstrations (Oxford, Sussex, Cambridge, Essex, Leeds, East Anglia, Kent, and Bradford). 'Of the thirteen instances involving campus issues, ten led to sit-ins and three to physical occupation of college property' (Fisk 1969: 423).
13. The Report discusses a third issue: policing and the effects of excessive force (34–35).
14. Frank's companion Nancy, Rowbotham remembers as having 'a most impressive tattoo—a butterfly on her buttock. She showed it to me with

- pride [...]. Before Nancy's butterfly, my own efforts at not being a nice girl paled into insignificance' (2000: 86).
15. This account is quite different from the one given by Tariq Ali who was chairing the meeting (1987: 178–179). This simple discrepancy between accounts is a simple warning that every eye-witness interpretation should be given independent verification.
  16. I did attend this conference. It was almost entirely taken up with voting on motions, more and more surreal, for a Manifesto.
  17. Tony Judt wrote in his autobiography 'By any serious measure, nothing at all happened [...]. At the time I thought Aron unfairly dismissive [...]. Today I would be disposed to share his contempt, but back then it seemed a bit excessive' (2010: 111).
  18. Issue 53 of *NLR* is also interesting in that together with material on a special feature on university as red bases, it also has an early article on the Chinese Cultural Revolution (by Bill Jenner). What is interesting is the paucity of information but the number of political lessons drawn from it. It emphasized the role of youth, mobilized by Mao against the establishment that had begun to take the capitalist road.
  19. It is interesting that Caroline Hoefferle did not investigate the police records, the National Archives at Kew, as David Fowler pointed out in his review of her study of the British student movement (*English Historical Review* (2014) 129: 1548–1549).
  20. The *New Left Review*, which began in 1960, divided in 1962 when Perry Anderson took over as editor. E. P. Thompson left the board, while Anderson led the journal towards new European Marxist thought, both Trotskyist and Althusserian, as it radicalized. The debate between Anderson and Thompson was summed up in Anderson's *Arguments within English Marxism* (1980). The student milieu at Leicester University in the late 1960s was dominated by Anderson's influence in a journal called *Sublation* 1966–67, via the presence of Anthony Barnett, which introduced Althusserian theory into the debates.
  21. The acronym for Chicago, Virginia, UCLA neoliberal groupings (see Peck 2010: 102).
  22. For example, Wendy Brown notes recently:

It is remarkable how quickly all strata in public universities—staff, faculty, administrators, students—have grown accustomed to the saturation of university life by neoliberal rationality, metrics, and principles of governance [...]. Also on the horizon are new “enterprise zones”

encircling public universities, where businesses large and small will make direct use of university goods, including research, technology, consultants, and cheap university labor. Not only does this vision pose a striking contrast with the classic university-town ambiance of cafés, bookshops, pubs, and thrift stores, it literalizes as it spatializes the domination of the university by the needs and purposes of capital and spatializes as well the merging of business, state and academe. (Brown 2015: 198)

23. The bind implanted by neoliberal thinking is well summarized by Colin Crouch: the Buchanan approach he says

represents nearly all state activity as the self-seeking and self-aggrandizement of political figures and officials. For this school, a proposal to develop a public service should not be seen as having anything to do with the substance of the service in question, but as politicians and officials expanding their scope for patronage. From this they drew similar conclusions to their friends at Chicago: keep as much as possible in the market, away from the public sector [...] we need to register the dilemma in which the combined Chicago/Virginia approach leaves us in relation to issues like distribution, pollution and environmental damage. We are told that these are not matters for firms, as their duty is to maximize shareholders' profits; if we want action on them, we will have to turn to politics. But when we arrive at the door of politics we find Chicago/Virginia people waiting there to warn us never to turn to politics for anything, as governments are at best incompetent and at worst corruptly self-seeking. (Crouch 2011: 62–63)

24. Curiously one of Milton Friedman's doctoral students of 1957, Andre Gunder Frank, was in Chile advising Allende. He had resolutely rejected neoliberal economics arguing that economic backwardness was a result of imperialist styles of economic domination and that neoliberalism could only be applied in a country like Chile by violence and terror. He wrote a blistering open letter to Milton Friedman denouncing the complicity of neoliberal economics with the illegal seizure of power by Pinochet.
25. This is one of Benedict Anderson's last essays: he had been expelled from Indonesia after reporting the installation of the dictatorship and banned from the country until 1998.

26. A report in *The Guardian*, November 16, 2016 by Aditya Chakraborty and Sally Weale noted that 68.1% of teaching staff at Warwick were on temporary or 'atypical' contracts.
27. Henry Giroux has written of the 'awakening' in recent years of new international student protests against some of the extreme measures and effects of neoliberalism, its attack on democracy, its 'intellectual violence,' its 'war on youth.' His report focuses particularly on 'the Quebec Student Protest Movement' (2014: 155–180), and he argues the London demonstrations of March 2011 should be considered as symptomatic of a new period of discontent and protestation.

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# The Information Revolution and Its Implications for Democracy

Laurence Whitehead

## Introduction

I served on the original selection committee that appointed Hermínio to the lectureship in the Sociology of Brazil at the University of Oxford's Latin American Centre, and I was his colleague there from his appointment to his retirement. As my interest in, and knowledge about, Brazil gradually increased, we came to overlap on successive rounds of academic activity at the LAC. However, my Portuguese remained inexcusably primitive, and I could never compete with him on any topic that required strong command of the language. My early education in Portuguese came in part from reading his essays on Salazar's Portugal of the 1960s (powerful work which did much to secure his appointment). Later, I shared various of his Brazilian students (covering the politics and political economy topics that were marginal to his interests), and eventually I even found myself reading his more demanding theoretical writings in Portuguese. I probably became more informed, and certainly more fascinated, by his

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work after his retirement, when he no longer felt under such institutional constraints to deal with contemporary Latin American issues, and was freer to engage with more foundational issues of social theory, where his true expertise lay.

Thus it was that, in 2015, I turned to his dense and demanding volume *Experimentum Humanum: Civilização Tecnológica e Condição Humana* (2012a) while preparing to write the essay that follows. Before presenting that text, I wish to record our email exchange of April/May 2013. As the reader will observe, this dealt with broader issues than those covered in my own eventual text of two years later. But the dialogue is worth reproducing as an indication of the way he continued to interact with those colleagues whose work strayed (at least partially) into his own domain of complex analysis. On April 30, 2013, I opened the exchange with the following comments on his earlier essay ‘Tecnociência e Cultura’, which foreshadowed pp. 70–143 of the *Experimentum* volume:

Over the weekend I read this paper with some care, and found it powerful, original and highly illuminating. I think it is one of your strongest short pieces. I certainly learnt a lot about the history of the relevant debates.

I have a few random thoughts to add:

- (i) You do not ever reveal what you understand by ‘consciousness’. So I continue to cling to the old idea that this is something humans can have, but not their machines, however computationally advanced they become. On that no doubt too traditional a view (too much like ‘only we have immortal souls’) I can still believe that Vico lives on, despite incredible and still accelerating scientific and technical advance.
- (ii) In the second half of your paper you present me with a striking and impressive list of thinkers who disagree with my core assumption, and who can therefore allow their reasoning about cyborgs to run wild. You persuade me that these authors have some powerful ‘insights’ that I need to consider more seriously. Still, in the end, it is not clear to me who they represent, or whether they convince readers outside their own cultish circles. Could it be that you are taking their *jeux d’esprits* too seriously?

- (iii) If we do take these prognostications seriously, but (like me) without granting that AI can lead to what I understand by ‘consciousness’, then perhaps—as I think you hint indirectly in your final paragraph—they are really far more narcissistic than futuristic. In some cases they have imagined fantastical or at least metaphorical futures that are really intended to make the bulk of stupid currently existing humanity sit up and become won around to the techno-utopian illusions of the cult. After all, we know that nearly all science fiction dates very quickly, because on inspection it is mainly commentary on what already exists more than revealing what has yet to come. In other cases some authors may attract a wider following (e.g. scientology) targeting those in the current society who most need religious consolation, and solidaristic certainty. Their audience is not the farsighted and enlightened, but rather the gullible, those unable to cope with the loneliness and mortality of the human condition—which is all that there really is on offer.

The following day he replied *inter alia* in these terms:

The questions regarding consciousness I have of course been thinking about over the years. However, I have not written a proper text on the subject which is the only way in which one can sort out one’s thoughts on anything let alone on matters of this kind. I am committed to giving one of the keynote addresses to the meeting of the Society for the Philosophy of Technology in July in Lisbon. My topic is the metaphysics of information, and consciousness has to come into it. I am unable to accept the dominant naturalistic/physicalistic views, even when they appear in the most astonishing fashion as with Galen Strawson, who argues that physicalism entails panpsychism! John Foster, an Oxford philosopher who has probably retired by now, has ably defended a neo-Cartesian substance dualism of the physical and the mental, almost alone in the contemporary world, and it is good to have someone of such ability and heterodoxy around. I fear Oxford will have fewer and fewer of such people in the future.

Later the same day he added:

I am afraid the currents of thought I addressed in the text you commented on no longer pertain to crackpots, oddballs and weirdos. Far from it. In the

last decade or more, there has been a process of what I have called 'normalization' of the proposals and stances I discussed. Transhumanism has entered the mainstream. One important landmark of this process was the publication of a many-authored volume on the convergence of technologies sponsored jointly by the National Academy of Sciences of the USA and the Department of Commerce of the same country. Transhumanist themes appeared and were sympathetically discussed in that volume, though only some of the contributors could be characterized as transhumanists or singularitarians. Subsequently the topic of the convergence of technologies with its transhumanist intimations was the subject to at least two collections one sponsored by the European Parliament and the other by another European entity. In Britain, a DEMOS report entitled 'Better Humans' was published a few years ago. The Institute for the study of the future of humanity in the ancient University of Oxford is headed by Nick Bostrom, certainly the most distinguished philosopher of transhumanism in the world today, and at least one of his collaborators is associated with the general direction of transhumanism, i.e. the progression towards a higher species (partly through successive 'enhancements', genetic, neurological, pharmacological, and other, and closer intertwining of digital computational devices and the human body/brain) or towards a shift to a computational existence of human/more-than-human intelligence. Both Google and Microsoft have backed financially various transhumanist projects, including the annual Singularity University in the USA (which in the future may be held in other countries), and Ray Kurzweil, the most assiduous, enthusiastic and influential of transhumanist thinkers is now director of research for Google or Microsoft, I can't remember which at the moment. Lots of Silicon Valley people broadly sympathize with a transhumanist vision, a version which has gone far into academia as enhancement propaganda, a bland and somewhat diluted version of transhumanism (of which there are now several varieties, which I discussed in another paper). I could go on... Needless to say I find the transhumanist vision, at heart, abhorrent, but it is slowly permeating scientific and technological thought. Certainly DARPA is interested, has been interested for years and a recent report submitted to it on 'biomod's', biologically modified humans, in the first instance military personnel, was summarized in the NYT.

I wish we had been able to pursue this discussion further. It still seemed to me that the key question is what we are to understand by 'consciousness' and whether, therefore, such awareness can be attributed to any

non-living entities. Of course, the old way of approaching this was religious—it was a divinity that had infused some of its creatures with ‘souls’. But nowadays it is the materialist approach that prevails, through all the discoveries of modern neuroscience and so on. Although that still leaves great scope for controversy about the precise nature and extent of ‘consciousness’, it is increasingly possible to trace how this seems to have arisen. In particular, evolutionary reasoning and evidence suggests that the emergence of nimble fast-moving creatures trying to survive in rapidly changing environments (e.g. vertebrates moving onto land) must have required consciousness-developing adaptations. These might include self-awareness, capacity to anticipate the behavior of others, ability to focus attention very sharply on narrow subsets of information in an emergency, flexible decision-making, and eventually such second order features as regret at making the wrong decision, unlimited associative learning, and then broader reflexivity. These capacities require a lot of specialization and absorb a considerable amount of energy, such that animals with full consciousness periodically need to sleep. The context for all this development is the struggles for survival and reproduction of creatures operating in an intensely competitive environment and characterized by mortality. No matter how ‘intelligent’ AI devices may become, they do not originate in this manner, their propagation and resource provision is not determined by such competitive pressures, and they are not subject to mortality.

These seem to me to be strong materialist arguments for doubting that they will ever prove capable of developing what is generally understood as the ‘consciousness’ of living creatures. The Turing test is important, but it is about mimicry rather than subjectivity. Would such devices ever need to sleep (perchance to dream)?<sup>1</sup> Could they learn to appreciate music as distinct from tracking noise? How could they construct a narrative (or appreciate a novel) in the absence of a personal emotional life? How, in the absence of a social upbringing and training extended from infancy to adolescence, could they acquire the tacit knowledge required by conscious beings when sifting an unlimited flux of events and sensations? On what basis could they acquire empathy for others, or the fear of death?<sup>2</sup>

Clearly my last brief exchange of ideas with Hermínio was taking me well beyond the scope of the topic I eventually tackled (in a lecture at the

Tec de Monterrey in Mexico City in September 2015). Nevertheless it seems worth reproducing here as a precursor to my own text, not least for what it reveals about his collegiality, the provocativeness of his ideas, and the vast scope of his intellectual capacities and ambitions.

It is perhaps worth adding that Professor Bostrom also spoke at the same lecture series as I did and that the plan was to have a further lecture by Hermínio, although regrettably that planned invitation was too late.

## The September 2015 Lecture

The Impact of the Information Revolution on Democracies—Old and New

This lecture will try to cover a very large area and so will have to be highly compressed and selective. The main focus will be on the extremely rapid and indeed explosive growth of the global ‘infosphere’ over the past couple of decades (and foreseeably into the medium-term future) and the transformative/disruptive effects it is already having—and will have to a much greater degree in the coming generation—on world politics in general, and democratic politics in particular. That part of the lecture is inevitably very broad brush and may seem rather abstract in places. To ground the discussion I therefore also provide some relatively specific illustrations, with a particular focus on the implications for democracy in Mexico and North America.

### Democracy

First a preliminary clarification on ‘democracy’. It would be easy to take up too much of the lecture on this much debated topic. Political theorists elaborate ‘ideal’ models of democracy; comparative institutionalists track the varied morphology of currently existing democratic regimes; political economists seek to explain their trajectories by reference to socio-economic determinants; historians subject all these framing devices to skeptical scrutiny. What needs to be highlighted here is the way successive experiments in establishing broadly democratic (inclusionary, rule-based,

participatory, citizen-guided) political systems have been conditioned by the availability of particular technologies of information gathering and dissemination. For example, the print industry (and especially local newspapers) was of great significance in the construction of the democratic regimes of the nineteenth century, together with the telegraph and the railway. Likewise, radio broadcasting, together with the internal combustion engine, shaped the political—including the democratic innovations of the first half of the twentieth century. After 1945 television and visual mass communications reshaped the structure of political life once again. What concerns us here is the profound impact that the latest wave of information and communications technology (ICT) has already had—with most of the big effects still to unfold—on the scope for mass political expression in general (and for broadly democratic versions of that in particular) and indeed on the very nature and possibilities for democratic life in future generations.

## The Information Revolution

In contrast to previous information technologies, the currently emerging ‘infosphere’ is global, instantaneous, insatiable, horizontal, and interactive. (It is now also almost frictionless and currently expanding exponentially. According to the International Telecommunications Union, in 2013 there were 6.8 billion mobile subscriptions for a global population of 7.1 billion. More broadly, the number of connected devices per person has grown from 0.08 in 2003 to 1.84 in 2010, to 3.47 in 2015, and is expected to reach 6.58 in 2020. The encompassing term ‘infosphere’ reflects a crucial point here—most connected devices will be connected to each other, rather than simply interfacing with a human user). Each of these key features of modern ICT and the resulting ‘infosphere’ could have huge implications for the future of democratic politics throughout the world. So we need to reflect on the nature of this impact on all existing democratic regimes—both old (such as the USA) and new (such as Mexico).

First, the infosphere is *global*, and an increasing volume of critical public policy issues can only be tackled either at the world or at least some supra-national-level, whereas nearly all democratic politics is either

national or local. Of course the global coverage of ICT is highly uneven, with big differences separating language communities, geographical regions, functional communities, social classes, and generational cohorts. In political terms, some large audiences (e.g. in China, Russia, etc.) are hemmed in by authoritarian controls over ICT flows, and increasingly various types of state interference with internet freedoms are being attempted even by leading western democracies—perhaps in the name of counterterrorism, or maybe to control pedophiles, and so forth. For all that, the entire world community is being relentlessly caught up in a single rapidly integrating web of connected communications. Some of the political effects can be seen when *WikiLeaks* data sets are released, or Google Maps are consulted. We may return to the possibility of nationalist backlashes against globalization later on, but at least in the case of the community of democracies much more connectivity lies ahead. Any attempts at obstruction will become ever harder to sustain, and as democratic states become more informationally integrated, the consequences will become built in. To illustrate this, once the sharing of tax information across borders has become routine, it will be almost irreversible—with major consequences for fiscal control and tax evasion as, for example, the IRS gains legal access to the most sensitive of corporate and personal income data about taxpayers of Mexico, Switzerland, the UK, and so on.

Second, the infosphere is *instantaneous* and therefore inevitably unfiltered. It abolishes friction, checks, and bottlenecks and delays in the flow of news. In the nineteenth century good political information was hard to come by and traveled slowly. The printing press delivered a selection of reports and analysis, but at a cost in distribution, and with a time lag. In the next century the radio, and then the television, provided a widening array of direct reportage and reactions to developments but mainly through scheduled bulletins and always filtered by an approved news source. Listeners and viewers were understood as mass audiences to be spoon-fed uniform information from central transmitters, who were answerable either to the state or to the program sponsors. In October 1968 I recall the media blackout on what had just happened in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas at Tlatelolco (very similar to what I witnessed in Havana the day after the fall of the Berlin Wall). In both cases there was a void between what the public were told and what (through gossip,

rumor, hearsay) they knew they were not supposed to know. It took weeks for the media to (partially) fall into line with public knowledge, and a large part of the population never fully grasped what they had missed. Zabludovsky's Televisa reportage of the PRI's supposed electoral victories in the 1980s were further demonstrations of filtering power of centralized information transmitters. If all this seems like ancient history, just turn to the local press in Toluca today.

Contrast widespread social media coverage of the recent episode in which Jorge Ramos was expelled from a news conference by Donald Trump, or the reception of the intercepted phone call by the managers of OHL. These items immediately 'went viral'—knowledge of them spread like wildfire through the social media, with no gatekeepers or delays. Transmission was instant, unfiltered, frictionless, and networked (Tufekci 2017).

But third, the infosphere is also *insatiable*. Instant information-on-demand is by definition not filtered, solemnized, or restricted to what really 'matters'. The demand for more input is constant, urgent, and effectively limitless. No sooner has one item captured a mass following than another quite different preoccupation may come crowding in, with no coherent linkage or follow through. Even where some sustained theme is developed, the constituency it addresses is likely to be disorganized and impermanent. Well-structured interests can usually afford to wait until any challenge directed against them has peaked, or is displaced elsewhere. The business of 'reputation management' has become a major growth industry with its own techniques for exploiting such features of the infosphere and sidestepping or redirecting any public pressures it may fleetingly generate. But this is not to say that nothing has changed compared to earlier periods when gatekeepers had some control over the public agenda. In the new context no one is off-limits; only the most agile and well prepared get any 'right of reply'; and those in the limelight can never tell from which direction the next challenge may come. Instead of dealing with a small number of well-defined rivals with predictable agendas, public figures can face sudden surges from the most unexpected of quarters. Reputation management in such conditions involves 24 hour a day vigilance on all fronts. For example, any political speech promoting some currently effective message can be reduced to ridicule if there is anything in the speaker's record that can be disinterred to show a contradictory message, or inconsistent conduct



from an earlier period. You can see the way this is hampering the current campaign of Hillary Clinton to secure nomination for next year's presidential election. The damage she has suffered over her personal email account illustrates how hard it is to sustain an image of integrity when unlimited prior information is so readily available to competitors. It is not just those individuals and issues with a mass following who are affected by the insatiability of the infosphere, of course. At least in the UK anyone who knows your address can summon up a photo image of your residence and an estimate of its probable current value. There is a search engine that enables the curious to gain instant access to a book review I wrote 30 years ago and have long since forgotten about. All of us are now subject to scrutiny from the most unexpected of sources.

This is because, *fourth*, the infosphere is horizontal. That is to say, all the users of its information have great access if they know how to use it. So any motivated individual, or network of interested persons, can mine it for whatever purpose may motivate them. There are, of course, some purposes that are illegal and some databases that are off-limits to the unauthorized, although in practice such restrictions are proving hard to enforce. But the default assumption is availability to all for almost all purposes, with the principle barriers to access knowhow and patience, not privileged position in a hierarchy.

Hence enthusiasts claim that modern

ICTs 'democratize' data and the processing/controlling power over them, in the sense that now both tend to reside in a multitude of repositories and sources. Thus, ICTs can create, enable, and empower a potentially boundless number of non-state agents, from the single individual to associations and groups, (Floridi 2014: 175)

including macro-agent-like corporations and supra-national institutions. The centrality of the state in political life is thus overthrown. Floridi goes on to claim that ICTs

fluidify the topology of politics [...], they do not merely enable but actually promote [...] the agile, temporary, and timely aggregation, disaggregation, and reaggregation of groups 'on demand' around shared interests, across old, rigid boundaries, represented by social classes, political parties,

ethnicity, language barriers, physical barriers, and so forth. (Floridi 2014: 176–177)

Although this sort of hyperbole risks creating the impression that the old political order of states, parties, classes, and the like is simply being swept away—not what we should expect either in Mexico or the USA—there is something rather transformative about the horizontal inclusiveness of the rising infosphere.

Finally, therefore, we should underscore the system's *fifth* feature—it is also interactive. Whereas print media, and news broadcasters supplied their material to passive audiences, the infosphere provides a medium through which groups with shared interests can dialogue among themselves to build a common position and can then interact with other groups, both like-minded and not. Ideas can be exchanged, misinformation can be corrected, evidence can be advanced or rebutted, and demands for reform can be articulated, all in real time and without intermediation. The Yo Soy 132 campaign<sup>3</sup> was promotional and interactive in this sense, for example. Note that very little, if any, material resources are required to power this type of initiative. No pre-existing organization is needed, even when taking on a target as well-protected as the PRI's winning presidential candidate. At the same time, as this example indicates, the forces that interact through the infosphere are not all purely spontaneous and unstructured improvisations. In fact, any durable and effective internet campaign (however spontaneous and undirected in its origins) will need follow through by organized groups of supporters and so will encounter all the more traditional issues of political activism: Who can speak for the cause? Using what resources? Enlisting which allies? With what authority to bargain/compromise?

So, having outlined the main features of the currently ongoing information revolution, let us now consider its likely implications for democratic politics.

## The Infosphere and Democracy

Changes in power, geography, and organization reshape the debate on democracy, the oldest and safest form of power crowdsourcing. (Floridi 2014: 177)

I began this lecture by referring to democracy, broadly conceived, as an inclusionary, rule-based, participatory, citizen-guided political system. Mine was not quite the standard definition but a fairly close approximation. It was looser than some because I wanted to leave open the possibility that future systems reshaped by the information revolution might be included within the general rubric of democratic politics, even when they do not foreground multi-year national electoral contests between highly organized political parties.

But Floridi (Chap. 8 on 'Politics') goes much further than me, and fully re-describes democracy in accordance with his vision of the infosphere of the future. In this world the Newtonian and materialist ontology has been replaced by a dephysicalized informational ontology. The state is progressively losing its capacity to control information flows through what he terms 'political apoptosis' (borrowing from programmed cell death in biology). Rights of usage are replacing rights of ownership, money is becoming data, informational power is displacing physical force, interactions are replacing things, and politics is becoming less visible/harder to understand. Whereas twentieth-century state-focused democracy presumed a social contract with consent as the norm (it required an effort to 'opt out' of political participation) under the new dispensation democracy is a matter of voluntary 'opting in' (loyal membership is no longer the default position). Within such a framework it is even possible to re-describe democracy as 'power crowdsourcing'.

Perhaps all this may eventually come to pass, but it has not done so yet even in the most digitalized of nations, and in my opinion, will come about for the next generation or two—if ever. So instead of assuming the reconstruction of democracy in accordance with this transformative vision of the infosphere, I prefer to reflect on how the two are likely to 'co-evolve'. That is why I chose to characterize democracy in terms that can accommodate a big impact from the information revolution but without being entirely dissolved into it.

So what does the explosive and apparently irresistible rise of the infosphere imply for the nation-state as the main arena for political democracy? And for the national electorally competitive political party as its principle vehicle? And for the political accountability/transparency of rulers to their citizens?

First, then, *the nation-state*. Today's democratic regimes rely very heavily on the existence of the modern territorially defined nation-state. It defines the *demos*—essential for measuring the locus of each electoral majority—and it administers the legal, financial, and public service systems expected by its citizens. It therefore attracts their loyalty and provides one of the most powerful sources of political identity. Over several centuries the nation-state has adapted to changes in information technology, initially working through print media, then public broadcasting, and now increasingly via e-government. So how, in general terms, might the explosive rise of the infosphere affect this crucial institutional bearer of democratic potential? Some cyber-enthusiasts believe that it cannot only reshape and perhaps destabilize but even dethrone the central political role of the state. Deterritorialized ICTs become the key locus for democratic expression, displacing the centralizing, mechanistic, physical state. In my view that radically underestimates the resilience and adaptability of the modern nation-state, and it promotes an unrealistic vision of a future stateless variant of democracy.

Nevertheless, the information revolution does indeed present some formidable challenges to the many assumptions about democracy that we have inherited from the state-centric twentieth century. Supra-national levels of democratic governance—best currently exemplified by the European Parliament—become at least technically feasible. More strikingly, sub-national democratic movements have also gained new traction (Scotland, Catalonia, etc.). None of these are 'deterritorialized', however, and their capacity to withstand pressure from pre-existing states will depend on the extent to which they can forge collective identities and loyalties strong enough to counter the pull of established nationalisms. Perhaps agile use of the infosphere will permit the rapid consolidation of such allegiances. It is worth noting here that democratic forces are not the only players in this game. Putin's Russia seems to be having some success in this regard in Crimea and parts of the Donbass. ISIS is also making innovative use of the infosphere in order to construct its caliphate out of the disintegration of some fragile states in the Levant (note that Iraq, Syria, Libya, etc. were never 'nations', only rather artificially cobbled together postcolonial states).

The information revolution does abolish distance, as well as eliminating time lags. So real time images from Tahrir Square are instantly available throughout the world, and can no longer be filtered by incumbent rulers, whether democratically elected or not. The democracies of the European Union have just been galvanized by exposure to the human tragedies arising from their dishonest and incompetent refugee policies. The Peña Nieto administration has been similarly shaken by uncensorable evidence from Ayotzinapa and elsewhere, which has brought great discredit not only within Mexico but also internationally. These twin sources of pressure are likely to reinforce each other. Shocks of this kind do not displace the political centrality of a democratic state, but they do challenge it, and can force sharp policy U-turns even in the absence of electoral contests. When sufficiently mishandled they can precipitate elite rotation and even prompt mass disaffection with the established political system. A normal assumption of the democratic political process would be that if particular rulers fail to manage such challenges adequately, their party rivals and competitors will displace them. But there is also growing evidence that when the political opposition is no more credible in such matters than the incumbents, the infosphere can help nurture the dramatic emergence of new ‘outsider’ challengers—as with Syriza, Podemos, UKIP, the Tea Party, and so on.

So, second, this brings me to the next issue—*political parties*, specifically the infosphere and its impact on the party system in democratic regimes (both old and new). Nineteenth-century political parties were mostly fairly local affairs, with leaders who operated on the basis of personal contacts and face-to-face relations. In the twentieth century the rise of highly organized mass programmatic parties mirrored bureaucratization of the state apparatus, Fordism in the field of manufacturing, conscript armies in warfare, and so on. Robert Michels proclaimed the ‘iron law of oligarchy’ and even in the most democratic of countries political parties tended to follow his logic. By the end of that century, the spread of democratic politics almost invariably involved the establishment of competitive national multiparty electoral systems, in which the central choice offered to the electorate was between a small number of highly structured party teams competing to occupy national public offices in occasional (multi-year) elections. The orthodox view was that

to succeed such parties would always need to bid for the median voter and thus come to resemble each other. In practice, professional political elites were to debate and alternate within a restricted arena (congress and cabinet) well insulated from the flux of amateur public opinion. They would understand the complex trade-offs of modern government and would save the largely apolitical electorate the trouble of grappling with such technical and intricate matters by handing out 'sound bites' and simplified dog-whistle messages to keep the voters onside. Once powerful mass membership parties with ideological programs were incompatible with this 'partidocracia' model of democracy and were allowed to atrophy from the bottom up. Media politics privileged telegenic candidates who could bypass their organized supporters and provide carefully selected information to the masses in a top-down non-interactive manner. With the displacement of state media and the rise of advertising-financed private communication empires, British and American political leaders became extremely dependent on a small coterie of press and media barons who would supply their audiences with carefully managed political information (mixed in with entertainment-infotainment) in exchange for exorbitant privileges and immunities. This was the 'Murdoch Press' issue that recently galvanized British politics, or the even more extreme Berlusconi counterpart in Italy. The case of Televisa will be noted further on.

The information revolution may present a serious challenge to this transient and unstable model of democratic institutionalism. The new model of communications is, as noted, horizontal and interactive, in contrast to the vertically manipulative formula that characterizes partidocratic politics. Worse still, from the standpoint of the established elites, it is anarchically open to all comers, and at the individual level virtually cost free. And in contrast to the carefully choreographed electoral timetable of the party professionals, it produces issues, challenges, and unexpected alternative options on demand and in real time. Moreover, its themes tend to be 'single issues' with mass appeal that cannot be assigned to conventional party silos and that are not readily suited to trade-offs or complex technical evaluations. Just as the infosphere can weaken and disorient modern governance in the democratic state, so also—and perhaps to a more dramatic extent—it has the potential to damage the

credibility and discredit the authority of many of the most venerable of democratic political parties.

But again, as we saw in the case of the state, there is also scope for learning, adaptation, and ‘coevolution’. States and their parties will not emerge unscathed from their encounters with the infosphere, and if they fail to adjust, they may indeed face existential risk, but comparative experience suggests that on the whole and over time they may prove capable of adjusting and borrowing enough from the new information regime to remain afloat in a new form. Although personal use of the infosphere may appear cost free, from a macro-social standpoint this is far from being the case. The networked infrastructure requires huge resources and responds to powerful corporate and state imperatives. Spurred by issues of cybersecurity, states (democratic as well as authoritarian) have taken increasingly stringent powers of to monitor and regulate the infosphere—ostensibly in the public interest, of course, but with evident partisan censorship potential. As for the corporate interests involved, the hidden price imposed for these apparently ‘cost free’ services is their intrusive access to the most personal data about their users, mainly for targeted commercial advertising, but also to deliver tailored versions of political messaging.

This is not what libertarian cyber-enthusiasts foresaw, and indeed they can argue that it is all too ‘presentist’, and radically underestimates the scale, momentum, and liberating potential of the ongoing information revolution. In their view the biggest effects are yet to come through. In particular they point to the contrast between Generation X (born before the early 1980s), Generation Y (before September 11, 2001), and Generation Z—the AO or ‘always on’ generation:

For them there has never been a world without ‘google’, ‘tweet’, and ‘wiki’ not merely as services but as verbs; they have no recollection of a world without Facebook being a social media, not a book, and of books not being available online (Amazon was incorporated in 1994). They are likely to think that a pocket mirror is a phone app. They use Wikipedia (founded in 2001) as synonymous with encyclopedia [...]. Generation Z may not conceive of life outside the infosphere, because, to put it dramatically, the infosphere is progressively absorbing any other reality. (Floridi 2014: 44)

Perhaps so, but not quite yet. Two cautionary points are in order here. First, as my late colleague Hermínio Martins demonstrated at length in his last book, such theories of accelerated technical and social change are nothing new. He traced them back into the nineteenth century and pointed out that in practice (he was thinking of Moore's Law) the normal pattern is not as asymptotic advance but rather a succession of 'S' shaped progressions:

Any technological trajectory, after a phase of accelerated growth, will encounter insuperable obstacles, which can be graphically represented as an 'S' curve, and will be followed by a further phase of accelerated technological advance, again represented by a new and enveloping curve, and so on successively. In the general history of technology, and in particular the history since 1945, one can recognize a succession of such curves together with, overall, an underlying acceleration of the acceleration, a super-exponential or hyperbolic rate of growth, represented by a sigmoid curve. (Martins 2012: 340, my translation)

The second reservation is more prosaic. At least in the case of ICT and democracy, outside a limited range of highly educated population groups, the bulk of the population has to contend with much more basic concerns than just pursuing an avatar through cyberspace. Politics still mainly concerns basic needs, fundamental rights, minimum levels of personal security, and dignity, all very real issues that are rooted in the material and physical world. The infosphere may provide new forms of access to information, more inclusionary avenues of participation and empowerment, but if so these 'democratizing' potentialities are still incipient and untested. Hopefully they can reinforce the access to politics that was first provided by locally based and face-to-face organizations (nineteenth-century style) and later expanded to more impersonal mass formats via the rise of social democracy. Both of those formulae for political inclusion have largely run their course and no doubt require supplementation. But in democratic terms the infosphere can at best re-energize and redirect such activism, not supplant it. Successive generations may well turn out to be bearers of sharply contrasting, even incommensurable, sociopolitical styles and outlooks. But if so, a proper



sociological explanation should not restrict its scope to the merely technological component of generational change. Equally relevant would be educational dynamics (such as the massification and marketization of higher education, also a subject of great concern to Hermínio Martins), transformed family and labor market structures, overcrowding in cities, and the political fallout from extended life expectancies and a burgeoning share of geriatrics in the electorate. Perhaps Generation Z will make quite different demands on their rulers from those that were thought adequate to a twentieth-century partidocracia. But they will still need means of organized collective expression, methods of articulating their material interests, and mechanisms of accountability that reach beyond the digital realm. In some sense that means they will still need what may loosely be termed ‘political parties’, and those in turn will need links to ‘civil society’.

That brings me to my third area of reflection concerning the political impact of the information revolution: its implications for the *accountability* of rulers to their citizenry and the *transparency* of their public activities. Here is Floridi again:

First, we are witnessing a substantial erosion of the *right to ignore*. In an increasingly frictionless infosphere, it becomes progressively less credible to claim one did not know when confronted by easily predictable events and hardly ignorable facts.

Second, there is an exponential increase in *common knowledge* [...] which [...] basically refers to cases in which not only everyone knows that p but also knows that everybody knows that everybody knows [...].

Third, the impact of the previous two phenomena is also quickly increasing because meta-information about how much information is, was, or should have been available is becoming overabundant. It follows that we are witnessing a steady increase in agents’ responsibility [...]. This is a bit paradoxical since ICTs are also part of a wider phenomenon that is making the clear attribution of responsibility to specific individual agents more difficult and ambiguous. (Floridi 2014: 42–43)

He goes on to differentiate between two quite separate meanings of ‘transparency’: i) a multi-agent system can be transparent in the sense that it moves from being a black box to a white box, as in ‘Open Government’;

and ii) more subtly, a multi-agent system can be transparent in the sense of being so efficient and taken for granted that it becomes 'invisible', like the oxygen we rely on to breathe. This is not to deny that opacity may also sometimes be needed in politics (e.g. classically, before the announcement of a budget) but in the politics of the infosphere informational opacity cannot be presumed positive unless it is adopted explicitly, consciously, and for good reason (Floridi 2014: 188–189).

How would these new principles work out in practice? Holders of public office become more open to criticism for all the things that happen on their watch, but on the other hand it is harder to be sure who precisely is in charge. Official secrets can still exist but only under highly specified conditions that are not hidden or a screen for official impunity (though Edward Snowden and Julian Assange may not agree with Barack Obama over the precise application of this test). Citizens have more and better grounds for holding the leaders to account (less scope for elitism), but officeholders have more reason to shift the blame (diffusion of responsibility). If so, neat theorems about democratic accountability (as in the reductionism of the principal-agent literature) and public service transparency (as in most 'good governance' treatises) are liable to raise impossible collective expectations. The information revolution may intensify public scrutiny and demands for more responsible policy-making, but achieving better (and more democratic) outcomes is still fraught with ambiguities, and can provide endless scope for recriminations and litigation.

Overall, therefore, the information revolution is already producing substantial effects on the content and nature of democratic government, including the centrality of state authority, the structure of party politics, and the nature of government accountability to its citizens. Much bigger consequences may be on their way soon. But the nature of these effects is still open to negotiation. The beginning of wisdom is to recognize the force and structure of oncoming developments. At least that gives some prospect of understanding what is unavoidable, where the main opportunities and pitfalls lie, and what democratic innovations are to be expected. How well—or badly—all this turns out is under-determined. Much will depend on how well inherited political interests adjust to convulsive technical changes.

This is all very well as an abstract overview, but to conclude it may be best to bring the level of analysis down a notch or two. So, what, in practical terms, might be the implications for Mexico's democracy over the coming generation?

## The Infosphere and Mexico's Present-Day Democracy

At the outset I mentioned the following four criteria of contemporary democracy: it should be *inclusionary, rule-based, participatory, and citizen-guided*. To conclude let us reflect on how each of these tests applies to the Mexican case, given the general features of the information revolution outlined above.

First, then, what kind of *inclusionary* politics are to be expected over the coming generation? There has been a glaring omission in the discussion so far. It is especially dramatic in contemporary Mexico, but in fact it concerns the effects of the information revolution in all 'really existing' democratic regimes. What has been left out is the digital divide. According to LatinAmericanScience.org, internet penetration in 2014 was 93% in the Netherlands and 81% in the USA. But it was only 38% in Mexico—less than half of whom have access to the internet in their own homes. In 2012 the Federal Government launched the CompuApoyo program targeted at families earning less than five times the minimum wage. They are eligible for 1000 peso grants and 3500 peso loans to buy personal computers, together with free subscriptions to broadband in the first year. This and other efforts will doubtless raise the rate of internet penetration over the current decade, but the process will take time, and many participants will drop out or fail to advance, given the many other obstacles to modern education that they also face.

No doubt there are several million Mexicans born in the twentieth century who fit the profile of 'Generation Z'; and their numbers are sure to grow rapidly over the next generation. However, a larger number of millions in that age cohort are even less internet proficient than myself, or indeed digitally illiterate—as well as innumerate and barely literate. For far too many of them, the magic of the rising infosphere is liable to present a threat of still great exclusion and disempowerment, not the

promise of inclusive participation. And in an electoral democracy, their opinions, their votes, and their physical participation in political activism will carry a weight that could even exceed the influence of their internet-savvy counterparts. Egypt, after Tahrir Square, provides one illustration of how this digital divide could derail the expectations of the cyber-enthusiasts; current developments in Guatemala (a neighboring 'democracy' with still lower internet penetration than Mexico) indicate how this may also apply much closer to home. For a simple illustration I refer to the video now running on Mexican social media which shows congressman Javier Estrada Gonzalez (PVEM) handing out 50 and 100 peso notes to passersby in the Zocalo of Cuernavaca. His lemma is 'soy tu diputado, y estoy para servirte' (I am your Member of Parliament and I am here to serve you).

So, second, what about the *rule-based* dimension of contemporary Mexican democracy? Not long ago the INE ruled that the PVEM should retain its status as a legally registered political party, since its misconduct did not reach the standard required for disqualification. There may have been a little opacity involved in this decision-making process, but basically Floridi's test of 'common knowledge' (everyone knows that everyone knows) applies to the PVEM's attitude to the rules of Mexican democracy. Both those in the infosphere and those excluded from it are equally well-informed on this score. In this case, as in so many others on the public agenda in Mexico today, the issue is not, therefore, whether internet-driven rises in transparency (the 'white box' effect) will ensure that the rules of democracy are more fully observed. More specifically, the problem is not that the relevant authorities do not know of violations. It is that they do not *care* to know. Perhaps, as the Guatemala parallel indicates, there may come a time when all of a sudden they are made to care by participatory political mobilization. And perhaps, when such a time comes, the information revolution will contribute to the speed, force, and direction of the upheaval. But the problems of rule-enforcement in these 'really existing' democracies are not primarily an absence of frictionless information. Other, more material and traditional, aspects of the political regimes in question are far more critical.

So, third, how might the information revolution impact upon the *participatory* features of Mexico's democracy? Again, let us address this large

general question via a couple of contemporary illustrations. One social network, Change.org, recently claimed it had collected 40,000 internet signatures for a petition condemning Televisa for its harassment ('acoso') of media critics and rivals. The company then dismissed the key employee allegedly involved. Another, the Consejo Nacional Ciudadano, is pursuing the same route with the aim of prosecuting the President, the First Lady, the Interior Minister, the Finance Minister, and others for illicit enrichment. It seems unlikely that this second campaign will produce such a speedy response as achieved by the first. Mexico's elected political authorities may be losing a few points of credibility in the infosphere, but they remain confident of their continued mastery of the participatory machinery that really matters—the national electoral process. A couple of international analogies may help to explain their assurance. Before the 2012 elections in Spain, a highly disaffected Generation Y mobilized and occupied many public spaces with protests against unemployment under the rubric of the 'Indignados'. One of the keys to their unity was their alienation from all political parties and their consequent determination not to vote. As a result the conservative Partido Popular—the part least likely to reflect their opinions—won an unprecedented electoral majority. In a similar vein, the Occupy movements in London and New York were trumped by the Conservatives and the Tea Party. These examples are drawn from established democracies with high internet penetration. They suggest that state-directed electoral processes and Robert Michels style political parties remain very palpable players in participatory politics well into the second decade of the twenty-first century.<sup>4</sup> No doubt the voluntary opt-ins, interactivity, and crowdsourcing dynamics of the infosphere are becoming more important, and perhaps they may eventually come to dominate the more top-down and regimented politics of the past. But at least for now, and at least in Mexico, these remain a thin overlay rather than the deep structure of the democratic regime.

Fourth, and finally, that leaves the *citizen-guided* component of democratic politics. Here we are concerned not just with periodic electoral contests but also something more than mere social media single-issue campaigns. A stable and legitimate democracy rests on a base of citizen support that steers public debate and underpins system legitimacy. Allied concepts include the demos, the res publica, and civil society. These are

all polysemic and contextually adaptable terms, and the relation between them is a topic for a different discussion. In contemporary Mexico prominent aspects include electoral integrity monitoring, the protection of free speech, the promotion of citizen security, and the responsible development of the liberal professions.

In all these areas the information revolution has the potential to make a cumulatively powerful positive contribution. These are slow, incremental, low-visibility features of a democratization process, but they can make a major difference over the longer run. To my mind it is here that the rise of the infosphere could prove most productive as an aid and channel to fuller democratic development of Mexico in the decades to come. Here we are dealing with technical progress that is supportive of other positive tendencies, that co-evolves rather than displaces, and that may be 'transparent' in Floridi's second sense (i.e. invisible, taken for granted) rather than dramatically transformative. Even here some caveats are in order. Public-spirited citizens are not the only actors who can be empowered by ICTs, and particularly in the realm of citizen security, there is considerable scope for the misuse of surveillance capabilities, and the suppression of privacy in the name of safety. The infosphere could strengthen democracy, but it can also be misappropriated by a *democracia* regime. Nevertheless, the underlying thrust of the information revolution is broadly prodemocratic: transparency, inclusive empowerment and interactivity, and multi-agent and horizontal cooperation are all features that possess on 'elective affinity' with a citizen-guided democracy.

Mexican democracy faces many near-term and also longer-term challenges. The rise of the infosphere is no magic panacea. But it is a major new development that is sure to help reshape the landscape of political opportunities here. And if properly understood and well managed, it can yield substantial benefits.

## Conclusion

In contrast to Hermínio's extremely wide ranging and profoundly elaborated life work on the transformative and totalizing consequences for humanity of accelerated technological advance, including its Faustian

potential, my lecture in Mexico concerned a far more limited and restricted facet of this whole. As can be seen from our email exchange in 2013, I still have difficulty in visualizing a ‘transhuman’ future in which cyborgs displace human consciousness substituting some deeper/higher/more networked form of intellection. But if Vico still lives (as I asserted), his *verum factum* now extends beyond the human-made world of civil and political society (including successive variants of democracy) into many additional arenas for human invention and prosthetics that were unimaginable in his lifetime. Moreover, as stressed both by Hermínio and by the accelerationist theorists summarized in *Experimentum Humanum*, the pace of our knowledge/manipulative capacity expansion appears to advance in a process of exponential explosion. On a far smaller canvas, and from a smaller and more grounded perspective, my lecture sought to interrogate one local and near-term component of this vast panorama. The opportunity to exchange ideas with Hermínio helped me connect a little with his larger horizon.

## Notes

1. Here I am assuming that dreaming is an introverted condition experienced always and only by individuals, whereas the artificiality of AI devices indicates that they are never that free-standing, and indeed as they become more intelligent they become ever more networked. Sleep is also an aspect of personal consciousness—downtime needed for the memory editing and experience ordering entailed by subjectivity—not to be confused with computer switch off.
2. I suspect that it is this last (all too human) aspect of consciousness that accounts for both the old spiritual commitment to ‘immortal souls’ and for the fantasies of immortality that underpin the appeal of current materialist techno-illusions.
3. See Yanina Welp (2015).
4. A. Bruer and Y. Welp (eds) (2014) *Digital Technologies for Democratic Governance in Latin America: Opportunities and Risks*: Abingdon: Routledge. For them context matters a great deal (e.g. Yo Soy 132 was in the midst of an election campaign, and so formal politics prevailed), and ICTs are politically more significant as supplements to more traditional

forms of organization, rather than as free-standing substitutes. Parliamentary websites do not enhance citizen understanding or respect for LA Congressional activities. But IT can assist in speedy accurate and respected transmission of electoral count (Brazil—not Venezuela).

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# Thinking About Think Tanks: Politics by Techno-Scientific Means

Stephen P. Turner

Hermínio Martins was a thinker introduced to me by Irving Velody and Peter Lassman, who revered him. His chapter, ‘Technology, Modernity, Politics’ (1998), is an extraordinary and indispensable account of the great theme of the technical mastery of nature and the world, and its relation to ‘history.’ In this chapter he notes that A.A. Cournot, one of the ‘technological Prometheans’ at the core of his account, comments that ‘the post-historical phase presents itself in the typical form of gazettes and statistical bulletins, the end of history being also the “end” of historical narrative and narratability’ (1998: 155). Today, it might be said, paraphrasing Weber, that whereas the Prometheans wanted to live in a world of technical mastery, we are forced to. The thinkers Martins called Faustian, such as Heidegger, who rejected this fate, did so at the cost of being unable to comprehend their own societies. This fate is increasingly evident in the domain formerly known as politics, which is increasingly occluded by ‘policy’ understood in the sense of a form of technical

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mastery that displaces politics. To be in politics is now to be in the business of policy formation and in the thrall of experts.

One symptom of this new situation is the rise of think tanks as an organizational phenomenon but also as what I have elsewhere called a 'knowledge formation' (2017), that is, to say a more or less stable social structure or organization in which knowledge is produced. In this chapter I discuss this general phenomenon in relation to politics, and particularly to party structures, which think tanks partly replace and partly support. My central example will be a historical one, contemporary with Cournot: a think tank-like institution which produced statistical bulletins on labor.

## The Policy Process and Knowledge Formations

Arguing about definitions of social phenomena is rarely profitable, but the problem of defining 'think tanks' is perhaps an exception. The phenomenon of think tanks is one in which the category itself was retrospectively constructed to take account of a novel kind of organization that had emerged out of the mass of organizations that were part of various other organized movements and specialized government bodies. As an organizational form, however vaguely defined, think tanks were copied and became ubiquitous worldwide phenomenon. In what follows, I will try to make some theoretical sense of this phenomenon by placing think tanks in the two more general categories alluded to above: the policy process and the organizational category of 'knowledge formations.' This will allow for some rough comparisons and help to identify more clearly what the definitional issues are. My broader concern, however, will be to see why think tanks proliferated, what they replaced, and why this proved to be such a successful organizational form.

Margaret Thatcher once observed that 'the facts are Tory.' There is a small truth in this but only a small one. There is an element of fact in policy recommendations of all sorts, but they are not alone. One can think of policies as the joint product of four elements: the 'facts,' *Weltanschauungen* or values, interests, and administrative policy decision practices, or legal expedience. All policies have these elements, but they

enter in different ways. We can think of the process that think tanks are part of a process that starts with the construction of facts and ends in actual policy. Facts are of course never enough to generate policy or determine policy. There are many steps, each of which involves construction, then reconstruction, and more reconstruction, to produce a policy.

The language of 'construction' can be a distraction, so let me first defuse some objections. Many years ago Richard Rudner wrote a famous paper on the role of values in science (1953) in which he argued that in the determination of a scientific result there were always elements of judgment and choice. These acts of judgment could not be reduced to matters of 'facts' and therefore needed to be understood in terms of non-facts, that is, values. For my purposes, this sense of construction is sufficient. In each step of the process of forming and indeed implementing policy, there are transformations from a prior state: values themselves do not directly determine policy; they must be reconstructed, with an element of judgment, into something closer to policy principles or election platforms, for example. And even this is not enough: crafting an actual implementable policy requires decisions about legal form. There is a long similar process at the early stages of policy development with respect to the factual basis for the policy: the creation of a factual world, in the form of digestible boundary objects, such as reports or statistical analyses, all of which requires a good deal of reconstruction, then the addition of elements of interest, values, and considerations of realizability.

The term 'fact-finding' to specify the first stage of the process of constructing facts for the purposes of directing policy or supporting policy thinking is useful because it implies the active role and selective work of the fact-finder. What is found may be fact, but it is not fact as such, but the facts that someone finds and presents to others because they are taken to be relevant to the specific purposes for which the project of fact-finding was created and negotiated. Moreover, fact-finding has an organizational aspect. The production of the project is done by some specific organization, which has a specific character as a knowledge formation, with a particular structure, membership, practices, and pre-existing knowledge base, as well as biases, known and unknown.

What I will be calling a knowledge formation is a form of organization that persists over time and must thus sustain itself. To sustain itself it

must meet certain requirements, which must be reconciled with one another and are typically in tension in some respect. Indeed, most historical knowledge formations have involved a central tension, which has defined it. The list includes the following:

*Knowledge sources:* Knowledge has a history and source, and the sources constrain the way a knowledge formation is configured. There are multiple sources of 'knowledge' but the type of knowledge involved is important as a determinant of the way in which it is produced. Normally the means of knowledge production is shared by others, such as academic non-think tank producers, or journalists, and are open to criticism and appraisal by others.

*Resources:* Producing and reproducing knowledge requires people whose lives are to a significant extent dedicated to these tasks, and this means they must have sources of income that support the intellectual work that they do.

*Means of communication:* To the extent that new knowledge is generated or new interpretations are proposed, 'publication'—in the literal sense of making known to some relevant persons—is essential.

*Norms of conduct and conventions of discourse and exchange:* Norms are part of the conditions for knowledge production and also of the reproduction of knowledge. These may vary significantly by field, and across time, but without them it is difficult for communication and exchange to result in something commonly recognized to be 'knowledge.' These norms, however, limit as well as facilitate communication, and because they vary from group to group and discipline to discipline, they are also the source of mutual incomprehension and disagreement.

*Exclusion/inclusion and marks of recognition:* A pervasive feature of intellectual communities is the existence of marks of membership, explicit or implicit. Certification in the form of degrees, membership in societies or academies, peer-review in a variety of contexts, implying a definite notion of 'peer' and the like are examples.

*External legitimacy:* Normally the community or group communicating knowledge has some sort of respect and recognition by non-members. This may be highly formal and come with a developed theory of the status of the particular kind of knowledge. The theory may be accepted by those who do not share the knowledge, or be part of the rationale for a particular institutional structure, such as an education system, bureaucratic order, or religious system.

Think tanks are knowledge formations, and we can regard think tanks as a particular solution to the general problems that all knowledge formations face.

The list allows us to deal with some of the definitional issues, or at least to identify them. The relevant comparisons, at a first approximation, are two: the individual expert, that is to say the expert not attached to a knowledge organization, and expertized social reform movements, that is to say organized movements promoting some reform cause which make or publicize expert claims but do not claim to originate them. Commissions depend for their external legitimacy to a great extent on the personal reputations of its members (Turner 2014a: 71–92, especially 74–75). In contrast, think tanks tend to efface the personal authority of the members in favor of the authority of the organization itself, not surprisingly, as the aim of think tanks is to last longer than the immediate knowledge task and policy problem it is addressing.

One can regard think tanks as beginning in the USA with such organizations as the Carnegie Peace Foundation and such Progressive Era institutions as the Russell Sage Foundation and the Municipal Research Bureaus. Projects of these organizations, such as the Pittsburgh Survey supported by the Russell Sage Foundation, have characteristics of these ongoing bodies. What is striking about them is that to some extent, and almost entirely in the case of the Pittsburgh Survey, the aim was to influence policy through educating the public at large. In the case of this survey and other similar surveys, this was done through a complex educational public exhibit attended by many thousands of citizens, with the aim of creating the conditions for the election of a reformist municipal government (Turner 2014b: 142–144).

At the opposite pole from this, one finds the Congressional Research Office of the US Library of Congress. This is often treated as a pioneering think tank, but its research is not public—it is done for congressmen, and the results are only disclosed to them, though they may use it and disclose it. It is a government agency, though one that is governed by congress rather than the executive branch. But the research is precisely the kind that is carried out by more traditional think tanks. There are European analogues to this in the present, in Germany, for example, but one might also look back to earlier formations which look very similar. The US

National Academy of Sciences was established with the explicit aim of providing scientific advice, as an officially recognized body, and in this it followed various European academies. Ernst Engel's Prussian statistics group was part of a bureaucracy but functioned as a kind of policy-relevant research body as well as a university class training institution, which is the case also for many present organizations classified as 'think tanks,' such as CIDE (The Center for Research and Teaching of Economics) in Mexico.

Both kinds of think tanks are concerned with policy: they simply intervene in different points of the policy process, and this difference accounts for many of the apparent differences between think tanks. We can define think tanks as non-temporary knowledge formations whose purpose is to intervene at some stage in the policy formation process through the production of what in science studies are called boundary objects (Star and Griesemer 1989). These include things like exhibits, but also such things as reports, which contain results that are usable and understandable to public audiences but obscure the messy, uncertainty filled process of their production. This definition allows us to concentrate on a more meaningful problem: to explain how, out of all the rival forms of expertization and policy intervention present during and before the rise of think tanks, these specific kinds of organizations were able to find a niche, flourish, and expand to other niches and to the different niches provided by other countries and other contexts.

## **The Case of Labor Statistics: Think Tank or Bureaucracy?**

In what follows I wish to explore the phenomenon of think tanks in terms of an early historical example: the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics, a pioneering institution of the late nineteenth century. What the example will reveal is how tenuous most of these definitional distinctions are. But it will also reveal something about the conditions for a successful policy-oriented knowledge formation and the means available to it for intervening in the policy process. The founding of the bureau

is revealing about the relation between this kind of distinctive think tank-like organization and commissions in the narrow sense. The motivation for the creation of the bureau was, as with many think tanks, a perceived crisis. As a consequence of the economic dislocations during the decade after the Civil War, the problems of 'labor' became an important part of popular consciousness and, in the eastern states especially, an element in state politics. Massachusetts was the home of shoe and textile manufactures, which had benefited from the demand created by the war, and also provided soldiers from the working class who had worked in the mills.

Why was this bureau a solution, and what problem did it solve? The creation of the bureau was preceded by a series of acts of labor legislation over the previous four decades, much of which involved working hours. This was an international phenomenon. The short-hours movement was the central issue for labor during the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. Socialist parties themselves were primarily supported for their commitment to this goal, and when it was achieved, the Left typically lost the unity it had. There were parties of this kind in Massachusetts, but they were relatively small, and that is an important part of the background to the founding of the Massachusetts Bureau: the elected officials had no desire to provide these parties with short hours as an organizing issue, and sought to at least appear to support the working classes.

The bureau itself was preceded by two commissions, one in 1866 and a second in 1867. The first commission was empowered to collect statistical information, and sent out a thousand circulars to towns and cities, asking for reports on the condition of the working classes and particularly about child labor. Its reports presented pro and con arguments for a short-hours law, and recommended against it, concluding that 'the change desired can be better brought about by workmen outside the state house, than by legislators inside' (Pidgin 1876: 19). But the commission did make recommendations for legislation and enforcement in the case of child workers, and also asked that 'provision be made for the annual collection of reliable statistics, in regard to the condition, prospects, and wants of the industrial class' (Pidgin 1876: 19). The second commission went farther, and recommended a ten-hour day law (Pidgin 1876: 21).

The commission form solved some of the issues discussed above: its legitimacy was a product of the status of the members of the commission, respected worthies, including an academic, Francis Amasa Walker, whom we will shortly hear more of. Politically, however, it was inadequate for the purpose of providing a political or policy resolution of 'the labor question,' and the commissions themselves pointed to means of doing so, by suggesting that statistics be collected on an annual basis.

The specific event that precipitated the founding was the application for a state charter by a labor organization (a shoemakers union). The grant of a charter was at first refused, but the legislature did not wish the refusal to appear antagonistic to the working man, and so, as a gesture, a state Bureau of labor statistics was created to study the issues around the 'labor question.' The initial concern of the bureau in 1869 involved an effort to sort out the claims about the number of unemployed and to determine if returning Civil War veterans were taking the jobs of the already employed or were themselves unemployed. The idea behind this was a product of the 'lump of labor' fallacy: the idea that there was a finite demand for labor. But the remit of the bureau was much larger, and also very vague. Indeed, as became apparent, there was little known about how to 'fact-find' about labor: the methods needed to be devised by the bureau itself. Nor was it clear what the limits of factual construction were: simply tables of statistics, or something more? Who was the audience, and what was the message for this audience? These were questions that were answered through practice and trial and error.

The first director of this bureau, Henry Oliver, was faced with the vague statutorily defined task of 'the gathering of statistics of labor [...] together with what might be ascertained of their influence upon the health, education, manners of life, and industrial habits of the workings class' (Bureau of Statistics of Labor [Mass.] 1870: 7). The interpretation placed on this wording of the law by the officers of the bureau involved creating a broad theme within which the bureau was to define specific research topics. The purpose was not simply, or even primarily, to aid legislators in making policy or executives in administering the laws effectively but to 'modify, improve, and reform public sentiment' (Bureau of Statistics of Labor [Mass.] 1872: 11). This is a succinct formulation of at least one aim of some think tanks: to provide the conditions for public



acquiescence for policies that they might not otherwise have accepted. The politics behind this particular case are not clear, but the bureau did survive attempts in its early years to shut it down. One can infer some motives for support: legislators did not want to legislate without public backing. Having the bureau transform public opinion was a convenient and risk-free alternative to doing so themselves: if the public was not persuaded, the recommendations could be ignored.

The means by which the statistics were to be gathered were not specified by the legislature when it created the bureau, and Oliver soon discovered that he did not possess any particular legal authority to compel testimony, as would a census or legislative commission. He at first attempted to get the authority to call 'witnesses' in the fashion of a court or a legislative inquiry, but for legal reasons this proved difficult. He was then made a justice of the peace, which enabled him to legally compel testimony, but the bureau had no funds to pay the required witness fees so he was forced to resort to the collection of voluntary responses. This was a pivotal moment in the development of the social survey, for it created the modern relation between the surveyor and the surveyed.

Oliver had what he called 'schedules' or 'blanks' printed containing questions for employers and employees. He sent these by mail to large numbers of subjects and asked them to respond by mail. Assessors provided lists of employers, but in the case of employees, many devices were used, including newspaper advertising and rolls of unions. The inadequacy of these samples was understood in an informal sense, and the ideal of a complete enumeration was always used as a standard of comparison in assessing the adequacy of the results with respect to representativeness. But there were no good means of overcoming the difficulties within the legal limitations imposed on the bureau. The questions on the 'blanks' were, by modern standards, badly worded, and the lists of questions were very long. Many of the questions called for quite simple numerical answers about the number of persons employed and the like, but many were requests for opinions—and not simple questions of approval or disapproval of some statement or position, but complex questions about the respondent's beliefs about the causes of various undesirable features of the contemporary situation, such as the high price of provisions.

Few workers or employers proved to be willing to answer the complete list of questions. Most simply failed to respond. The answers of those who did were generally 'curt and unsatisfactory' (Bureau of Statistics of Labor [Mass.] 1870: 23). The bureau did follow-up, with correspondence, on responses that it found 'strange or unmeaning' (Bureau of Statistics of Labor [Mass.] 1870: 12), but apparently not to improve the response rate. In one of these early surveys, the 'circular' or questionnaire addressed to workers contained 137 questions, and was sent to 268 workers, of whom 114 replied. When possible, unskilled laborers who were not literate enough to complete a blank were interviewed orally. The equally demanding circular for employers, also sent with a prepaid envelope, received only 217 replies out of 1248.

The bureau was well aware of the inadequacy of the formulations of questions they were asking: in the first report they quote Rousseau to the effect that 'the art of asking questions [...] is the art of masters rather than of scholars, and one must have learnt many things to know how to ask about a thing one does not understand' (Bureau of Statistics of Labor [Mass.] 1870: 16). This was used to justify the effort the bureau spent on gaining background information, especially historical information, and producing reports on existing laws in other countries relative to the topics listed above and generating statistics on them.

The 'assumptions' behind the construction of the questions and the analysis of results differ from what was to become standard survey practice in America; and the differences need to be made clear, for they involve some basic methodological premises. The workers' and employers' responses are treated in a manner not unlike the model of legislative testimony, in that people are assumed to have coherent reasons or a particular experiential base for their 'opinions,' and the task of the interpreter was, in large part, to exhibit and explicate these reasons. The workers and employers were treated as responsible adults who were capable of making their own judgments. Questions often ask for judgments—for example, of the adequacy of ventilation in a factory—and their responses were taken at more or less face value. This was typical of 'commissions' in the narrow sense: because of their short life spans they were likely to take testimony or evidence in the form of reports which others had generated for them to consider.

So what did the reports do? Where there were systematic differences of opinion between workers and employers, the character of the differences was made apparent, but the descriptive categories and 'values' were those of the subjects. The role of the analyst was to classify and count the different kinds of reasons and opinions, not to supplant the subjects' terms of reference. Not surprisingly, the reports were highly readable human documents in which the voices of the subjects come through clearly. The 'testimonies' in which workers' lives are recorded were exemplary in this respect, since the educative aim of the surveys was to make the problems of real people evident. There were attempts to balance and present systematically the 'facts' about such things as child labor or divorce that might otherwise be known only through unrepresentative and misrepresented reformist horror stories. Thus, while the initial aim of the surveys was to get the facts about unemployment, these procedures were generalized to other 'problems,' especially those in which there was potential legislative action.

The reports thus went beyond 'tabular statistics' to become a kind of simulacrum of democratic deliberation, in which different voices were heard. In retrospect, of course, the bureau's construction of this discourse, and more generally the attitudes of its authors, expressed in terms of filth and degradation, reflected the attitudes of literate middle-class Boston, which was indeed the public whose opinions the surveys were designed to improve (Watson 2002: 15–20). The credibility of the judgments was enhanced by the use of physicians as authorities in the reports: '12 In one section, no less than eighteen physicians are cited about the destructiveness of long hours in the factory' (MBSL I 1870: 127–128). Similarly, the second MBSL Report sent surveys to 'medical men in four principal factory towns' (MBSL II 1871: 504) asking them to describe the physical effects of factory life under no fewer than 17 headings (504). This represented a tension: between sheer reporting of attitudes, facilitating democratic deliberation, reliance on expert opinion, and promoting a cause to an audience.

The topics that were examined included many of the themes that were basic to early academic research of the reformist variety, such as the value to the worker of cooperative savings banks. These were sometimes politically treacherous. Oliver's report on this topic suggested that the workers did not use the banks as heavily as believed and that the major depositors

were employers seeking to avoid taxation. The state senate passed a 'resolve' rejecting the report as based on insufficient returns and complained that the reports made Massachusetts look bad. As Oliver said in his next report, the bureau was placed on trial.

## The Later History

The primary concern of the Massachusetts survey, and other state surveys as well, was the economic condition of the laboring classes: working conditions, child labor, the incidence of effects of employment on women, domestic labor, the cost of living, the numbers of strikes, the sanitary conditions of workers in the workplace and home, and so on. Given the criticisms of its methods and results, the Bureau had no alternative other than to refine their methods within its legal limitations. Oliver's successor, Carroll Wright, made it one of his first actions in office to test the method of mailing questionnaires by sending it to clergymen, who, he supposed, should be responsible and literate enough to reply: of 1530 mailed, there were only 544 replies, several of which were blank, others 'sneeringly expressed the intimation that what we were asking was none of our business' (Bureau of Statistics Labor [Mass.] 1874: 24).

He learned from this. Wright abandoned the mail method, except for certain infrequent uses, and relied on personal interviews, especially visits to employers to examine their records, which produced much better cooperation. Much of the work of the bureau was secondary analysis, especially of data on wages. But a great deal of data was collected by 'special agents' of the bureau conducting interviews. These interviews were governed by the interviewer's understanding of the objects of the inquiry rather than by adherence to any elaborate interviewing procedure, and this was understood to be one of the reasons for the superiority of the personal interview: Wright later explained that the questions on mailed blanks, no matter how precisely formulated, tended to be interpreted differently by different respondents, and were therefore inferior to the results obtained by personal interviews.

Wright was highly concerned with what he called the 'reliability' of results, which he viewed as a question of 'representativeness' and conceived

as a problem of random selection (Bureau of Statistics Labor [Mass.] 1874: 251). Yet these concerns did not lead him to random sampling procedures but to finding a 'fair ratio' of types in the population. For he also often used the concept of representativeness in an inference-relative rather than a population-relative sense; his aim was often to find a community or case in which some problem could be clearly observed.

The connection between the activities of the bureaus and legislation was obvious: states gradually produced legislation governing child labor and uniform hours, as well as regulations on many other topics. The bureaus did not long outlive this wave of legislation, and at the end, the Massachusetts bureau was reduced to the performance of such tasks as counting summer residents in hotels for the purpose of justifying the issuance of additional liquor licenses in resort towns. But in the 50 years in which the movement flourished, from 1869 to the 1920s, when child labor remained an issue, research began virtually on all of the problems that were later taken over by academic sociology under the heading of 'social pathology.'

Why treat this as a think tank? The bureau published reports on the consequences of divorce, the effects of prohibition, the rise of pauperism, the differential effects of certain forms of employment on women's health, the labor conditions of teachers and clergymen, the situation in tenement houses, the cost of living and workingmen's earnings, and the Canadian French in New England. They even published what would now be called an ethnographic study of profit sharing under Wright's name conducted by the future sociologist Franklin Giddings, who was then a Springfield newspaperman. In later years, there were studies on such topics as the social and industrial condition of the Negro in Massachusetts; the level of compensation for female college graduates; the relation of the liquor traffic to pauperism, crime, and insanity; the state of home ownership; the accumulation of wealth through insurance; and the state of workingmen's savings. The bureau also issued a large number of reports (also called surveys) on legislation and conditions in other countries with respect to such diverse topics as the existence of municipal pawnshops and the licensing of barbers. These are activities typical of think tanks.

The Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics was, however, anomalous among the state labor statistics bureaus. Wright, a highly competent and

politically adept leader, had used his discretion to expand the budget and the domain of the activity beyond its original construction. The imitators of the MBLS were not so successful, and many of them restricted their activities to purely industrial topics for the most part, as in fact Wright himself was compelled to do in the position he assumed in 1887 as director of the newly established Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (which was the direct administrative ancestor of the present cabinet level Department of Labor). Wright did perform some research beyond the narrower boundaries of labor statistics in his time in Washington—the report on the Pullman Strike and the study of slums, including the support of the Hull House survey, and the study by W. E. B. DuBois of the Philadelphia Negro being the most prominent examples. These studies used the same kinds of ‘methods’ as previous ‘labor statistics,’ and were closely monitored by Wright. But these were not part of the administrative routine of the Bureau and were usually responses to special Congressional demands in which the implicit political task of defusing a controversy was paramount.

In the 50 years of the bureau’s activity, the means of asking questions improved, though the same kinds of ‘opinion’ questions were asked into the twentieth century, requiring a great deal of inference on the part of the respondents and treating them as, in effect, local experts with special insight into such topics as the causes of high prices of provisions. This succession raises its own questions. The academicization of reform topics, primarily in the new field of sociology, moved the issues from the symbiotic relation between reform organizations and statistics bureaus to foundations and universities. The problems also changed: the problems that could be solved by labor legislation were replaced by the more intractable problems of race, crime, immigration, and urbanization. These required a different and more comprehensive kind of knowledge that was ultimately at odds with reformism itself.

## The Bureau as a Knowledge Formation

If we consider the basic elements of knowledge formations, we can see how the bureau constituted a solution to the problem of sustaining itself. The first issue, which proved to be a difficult one, was to identify

a knowledge source. The conflict was this. The politicians said that the task of the bureau was ‘to collect the facts and leave them speak for themselves,’ as Governor Washburn said in 1874. But ‘the facts’ were not a well-bounded domain, and the explicit aim was to affect public opinion. Oliver insisted from the first that ‘Tabular array of figures alone,’ as the preamble to the 1869–70 Report says, ‘are inadequate to help the cause of the laborer [...] be put into such light and view that its real status can be comprehended, its disease be determined, the right medicine be administered, its health be secured, and its true interests promoted’ (MBSL I 1870: 15). This reflected both values and expedience: the presentation was motivated by a desire to help, but to help in a particular way, by removing pathologies. In the terms given earlier, these are reconstructions of the facts with values and interests added in, in order to bring the reconstructed facts closer to and more relevant to policy.

This role was the accepted understanding of the bureau, but the problem of partiality was never far removed from discussions of the bureau’s work. As one of the early commentaries on the bureau’s reports put it,

The report itself is a model for clearness, system and practical arrangement, and especially for a thorough recognition of the nature of the facts required by a body of legislators, though it is much to be feared that they will be the last to be benefitted thereby. It does not need a very close scrutiny to recognize that General Oliver, the chief of the bureau, is in warm sympathy with the workmen, and, from conviction, inclined to their views. But, after a careful study of the volume, we acquit the authors of every suspicion of partiality in what was, after all, the main work, the collection of the facts themselves; and these are of the utmost importance.

That the reading of such reports as General Oliver’s will convince many persons of the gravity of the evil, and reconcile them to the freest and most exhaustive discussion of the remedies, is the chief, as it will be the most immediate, result of the establishment of the bureau itself. (Pidgin 1876: 66–67)

This lays out quite clearly the situation of the bureau. It was intervening in a contentious topic. It was certain to face suspicions of partiality. It nevertheless was expected to reveal ‘the evil’ to responsible persons, and

‘reconcile them to the freest and most exhaustive discussion of the remedies.’

The use of statistics, as the prominent Professor Francis Amasa Walker, a member of one of the commissions, put it, was a powerful means of doing this: the country is hungry for information; everything of a statistical character, or even of a statistical appearance, is taken up with an eagerness that is almost pathetic: the community have not yet learned to be half skeptical and critical enough in respect to such statements (quoted in Pidgin 1876: 59).

Statistics were accepted uncritically, and in a sense, this was the goal of expertization itself: uncritical acceptance. But this, as it turned out, was not enough, as Wright came to understand.

The initial resource base of the ‘labor statistics’ movement was explicitly political: it was a concession to the interests of the working classes, although a concession which, at the time, was perceived to be insufficient. The ‘objectivity’ of the results was not especially problematic since, like testimony, its credibility lay in its sources and in the recognizability of the facts in the testimony. The political problems of satisfying diverse supporters in the fractious labor movement and its reformist well-wishers of the time, however, made this resource base unstable. Where it went astray was when it came up with results, as in the savings bank survey, that were unflattering and served few interests.

Wright transformed the bureau into something different and politically more stable—a kind of research organization that would collect facts on public issues and produce ‘balanced’ reports on them which nevertheless shaped public opinion by agenda setting and defining problems in a vivid way that the intended audience would accept. Why did it work? In large part, it was because of the contrast with the theatrical character of the reform movements themselves, which claimed expert knowledge, sought to influence the public, and in some cases, the major one being prohibition, did so, but used methods of publicity that employed emotional manipulation and personal appeals, an inheritance of abolitionism, the source of reformism. The MBLS was a model of sober analysis compared to these performances. And this did a great deal to serve the purpose of external legitimacy.



## Politics by Other Means

In a strong parliamentary system with strong parties, these educational tasks, as well as the agenda setting done by the commissions and the bureau, would be done by parties, or party intellectuals, or intellectuals speaking out in reform or religious contexts. In Britain, for example, in the twentieth century, the thinking was done by people like the Fabian Society, and later Richard Tawney, who addressed Christian socialist conferences and theorized the British welfare state, or John Maynard Keynes, who personally addressed the cabinet as an advisor. Yet here there was also a role for think tanks. The Tories had Chatham House, which served as a venue for their party intellectuals. The term has little application in the American context, simply because the parties were heterogeneous coalitions of voting groups which had to be bound together by platforms that reflected interests and to a lesser extent, a vague sense of shared values.

The 'American' version of the relationship between think tanks and political parties is represented by the MBLs. The think tanks are non-partisan but serve to set agendas. In the important case of Worker's Compensation legislation, the one relatively unambiguous success of Progressivism, the knowledge base, had been prepared by decades of research by bureaus of labor statistics and a commission in New York using these statistics. The actual passage of the landmark legislation was the result of a New York State commission charged with writing a law. The person appointed for the task, however, Crystal Eastman, was a Progressive activist who had done the volume on workplace accidents for the Pittsburgh Survey and was a trained lawyer. This was a top-down reform based on a general consensus of workers and employers that had been built in part by the Labor statisticians. Party politics was irrelevant. A second pattern was observed in Chile during the Pinochet repression of democracy. There, think tanks flourished because the 'technocratic option' was allowed while the possibility of political party challenges was not.<sup>1</sup>

A third pattern involves internal party politics: the creation of highly partisan 'think tanks' which aim at influencing parties themselves. The present Fabian Society, which has explicitly evolved into a party think

tank, and the Center for American Progress are examples. These play an important role because they express as expert certainties for a limited partisan audience claims that think tanks which claim to be non-ideological, such as the Brookings Institute, could not, without jeopardizing their reputations. And there is at least one more pattern: counter-institutions, which contest the claims of think tanks like Brookings to be non-ideological, such as the Heritage Foundation, and supply alternative ‘expert’ claims.

The sheer variety of think tanks and the porousness of the boundaries between them and other kinds of expertized organizations are telling. Expertization is ubiquitous. The balance between traditional political parties and expertized organizations, whether official or private, is shifting. Parties no longer set agendas: they react to the agenda setting of others. This is an epochal change.

## Notes

1. <http://onthinktanks.org/2013/01/28/think-tanks-in-latin-america-what-are-they-and-what-drives-them/>

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