THE   POLITICAL   SOCIOLOGY

OF

C. WRIGHT MILLS

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By

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate that
C. Wright Mills' sociological contributions are of wide-
ranging scope and diversity. Despite many limitations of
the model of sociology which Mills offered, it may be con-
tended that he deserves a place in the history of modern
sociology/radical sociology for his many substantive contri-
butions. These contributions, centering around his Critique
of the Parsonian grand sociology, Sociological methodology,
Mass Society, Alienation, Political Sociology, New Leftism,
and Democracy and Liberalism, constitute the main themes for
analysis and assessment in the present dissertation. A
champion of sociological radicalism, Mills represents an
integrating link between classic sociology and modern sociology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A NOTE ON MILLS' WRITINGS

The abbreviations used in the bracketed references to Mills' works in this dissertation are as follows:

SP---Sociology and Pragmatism

FMW--From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology

NMP--The New Men of Power

WC---White Collar

CSS--Character and Social Structure

PE---The Power Elite

CWT--The Causes of World War Three

SI---The Sociological Imagination

IM---Images of Man

LY---Listen, Yankee

TM---The Marxists

PPP--Power, Politics & People

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Objective

The basic objective of this dissertation work is to
attempt an interpretive exposition of some chosen aspects
of Mills' political sociology. Nowadays Mills is generally
acknowledged as one of the central figures of modern socio-
logy, particularly as the father of radical sociology. Al-
though, generally speaking, I share this view, I consider
Mills mainly a political sociologist and, accordingly, intend
to systematize and assess the leading aspects of his political
sociology.

It is my conviction that Mills has appreciably con-
tributed to the development of modern sociology. Specifical-
ly said, Mills' sociology marks, in view of its political
implications, a significant break with the mainstream socio-
logy which dominated the arena of sociological theory and
research until the beginnings of the decade of the 1960s. It
has contributed towards a restoration of the critical and
oppositional stance which sociology lost in the 1950s. On
the one hand, Mills' political sociology constitutes a radi-
cal critique of the corporate capitalist social structure of
America and its institutional arrangements. On the other
hand, it represents a distinct variety of political sociology
including a model of man and society, a definition of socio-

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logy, and a theoretical system of sociological concepts and ideas. In other words, there are two manifest concerns behind this theoretical endeavor of evaluating important political sociological contributions of Mills. These contributions can briefly be summed up in the form of two hypotheses.

In the first place, Mills' political sociology is a theoretically articulated critique of a capitalist social structure and its institutions. It is often assumed, not without reason, that sociology as a field of intellectual inquiry and academic exercise is a way of expressing sociohistorical realities at a given point of time. Since it evolves within a matrix of operating sociohistorical forces it reveals, among other things, changing relations of man to man in society. As far as political sociology is concerned, it reveals the nature of this changing relations in political terms. Mills' political sociology, though rooted in diverse American, European and the British intellectual traditions, is embedded within the sociohistorical contexts of a society and, as such, it is an indicator of the dominant operating sociohistorical forces and their associated institutional-structural trends. That is to say, Mills' political sociology reflects some of the contradictions of corporate capitalism, analyses some of the crises points in corporate capitalist social structure, focuses on some of their consequences on the life fates of individuals, and sheds some new light on the ascendancy of the military-industrial state. If, therefore, sociology is an indicator of sociohistorical forces and institutional trends encompassing man's life and

his social relations, it may be hypothesized, then, that Mills' political sociology highlights these aspects as basic concerns of reason and freedom for the establishment of an equilitarian society.

This leads, secondly, to the other facet of Mills' political sociology. The task of political sociology, as he says, is to deal with "private troubles and public issues." They provide the goals to which the concerns of political sociologists, democratically oriented to the values of reason and freedom, should be directed. If power elite, mass society and alienation--the critical concepts of Mills' sociological radicalism--are features of American society, they constitute merely an aspect of his political sociology. The other one is programmatic and reformist in nature and mission. It envisages the establishment of a democratic society in terms of a translation of the ideas and ideals of the classic liberal democratic tradition. In its turn, it sets out the task of political sociology as themes of private troubles and public issues. If, therefore, establishment of a democratic society depends upon the restoration of reason and freedom in human social affairs, it may be hypothesized, then, that the primary task of political sociology is to deal with, among other things, private troubles and public issues of men and women in society. It is in this that political sociology becomes a function of private troubles and public issues. This also distinguishes Mills' political sociology either from Marxist sociology or from the mainstream/functional political sociology.

Thus the present dissertation takes up and deals with analytically and critically the leading aspects of Mills' political sociology. The following are the leading aspects which I have chosen for specific analysis here: a comparison of Mills with Parsons, sociological methodology, mass society, alienation, political sociology, new Leftism, democracy and liberalism. As already indicated, the central theme of this theoretical work is Mills and his basic aspects of political sociology. In spite of this theoretical point of reference, an attempt has been made to discuss the issues in the comparative perspective, taking note of the works of other theorists who have advanced their ideas on the similar items. In this regard my purpose has been to indicate how far Mills' ideas are continuous with, or have departed from, those of others in the area concerned. In brief, the present dissertation work is predominantly a theoretical and evaluative study of Mills' contributions to the field of political sociology.

Contemporary Evaluations: A Review

> As Andy Warhol facetiously remarked, "Every
> one in America will be famous for fifteen
> minutes." Mills had his hour, and it came
> none too soon. Had he lived, the remaining
> years of the sixties might have been painful.
> Young Leftists, unable to tolerate any poli-
> tical or intellectual leader for more than
> a few months, would surely have abandoned
> Mills. Yet this would not have troubled him
> nearly as much as their growing tolerance of

> reason and democracy. There was finally no
> way for Mills to throw off what he poignantly
> called "'this moral anguish is crushing me.'"
> (Clecak, 1973: 71).

These concluding remarks bring an end to Clecak's portrayal

of C. Wright Mills as a lone rebel with radical paradoxes

and dilemmas of a new Left. To be fair, in this contemporary

epoch of political isms the obverse of "radicalism" is not

anything without paradoxes and dilemmas. Whether young

Leftists are intolerant of reason and democracy is one

question; and whether there really exists a way out of radi-

cal paradoxes yet another. The significant point is whether

one confronts, to use Mills' words, "the question of poli-

tical irresponsibility in our time or .... the cultural

and political question of The Cheerful Robot" (PPP: 246).

In the hey-go-mad days of rabid anti-intellectualism in

politics and grand theory and abstracted empiricism in socio-

logy of the fifties Mills does, unlike most others, confront

the question of political irresponsibility in the overdevelop-

ed superstate of corporate capitalism. If "moral anguish"

crushed him it was not entirely, I think, due to radical

paradoxes and dilemmas in his Left radicalism; it was rather

the verbalized expression of powerlessness of a conscientious

man in a society defined only by situated contradictions of

corporate motives through metaphors of liberal vocabulary.

If Mills was not sure of the answers to the questions he

raised he was, however, able to demonstrate, living in the

academic dog days of mytholozing jargon, that there were

"important tendencies for irresponsible thought and action

within American social science" (Kaufman, 1960: 116). Not

that irresponsible thought and action have now abated. The

mainstream sociology has become "corporate sociology." Its

basic concepts, problems, theories and orientations are now

determined "at least in broad outline, by the needs of the

corporate system of which it is a part" (Szymanski, 1970: 3).

In the mass production of this corporate corpus, the Uni-

versity has now become what Miller called "part of the factory

system of commercial America" (1962: 8). It has been asserted

that Mills was "a complex man" with "a bundle of contradic-

tions," "egomaniacal and brooding, hearty and homeless, driven

by a demon of discontent and ambition" or simultaneously

"sociable and aloof, democratic and snobbish, generous and

close, humble and cocky, rationalistic and simplistic"

(Swados, 1963: 36-37). But at the same time he remains a

man, says Wakefield, "as great in generosity and kindness

as in talent and dedication" and that he was "out of step

with the time and society he lived in" (1962: 331). Indeed,

there were contradictions in Mills. He was on the Left but

not of the Left, a radical but a lone guerilla, and always

a political man but never with any political affiliation.

He blieves that liberalism has become a political rhetoric

and, hence, increasingly banal and meaningless to larger

masses. Yet he did not lose faith in the classic values

of liberalism. Rather he speaks of moral, political and

intellectual commitment to its basic values of reason, freedom
and truth. He likened Marx's conception of the working class
to a romantic illusion, "a labor metaphysic" without any
politico-historical substance. But he still conceives man,
more in Marx's terms, as the maker of his life fate. Mills
saw intellectuals having become transformed into powerless
technicians and salesmen in the "American Celebration." But
he thinks that they could be "programatic in a politically
realistic way." However, beneath all too apparent contradic-
tions and subterranean truths lies the significance of his
life as a political sociologist. He lived a full life, had
his hour and died a revolutionary (cf. Landau, 1965: 46)
though in terms of effort rather than of accomplishment in
his own decade. And as Howe, earlier a friend and later a
critic, puts it nicely: "Even his enemies paid him that
tribute" (1966: 246).

My own work is an attempt to search an answer to
this question: Why do even his enemies pay him that tribute?
In my own effort to undertake this present study I have been
motivated by this question, and it is this which has prompted
my investigation into the manifold aspects of Mills' politi-
cal sociology. Even when he remains much criticized, attack-
ed, despised, fabricated, misunderstood and accused of socio-
logical heresy and paranoid romanticism, what then accounts
for the resurgence of Millsian themes in contemporary socio-
logical literature?[1] Stated otherwise, how can be become a
rich fount of unabated inspiration to the present generation

of radical sociologists? How could he become the founding
father of "radical sociology" (Scimecca, 1976, 1977), the
forerunner of a "new sociology" (Horowitz, 1965; Anderson,
1974), and also a mentor of a radicalized liberal political
sociology? How did he remain the most widely read socio-
logist of international repute over the decade and a half
following the Second World War (cf. Friedrichs, 1970: 68)?
In brief, why is he regarded as a "titan" (cf. Martindale,
1975) of modern sociology?

Is it due to the fact that, as Horowitz notes, "the
main drift of C. Wright Mills' work is linked to the practi-
cal importance of an ethically viable social science"? He
thinks that "this is so because such a sociology confronts
the facts with integrity by doing something about the facts"
(Horowitz, 1969a: 20). Is it because, as Domhoff concludes,
Mills' The Power Elite, as landmark of political sociology,
"stands as tall in the light of recent events as it did in
1956 when it crashed in on the Great American Celebration
with its detailed description and provocative indictment of
the structure of power in modern society" (Domhoff, 1969: 278).
In commenting on the sources of appeal and overall achieve-
ments of social criticism as contained in Mills' same classic,
Gillam concludes by saying that in a time of disquieting con-
sensus "it was altogether timely and prophetic, moreover, in
its attack on the prevailing orthodoxy." Although it lapses
into ambiguity and contradiction in its task of the new radi-
cal synthesis in the long run, he continues, "The Power Elite

at once announced and helped to inspire a revival of radical

theory that would, over the next decade and a half, consider-

ably influence the course of American social thought. This

was no mean achievement" (Gillam, 1975: 479). Aptheker,

a much known Marxist theorist, contends that Mills' critique

"does represent very vigorous indictments of significant

aspects of monopoly capitalism's institutions, does offer

important contributions toward a really radical attack upon

the social system itself" (1960: 87). Then, are Mills'

contributions important in terms of "tactical programs"?

Thus he estimates: "He does stand firm against McCarthyism

and the New Conservatism; he does condemn militarism; and

he does call for an end to the Cold War and its replacement

by an era of active peaceful co-existence. For an American

today these are decisive ideological and political virtues.

They are epitomized in and fought for in the books of C.

C. Wright Mills and this must determine their over-all

political evaluation" (Aptheker, 1960: 87-88). Sigler finds

out that Mills, as both a post-Marxian and a post-Weberian,

was a champion of democracy which he wanted to preserve and

refine; as a social theorist Mills was "the outstanding recent

exponent of radical-reformist social science" (Sigler, 1966:

46). Should he then be recognized as the inspiring fount of

radical sociology? Translating Mills' message into tasks of

sociological commitment Szymanski defends: "The radical

sociologist must serve as a constant social critic. He must

incorporate into his life work an incessant critique of the dominant institutional structure to the extent that it frustrates man's human and material needs and crushes man's potentiality. The role of the radical sociologist must be to relate people's personal troubles and day-to-day concerns to the dynamics of social structures, thus translating them into political issues" (1970: 9-10). In view of their stages of economic development together with related issues, both the postindustrial and the industrializing nations are now exhibiting symptoms of structural strains. Translated into the individual's problems, the structural strains become what Mills calls personal troubles. If this be so, sociology then takes on a humanistic and liberating role. This means that, as Rex points out, "the whole humane purpose of sociology is to take these 'private troubles' seriously by tracing them to their roots, even if this means being criticised for not dealing with immediate problems of suffering" (1974: x). Is it true, therefore, that Mills' contributions lie in giving a human content to sociology's themes? Or, finally, can it be said that Mills' importance is because of his personal thrusts of "a unified style of life, one that would bring together thought and action, power and reflection, as few intellectuals seemed to be capable of doing?" The scar Mills left on the map of modern sociology, defeating his premature death, continues to scintillate. He was an intellectual maverick, a political radical neither deterred by os-

tracism and alienating hostility nor ever exalted by honor-
ific status bestowals of any sort. A tough-minded rebel
throughout his life, Mills never lost the muckracker's zeal
to expose and blast the ideological superstructure of con-
sensual sociology of neo-liberal myths and rationalizations.
Is this portrait a reason for which the posterity should
remember Mills? Howe remembers Mills as a Promethean person-
ality, "a man of great seriousness if only fragmentary
achievement, a natural rebel at a time when most intellectuals
were taking to cover, a kind and ambitious mind that had the
courage to undertake too much .... Compared to shilly-shally-
ing of his academic colleagues, this Mills seems a great
giant. For it is true that some of them can point to work
more neatly rounded and firmly structured than the achieve-
ment of Mills. What is the measure of their success against
the tragic power of his failure" (1966: 252)? Despite
ambiguities, oversimplifications or contradictions, Mills'
contributions to sociology are well recognized. His legacy
definitely stands above and transcends discoverable inade-
quacies in his sociology. In brief, Mills as a political
sociologist gave, in the words of Spinard, "enough that was
valuable to make us all, if we want to think and act intelli-
gently and responsibly in the political world, somewhat
Millsean" (1966: 57).

In a profound sense, truth always remains elusive
indicating a perennial gap between search and success. From

this point of view, all the above-mentioned portrayals may be considered in fact a multitude of intellectual endeavors to approach Mills--the man and the sociologist--and to evaluate his contributions. In bringing all these perspectives together in review I do not intend to contest their validity, disprove them and then make my own revelations hitherto unknown. Instead, I intend to pursue, in my work, the issue even further, rather in a different way. Mills contributed in several ways. For example, he constructed his own radical sociology in course of his debates with grand theory and abstracted empiricism. He fought against anti-ideologists and gave a Leftist orientation to sociological studies. He deplored for the rise of the power elite, mass society or alienation. But, above all, he also envisioned a humanistic radical sociology, contributed to sociology of knowledge, and revised and/or stood for democracy and liberalism. These are leading aspects of Mills' sociology, and the avowed objective of this present study is to systematize and critically evaluate Mills'contributions to these themes of sociology, having considered him basically a political sociologist par excellence.[2]

I prefer to call Mills a political sociologist, specifically in the political sociological tradition of Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Max Weber (1964-1920) and definitely without ignoring the influences of others on him. The inseparability of the social and the political goes back to the days of Aristotle, the grandmaster of modern politics.

This tradition of intrinsic inseparability continued to flow
more or less in a historical sequence only to be interrupted
seriously by Machiavelli (1469-1527) who opted for Politik
rather than Staatslehre and sharply distinguished between
Realpolitik and Ecclesiastical politics. Whereas both Bodin
(1530-1596) and Montesquieu (1689-1755) renewed the tradi-
tion, it suffered a halt again in Hegel (1776-1831), al-
though his metaphysical idealism postulated eventual con-
·summation of the civil society in the State. But it was Marx
and Weber who struck the keynote of modern political socio-
logy, restoring the lost linkage between the social values
and social science regardless of contrary purposes in their
respective minds. As Runciman suggests, speaking of the
inseparability of the social and the political: "For Marx,
social science and social values are mutually involved be-
cause all social thought is liable to be (in his sense of
the term) 'ideological'; for Weber, they are involved be-
cause the social sciences must be 'value-relevant' although
this does not prevent the conduct of an actual sociological
investigation being 'value-free'" (1963: 53). In Mills this
classic tradition flows, occupying a unique place between
Marx's political tradition of sociology and Weber's socio-
logical tradition of politics. Whether it is a theoretical
position of precarious balance and stabilized uneasiness in
Mills or how he moves back and forth in between them itself
poses a different problem which still needs to be answered.[3]

In the meanwhile what I call Mills' political sociology re-
presents a fruitful intersection between the social and the
political and thus makes strongly a valid plea to redirect
sociological imagination--its theory, research and practice--
to the accomplishment of politically defined goals. Put
otherwise, the relevance of Mills lies in his efforts to re-
vitalize sociology in political terms and also to unite poli-
tics and sociology into a common area of intellectual explor-
ation by social scientists. From another perspective, the
political significance of Mills' political sociology may be
understood in the background of predominant social science
exercises around the decade of the fifties in America. As
one commentator describes the situation: "Sociologists are
hot on the trail of new discoveries in American social
mobility; political scientists are busily assuring us that
the two-party system is an inevitable ingredient of American
politics; economists are celebrating America's new affluence;
socialism is treated as a dead dog, buried for all time
(thank God) in an enormous Princeton study" (Martinson, 1960:
14). It was in this academic environment of pseudo-politics
that Mills spoke of the role of sociology in political terms.
However, for Mills, how does the political become the social?
Let him speak for himself:

> The shaping of the society we shall live in and
> the manner in which we shall live in it are in-
> creasingly political. And this society includes
> the realms of intellect and of personal morals.
> If we demand that these realms be geared to our
> activities which make a public difference, then

> personal morals and political interests
> become closely related; any philosophy that
> is not a personal escape involves taking a
> political stand. If this is true, it
> places great responsibility upon our poli-
> tical thinking. Because of the expanded
> reach of politics, it is our own personal
> style of life and reflection we are think-
> ing about when we think about politics
> (PPP: 299).

In this statement, which he made as far back as 1944, Mills
comes very close to Weber who once made this remark: "All
ultimate questions without eception are touched by political
events, even if the latter appears to be superficial" (quoted
in Mayer, 1956: 15). Mills was predominantly a sociologist
by training as well as by profession. When he coined the
term "sociological imagination" he admits that he did not
intend "to suggest merely the academic discipline of 'socio-
logy'" (SI: 19 footnote). Nevertheless he uses the term
because, inter alia, he was primarily a sociologist. "Every
cobbler thinks leather is the only thing, and for better or
worse, I am a sociologist" (SI: 19 footnote). Despite his
self designation as a sociologist, it is neither unwarranted
nor unjustified to call him a political sociologist because
of the obvious political meaningfulness in which Mills con-
ceives the substance of his sociology. Stated otherwise,
this is to suggest that Mills' sociology is predominantly
political sociology which seeks to study social structural
problems in terms of their political repercussions on the life
fates of individuals. Needless also to suggest, his is a
political sociology and as such it offers a political critique
of advanced capitalist society.

There is another reason which supports my decision
to treat Mills' sociology as political sociology. Whether
regarded as a political intellectual, intellectually a
political rebel, an ideologist, a politically-oriented
sociological social psychologist, a sociologist or even a
democrat, Mills was basically a political man, a homo
politicus. Beneath all concerns of his sociological imagina-
tion or social science, this remains the all-pervasive fact
of his life. Mannheim said in his Ideology and Utopia:
"Whatever your interests, they are your interests as a
political person, but the fact that you have this or that
set of interests implies also that you must do this or that
to realize them, and that you must know the specific posi-
tion you occupy in the whole social process" (1936: 163).
Mills' life concerns are a fulfillment of this Mannheimian
dictum as Mills reverberated in later years of his life. Al-
though Weber started with different premises, this is also
Weber's position, and, like Weber's, Mills' political socio-
logy is a sociology of a political man. He is indeed a
political man by self affirmation, not by anybody's imputa-
tion. In commenting upon the criticisms made against his
The Power Elite, which was in effect "a blow at the smooth
certainties and agreeable formulas that now make up the con-
tent of liberalism," Mills makes no wriggling to point out:

> Yes, I do feel that I stand, with most other
> people, outside the major history-making forces
> of my epoch, but at the same time I feel that I
> am among those who take the consequences of
> these forces. That is why I do not make a rigid
> distinction between "life and history," and that
> is one major reason why I am a political man.

No one is outside society; the question is
where you stand within it (Mills, 1957: 30).

As a political man, intellectually and morally tied to demo-
cratic values of truth, reason and freedom, Mills confronted
"the greatest human default being commited by the privileged
in our times" at the bakc of which lie what he calls private
troubles and public issues. Mills' political awareness as
a social being is reminiscent of Aristotle's prophetic utter-
ance in The Politics, the magnum opus of modern political
science: "The man who is isolated--who is unable to share
the benefits of political association, or has no need to
share because he is already self-sufficient--is no part of
the polis, and must therefore be either a beast or a God"
(Aristotle, 1968: 6). Throughout his life, Mills remained
politically conscious, and the leading agency of his political
socialization was, among others, the trouble-ridden years of the
Second World War (cf. Gillam, 1966). While the issues of both
national and international politics strongly influenced the
development of Mills' political attitudes (cf. Gerth, 1962a,
1962b), it was, most importantly, the outbreak of World War
II that threw him the challenge to think and act politically
and to profess radically.[4] Mills was awakened to the new
realities of power and politics of the modern industrial
society only in the forties although the fact remains un-
erringly evident that his subsequent years were marked by
ever increasing political awareness in sociological vocation.

At this point I would like to point out that any

specific discussion on Mills' power elite has been excluded,

somewhat deliberately, from the purview of the present work.

In this two reasons are responsible for my decision. First,

much work has already been done on this aspect of Mills'

political sociology.[5] It is also my impression that absence

of any specific discussion on this aspect does not seriously

affect my treatment of his other contributions especially

because I have in fact taken due note of this concept through-

out the work as and when necessary. Second, I am of the

opinion that it is quite possible to approach Mills and

evaluate his other contributions without necessarily concen-

trating on the theme of power elite. In fact, those who

evaluate Mills' position or his political sociology in terms

of power or power elite concepts tend to underemphasize his

other aspects of political sociology. This is, however, not

to suggest that discussion of power elite thesis is unnecess-

ary in or irrelevant to my assessment of Mills' contributions.

Neither is it to undermine or undervalue its importance in

the study of his political sociology. What is suggested here

is that, on the contrary, Mills can be credited for having en-

riched many other areas of sociology. In other words, Mills'

contributions do not exhaust what he said about the rise of

power elite in America. Even if it is assumed that he has

overemphasized power aspects in sociology, I take the posi-

tion that Mills, by his use of the concepts of power or power

elite, contributed to the relative politicization of socio-

logy. Also, he made appreciable use of power elite theory

as heuristic device in order to articulate his concerns for
the decline of democracy and democratic institutions in
America.

This aspect may be illustrated in some more detail.
Theorists like Horowitz, Gillam and Cuzzort, to cite three
among many others, think that Mills' sociology revolves around
the dimension of power, and this explains both political sig-
nificance and political orientations of his sociology.
Horowitz argues, "In short, the settlement of the sociological
question of how men interact, immediately and directly entails
research into questions of superordination and subordination,
elites and masses, rulers and ruled, in-groups and out-groups,
and members and non-members .... The study of power is the
beginning of the sociological wisdom--but the essence of that
wisdom resides in men. Hence the existence of power is a
less significant area of study than the human uses made of
power. Men define power; they are not necessarily defined
by it. This, at any rate, is the liberating task of the social
sciences" (1969a: 9, II). In his unpublished Master's thesis,
The Intellectual as Rebel: C. Wright Mills 1916-1946, Gillam
seems to have emphasized the "power" aspect in the political
orientations of Mills' sociology. As evident by the title
of the thesis, Gillam purported to understand "the mind" of
Mills as a "paradoxical individual," and so he was led "back
to his formative years." In connection with Mills' criticism
of Dewey on grounds of the latter's failure to "confront the

the problem of power" in modern industrial societies, Gillam

points out that there are "two elements which would dominate

the course of Mills' own intellectual odyssey--his sometimes

agonizing efforts fully to know his every hidden value, and

a concomitant obsession with the problem of power in modern

society" (1966: 67).[6] Elsewhere, in tracing the roots of

Mills' radicalism, he makes this observation: "Mills, how-

ever, while he sometimes feared power and always viewed it

with suspicion, was ultimately concerned with using it for

his own purposes" (Gillam, 1966: 130). Cuzzort's evaluation

is this: "Mills was concerned with one aspect of society

which never loses its significance--the question of power.

His work remains centered on power--the nature of power, the

distribution of power, the uses and abuses of power, the

power of organizations, the myths of power, the evolution of

power, the irrationality of power, and the means of observ-

ing and comprehending power in the vastness of modern

society" (1969: 134). Of these different perspectives,

Horowitz appears to have correctly indicated the role of

power in Mills' sociology. Gillam has overemphasized his

case and this exaggerates, I think, Mills' concern for power.

As far as Cuzzort is concerned, he undervalues the over-all

political contexts behind Mills' apparent reliance on the

concept of power or power elite as a heuristic device.

Generally speaking, there is little doubt that the power di-

mension is an indispensable, if not integral, component of

Mills' sociological system. But, to be sure, that is not all

that Mills' sociology stands for. What is postulated here and
to be elaborated throughout this work is that the dimension
of power additionally adds political character to Mills'
leading sociological themes. In other words, the concept of
power has added political dimension to his sociology. "But
the truth", says Miliband, "it was not so much by power that
Mills was haunted as by powerlessness" (1965: 81). In view
of this, my position with regard to the role of power in
Mills' sociology is this: on the one hand, it not only en-
hances the political character of sociological themes but
also restores, to a great extent, the significance of power
in sociological analysis which was lost typically in the
decade of the fifties; on the other hand, Mills only employed
the concept of power as a heuristic device in order for high-
lighting the low ebb of America's democratic institutions.

That Mills' use of the concept of power adds poli-
tical dimension to his sociology may be illustrated from the
fact of its importance right in the discipline of political
science itself. From one point of view, all great political
thinkers have been aware not only of the coercive aspects of
power; "they have also taken cognizance of the possibility of
using power as an instrument by means of which other values
might be maximized, and the 'good life' brought into being"
(Lasswell and Kaplan, 1961: xiii). In their book, Power
and Society, Lasswell and Kaplan point out that "political
science, as an empirical discipline, is the study of the
shaping and sharing of power" (1961: xiv). Poulantzas, a

theorist in the Marxist tradition, recognizes that the prob-
lem of power is of "supreme importance for political theory"
(1973: 99). In this regard, by introducing his concept of
power or power elite into the arena of sociological debates,
Mills has made noteworthy contribution towards the develop-
ment of political sociology. From another point of view,
the concept of power implies also a social process and, as
such, its political aspect cannot be differentiated from its
social aspect. To be specific, a political process is also
a social process politically considered. Power is as much
social as it is political. "The power process is not a
distinct and separable part of the social process but only
the political aspect of an interactive whole" (Lasswell and
Kaplan, 1961: xvii). Viewed in this light, Mills' use of
the concept serves an important purpose in studying the
political and the social structures of American society. By
its use, he exhibited the structural consequences, in socio-
logical and social psychological terms and in his discussions
of mass society and alienation especially, of power elite as
an independent variable in all its major aspects. Looking
sociologically at power, the central concept of politics,
Mills suggests how the study of society and polity through
the instrumentality of this concept could be made theoretical-
ly possible and practically relevant. But this is not to say
that Mills' use of the concept is beyond controversial limits.
What is significant is that it means a fruitful beginning,
not at an interdisciplinary endeavor only, but in the study

of what I call political sociology. From this focal point,
political sociology is concerned with "who the power holders
are, how they deal with social issues, why they follow a
particular course of action, what kinds of challenges exist
to their prerogatives, and how conflicts, if they exist, are
resolved. These are issues of great consequence to all our
lives. Political sociology, therefore, is not esoteric
field, of interest only to specialists, but should speak to
all concerned with the structuring of power in our society"
(Chasin and Chasin, 1974: 2). What is true, therefore, is
that Mills' sociology does recognize both the social and
the political aspects of the same social reality of every day
life. In a similar way, Mills accepts that politics is in-
timately connected with power phenomena. Setting forth
his position in unmistakably clear terms Mills goes on to
say, "There are those, of course, who deny that politics has
to do with a struggle for power but they are of no direct
concern to politics as we know it or can imagine it" (PPP: 212).
This should be taken as more than a mere statement of a socio-
logist about his political concern for the role of power in
the study of social structure. From sociology's point of
view, Mills' treatment of power has had a profound impact on
the politicization of sociology and also the evolution of
political sociology itself. As for Mills, he realized the
political implications of "power" in sociological studies as
early as 1942. But it is interesting to note that "neither
Park Burgess' Introduction to the Science of Sociology, which

was the standard introductory text in the 1920's and 1930's,
nor Ogburn and Nimkoff's Sociology, which was probably the
most widely read text during the 1940's and 1950's, even
list the term 'power' in their indexes." (Olsen, 1970: x).
The advent of Mills, coupled with a host of empirical research
studies of power structures in communities and organizations,
provided the much-needed impetus towards the development of
political sociology in the decade of the 1960s.

Though power is the major avenue through which institution-
al structures of the political society may be studied, where
does power come from? In this Mills followed the sociological
tradition of Weber. If power is an important variable in
the study of political sociology, it is the state, the poli-
tical society, which becomes all the more important since the
nature, character, scope and consequences of power depends
on the diverse structural contexts and components of the
political organization called 'State'. Mills' realization
of the importance of the state as the highest political or-
ganization monopolizing all sources of legitimate violence,
a conception that precisely reflects the impact of the Weber-
ian heritage on him, is contained in the article, "A Marx
for the Managers", written with Hans Gerth in 1942. In this
article he carried out a searching criticism of James Burn-
ham's The Managerial Revolution. In this book Burnham ad-
vances the thesis that a managerial society will supersede
through war and revolution both capitalism and socialism be-

cause of increasing indispensability of the new managerial

class as productive experts and administrative executives.

In reviewing Burnham's thesis, Mills strongly contends that

"the chances at political power for those filling technically

indispensable roles is not a function of their technical

roles but of their class position and political affiliations,

whatever that may be" (PPP: 61). He, therefore, vehemently

refutes Burnham's assumption that "the technical indispens-

ability of certain functions in a social structure are taken

ipso facto as a prospective claim for political power" (PPP: 57).

Alternatively Mills suggested:

> The question is: Where is the power? The
> answer is: It is the structure of domination,
> which is the state with its monopoly of phys-
> ical force, and fused within it the industrial-
> ists and their agrarian colleagues (PPP: 60).

Though Mills stated this in the immediate context of the Nazi

State, it is fascinating to note him saying that "the task

of understanding what is happening in the world today involves

a comprehension of such basic issues as the retention or a-

bolition of private property, the structure of classes,

possible political and social movements, and of war" (PPP: 68).

As a matter of fact, Mills' use of power to dissect the insti-

tutional structures of society is inextricably bound up with

his notion of politics the meaning of which consists "in

understanding authority," the legitimated power involving

voluntary obedience of the ruled to the ruler. In their turn,

both power and politics are facts of state. For Mills, it

was the state in the industrial epoch of advanced capitalism.

To raise such a question as "where is the power" meant a
real beginning in Mills' intellectual odyssey as a political
sociologist. On the one hand, it signifies his realization
of the essence of political process in power; on the other
hand, it enabled him to locate the habitat of power in the
state as the social structure of domination, just as Wber
did when he spoke of "Politics as a vocation" in a speech
at Munich University in 1918.

This brings us to the crucial question Mills raised
in connection with the role of power in modern industrial
society. He asked: "Whose power and for what ends" (CSS:
195)? The general problem of politics, in general of his
political sociology, is then the explanation of varying
distributions of power and obedience. But power is not, and
cannot be, an end but simply a means and an avenue to discern
historical changes overtaking self, society and polity in
the wake of industrialization, bureaucratization and central-
izing tendencies in modern times. As far as Mills is con-
cerned, he was aware of the limits of power in any fruitful
analysis of the structural problems of society. To quote
Mills:

> In reflecting upon the basic transformations of
> twentieth-century societies, we may first examine
> those institutional orders in which the distribu-
> tion of power is most visible. We do not intend
> by this approach to imply that "power" is the
> highest value, for men in general or for us; it
> is simply expedient to approach modern social
> structures from this point of view, for it is
> from this vantage point that we may best hope to
> understand the ground swell of our age (CSS: 456).[7]

In terms of this it seems clear, as I understand, that Mills'
evolution into a political sociologist does not coincide
with his discovery of "the power elite" in the institutional-
structural trends in American society. In fact those who
exaggerate his uses of power concept really underemphasize
other aspects of Mills' political sociology. As a matter of
fact, these other aspects, which constitute the substance of
the present work, are equally, if not more, important in any
attempt to evaluate his over-all contributions. Repeatedly
Mills points out that "the idea of power elite is of course
an interpretation. It rests upon and it enables us to make
sense of major institutional trends, the social similarities
and psychological affinities of the men at the top. But the
idea is also based upon what has been happening on the middle
and lower levels of power .... " (PPP: 30). Yet from
another point of view Mills' analysis of the power elite is
a part of his political and intellectual concerns for what
is spoiling American democracy.[8]   Elsewhere he specifically
pointed out the following:

> An attack on this power elite is also a fight
> for the democratic means of history-making.
> A fight for such means is necessary to any
> serious fight for peace; it is part of that
> fight (CWT: 121).

If, therefore, as Horowitz says, the study of power is the
beginning of sociological wisdom, then, it may be argued,
it is not definitely and ultimately the goal; neither is it
an end to which efforts of sociology, political sociology or
any other social science as such need be directed. From this

vantage point, Mills does not falter to proclaim that his
basic point is always "the political role of social science
--what that role may be, how it is enacted, and how effective-
ly--this is relevant to the extent to which democracy pre-
vails" (SI: 189). To put him more succinctly:

> .... it is precisely the job of liberal educ-
> ation, and the political role of social science,
> and its intellectual promise, to enable men to
> transcend .... fragmented and abstracted milieux:
> to become aware of historical structures and of
> their own place within them (SI: 189, footnote).

Coverage of the Work

As already indicated, in delineating the contours and
the content of this political sociology I have chosen selec-
tively some issues which I have deemed basically fundamental
to Mills' sociological system. My decision, involving un-
avoidably some amount of personal preference and understand-
ing, need not however be taken in absolute terms since, what-
ever the criteria for choosing one set of issues rather than
another, Mills' ideas are so interrelated as to defy any
systematic scheme of classification. This is to suggest that
his sociological categories stand in complex relationship to
each other, and that all of them occur in one form or another
in the analysis of any specific aspect of his sociology. In
view of this the broad purpose of this work has been to present
his sociological system as a whole although this has been
done in terms of focussing on individual issues.

In chapters 2, 3 and 6 I discuss different aspects
of Mills' political sociology as such. In chapters 2 and
3 I discuss how his political sociology gathers its form
and content in the context of its theoretical debates with
grand theory and abstracted empiricism, which claimed legi-
timate authority to have the final say over the defining
contours of all theory and research in sociology until the
advent of Mills in the decade of the fifties when he firmly
put forward an alternative conception, variously designated
as "radical sociology", "new sociology", or "humanistic
sociology".[9] While these two chapters serve to outline
Mills' contributions to various general aspects of socio-
logy including its theoretical emphasis and research orien-
tations, in chapter 6 I focus on the political aspects and
the political goals of his sociology. It is essentially a
problem centered sociology conceived in terms of a reaffirm-
ation of faith in political liberalism. Though conceived
immediately to highlight private troubles and public issues,
Mills' political sociology envisages reconstruction of a
democratic society through an appeal for restoration of
reason and freedom for all in the society. In chapters 4
and 5, wherein I discuss Mills' assumptions about mass
society and alienation, contain descriptions of how individ-
uals fell into the grip of private troubles or public issues
due to continuing disappearance of reason and freedom from
the society. Mills' ideological orientations and political

inclinations, as manifest in the totality of his counter
conception of sociology, have constituted the general themes
of chapters 7 and 8. Mills was not only a sociological
ideologist, and as sociological ideologist he was, in his own
unique way, a champion of new Leftism. It is needless to
say that his protest against Bell's thesis of the end of
ideology has become the cornerstone of sociological radical-
ism of his later life. Whereas these aspects are the substance
of chapter 7, the specific concern in chapter 8 has been to
establish Mills as a liberal democrat. Since I suggest that
Mills' brand of political sociology is essentially a liberal
political sociology, I have found it necessary to catalogue
the elements of democratic liberalism for which Mills stood for
throughout his life. My own finding is that Mills' position is
very much comparable to that of Mill, the best theoretical
representative of liberal democracy. My conclusions, con-
tained in chapter 9, consist of two parts. The first part
presents a summary of findings as to my assessment of Mills'
contributions. The other part focuses on the shortcomings
of Mills' political sociology and suggests some measures by
which its theoretical and methodological deficiencies can be
remedied.

A Note on the Method and Limitations of the Work

In pursuing the present work I have relied on what
Mills called "intellectual craftsmanship." Boradly speaking,

this concept of intellectual craftsmanship underlies my own

research procedure, or "method" as it may be called. Put

very briefly, it demands, among others, the following pre-

requisites.[10]

> Avoid any rigid set of procedures. Above all,
> seek to develop and to use the sociological
> imagination. Avoid the fetishism of method
> and technique. Urge the rehabilitation of
> the unpretentious intellectual craftsman, and
> try to become such a craftsman yourself. Let
> every man be his own methodologist; let every
> man be his own theorist; let theory and method
> .... become part of the practice of a craft
> (SI: 224).

In terms of these assumptions of intellectual craftsmanship,

which have influenced my own methodological consciousness, I

have tried to examine, analyse and systematize basic ideas

or categories of Mills' political sociology. Mills' concept

of intellectual craftsmanship is meaningful in the sense of

a method of analysis the purpose of which is to explain some-

thing or to increase their understanding. While not all

sociologists are methodologists (cf. Becker, 1970: 3),

methods are undeniably essential in the pursuit of socio-

logical knowledge. As Mills said, "Statements of method

promise to guide us to better ways of studying something, often

in fact of studying almost anything" (SI: 122). So far so

good. In my own work, I have taken the point of view that

method is a tool, a means of raising certain worthwhile issues

and of explaining them in order to reach certain conclusions

which might follow from the findings. The criteria for rais-

ing issues or the modes of answering and explaining them

differ from sociologist to sociologist. Nevertheless, this
study has chosen some issues, having assumed that they pre-
sent a theoretical system of interrelated ideas. The ques-
tion of any rigid adherence to any specific scientific method
has been avoided because of the fact that sociology is both
"a humanistic and scientific discipline" (Zetterberg, 1965:
20). For me, method has to do, as Mills said, "with how
to ask and answer questions with some assurance that the
answers are more or less durable" (SI: 120). In my effort to
avoid any rigid adherence to method, I have tried to be
guided by what Mills calls the sociological imagination.[11]
Stated otherwise, the function of the sociological imagina-
tion; in addition it has been conceived as a guiding prin-
ciple that gives order to theory, methodology and research
process. In my work I have adhered to the following ground
rules:

> The sociological imagination demands varia-
> bility in the research process. The processes
> by which sociology is done should not be made
> too rigorous; an open mind is required. What
> some regard as doctrinaire will be challenged
> by others and, therefore, methodological and
> theoretical principles must always be evaluated
> in terms of the sociological imagination (Denzin,
> 1973: 6).

As far as the theoretical perspective of this work is con-
cerned, I have looked to and have utilized the sociology of
knowledge tradition. It has been used as a frame of refer-
ence, as a kind of perspective or orientation in my examina-
tion and explanation of the issues concerned. Although

Manheim is generally associated with the development of the

sociology of knowledge area, it has a rich but widely diver-

sified origin.[12] But, it must be noted, the scientific

status of the sociology of knowledge is still a matter of

debate in spite of the fact that there are many sociologists

who are urging for its development and employment in the

sociological analysis.[13] Without entering into controversies

as to this, i.e., the scientific status of the sociology of

knowledge, let me state in broad terms in which I have used

this as the theoretical point of research orientation. My

own understanding is that, put in the words of Jarvie, "we

do not acquire our knowledge, opinions and beliefs in a

vacuum, but in a social and political atmosphere; that what

we take to be true, and especially what we take to be ob-

viously true, is conditioned by these social and political

surroundings, and especially by our social and political

interests" (1972: 131). To this assumption it must also

be added that knowledge has its origin in the social and

material bases the exploration of which falls within the

tasks of the sociology of knowledge. Obviously this approach

conceives the society as a dynamic concept and steers its

way through conflicting viewpoints. As one contemporary

sociologist states: "For its vitality as an intellectual

exercise, the sociology of knowledge posits a society of

diverse and diverging viewpoints, intellectually rent into

ideological camps providing, on the one hand, justification

for the maintenance of the status quo and propounding, on

the other hand, dreams and schemes of future utopias"
(Shaskolsky, 1970: 6). While the truth or falsity, correct-
ness or incorrectness, validity or invalidity of my findings
is left to the readers, this study has in general attempted
to pursue an objective and detached analysis. Regardless of
whether or not this stand has succeeded. I have tried to
follow what Hughes advised to all researchers: "I believe
those sociologists who will contribute most to the funda-
mental, comparative and theoretical understanding of human
society and of any of its problems are those deeply concern-
ed with it as to need a desparate, almost fanatical detach-
ment from which to see it in full perspective" (Hughes,
1971: 495).

Finally, few words need to be said with regard to
some limitations of this work. The most important of all
limitations that might be found inherent to this work is that
it remains far from being a complete study by itself. The
existing literature on Mills or concerning his life and works
is terrifyingly vast and is continuously growing. In addi-
tion, Mills himself was also a voluminous writer. For ob-
vious reasons, therefore, not all but only chosen few aspects
that are politically and sociologically relevant have been
selected for specific analysis in this study. Since disser-
tations for the Master's degree requirement are necessarily
of narrow scope my work, being conceived as an attempt to
present Mills' contributions as a theoretical system, appears
somewhat ambitious. I have no hesitation to admit this al-

though I have continuously struggled with the constraint of
time which deprived me of more concentration and further
critical analysis in my work. I urge the readers to consider
this work as a necessary preliminary study of Mills, and not
a decisive one which I hope to undertake in the near future.
Another limitation of this work relates to the source of
data. In general, the data for this work have been mainly
collected from library sources. These data constitute the
published works of Mills, works published about him, and
other works that have been found to have a bearing on Mills
and his era or his contemporaries. But I have not been able,
primarily because of monetary and time constraints, to con-
sult and examine Mills' unpublished papers some of which
have been retained by Mrs. Yaroslava Mills, while others are
now lying with the University of Texas.[14] Since these papers
are "primarily academic in nature and weighted toward the
middle and later years of Mills' life" (Gillam, 1966: 152),
I presume that they might have a bearing on my information
of Mills' sources of or views on sociological concepts. The
readers are therefore forwarned of some inadequacies of this
work although, I suppose, these unpublished works of Mills
may not, unless otherwise shown, significantly change the
main theoretical thrusts or arguments of his political socio-
logy. The main reason for this assumption is that Mills'
own published writings are clearly indicative of what he has
to say, and that published works of others concerning his
sociology are also clear in their respective interpretations

or emphases. It is my feeling that I have covered, as much
as I can, the substantive information contained in the
available published sources. However, this should not be
construed as a justification of my lapses which this work
might suffer from.

Notes

1.   A clear evidence of increasing sociological interest in
     Mills' work can be illustrated by drawing attention,
     besides existing voluminous literature, to the number
     of theses already done on different aspects of his
     sociology. See Gillam (1966), Cleere (1971), Warner
     (1972), Bray (1973), Kraetzer (1975), Berkowitz (1976).

2.   It must be noted that most of the contemporary review-
     ers of Mills are in general agreement over this char-
     acterization. See, for example, Spinard (1966), Dom-
     hoff (1969), Bray (1973), etc.

3.   My own impression is that Mills, in spite of his serious
     plea for incorporation of what he calls "plain marxism"
     into social science, is more Weberian than Marxian. In
     all his essential ideas, e.g., power, power elite, poli-
     tics, state, stratification, society, bureaucracy or
     marxism, Mills is far more closer to Weber than to Marx.
     To start with, see Mills (FMW: 46-50; 1963); Sharp (1960),
     Zeitlin (1971), Kozyr-Kowalski (1968), Mayer (1975),
     Sigler (1966), Berkowitz (1976: 73-89).

4.   However, this political evolution of Mills was not con-
     tinuous but rather abrupt. See Scimecca (1977:12).

5.   For example, see especially Domhoff and Ballard (1969),
     Crockett (1970), Gillam (1971), and Berkowitz (1976).

6.   Italics added. Gillam quotes William Miller in order to
     point out that the theme of Mills' life was "the in-
     tellect as a source and engine of power .... (H)e was a
     self-conscious student of power, and of men of power, new
     or old; he worked on power as an intellectual category.
     And he was devoted to his intellectual work; one should
     never forget that. And yet he studied power with the
     hope and anticipation of getting to use it as he under-
     stood it ...." (See Gillam (1966: 68).

7.   Italics added.

8.   For a powerful but negative assessment of Mills' views
     on "the spoiling of American democracy," see Plamenatz
     (1973: 34-51, 130-47).

9.   Towards the end of the decade of the 1950s, Davis called
     for an abandonment of "functional analysis" as a special
     method or body of theory, and argued that structural-

functional analysis was in effect synonymous with
sociological analysis. "If the most frequent con-
ceptions of functionalism make it, in effect, in-
clusive of sociological analysis but exclusive of
reductionism and sheer description, then the scien-
tific problems of functional analysis are the same
as those of sociology in general" (Davis, 1959: 762).
See also Warshay (1975: 85) who designates the period
between 1950 and 1963 as "Theory-Method Era".

10. For an elaboration of other fundamentals of this con-
cept, see Mills' essay "On Intellectual Craftsmanship"
in his The Sociological Imagination.

11. For a discussion of the scope and usefulness of Mills'
concept of the sociological imagination, see chapter 3.

12. See, for example, Curtis and Petras (1970); also
Stark (1958).

13. For leading criticism of the sociology of knowledge,
see Popper (1957, 1959, 1962, 1972). For a brief criti-
cism of Popper and an argument for the relevance of the
sociology of knowledge as a fruitful orientation in
sociological research, see Sjoberg and Nett (1968: 39-69).
They argue that if the assumption that knowledge is
superior to ignorance is accepted, then the sociology of
knowledge perspective "can be employed as a tool to
further rationality as opposed to irrationality. View-
ed as a methodological tool, the sociology of knowledge
perspective not only prevents any lapse into an anti-
scientific, historicist position but permits one to
avoid, at least to a degree, becoming captive of one's
own time and place" (Sjoberg and Nett, 1968: 11-12).

14. This information is provided by Gillam (1966: 152).

CHAPTER TWO

Parsons and Mills: A Comparison

Introduction

Throughout the decade of the 1950s the mainstream sociology, in its twin aspects of grand theory and abstracted empiricism, dominated the sociological scenario practically without any rival to challenge its hegemonic control. Both grand theory and abstracted empiricism constituted its life essence. It claimed legitimate authority to have the final say over the defining contours of all theory and research in sociology until especially when Mills firmly put forward an alternative conception, variously designated as "new sociology", "radical sociology" or "humanistic sociology."[1] Against this backdrop my purpose in the two following chapters, 2 and 3, is to undertake an examination of Mills' critique of the Parsonian sociology and an assessment of his views on sociological methodology.

Why Parsons?

Of the numerous social scientists, both within and outside of America, Mills launched one of the earliest and probably the bitterest attack against Talcott Parsons, the high-priest of what has been generally known in sociology

as "functionalism", "structural-functional approach" or
"grand theory" in Mills' derogatory labelling. To start
with, the basic question, which remains to be answered is
why Mills picked up Parsons, not, for example, Merton "whose
disservice to sociology has been more insidious than that
of Talcott Parsons because, free from the latter's monu-
mental muddle-headedness, he was able to sterilize the sub-
ject matter without falling into absurdity" (Andreski, 1973:
56-57). Another related question is whether Mills' almost
exclusive focus on The Social System (1951) has degenerated
into an one-sided critique of Parsons. On both counts
Mills' position, I think, seems justified in view of the
theoretical and practical influence exerted by Parsons' con-
ceptual and methodological position upon innumerable ad-
herents of the structural functional approach.

Compared to The Structure of Social Action (1937),
the major work of Parsons' first phase in the intellectual
career when he formulated various elements of a much-publicized
voluntaristic theory of action, the publication of The Social
System in 1951 marks the beginning of the second phase, pro-
bably and significantly the last one, where Parsons shifted
his focus to the analysis of large scale social systems and
detailed elaboration and further sophistication of the cate-
gories of his action theory. Closely following its heels
were his Toward a General Theory of Action (1951) and Working
Papers in the Theory of Action (1953), both of which were

outputs of collaborative effort. An interesting point to be noted here is that the publication of Working Papers was welcomed by Lundberg (1956a), a rigorous follower of the positivist tradition of Dodd, as a new positive methodological development in sociology.[2] However in all three very significant publications one can easily discover Parsons' effort to develop a general conceptual scheme in terms of a set of concepts and categories that would enable, while codifying the empirical data, sociology to benefit from a theoretical framework to be developed by other sociologists through careful but systematic use of Parsons and his other associates' endeavours to establish a sociological science. This is to say practically that, despite Parsons' diversified and wide ranging areas of interest, one can see without much effort certain persistent themes and problems in all his writings, including those not specifically mentioned. Mitchell, a rather sympathetic commentator on Parsons, affirms this:

> Perhaps the most persistent and generally noted theme has been his lifetime dedication to theory and to the task of elaborating a "logically articulated conceptual scheme" .... which will allow social scientists, generally, a means of organizing their collective product and direct them into fruitful areas of research. This has been the explicit goal and strategy in each of his books (Mitchell, 1967: 4).

If this be so and is accepted, there remains little doubt as to Mills' propriety to choose specifically The Social System as the focal point of his critique. For instance, in the afore-mentioned book Parsons admittedly undertook an attempt

"to present a logically articulated conceptual scheme" (1964a:

536). In later years Parsons consistently pursued the theme,

reiterating his position forcefully in 1959 when he said

this: "As the sciences of behavior mature as sciences, they

will not continue to be the province of a plurality of com-

peting 'schools' of theoretical interpretation, but they will

tend to converge on a logically integrated, but also highly

differentiated, conceptual scheme" (quoted in Mitchell,

1967: 5). Related to Parsons' concern for a unified conceptual

scheme, it is worthwhile to outline his methodological posi-

tion, especially his views on the role of values in a science,

which, I think, only paralleled abstracted empiricism in its

high esteem for the method of physical sciences. In 1935

he stated his position clearly:

> Like most Americans growing up in the social
> sciences since the War, my starting-point has
> been what may be broadly called the "positivis-
> tic" movement in those fields--the tendency to
> imitate the physical sciences and to make phy-
> sical science the measuring-rod of all things
> .... The task of sociology, as of other social
> sciences, I consider to be strictly scientific
> --the attainment of systematic theoretical
> understanding of empirical fact .... I stand
> squarely on the platform of science (Parsons,
> 1935: 313-14, 316).

Later, in 1959, the year which witnessed the publication of

Mills' The Sociological Imagination, Parsons formally acknow-

ledges that his position is grounded particularly upon Weber's

views on the methodology of the social sciences and the socio-

logy of religion. He accepted the Weberian distinction be-

tween value-relevance (Wertbeziehung) and value-freedom

(<u>Wertfreiheit</u>). In his article, "An Approach to the Sociology
of Knowledge," he admits, in regard to the Weberian postulate
of value relevance, that empirical generalizations about
society, however validated, are never completely independent
of the value perspective of the social scientist (Parsons,
1970: 291). As to the other postulate of value freedom he
interprets the Weberian position in another article, "Evalua-
tion and Objectivity in Social Science" (1964), by saying
that "it is not advocacy that the social scientist abstain
from all value commitments .... The point is rather than <u>in</u>
<u>his role</u> as a scientist a particular subvalue system must
be paramount for the investigator, one in which conceptual
clarity, consistency and generality on the one hand, and
empirical accuracy and verifiability on the other, are the
valued outputs of the process of investigation" (Parsons,
1968: 86). While the question as to why and under what
circumstances Weber made the dichotomy between <u>Wertbeziehung</u>
and <u>Wertfreiheit</u> will be answered elsewhere,[3] for the time
being it seems legitimate, as did Mills in regard to abstract-
ed empiricists, to ask how far the Parsonian sociology pre-
serves its conformity to the ethical injunction of Weber.
Parsons proposes to distinguish between science and ideology
on the analytical level. As to <u>Wertbeziehung</u>, his own version
of sociology reflects what he himself calls "particular
ideology," the ideological orientation which influences the
selection of some problem in preference to others for greater
emphasis and which thus neglects or plays down others. This

preference in selectivity, as he argues, "shades off into

distortion" (Parsons, 1970: 294). Interesting though,

Parsons seems to have never addressed himself to the "particu-

lar ideological" character of his own brand of sociology.

Remindful of the Millsian tradition, Zeitlin makes this

query. To quote him:

> Has he confronted himself and asked whether
> and in what degree his "scientific" statements
> are characterized by "selectivity" and even
> "distortion"; whether, and in what measure,
> he has been yielding concessions to outside
> orientations and interests? For if he has not
> asked himself these questions, he has failed
> to abide by the norms of "science" as voca-
> tion (Zeitlin, 1973: 60).

In respect of the other canon of Weber's dichotomy,

one can raise similar issues. Does his own scientific socio-

logy contain the professed "conceptual clarity, consistency

and generality" or "empirical accuracy and verifiability"

as he suggested those as defining marks of the sociologist

in the role of a scientist? If not, as is truly the case,

the cult of dualism between fact and value, or knowledge and

interest, in the Parsonian sociology has been transformed

into a sacred doctrine of scientific objectivism as the

integral core of structural functional approach. To put my

own criticism in the words of a contemporary sociologist who

bears much Millsian tradition: "Their objectivism is gained

at the cost of reifying scientific knowledge and, consequent-

ly, mystifying its politically intended character and histori-

cal relationship to the technological needs of capitalist

production" (Horton, 1971: 178). There remains little doubt

as to why Mills' selection of Parsons, whose methodological position provided a strong support to the abstracted empiricists' scientism, is very much justified. Apart from Parson's theoretical, conceptual and methodological position that Mills criticized in his claim for an alternative sociology, he had in fact another equally important reason. Parsons' theoretical sociology, despite its many limitations, coincided with the theoretical enterprise of American sociology itself. "Few matched his classificatory diligence, but many purveyed his sense. 'Structural' (or 'normative') functionalism, as it came to be called, was in the 1950s and the early 1960s virtually coextensive with theory among American sociologists" (Hawthorn, 1976: 214). To be sure, there are variations in theoretical adaptations of structural functional approach among Parsons' adherents within the camp of establishment sociology. Despite this fact, the singularity of Parsons' prominence lies in over-all acceptance of his systemic framework by innumerable sociologists, no matter whether they are his associates, colleagues or students. For example, the list of his adherents is quite long; among them are Marion J. Levy, Kingsley Davis, Robert K. Merton, Neil J. Smelser, Charles Drekmier, Bert F. Hoselitz, S. N. Eisenstadt, Winston White, Robert Bellah, Cliffort Geertz, Albert Cohen, David Aberle, Bernard Berber, Renee Fox, William Mitchell, Gabriel E. Almond, David E. Apter, Karl Deutsch, and many others within sociology, anthropology and

political science. It is clear that even if Parsons lacks

the theoretical profundity of Weber, the revolutionary

charisma of Marx, the lucidity of Freud or the causticity

of Veblen, he became the focal point of many sociologists,

both his proponents and opponents. Indubitably Parsons is

one of the very few sociologists who have deeply affected

theoretical and methodological developments of modern socio-

logy. "If ever a social theory seemed to grow only from

purely technical considerations internal to social theory,

as if born of an immaculate conception, it is the work of

Talcott Parsons" (Gouldner, 1970: 169). All this, therefore,

indicates why Mills, as did Gouldner later, focussed on

Parsons, considering him the best representative of the

establishment sociology.

Functions of Terminology

Next, the most fundamental aspect of Parsons' socio-

logy is his literary style, as Mills rightly pointed out.

Parsons has been, in his own words, an "incurable theoreist."

Naturally the logical style of Parsons has raised more

questions, pointing ultimately to the ideological intent be-

neath sociologically stated issues. Fletcher, though general-

ly accepting the main themes of Mills' The Sociological

Imagination, observes that "terminology is the most evident,

but surely the most trivial ground on which Parsons can be

criticised" (1960: 170). Martindale suggests that "Parsons

wrote as he did by choice, that he developed a style as he
adapted to his purpose as was that of Mills to other ob-
jectives" (1975: 73). These two explanations are too simple
and do not reveal subterranean truths underlying the Parson-
ian sociology. The question is one of lack of substantive
issues in Parsons' sociology and of whether conceptualizing
problems is by itself worthwhile without necessary reference
to any description and explanation of concrete social events
and human action. If the purpose of the definition of the
concepts is to focus argument upon fact, to transform argu-
ment over terms into disagreements about fact, and thus to
open arguments to further inquiry, as Mills pointed out,
then Parsons' sociology is far beyond this, despite its
charms of pretentious language and sophisticated dressing up
of the subject matter almost to a mysterious level.[4] Most
often it is either a theoretical forest and "a jungle of
fine distinctions and intertwining classifications" (Devereux,
1961: 2), or a kind of sociological sport in which "methodo-
logy exercises its perverse influence by disguising itself
as a theory" (Louch, 1966: 11). Piercing through the subtle-
ties and obscurities of Parsons' language, Mills revealed
in his unique way the vacuity and relative barrenness of grand
sociology (SI: 25-33). But Mills was by no means alone to
point out this. To cite an example of how an outrageous
vocabulary can clothe 'the essential barrenness of the theory',
let me quote Louch who focuses his argument on Parsons'

article entitled "General Theory in Sociology" and published

in R. K. Merton and others' Sociology Today.

> .... when the structure of the larger system
> is undergoing a relatively continuous process
> of change in the direction of increasing
> differentiation, the mechanisms involved in
> this change will, under certain circumstances,
> operate to dichotomize the population of units
> receiving the primary "real" output of the
> focal system of reference and to produce an
> orderly alternation of relative predominance
> of the two nearly equal parts (Parsons, 1960a:
> 22).

Louch translates, so to say, and then comments:

> That is: given social change in a democratic
> society parties in power will tend to swing
> from liberal to conservative and back again.
> I do not know why such simpler formulations
> will not do in place of the bewildering com-
> plexity, unless it is that the terminological
> display clouds the paucity of information
> (Louch, 1966: 14).

In other words, theory lacks explanatory power, makes

description unnecessarily complex and is applied to cases

which are far from enlightening. Illustrating Parsons'

"nebulous verbosity" and his slippage into "the realm of

pure fancy completely out of touch with reality," Andreski

goes on to say, referring to his recent publication, Societies:

Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives (1966), that "des-

pite the author's good intentions, what he says is sadly

lacking in clarity. Indeed he can make the simplest truth

appear unfathomably obscure" (1973: 60). Lack of substantive

content is one of the basic shortcomings which reduce the

grand theoretical sociology into what Mills calls "an arid

game of concepts." Much of what remains is sociological

commonplace. "In fact, many of the ideas of grand theorists,

when translated, are more or less standard ones available

in many text books" (SI: 29).

Black points to the same direction when he opines

that "on the whole, it seems to me, the component concepts of

Parsons' scheme are laymen's concepts in the thin disguise

of a technical-sounding terminology" (1961: 279). The grandoise

vocabulary, built upon endless elaborations of finer distinc-

tions, innumerable empirical generalizations and other con-

ceptual and theoretical exercises, speaks of emptiness,

rather than organizing a systematic effort to describe and

explain intelligibly human conduct and social issues. In a

very profound sense, grand theoretical sociology is locked

within itself. As Mills points out:

> The basic cause of grand theory is the initial
> choice of a level of thinking so general that
> its practitioners cannot logically get down to
> observation. They never, as grand theorists,
> get down from the higher generalities to prob-
> lems in their historical and structural contexts.
> This absence of a firm sense of genuine problems,
> in turn, makes for the unreality so noticeable
> in their pages (SI: 33).

Relative Insignificance of Grand Sociology: Issues of Politics

Legitimation, Order, Change and Conflict

While the role of terminology in Parsons' sociology

is not so simple as to be explained away as a matter of

personal style or endeavor at theoretical abstraction to
picture reality, its more serious limitation is due to his
persistent insensitivity and apathy to concrete social and
political issues.[5] For him sociological theory is "<u>that</u>
<u>aspect of the theory of social systems which is concerned</u>
<u>with the phenomena of the institutionalization of patterns</u>
<u>of value-orientation in the social system</u>, with the conditions
of that institutionalization, and of changes in the patterns,
with conditions of conformity with and deviance from a set
of such patterns and with motivational processes in so far
as they are involved in all of these" (Parsons, 1964a: 552).
It is now quite well known that the Parsonian theoretical
system is a consensual sociology that has become self-defeat-
ing in its extraordinary emphasis over the subjective and
normative elements. His sociology raises debates and resolves
issues within the broad-based framework of order, coopera-
tion, consensus and agreement. Norms are adhered not be-
cause of sanctions but for reasons of 'moral obligation'
that manifests 'the existence of a common system of ultimate-
value attitudes'. Parsons' overemphasis on the problem of
order (1964a: 36-37) has led Mills, as also many others in-
cluding Lockwood and Gouldner, to observe: "The idea of the
normative order that is set forth, and the way it is handled
by grand theorists, leads us to assume that virtually all
power is legitimated" (SI: 42). Stated otherwise, grand
sociology provides legitimation to any social order in which
harmony of interests is the natural feature of the society

(SI: 42). Similar to his overemphasis on the normative order
is Parsons' assertion that the social equilibrium, the con-
tinuity and maintenance of social patterns, normative ex-
pectations or value systems, is not problematic. He assumes
that "the maintenance of the complementarity of role-expecta-
tions, once established, is not problematical, in other words
that the 'tendency' to maintain the interaction process is
the first law of social process" (Parsons, 1964a: 204).
The position that social continuity, normative expectations
or value systems do not require explanation is hardly tenable.
They do not suddenly appear from vacuum. But, as is contend-
ed here, the dominant normative system, requiring internal-
ization of values and norms for a stable order, may very well
serve the interests of the powerful and the privileged, such
as, for example, those of big corporate owners of America's
mass society. Alternatively said, which is predominant cannot
be decided "a priori" in accordance with certain principles
of sociology. Mills elaborates: "We might well imagine a
'pure type' of society, a perfectly disciplined social struc-
ture, in which the dominated men, for a variety of reasons,
cannot quit their prescribed roles, but nevertheless share
none of the dominator's values, and thus in no way believe
in the legitimacy of the order" (SI: 39). Parsons isolates
values from social classes, interests and the state, invit-
ing serious deficiencies which weaken the reliability of
Parsons' sociology.

> To maintain and transmit a value system, human
> beings are punched, bullied, sent to jail,
> thrown into concentration camps, cajoled,
> bribed, made into heroes, encouraged to read
> newspapers, stood up against a wall and shot,
> and sometimes even taught sociology. To speak
> of cultural inertia is to overlook the concrete
> interests and privileges that are served by in-
> doctrination, education, and the entire com-
> plicated process of transmitting culture from
> one generation to the next (Moore, Jr., 1968: 486)

It is then quite understandable why Mills' reaction

to Parsons' sociology is so much negative. Parsons' selec-

tive emphasis on the normative elements only matches his

underemphasis of the conflictual elements within the society.

Those elements making for instability and conflict tend to

be ignored "as a general determinant of the dynamics of social

systems" (Lockwood, 1956: 136). To be sure, Parsons of course

refers to conflictual elements within the normative social

system and does in detail deal with "sources of conflict,

aggression, deviance, and with processes at both the psycho-

logical and social-systems levels for the handling of conflict,

deviance, and general re-equilibriating tendencies" (Mitchell,

1967: 39). Going a step further, Merton contends that func-

tionalism, far from being a conservative ideology, can very

well be radical and critical when addressed to the malfunc-

tioning of specific institutions that satisfy societal needs

of all. In other words, functionalism may involve "no in-

trinsic ideological commitment" (Merton, 1957: 39). But as

a matter of fact in their respective functional sociologies

of Parsons, Merton and Davis, even when conflictual elements

are raised and problems of social change posed, the considera-
tion only proceeds along the Durkheimian "dysfunctional"
road. Deviance, tension or strains, though dysfunctional,
tend to become either institutionalized or resolved in such
a manner as to promote integration which is taken for granted
as the dominant equilibrating tendency inherent in the society.
This is what is called cybernetic functionalism wherein soci-
ety is conceived to be a self-regulating and equilibrating
system (cf. Jacobson, 1971).

For instance, in his article "Social Classes and
Class Conflict in the Light of Recent Sociological Theory"
(1949), Parsons thinks that "class conflict is endemic in
our modern industrial type of society" and that "class con-
flict certainly exists in the United States." But he does
not focus on the bases, structural and objective, of class
conflict and regards conflict as a failure of social control
and normative breakdown. It is basically a Durkheimian ap-
proach, confusing anomie with conflict. No wonder for him,
there is no "sharp and fundamental sociological distinction
between capitalist and all noncapitalist industrial type of
society," and capitalist and socialist industrialism can be
seen "as variants of a single fundamental type, not as dras-
tically distinct stages in a single process of dialectical
evolution" (Parsons, 1966: 333). Such a view not only under-
writes most basic differences between socialism and capital-
ism but is also either too conservative or too Messianic.

Practically it ignores "the experiential reality of industri-
al society. It fails to touch upon an entire vast realm
of the industrial experience, horror. It fails to comprehend
either the collective horror or the personal horrors which
certain features of industrial society almost necessarily
involve" (Foss, 1963: 125-26).

Let me look at the same facet of Parsons' consensual
sociology. In his "Democracy and Social Structure in Pre-
Nazi Germany" (1942), Parsons refers to the development of
Germany under the aegis of "big business" and to many other
concepts such as "propertyless industrial class," "a high con-
centration of executive authority and control of industrial
property," the role of "feudal-militaristic" elements in the
structure of the German state, "economic distinction," "class
struggle," giving an idea that he was pursuing a Marxian
analysis. Far from it; he rather employs Durkheim's anomie
and Weber's rationalization as explanatory categories in
tracing the development of German National Socialism. In the
period of "rapid technological change, industrialization,
urbanization, migration of population, occupational mobility,
cultural, political and religious change" in Pre-Nazi Germany,
the immediate result was, says Parsons like a loyal Durkheim-
ian, "the widespread insecurity" involving "the well known
consequences of anxiety, a good deal of free-floating aggres-
sion, a tendency to unstable emotionalism and susceptibility
to emotionalized propaganda appeals and mobilization of affect

around various kinds of symbols" (1966: 117). With this

Durkheimian approach to "the elements of malintegration,

tension and strain in the social structure" of Germany, Par-

sons finds out through what Weber called the process of ra-

tionalization how Germany's cultural tradition was affected

"in the form of seularization of religious values, emancipa-

tion from traditional patterns of morality .... and the

general tendency of rational criticism to undermine tradi-

tional and conservative system of symbols" (1966: 118). As

a result of both, the older conservative patterns were shaken

in such a way that they particularly "in defining the role of

the youth, of sex relationships, and of women could not serve

as an adequate basis of institutional integration" (1966:

122). From this vantage point the critically important as-

pect of the National Socialist movement for Parsons lies "in

the fact that it constitutes a mobilization of the extreme-

ly deep-seated romantic tendencies of German society in the

service violently aggressive political movements, incorporat-

ing a 'fundamentalist' revolt against the whole tendency of

rationalization in the Western world, and at the same time

against its deepest institutionalized foundations" (1966:

123).

Similar analysis can be found also in his article on

"Sociological Aspects of Fascist Movements" (Parsons, 1966:

124-41). As is therefore evident in the Parsonian analysis,

anomic consequences of disorganizing processes of industrial-

ism and urbanism, and negative impact of rationalization were

obstacles to the development of liberal democratic patterns

and values within German capitalism. And, as Parsons makes

clear, it had nothing to do with what Neumann called "total-

itarian monopolistic capitalism." Stated otherwise, the

differences between Parsons and Mills as to their respective

political orientations came to the fore when the latter re-

viewed in 1942, the year which saw the appearance of Parsons'

essays, Neumann's Behemoth, and regarded it "at once a de-

finitive analysis of the German Reich and a basic contribu-

tion to the social sciences" (PPP: 170). The deficiencies in

the Parsonian analysis are now clear. Parsons never gives

attention to the factual support rendered by bankers and in-

dustrialists who were largely responsible for the accession

of the Nazis to power. The monopoly form of German capital-

ism required the stabilizing support of a total political

power, for the corporations could not flourish in capitalism

without guarantees and subsidies from the state, the struc-

ture of legitimate coercion.

Parsons also ignores the fact that the working class

was regimented and fragmented, that the trade unions were

smashed and, finally, that the social democratic and commun-

ist parties were suppressed. Power was concentrated in four

elite constituents, the Nazi party, the State bureaucracy, the

armed forces and particularly the monopoly capitalists. The

combination of these forces made the struggle against capi-

talism impossible. The espousal of these views made, among

others, Mills not only a radical but also aware of ominous

future awaiting individuals in capitalist democracy.

> The analysis of Behemoth casts light upon
> capitalism in democracies .... (I)f you read
> his book thoroughly, you see the harsh out-
> lines of possible futures close around you
> .... (I)t sets our attitude toward given
> elements in other countries, sights the acts
> of our allegiance, places limits upon our
> political aspirations: helps to locate the
> enemy all over the world .... Behemoth is
> everywhere united (PPP: 177-78).

This explains, as Mills concluded, "Why one Behemoth is worth,

to social science, twenty Social Systems" (SI: 47).

The deliberate emphasis on a normative social order

in the grand theoretical sociology, as also in its different

structural functional variants, has resulted in a double ef-

fect; on the one hand, it not only minimizes the role of con-

flict or antagonisms within society but also, on the other,

makes any large scale structural change of the corporate

capitalist society impossible. Take for instance, Parsons'

views on social change and Bolshevism in The Social System.

He stresses the need for adaptive social structures in terms

of functional requirements of the social system, the re-

emergence of conformity needs as associated with the old

society, the mitigation of radicality of revolutionary pro-

cess (Parsons, 1964a: 527). All revolutionary meovements,

because of their motivational ambivalence due to a fusion of

"utopian" and "realistic" elements, have to come to terms

with reality once they are all accomplished--in other words,

the process of reequilibration of the society. Possibilities

of large scale structural changes are therefore ruled out by

its own internal constraints such as supposed ideological

and utopian limits of revolutionary movements, inevitable

equilibrating tendencies toward adaptive structures and

restoration of old cultural values, personality need disposi-

tions, vested interests, complexity of social structures,

tendentious socialization toward conformity, strains of in-

dustrialization that shift emphasis from the universalistic-

ascriptive to the universalistic-achievement pattern, etc.

By employing what he calls universalistic-achievement pattern,

he not only discusses American society but also goes on to

say that industrialization would transform the USSR in the

direction of the USA, involving changes towards "political

democracy" (Parsons, 1964b: 397).

In other words, we might expect a new variant of

political democracy out of a marriage between industrializa-

tion and Soviet socialism. This is to say, as does Swinge-

hood, that "civilization has run to its close in American

pluralistic democracy and that only modifications and 'improve-

ments' can be expected in the pattern of social inequality

during the coming centuries. Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia

are merely episodes on the way to normal mode of a well-in-

tegrated and stable industrial capitalism" (1975: 211). The

truth of the matter is that in the Parsonian sociology the

emphasis has been carried to an utopistic level.

> By no feat of the imagination, not even by the
> residual category of "dysfunction," can the
> integrated and equilibrated social system be
> made to produce serious and patterned conflicts
> in its structure .... The system theory of

society comes, by implication, dangerously
close to the conspiracy-theory of history
--which is not only the end of all socio-
logy but also rather silly (Dahrendorf,
1958: 120-21).

Parsons' one-sided selective emphasis on and prefer-
ence to normative elements, which as a matter of fact mini-
mize structural causes of conflict, are linked to his rela-
tive insensitivity to political issues and, so to say, con-
servativism of open complacency. Mills rightly points out
that in terms of systems sociology "the idea of conflict
cannot effectively be formulated. Structural antagonisms,
large-scale revolts, revolutions--they cannot be imagined
.... Not only does the 'collective behavior' of terrorized
masses and excited mobs, crowds and movements-- with which
our era is so filled--find no place in the normatively
created social structures of grand theorists. But any
systematic ideas of how history itself occurs, of its mechan-
ics and processes, are unavailable to grand theory, and ac-
cordingly, Parsons believes, unavailable to social science"
(SI: 42-43).[6] If the thrust of sociological analysis is on
normative order and socialization, regardless of the fact
that it legitimates in effect the exploitative social struc-
ture of corporate capitalism, it remains to imagine how the
understanding of American society in terms of universalistic-
achievement pattern can be realistic "without mentioning the
changes which its capitalistic institutions .... are under-
going" (Lockwood, 1956: 138). Mills poses the same questions
as Lockwood did earlier:

It is, for example, difficult to imagine a
more futile endeavor than analyzing American
society in terms of 'the value-pattern' of
'universalistic-achievement' with no mention
of the changing nature, meaning and forms of
success characteristic of modern capitalism,
or of the changing structure of capitalism
itself; or, analyzing United States strati-
fication in terms of 'the dominant value
system' without taking into account the known
statistics of life-chances based on levels of
property and income (SI: 43).

Not that Parsons is unaware of social change. He does

deal with them, their origins, their directions, scope and

rates; however, not to highlight the problematic facets of

capitalism but eventually to return, by means of his peri-

pheral analysis, to "liberal democracy" within the doctrin-

aire sovereignty of corporate capitalism. Whatever the optim-

ism cherished by the sociologists of structural functionalism

about the 'new possibilities for accounting for change and

conflict, not to mention stability and order'--through the

developments in the theories of resources, generalized media

interchange, the logic of value adding processes, cybernetic

control or general action level analysis--, even the adherents

of Parsons admit of his failure. Loubser, a former student

claiming to stand in particularistic relationship to Parsons,

admits that "the critics have a point to the extent that

Parsons in spite of his astounding capacity for sustained

abstract thinking, has slipped into misplaced concreteness

himself, hence seemingly providing empirical conceptions of

concrete reality as always relatively integrated and stable"

(1976: 17). To be sure, it is not a mere slippage since

Parsons' theoretical sociology is manifestly on the side of liberal optimism for a consensual social order, considering conflicts only anomic dislocations of ephemeral duration. This apparent political bias is at the bottom of his persistent avoidance of stark realities of capitalist society, such as the scale of corporate concentration, massive alienation, potential class conflict, consequences of elite constellation, media manipulation of mass consciousness, problems of legitimation, decline of democracy, growth of weapons culture at home or underdevelopment and imperialism abroad, and so on. A glaring example of his analysis of power. He has less to say on the distribution of power, struggle for it or costs of authority. Economic and political aspects of power, which constitute the factual social order, remain largely unattended and are delivered "for safekeeping to the economist and political scientist" (Lockwood, 1956: 141). The same criticism holds good for Parsons' recent writings (cf. 1968: 223-63, 297-354; 1965: 199-225). As one contemporary sociologist points out:

> The parallels which Parson is determined to
> pursue between the polity and the economy
> serve, in fact, to separate political and
> economic processes from one another. That
> economic and other "material" factors them-
> selves play a key part in power deflation
> is ignored because Parsons is above all con-
> cerned to show how the polity and economy are
> "analytically" similar, not how they inter-
> twine. Parsons' many discussions of the re-
> lationships between sociology and economics,
> including his and Smelser's Economy and Society,
> are all stated in terms of highly formal ....
> categories, and rarely suggest any substantive
> generalizations linking the two (Giddens, 1968:
> 266).

Parsons, Mills and the Role of History

Another serious flaw in Parsons' grand theoretical
sociology is its conspicuous disinterestedness for historical
concerns. Whereas in Mills "history is the shank of social
study", in Parsons' it is relegated to comparative insigni-
ficance. The historical dimension appears to impose barriers
to the development of a science of sociology. In the process
of sociology's emergence into 'the status of a mature science',
Parsons contended in 1945, historical sociologies of Tylor,
Morgan, Marx or Veblen scarcely have any significant place
since their "ill advised" attempts have tried "to attain,
at one stroke, a goal which can only be approached gradually
by building the necessary factual foundations and analytical
tools" (Parsons, 1966: 220). In 1950 he reiterated his
stand: "If the prospects of sociological theory are good,
so are, I am convinced, those of sociology as a science, but
only if the scientifically fundamental work is done" (Par-
sons, 1966: 368).

Incidentally, a striking parallel can be found in
Karl Popper's two books, The Open Society and Its Enemies
(1945) and The Poverty of Historicism (1957), wherein he
argues over the impossibility of historical prediction since
the progress of history is conditionally dependent upon the
progress of knowledge. If Parsons' deliberate attempt to
divorce sociology from historical concerns marks a healthy

protest against unfounded theorizing, fruitless abstraction

or mere historicism, it in turn invites immediate criticism

by its naive avowal of abstract conceptualization at em-

pirical levels in almost total seclusion of historical data.

Lynd, whose impact on Mills remains evident, argued in 1939

that the place of historical analysis in social science is

"basic and beyond question." To the extent "that it reveals

man confronted by typical human dilemmas and finding service-

able paths through them, we may cautiously canvass past pre-

cedents as possible dress rehearsals for coping with the

fumbling present; and, in so far as it represents irrepar-

ably spilled milk, we may learn from it how to avoid past

errors" (Lynd, 1964: 129-30). Historical knowledge is neither

luxury nor amusement of intellect at leisure time. History

adds to widen the range of intellectual grasp over reason

itself; to understand society is to understand history too

because social structures exist only as historical structures.

"The main structural features of what society can be like in

the next generation are already given by trends at work now.

Humanity's freedom to maneuver lies within the framework

created by its history" (Moore, Jr., 1958: 159). A system

sociology can of course establish certain uniformities and

recurrences regarding human behavior and action but there is

no guarantee that "the laws it establishes will hold good

beyond the historical period from which facts are drawn"

(Collingwood, 1969: 17-18).

In sharp contrast to Parsons, Mills conceives socio-

logy and its significant problems within an awreness of

historical social structures.[7] For him, the task of the

sociological imagination, lying at the very bottom of any

sociological enterprise, is "to understand the larger his-

torical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and

the external career of a variety of individuals" (SI: 5). To

Mills both man and society appear in their historical signi-

ficance. On the one hand, says Mills, "we cannot adequate-

ly understand 'man' as an isolated biological creature, as a

bundle of reflexes or a set of instincts, as an 'intelligible

field' or a system in and of itself. Whatever else he may

be, man is a social and an historical actor who must be under-

stood, if at all, in close and intricate interplay with social

and historical structures" (SI: 158). Elsewhere, "Man is a

unique animal species in that he is also an historical develop-

ment" (CSS: 480). On the other hand, he also conveices that

"the image of any society is an historically specific image"

(SI: 149). By the principle of historical specificity Mills

means that "the problems we face are set by conflicting

elements in a specifically capitalist social structure" (CSS:

384). Having conceived of man as an historical actor he

espouses, in continuation of the classic tradition of socio-

logy, the view that "all sociology worthy of the name is

'historical sociology'" (SI: 146). Rightly he asserts that

no social science including sociology can transcend history.

Social sciences themselves have originated in the processes

of transition of human societies from one historical stage to another, from the rural communities in feudal era to urban industrial societies in modern times. Many of the dominant conceptions of modern sociology--Maine's status and contract, Tonnies' community and society, Weber's status, class and rationalization, Spencer's military and industrial societies, Pareto's circulation of elites, Cooley's primary and second- ary groups, Durkheim's mechanical and organic solidarity etc. --are inextricably bound up with different phases of historic- al transition of society. These ideas still orient the prac- titioners of sociology to multifarious ways of looking at society and its realities. As a matter of fact the classic tradition is imbued with, says Mills, "a master view of the structure of society in all its realms, the mechanics of history in all their ramifications, and the roles of individ- uals in a great variety of their psychological nuances" (IM: 3).

Sociology, when conceived within its historical di- mensions, becomes a humanistic endeavor. The consciousness, embedded in the knowledge of the past societies, of ironic and tragic aspects of history has a sobering impact upon anybody's enthusiasm for abstract theorizing. The dialogue be- tween sociology and history is needed for a variety of reasons. First, the intercourse is needed for a knowledge of the historical varieties of human society. "We need the variety provided by history in order even to ask sociological questions properly, much less to answer them" (SI: 146-47). Second, whereas "a-historical studies usually tend to be

static or very short-term studies of limited milieux" (SI:
149), a historical knowledge of sociological concerns broaden
the range of consciousness and interest of the sociologist.
Third, knowledge of the historical dimensions of sociological
concerns enable the sociologist to undertake comparative
studies by means of which "we can become aware of the <u>absence</u>
of certain historical phases from a society, which is often
quite essential to understanding its contemporary shape"
·(SI: 157). Lastly, the knowledge of historical materials is
also required to discern long run trends of society, involved
in answering questions of "from what" and "to what". However
it must be noted, as Mills warns, that the sociologist re-
quires historical orientation in order to "study history
rather than to retreat into it" (SI: 153). One should study
history in order to get rid of it; otherwise historical ex-
planations, being indirectly relevant, may well degenerate
into conservative ideologies or, at best, sociological tri-
vialities. In brief, Mills' sociological perspective is what
follows in his own words:

> The problems of our time--which now include the
> problem of man's very nature--cannot be stated
> adequately without consistent practice of the
> view that history is the shank of social study,
> and the recognition of the need to develop a
> further psychology of man that is sociologically
> grounded and historically relevant. Without use
> of history and without an historical sense of
> psychological matters, the social scientiest
> cannot adequately state the kinds of problems
> that ought now to be the orienting points of
> his studies (SI: 143).

A contemporary parallel to Mills' perspective can be found

in Berger's invitation to a humanistic sociology:

> While most sociologists, by temperament per-
> haps or by professional specialization, will
> be concerned mainly with contemporary events,
> disregard of the historical dimension is an
> offense not only against the classic Western
> ideal of the civilized man but against socio-
> logical reasoning itself-namely, that part of
> it that deals with the central phenomenon of
> predefinition. A humanistic understanding
> of sociology leads to an almost symbiotic re-
> lationship with history, if not to a self-
> conception of sociology as being itself a
> historical discipline (Berger, 1963: 168-69).

An Assessment: The Roots of Ideology in Parsons and his Sociology

Having surveyed the main theoretical divergences of their ideas, it remains to see how Parsons' sociology is a sociology of legitimation of, and status quo for, the corporate capitalist society of America. Stated otherwise, it remains to point out in Mills' terms how the system sociology serves the ideological needs of the corporate mass society. The leading question is: "Is grand theory merely a confused verbiage or is there, after all, also something there" (SI: 27)? His own answer is quite suggestive, providing the basis of radical criticism of structural functional socio-logies. Mills' anwer is:

> Something is there, buried deep to be sure,
> But still something is being said (SI: 27).

Although he modestly claims not to "judge the value of Parsons' work as a whole," Mills nevertheless points, among other things already indicated, to the legitimation

functions of the systemic categories of the Parsonian socio-
logy. The Parsonian variety seeks basically to convert all
institutional structures including their problems of change
and order into what Mills calls "moral sphere" or, more
specifically, "symbol sphere." Parsons' value orientations
and normative structures are mainly "master" symbols of
legitimation of a specific type of social order, namely, the
corporate liberal society of America. "Such symbols, however,
do not form some autonomous realm within a society; their
social relevance lies in their use to justify or to oppose
the arrangement of power and the positions within this arrange-
ment of the powerful. Their psychological relevance lies in
the fact that they become the basis for adherence to the
structure of power or for opposing it" (SI: 37). If this
is the truth, as Mills claims, Parsons' sociology has none-
theless important function of providing political and ideo-
logical support in order to legitimate stable forms of domina-
tion. To this extent his is a conservative sociology. It
is, in Dahrendorf's phrase, "the conservatism of complacency".
Considered yet from another point of view,

> The great challenge of sociology and of social
> science is not the concern with social equili-
> brium or stability commonly expressed with a
> repressive conservatism by the entrenched. The
> challenge is not to provide intellectual in-
> struments and perspectives to entrepreneurs and
> administrators in the hope that they will ap-
> proximate the ideal of the philosopher-king
> or even the philosopher-actionist (Lee, 1973: 6).

That is to say, as does Lee, "man is not a tool; society is
not a system." To dig up conservative roots of Parsons'

sociology is to find that these are deep lying. His con-
servative antecedents are linked to social disorganization
and consequent demoralization caused by the Great Depression,
and to the general crisis facing the middle class dominated
societies.[8]

The economic crisis born of the Depression had the
shattering impact on the economy which failed, as a result,
to hold together American society of the middle classes. For
Parsons it was predictive of even greater social catastrophe.
In search of a way out of this disorganization and demorali-
zation he looked to individual moral commitment than to
economic sources that would involve consideration of economic
bases of the society or changes in the distribution of power
and income. Thus Parsons' voluntaristic sociology, the work
of the first phase of his career, postulated that commitment
to moral values would ensure stability and promote social in-
tegration despite wide spread deprivation for economic reasons.
This was indeed the beginning of his conservative response to
the structural problems of society. When the Depression
gradually receded, war came to an end, stability was restored,
and prosperity made its appearance slowly, American society
was no longer in need of an exclusive focus or emphasis upon
commitment to moral values as cementing forces of a harmon-
ious society. Having been assured of relative stability of
the society and "welfare state" developments, Parsons shifted
his emphasis, in the second phase, to a conception of society

as a social system. He now elaborates "the complex

variety of specific mechanisms that contribute directly

to the internal stability of a society, which goes well

beyond the mere affirmation of the importance of shared

values as a source of societal stability" (Gouldner, 1970:

143). In the postwar period he replaces the voluntaristic

individual commitment by a conception of "how the social

system as such maintains its own coherence, fits individu-

als into its mechanisms and institutions, arranges and

socializes them to provide what the system requires"

(Gouldner, 1970: 143). This is indeed quite well in

accord with the welfare state's need to assure its exis-

tence through an emphasis upon "the oversocialized con-

ception of man" (cf. Wrong, 1961). Needless to mention,

the so-called evolving welfare state is in fact a limited

conception within the social structure of corporate capi-

talism. Any sociology which is consistent with the basic

assumptions and fundamental requirements of welfare state

is necessarily a corporate sociology, assuring the system

equilibrium of the corporate social structure. This is

why Szymanski states, following Mills, that the main func-

tion of Parsons' sociology is to provide a conservative

definition of the society in order to legitimate its exist-

ing institutional structures of domination. "The function

of legitimation is the production of a sophisticated de-

finition of social reality that explains and justifies the

existing social order and its dominant interests--it ex-

plains how well a society functions, how well the ongoing

institutions are necessary, and how good the whole system

is" (Szymanski, 1970:3). In the words of another radical

theorist:

> Even though the functionalists may well be right
> that there are a set of "needs" that each
> society has to meet to get it on, they cannot
> "scientifically" demonstrate that American
> corporate capitalism is the necessary or in-
> evitable or most rational way of meeting those
> "needs." As a matter of fact, the irrational-
> ity, inequality, and inefficiency of American
> capitalism in meeting the "functional requisite"
> of its population is support for the "stupidity
> of the body" corrective to establishment func-
> tionalism (Sternberg, 1977: 115).

Tracing back again to its origins, Parsons' con-

servatism is also rooted in such factors as shook the con-

fidence of and created anxieties in the middle class men

of America. On the one hand, there was the impact of World

War II which undermined the confidence of the middle class

in any notion of uninterrupted and continuous progress;

prior to this, the Bolshevik Revolution heightened the

psychological anxiety in the Euro-American middle classes;

the rise of fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany further

aggravated bourgeois search for social peace in a stable

political order; and, finally, the global economic crisis

of the 1930s created, among others, acute status anxieties

and economic insecurities for the middle class. Here too,

Parsons' response was conservative because he sought remedy

only in a stable political order whose economic foundations

remained nonetheless as weak as ever. The growth of welfare

state only strengthened his conservatism. On the other hand,

the rising popularity of the Marxist studies necessitated a thinking of possible theoretical and/or practical alternatives to the claim of Marxism as an adequate social theory (cf. Gouldner, 1970: 188). Parsons' grand scheme, reflected in the voluntaristic interpretation, served to expel, at least for some time to come, Marxism from the purview of sociological analysis.

From another point of view, that of his intellectual orientations, Parsons was more amenable to a number of conservative influences. Many of his sociological heroes are either conservatives or old liberals, or both. Marshall was a neo-classical economist and liberal; Pareto a conservative Italian economist and sociologist with old liberal tradition; Weber a German nationalist and sociologist with old liberal tradition; Durkheim a French liberal, nationalist and admittedly conservative; Hobbes an English conservative political thinker famous for absolutist theory of sovereignty and also political order. In this context it is of interest to note that "Parsons has never suggested that if he were to rewrite The Structure of Social Action Marx's name would be added, although he has expressly suggested that Freud would be added" (Mitchell, 1967: 177).

What is, therefore, the dominant political orientation to which Parsons and his sociology remain firmly tied? It is not at all difficult to find that beneath his conservatism, which only rivals that of Edmund Burke, there lies his political and moral commitment to liberalism. It is "the

ideology of John Locke and John Stuart Mill, the ideology

of political liberty and a free society" (Hacker, 1961: 291).

In terms of what Parsons has omitted from the scope of his

work, it is highly illuminating to note that he speaks less

for the workers, the middle classes or the elites than for

the aristocracy of leadership. Masses are politically un-

dependable though he never explains why some are prodemocratic

than others. Since he is more interested in leaders not in

the masses of workers, no matter whether they are of white-

or blue-collar variety, he has much less to say of the masses,

of the structural transformations toward a mass society, of

cheap materialism or of the lowering of mass public tastes.

Whereas Mills' target was elites of politics, business and

military, Parsons' suggestion is for an elite aristocracy.

In his article, "Social Strains in America" (1955), he wrote:

> Under American conditions, a politically leading
> stratum must be made up of a combination of
> business and nonbusiness elements. The role of
> the economy in American society and of the
> business element in it is such that political
> leadership without prominent business participa-
> tion is doomed to ineffectiveness and to the
> perpetuation of dangerous internal conflict.
> It is not possible to lead the American people
> against the leaders of the business world. But
> at the same time, so varied now are the nation-
> al elements which make a legitimate claim to
> be represented, the business element cannot
> monopolize or dominate political leadership and
> responsibility. Broadly, I think, a political
> elite in the two main aspects of "politicians"
> whose specialities consist in the management of
> public opinion, and of "administrators" in both
> civil and military services must be greatly
> strengthened (Parsons, 1965: 247).

This being "the realistic need" of time, Parsons argues,

in his search for a way out of strains during McCarthyism,
for a close alliance between "a specially political elite"
and other "cultural elements", notably those in the Univers-
ities and Churches. Elsewhere, he seems to think that the
institutionalized values and norms of the society motivate
at least certain upper groups and intellectuals to promote
the interests of the social system as a whole (cf. Parsons,
1960b: 120). Given the theoretical thrusts and political
orientations of both Parsons and Mills, one can only guess
how there could be a reconciliation between the two (cf.
Fallding, 1961).

At least one third of Parsons' work are on political
issues which cover a wide range of areas and topics. But
"even when he embarks upon the study of an important poli-
tical question, as he has done increasingly in the last few
years, apparently in response to external pressures, his
natural inclination is simply to restate, where possible
according to his conceptual scheme, some conventional and
generally accepted judgements upon the subject" (Bottomore,
1975: 35). However, it must also be noted that structural
functional sociology also confronted forces and factors all
of which converged in the 1950s toward a paradigmatic con-
solidation for the legitimation of the status quo. The
smooth transition from a war time economy to the material
reconstruction of Europe, the retooling demanded by the
electronic age and reinforced by the demands of Korean war,
the resistance of the East Europeans to the militant Soviet

marxism, the collapse of McCarthyism, the open-ended pro-
perty, and the homilies of family, education, and Eisen-
hower--all these united "to underwrite an era of unparalleled
conformity and commitment to the status quo (Friedrichs,
1970: 17). Put in political terms, consensual sociology,
which has its locale in Parsons' grand theoretical con-
struction, has become in effect "a metaphysical representa-
tion of the dominant ideological matrix. It rests on a
principle of 'general interests' that every member of society
is supposed to imbibe if he wishes to avoid the onus of be-
ing a deviant or an unconnected isolate" (Horowitz, 1968: 7).
This only impels any one seriously concerned with the state
of sociology in corporate capitalism to think that thanks
are due to Mills for his prophetic words he said in 1959:

> It must be evident that the particular view of
> society which it is possible to dig out of
> Parsons' texts is of rather direct ideological
> use; traditionally, such views have of course
> been associated with conservative styles of
> thinking. Grand theorists have not often de-
> scended into the political arena; certainly
> they have not often taken their problems to
> lie within the political contexts of modern
> society. But that of course does not exempt
> their work from ideological meaning .... The
> ideological meaning of grand theory tends
> strongly to legitimate stable forms of domina-
> tion. Yet only if there should arise a much
> greater need for elaborate legitimations among
> conservative groups would grand theory have
> a chance to become politically relevant (SI:
> 48-49, footnote).[9]

To call Parsons an ideologist of conservatism or of
conservative liberalism is therefore not a stretch of
imagination. Although Mills seems to be entirely justified,

his criticism is not enough since it, adds Andreski, "does

not do justice to the insidiousness of a doctrine capable

of carrying its adherents far beyond ordinary and honest

conservatism, which entails a loyalty to some definite order,

accompanied by a deprecation of systems or theories opposed

to it." The structural functionalism is what he calls

"promiscuous crypto-conservatism." There is much to believe,

in continuity with Mills, in what Andreski says of this

ideological variant of sociological conservatism:

> The ideology of structural-functionalism, in
> contrast, bestows its blessing on every system
> which exists, so long as it exists; which
> means that it throws its weight on the side
> of the powers that be, whoever, wherever and
> whenever they might be (Andreski, 1973: 146).

Notes

1.   Cf. Kingsley Davis (1959).

2.   See also McKinney (1954).

3.   See chapter 3, especially the section on "Values and Objectivity".

4.   It seems difficult for me to see how Parsons' literary style, which is of course unique, could be separated from the way in which he makes theoretical abstractions. In any case, the effect often has been to mystify, rather than to clarify, issues which Parsons raises and deals with.

5.   For this and various other criticisms, see Bottomore (1975: 29-43).

6.   It must, however, be noted that Mills "did not consciously conceive of providing a category for conflict in the conventional theory" (Allen, 1975: 48).

7.   For further analysis of Mills' views on the role of historical dimension in sociological studies, see chapter 3 wherein I discuss, in a separate section, his ideas of "Empiricism based on Social-Historical Structures."

8.   I am indebted to Gouldner (1970: 141-48) for his excellent analysis of Parsons' conservative roots. I have more or less pursued my own analysis along Gouldner's suggestions. See also Strasser (1976: 122-48) for conservative sources of Parsons' sociology.

9.   Italics added.

CHAPTER THREE

Sociological Methodology

Introduction

> The model I have 'taken' is C. Wright Mills.
> I have rejected arse-licking empiricism and
> bland theory in favor of his 'new sociology'.
> Mills did create a new method, theory and
> subject area with each substantive work. I
> do not think that new sociology is, in fact,
> new. It seems to be a traditional sociology
> surfacing in yet another generation with its
> modernity coming as shock. Mills united his
> sorrow, anger, knowledge and dignity in his
> sociological imagination. He did his very
> best .... I have a wish for fellow researchers;
> make Mills your model (Fletcher, 1974: 197).

These inspiring words of Fletcher, a contemporary writer

on sociological methodology, only remind us of Mills' frantic

attempt at liberating sociology from the empriricists'

narcissistic focus on scientistic methodology. In accomplish-

ing this, as he did in The Sociological Imagination, Mills

did not overstate his case; rather he was "putting a genuine

point of view. His statement is vigorous but not sweeping,

unreasonable or purely emotional" (Robb, 1968: 79). And in

proposing a counter sociology within humanistic concerns and

an alternative sociological methodology Mills, succeeding the

generation of Karl Mannheim, Robert Lynd, Louis Wirth and

Pitrim Sorokin, invited in turn fiercest opposition from

those in the camp of establishment sociology. Among other

things, the heat produced in retaliation, and reprisal as a

result, of Mills' virulent but well timed and long overdue

attack against "abstracted empiricism" was responsible to a large extent, I think, for the over-all neglect of his basic contributions to the issues of sociology of knowledge, epistemology and methodology. For example, the publication of The Sociological Imagination, in which Mills furnished a forthright statement of his own "philosophical and metasociological position with respect to the goals and methods of the social sciences, especially that of sociology" (Winthrop, 1960: 300), was followed by a barrage of devastating criticism. Despite the fact that "there is no question of rejecting the sort of quantitative research Mills attacks", Selznick asserts that his criticism, couched in "polemical language" evoking the "thrill of revelation," has added intellectually "nothing new" (1959: 128). Feuer contends that "the 'vulgar empiricist', whom Mills and the Marxists scorn, has contributed much to the daily life-blood of science" (1959: 121). Most noteworthy criticism was however made by Shils, who nevertheless agrees with Mills' critique of ahistorical bias and bureaucratic tendencies in the current empirical research practices. The questions which Shils directed at Mills are the following:

> Does he deny that sampling, standardization of interview questions, and the statistical processing of the data gathered by interviews can make our picture of at least certain sectors of reality more reliable--even if it cannot depict all of that reality which properly interests us? Does he really believe that nothing that has been learned or could be learned by systematic empirical research can ever enrich our self-awareness and give us a more differentiated picture of the society in which we live? And does he really believe--as he says he does--that the sins of systematic empirical research arise simply and exclusively from the self-denying

> ordinances decreed by a false conception of
> science and by a desire to stay on the right
> side of the powerful (Shils, 1961: 607).

Despite these criticisms Mills never misses, I think,
the mark or fails to indicate wherein lies the deficiencies
of the dominant modes of empirical inquiry. Anyway, although
his interests in "the improvement of social science methodo-
logy" and his "concomitant faith in the ability of the social
sciences, through the experimental method, to approach reality"
(Gillam, 1966: 62-63) are clearly indicative even of his
early writings, it is not until recently, it should be noted,
that there has been a revival of interest in the methodological
issues raised by Mills.[1] Many years have passed by since Mills
expressed his doubts as to the absolutist claims of methodo-
logy based on the model and philosophy of natural sciences
(cf. PPP: 453-468). But, looking at the current trends of
empirical inquiry, the situation seems not to have changed
much, and the mainstream currents of the discipline are "still
the safe and shallow waters of academic empiricism" (Dreit-
zel, 1969: ix). The science-building weltanschauung of socio-
logy is related to what Mills called "liberal practicality."
In its older forms it emphasized "pathological" in sociology.
For example, in 1943 Mills spoke out, in criticising the
"typical perspectives and key concepts" underlying the ideology
of several authors of social problems books, that "in seeing
everything social as continuous process, changes in pace and
revolutionary dislocations are missed or are taken as signs

of the 'pathological'" (PPP: 537). In its current form,
"the new liberal practicality" has shifted its emphasis,
turning from "pathological" aspects of society towards
"fragmentary problems of scattered causation" as relevant
to serving the purposes of the political, corporate and
military orders of the society (SI: 92). As a whole, the
focus on "social problems", not of course in Mills' sense
but covering stray cat and dog topics like crime, delinquency,
families and broken homes, alcoholism, suicide, ghetto con-
ditions, race relations etc., continue to remain firmly linked
to liberal practicality in the academic empiricism. Stern-
berg has shown that three leading sociological journals,
American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review,
and Social Problems, are "basically social problems journals"
(1977: 99). Interestingly, most American sociologists
scarcely think that social problems are "the result and re-
flection of the underlying problems of an increasingly voci-
ferous American capitalist system." As he further makes it
clear, "the general rule is that American sociologists, deep,
deep in the hip pocket (ASS) of the ruling class in the
United States, define 'social problems' as groups of people
or conditions likely to pose a present or future threat to
the current structure of vast social inequality in our country"
(Sternberg, 1977: 109). Others find that what goes on within
sociology or the social sciences as scientific study tanta-
mounts to "sorcery."[2] In view of such an image of the current

state of affairs in sociology and the social sciences, it is
quite worthwhile to sum up Mills' contributions in regard to
the important issues of sociological methodology, as he
conceived of them.[3]

Sociology of Knowledge and Epistemology

It is to be contended here that Mills' reaction to
and critique of methodological positivism as contained in
abstracted empiricism is less important than what he had to
say on the substantive issues of the sociology of knowledge,
epistemology and methodology. Before Mills subjected the
epistemology based on the model of physical sciences to
searching criticism, in America it was prominently Lynd
(1964: 119-20), among others, who cautioned against the
rising trend of empiricism. But, despite his reminder and
admonition, American sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s re-
mained enthralled by the method of physical sciences. The
culmination of this empiricist tendency transforming science,
in Mills' words, "less a creative ethos and a manner of
orientation than a set of science machines," produced sharply
an opposite reaction for him. In The Sociological Imagination
Mills directly raised the question of the cultural and human-
istic role of science. "The felt need to reappraise physical
science reflects the need for a new common denominator. It
is the human meaning and the social role of science, its
military and commercial issue, its political significance that
are undergoing confused reappraisal" (SI: 16). The truth of

the matter is, however, that Mills' own intellectual career
as a sociologist began with his lasting interests in the
substantive problems of sociological methodology--the socio-
logy of knowledge, epistemology, and other methodological
issues.

Since Mills' own position on these matters is largely
connected with what emerged as Wissenssociologie in Germany
in the 1920s it is necessary, in brief, to outline its in-
tellectual postulates within the framework of which Mannheim,
Mills' orienting point, conceived the sociology of knowledge.
In his Ideology and Utopia Mannheim undertakes to show that
the sociology of knowledge seeks to clarify how conditions of
existence affects the historical genesis of ideas; to show
how they constitute an essential part of the products of
thought and how they are reflected in the content and form
of thought. Since the approach to a problem, the levels of
problem formulation, the stage of abstraction or the concrete-
ness the researcher hopes to attain are all bound up with
social existence, the sociology of knowledge seeks to obtain
"systematic comprehension of the relationship between social
existence and thought" (Mannheim, 1936: 309). In this re-
lationship of epistemology to general social-intellectual
situations of any given period 'truth' necessarily appears
as social, and it undergoes a process of social conditioning
over time, meaning thereby absence of any absolute truth or
any static ideal of "eternal truth."

> We see, therefore, not merely that the notion
> of knowledge in general is dependent upon the
> concretely prevailing form of knowledge and
> the modes of knowing expressed therein and
> accepted as ideal, but also that the concept
> of truth itself is dependent upon the already
> existing types of knowledge (Mannheim, 1936: 292).

The precondition to further goals of the sociology of knowledge consists in the acquisition of a detached perspective through which not only the outlines of the contrasting modes are discovered but through its validity as well is established. The procedure allowing this is "relational" in contrast to avoidance of what is called "relativism" by Mannheim. Relationalism lies "in the nature of certain assumptions that they cannot be formulated absolutely, but only in terms of the perspective of a given situation" (Mannheim, 1936: 283).

Mannheim's sociology of knowledge and epistemology has raised many questions which still await solution. Of them, the most serious, besides his ambiguities in the concept of relationalism, is the charge of relativism which his views invariably lead to.[4] In order to overcome epistemological consequences, which characterized his earlier work, Mannheim was gradually led "to argue in terms of a pragmatic theory of adjustment to the specific requirements of particular historical situations and, later, to stress the position of the 'socially unattached intelligentsia'" (Phillips, 1974: 75). As will be seen, Mills' position reflects both the advantages and disadvantages of the Mannheimian position. This is however to indicate that Mannheim himself was not sure of any way out of relativism despite his gradual re-

liance on pragmatism and activism. He himself said: "Only
a mode of thought, only a philosophy which is able to give
a concrete answer to the question, 'What shall we do?' can
put forward the claim to have overcome relativism" (Mannheim,
1959: 128-29). Despite all criticism that can be legitimate-
ly raised to assail Mannheim's position, it goes to his credit
for indicating that knowledge has a social basis; in addi-
tion he has shown that, as Kecskemetic has said, "genuine
knowledge of historical and social phenomena" (1959: 1) is
possible. It now remains to see how profoundly Mills was
influenced by Mannheim although the former tried to effect
a communion between the latter's sociology of knowledge and
epistemology with the pragmatism of Peirce and Dewey, and
with the symbolic interactionism of Mead.

Combining the views of both Mannheim and Mead, Mills
asserts that the sociology of knowledge is moving towards
"a theory of mind and knowledge which takes as its data not
an individual's performances or tests, but the entirety of
intellectual history" (PPP: 470).

> Drawing upon the theories and findings of all
> social science, sociology of knowledge is an
> attempted explanation of the phenomena of in-
> tellectual history. In its explanation of
> these materials it appeals to the data of social
> history. And in order to trace the mechanisms
> connective of mentality and society, the socio-
> logy of knowledge must be informed by a "psycho-
> logy" that is socially, ethnologically, and
> historically relevant (PPP: 471)

In his first full-length article concerning the sociology
of knowledge, "Language, Logic and Culture", Mills confronts
"the relevant sociological materials, particularly as they

bear on the nature of mind and knowledge" (PPP: 423). Accord-
ingly, he presents "certain coordinates for a sociological
approach to reflection and knowledge, viewing conjointly
sociality and mind, language and social habit, the noetic
and the cultural" (PPP: 437). Broadly speaking, Mills sets
himself to the task of constructing a theory of mind that
conceives "social factors as intrinsic to mentality," of
developing a concept of mind that incorporates "social pro-
cesses as intrinsic to mental operations" and of developing
"a clear and dynamic conception of the relations imputed be-
tween a thinker and his social context." Without such a
thorough-going social theory of mind, the research in the
sociology of knowledge may become, says Mills, "a set of
mere historical enumerations and a calling of names" (PPP: 426).
As is therefore evident, although Mills takes up the Mann-
heimian concern for social determination of ideas and mental-
ity and directly stresses his conception of "a psychology
which would be socially and historically relevant" (Mannheim,
1940: 15), he moves a step farther than Mannheim. He calls
for "a more adequate psychological base than has been given
...." (PPP: 425) to the sociology of knowledge and, accord-
ingly, proposes to deal with relevant "social psychological"
categories. It is here that Mills utilizes the Meadian social
psychological category of "the generalized other. For Mills,

> The generalized other is the internalized audience
> with which the thinker converses; a focalized and
> abstracted organization of attitudes of those im-
> plicated in the social field of behavior and ex-
> perience. The structure and contents of selected

and subsequently selective social experiences
imported into mind constitute the generalized
other with which the thinker converses and
which is socially limited and limiting ....
Within the inner forum of reflection, the
generalized other functions as a socially
derived mechanism through which logical evalua-
tion operates (PPP: 426-27, 429).

However, unlike Mead who holds that "the attitude of the

generalized other is the attitude of the whole community"

(1965: 218), Mills argues that the concept may stand for

"selected societal segments" instead of incorporating "the

whole society" (PPP: 427 footnote).[5] He names these selected

societal segments as "significant others", "authoritative

others", and the "generalized other" (CSS: 95). In any

event the generalized other is very much crucial:

One operates logically (applies standardized
critiques) upon propositions and arguments
(his own included) from the standpoint of a
generalized other. It is from this socially
constituted viewpoint that one approves or
disapproves of given arguments as logical or
illogical, valid or invalid. No individual
can be logical unless there be agreement among
the members of his universe of discourse as to
the validity of some general conception of good
reasoning (PPP: 427).

Thus understood, illogicality or immorality are both deriva-

tions from social norms. The social structure of mind, built

upon social and psychological factors, influences "fixation,

not only of the evaluative but also of the intellectual."

The generalized other is "the seat of a logical apparatus"

(PPP: 431).

Like Mannheim, Mills is inevitably led to confront

these following questions: How is the sociology of knowledge

related to epistemology and methodology? Does the sociology

of knowledge have epistemological and/or methodological con-

sequences? Finally, can epistemology and methodology be

bracketed together? In answering these questions, Mills

finds, on the one hand, "no fundamental disagreement between

Dewey's and Mannheim's conceptions of the generic character

and derivation of epistemological forms" (PPP: 456). On the

other, he strongly supports Mannheim's claim that "new cri-

teria for social science may emerge from the inquiries of

the sociology of knowledge. It is entirely possible" (PPP:

461). However, in attempting to work out a synthesis between

Mannheim's sociology of knowledge and Peirce and Dewey's

scientific postulates of the verificatory model, Mills moves

a step beyond them. For example, Mannheim has failed to

avoid certain ambiguities and mislocations in his work be-

cause of his inability to understand that, in Mills' words,

"in its 'epistemological function' the sociology of knowledge

is specifically propaedeuctive to the construction of sound

methodology for the social sciences" (PPP: 464). In Dewey

experimental activity is the core element in his descriptive

account of the scientific method (inquiry qua inquiry). As

a result, in Dewey's model "there is ever present the drive

programmatically to derive from physical science and then

apply to other domains a paradigm of inquiry. Such an epis-

temological program carries with its fulfillment the applica-

tion of the experimental mode of action to society" (SP: 387).

In contrast to this, the position of Mills, who intends to

join "the live logician and social methodologist in the
critical building of sounder methods for social research"
(PPP: 465), is plainly opposite. Because, like a Mannheim-
ian disciple, he explicitly recognizes the need "to analyze
social researches in their cultural and intellectual con-
texts and attempt to articulate the inchoate rules implicit
within them" (PPP: 466).

Mills asserts the relevance of the sociology of
knowledge for epistemology by questioning the negative pro-
position, advanced mainly by Hans Speier, Talcott Parsons,
Robert MacIver, and R. K. Merton, that "sociological investi-
gations of inquiries have no consequences for norms of 'truth
and validity'" (PPP: 453). The matter is more complicated
than this simplistic assertion and the relevant questions,
which Mills raised, are as follows:

> He who asserts the irrelevance of social con-
> ditions to the truthfulness of propositions
> ought to state the conditions upon which he
> conceives truthfulness actually to depend; he
> ought to specify exactly what it is in thinking
> that sociological factors cannot explain and
> upon which truth and validity do rest. Those
> who take the negative position must state what
> sort of things these criteria of truth and
> validity are, how they are derived, and how
> they function (PPP: 454).

Mills acknowledges that 'truth' and 'objectivity' are meaning-
ful in terms of some accepted model of verification. But
they have many 'criteria' and these, either the observational
and verificatory models of truth and validity or their cri-
teria, are not "transcendental." In terms of the Mannheimian
language, there are no eternal truths. They vary in different

social groups in different historical periods. In their persistence and change these criteria are "legitimately open to social-historical relativization." The acceptance or rejection by a thinker of a particular verificatory model is a kind of "juncture" when, says Mills in conformity to his sociology of knowledge stance, "extralogical, possibly socio-logical, factors may enter and be of consequence to the validity of an elite's thinking" (PPP: 457). The reason is that many thinkers do not select their verificatory model "consciously" or "thoroughly", as did Peirce. In addition, the social position of a thinker, though not directly rele-vant to the truthfulness of propositions tested by the veri-ficatory model, is of considerable importance. For example, it is by no means certain that all thinkers have employed what is currently called 'scientific' thought model. Mills specifically draws attention to two factors. First, the intellectual and scientific categories upon which the inquiry rests are related to "social situations, cultural determinants." What is taken as problematic and what concepts are available and used may be interlinked in certain inquiries" (PPP: 459). Mills' views are also reflected in his assessment of Marcel Granet's La Pensee Chinoise. Adopting what he calls "the sociologistic view of sociology is "with the 'parallelism' of ideas and social structures, the 'origin' of conceptions from societal forms and drifts" (PPP: 474). In Granet's treatment the sociology of knowledge was used "methodologically as an organon of historical reconstruction" (PPP: 476). Second,

empirical verification is not a "simple, and positivistic

mirror-like operation." Mills refers to "the social theory

of perception" according to which observational dimensions of

any verificatory model, that may be selected, are delimited

by "the selective language of its users." As he says, "A

specialized language constitutes a veritable a priori form of

perception and cognition, which are certainly relevant to the

results of inquiry .... Different technical elites possess

different perceptual capacities" (PPP: 459-60).

As a matter of fact, besides the concept of the gen-

eralized other, in Mills' formulations language is an addi-

tional social psychological mechanism which connects thinking

with societal patterns or reflection with sociality. The

importance which Mills attaches to the social psychological

role of language in its historical significance can be under-

stood clearly from his formulation of the concept of "socio-

tics." As Horowitz has stated, "BY designating his work as

'sociotics', Mills sought to encompass all sociological pheno-

mena involved in the function of language; the ways in which

language channelizes, limits, and elicits thought" (SP: 15).

> Sociotics is at once a portion of theory of
> language and a division of sociology of
> language .... Within the sociology of know-
> ledge, sociotics designates the attempt to
> set forth linguistic mechanisms connective
> of mentality and other cultural items
> (PPP: 492).

Sociologically considered, language is the mechanism by

which persons "internalize roles and the attitudes of others"

(CSS: 12 footnote). From an individual's point of view,
mind is "the interplay of the organism with social situa-
tions mediated by symbols" (PPP: 433). Thus from the socio-
logy of knowledge point of view,

> Our behavior and perception, our logic and
> thought, come within the control of a system
> of language. Along with language, we acquire
> a set of social norms and values. A vocabul-
> ary is not a mere string of words; immanent
> within it are societal textures--institution-
> al and political coordinates. Back of a vo-
> cabulary lie sets of collective action (PPP: 433).

If this be so the thinking process of the individual is cir-
cumscribed by the audience to which he addresses through a
common set of symbols characteristic of any language system.
Because, argues Mills like a Median, "in order to communi-
cate, to be understood, he must 'give' sysmbols such meanings
that they call out same responses in his audience as they do
in himself. The process of 'externalizing' his thought in
language is thus, by virtue of the commonness essential to
meaning, under the control of the audience" (PPP: 434-35).

The task of the sociology of knowledge consists in
giving, among other things, "promise of explaining an area
of lingual and social fact" (PPP: 450). Accordingly, Mills
develops "an analytic model" for the explanation of motives
based on "a sociological theory of language and a sociological
psychology." This rests, argues Mills with the influence of
Weber (1964a: 39) and Dewey (1970: 471) in the background,
upon refutations of both Wundt and Freud. Motives are not
expressions of "prior elements" in the individual as Wundt
sees them. Rather they are "typical vocabularies having

ascertainable functions in delimited societal situations"
(PPP: 439). Again, the problem of motivation is not one of
"motive power" as Freud's biological metaphysic holds. On
the contrary, it is a problem of "steered conduct" (CSS: 113).
With such a viewpoint Mills discovers motives in socially
situated actions. Although motives are "terms with which
interpretation of conduct by social actors proceeds" or
"accepted justifications for present, future, or past pro-
grams or acts" (PPP: 440, 443), they or their vocabularies
are avenues of social control. They are not static but vary
in content and character in relation to different societal
situations and historical epochs. So it is possible to say
"what is reason for one man is rationalization for another"
(PPP: 448). This poses the problem of relativism. Mills
suggests a way out by singling out, for the sociology of
knowledge analysis, the accepted vocabulary of motives of
the dominant group to which the individual is linked. On
the one hand,

> Determination of such groups, their location and
> character, would enable delimitation and methodo-
> logical control of assignment of motives for
> specific acts (PPP: 448).

on the other, rather at a higher level,

> What is needed is to take all (these) terminologies
> of motives and locate them as vocabularies of
> motive in historic epochs and specific situations
> (PPP: 452).

Finally, it remains to consider Mills' views on "theory",
"method" and "verification" in empirical practices of socio-
logy. In relation to these categories, as developed in The

<u>Sociological Imagination</u> (1959), Mills follows generally the

classic tradition of sociology.

In Mills' sociological methodology of intellectual

craftsmanship, neither theory nor method constitutes "auto-

nomous" domain. Methods are "methods for some range of

problems." Theories are "theories for some range of pheno-

mena." Every working sociologist is "his own methodolpgist

and his own theorist, which means only that he must be an

intellectual craftsman" (SI: 121). According to Mills, the

operating and practical postulates of a viable methodology,

based on the classic tradition, are the following:

> 'Method' has to do, first of all, with how to
> ask and answer questions with some assurance
> that the answers are more or less durable.
> 'Theory' has to do, above all, with paying
> close attention to the words one is using,
> especially their degree of generality and
> their logical relations. The primary purpose
> of both is clarity of conception and economy
> of procedure, and most importantly just now,
> the release rather than the restriction of the
> sociological imagination (SI: 120).

There is no one grand model or one grand methodology of socio-

logical work. "Social science of any kind is advanced by

ideas; it is discipline only by fact." The relevance of

either theory or method consists in their efficacy to illumine

the concrete realities of social happenings; their uses are

justified in terms of actual work only. Successful crafts-

manship avoids "rigid set of procedure," "association and

dissociation of concepts," and "fetishism of method and

technique." The methodological sophistication and scientistic

concerns over purity of the "empirical," "data," "validity"
or "facts" may bring about mellower maturity of sociology
but, when it becomes an ethos of epistemological enthusiasm,
it may needlessly erode human passions or moral fibres of
the sociologist in understanding the human significance of
tormenting sociopolitical issues. Neither theory nor method
is, says Mills, "part of the actual work of the social studies.
In fact, both are often just opposite: they are statesmanlike
withdrawals from the problems of social science" (SI: 122).
However sophisticated the postulates of theories and methods
are, the search for universal generalizations of cause-and-
effect relationships always falls short of the desired per-
fection. The more rigorous the methodology becomes the more
it defeats the purpose of research, that of providing "factual
information, that is, empirical evidence in the form of quanti-
tative estimates and/or qualitative experience which can be
organized to relate values we hold, and to confirm or re-
pudiate our beliefs about the functioning of society, institu-
tions, and people" (Rein, 1976: 38). Finally, Mills also
raises the question of verification. "For what level of veri-
fication ought workers in social science be willing to settle"
(SI: 71)? Mills' answer avoids both the rigidity of episte-
mology and the empiricists' techno-mindedness to process every
thing through "the fine mill of The Statistical Ritual." He
does not emphasize "how to verify" at the cost of "what to
verify." The Problem of verification is not set apart from
the craftsman's moral consciousness and social responsibility.

>Verification consists of rationally convincing
others, as well as ourselves. But to do that
we must follow the accepted rules, above all the
rule that work be presented in such a way that
is open at every step to the checking up by
others. There is no One Way to do this; but it
does always require a developed carefulness and
attention to detail, a habit of being clear, a
skeptical perusal of alleged facts, and a tire-
less curiosity about their possible meanings,
their bearings on other facts and notions. It
requires orderliness and system. In a word, it
requires the firm and consistent practice of the
ethics of scholarship. If that is not present,
no technique, no method, will serve (SI: 126-27).

Having outlined Mills' sociology of knowledge and

epistemology, it now seems evident that his views, like Mann-

heim's suffer from what has been called "relativism." The

truth of the matter inherent in the positions of both Mann-

heim and Mills is that they were unable to provide satis-

factory remedy for relativism, and this seriously affects

the scientific validity of their formulations. A partial

explanation consists in their rejection of the Marxian

scientific method.[6] In particular Mills' dominant orienta-

tions, sociological, political and philosophical, were after

all on the side of liberalism which he still regarded viable

as an adequate theory of society. The other part of the

story is that the sociology of knowledge remains, more pro-

bably, built upon certain relativistic propositions. What-

ever it is, Mills' sociological methodology has been validly

characterized by Gillam (1966: 48), Phillips (1974: 71-72),

and Scimecca (1977: 59) as relativistic. For instance, even

the verificatory model of Peirce and Dewey cannot provide,

argues Mills, "absolute guarnaty" for the truthfulness of
the findings of the sociology of knowledge. However, he
suggests that it is "the most probable we have at present"
(PPP: 461). In addition he holds,

> The assertions of the sociologist of knowledge
> escape the "absolutist's dilemma" because they
> can refer to a degree of truth and because they
> may include the conditions under which they are
> true .... Assertions can properly be stated as
> probabilities, as more or less true. And only
> in this way can we account for the fact that
> scientific inquiry is self correcting (PPP: 461).

This raises the question of inner contradictions or relati-
vistic assertions. Phillips rightly points out:

> .... either the relativist's own assertions are
> themselves relative, and, therefore, lacking
> truth value; Or his argument is unconditionally
> true, and, consequently, relativism is self
> contradictory (1974: 72).

Language is relative because "semantical changes are surro-
gates and foci of cultural conflicts and group behavior"
(PPP: 432). Motives are relative because "the motivational
structures of individuals and the patterns of their purposes
are relative to societal frames" (PPP: 448). Logic is
relative because "criteria are themselves developing things"
(PPP: 461). And so on. Despite such relativistic social
analysis, there is no point, I think, to underrate the theor-
etical awareness Mills demonstrated in these matters. The
problem of relativism vs. absolutism has yet to be solved.
And until that is done, it should be clear that both Mannheim
and Mills recognized "as most sociologists do not, the social
nature of language, perception, concept-formation, verifica-
tory models, truth and knowledge" (Phillips, 1974: 79).

Values and Objectivity

The still indecisive controversy as to whether or
not values should play any significant part in the scienti-
fic enterprise arose with Weber who asserted in 1904 that
"it can never be the task of an empirical science to provide
binding norms and ideals from which directives for immediate-
ly practical activity can be derived .... An empirical science
cannot tell any one what he should do--but rather what he can
do--and under certain circumstances--what he wishes to do"
(1964b: 52-54). But, at the same time, it must be specifical-
ly noted, he did not intend withdrawal of value judgements
from "scientific discussion in general"; rather he enunciates
his position by saying that "the capacity to distinguish be-
tween empirical knowledge and value-judgements, and the ful-
fillment of the scientific duty to see the factual truth as
well as practical duty to stand up for our own ideals con-
stitute the program to which we wish to adhere with ever
increasing firmness" (Weber, 1964b: 58). Despite the myth
of a value free science which American sociologists created
in the period following the Second World War in order to seek
legitimation for their rampant methodological empiricism and
also to shun social responsibility, it is thus clear that
Weber never understressed the value relevance of the subjective
value judgements in sociology. However, it is very difficult
to gainsay that he, by emphasizing a dichotomy between judge-
ments of fact and judgements of value, became the ideological

fountain source of the _weltanschauung_ of the current neo-

positivism in the social sciences. But even then, he

dichotomized under certain constraining circumstances. He

formulated the doctrine of ethical neutrality, together with

its all-soul concern for judgements of fact, in order to main-

tain the cohesion and the autonomy of the University in

general and the nascent social sciences in particular, to

enhance the independence of sociology, to depoliticize the

University and place it above controversies of politics, to

restrain political passion, to provide 'a partial escape from

the parochial prescriptions of the sociologist's local or

native culture', and so on (cf. Gouldner, 1973: 3-26). When

the doctrine was imported into America in the early thirties

most sociologists forgot, in their quest to make sociology

scientific and search for predictive sociological generali-

zations and laws, the specific constraining circumstances of

its origin and also Weber's concern that "only a small portion

of existing concrete reality is colored by our value-condition-

ed interest and it alone is significant to us (1964b: 76).

The intensity of the rising currents of social scientists'

enthusiasm is conceivable in terms of their general agreement

that "research should be conducted objectively; researchers

should proceed without value judgements or personal prefer-

ences concerning the utilization of knowledge" (Hinkle and

Hinkle, 1968: 26). This position was most brilliantly re-

flected in Lundberg who, as faithful successor to the Comtean

vision of a unified positivistic science, advocated "bring-
ing societary phenomena within the framework of natural
sciences" (1956b: 18).[7] Needless to say, the myth of value
free sociology in its pseudo-objectivity was born at almost
total cost of Weber's other dictum, the value relevance of
social phenomena. It came to mean not only "an utter de-
tachment" incumbent on the social scientist but also involved
practically his "renunciation of the role of the citizen"
(Shils, 1965: 1434). Many sociological practitioners found
it expedient "to become peddlars not of knowledge but of
techniques" (Lee, 1951: 706). The doctrine of ethical
neutrality, involving a loss of critical stance for sociology,
is now an escape route for those "who live off sociology
rather than for it, and who think of sociology as a way of
getting ahead in the world by providing them with neutral
techniques that may be sold on the open market to any buyer"
(Gouldner, 1973: 12).

Of the sociologists in America it was Wirth and Lynd,
most prominently among others, who developed the unmasking
tradition of which Mills subsequently became the most notable
protagonist. Wirth, writing in the Preface to Mannheim's
Ideology and Utopia, has reminded that assertions in the social
sciences, no matter however objective they may be, have "rami-
fications extending beyond the limits of science itself" and
accordingly points out that truth itself, not being a simple
correspondence between thought and existence, is "tinged with

the investigator's interest in his subject matter, his
standpoint, his evaluations, in short the definition of his
object of attention" (1936: xv, xviii). Lynd has advised
sociologists to be more candid about their "motivations" and
not to hide behind "the aloof 'spirit of science and scholar-
ship'" (1964: 178). However, it must be noted that it was
Mannheim who, by virtue of his sociology of knowledge, in-
fluenced Mills more than others. His awareness of the problem
of values was quite noticeable as early as 1940:

> Questions of value should not be taken uber-
> haupt. Located as snarls in social inquiry,
> questions of value become specific and genuine
> .... Not only the content of values in social
> inquiries should be detected, but how values
> creep in, and how, if at all, they condition
> the direction, completeness, and warrantability
> of the results of research (PPP: 466-67).

While the values are themselves the subject matter of
valid sociological investigation, later in 1962 Mills cate-
gorically asserts that "no political philosopher can be de-
tached; he can only pretend to be" (TM: 11-12). Political
and moral judgements are at the very heart of the social
scientist's intellectual orientation. Values arise from
various possibilities and are involved in all stages of
sociological studies. As Mills wrote: "Values are involved
in the selection of the problems we study; values are also
involved in certain of the key conceptions we use in our
formulation of these problems, and values affect the course
of their solution" (SI: 78). The fact that values are extra-
scientific or non-scientific and that they are elusive of

logical formulation does not free the social scientist from

moral, political and intellectual implications underlying

his methodological commitment to objective detachment.

Science itself is, as Polyani says, "a system of beliefs to

which we are committed" (1964: 171). In the scientific

enterprise values do creep in and the fact remains that "we

cannot escape from making judgements and the judgements that

we make arise from the ethical preconceptions that we have

soaked into our very view of life" (Robinson, 1964: 19). To

avoid values and ostracize them from the analysis of social

phenomena practically means mindless refusal of one's respons-

ibility. This causes concern in view of the fact that in

this ideological epoch and so called social science affluence,

the problems of research as well as results of their findings

will have political implications. In other words, the question

of the scientific status of sociology is less important than

"the social and political uses" of this soft science (cf.

Horowitz, 1975: xiv). Thus,

> Whether he wants it or not, or whether he is
> aware of it or not, anyone who spends his life
> studying society and publishing the results _is_
> acting morally and usually politically as well.
> The question is whether he faces this condition
> and makes up his own mind, or whether he conceals
> it from himself and from others and drifts moral-
> ly (SI: 79).

The slogan of scientific objectivity and the neutralist posture

of the sociologist are in effect indication of a fear of "any

passionate commitment." The avid passion for the curious

mannerism of noncommitment, as evident in the small scale

empiricists, is a diplomatic maneuvre of putting their work

outside the political contexts of their society. It is need-

less to add that the task of social theory "does require a

continuous, critical, uncomplaisant, re-examination of pre-

mises and analyses," and is not limited to describing "the

basic form and outline of soceity as it is" (Kolko, 1970: 133).

On the one hand, the scientific character of socio-

logy and the nature of its data re not the same as those of

natural sciences. As has already been pointed out, Mills was

particularly aware of the "cultural and intellectual" contexts

of social research and he emphasized the inappropriateness of

the laboratory and experimental technique to the investiga-

tion of social phenomena. The truth of the matter is that the

social sciences in general are not, keeping aside the para-

phernalia of scientific methodology with its associated tech-

nician's attitude, sciences characterized by their own laws,

but a heterogeneous collection of inquiries strung together

on the common theme of human action" (Louch, 1966: 236-37).[8]

Mills' call for the acceptance of a legitimate role

of values, on the other hand, can be justified yet from another

point of view. The positivistic viewpoint, taken by itself,

is inadequate because it is not yet complete. The conception

of objectivity, founded on the so called separation of facts

from values, is more complex and intriguing than is supposed

by the protagonists of positivist sociology. While, on the

one hand, scientific canons of verity, precision and semantic

neutrality are yet to be formulated to distinguish "is" from

"ought" of the situations, a science which proposes to establish factual truth by purely objective formal criteria is, on the other, likely to be a failure. "Any process of inquiry unguided by intellectual passions would inevitably spread into a desert of trivialities" (Polyani, 1964: 135). Again, while values are difficult to exclude from social analysis, it is also difficult to ensure objectivity in view of the fact that the researcher's orientations are invariably bound up with the evaluative elements of his culture and society. In a conception of sociology that centers around human concerns and that involves what Berger calls "an openness of mind and catholicity of vision" no amount of methodological technicalities of verification or validation can guarantee objectivity. The problem of objectivity becomes acute only when one blindly adheres to personal preferences and partial views in face of clear, logical, factual and irrefutable evidence to the contrary. Otherwise the claim of the social scientist that "he knows how to proceed impartially is an illusion" (Couch, 1960: 46). However, by this it is not intended to argue that the ideal is not worth pursuing; it is rather to suggest that values may not be simple personal predilections but it may be such conceptions as are built within the logical structure of the argument. For this values themselves are worthy of discussion. The researcher can attain objectivity "not by giving up his will to action and holding his evaluations in abeyance but in confronting and examining himself" (Mannheim, 1936: 47).

As for Mills,

> So far as conceptions are concerned, the aim
> ought to be to use as many 'value-neutral'
> terms as possible and to become aware of and
> to make explicit the value implications that
> remain. So far as problems are concerned,
> the aim ought to be, again, to be clear about
> the values in terms of which they are selected,
> and then to avoid as best as one can evaluative
> bias in their solution, no matter where that
> solution takes one and no matter what its moral
> or political implications may be (SI: 78).

Put in the words of Gouldner, who carries distinct Millsian

tradition in his sociology:

> Objectivity thus means not being biased in
> favor of one's own side or against our ad-
> versaries, particularly in our cognitive work
> .... It means, in short, facing bad news and
> not exaggerating the good news (1976: 5).

It follows, therefore that the problem of objectivity can be

overcome, at least to a large extent, by confronting, and

not by denying, values and value judgements (cf. Werkmeister,

1959: 503; Myrdal, 1953: 242). Additionally, if the socio-

logist keeps problem consciousness upper-most in his mind, he

can proceed objectively in his analysis, given the acknowledge-

ment of value premises and value implications of his work.

"For objectivity in the work of social science requires the

continuous attempt to become explicitly aware of all that is

involved in the enterprise; it requires wide and critical

interchange of such attempts" (SI: 130). Thus understood,

it remains to accept what Mills rightly puts forward:

> There is no way in which any social scientist can
> avoid assuming choices of value and implying them
> in his work as a whole. Problems, like issues and
> troubles, concern threats to expected values, and
> cannot be clearly formulated without acknowledge-
> ment of those values (SI: 177).

Quantification and Sociology

Mills' emphasis on the historical dimensions of the problems of structural significance might suggest his hostility to quantifying trends in the current styles of empirical researches.[9] However this is far from the actual truth. He only reacted to what usually passes on in the name of quantification, that is "the use of statistics to illustrate general points and the use of general points to illustrate statistics" (SI: 71). He was, quite rightly, apprehensive of surreptitious white-washing by quantification of the facts and issues of sociology. Rather than speak against the uses of quantification Mills has persuasively argued for proper utilization of statistics or mathematics in the illumination of the problem situations of the emergent mass society.

> The specific methods--as distinct from the philosophy--of empiricism are clearly suitable and convenient for work on many problems, and I do not see how anyone could reasonably object to such use of them. We can of course, by suitable abstraction, be exact about anything. Nothing is inherently immune to measurement. If the problems upon which one is at work are readily amenable to statistical procedures, one should always try to use them (SI: 73).

His caution against the common tendency of the quantophrenic empiricists to blind people and explore only such data as are quantitatively manipulatable is therefore understandable. It also must be noted that it is as wrong to assume that no knowledge is possible without quantification as it is to

believe that amenability of the data to measurement necessar-

ily coincides with the significance of the problem chosen

for the study. Mills only calls for the use of quantifica-

tion in honest and sensible manner. What he argues against

is "the soul-destroying taboo against touching anything that

cannot be quantified and a surreptitious reverence for every

scribbling which loos like amthematics" (Andreski, 1973: 136).

No amount of high-level quantitative endeavor is able to ab-

stract without involving the risk of distortion of facts or

reality. In addition, while dangers are obvious in the badly

collected data, quantitative data are scarecly available in

cases where the government and other private agencies do not

wish exposure of their lapses. Far more important limitation

arises in view of the fact that "there is no ultimately self-

validating mathematics or other logic that could take from

man the necessity of <u>choosing</u> his axioms, <u>selecting</u> his

logical models and <u>accepting responsibility</u> for the particular

grammar he chooses to apply to the problem confronting him"

(Friedrichs, 1970: 151). Given the advantages of quantifi-

cation, Mills' position, I think, resembles that of Moore Jr.

who says this: "We do know in a general way that we do not

want our gains in logical rigor and ease of manipulation to

be at the expense of too much historical content" (1958: 135).

Empiricism based on Social-Historical Structures

In conformity to his espousal of the need for the em-

phasis on the historical dimensions in sociological analysis, Mills advocates "a much broader style of empiricism" than is usually available within the methodological inhibitions of abstracted empiricism.[10] For him, legitimate sociological analysis consists of comparative understanding of the social structures in their historical significance. The classic practitioners like Weber and Ostrgorski, Marx and Bryce, Michels, Simmels or Mannheim have well illustrated the fruitfulness of the macroscopic orientation to sociological analysis. In the words of Mills, "These men like to deal with total social structures in a comparative way; their scope is that of the world historian; they attempt to generalize types of historical phenomena, and in a systematic way, to connect the various institutional spheres of a society, and then relate them to prevailing types of men and women" (PPP: 554). In terms of this broadbased empiricism, Mills urges the sociologists to undertake social analysis and pursue it in the classic way which involves

> .... an abstraction from what may be observed in
> everyday milieux, but the direction of its ab-
> straction is toward social and historical struc-
> tures. It is on the level of historical reality
> --which is merely to say that it is in terms of
> specific social and historical structures that
> the classic problems of social science have been
> formulated, and in such terms solutions offered
> (SI: 124).

The productive sociological research lies between grand theory and abstracted empiricism, as Mills said, or between "Big Theory and Big Research", as Moore, Jr. (1958: 140) said. Mills is however not hostile to small scale researches

centering around problems of milieux though he would advise

not to study "merely one small milieu after another."

> I do not suppose that anyone has a right to
> object to detailed studies of minor problems.
> The narrowed focus they require might be part
> of an admirable quest for precision and cer-
> tainty; it might also be part of a division
> of labor, of a specialization to which, again,
> no one ought to object (SI: 74).

Problem Consciousness as a Soruce of Sociological Craftsmanship

The loss of problem consciousness had its origin in

a two-fold source: grand theory and abstracted empriricism,

both of which neglected historical dimensions in sociological

theory and research. As a result, working sociologists in-

dubitably came to underrate historical simensions that only

can provide "a real sense of problems". In spite of many

limitations of his work, it is to the historian that "we may

turn in search for a different approach to the problems of

human society .... The fruitful historical research generally

begins with an awareness of some problem that is felt to be

significant" (Moore, Jr. 1958: 141). At the same time the

problem consciousness, an integral component of sociologists'

humanistic concern, "is not merely a means of avoiding ideo-

logical biases but is, above all, an indispensable condition

of progress in any discipline of human inquiry" (Dahrendorf,

1958: 124). As a matter of fact the loss of problem con-

sciousness was ultimately due to an abandonment of the classic

tradition of sociology. In urging the working sociologists

to keep "uppermost a full sense of the problem at hand" Mills

calls for the reinstatement of this tradition.

> To practice such a policy .... is to take up
> substantive problems on the historical level
> of reality; to state these problems in terms
> appropriate to them; and then, no matter how
> high the flight of theory, no matter how pains-
> taking the crawl among detail, in the end of
> each completed act of study, to state the solu-
> tion in the macroscopic terms of the problem.
> The classic focus, in short, is on substantive
> problems (SI: 128).

But, inevitably, the question is: what is a significant or

substantive problem? As for Mills, the problems are not im-

mediately significant because of their practical, political,

or moral meanings. "What we should mean in the first instance

is that", says Mills, "they should have genuine relevance

to our conception of a social structure and to what is hap-

pening within them" (SI: 73). And, then, the problems be-

come significant in terms of their political consequences

upon men in sociohistorical transformations of the society.

Thus his sociology becomes a political sociology, and its

problems are significant, morally and intellectually, in

terms of threats to cherished values of truth, reason, and

freedom--in brief, political ideals of liberalism. These

values constitute "the necessary moral substance of all sig-

nificant problems of social inquiry, as well as of all public

issues and private troubles" (SI: 175). To elaborate the

political overtones of Mills' sociology:

> The very enterprise of social science, as it
> determines fact, takes on political meaning.
> In a world of widely communicated nonsense,
> any statement of fact is of political and

> moral significance. All social scientists,
> by the fact of their existence, are involved
> in the struggle between enlightment and
> obscurantism. In such a world as ours, to
> practice social sciences is, first of all,
> to practice the politics of truth (SI: 178).

The realization of this truth has its roots in the ideals

of political liberalism and pragmatism rather than in the

tenets of Marxism or dialectical materialism. Whatever it

is, in envisioning political tasks of the sociologists,

Mills does not intend "to save the world" although there is

nothing wrong in it if it means "the avoidance of war and the

re-arrangement of human affairs in accordance with the ideals

of human freedom and reason" (SI: 193).

Critique of Modern Empiricism: The Radical Viewpoint

Ever since its birth, mainstream sociological theory

and research has retained its one-sided unneutral function

of legitimating the irrationality and immutability of the

existing structure or institutional arrangements of the

society. Among other things, its main function has been ideo-

logical, and its practitioners are "so intensively interest-

bound to a situation that they are simply no longer able to

see certain facts which would undermine their sense of domin-

ation" (Mannheim, 1936: 40). In its triumphant march the

mainstream sociology, both in its intellectual content and

ideological-political character, has continued to maintain

its historic alliance with capitalism. It is still, more

than ever, "a moralizing sociology of milieux" (SI: 88).

It is not "a science: it is a way of doing ideology. And
in a high-technology society, it is an ideological produc-
tion of great practical and ideological utility to any ruling
class" (Freiberg, 1973: 19-20). That the situation has
changed little since Mills' time is evident from the remark
made by Kon in 1974: "When studied from within, the crisis
of sociology, I believe, appears as a crisis of the illusions
of positivist science, empiricism and functionalism" (Kon,
1975: 58). It is therefore no wonder that Mills' critique,
in spite of its limitations, towers over most subsequent
criticisms made recently in the social sciences (cf. Shaw,
1975: x).

As early as 1944 Mills discovered the US intellectuals'
failure to reinstate "pragmatism's emphasis upon the power
of man's intelligence to control his destiny" (PPP: 292).
They suffered what he calls "a failure of nerve." In the
beginning of the mid-twentieth century Mills saw how the
emergence of rational bureaucracies affected "the conditions
of intellectual life." The intellectual, he writes,

> ....hopes for opportunities of research, travel,
> and foundation subsidies. Tacitly, by his
> silence, or explicitly in his work, the academic
> intellectual often sanctions illusions that up-
> hold authority, rather than speak out against
> them. In his teaching, he may censor himself
> by carefully selecting safe problems in the name
> of pure science, or by selling such prestige as
> his scholarship may have for ends other than his
> own (WC: 152).

The development of rational bureaucracies accompanied what
Mills called "the managerial demiurge." The bureaucratic-

managerial-technological society required a legitimating
ideology and a set of intellectuals who could be hired in
research cartels in order to turn out "elaborate studies
and accurately timed releases, buttressing the interest,
competing with other hatreds, turning pieties into theo-
logies, passions into ideologies" (WC: 153). As a result
they became technicians and joined "the expanding world of
those who live off ideas, as administrator, idea-man, and
good will technician" (WC: 156). To carry Mills' analysis
a little further, his concept of "technicians" is comparable
to Gramsci's concept of "functionaries". In the words of
Gramsci, whom Mills labels as a plain marxist, "the in-
tellectuals are the dominant group's 'deputies' exercising
subaltern functions of social hegemony and political govern-
ment" (1971: 12). The great increase in the number of in-
tellectuals or technicians is itself an indication of their
need for ideological justification of the power wielder's
domination in the regime of corporate capitalism. To quote
him again, "The democratic-bureaucratic system has given rise
to a mass of functions which are not all justified by the
social necessities of production, though they are justified
by the political necessities of the dominant fundamental
group" (Gramsci, 1971: 13). In this light there is little
difficulty to note, as Mills has done, that the empiricist-
technicians of modern sociology, though too alienated to
identify themselves with private troubles and public issues
of their time, are in historical continuity with their pre-

decessors in providing legitimating ideology for the corporate
capitalist social structure of domination, alienation and
manipulation. The producers of social scientific knowledge,
no better than other workers, are engaged in "producing
commodities for exchange" and they participate only in
developing "an exchangeable account of society" (Horton,
1971: 175). In fact the present relationship of the functions
of social scientific knowledge to the corporate-pluralist
interests of the dominant class is quite indicative of certain
patterns which, though more complex and intriguing than sup-
posed, are as follows:

First, a noticeable trend consists in the emergence
of the government as the predominant buyer of social scien-
tific knowledge or, stated otherwise, of relevant information
suited to its political purposes. Private agencies come next.
As a result of both the number of sociologists receiving
support from these is generally on the increase. Between
1966 and 1970 their number, who were receiving federal support,
has gone up from 3,640 to 7,658 (Horowitz and Katz, 1975: 10).
In this wider involvement with different policy making a-
gencies of the government, the sociologists are more prone
to accommodate government's priorities, and therefore its
political interests rather than assume autonomy and respons-
ibility.

> .... there is slender evidence that information
> bought and paid for is made the basis of policy
> in critical times. Indeed, there is just as
> much evidence for the conclusion that information
> is used when it suits policy-makers and discarded

when it does not "fit" political plans
(Horowitz, 1968: 272).

As for researches within the Universities there is little
or no scope for developing or undertaking critical studies of
colonialism, imperialism or class struggle given the struc-
ture of Graduate programs geared to standardized methodology
and research techniques.[11] The chief obstacle is the feudal
structure of the University through which "a bankrupt
orthodoxy perpetuates its bankruptcy by forcing young scholars
to swear fealty to its certified ideological idols and techni-
ques" (cf. Horowitz, 1970: 8).

Second, it is the foundations and other corporate
bodies that are influencing the trends of sociological research.
Nearly one-half of all foundations grew up between 1950 and
1959 and nearly one-fourth between 1960 and 1969. The largest
12 of approximately 25,000 foundations in 1969 controlled
some $7.5 billion in assets or roughly 30 percent of the
resources of all the foundations put together. In 1970-71
foundation support for the social sciences rose to $77 million
or 38 percent of the total expenditure (Horowitz and Katz,
1975: 16-18). Whatever the philanthropic purposes they might
serve, the foundations have been increasingly caught in the
political crossfire since the 1960s. Attacks came from all
directions, from liberal to Marxist, but it was Mills who took
lead to focus on the ideological purposes which they served.
In 1944 he wrote: "Research in social science is increasingly
dependent upon funds from foundations, and foundations are
notably averse to scholars who develop unpopular theses, that

is, those placed in the category of 'unconstructive'" (PPP:
297). As a matter of fact, directions of foundation financed
research have caused concerns for many (cf. Lundberg, 1968;
Horowitz and Kalodney, 1969; Horowitz, 1969). Nielsen com-
ments that "the large foundations--their theoretical useful-
ness as creative forces and as change agents notwithstanding
--are in fact overwhelmingly passive, conservative, and
anchored to the status quo" (1972: 406).

The third characteristic trend relates to increasing
uses of sociology, as well as participation of more socio-
logists, in providing materials useful for military intelli-
gence, strategic planning and psychological warfare. Of
course, this trend is coincident with the rise of Cold War
and world wide US military involvement since the World War II.
Bowers reports that well over two hundred professional socio-
logists have contributed to this post-War use of sociology
and that "this upward trend in the military use of sociology
is here to stay" (1967: 267). Sometimes military spending for
behavioral and social research has yielded many important and
interesting results, causing thereby euphoria among the socio-
logists. For example, one of them remarks, ".... the resources
for the conduct of our foreign policy, and our social science
as a whole, would be poorer if military agencies had not
stepped in and provided funds and encouragement that were
not forthcoming from civilian departments" (Davison, 1967: 396).
What, however, causes concern is that the same money could
have come from another department. The truth is that socio-

logy is also becoming a component of the military establish-
ment of the corporate capitalist society (cf. Beals, 1969:
111-12). Take for instance, the ultimate purpose of Samuel
Stouffer's The American Soldier (1949). In spite of its
claim that the study was value free, it is not at all diffi-
cult to see that the military used "its findings as a kind
of handbook to promote higher morale, defuse dissension, and
generally increase the efficiency of battle units in the
European campaign" (Sternberg, 1977: 107). A far more glaring
example in point is project Camelot, an Army-supported be-
havioral research project with a four year budget of $6
million. On the one hand, its purpose is clearly political
and practically conservative. Its purpose, however hidden
behind the technical vocabulary, was not only to investigate
political conditions of Latin American countries but also to
obstruct any political changes therein. Clearly it was one
of "counter-insurgency" nature. On the other hand, its
problems were also methodologically pertinent. By confusing
revolution and radical change with problems of social patho-
logy, the Camelot sociologists revealed only their conserva-
tive ideological biases characteristic of the functionalists'
concern to reduce every thing as issues of order, stability,
pattern maintenance, conflict management, and so on. As a
matter of fact the project, though cancelled in 1965, has
brought to the fore serious issues like value of the value-
neutrality ethic, ideological cohabitation between social

science and vested interests, and conservative roots of main-
stream sociology and sociologists. It is evident that "the
brutal _fact_ of imperialism is incorporated into the intellec-
tual structure of the project. The unquestioned and highly
doubtful presuppositions of power politics in the Cold War
era are built into the very system of research which is sup-
posed to discover truth. One might ask whether such social
science is exploring or fabricating the truth" (Ober and
Corradi, 1966: 52). The project has demonstrated, more than
revealing the naked face of conservative-ideological politics
underlying the current trends of sociological empiricism,
that long run interests of the sociologists do not lie with
a sectarian politics but with "the broader concerns of man-
kind" (Sjoberg, 1967: 160).

Finally, in conformity to the increased demand for
policy related social sciences, the various government, in-
dustrial and corporate agencies are showing greater interest
in gathering raw quantitative data necessary to their policy
planning and policy formulation. In this survey research is
the most frequently used tool. That is to say, recent de-
velopments point toward a client-centered sociology (cf.
Lazarsfeld et al., 1967: x-xi). Besides such corporations
as General Motors, Ford Motor Company, General Electric etc.,
the government prefers, particularly in the studies of crimin-
ality, defense, foreign policy and urban studies, to appoint
sociologists who can transform qualitative materials into
quantitative terms. The policy makers' preference derives

from the fact that this enables them "to order and audit political options and the implications of their choices", as Horowitz and Katz say. The negative implication arising from the purposive emphasis on the quantitative aspects is that "social sciences move beyond their academic confines, and become very much a part of the larger social and economic system" (Horowitz and Katz, 1975: 46). The widespread uses of survey research conform to the general pattern of the domination of the quantitative trends in sociology. The survey research provides necessary data by which establishment sociologists, in the name of so-called meaningful integration of theory and research, build up, on the one hand, a comfortable sociology and aid, on the other, the administrative-bureaucratic apparatus in the preservation of the status quo. The rise of the trend is "almost entirely the result of its general 'practical' uses in the manipulation of consciousness, together with its suitability to the financial, ideological and career structures of the 'social sciences'" (Shaw, 1975: 41).

This review of the major trends of current empirical research styles in sociology attest only to Mills' premonition of how the politics of liberalism, both as ideology and rhetoric, is providing "the terms of all issues and conflicts" (PPP: 218). Elsewhere he says that, even if the moral content of liberalism is still abstractly stimulating,

. .

> .... its sociological content is weak: its
> political means of action are unpromising,
> unconvincing, unimaginative. It has no
> theory of man in society, no theory of man
> as the maker of history. It has no political
> programme adequate to the moral ideals it
> professes .... It is much more useful as a
> defense of the status quo .... than as a
> creed for deliberate historical change (TM: 30).

In this context Mills' political sociology, in its dual

aspect of criticism of the establishment trends and of an

attempt at the reconstruction of the radical alternative, is

singularly important in the history of sociological analysis.

To conclude, therefore, in the words of a recent critic of

mainstream sociology:

> Given the persistence of the structural
> constraints inherent in the exercise of
> the procession, which are partly rooted in
> the academic structure generally, the chance
> of another Mills arising in sociology is
> about equal to the chance of a Fidel Castro
> emerging in the State Department. Unless
> this structure changes profoundly, it is
> safely predictable that the next generation
> of prominent sociologists will be just as
> bought as the present one is (Nicolaus, 1971: 51).

Notes

1. To cite an example, see the recent article of Phillips (1974), where he contrasts Mills' position with that of Mannheim and Merton. See also Kraetzer (1975).

2. For a contemporary but highly critical point of view assailing "pompous bluff and paucity of ideas" in the recent flood of publications, see Andreski (1973).

3. It seems to be a rewarding task to trace how Mills' Methodological contributions including his concept of the sociological imagination have influenced the contemporary sociologist and their sociologies. Needless to add, these sociologists vary widely between them. Generally see Rapoport (1965: 94-107), Glaser and Strauss (1967: 251-57), Willer (1967), Kariel (1968), Sjoberg and Nett (1968), Becker (1970: 13), Hughes (1971: 478-95), Denzin (1973), Fletcher (1974; 1975).etc.

4. For a discussion of Mannheim's lapses into historicism see Wagner (1952).

5. Mills' contention has been supported by Meltzer who says of Mead: "He oversimplifies the concept by assuming, apparently, a single, universal generalized other for the members of each society--rather than a variety of generalized others (even for the same individuals), at different levels of generality" (1972: 20), as Mills suggested earlier.

6. Mills' failure to realize that Marxism provides an adequate basis of "science" or "scientific method" has resulted in serious consequences for his radical sociology. See chapter 9, which contains my criticisms of the drawbacks of radical sociology in general.

7. His arguments are more elaborate and articulate in Can Science Save Us. See Lundberg (1961), and also Bierstedt (1963) who carries the same tradition, more or less.

8. For interesting discussion on the nature of social science including sociology, see Winch (1965) and Ryan (1970).

9. Cf. Shils (1961). I have already quoted a section from Shils' review article in this connection. See pp. 79-80 of this chapter.

10.   For Mills' views on the role of historical materials
      in sociological analysis, discussed in a comparison
      with Parsons' grand sociology, see chapter 2,
      especially pp. 61-67.

11.   However, I take note of the fact that nowadays many
      American social scientists are undertaking serious
      studies in these areas.

CHAPTER   FOUR

Mass   Society

Introduction

Before I again return to Mills' political sociology,
I propose to deal with, in the following two chapters, two
important theoretical issues: mass society and alienation.
In this regard, Mills' contributions may be summarized in
two ways: 1) he developed a sociological framework within
which a theory of mass society could be formulated; and in
doing so, he connected the alienating features of modern man
with the emergent society in America; and 2) his framework
provides an important perspective that helps one to assess
the structural changes of American society and its impact
upon the psychology of individuals.   While accomplishing both
purposes, Mills' framework also creates a distinct tradition
within American sociological analysis in that it marks a
characteristic break with the aristocratic perspective of
European mass theorists.

The Trends towards Mass Society

In 1930, when he published his The Revolt of the
Masses, Gasset perceived the new trend and wrote: ".... America
is, in a fashion, the paradise of the masses" (1957: 116).

By the mid-twentieth century American society has moved,
says Mills, "a considerable distance along the road to the
mass society" (PPP:358). This movement is the noticeable
development of far-reaching structural transformations that
were taking place following the last World War. The gradual
evolution of American society into a mass society, in one
form or another, is linked with the changes, brought about
by developments of technologies of production and destruction,
in the institutional orders of the society. Massive techno-
logical developments in the society were accompanied by rapid
industrialization, continuous urbanization, proliferation of
opportunities for men and women with the broadening of the
economic base, the expansion of decision-making spheres and
at the same time centralization of its apparatus and, finally,
bureaucratization of all spheres of life, social and individual.
The impact of these changes is most visible in the realm of
power which nowadays increasingly resides in the economic,
political and military orders of the society. Using the
concept of power as an 'expedient to approach modern social'
structures' and keeping in mind the institutional dominance
of the economic, political and military orders, Mills ad-
vanced his thesis of the structural transformations and of
how it has trichotomized American society into three dis-
tinct layers, ranked in terms of their accessibility to
power. To quote Mills:

> The top of modern American society is increas-
> ingly unified, and often seems willfully coor-
> dinated: at the top there has emerged an elite

*while point [illegible] on 'Power elite' [illegible]
must also [illegible] with [illegible] a [illegible]
[illegible] points in which [illegible] the [illegible]
[illegible] of [illegible] with the [illegible]
[illegible]*

> of power. The middle levels are a drifting
> set of stalemated, balancing forces: the
> middle does not link the bottom with the top.
> The bottom of this society is politically
> fragmented, and even as a passive fact, in-
> creasingly powerless: at the bottom there is
> emerging a mass society (PE: 324).

The concept of the mass society, as Mills develops, is linked

with the shift of power from the mass of people to those

"political, economic and military circles which as an intri-

cate set of overlapping cliques share decisions having at

least national consequences. In so far national events are

decided, the power elite are those who decide them" (PE: 18).

Conversely, in the mass society the people have become power-

less or have suffered powerlessness to the extent the power

elite has become powerful.) Together with the middle level

of the society, characterized by the new bourgeoisie which

is without any political direction, the men in the masses

are now open to control and manipulation by the power elite.

This approach to the problem of powerlessness of the masses

in a society presided over by elites in power sharply differ-

entiates Mills from Le Bon, Mill, Tocqueville, Burckhardt,

Gasset and others, who viewed with concern the emergence of

the masses as a new balancing force in the society. These

theorists assume more or less that either the masses have

acceded to power or their likely accession to power is a

threat to society. The basic postulates behind this aristo-

cratic-elitist conception is a supposed incompetence of the

masses to decide their own destiny. In contrast, Mills'

viewpoint is just opposite. The dividing line is Mills'
explicit commitment to democracy. For Mills, the mass society
is indicative of a societal condition in which elite pre-
eminence replaces or erodes the power of the masses to rule
themselves by their own representatives. As he remarks, "In
our time, the influence of publics or of masses within poli-
tical life is in fact decreasing, and such influence as on
occasion they do have tends, to an unknown but increasing
degree, to be guided by the means of mass communication"
(PPP: 35).

Mills differentiates between what he calls "community
of publics" and "mass society." For sure, these phrases in-
dicate only the extreme types. Neither of them is at any time
an exact reflection of social reality in America. "Social
reality is always some sort of mixture of the two" (PE: 302).
Therefore, these two concepts of "community of publics" or
"mass society" are mere theoretical constructs developed
in order to picture, in relative terms, the social situation
that could exist at a given period of time. In distinguish-
ing poblics from masses, Mills chooses to examine the role
of the communications media in influencing and as control
over man in the industrial-technological society. Apart
from many other effects which it entails, the media revolu-
tion has structurally transformed the community of publics
into a society of the masses along four dimensions. In a
public,

> (1) Virtually as many people express opinion
> as receive them. (2) Public communications
> are so organized that there is a chance imme-
> diately and effectively to answer back any
> opinion expressed in public. Opinion formed
> by such discussion (3) readily finds an out-
> let in effective action, even against--if
> necessary--the prevailing system of authority.
> And (4) authoritative institutions do not
> penetrate the public, which is thus more or
> less autonomous in its operations (PE: 303-04).

At the opposite extreme, in a mass

> (1) far fewer people express opinions than re-
> ceive them; for the community of publics be-
> comes an abstract collection of individuals
> who receive impressions from the mass media.
> (2) The communications that prevail are so or-
> ganized that it is difficult or impossible for
> the individual to answer back immediately or
> with any effect. (3) The realization of opinion
> in action is controlled by authorities who or-
> ganize and control the channels of such action.
> (4) The mass has no autonomy from institutions;
> on the contrary, agents of authorized institu-
> tions penetrate this mass, reducing any autonomy
> it may have in the formation of opinion by dis-
> cussion (PE: 304).

Mills' description of both concepts proceeds along 'ideal-

type' description. The dividing line, as already indicated,

is set by the media. In addition, he draws heavily upon the

image of a classic public as theorized by the eighteenth

century political scientists. Somewhat ideally conceived,

the public of classic democratic tradition is the source of

legitimation and the center for exchange of rational opinion

between persons tied to each other by harmony of mutual in-

terests. "And, in so far as the public is frustrated in

realizing its demands, its members may go beyond criticism

of specific policies; they may question the very legitima-

tions of legal authority" (PE: 299). Such a concept of public

is, as the basis of democratic community, now a 'fairy tale'
and does not even present 'an approximate model of how the
American system of power works.' However, one should not
forget, as Mills reminds, that the idea of the mass society
"involves more than mass communications. The idea implies
that multitudes of people participate in various activities,
but that they do so only formally and passively. Action and
opinion are one again, and both are rigorously controlled
by monopolized media" (PPP: 583). Mills never says that
America is completely a mass society though there are others
who called America a mass society.[1] America has never been
completely a community of publics either. Mills only dis-
covered the structural trends towards mass society. In 1954
he says that the situation was "half-mass and half-public."
He also comments that America has travelled "a considerable
distance along the road to the mass society" (PPP: 358). The
latter position found poignant affirmation in his The Power
Elite published in 1956. Therein he says more affirmatively
that "many aspects of the public life of our times are more
the features of a mass society than of a community of publics"
(PE: 304).

How has this situation come about? That is, how
has this transition to the mass society occurred apart from
the rise of the power elite at the top of the masses? What
are the other structural trends? What is their impact upon
the mass life of the individual? All these queries are at

the heart of Mills' thesis of the mass society and aliena-
tion. On the one hand, there is the decline of the individ-
ualism and a rise of irrationality in life (cf. PE: 301-02).
What Mills argues is a part of the story of disillusionment
of the old liberals with the modern forces of sociopolitical
change. The idealization of the traditional community as the
source of organic, natural and desirable interpersonal re-
lationship and the celebration of the free individual at the
same time constituted the theme of liberal optimism which the
old liberal mass theorists thought to have broken down under
the impact of modern conditions of society. This kind of
sociological romanticism found its genesis in the well known
themes of Tonnies, Simmel, or Sombart.[2] Mills only subscribed
to this romanticism. On the other hand, Mills has found in
the mass society "a movement from widely scattered little
powers to concentrated powers and the attempt at monopoly con-
trol from powerful centers, which, being partially hidden, are
centers of manipulation as well as of authority" (PE: 304-05).
The fact that media control aids in manipulation is not to
ignore the role which communication technology plays in the
biological evolution of man and in the development of social
structure. Rather, "the development and maintenance of
large social structure depends on a communication technology
that permits communication through space and time in addition
to face-to-face oral communication" (Parker, 1973: 619).
Mills' apprehension is that mass society marks a transition
towards a life of manipulation, a life guided and directed

by centralized points of control, which must be eliminated.

In this sense men are not moving towards but are drifting

away from possibilities of any more freedom in the society.

He only points to the danger inherent in the society of media

sovereignty. To put it in the words of Fromm: "We are not

on the way to greater individualism, but are becoming an in-

creasingly manipulated mass civilization" (1968: 26). Need-

less to add, it is also Mills' message.

Other Factors

The Bureaucratic Character: In his Economy and Society (1922)

Weber wrote:

> The United States still bears the character
> of a polity which, at least in the technical
> sense, is not fully bureaucratized. But the
> greater the zones of friction with the outside
> and the more urgent the needs of administrative
> unity at home become, the more this character
> is inevitably and gradually giving way formally
> to the bureaucratic structure. Moreover, the
> partly unbureaucratic form of the state structure
> of the United States is materially balanced by
> the more strictly bureaucratic structures of those
> formations which, in truth, dominate politically,
> namely, the parties under the leadership of pro-
> fessionals or experts in organization and elec-
> tion tactics (1968: 211).

Mills, the faithful carrier of the sociological heritage of

Weber, also found that "the United States has never and does

not now have a genuine civil service, in the fundamental sense

of a reliable civil service career, or of an independent

bureaucracy effectively above political party pressure"

(PE: 239). As far back as 1942, Mills said, in virtual agree-

ment with this master theorist of bureaucracy, that "the historical drift may be seen as a bureaucratization of industrial societies, irrespective of their constitutional government" (PPP: 53). He also notes that "all modern states are bureaucratic" and that "bureaucracies do not operate without definite social settings" (PPP: 65).

With Weber as the dominant influence upon him therefore, it was not difficult for Mills to discover bureaucratic tendencies of the modern industrial societies. In other words, bureaucratization added mass character to the industrial-technological societies of today. Although the development of a money economy is not decisive for the existence of a bureaucracy, it flourishes along with bureaucracy. It is a "presupposition of bureaucracy" (Weber, 1968: 204). Mills found its corroboration in his own society. "In three or four generations the United States has passed from a loose scatter of enterprisers to an increasingly bureaucratic coordination of specialized occupational structures. Its economy has become a bureaucratic cage" (WC: 58). Bureaucratic centralization has pervaded almost all aspects of mass man's life and all the sectors of his society. In the present era, the mass society is characteristic of, to borrow a phrase of Whyte's "a generation of bureaucrats." The corporation manifests the generation's values. All are in a frantic race to respond to standardized future which it portends. Whether he is corporation-bound, a lawyer or a scientist, his occupation is "subject to the same centralization, the same trend

to group work and to bureaucratization .... Whatever their

many differences, in one great respect they are all of a

piece: more than any generation in memory, theirs will be

a generation of bureaucrats" (Whyte, Jr., 1956: 64).

(1) The Managerial Demiurge: An important aspect of the

emergent mass society, as Mills refers to in one way or

another, is that it has increasingly become, following World

War II, a "managerial society." Managerial development is

a new phenomenon of the modern America's mass society. The

managerial demiurge, as Mills termed it, is largely a result

of bureaucratization. "As the means of administration are

enlarged and centralized, there are more managers in every

sphere of modern society, and the managerial type of man

becomes more important in the total social structure" (WC: 77).

Both types of managers--the business and industrial--set the

pace and tone of corporate life for the mass. Managers are

the high priests and they possess social mana. The managerial

bureaucrats have exiled the old captains of industry and

business into oblivion. They have thus become "the economic

elite of the new society; they are the men who have the most

of whatever there is to have; the men in charge of things and

of other men, who make the large-scale plans. They are the

high bosses, the big money, the great say-so" (WC: 100).

The managerial demiurge is conspicuous in terms of

three distinct tendencies that it seems to have. First, it

is manifest in the increasing trend of rationalization, the

core and the essence of bureaucratization. Stated simply,

rationalization decreases the chance of the individual, how-
ever placed in the stratification structure or in the occu-
pational hierarchy, to get a view of the whole, of the
totality of any reality. The managers, the business men,
the corporation executives, the clerks, the salesmen, the
store-keepers or the foremen--all are now subject to the
sovereign rule of rationalization. The second consequence of
the rising tide of managerialism is that, in its progress,
"the capitalist spirit itself has been bureaucratized and
the enterprise fetishized" (WC: 107). Bureaucratization, in
the last place, gives way to manipulation, the secretive
exercise of power. The mass man's powerlessness has increased
to the extent to which manipulation has grown anonymous and
all embracing. The shift from the exercise of authority to
one of manipulation is the hallmark of the new society of
the masses, including the new bourgeoisie.

(2) The Profession and Education: The increased bureaucra-
tization of the world of professions is another mark of this
society. The managerial demiurge works to build up "in-
genious bureaucracies of intellectual skills" (WC: 115)
practically in all types of professions. The impact of
bureaucratization is such that "the rationality itself had
been expropriated from the individual and been located, as
a new form of brain power, in the ingenious bureaucracy it-
self" (WC: 112). More and more professionals now respond
to and operate as part of the managerial demiurge.

Again, Mills refers not only to "mass-production

methods of instruction" (WC: 129) but also to a kind of

"bureaucratic ethos" which underlies education in the mass

society. American educational system is based upon the

organizational and hierarchical pattern of the corporate

society. It functions only as a response to and in the

satisfaction of the needs of a technocratic culture. "It

is a product both of certain unique conditions of mass educ-

ation and higher education's servicing role vis-a-vis the

bureaucratically organized political and economic sectors"

(Vaughan, 1973: 232). The knowledge has thus become both

bureaucratized and a commodity. It is giving rise to what

Mills calls a "new academic practicality" (cf. WC: 134).

Its practitioners readily assume "the political perspective

of their bureaucratic clients and chieftains" and serve only

"to increase the efficiency and reputation--and to that ex-

tent, the prevalence--of bureaucratic forms of domination in

modern society" (SI: 101). Professors become "more directly

an appendage of the larger managerial demiurge" (WC: 133)

as more and more foundation money is poured to encourage

large-scale bureaucratic research into small-scale issues.

The more the members of the academic community act as part

of the corporate establishment and pursue goals bureaucratical-

ly set out, the more they become apolitical, detached from

larger structural issues of long run consequence. The more

they professionalize this apolitical ideology of the mana-

gerial society, the more they endanger their ability to grasp

the other side of the political reality. Given such a situa-

tion, American social science presents a dismal picture.
"Research for bureaucratic ends serves to make authority more
effective and more efficient by providing information of use
to authoritative planners" (SI: 117).[3]

It is worthwhile to note that before the mass society
began to make its appearance, it was considered a major
avenue to social equality and political freedom, but "not
the big avenue of economic advancement for the masses of
populace" (WC: 266). The purpose of education was the crea-
tion of 'good citizen' in a 'democratic republic.' In the
new industrial-mass society the meaning of education has
shifted "from status and political spheres to economic and
occupational areas" (WC: 266). It has increasingly become
"a mark of status, and has already become a necessary pre-
requisite for higher social ranking" (Rodnick, 1972: 50).
Because it is the decider of the individual's occupational
fate in a competitive mobile society, educational system is
oriented to providing "'the successful man' in a 'society
of specialists with secure jobs'" (WC: 266). Of many other
consequences that it has produced, education on a mass scale
has also been "one of the major social mechanisms of the rise
of the new middle-class occupations, for these occupations
require those skills that have been provided by the educa-
tional system" (WC: 266). For wage workers, mass education
probably provides the only channel along which their offspring
can improve their status, although in the long run they usually
end up at the bottom of the white collar job hierarchy. Whether

for wage workers or for salaried employees, it must not be presumed that the prospect offered by mass education is of limitless success. Often the supply exceeds the demand and this results in alienating frustration for those who find themselves outside the opportunities. As Mills says, "Among those who are not allowed to use the educated skills they have acquired, boredom increases, hope for success collapses into disappointment, and the sacrifices that don't pay off lead to disillusionment" (WC: 272).

(3) The Decline of Voluntary Associations: Another important consequences of the bureaucratization of the predominant economic, political and military structures of the US society has been the lowering of the effective use of all "smaller voluntary associations operating between the state and the economy on the one hand, and the family on the other" (PPP: 360). The decline of the primary, traditional or voluntary relations and, therefore, also of primary groups is historically associated with the theory of the mass society. Maine, the celebrated English sociologist of law, traced the development of progressive societies in terms of a passage from status to contract. This movement involved a decline of social groups and the family and an accompanying emergence of legally autonomous individual (cf. Maine, 1861). The German sociologist, Tonnies, who introduced the much publicized dichotomy between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft in 1887, traced the rise of more impersonal, atomistic and mechanical relations as features of the new society, Gesellschaft,

which grew out of the ruins of new commercialism and indus-
trial capitalism. In America Colley anticipated the rise of
the mass society because of the continuous eclipse of primary
groups from social life. Park, who also perceived the same
trend, distinguished masses from publics as far back as 1904.[4]
It was, however, Blumer, a student of Park, who extended and
systematized the idea of "mass" (cf. Blumer, 1955: 370).

Mills looked at the decline of voluntary associations
from the political context which is, in its turn, a conse-
quence of centralization and bureaucratization of the dominant
institutional structures of the society. He clearly points
out: "Voluntary associations, open to individuals and small
groups and connecting them with centers of power, no longer
are dominant features of the social structure of the United
States" (CWT: 33). It is this political perspective that
differentiates Mills from other mass theorists who associate
the decline more with the rise of industrialism and commercial-
ism. Voluntary associations are gradually transformed into
mass organizations and the more they become so, the more they
lose the grip over individuals. The result is three-fold:
first, the individual is detached from his moorings in the
voluntary association in which he can either reach 'reason-
able opinions' or utilize its agency to undertake 'reasonable
activities;' second, he becomes vulnerable to mobilization.[5]
With the media techniques they become open to manipulation.
As the parties become larger, the individual's role disappears

sector of the economy in 1969. Moreover, that figure is a substantial advance over a dozen years ago and is actually 1.35 times higher than it was in 1955, when only half were on the top 500 payrolls" (1970: 38).[6] A typical but representative example of the late 1970's corporations is General Motors

> .... with its 750,000 employees, its 1.3 million shareholders in more than eighty countries, its plants in twenty-four different countries and its varied production which includes autos, refrigerators, electric stoves, locomotives, jet engines, earth-moving equipment and missile guidance systems. In 1969 General Motors had a net profit (after taxes) of over $2 billion, which was greater than the general revenues of forty-eight states, while its sales of $21 billion were greater than the Gross National Product of all but nine foreign countries (Rodnick, 1972: 97-98).

The following two Tables provide a picture of corporate concentration in American economy.

Table A

Share of Assets Held by the Largest
US Manufacturing Corporations, 1950
to 1972 (percentages)

	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1972
100 largest	39.7	44.3	46.4	46.5	48.5	47.6
200 largest	47.7	53.1	56.3	56.7	60.4	60.0

Source: Clement (1977: 139).

Table   B

US Manufacturing Corporations
with Assets over $1 billion,
1960 to 1973

	1960	1970	1973
Number	28	102	124
Percent of all mfg. corps	27.6	48.8	52.9
Percent of profits of all mfg. corps.	37.1	51.9	52.6

Source: Clement (1977: 140).

(2)   The Thesis of the Managerial Revolution and Mills: An

important aspect, which needs to be mentioned, relates to the

so-called separation of ownership from the control of corpora-

tions.   The question is: Who controls the corporations?

In the early thirties, Berle and Means suggested that control

had passed to the top managers who did not own the corpora-

tions.   They assert that recent changes, brought about by

distribution of stock of the corporation among a wider segment

of people and by concomitant legal measures, have affected

radically the character of the corporations.   It represents

a qualitative break with the older forms in so far as the

question of control is concerned.   The separation of ownership

from control has thus necessitated a 'neutral technocracy'

that would supposedly promote the well being of all sections

of the people and balance their interests against each other.

To quote them: "It is conceivable--indeed it seems almost

inevitable if the corporate system is to survive--that the 'control' of the great corporations should develop into a purely neutral technocracy, balancing a variety of claims by various groups in the community and assigning to each a portion of the income stream on the basis of public policy rather than private cupidity" (Berle and Means, 1933: 356). The idea of neutral technocracy found its authentic articulation in J. Burnham's The Managerial Revolution (1941). Therein he asserts that the present capitalist institutions and beliefs are undergoing a rapid transformation. The forces that are at the back of contemporary societal events have ruled out both socialism and capitalism as any adequate basis of social reorganization. Rationalization process has meant increasing indispensability of 'production experts' and 'administrative executives.' Therefore, "within the new social structure a different social group or class--the managers-- will be the dominant or ruling class" (Burnham, 1966: 74). Stated very simply, present social trends are towards a managerial society. Berle further developed the ideas in his other works, The 20th Century Capitalist Revolution (1954) and Power Without Property (1959).[7]

Mills' response to this thesis of managerial revolution, formulated in the larger contexts of political power and social stratification, was contained in the article, "A Marx for the Managers," written with his teacher Hans Gerth and published in 1942. Later, he elaborated his position

and never lost sight of it. Subsequently this article has
become a substantive basis of a radical critique of the cor-
porate-mass society. The postulates of the managerial revo-
lution, as theorized by Burnham, "unduly short-cut the road
from technical indispensability to a grab and hold of power.
The short-cut establishes too automatic an agreement between
the social-economic order and political movements" (PPP: 57-58).
The fundamental error consists in the recognition of techni-
cal indispensability of a class as superior claim to political
power. Burnham was incorrect in assuming that in Germany
the new middle class--the managers--had become new rulers.
The group of big industrialists and Junkers never lost their
power; German capitalism produced for the state rather than
for the open market; and so the political power was a monopoly
of the German state; the fact that the middle class enjoyed
more opportunities on a wider social scale did not mean that
it rose to power; "On the contrary, the Nazi war economy has
violated all material election promises to the middle class.
The middle class was politically important in the ascent of
the Nazi party to power, but it is a power which they do not
share" (PPP: 59). Burnham confounds 'the regulatory power
of the state with ownership.' The fact is that the state
control does not dislocate ownership but rather guarantees
security against such dislocation. Burnham's definition of
property as actual disposition perpetuates the notion of
private property. No American heiress loses ownership of

machines and offices which her late father's 'production

engineers and executives efficiently and faithfully run' for

her. In the sphere of politics, "managers do not significant-

ly differ from owners in their beliefs and loyalties" (PPP: 64).

At the same time, experts seldom make decisions and the top

knock off "the 'managers' before they get to be the deposi-

tory of decisional power" (PPP: 67). In this he blasts the

myth of the managerial revolution and, so to say, of the idea

of soulful corporations. "Modern revolutions are not watched

by masses as they occur within the palace of elites. Revolu-

tions are less dependent upon the managerial personnel and

their myths than upon those who bring to focus and legitimate

the revolutionary activity of struggling classes" (PPP: 71).

Later, Mills argues in specific terms: "While owner and

manager are no longer the same person, the manager has not

expropriated the owner, nor has the power of the propertied

enterprise over workers and market declined. Power has not

been spilt from property; rather the power of property is

more concentrated than is its ownership" (WC: 101). What has

happened in fact is, as Mills calls it, "the managerial re-

organization" of the propertied class whose powers and pri-

vileges are integral components of the institution of private

ownership (cf. PE: 147). As one industrial sociologist says:

> As C. Wright Mills has shown, the managers
> under any regime whatsoever are never anything
> but executive agents. They are never in a
> position, publicly or institutionally, to as-
> sert themselves against their masters. Con-
> versely, the masters become totally powerless
> without the complex (and secretly all powerful)
> managerial cadre (Ellul, 1965: 256).

The institution of private ownership is now "depersonalized, intermediate and concealed" (WC: 101). The owners do not run the corporation or the enterprise. Owners are only people "who legally claim a share of profits and expect that those who operate the enterprise will act for their best interests" (WC: 100 footnore). Managers only have such 'operating control' over the enterprise as is necessary to run it. The top man in the bureaucratized big business is, says Mills,

> .... a powerful member of the propertied class.
> He derives his right to act from the institution
> of property; he does act in so far as he possibly
> can in a manner he believes is to the interests
> of the private-property system; he does feel in
> unity, politically and status-wise as well as
> economically, with his class and its source of
> wealth (WC: 102).

The divorce of control from ownership of property changes "the personnel, the apparatus, and the property status of the more immediate wielders" (WC: 102) of power, but it does not diminish, rather increases, the power of property. Therefore, as Mills argues, "if the powerful officials of U.S. corporations do not act as old fashioned owners within the plants and do not derive their power from personal ownership, their power is nevertheless contingent upon their power of property" (WC: 102). The managers are the managers of private properties.

It is frequently asserted that stockholders are the owners of corporations, involving a disposal of ownership over wider sections of people. But this proposition has little validity in point of stockholder's control over the corporations.

If it is true that there are individual stockholders, then

it is also true that almost half of the stockholding are

owned by corporate entities (cf. Hacker, 1970: 41). Menshikov

reports that

> .... in 1953, the richest families owned 77.5
> percent of all stocks in individual possession,
> 76 per cent of the bonds of copanies and 100
> per cent of the bonds of states and municipali-
> ties .... While in 1929 one per cent of the
> U.S. population owned 65.6 per cent of the in-
> dividually owned corporate capital, in 1953
> this share increased to 76 per cent (1973: 73-74).

This is the reason why Mills is led to conclude that "the

managers are agents of big property owners and not of small

ones. Managers of corporations are the agents of those owners

who own the concentrated most; they derive such power as they

have from the organizations which are based upon property

as a going system" (WC: 103).

The stark reality is that neither the salaries nor

business nor stock options have essentially altered the dis-

tributions of stock ownership in favor of the top executives

so that they will be in a position to control the corporations

in the near future. Menshikov reports, on the basis of data

for over 100 of the biggest US corporations, that "in the last

ten years there has not been a single case of any of the hired

executives advancing to the ranks of their leading stockholders"

(1973: 111). Although it is true, as Mills thinks, that man-

agers seldom personally own the property they manage, it should

not be assumed that managers are in general divorced from

ownership. "Quite to the contrary," hold Baran and Sweezy,

"managers are among the biggest owners; and because of the
strategic positions they occupy, they function as the pro-
tectors and spokesmen for all large-scale property. Far
from being a separate class, they constitute in reality the
leading echelon of the property-owning class" (1972a: 167).
Mills had no doubt that managers, especially those at the
top, 'definitely form a segment of the small, much-propertied
circle'. However, they do not constitute a separate class
since the "top level managers .... are socially and political-
ly in tune with other large property holders. Their image
of ascent involves moving further into the big propertied
circles" (WC: 104). In The Power Elite Mills reaffirmed the
idea that "the chief executives and the very rich are not
two distinct and clearly segregated groups. They are both
very much mixed up in the corporate world of property and
privilege .... (PE: 119). It must be pointed out, however,
that the advancement of the top executives to the ranks of
the very rich does not mean their ultimate absorption into
the owning class. Rather they remain in subordinate position.
Mills' failure has been made up by Menshikov who suggests
the following:

> Whatever corporate 'privilege and prerogative'
> this top group enjoys, however broad its power
> over the working masses and also the small and
> middle businessmen, it is not the owner and it
> is not the one which in the final count wields
> power. Managers come and go, but the power of
> the finance-capitalists, based on their wealth
> and ramified control system, remains so far
> (1973: 132).

In the light of foregoing analysis, it seems that the theory

of the managerial revolution--the myth of a ruling class of

managers--is in reality an apology for the institution of

private property and ownership. What Mills said in 1942 seems

to be valid even today: "If the present ruling owners fall,

so may their managers" (PPP: 71).

The Cultural Character

Whereas McLuhan notes the impact of media revolution

by saying that in the modern society "the medium is the message,"

Mills realizes its importance through its capacity to transform

the community of publics into a society of the masses. By ob-

serving that medium is the message, McLuhan merely says that

"the personal and social consequences of any medium--that is,

of any extension of ourselves--result from the new scale that

is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves

or by any new technology" (1965: 7). For Mills, the media

are a basic feature of America's industrial-technological

society and they have added the mass character to it. The

pervasiveness of the mass media in American society can hardly

be overemphasized. "Americans are media freaks. They read

60 million newspapers per day, have nearly 300 million radios

in cars and homes, and spend more than 360 million hours per

day in front of their television sets. Including film, book

and stereos, total media consumption per person averages some

50 hours per week, exceeding every other activity but sleeping"

(Glessing and White, 1973: v). In other words, the media

consumption in America has already reached a height quite

unknown to any earlier period. At the same time, as Mills

argues, "the media, as now organized and operated, are even

more than a major cause of the transformation of America into

a mass society" (PE: 315). While Blumer in his analysis of

mass behavior perceived the tendency of the media to detach

the individual from his links with primary group and local

community, Mills was more pointed, along with other critics

of mass culture, in his attack on the negative consequences

that jeopardize modern man's life in the urban-industrial

society of the masses. Like Macdonald, Howe, Van den Haag,

to mention the prominent few, Mills sharply criticized the

role of the media in massifying American society.8 To illus-

trate his basic stand on the cultural role of the media in

America:

> The contents of the mass media are now a sort
> of common denominator of American experience,
> feeling, belief and aspiration. They extend
> across the diversified material and social
> environments, and, reaching lower into the age
> hierarchy, are received long before the age of
> consent, without explicit awareness. Contents
> of the mass media seep into our images of self,
> becoming that which is taken for granted, so
> imperceptibly and so surely that to modify them
> drastically, over a generation or two, would be
> to change profoundly modern man's experience and
> character (WC: 334).

For him, the individuals are passive consumers of

standardized media content in the media markets of the mass

society; they are at the receiving end; they are imprisoned

within a 'pseudo-environment' full of stereotypes and standardized

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images of imitation. In reviewing the media effects, Klapper
notes that "persuasive mass communication functions far more
frequently as an agent of reinforcement than as an agent of
change" (1965: 15). In this light, Mills argues, not without
reason, that the prime function of the media is to foster "a
sort of psychological illiteracy" among the mass consumers
of this media-dominated society. This reminds us of McLuhan
who said: "Mental breakdown of varying degrees is the very
common result of uprooting and inundation with new informa-
tion and endless new pattern of information" (1965: 16). Let
me indicate some of the functions of media in the mass society.

First, "the media not only give us information; they
guide our very experiences. Our standards of credulity, our
standards of reality, tend to be set by these media rather
than by our own fragmentary experience" (PE: 311). Even when
the individual attempts to define the meaning of the message
of the media, he is seldom successful because of the stereo-
types already organized by the mass media in his structure of
attitudes and beliefs. Second, the individual's passivity
and his construction of the pseudo-world is furthered by the
consensual, homogeneous and standardized themes that the media
purvey. As the media are now organized, the individual cannot
play 'one medium off against another' because there is no
genuine competition between them. For, "The more genuine
competition there is among the media, the more resistance
the individual might be able to command" (PE: 313). But this
does not usually happen, given the economic nature of the

corporation-dominated capitalist society. The media operate
on the basis of corporate profitability encompassing the
broadest audience. "Profitability may depend on reaching a
national audience; if so, then sympathetic treatment of the
American Negro's struggle for equality--for instance--is un-
economical. This is not because the television networks are
anti-Negro. If they have been unable to find sponsorship
for popular Negro entertainers, it is because advertisers
are afraid of alienating too many white viewers" (Bensman
and Rosenberg, 1963: 361). Speaking of the TV in particular,
Lazarsfeld admits, though 'facetiously', that "the networks
continue their bad programs because this makes for larger
audiences and therefore more profit from advertising" (1971:
viii). Third, the mass media have become the chief source
of mass man's identity, aspirations and self-image. As
Mills puts it, "(1) the media tell the man in the mass who
he is--they give him identity; (2) they tell him what he
wnats to be--they give him aspirations; (3) they tell him how
to get that way--they give him technique and (4) they tell
him how to feel that he is that way even when he is not--
they give him escape" (PE: 314). In other words, the media
provide him with a sophisticated frame of self-reference,
which is, more often than not, a source of perverted way of
looking at the sociopolitical reality. In the last place,
the mass media, the TV being the most important of them,
"often encroach upon the small-scale discussion, and destroy

the chance for the reasonable and leisurely and human inter-
change of opinion" (PE: 314). The media have produced a new
human type, the mass-produced hermit captivated in a world
within the four walls of his room.[9]

The mass media are the purveyors of a vulgarized
universe; they do not focus on individual's soruces of private
tension and anxieties; they do not provide clues to wider
contexts of reality and connect them with his experiences.
"They do not connect the information they provide on public
issues with the troubles felt by the individual. They do not
increase rational insight into tensions, either those in the
individual or those of the society which are reflected in the
individual" (PE: 315). Rather they are a bunch of diver-
sionary techniques which corrode his chance to understand his
self and its meaning or the world he lives in.

The Metropolitan and Industrial Character

Lastly, as Mills points out in the tradition of
Simmel in particular, the rise of the metropolis is an im-
portant master trend making for a mass society (cf. PPP: 364-
65). For Simmel, the advent of metropolis, as the locale of
modern urban civilization of innumerable masses, is one of
the great transformations the origins of which are rooted in
'the large developmental tendencies of social life as such.'
It has simultaneously given rise to opposing trends which
engulf modern man. On the one hand, metropolis has given

the individual 'a heightened awareness and a predominance of
intelligence', 'punctuality', 'calculability', 'exactness',
a 'money economy', 'the highest division of labor' and a
system of mass production for the anonymous market. Yet, on
the other hand, Simmel discovers the progressive fragmenta-
tion of man in the metropolitan civilization in which he has
become encapsulated. Thus he could write, "The deepest
problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual
to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence
in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical
heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life"
(Simmel, 1964: 409). In 1938 Wirth, a prominent representa-
tive of the Chicago school of American sociology, added the
urban dimension to the sociological theory of mass society.
He reminds us, as Mills did later, that "the masses of men
in the city are subject to manipualtion by symbols and stereo-
types managed by individuals working from afar or operating
invisibly behind the scenes through their control of the in-
struments of communication" (Wirth, 1938: 23).

As mass theorist, Mills also discovers, reminding us
of Tonnies and Simmel in the earlier and Wirth in the latter
times, that "the growth of this metropolitaN society has
segregated men and women into narrowed routines and milieux,
and it has done so with the constant loss of community struc-
ture" (PPP: 365). The metropolitan society has spilt the
individual from easily identifiable groups in which he had
his identity. it is a society of strangers, only linked to

each other by a huge network of impersonal and formal media
of communications. Here persons know each other only in a
"segmental manner." The members of a metropolitan society
of masses know one another only fractionally" (PPP: 365).
The metropolitan man is "a temporary focus of heterogeneous
circles of causal acquaintances, rather than a fixed center
of a few well-know groups (WC: 252). Primary personal rela-
tions evaporate and causal contacts, at the impersonal level,
gain supremacy in the metropolitan life. It is a society in
which "the humanist reality of others does not, cannot, come
through" (PPP: 365).

The metropolis is also an industrial society. Ray-
mond Aron defines industrial society as a society in which
" .... large scale industry .... is the characteristic form
of production" (1967: 73). Aron's definition has two key
features: first, it involves separation of the enterprise
from the family; and second, it also means a new form of
the division of labor which not only involves " .... the
division which has existed in every society between the various
sectors of the economy, peasants, merchants and craftsman, but
a technological division of labor within the firm which is
one of the characteristics of modern industrial society"
(Aron, 1967: 73). In both senses, American society is an
industrial society which, in course of large scale production,
turns into a society of the masses. For Mills, America is
becoming a mass society, among other reasons, by forces of

"structural industrialization." Whatever the criteria of an industrial society, which are yet to be sorted out, America is the top industrial society in terms of developments in both science and technology, and mass production and mass marketing. Industrial Revolution has led to mass production of things and services through "special type of factory production in which the principles of power, accuracy, economy, system continuity, speed and repitition are realized" (Martindale, 1960: 3-4). It has transferred the skill from the artisan to the machines. In the assembly line production man and machine are fused into one continuous operation. The principle of maximum production by the minimum number of men is the essence of mass production in the mass society. Thus "the immense productivity of mass production technique and the increased application of technological rationality are first open secrets of modern occupational change: fewer men turn out more things in less time" (WC: 66). The idea of mass production as an ongoing preoccupation involves mass consumption, mass distribution and mass market in the society. All are interconnected, which in the process becomes a 'network of enterprises and occupations' with the middle classes in the middle and the masses at the bottom of the mass society. The underlying principles rest on the operations of a market economy. To quote Mills:

> Goods produced in the factory are transported
> to urban centers of consumption; there they
> pile up, and are unpiled into the market radius
> of the city. Without mass production, commo-
> dities cannot be accumulated to fill great stores.

> Without big cities there are no markets large
> enough and concentrated enough to support such
> stores. Without a transportation net, the goods
> cannot be picked up at scattered points and
> placed in the middle of the urban mass. Each
> ot these is a center of the modern web-work of
> business and society (WC: 162-63).

As for the individual as worker in the industrial-metropoli-

tan society, Mills creates no vagueness to point out the follow-

ing:

> .... in modern industrial society the mass of
> men are, and must be, dependent workers. This
> paramount fact of dependent, collective work
> is firmly anchored in large-scale technology;
> it finds a parallel and a further anchorage
> in an extremely narrow distribution of property
> (PPP: 180).

The rise of industrialism and urbanism has led to the dis-

integration of the family and no longer is it an economic

unit in the society of the masses. If its decline is one

aspect, its separation from the sphere of work is then another.

The process of the division of labor has acted as the major

catalyst towards this end (cf. WC: 237-38). In addition,

Mills refers to religion as 'part of the false consciousness

of the world and of the self' among the cheerful robots of

the mass society (cf. CWT: 148). For them religion has be-

come 'the religion of good cheer and glad tidings' or 'a

respectable distraction from the sourness of life.' The de-

cline of religion is a mark of the new society of the masses.

To quote him:

> As a mass medium, religion has become a re-
> ligiously ineffective part of the show that
> fills up certain time slots in the weekly
> routines of the cheerful robots. As an in-

> stitution that is part of a political so-
> ciety, religion has become a well-adapted
> rear guard. Rather than denounce evil,
> rather than confront agony, the minister
> goes his amiable way, bringing glad tidings
> into each and every home (CWT: 152-53).

An Assessment

The main thrust of the foregoing analysis has been to highlight the differential aspects of emergent mass social order in American society in so far as they were evident in Mills' writings. Put otherwise, his formulations provide, from a theoretical point of view, "a diagnosis of certain underlying tendencies in the modern world, as well as a set of criteria for measuring the extent of these tendencies in specific cases" (Kornhauser, 1968: 14).

This is of course not to overlook various other assessments of the mass society theory. Bell, Shils, Rose, Parsons, Bramson, Bauer and Bauer, Gans and many others have squarely challenged the basic assumptions of the theory. Shils hails the mass society as a new social order in which the individual has for the first time experienced "a greater sense of attachment to the society as a whole, and of affinity with his fellows" and in which "large aggregations of human beings living over an extensive territory have been able to enter into relatively free and uncoerced association" (1974: 229). In the mass society man experiences, evidently in contrast to Mills' assumptions, a new height of freedom

and individuality. To quote him:

> The personal dispositions, those qualities of
> rationality and impulsiveness, amiability and
> surliness, kindliness and harshness, loving-
> ness and hatefulness, are the constitution of
> the individual. Felt by himself, acknowledged
> by himself, coped with by himself, they are
> formed into his individuality. The perception
> and appreciation of individuality in others
> moves in unison with its development in the
> self (Shils, 1963: 40).

As conceivable, Mills' theory is diametrically opposite to

one suggested by Shils. Both are 'ideal-type' descriptions

in respect of the major features of the mass society. It

is interesting to note in this connection that most of "the

critics of the critics" of mass society, such as Bell, Shils,

or Bauer and Bauer, have not referred to Mills except in-

directly. The criticisms they have made largely apply to

European theorists like Gasset, Marcel, Lederer or to those

who are European immigrants to America or Britain, such as

Arendt, Mannheim, Fromm and Marcuse. As a result, their

criticisms suffer from a two-fold drawback. On the one hand,

thses critics have much in mind the European postulates of

mass society or alienation. On the other hand, they criticize

most of which represent the aristocratic critique of the mass

society; to be sure, Fromm or Marcuse, along with Mills, do

not present such a view. On both counts their criticisms

have limited validity and scope in so far as Mills was con-

cerned. For all of them, Mills, Fromm or Marcuse, the primary

data in analysing the nature of post-Second World War Ameri-

can society are based on American, and surely not European,

experiences of life and society. Since the main purpose here
is to focus on Mills in particular, the essential points of
criticism against the mass society theory can be briefly
and selectively touched upon in as much as they apply direct-
ly or indirectly to Mills' theory.

First, Bell has said that the theory of mass society
is "at heart a defense of an aristocratic cultural tradition--
a tradition that does carry with it an important but neglected
conception of liberty--and a doubt that the large mass of man-
kind can ever become truly educated or acquire an apprecia-
tion of culture. Thus, the theory often becomes a conserva-
tive defense of privilege" (1967: 28). Applied this to Mills'
theory, Bell's criticism seems to have zero validity. In
his theory Mills does not talk of "mindless masses," as the
aristocratic representatives of the mass society theory do,
but of the "powerless masses" who have become targets of mani-
pulation from centralized points of control, no matter whether
specifically by the power elite or by any other persons in
the seat of power in the corporate capitalist society. If
his theory is any defense, it is the defense of democratic
tradition discovered in the loss of reason and freedom in the
contemporary American society.

Secondly, Shils says, though not directly referring
to Mills:

> The critical interpretation of mass culture
> rests on a distinct image of modern man, of
> society, and of man in past ages. This image
> has little factual basis. It is a product of
> disappointed political prejudices, value as-

> pirations for unrealizable ideal, resentment
> against American society, and, at bottom,
> romanticism dressed up in the language of
> sociology, psychoanalysis and existentialism.
> (1974: 255).

True, there are elements of romanticism in Mills' theory of

mass society. He resents for the decline of 'the Renaissance

man' or of the 'traditional' and 'primary' social relation-

ships. But, if Shils' critique could at all be applied to

Mills' theory, it is still hard to sustain in terms of the

basic spirit behind Mills' major assumptions. If Mills'

theory is a product of disappointment or resentment against

American society, Shils' own theory, as of Bell's too, is

simply an apology of the established regime. Far from being

a product of 'disappointed political prejudices, value as-

pirations for an unrealizable ideal or resentment against

American society', Mills' theory is directly an outcome of

political mindedness, of democratic aspirations and of an

assessment of America's ills for the construction of a so-

ciety founded on democratic values of reason and freedom. At

least, Shils' image of modern man in the new social order of

the mass society is as romantic as that of Mills' image of

alienated man. If Mills is accused of pessimism, Shils then

portrays an equally opposite, more optimistic than real, image

of modern man. Bramson echoes Shils. Looking at the theory

of the mass society in the contexts of developments in the

media research in America, he suggests that the shift in the

analysis of the mass society is, among others, "symptomatic

of the disillusionment of many American sociologists with the

panaceas of socialism, which previously had provided a tacit ideological justification for dealing with larger social issues" (Bramson, 1967: 97). But, to be sure, Mills' disillusionment with socialism matches equally with his disillusionment with liberalism. What Mills detested in the mass character of the industrial-urban or corporate-capitalist society, not the industrial society or the processes of industrialization and urbanization thereof.

Thirdly, in a widely read and much quoted article, "America, 'Mass Society' and Mass Media," Bauer and Bauer made three specific criticisms against mass theorists. They also, like others, did not mention Mills in their critique. But these criticisms may very well be applied to Mills' theory. First, they suspect that "the elements of elitism extend very deeply into the thinking and feeling of the theorists of mass society" (Bauer and Bauer, 1960: 59). Second, the theorists are intellectuals in whom "social pessimism is more often and more readily approved than is social optimism" (Bauer and Bauer, 1960: 59). Third, mass theorists are opposed to the Protestant ethic and they fail to recognize "the fact that in America Protestantism is a rural phenomenon" (Bauer and Bauer, 1960: 62). Their image of American society is an outdated model of describing the present realities; the onset of automation has reversed the trend of progressive alienation of the worker from his work; this has caused 'a characteristic confusion between reality and values'; the mass theorists are disturbed by 'the egalitarianism of modern

society'; their focus on alienation does not correspond 'unambiguously to what is known in our society'; and, finally,

> By and large, the theory of mass society is
> a theory of social control <u>from above</u> even
> though it is premised on the necessity for
> making concessions to mass taste in order
> that the masses be controlled most effective-
> ly .... While the critics of mass society (or
> at least some of them) exhibit a romantic
> populist trend when talking about "folk so-
> cieties," they are strongly anti-populist
> with respect to modern society (something
> of an anomaly in view of their generally
> liberal political orientation) (Bauer and
> Bauer, 1960: 64).

Parsons and White endorse the views of Bauer and Bauer. They also agree on the point that the findings of the mass theorists reflect not only "a serious paucity of adequate research findings .... but also an even greater lack of theoretical analysis" (Parsons and White, 1960c: 67). Bauer and Bauer have drawn profusely, although at times to their advantage, upon Ernest Van den Haag, Leo Lowenthal, T. W. Adorno, Bernard Rosenberg, T. S. Eliot, Q. D. Leavis, Dwight Macdonald, Irving Howe, Clement Greenberg and a host of others. In developing a generalized model of mass society, they have underrrated the differences in moral, scientific or political attitudes which exist in fact between different mass theorists. Although the conclusions of most of the major theorists point to the same direction and tend to be alike, there is no denying the fact that considerable antinomies exist between them. As Coser has justifiably remarked, Bauer and Bauer have thrown all the mass theorists, especially the

critics of mass culture, "in one bag" (1960: 79). In the same

way it is difficult to sustain the argument that Mills' theory

is characterized by elitism as such. On the contrary, he

viewed with concern the growing political apathy and power-

lessness in face of manipulative tendencies in the mass

society. Mills found that the decline of primary publics

could only end up in the emergence of the mass society and

that, given the tendency, it is a serious set back for Ameri-

can democracy. An elitist is no supporter of democracy.

There is scarcely any indication in Mills' assumptions of

mass society that he preaches a control of the masses from

the above.

> These critics aver that mass societies destroy
> the "public," i.e., those meaningful inter-
> mediary groups which mediate between the primary
> family unit and the nation-state. The claim that
> by dissolving those proximate units which cushion
> and envelop the individual and hence make poss-
> ible a meaningful participation in public affairs,
> mass society destroys the very possibility of a
> democratic, pluralistic polity. This, in essence,
> is the point of view of, among others, C. Wright
> Mills, Seymour Lipset, Philip Selznick; that is,
> of some of the major contemporary critics of mass
> society. How do they fit into Bauers elitist
> amalgam (Coser, 1960: 80)?

By the same token, it may be counter-argued that the mass

theorists including Mills are no more intellectual than those

who criticise them. Again, it is also difficult to trace

out in Mills any lack of enthusiasm for the revival of Pro-

testant spirit as the core of work ethic. Rather, the whole

import of Mills' views on work alienation is pervaded by a

humanist concern to instill the spirit of the Protestant ethic

in the workers.

The advent of automation, the second Industrial

Revolution as John Diebold has called it, now marks the

latest stage of the production technology. By substituting

machines in place of men as controllers of production opera-

tions, automation is now introducing most fundamental changes

in the nature of man and machine relations.[10] But, to be

sure, there is no fool proof guarantee that automation will

always provide immunity against alienation from all types of

work. The introduction of automated techniques has not

always in fact produced similar immunity from alienation in

the office as it does more in the work places of factory. In

addition there are others who express concern, at this given

stage of technology's development, over the shape which auto-

mation will take on in the approaching future.[11]

Bauer and Bauer are on a very strong ground in respect

of the empirical evidence concerning the effects of exposure

to media of mass communications. In America early researches

in this field contributed much to the development of the

mass society theory. Naturally the theory becomes vulnerable

to severe scrutiny in so far as media research points to the

contrary. It bases are shaken to the extent that its theore-

tical postulates are based upon the "wrong" assumptions as

to the role of the media.[12] As far as the media impact on

the outcomes of the political campaigns is concerned, it

seems that mostly they are ineffective in causing substantial

changes in the attitudes of the people in general. Weiss re-

ports that "few people appear to be converted merely through

exposure to formal political communications. The available evidence suggests that the preponderance of total media effects is contributed by the reinforcement of substantiation of vote decisions brought about by other factors, such as habitual patterns of voting or social and personal influences" (1969: 176).

In whatever way one may look at the role of the media, it is redundant to add that they have come to stay, rather quite firmly, in human societies. Evidently, they have good as well as bad, positive and negative, effects, and the concern of the mass theorists is with the latter. There is no evidence to show that the mass theorists are ignorant of the positive impact of the mass media. It is, therefore futile for any one to single out the chosen set of data in order to back up one's position and then criticize the adversaries, o often underestimating and even concealing the ill effects of the media. The main question, as Weiss poses it, is this; "What role can the media play in developing public taste for a culturally more varied range of programs and more serious or demanding offerings" (1969: 110)? In Mills' terms, the media should also be a political forum disseminating clashes of opinion and stimulating public interest in politics. The fact that empirical evidence concerning media runs counter to many of the basic postulates of the mass society theory has got to be accepted with careful reservations. On the one hand, it has not yet been possible to develop any satisfactory or

theoretically derived schema to categorize the effects of

the media. Despite unprecedented spurt in the media research,

it has not been successful to provide worthwhile scientific

generalizations since "there are a sizable number of differ-

ences between the different media and some of these may operate

to increase and others to decrease the effects studied. At

the same time, the studies have frequently been done under

somewhat artificial conditions so that they have likewise not

been too useful for practical application under naturalistic

conditions" (Hovland, 1972: 530). On the other hand, most

"critics" of the critics of mass society are more or less

silent on the specific question of the monopoly control by

corporate interests over different media. The irresistable

urge on the part of the media controllers to reinforce the

existent social trends and stabilize the Establishment de-

fined status quo and political attitudes has been a natural

corrolary of the capitalist transformation of the society.

> The news media operate to continually underscore
> the legitimacy of business and government, to
> enhance their perpetuation in the name of order
> and stability, and to romanticize their agents
> with publicity and sometimes affectionate atten-
> tion .... In American society where the news
> media are controlled, almost monopolized by per-
> sons of wealth, power and high political office,
> most persons are imprisoned in a network of myths
> and lies, in an environment where the media have
> become a mass means for pacification (Ehrlich,
> 1974: 32-33, 41).

Finally, contrary to the assumptions of Mills, Rose

has claimed that, among others, the institution of the family

and the voluntary associations have acquired special signifi-

cance in the mass society. Of the family, he says: "For many adults in our society, the nuclear family provides the only regular source of companionship, the only safeguard against loneliness. It provides partial compensation for the mass society" (Rose, 1967: 202). With regard to the voluntary associations he thinks that they enable individuals to counteract 'the feelings' generated by the mass society. Like Shils or Bells and many others, Rose draws attention to a vast increase in the number of voluntary associations, clubs, societies and other organizations. Despite the rosy picture Rose has provided, there are subtle truths behind the pluralistic universe in the American social structure. Despite its role as an emotional center, it may be said that "in American society the institutional significance of the family has been eroded especially fast. Its socializing functions have been undermined not by political institutions or the ideological jealousy of the authorities, but by the growing belief that the experience of one generation is ir-relevant for the next" (Hollander, 1973: 264). Keniston, in a study of alienation of the American youth, remarks that "the middle-class American family is extreme in its smallness, its isolation from the mainstreams of public life and its intense specialization" (1965: 273). Similarly, pluralism has been a familiar model of society to many theorists be-ginning with Madison and Tocqueville, apart from its modern apologists. But the question remains the same: How far does

this model fit the facts of, and work in, the corporative

society of America? Hacker provides an answer:

> .... when the General Electric, the American
> Telephone and Telegraph, and Standard Oil of
> New Jersey enter the pluralist arena, we have
> elephants dancing among the chickens. For
> corporate institutions are not voluntary as-
> sociations of individuals but rather associa-
> tions of assets, and no theory yet propounded
> has declared that machines are entitled to
> a voice in the democratic process (1970: 42-43).

The efficacy of voluntary associations suffers a serious

erosion in a community that is molded mostly by the corporate-

normative institutions in the capitalist society. The alien-

ation of the individual from the community is anything but

natural likelihood since in the capitalist society "the

institutions determining the role structure, the power struc-

ture, and the physical structure of a community operate apart

from the needs of individuals" (Gintis, 1972: 282). It is

to these aspects, along with others, of alienation that I

now return in the next chapter.

Notes

1. See, for example, Wirth (1948) and Martindale (1960).

2. Cf. Shils (1974: 257).

3. See also Whyte, Jr. (1956: 219). Mills' criticism on
    the point and my own review of the current trends in
    sociological research have already been discussed in
    Chapter 3, especially at pp. 112-120.

4. This information is provided by Walter (1964: 399).

5. Arendt (1951) has illustrated this.

6. In the period, 1955-1970, "the proportion of workers
    in manufacturing and mining in the United States employed
    by the top five hundred rose from 44.5 per cent to 72
    per cent" (Clement, 1977: 138).

7. For a modern version of managerialism emphasizing "wide
    ranging scope of responsibility" of the "soulful corpora-
    tions", see Kaysen (1957).

8. For a collection of critiques of mass media and mass
    culture, see Rosenberg and White (1957).

9. See Anders (1957).

10. Shepard suggests that "the thesis that automation reverses
    the historical trend toward increased alienation from work
    among factory workers apperas to be supported " (1971: 117).

11. See, for example, Killingsworth (1970: 341-42).

12. For a recent review of the findings on the point, see
    Gans (1974: 39-40).

CHAPTER FIVE

Alienation

Introduction

Both in the history of sociological thinking and in
the present day studies of human relations, the concept of
alienation, originating notably in the works of classic
sociologists such as Tonnies, Marx, Durkheim, Weber and
Simmel, has travelled a long way to become the master concept
of sociology. It has emerged "as the inclusive category
which points to our personal and social frustrations, to our
sense of collapse and doom and to the critical nature of
the human situation at this juncture in history" (Murchland,
1971: 4). Whereas the classic masters were preoccupied in one
way or another with the alienating themes of the individual
in the urban-industrial society, the concept received
dramatic formulation and amazing authenticity in the hands
of the different mass theorists.[1] The massive literature
on the mass society became the breeding ground of phenomena
associated with the concept of alienation, although it may
very well be doubted how far the basic assumptions of the
mass society theory are central to the understanding of the
concept in its later manifestation in the contemporary
societies.[2] However, looking at its genesis from the histori-
cal perspective, the concept of mass turned out to be of

central importance to the phenomenon of alienation.[3] Mills
elaborated the theme and extended its differential dimensions
against the back-drop of mass societal developments that were
taking place amid forces of structural transformations in
American society.[4] In the model he built for the study of
social structure and personality, alienation became its chief
social psychological issue. In other words, he started with
the assumption that "problems of the nature of human nature
are reaised most urgently when the life-routines of a society
are disturbed, when men are alienated from their social roles
in such a way as to open themselves up for new insight"
(CSS: xiii). At bottom, the problem of alienation is a matter
of individual experience; outside, it is a question of re-
lationship between him and the historical social structure
he lives in. That is why Mills proposes that "the structural
and historical features of modern society must be connected
with the most intimate features of man's self" (CSS: xix)--
the theme of Mills' sociological social psychology. The pro-
blem of alienation, for him, is a problem of both personality
and social structure. Mass society provided the framework
of modern social structure; and within this framework, the
psychological theme of modern man is alienation. Put in a
single sentence: the structural shifts in social existence of
life have been accompanied by experiences of alienation for
man. This was the basic point of Mills' stand when he review-
ed Charles Mirris' book, <u>Paths of Life: Preface to a World</u>

Religion. The basic issue of this book is one of 'estrange-
ment, of self alienation'. Alternatively he proposed that

>   .... the problem of estrangement arises from
> an urbanized, pecuniary, and minutely divisioned
> society and that the groud problem cannot be
> solved by moral consideration of personal ways
> of life .... That self-estrangement arises from
> a social-historical condition has been demons-
> trated by such men as Marx, Simmel and Fromm.
> In order to transform the conditions of estrange-
> ment (.... or to remake the self), we must be
> dominantly Promethean .... (PPP: 161-62).

The developments that were taking place in the capitalist

orders of America's social structures, especially following

the Second World War, revealed, for Mills, the obstacles in

the way of the individual's capacity to live rationally with

freedom. Rationality and freedom are values, the heritage

of the Enlightenment, that are needed to establish a demo-

cratic or free society which "entails the social possibility

and the psychological capacity of man to make rational poli-

tical choices" (Mills and Slater, 1945b: 315). The problem

of alienation is a problem embedded in the capitalist social

institutions, and Mills speaks for an acceptance of 'a social-

ist view of human nature' to counter the facts of changed

structural contexts of the society. Although early enthus-

iasm of Mills for this socialist image of man evaporates in

his later writings, he, nevertheless, points out in 1945

how this could enable men to solve the problem of alienation:

>   It will recognize the collective conditions of
> work which exist under capitalism and which will
> continue to exist in any modern industrial so-
> ciety. It will see in immense detail how the
> institutions of such collective work, pegged
> upon bureaucratized private property, make for
> the alienation of man from one of his key chances

> to contact reality creatively. It will see
> that the chances of individual men rationally
> to work out their life plans are increasingly
> expropriated by the spread and clutch of cor-
> porative institutions (Mills and Slater, 1945b:
> 315).

At the beginning of the mid-twentieth century Mills discovers the social psychology of the little man in the emergent mass society since the problems now confront him 'border on the psychiatric'. "In so far as universals can be found in life and character in America, they are due less to any common tutelage of the soil than to the levelling influences of urban civilization, and above all, to the standardization of the big technology and of the media of mass communication" (WC: xiv). In the new pattern there is no "moral sanctifying of the means of success; one is merely prodded to become an instrument of success, to acquire tactics and not virtues; money success is assumed to be an obviously good thing for which no sacrifice is too great" (WC: 265). Though Mills says this in his characterization of the new middle class man, it also holds good for the wage workers who are not far behind in their run for monetary success. Aware of the built-in constraints of mobility in the corporate society, "the wage-worker comes to limit his aspirations, and to make them more specific: to get more money for this job, to have the union change this detail or that condition, to change shifts next week" (WC: 278). Mills continued to refer to the theme of alienation in many of his other writings at various points of time.[5] But the theme drew most of his attention in White

Collar (1951), The Power Elite (1956) and The Sociological

Imagination (1959).   In The Power Elite he elaborates the

alienating experiences of the mass man in the following terms:

> .... He is not truly aware of his own daily ex-
> perience and of its actual standards: he drifts,
> he fulfills habits, his behavior a result of a
> planless mixture of the confused standards and
> the uncriticized expectations that he has taken
> over from others whom he no longer really knows
> or trusts, if indeed he ever really did. He takes
> things for granted, he makes the best of them, he
> tries to look ahead .... but he does not serious-
> ly ask, What do I want? How can I get it? ....
> He loses independence, and more importantly, he
> loses the desire to be independent: in fact, he
> does not have the hold of the idea of being an
> independent individual with his own mind and his
> own worked-out way of life .... Such order and
> movement as his life possesses is in conformity
> with external routines; otherwise his day-to-day
> experience is a vague chaos .... He does not
> formulate his desires; they are insinuated into
> him. And, in the mass, he loses the self-confi-
> dence of the human being--if indeed he has ever
> had it. For life in a society of masses implants
> insecurity and further impoetence; it makes men
> uneasy and vaguely anxious; it isolates the in-
> dividual from the solid group; it destroys firm
> group standards. Acting without goals, the man
> in the mass just feels pointless (PE: 322-23).

In The Sociological Imagination, Mills comes finally to at-

tach central importance to alienation as did Karl Marx in his

Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844.   Contrary to

Becker's remark that "Mills himself was led to neglect the

idea of alienation" (1965: 122), it appears that Mills realiz-

ed, no less than Marx, the magnitude of increasing alienation

in man's life.   It is alienation that has turned him into a

cheerful and willing robot and yet lifeless.

> The advent of the alienated man and all the
> themes which lie behind his advent now affect
> the whole of our serious intellectual life and
> cause our immediate intellectual malaise. It
> is a major theme of the human condition in the
> contemporary epoch and of all studies worthy
> of the name. I know of no idea, no theme, no
> problem, that is so deep in the classic tradi-
> tion--and so much involved in the possible de-
> fault of contemporary social science (SI: 171).

The cult of the present is the theme of alienation and the

quest of the individual is to search out a breakthrough and

transcend powerlessness, fragmentation or manipulation. Aliena-

tion stands for detachment of the individual from the social

and historical setting of his life, from his value commitments

and from his commitments to life.[6] The ascendancy of the

cheerful robot is the ascendancy of the alienated man in the

mass social order. On the one hand, the individual has be-

come "always somebody's man, the corporation's, the govern-

ment's, the army's; and he is seen as the man who does not

rise .... He is more often pitiful than tragic, as he is seen

collectively, fighting impersonal inflation, living out in

slow misery his yearning for the quick American climb. He

is pushed by forces beyond his control, pulled into movements

he does not understand; he gets into situations in which his

is the most helpless position" (WC: xii). On the other hand,

the society has emerged as "a great salesroom, an enormous

file, an incorporated brain, a new universe of management and

manipulation" (WC: xv). Against the back-drop, let me illus-

trate different aspects of alienation to which Mills referred.

Rationalization and Bureaucratization

A basic aspect of Mills' theory of alienation traces its genesis in rationalizing and bureaucratizing tendencies inherent in the large-scale organizations that now make the corporate mass society of America. Foreboding this ominous trend, Weber states that "the fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the 'disenchantment of the world'" (1968: 155). Karl Mannheim advanced Weber's thesis in his classic Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction wherein he introduced the dichotomy between 'functional rationality' and 'substantive rationality'. Modern industrial societies bear the mark of functional rationalization, and increasing industrialization stands for increased functional rationalization (cf. Mannheim, 1940: 55). With the ascendant trend of functional rationalization in the industrial society, man gradually loses what Mannheim calls 'self-rationalization' which implies his capacity to exercise systematic control over his impulses and accordingly plan his action towards the goal he has in mind. This leads to alienation. As he says,

> The average person surrenders part of his own
> cultural individuality with every new act of in-
> tegration into a functionally rationalized com-
> plex of activities. He becomes increasingly
> accustomed to being led by others and gradually
> gives up his own interpretation of events for
> those which others give him. When the rational-
> ized mechanism of social life collapses in times
> of crisis, the individual cannot repair it by
> his own insight. Instead his own impotence re-
> duces him to a state of terrified helplessness
> (Mannheim, 1940: 59).

Mills combined points of view provided by both Weber and Mannheim and applied the paradigm of 'bureaucratic rationality' to the changed structural contexts of America's industrial society. In doing this he proceeded social psychologically to reveal the differential dimensions of alienation, as are experienced by the mass man. Like these classic masters, he argues that the modern society is no longer characterized by an identification of rationality with reason. In the industrial society, increased rationality does not provide the condition of increased freedom and this is due to the decline of both Marxism and Liberalism. The triumph of science and of its rationality does not mean that man now lives "reasonably and without myth, fraud, and superstition" (SI: 168). The man in the industrial-technological society suffers from what may be called technological malaise. When technique, remarks Ellul, "Enters into every area of life, including the human, it ceases to be external to man and becomes his very substance. It is no longer face to face with man but is integrated with him, and it progressively absorbs him" (1965: 6). Rationally organized arrangements, far from being a means of increased freedom for the individual, are "a means of tyranny and manipulation, a means of expropriating the very chance to reason, the very capacity to act as a free man" (SI: 169). Technological development is no longer an embodiment of reason in history or society. Instead of working toward human liberation, technological rationality works toward human alienation.

> The rational organization is .... an alienating
> organization: the guiding principles of conduct
> and reflection, and in due course of emotion as
> well, are not seated in the individual conscience
> of the Reformation man, or in the independent
> reason of the Cartesian man. The guiding princ-
> iples, in fact, are alien to and in contradiction
> with all that has been historically understood
> as individuality (SI: 170).

Mills' cry is, therefore, for the loss of individuality-- the

free man of the Renaissance or the Enlightenment ideal. The

alienated man, who has now flourished, is the antithesis of

the Western image of man. And the society in which this

alienated man, 'the cheerful robot', has flourished is the

antithesis of free society, a symptom of the decline of demo-

cracy in America. This signifies, for Mills, the decline of

the values of reason and freedom. The advent of the alienated

man is thus a problem of a loss of reason and freedom in the

society and, in this sense, alienation is the trouble of the

contemporary individual. In other words, "put as a trouble

of the individual-- of the terms and values of which he is un-

easily unaware--it is the trouble called 'alienation'" (SI: 172).

By the same token, alienation is a public issue, an issue of

democratic society, as fact and as aspiration (cf. SI: 172).

It is interesting to note that the same conclusion was

reached by Fromm. Fromm has found that "the rationality of

the system of production, in its technical aspects, is accom-

panied by the irrationality of our system of production in its

social aspects" (1965: 138). Though man has built his world,

factories, cars and clothes, he has become "estranged from

the product of his own hands, he is not really the master any

more of the world he has built" (Fromm, 1965: 138). Marcuse,

a Freudian like Fromm, also looks at the problem of aliena-

tion from the point of view of irrationality of the capitalist

system of production. Though the techniques of industriali-

zation are ultimately political techniques, it is to be noted

that "as such, they prejudge the possibilities of Reason and

Freedom" (Marcuse, 1966: 18). The truth is that "the core

of Marcuse's work is a critique of technologial rationality--

that is, an evaluation of its present impact on individuals

and society and an analysis of its interconnected positive

and negative features" (Leiss, 1971: 399).[7] In his own analy-

sis of commodity fetishism Marx has shown, quite decisively,

how the market mechanism within the capitalist society turns

not only the products of human labor but also human beings

into commodities. " .... the existence of things qua commo-

dities, and the value-relation between the products of labor

which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connec-

tion with their physical properties and with the material re-

lations arising therefrom. There it is a definite social re-

lation between men that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic

form of a relation between things" (Marx, 1970: 72). In his

own analysis of alienation Mills, like Fromm, pursues Marx's

basic assertion that in capitalism every thing including man

is turned into a marketable commodity.[8] This could be illus-

trated by Mills' reference to American society as The Great

Salesroom or The Enormous File.

(1) <u>The Individual in the Great Salesroom</u>: Whether one is really a salesman or not, says Mills, "the salesman's world has now become everybody's world, and, in some part, everybody has become a salesman" (WC: 161). The mass character of this salesman's society has all the qualities of impersonal bureaucratic and commercial relationships that permeate its length and breadth. Salesmanship is almost an independent force that keeps the mass consumption society in its highest gear of production. The centralized control separates him from the product of labor or the processes of the creation of the product. Describing the alienation of the individual salesman, Mills says:

> As the organization of the market becomes
> tighter, the salesman loses autonomy. He sells
> the goods of others, and has nothing to do with
> the pricing. He is alienated from the price
> fixing and product selection. Finally, the
> last autonomous feature of selling, the art
> of persuasion and the sales personality involved,
> becomes expropriated from the individual sales-
> man. Such has been the general tendency and
> drift, in the store as well as on the road (WC: 181).

The salesgirl shares, probably more, the alienating experiences of her male counterpart. There is seldom any area of her personality that remains immune from adroit management required of successful salesmanship. The result of this is self-alienation. "In the normal course of her work, because her personality becomes the instrument of an alien purpose, the salesgirl becomes self-alienated" (WC: 184). The centralization of salesmanship in the new society has given rise to the personality traits and develop ruthless techniques for sharpening them. The production of "high powered sales personal-

ity," to borrow a phrase of Mills', is only an aspect of commodity production in the capitalist-mass society of America. The new socioeconomic role that the individual occupies in this personality market gives rise to what Mills calls "marketing mentality" (WC: 182). This reminds us of Fromm's concept of "marketing orientation." "His sense of value depends on his success: on whether he can sell himself favorably, whether he can make more of himself than he started out with, whether he is a success" (Fromm, 1955: 129). Mills' analysis reaches the same conclusion, revealing the same self-alienated image of the individual. On the one side, the sales personality is a symbol for success since it has become "a dominating type, a pervasive model of imitation for masses of people, in and out of selling" (WC: 187). On the other, the personality market which has resulted from the conversion of society into the great salesroom shows how unmistakable signs of "all pervasive distrust and self-alienation so characteristic of metropolitan people" (WC: 187-88). In this epoch of unabated rationalization and bureaucratization, manifest in the managerial demiurge, the individual in the office is a minute part of the gigantic apparatus. This has paved the way for increased alienation from fragmentation of tasks, from expropriation of a total view of the operative process, from loss of solidarity of primary contacts and from negative satisfaction in work. They constitute, in his words, "the model of the future" (WC: 212).

(2) <u>Alienation of the Intellectual</u>: Mills' continued in-
terest in the alienation of the intellectuals, while adding
a new dimension to the contemporary theme, could be consider-
ed a part of the general tradition in the intellectual mood
of the Western world.[9] Attesting to this, Hofstadter writes:
"A self-conscious concern with alienation, far from being
peculiar to American intellectuals in our time, has been a
major theme in the life of the intellectual communities of
the Western world for almost two centuries" (1963: 398).
Amid a general acquiscent mood of the intellectuals toward
cultural adaptation and conformity following the turmoil-
ridden years of Second World War, Mills was one of the few,
prominently with Howe and Mailer, who raised the voice of
protest. In 1944 he said:

> We continue to know more and more about modern
> society, but we find the centers of political
> initiative less and less accessible. This
> generates a personal malady that is particularly
> acute in the intellectual who has labored under
> the illustion that his thinking makes a differ-
> ence. In the world of today the more his know-
> ledge of affairs grows, the less effective the
> impact of his thinking seems to become. Since
> he grows more frustrated as his knowledge in-
> creases, it seems that knowledge leads to power-
> lessness (PPP: 293).

In 1959 he articulated the problem in terms of its relations
to capitalist social institutions. "In capitalist societies
over the last two centuries, all that has happened to work in
general--in a word, alienation--is now rapidly happening to
cultural, scientific, and artistic endeavor" (PPP: 226).
Elsewhere he urged the intellectuals to "<u>confront</u> capitalism

as one type of political economy .... (CWT: 142).

The estrangement of the intellectual is not a simple
retreat from reason or due to a lack of radical movements
and decline of "marxism as a packaged intellectual option."
In the corporate economy, there are "others"--capitalists--
who "own and operate the mass media" and stand between the
intellectuals and publics (cf. PPP: 226). They own the
cultural means of production, as they own the other means of
production. At the same time, many of the intellectuals are
salaried employeees in institutions directly or indirectly
controlled by corporate owners. Thus the intellectual has
become a hired man of an industry or corporate business and
the fact remains that, as Mills remarks, "when a man sells the
lies of others he is also selling himself. To sell himself
is to turn himself into a commodity. A commodity does not
control the market; its nominal worth is determined by what
the market will offer" (WC: 153). And one can anticipate
how much this mass market can offer the intellectuals in
the long run. The reason is not difficult to understand, for
ultimately in this society "science-technology, far from
being a negative force for critical assessment of events and
governmental policies, has been a positive instrument in as-
sessing the positive role of corporations and government to
influence events in the directions favorable to the interests
of the marketeers" (Smith, 1973: 166). It is in this light
that the shifts in the attitudes of contemporary intellectuals

towards America may be understood. In viewing this in terms

of "from what to what" Mills explains the nature of the shifts:

> From a political and critical orientation
> toward life and letters to a more literary
> and less politically critical view. Or:
> generally to a shrinking deference to the
> status quo; often to a soft and anxious com-
> pliance, and always a synthetic, feeble search
> to justify this intellectual conduct, without
> searching for alternatives, and sometimes
> without even political good sense (1952: 446).

However, Mills' attitude to alienation is not merely

negative. For most intellectuals it provides an escape

route from facts of defeat and powerlessness. "It is a

lament and a form of collapse into self-indulgence. It is

a personal excuse for lack of political will. It is a

fashionable way of being overwhelmed" (WC: 159-60). But

alienation is not a cul-de-sac in which the intellectuals

are predestined to live in a state of continued passivity.

Mills explicitly asserts that "there is no reason to make

a political fetish out of it" (PPP: 301). Elsewhere he says

in no dubious terms:

> So long as they are intellectuals, they must
> reason and investigate and, with their passion
> to know, they must confront the situations of
> all men everywhere. That he expects this of
> himself is the mark of the intellectual as a
> type of social and moral creature. That he is
> alienated is another way of saying that he is
> capable of transcending drift, that he is
> capable of being man on his own (CWT: 125).[10]

It is not an assertion of negativism towards responsibility,

but a positive stance, as also a way, to transcend negativism

and fulfil responsibility. It is not a resentment for ex-

clusion of intellectuals from places of power and recognition

but an exhortation to all those concerned in affairs of the
society. It is not, finally, an expression of defeatism,
but a realization that "the capacity to formulate radical
views and higher standards is an advantage which the aliena-
tion that individual enjoy and suffer makes available to
them" (CWT: 140).

Work, Private Property and the Division of Labor

Although John Stuart Mill anticipated very well work-
ers' alienation, it was in Marx that the theory reached its
climax.[11] In course of time it became the root of modern in-
terest in the alienation of labor. It may be added, not
without reason, that it provides for many including Mills the
basis of an adequate social psychological framework within
which alienation of the worker could be fruitfully explained.
Mills' analysis of the workers' alienation is supportive, at
least in broad terms, of Marx's thesis. It also fills in the
gap left behind by Marx, for changes in the conditions of
labor in the advanced industrial societies have necessitated
a fresh reappraisal of the problem. Mills' thesis in this
respect is based upon cues from Weber, and therefore, Weber's
influence upon Mills may be looked upon, among others, as a
reason of his deviation from Marx.[12] The psychical exploita-
tions, of which Marx was quite aware, are not, as Mills argues,
"rooted in capitalism alone and as such. They are also coming
about in non-capitalist and post-capitalist societies. They

are not necessarily rooted either in the private ownership or in the state ownership of the means of production; they may be rooted in the facts of mass industrialization itself" (TM: 111). The fact that alienation is not a problem of any capitalist society, as Mills argued, has now found corroboration by many.[13] The question, as Mills raises, is that "the attitude of men towards the work they do, in capitalist and in non-capitalist societies, is very much an empirical question, and one to which we do not have adequate answers" (TM: 111).

(1) <u>Mills' Model of Craftsmanship and Alienation</u>: It is worthwhile to note how Mills proceeds to highlight the social psychology of alienation that engulfs both the salaried employees and the wage workers in America's industrial-mass society based upon concrete foundations of corporate capitalism. In this society the meaning of work no longer corresponds either to the secularized gospel of work as compulsion or to the humanist view of it as craftsmanship. The historical work ethic does not provide the motive force for work. For almost everyone "work has a generally unpleasant quality .... For the white-collar masses, as for wage earners generally, work seems to serve neither God nor whatever they may experience as divine in themselves. In them there is no taut will-to-work, and few positive gratifications from their daily round" (WC: 219). Elsewhere, he asserts, echoing Marx, "Underneath virtually all experience of work today, there is a

fatalistic feeling that work <u>per se</u> is unpleasant" (WC: 229).

Marx has provided in the 1844 <u>Manuscripts</u> a model of "man in industrial society," not merely "a philosopher's pro-jection of his ways of feeling on to a model of an industrial worker" (cf. Clayre, 1974: 58). In the like manner, Mills has constructed a model of craftsmanship that portrays man's social role as a worker in the industrial society. The fea-tures of his model may briefly be stated here as follows:

> There is no ulterior motive in work other than the product being made and the processes of its creation. The details of daily work are mean-ingful because they are not detached in the worker's mind from the product of the work. The worker is free to control his working action. The craftsman is thus able to learn from his work; and to use and develop his capacities and skills in its prosecution. There is no split of work and play, or work and culture. The craftsman's way of livelihood determines and infuses his entire mode of life (WC: 220).

In fact, Mills' conception of work as craftsmanship is an amalgam of diverse intellectual traditions. He draws upon the works of Tolstoy, Carlyle, Ruskin and Morris, on the one hand, and of Marx and Engels on the other; and both groups, in their turn, drew their inspiration from the Renaissance tradition of work. Most of them harbor in their mind an image of work that is supposed to have been better in the past days--say, in the early origins of civilization, in the culture of primitive peoples, in the medieval period or in the pre-in-dustrial craftsmanship and agricultural labor. In constructing his model of craftsmanship Mills has also an image of work "as it should be," which he compared with work "as it is" in

the contemporary conditions of industrialization. The ques-
tion which remains to be answered is that how far these
theorists are justified, in the words of Clayre, "in believ-
ing that there was any past age in which ordinary experience
of most men at work was dramatically more happy and satisfy-
ing than that of men at work in their own time" (1974: 86).

(2) The Private Property: In this regard, Mills finds, like
Marx, capitalism as a breeding ground of alienation for both
white- and blue-collar workers. Mills points out in no less
clear terms that "the objective alienation of man from the
product and the process of work is entailed by the legal frame-
work of modern capitalism and the modern division of labor"
(WC: 225). Elsewhere, he reiterates the theme by saying that
"the alienation of the individual from the product and the
process of his work came about, in the first instance, as a
result of the drift of modern capitalism" (WC: 233). Work is
no longer self-creativity, as Marx thinks; it has been tri-
vialized into what Mills calls 'marketable activity' in which
worker's personality or his personal traits become part of
the means of production. In other words, man "instrumentalizes
and externalizes intimate features of his person and disposi-
tion (WC: 225). In so far as capitalism is concerned, if the
institution of private property is one reason, the division
of labor is then another. The structural transformation of
the rural world of small entrepreneurs into an urban society
of dependent employees has given rise to the institution of
"property conditions of alienation from product and processes

> psychologically detached from him, and this
> detachment cuts the nerve of meaning which
> work might otherwise gain from its technical
> processes .... As tool becomes machine, man
> is estranged from the intellectual potential-
> ities and aspects of work; and each individual
> is routinized in the name of increased and
> cheaper per unit productivity (WC: 225-26).

But as essential difference between Marx and Mills may be

noted at this point of discussion. For Marx, the capitalist

market turns everything into commodities, not only the pro-

ducts which acquire exchange value and are sold as commodities

but also the producers, the makers themselves. In contrast

to this, for Mills, it is not so much the capitalist market

as it is the bureaucratized enterprise which is at the back

of expropriation of rationality, resulting thereby in aliena-

tion. In the Weberian tradition, he postulates that "not the

market as such but centralized administrative decisions deter-

mine when men work and how fast" (WC: 226). At the same time

he also sounds very much alike when Mills says that "the

enterprise is an impersonal and alien Name, and the more that

is placed in it, the less is placed in man" (WC: 226). The

harder the worker works in the bureaucratized enterprise,

whether in the office or in the factory, the more he builds

up that which dominates his work 'as an alien force, the commo-

dity'. In the manner characteristic of Mannheim, Mills thus

comes to conceive of alienation:

> The expropriation which modern work organization
> has carried through (thus) goes far beyond the
> expropriation of ownership; rationality itself
> has been expropriated from work and any total

> view and understanding of its process. No
> longer free to plan his work, much less to
> modify the plan to which he is subordinated;
> the individual is to a great extent managed
> and manipulated in his work (WC: 226).

(4) Other Factors: Apart from the alienating grounds of pri-

vate property, the division of labor and the rational bureau-

cracy, Mills points to three other sources of workers' alien-

ation. He advances, following Weber, that "under modern con-

ditions, the direct technical processes of work have been

declining in meaning for the mass of employees, but other

features of work--income, power, status--have come to the

fore" (WC: 230). First, since the work is a source of income

and therefore of security, economic motives operating in the

background are its firm rationale. In his the 1844 Manuscripts

Marx reminded: "The power to confuse and invert all human

and natural qualities, to bring about fraternization of in-

compatibles, the divine power of money, resides in its charac-

ter as the alienated and self-alienating species life of man.

It is the alienated power of humanity" (1961: 166). For Mills

too, money-mindedness in the consumption-orientated society

is a new variable of meaninglessness in work. "The division

of labor and the routinization of many job areas are reduc-

ing work to a commodity, of which money has become the only

common denominator .... The sharp focus upon money is part

and parcel of the lack of intrinsic meaning that work has come

to have" (WC: 230). Second, the meaninglessness in work is

correlated to status yearning which, in their turn, depend

more or less upon the money the worker is able to earn. The

growth of this development. Its main empirical bases stem

from the studies carried out between 1927 and 1939 at the

Hawthorne Plant of the Western Electric Company near Chicago.

Mills reacted quite violently to this approach, par-

ticularly as developed by Mayo, Roethlisberger, Dickson and

others. The new approach, he points out, is an ideologically

motivated political formula that attempts to psychologize

the problems of industrial relations in the private interests

of the growing big business. Put otherwise, the studies of

human relations may be considered "part of the attempt to

work up new symbols of justification, part of the effort to

sophisticate business rhetoric and business outlook" (Mills,

1948a: 202). In White Collar he was more pointed in his

criticism. "The need to develop new justifications, and the

fact that increased power has not yet been publicly justified,

give rise to a groping for more telling symbols of justifica-

tion among the more sophisticated business spokesmen, who have

felt themselves to be a small island in a politically hostile

sea of propertyless employees" (WC: 234). Later, Mills called

the approach an example of "new illiberal practicality" (SI: 92).

In speaking of the 'adaptive society' as the ideal of

the present or future society, Mayo suggests that "in a modern

and industrial society ultimate decisions, if they are to be

reasonable and progressive, must vest in groups that possess

both technical and social understanding" (1975: xlviii).

Naturally he assumes that "modern civilization is greatly in

need of a new type of administrator who can, metaphorically

speaking, stand outside the situation he is studying" and
that, therefore, "the outstanding need of the modern world
is the need for investigation and study of organization and
the principles of intelligent administration" (Mayo, 1975: 109,
129). In this form of managerialism the management is to
understand "the feelings and sentiments of the bottom" and,
then, to decide on transferring, upgrading, downgrading, pro-
moting, demoting, placing and selecting the workers in accor-
dance with "the social values" that are conceivably made of
the managerial wisdom (cf. Roethlisberger, 1959: 192-93).
Trade unions do not appear as competing centers of loyalty
for the workers. The same is also true of 'status' and
particularly 'power' factors within the work organizations.
The fact of the matter is that any reference to power—poli-
tical and economic conflict of interests—is often dissolved
into the problem of securing collaboration from the workers.

As Mills has clearly indicated, the managerial attempt
to boost up workers' morale is linked with the plain fact that
the workers are alienated in one form or another. The hier-
archical nature of the social structure of industrial work
places and the routinized character of job commitments, under
mechanized division of labor, demand that the workers be in
managerial terms. Stated otherwise, "morale in a modern
American factory has to do with the cheerful obedience on the
part of the worker, resulting in efficient prosecution of
the work at hand, as judged by management" (SI: 93). Under-

standably, such a morale approximates neither to that of the
Adam Smith-Jeffersonian unalienated man nor to that of Marx's
unalienated speciesbeing. Mills calls such a worker 'cheer-
ful robot'--the image of alienated man in Mills' political
sociology. (His powerlessness, a product of alienation, follows
from his work roles in the authoritarian structure of modern
industry.) "The morale projected by the 'human relations'
experts is the morale of men who are alienated but who have
conformed to managed or conventional expectations of 'morale'"
(SI: 94).

Management's effort to create job enthusiasm reflects
lack of workers' spontaneity for job commitments which are
more often than not routinized tasks in the mechanized and
rationalized work situations of mass production. This amounts
to, as Mills reminds us of Marx's statement, attempts to con-
quer work alienation within the bounds of alienation. Power
is not a negligible aspect in the work organizations and any
sociology of firms "must inquire into the relations between
strategy, balance and the politics of the firm" (Touraine,
1971: 147). Mills' emphasis on the power dimension is in
conformity to his discovery of structural trends in the society.
The question of 'morale' is not separate from but related to
'power' in the work milieus. Both provide clues to the etio-
logical background of work alienation. To sum up in the
words of Mills:

> The theoretical problem of industrial sociology,
> as it comes to an intellectual and political
> climax in the conception of morale, is a problem
> of exploring the several types of alienation and
> morale which we come upon as we consider system-
> atically the structure of power and its meanings
> for the individual lives of workmen. It requires
> us to examine the extent to which psychological
> shifts have accompanied structural shifts; and
> in each case, why. In such directions lies the
> promise of a social science of modern man's
> working life (SI: 95 footnote).

Leisure, Consumption and Alienation

Referring to the alienation of the individual worker

due to ascendant trends of rationalization, Mills says:

"Alienated from production, from work, he is also alienated

from consumption, from genuine leisure" (SI: 170). In his

The Theory of the Leisure Class Veblen traced how the rise

of the leisure class in America is linked with individual

ownership and the division of labor and how the feature of

leisure-class life is expressed in "the conventional mark

of superior pecuniary achievement and the conventional index

of reputability" through a "conspicuous exemption from all

useful employment" (cf. 1965: 86-87). Mills went further

than his sociological mentor, Veblen. If alienation from

labor is one characteristic of life of the industrial man,

then alienation from leisure, also consumption, is no less

important as a distinguishing mark of contemporary mass liv-

ing. Leisure ethic now runs through the consciousness of

modern man. The theme of leisure activity has turned into

an important aspect of mass society (cf. Touraine, 1971: 193).

The mass consumption society travels towards, to borrow a

phrase from Touraine, "leisure civilization." For Mills,

as for many others, the trend is the same.

> As people have more time on their hands, most
> of it is taken away from them by the debilitat-
> ing quality of their work, by the pace of their
> everyday routine, and by the ever-present media
> of mass distraction .... (A)s work declines in
> meaning and gives no inner direction or center,
> leisure becomes the end of life itself, and the
> leisure ethic swallows up all values, including
> those of work (PPP: 349).

When work loses its significance or fails to infuse the

craftsman's mode of living, it becomes "a sacrifice of time,

necessary to building a life outside of it" (WC: 228). Genuine

leisure releases, says Mills, "our attention so that we come

to know better our true selves and our capacities for creative

experience. Beyond animal rest, which is both necessary and

for many today quite difficult to get, genuine leisure allows

and encourages our development of greater and truer individ-

uality. Leisure ought to be what work ought to be, and what

neither of them usually is: a sphere of independent action"

(PPP: 350). Viewed in this light, modern worker rarely dis-

covers a genuine leisure which he can utilize privately 'to

discover, create and reinforce' his own individuality. As

Lasch says, "the work ethic has given way to a 'fun morality',

the spirit of calculation to concern with personal well-

being and psychic health" (1977: 14).

The ideology of alienated work automatically gener-

ates the ideology of alienated leisure. In the mass produc-

tion society leisure activities derive importance from the
innumerable ways that are available for consumption, and
the process of consumption is no less alienating than that
of production. The American worker, Bell remarks, has not
been tamed by the discipline of the machine but by the "con-
sumption society" (1967: 254). Consumption in America's mass
society means "the satisfaction of artificially stimulated
phantasies, a phantasy performance alienated from our con-
crete, real selves" (Fromm, 1955: 122). The increased avail-
ability of leisure time for man is a mark of this technological
society. In America the week's average working hours has de-
clined from 70.6 in 1850 to 40.8 in 1950, in addition to a
week-end of two complete days (cf. Friedmann, 1961: 105).
At the same time leisure activities have multiplied, but the
result has been alienation in one form or another. The work
ethic is replaced by the leisure ethic, and the split between
work and leisure becomes so absolute that "now work itself
is judged in terms of leisure values. The sphere of leisure
provides the standards by which work is judged; it lends to
work such meanings as work has" (WC: 236). Alt has rightly
noted that the development of consumerism, accelerated by
rise in wages and greater labor, has plagued the working
population and has caused erosion of the work ethic. Con-
sumerism is 'a major mechanism for shaping consciousness
and reproducing capitalist hegemony'. In his words:

> Concerned primarily with the immediate gratifi-
> cations of familial intimacy and consumerism,
> they come to tolerate the exploitative labor

> and even political authoritarianism so long as
> the system sustains a rising standard of living.
> Given its centrality in the reproduction of the
> economy the culture of daily existence, and
> political legitimation consumerism has become
> the major form of domination and reification
> (Alt, 1976: 55).

When the leisure ethic is stretched over to most spheres of

conscious and conspicuous enjoyment, the woker experiences

a dysjunction between his work and the rest of his life. The

cycle of work gives rise to one image of self--the everyday

image based on work. The leisure ethic generates another

image of self--the holiday image of self based on leisure.

The split within the self produces tensions that usually

remain suppressed but which find occasional outbursts especial-

ly in the week-end when they steam off along the erotic roads

of frenzied enjoyment. Thus, exposure to mass leisure ac-

tivities, an incidence of commercialization of leisure and

culture, does not accelerate but retard the creative life of

the working masses.

> So work is an unsatisfactory means to ulterior
> ends lying somewhere in the sphere of leisure.
> The necessity to work and the alienation from
> it make up its grind, and the more grind there
> is, the more need to find relief in the jumpy
> or dreary models available in modern leisure ....
> To modern man leisure is the way to spend money,
> work is the way to make it. When the two com-
> pete, leisure wins hands down (WC: 237-38).

Alienation from Status

Mills enriched the sociology of alienation by introduc-

ing into it the psychological dimension of status striving.

Following World War II, when the American era of fabled plen-

ty and mass merchandisers made its appearance, the rising

standard of living accompanied the growth of a generation of

status seekers. As Mills has noted, the preoccupation of

Americans with more and more status is a feature of "over-

developed" society with its production techniques and mass

consumption outlets. The overdeveloped society is one in

which "the means of livelihood are so great that life is

dominated by the struggle for status, based on the acquisi-

tion and maintenance of commodities" (PPP: 150). The frantic

search for new roads for higher status and its symbols sur-

rounds the new little men more than others in this production-

consumption society of the masses. By the mid-fifties America

came to be marked, so to say, as society crowded by status

seekers--"the people who are continually straining to surround

themselves with visible evidence of superior rank they are

claiming" (Packard, 1960: 7). For Mills, the distinguishing

mark of alienation in this status society is manifest in what

he calls "status panic" (cf. WC: 240). Mills has rightly noted

that "the enjoyment of prestige is often disturbed and uneasy,

that the bases of prestige, the expressions of prestige claims,

and the ways these claims are honored, are now subject to a

great strain, a strain which often puts men and women in a

virtual status panic" (WC: 240). The theoretical postulates

of status alienation have been neatly formulated by Packard:

> A society that encourages status striving pro-
> duces .... a good deal of bruising, disappoint-
> ment and ugly feelings. If a society promotes

>the idea that success is associated with
>upward mobility, those who can't seem to
>get anywhere are likely to be afflicted
>with the feeling that they are personal
>failures, even though the actual situation
>may be pretty much beyond their control or
>capacity to change (1960: 326).

The psychology of the middle class man is 'the psychology of status striving' and the phenomenon of status alienation is more a characteristic of the white collar rather than the blue collar workers. However, Mills addds that , in conformity to his thesis of 'blurring the class lines', dominant structural tendencies are leading to what he designates as "status proletarianization" (WC: 249) of the white collar strata.[14] The traditional bases of prestige and, therefore, of status have become inform and fragile. It has meant that alienation from status, the result of morbid strivings for status, has found newer ways of expression.

First, minute gradations of rank and fragmentation of skills cause, because of continuous bureaucratization, the break up of the occupational bases of workers' prestige and, thus lead to status competition and estrangement (cf. WC: 254). Second, the breakdown of community relations and the growing economic insecurity make the prestige relations fleeting and transitory. Leisure activities tend to justify the individual's claims to higher status and, in turn, cause further status alienation. Finally, many individuals, mostly those in the white collar strata, often seek release from the long-run reality of rather fixed positions in life through efforts to

raise themselves, at least temporarily, to higher status.

Status cycles provide people in a lower class a chance to

act like persons on higher social levels and get away

temporarily with it. "Urban masses look forward to vacations,

not 'just for the change,' and not only for a 'rest from work'--

the meaning behind such phrases is often a lift in success-

ful status claims" (WC: 257).

Alienation from Politics

Alienation in America's mass society is not merely a

characteristic of rationalization and bureaucratization pro-

cesses, of work roles in the capitalist economy, of leisure

and consumption, or of status strivings. It has penetrated

into the arena of politics and, so argues Mills, political

alienation is bound up with mass indifference to politics

of this society. The mass man is neither radical nor con-

servative, neither liberal nor socialist. He is a stranger

to politics, either a visionary or an inactionary. The

questions of legitimacy of political decisions and institutions

appear to have receded apparently behind mass man's estrange-

ment from all concerns of his polity. Rosenberg points out,

among other reasons: "In our complex urban mass society,

individuals devote themselves to minute specialized tasks

woven into the complex fabric of the economy. The great

economic and power blocs, typified by giant corporations and

unions, thrust the individual about with pressures too power-

ful to resist. As a consequence the individual is likely
to feel overwhelmed and powerless" (1951: 9).

For Mills, political alienation meant indifference to
or estrangement from "politics as a sphere of loyalties, de-
mands, and hopes" (WC: 326). Whereas politically .conscious
person finds 'a political meaning' in his own insecurities
and desires, and considers himself a demanding 'political
force', one who is politically indifferent does not find
such meanings in life. Mills defines the politically in-
different persons in the following manner:

> The politically indifferent are detached from pre-
> vailing political symbols but have no new attach-
> ments to counter-symbols. Whatever insecurities
> and demands and hopes they may have are not fo-
> cused politically, their personal desires and
> anxieties being segregated from political symbols
> and authorities. Neither objective evens nor
> internal stresses count politically in their con-
> sciousness .... To be politically indifferent is
> to see no political meaning in one's life or in
>   the world in which one lives, to avoid any
> political disappointments or gratifications. So
> political symbols have lost their effectiveness
> as motives for action and as justifications for
> institutions (WC: 326-27).

When most are preoccupied in private pleasures that so-called
Affluence has brought for them all, 'a revulsion from politics
and the strain it induces' is anything but natural. Thus to
the question, does the ordinary American feel a revulsion from
politics? Birnbaum has the following answer which brings out
the import of what Mills calls political alienation.

> The most striking thing about the country that
> considers herself the world's most thorough-
> going democracy is the political passivity of

> the populace, the absence of politics. I
> had the feeling of residing under an <u>ancien</u>
> <u>regime</u>, which though one without clerics,
> censors and magistrates to keep down opposi-
> tion, because without opposition. Consent
> and affirmation fill the press, are found
> every other page of serious and scholarly
> journals, envelop classroom and fall instinc-
> tively from the ordinary mouths of ordinary
> men and women (1958: 43).

Political indifference, as Mills saw, manifests principally

in two ways: political meaninglessness and political power-

lessness. Both are interrelated since one entails the other.

Political meaninglessness exists when the individual is unable

or incapacitated to distinguish between alternative political

choices because they have lost their meanings for him. Po-

litical powerlessness, on the other hand, implies precisely

a lack of control over processes of political decision making.

Like Fromm or Marcuse, Mills has discovered manipulation at

the bottom of political powerlessness.

> From the individual's standpoint, much that
> happens seems the result of manipulation, of
> management, of blind drift; authority is often
> not explicit; those with power often feel no
> need to make it explicit and to justify it.
> That is one reason why ordinary men, when they
> are in trouble or when they sense that they are
> up against issues, cannot get clear targets
> for thought and for action; they cannot deter-
> mine what it is that imperils the values they
> vaguely discern as theirs (SI: 169-70).

Political powerlessness is indicative of a 'malaise' of

America's mass social order. Very recently another commentator

attests to this:

> (Another) aspect of the malaise of American
> society in the 1960's and the early 1970's is
> a sense of powerlessness that permeates almost
> every major stratum and segment of society--

> an indication of politics having become more
> subjective, and unconnected with the more
> clear-cut issue of measurable social-economic
> interest and privation.
> .... Almost every major stratum of the popula-
> tion simultaneously attributes power and in-
> fluence to some other group: the blacks to
> whites, militant feminists to men, the lower
> middle-class whites to the students and ghetto
> residents, the radical students to the Establish-
> ment, the middle classes to the manipulators of
> the mass media, the alienated intellectuals to
> the 'silent majority' (Hollander, 1973: 398-99).

When, therefore, Mills says that "political estrangement in

America is widespread and decisive" (WC: 331), it is not

difficult to comprehend how it makes sense in the current

political realities of American society.

At the back of mass indifference to politics there

lies the fact that, speaking historically, politics was never

an autonomous region in the capitalist social structure of

America. Stated otherwise, in the words of Weinstein,"Liberal-

ism became the movement for state intervention to supervise

corporate activity, rather than a movement for the removal of

state control over private enterprise" (1972: 191). It thus

explains that politics has always been anchored in the

economic sphere and that, therefore, the economic rather than

the political institutions have been the reigning aspects of

the capitalist social structure of America. Mills has also

rightly drawn attention to the role of the bi-party system

and its working as a contributory cause of fostering political

apathy among the masses of people. The traditional two-party

system is responsible for the rise of 'opportunistic politics'.

Neither party has any explicit or articulate view. Nor do

they fundamentally differ in issues or making promises.

Often it is, to borrow a phrase from Reagan, "a politics of

silence, a campaign without issues" (1956: 355). For Mills,

> By virtue of their increased and centralized
> power, political institutions become more ob-
> jectively important to the course of American
> history, but because of mass alienation, less
> and less of subjective interest to the popula-
> tion at large. On the one hand, politics is
> bureaucratized, and on the other, there is mass
> indifference. These are the decisive aspects
> of U.S. politics today (WC: 350).

The conditions of mass apathy towards politics have not

abated but, on the contrary, they have shown symptoms of

continuance as well as of increment, as Mills prophesied in

1951, Most recently, in 1976, Aberbach attests to this. His

following observation further illumines what Mills said

earlier:

> The last decade has been marked by intense
> social stress, increased ideological polari-
> zation and a third party revolt. Political
> disaffection has increased steadily as citizens
> have lost confidence in the personnel and opera-
> tions of government. Accompanying this situa-
> tion has been an erosion of party fidelity, in
> which some voters have drifted away from iden-
> tification with the major parties and the in-
> fluence of the parties on voting behavior has
> diminished .... We are now at juncture where
> political distrust is growing rapidly, accom-
> panied by a rise in the percentage of the popu-
> lation which does not identify with either of
> the two major parties (Aberbach, 1976: 26).

Political Alienation from the Mass Media

The role of the mass media has acquired a new

significance in so far as it has become a factor in causing

alienating experiences for the people in the society of the

masses. "With the broadening of the base of politics within

the context of a folk-lore of democratic decision-making, and

with the increased means of mass persuasion that are avail-

able, the public of public opinion has become the object

of intensive efforts to control, manage, manipulate, and

increasingly intimidate" (PE: 310). Indeed, the role of

the media as a causal factor of political alienation is a

unique phenomenon of the large-scale industrial society of

contemporary generation of the masses. They are now a new

intermediary between the individual's material existence and

the psychological awareness of this experience.

> Between consciousness and existence stand
> communications, which influence such con-
> sciousness as men have of their existence.
> Men do 'enter into definite, necessary rela-
> tions which are independent of their will',
> but communications enter to slant the mean-
> ings of these relations for those variously
> involved in them. The forms of political con-
> sciousness may, in the end, be relative to
> means of production, but, in the beginning,
> they are relative to the contents of the
> communication media (WC: 332-33).

These words sum up precisely the political significance of

the media in the modern society; simultaneously it indicates

how pervasive the one-dimensionality of the media could be

when they are controlled by a single dominant group in the

society. In assessing the scope of shared communication in

the participation of the public concerns of a political com-

munity, Pool notes that "to play that game they must to some

extent be informed. There must be a communication system that

tells the public about the state of the world and identifies

the issues that must be resolved. Without shared information

of those kinds, there would be only private experiences, not

a public forum" (1973: 792). Considering this as a starting

point, the role of the media in the mass society presents a

dismal picture. In the United States the communications

system is neither 'autonomous' nor independent; it reflects

society selectively, reinforces a generalized version of

reality and creates its own world (cf. WC: 334). Or, as Mar-

cuse said: "If mass communications blend together harmon-

iously, and often unnoticeably art, politics, religion and

philosophy with commercials, they bring these realms of cul-

ture to their common denominator--the commodity form" (1966: 57).

The political role of the media in the mass society

could be better explained in terms of its content and accom-

panying message. They create, process, refine and transmit

messages and information that give rise to a world of false

consciousness and that never correspond to the actual life

conditions of the individual. On the contrary, by using

myths they explain, justify and at times glamorize the pre-

vailing conditions of existence. In a nation that has

"6,700 commercial radio stations, more than 700 commercial

TV stations, 1,5000 daily newspapers, hundreds of periodi-

cals, a film industry that produces a couple of hundred new

features a year, and a billion-dollar private book-publishing

industry" (Schiller, 1973: 19), it is amazing to note that

the world created by the mass media contains little political

discussion. Despite this existence of enormous media plural-

ism, the multichannel ecommunication flow does not provide

adequate political message or information in their media

content. The controversial issues are eliminated in order

to maximize the numer of consumers and therefore the media

exhibit manifest symptoms of ingrained institutional in-

ability to highlight latent bases of social conflict. Freire

notes that "the oppressors develop a series of methods pre-

cluding any presentation of the world as a problem and show-

ing it rather as a **fixed** reality, as something given--some-

thing to which man, as mere spectators, must adapt" (1971: 135).

As the present day cultural-informational apparatus of the

mass media functions, they rarely highlight what Mills calls

'the deprivations and insecurities' arising from structural

positions and historical changes. In terms of ideological

politics, the mass media have become entertainment media in

the leisure-oriented mass society.

> .... the mass media do not display counter-
> loyalties and demands to the ruling loyalties
> and demands which they make banal. They are
> polite, disguising indifference as tolerance
> and broadmindedness; and they further buttress
> the disfavor in which those who are 'against
> things' are held. They trivialize issues into
> personal squabbles, rather than humanize them
> by asserting their meanings for you and for me.
> They formalize adherence to prevailing symbols
> by pious standardization of worn-out phrases,
> and when they are 'serious', they merely get
> detailed about more of the same, rather than
> give big close-ups of the human meanings of
> political events and decisions (WC: 335).

This brings us to the central aspect of political
alienation--manipulation--by the mass media. In the same
manner it is here that the question of ownership and manage-
ment of the media networks assumes importance since it is
the mainspring of manipulation of the masses. Manipulation
is a technique of social control and an instrument of domina-
tion. It lacks public legitimation, and in this sense it is
"the 'secret' exercise of power, unknown to those who are
influenced" (PE: 316). In the mass society, divided into
elites and masses, manipulation is a necessary instrument of
control in the hands of those who have the power to exercise
but not the legitimation to do so. The technology of mass
media is made to respond to the needs of capitalist growth
and the entire system of media production, distribution and
consumption is geared to this. The primary role of the media
is to instill and reinforce the capitalism's belief, though
indubitably false, that material goods bring individual
happiness and are path to personal salvation (cf. Gintis,
1972: 283). It is in this context that the question which
Mills raises in regard to media's role becomes important:
"... . Why do mass communication agencies contain such per-
sistently non-political or falsely political content" (WC:
339)? His answer is also too clear:

> These agencies are of course owned and directed
> by a small group of people, to whose interest
> it is to present individual success stories and
> other divertissement rather than the facts of
> collective successes and tragedies (WC: 339).

The fact of the matter is that in America mass media have
developed into a large-scale industry and operate according
to commercialized norms of capitalist ownership. They are
firmly tied to the corporate economy. The corporate structure
that controls the media networks has now transcended the
national boundaries (cf. Read, 1976: 3). It is widening the
chasm between elites and masses in the developing nations.
It is meddling with their internal affairs. It is manipulat-
ing the public opinion at the national and international level.
Above all, it has become the purveyor of American mass stand-
ards and homogenizing influences. To state otherwise, the
transnational flow of the American media of communication has
established a process of socializing foreign media consumers
into the corporate norms predetermined by media merchants
and managers in the United States. "The international com-
merce in mass media, insofar as U.S. merchants are concerned,
is dominated by a handful of organizations that also hold
commanding positions in the American domestic market" (Read,
1976: 4). It is in this respect that Mills' apprehensions
as to the role of the media in the mass society acquire valid-
ity:

> The mass media hold a monopoly of the ideological-
> ly dead; they spin records of political emptiness.
> To banalize prevailing symbols and omit counter-
> symbols, but above all, to divert from the explicit-
> ly political, and by contrast with other interests
> to make 'politics' dull and threadbare--that is
> the political situation of the mass media, which
> reflect and reinforce the political situation of
> the nation (WC: 335-36).

If this is not true in toto one must not ignore, then, the point that, in the words of Read, "America's mass media merchants have become controversial both for what they say and for having their ability to say it" (1976: 179).

Mills and Alienation: An Assessment

With regard to alienation in America's mass society, Mills' depiction, without any doubt, conforms by and large to that of many other theorists, both Liberal and Marxist. The present debate no longer concerns its existence but rather centers around the extent to which it exists. The development of the vast literature of the sociology of a-lienation has proceeded generally alongside the tremendous growth of sociology in America, and much of the literature has developed on the basis of America social experience. On the one side, much of the theoretical development of aliena-tion literature took place because American social scientists became involved in the debate about the validity of Marx's formulations of the concept and its applicability to the modern industrial-social situations. A glance over the con-tents of the leading journals of sociology and its allied social sciences especially from 1950 on will evidence the social scientists' enthusiasm for alienation studies.[15] On the other side, the rapid development of the literature was only possible because the studies were largely fed by data from the American society especially following the World War II.

In this evolution of the sociology of alienation Mills' contribution, as has been illustrated throughout this present chapter, is scarcely insignificant. A modest estimate is provided by Horowitz in these words:

> Once Marx opened (this) pandora's box of the social and corss-cultural locale of alienation, it was just a matter of time before others would see alienation of different social sectors from those Marx had dealt with. Thus, for example, in a modern view of bourgeois society, that held by C. Wright Mills, alienation comes to be understood as a lower middle class phenomenon, something that debases salesgirls, technicians, and even intellectuals in a similar way. In this Mills provided not only a bridge from one class to another, but even more importantly, a way of viewing alienation as a problem for all nonruling classes, not only the factory-anchored urban proletariat (1968: 105).

In spite of the charges against the concept of alienation that it is used to signify "the most banal of dyspepsias as well as the deepest of metaphysical fears" (Jay, 1973: xiii), that this all-inclusive term "denotes practically everything and connotes nothing" (Zordon, 1972: 20), that it is "an atrocious word" (Johnson, 1973: 3), and that "what it says can be better said without it" (Feuer, 1963: 145), social scientists have gone well with the alienation studies.[16] In this connection a brief comparison of Mills with Marx may be made since, as has been noted, both have attached central importance to the concept of alienation, though for different reasons and in different ways.

As a plain marxist, Mills accepts Marx's concept as "brilliant and illuminating" or as "a quick rationalist

conception." As has been noted, like Marx, he has also

found origins of alienating causes in the core of capitalism.

His discussion of work, private property, the division of

labor or money bear much testimony to Marx's influence, as a

classic sociologist, on Mills. Plasek has rightly said that

the more Marxist approaches among contemporary sociological

and empirical studies "include some of the works of C. Wright

Mills" (1974: 320 footnote). However, in spite of Mills'

marxist bias in his analysis of alienation, he was unable to

accept capitalism as the fountain source of alienation in

modern man's life. On the contrary, he says that "the variety

and the causes of alienation go beyond Marx's cryptic and

not too clear comments about it" (TM: 111). Although as a

matter of fact Mills revealed at times more dimensions of

alienation than Marx, it seems, on the basis of a vast array

of Marxist literature on alienation, that he has underrated

the all-round significance of the capitalist contexts of

social and self-alienation.[17] Mills' differences with Marx

in respect of this theme may be illustrated in terms of his

own intellectual orientations as well as institutional

developments within American sociology itself. On the one

hand, Mills was intellectually more predisposed to influences

of Weber and Mannheim, especially in regard to the rise of

bureaucratic rationality in course of industrializing processes

of the society. In later days of his life he was disillusioned

with what he calls 'labor metaphysic'.[18] In addition, Mills'

acceptance of the intelligentsia in preference to the masses

as the main agency of sociohistorical change has stood in his

way of realizing the pervasiveness of alienation in a parti-

cular mode of production, that of capitalism. Rather than

looking, therefore, from a Marxist standpoint, he approached

the theme admittedly declaring to be a liberal democrat in

the classic tradition. Herein lies the importance of differ-

ence arising out of his intellectual and political orienta-

tions. On the other hand, Mills' deviation from Marx can

be understood as a function of dual set of facts. First,

Mills' attitude to Marx is in part linked with Weber's, not

Marx's, reception in the mainstreams of American sociology,

although "the American response to Weber is considerably

differentiated" (Horowitz, 1968: 189). It is needless to

mention here that overwhelming impact of Weber's reception

in American sociology is an important reason behind the

critical attitude of mainstream sociologists such as Parsons

and other members of his structural-functional school. In

this sense, the firmament toward more Marxist approach in

sociological themes is of fairly recent origin in American

sociology.[19] Second, Mills' approach to alienation is also

a part of the tradition along which most of American studies

of alienation have proceeded. Plasek has found that Ameri-

can studies estimate alienation as "one of the forms of

consciousness found among those involved in social problems.

Certain structural conditions and their interaction with

various beliefs may be found to produce alienation" (1974: 325).
In contrast to this, Marxist studies treat consciousness of
alienation as a function of capitalism, that is of a given set
of socioeconomic conditions. While both approaches are help-
ful in revealing the multidimensionality of the alienation
phenomena, the difference can hardly be underestimated.

In criticizing Marx, Mills states that his conception
of alienation contains "mixed moral judgements." Into his
conception, Marx has jammed, says Mills, "his highest and
most noble image of man--and his fiercest indignation about
the crippling of man by capitalism. And he has the strong
tendency to impute in an optative way, these judgements to
the psychological realities of the work men do and the life
men lead. Often these are not the realities men experience"
(TM: 111). Even if Mills' description of the sociopsychological
faces of alienation in different sectors of social life is
considered to be an improvement upon Marx's own, it can hardly
be said that his own conception of the image of man "as an
actor in historic crises, and of man as a whole entity" (CSS:
xiii-iv) is empirically more valid. Mills' own conception is
rather a standard image of man as a social creature in socio-
logy. In spite of many inadequacies that it might have, Marx's
theory no where misses the basic point of human exploitation.
Just like Mills, Marx was not a 'Messiah' indeed. The plain
fact is that both started with the background images of man
in their respective minds and then subsequently followed
different routes only to prove humanists at the end. In

regard to the elimination of alienation, Marx was positive

in its transcendance with the disappearance of capitalism and

establishment of a communist society. Communism, says Marx,

"turns existing conditions into conditions of unity. The

reality, which communism is creating, is precisely the true

basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist

independently of individuals, insofar as reality is only a

product of the preceding intercourse of individuals them-

selves" (1972: 157). Compared to this Marxist solution,

Mills called for the restoration of 'free individuality' and

for the restoration of 'reason' in human affairs. Put other-

wise, Mills wished the return of men of the Renaissance tra-

dition, that is, " men of substantive reason, whose independent

reasoning would have structural consequences for their so-

cieties, its history, and thus for their own life fates"

(SI: 174). In effect he wanted a revival of liberal demo-

cracy in its classic tradition. But this was, as it were,

running against the tide of times. Had he lived beyond 1962,

at least for some time, he would have seen, given the trans-

formation of corporate-capitalist economy of America, that the

prospect of restoration of reason and freedom in the liberal

democratic tradition is a far fetched one. One cannot over-

come alienation within the existent world of alienation. The

beneficiaries of post-Worl War II prosperity are now involved

in the paradox of alienation. The American social system is

facing "onslaught from all sides and alienation has been the

harbinger of the depth of the crisis" (Mizruchi, 1973: 124).

The problem of alienation is a problem of political economy,

that of capitalism. The point is whether abolition of the

capitalist mode of production should precede abolition of

anti-people bureaucracies as the pre-condition for the onset

of progressive disalienation. .For the time being, one can

agree with what Pappenheim says: "Capitalism can no longer

play a positive role today. And a system geared to commodity

production and based on competition cannot help man to con-

tend with the forces of alienation" (1967: 31). In spite of

his failure to realize this, it is heartening to learn from

Mills, even when he is betrayed by the on-march of events

and the run of times, the following:

> 'Man's chief danger' today lies in the unruly
> forces of contemporary society itself, with its
> alienating methods of production, its eveloping
> techniques of political domination, its inter-
> national anarchy--in a word, its pervasive trans-
> formations of the very 'nature' of man and the
> conditions and aims of his life (SI: 13).

Notes

1. The list of mass theorists is long. However, for many parallels in respect of alienating tendencies in American social life, see Marcuse (1966), Fromm (1955, 1965) and Riesman (1973) in particular.

2. See Seeman (1967) and Lystadt (1972: 91, 102).

3. See Nisbet (1953: 47-54) and Meadows (1965: 453-54).

4. It is to be noted that Mills does not offer any precise definition of the concept of alienation. Rather he describes its differential aspects. Naturally, I have avoided attempting its conceptualization or specifying its indices.

5. For example see his articles (1) "Mass Society and Liberal Education" (1954) and (2) "The Big City: Private Troubles and Public Issues" (1959), both of which are contained in Power, Politics and People.

6. More or less in this way Israel calls this "a discrepancy theory of alienation" (1971: 203).

7. For an earlier but different version, see Andrew (1970).

8. It must, however, be noted that there is a basic difference between Mills and Marx in their respective analyses of alienation. Mills does not focus on alienation with any specific discussion of the forces and relations of production, as Marx did in his Capital.

9. Mills' views on how intellectuals have emerged as hired research technicians of the Establishment appear in Chapter 3, especially at pp. 112-114. See also pp. 133-35 of Chapter 4.

10. Italics added.

11. See Marx (1961: 98-99; 1970: 71-83).

12. A comparison between two viewpoints of Marx and Mills has been attempted in the concluding section of this chapter.

13. For example, see Almasi (1965), Vranicki (1966), Schaff (1970) and also Novack (1973).

14. Briefly stated, Mills' thesis about the blurring of any
    worthwhile distinction between the white- and blue-collar
    workers is as follows: In the present capitalist so-
    ciety both the wage workers and the salaried employees
    are fast becoming dependent occupational category. "In
    terms of property, the white-collar people are not 'in
    between Capital and Labor'; they are exactly in the same
    property-class position as the wage workers" (WC: 71).
    For different evaluations of Mills' thesis, see Hamilton
    And Wright (1975: 21-22), Rainwater (1971: 207),
    Dahrendorf (1959: 55-56), Westley and Westley (1971: 54),
    Carchedi (1975a; 1975b; 1975c) and Johnson (1977).

15. To be noted is the fact that it was Fromm who popularized
    the concept of alienation as far back as 1941 when he
    published his Escape from Freedom. In 1961, he intro-
    duced Marx's Manuscripts to American readers through his
    publication of Marx's Concept of Man. The critical po-
    litical mood then prevailing--the McCarthy period--is
    understandable in the fact that Marx's writings were
    published not in Marx's but in Fromm's name. The publi-
    cations of Schacht (1970) and Israel (1971) attest to
    continued interest of the sociologists in the theme of
    alienation.

16. See, for example, Seeman (1975). A less useful but, on
    the whole, a readable summary of empirical studies on
    alienation can be found in Mouledoux and Mouledoux (1975).

17. For example, Ollman and Meszaros, along with Fromm,
    Sweezy, Korsch, Novack, Mandel and others, have made
    abundantly clear the pervasiveness of alienation in
    capitalist society. See especially Meszaros (1970)
    and Ollman (1976).

18. In Chapter 7, I trace the origins of Mills' disillusion-
    ment with the Marxian thesis of the working class as a
    revolutionary change agent for social transformation.

19. In this revival of Marxism in American sociology, Mills
    was, however, one of the leading sociologists. See
    Swingehood (1975: 2) and Friedrichs (1970: 259-60).

CHAPTER SIX

Political Sociology

Introduction: Towards the Radical Alternative

In offering a radical alternative to the academic

model of establishment sociology, Mills sought to construct

a conception of sociology in all its political, intellectual

and moral implications relevant to the changed contexts of

self and society since World War II. As early as 1942, when

Mills reviewed W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Hunt's The Social

Life of a Modern Community, he came to realize the need for

a basic reorientation of focus in the studies of sociological

theory and research. Along with the various theoretical and

methodological issues which he raised in the review, Mills

directly pointed to a lack of "sociological imagination"

(PPP: 50) in the work. Few years later, in 1953, Mills dis-

covered how sociologists, in their search for generalized

model, slipped into the grip of the methods of the physical

sciences and essentially fetishized these techniques. At

the same time his commitment to the basic tradition of socio-

logy became increasingly evident, and he continued to speak

of an imaginative sociology that would rest on both molecular

terms and macroscopic concepts. Stressing the need for a

"consciousness," he says that "the sociological enterprise

requires macroscopic researchers to imagine more technically,

as well as with scope and insight; it requires technicians

to go about their work with more imaginative concern for

macroscopic meaning as well as with technical ingenuity"

(PPP: 566). A year later, in 1954, Mills conceived sociology

as a human enterprise. He intended sociology to be a "common

denominator" and, accordingly, raised questions as to society,

personality and history (cf. PPP: 572). For him these are

the major themes, as also orienting points, of sociological

analysis. Both theorists and research technicians of socio-

logy, contends Mills,

> .... are going to have to drop their trivia-
> lization of subject matter and their preten-
> sions about method. Both are going to have
> to face up to the realities of our time. And
> both are going to have to acquire the human-
> ist concern .... for excellence of clear and
> meaningful expression (PPP: 576).

At the bottom of Mills' humanistic concern there lie

the agonizing experiences of the common man--the alienated

man in the emergent mass society of postwar America. In

the mid-fifties he notes the impact on mass man of the

levelling influences of urban and industrial civilization,

of the standardization of big technology and of the media

of mass communication. It was a period "moral uneasiness"

and of disintegration of "liberal values in the modern world."

As he writes: "Internationally and domestically, the death

of political ideas in the United States coincides with the

general intellectual vacuum to underpin our malaise" (PPP: 188).

Elsewhere, speaking in more explicit terms, he goes on to say

in a clear Durkheimian language:

> The moral uneasiness of our time--in politics
> and economics, in family life, educational in-
> stitutions, and even in our churches--is due
> to this key fact: the older values and codes
> of uprightness no longer grip us, nor have
> they been replaced by new values and codes
> which would lend moral meaning and sanction
> to the life-routines we must now follow
> (PPP: 332).

Gradually the theme of "private uneasiness and public in-

difference" as also "the political default of cultural work-

men" to recognize "imperilled values" came to occupy the

focus of Mills' sociological imagination. From the point of

view of a politically conceived sociology, "the unfulfilled

promise of political thinking that is also culturally sens-

ible stems from the failure to assert the values as well as

the perils, and the relationship between them" (PPP: 387).

The task of his political sociology would then, predictably,

be a study of troubles and issues in the context of the de-

cline of liberal values of reason, freedom and truth--the

watchwords of the Enlightenment. And the questions which

such a sociology raises in fulfillment of these tasks are as

follows:

> (1) What is the structure of this particular
> society as a whole? What are its essential
> components, and how are they related to one
> another? How does it differ from other vari-
> ties of social order? Within it, what is the
> meaning of any particular feature for its
> continuance and for its change?

> (2) Where does this society stand in human
> history? What are the mechanics by which it
> is changing? What is its place within and
> its meaning for the development of humanity
> as a whole? How does any particular feature
> we are examining affect, and how is it affected

> by, the historical period in which it moves?
> And this period--what are its essential
> features? How does it differ from other
> periods? What are its characteristic ways
> of history making?
>
> (3) What varities of men and women now pre-
> vail in this society and in this period? And
> what varities are coming to prevail? In what
> ways are they selected and formed, liberated
> and repressed, made sensitive and blunted?
> What kinds of 'human nature' are revealed in
> the conduct and character we observe in this
> society in this period? And what is the mean-
> ing for 'human nature' of each and every
> feature of the society we are examining (SI: 6-7).

These fundamental questions, underlying the territorial ambit

of the Millsian sociology, are in effect an articulation of

the sociological tasks which Mills conceived in 1954. In

raising these questions as to the structure of society, the

role of this specific society in this specific historical

period, and the dominant personality types now prevailing

at the helm of institutional arrangements, Mills has made

an appreciable(attempt in The Sociological Imagination (1959)

to direct working sociologists' attention to such issues as

would provide the goals and orientations for sociology itself)

It has been rightly asserted that "unbiased answers to

these questions would have radical implications". That is,

an objective analysis in the direction that these questions

point would undermine the established theories and unexamin-

ed assumptions on which corporate capitalism is based"

(Szymanski, 1970: 7-8). Stated in critical words, the

answers provide, on the one hand, a radical critique of the

liberal mythology theorized in the rhetorics of the establish-

ment sociology, and on the other, outline a counter concep-
tion of sociology as a preferred alternative.

Let me illustrate this. From the point of view of
its component social structures American society is unden-
iably a social structure of corporate capitalism in its form.
The state exists to articulate the needs of corporate in-
stitutions and has been an ideological and legitimating ap-
paratus to maintain the equilibrium of the liberal society
and also to promote the goals of capitalism. Whereas cor-
porations, the institutions of state apparatus, the military,
the universities or the Church are the essential ingredients
of the social structure of capitalist society in America,
the primary functions of the family, the mass media or educ-
ational institutions have been positive expedients to socialize
masses to the ideological consciousness of a liberal society.
Next, American society stands, from the standpoint of history,
at this historical moment for monopoly capitalism in all its
global consequences for every nations, developed or develop-
ing. The internationalized capitalist system has been, among
other things, an alliance of the ruling classes in both de-
veloped and developing nations. The "Free World" is not now
conducive to reason and freedom, as Mills thought, but it is
"always receptive to capitalism" (Gurley, 1970: 50). Again,
there is little doubt that in the modern societies the domin-
ant human type now prevailing is one of the bureaucrat. Its
prominence has followed the historic development of capital-
ism in its organic-solidary relationship with the principle

of bureaucratic rationality. Historically, the marriage be-
tween capitalism and bureaucracy has been consequential not
because of bureaucracy's inherent rationality and efficiency
but because of its ability to organize the productive apparatus
for accumulation and internationalization of capital (cf. Ed-
wards, 1972: 119). The conception of sociology which Mills
conceives in radical terms has to realize its potential
through, on the one hand, what he calls "the sociological
imagination," and through, on the other, its revitalization
in terms of the political ideals of classic liberalism. While
the sociological imagination constitutes the life-essence of
this new sociology of radicalism, liberal ideals of reason
and freedom give it necessary direction and orientation. Both
are symbiotic aspects of one and same sociological enterprise.

The Sociological Imagination: What then is the concept of
the sociological imagination? What does it stand for? How
is the concept the life-essence of radical sociology? Mills'
own answer is as follows:

> The sociological imagination enables its
> possessor to understand the larger historical
> scene in terms of its meaning for the inner
> life and the external career of a variety of
> individuals. It enables him to take into ac-
> count how individuals, in the welter of their
> daily experience, often become falsely con-
> scious of their social positions. Within that
> welter, the framework of modern society is
> sought, and within that framework the psycho-
> logies of a variety of men and women are formu-
> lated. By such means the personal uneasiness
> of individuals is focused upon explicit troubles
> and the indifference of publics is transformed
> into involvement with public issues (SI: 5).

The concept of sociological imagination indicates, without
doubt, the culmination of Mills' vision of ultimate moral,
intellectual and political fulfillment of the promises of
sociology. While the very formulation of the concept marks
the acme of personal glory in the entire intellectual career
of Mills as a sociologist, nothing less can be said of the
relevance of the concept for the development of sociology itself.
By adding sociological imagination to sociology, which suffered
apoplexy in the locked-up iceberg of grand theory and abstracted
empiricism, Mills infused necessary life-blood to the discipline;
he revitalized the consciousness of sociology; he generated
its radical spirit and instilled critical stance; he brought
down sociology from the high paradise of system theory and
system sanctioning research to the lower levels of systematic
analysis of the experiential realities of mundane life. Seek-
ing to place sociology in the apostolic tradition, by propos-
ing to initiate the sociological endeavor at the grass root
levels, Mills has constructed, as Horowitz says, a "man-sized
sociology" which does not convert "men into data, and history
into autobiography" (1969a: 2). If the social sciences are
becoming the common denominator of this epoch the sociological
imagination is also becoming, so argues Mills, the most desir-
able quality of mind required of both the masses and the
social scientists. For the masses the sociological imagina-
tion is an aid to understanding the ongoing realities of
historical and structural significance. For the sociologists,

it provides the most fruitful form of self-consciousness,
self-awareness and intellectual sensibility with which to
realize the cultural meaning of sociological substance. It
lays down the procedural rules of work; it is also substantive
in that it tells the sociologists where to focus and how to
channel intellectual effort. Procedurally it equips the
sociologist with

> .... the capacity to shift from one perspective
> to another--from the political to the psycho-
> logical; from examination of a single family to
> comparative assessment of the national budgets
> of the world; from the theological school to
> the military establishment; from considerations
> of an oil industry to studies of contemporary
> poetry. It is the capacity to range from the
> most impersonal and remote transformations to
> the most intimate features of the human self--
> and to see the relations between the two (SI: 7).

At the same time the concept is more than a procedural rule
of sociology. From the substantive point of view it requires
that

> ..... we seek a fully comparative understanding
> of the social structures that have appeared and
> do now exist in the world history. It requires
> that smaller-scale milieux be selected and
> studied in terms of large-scale historical
> structures (SI: 134).

In brief, the substantive focus is on the building up of a
macrosociology, but not necessarily at the expense of a micro-
sociological conception of reality. The sociological imagi-
nation provides realism and relevance to both theory and
research; while it seeks a replacement of grand theory and
abstracted empiricism, on its own part it does not seek to
divorce either theory or research. On the contrary, it en-

riches theory by providing necessary nutriment; it guides
research to more pertinent goals of reason and freedom for
the masses of men and women. And above all, it is the most
desirable quality of mind required for sociological work.
However, as Mills points out, "it is not merely one quality
of mind among the contemporary range of cultural sensibilities
--it is the quality whose wider and more adroit use offers
the promise that all such sensibilities--and in fact, human
reason itself--will come to play a greater role in human af-
fairs" (SI: 15). More concretely understood, the concept pro-
vides one with "adequate summations, cohesive statements,
comprehensive orientations." The concept may be understood,
as Shils elaborates, "as that body of categories, estimations,
and preconditions which an experienced and realistic socio-
logist carries in the boundary area of the mind beyond the
systematic articulations of research and theory" (1961: 616).
Mills' conception of the sociological imagination closely
parallels what Polyani calls "personal knowledge" signifying
not only a fusion of the personal and the objective but also
anchoring points of intellectual commitment. He shows that
"into every act of knowing there enters a passionate contri-
bution of the person knowing what is being known, and that
this coefficient is no mere imperfection but a vital component
of his knowledge" (Polyani, 1964: xiv). The phrase "socio-
logical imagination" is not simply a catchword; an invitation
to sociology and to practice it can be extended to someone

only when he manifests his willingness to grasp its meanings.
It is a passionate appeal, perhaps more than that.

The Sociology of Political Liberalism: The other important
aspect of Mills' radical sociology pertains to its education-
al and political role in the establishment of a democratic
society. As a matter of fact he conceives the role of socio-
logy in terms of its programmatic implications for a radical
restructuring of the existing institutional arrangements along
democratic lines. In his article entitled "Mass Society and
Liberal Education" (1954), he specifically dealt with the
role of liberal education in the context of postwar mass
societal trends. Remindful of both Tocqueville and Mill, the
most famous proponents of the Western democratic tradition,
he placed his faith in liberal education as an integral con-
dition for the establishment of a democratic society of self-
conscious and knowledgeable publics (cf. PPP: 370-73). In
The Sociological Imagination (1959) he proposes:

> It is the political task of the social scientist
> --as of any liberal educator--continually to
> translate personal troubles into public issues,
> and public issues into the terms of their human
> meaning for a variety of individuals. It is his
> task to display in his work--and, as an educa-
> tor, in his life as well--this kind of sociologi-
> cal imagination. And it is his purpose to culti-
> vate such habits of mind among the men and women
> who are publicly exposed to him. To secure these
> ends is to secure reason and individuality, and
> to make these the predominant values of a demo-
> cratic society (SI: 187-88).

In this way the political role of sociology becomes relevant
to the extent it sustains democracy. Mills' radical socio-
logy is therefore a political sociology based on the funda-

mental values of democratic liberalism. In trying to help

build a democratic society Mills envisages what he calls "a

liberating educational role" of sociology. "The education-

al and the political role of social science in a democracy

is to help cultivate and sustain publics and individuals that

are able to develop, to live with, and to act upon adequate

definitions of personal and social realities" (SI: 192).

In other words, this assertion makes his political sociology

essentially an updated version of liberal political sociology,

notwithstanding all qualifications which Mills makes in re-

gard to liberalism as ideology and rhetoric. Its radical-

ism in the form of a critical and oppositional stance plus a

powerful plea to substitute the status quo by major institu-

tional changes provides strength and legitimation to claims

of this variant of sociology. But, to be sure, its radical-

ism falls short of revolutionsim inherent in the Marxian al-

ternative for the complete, rather than radical, restructuring

of the society. This becomes evident when one takes note of

his concluding remarks in The Sociological Imagination (1959):

> What I am suggesting is that by addressing our-
> selves to issues and to troubles, and formulat-
> ing them as problems of social science, we
> stand the best chance, I believe the only chance,
> to make reason democratically relevant to human
> affairs in a free society, and so realize the
> classic values that underlie the promise of our
> studies (SI: 194).

Sociology of Private Troubles and Public Issues

It is now clear from the preceding analysis that Mills'

political sociology centers around what he calls "the personal
troubles of milieu" and "the public issues of social struc-
ture." Sociologically he refers to the structural problems
facing the individual in the mass society; politically he
relates these problems to the decline of the liberal values
of reason and freedom. Political sociologically Mills pro-
poses to formulate structural problems of both private and
public nature in terms of values that are assumed to have
been threatened by the rise of the power elite and consequent
mass society. His political sociology is therefore as much
a sociology of private troubles and public issues as it is
a political area of social analysis for enthroning liberal
ideals towards establishing a democratic society of free men
and women. From this standpoint, in taking up the substantive
problems at the contemporary historical level of corporate
capitalist reality Mills argues, explicating the theoretical
contours of his envisioned political sociology, that

> ..... the formulation of problems, then, should
> include explicit attention to a range of public
> issues and of personal troubles; and they should
> open up for inquiry the causal connections be-
> tween milieux and social structure. In our for-
> mulation of problems we must make clear the
> values that are really threatened in the troubles
> and issues involved, who accept them as values,
> and by whom or by what they are threatened (SI: 130).

Closely related to this is his designation of the area as "a
sort of public intelligence apparatus." Sociology is, said
otherwise, a goal related enterprise. Primarily purposive,
it is concerned with "public issues and private troubles and
with structural trends of our time underlying them both"

(SI: 181). While sociology can be directed at kings and citizens at the same time, sociologists are required, con-tends Mills, to attempt to uphold the liberal values. The dethronement of reason from public activity and mass societal captivity of individuals in the situations of unfreedom lead him not to think of the revolutionary or even radical role of the individual but to postulate that "it is a prime task of any social scientist to determine the limits of freedom and the limits of the role of reason in history" (SI: 184). This kind of elitist conferment of a superior role on the social scientist, rarely supported by any adequate theory of history-making of which Mills is so often vociferous, can however be explained in terms of his totalist and somewhat negativist assumption that mass man's revolutionary or radical role to enforce reason and freedom has been too jeopardized to be-come effective. While this is typically a dilemma of many classical democrats, such as Mosca, Mannheim or Mill, it can be said that such a conception constitutes a potential contra-diction in Mills' postulated democratic sociology.[1] Keeping this aside, let me return to his focus on troubles and issues as themes of his mainly reformist political sociology. The question is, what are these troubles and issues?

Private Troubles: For Mills, "it is the uneasiness itself that is the trouble; it is the indifference itself that is the issue. And it is this condition, of uneasiness and indiffer-ence, that is the signal feature of our modern period" (SI: 12).

The concept of trouble is a narrower one; it is the experience
of one individual or an individual phenomenon. Troubles oc-
cur, says Mills,

> .... within the character of the individual and
> within the range of his immediate relations with
> others; they have to do with his self and with
> those limited areas of social life of which he
> is directly and personally aware. Accordingly,
> the statement and resolution of troubles proper-
> ly lie within the individual as a biographical
> entity and within the scope of his immediate
> milieu--the social setting that is directly open
> to his personal experience and to some extent
> his willful activity (SI: 8).

Troubles, occurring at the personal level, demand personal
intervention. This is so in view of the fact that a person
is the best judge of his interests; he knows more than anyone
what to do when he himself is personally and directly aware
of his troubles. If the person fails there are ways of as-
sisting him, as is the case now after the rise of techniques
of social casework. The suffering individual can overcome
his troubles with the help of those concerned with his welfare.
Experiences in modern industries and urban societies increas-
ingly point to this direction. At the same time these may be
approached rather sociologically. As Rex puts it, "A more
sociological approach to 'troubles' is that which looks at
the problem, not merely as one of personality disturbance, but
as one in which the immediate structure of social relations
around the individual has been fractured and needs repair, or,
if we may put it that way, the replacement of a part" (1974:
209).

Public Issues: The distinction between troubles and issues

is less real than apparent. The dichotomy which Mills draws

between them is merely a ploy to invite attention to the same

matters but at different levels.[2] Public issues are personal

troubles which take on wider social dimensions of affliction.

For example, says Mills, "in modern society insecurity tends

to be experienced not as a personal mishap or misfortune, nor

as an irrevocable fate due to supernatural forces nor even to

the natural forces. And men, full of the tension of insecure

positions correctly blame social factors for personal defeat"

(CSS: 462). The public issues require, for their resolution,

social intervention at the public level. These larger issues,

says Mills

> .... have to do with matters that transcend
> these local environments of the individual and
> the range of his inner life. They have to do
> with the organization of many such milieux in-
> to the institutions of an historical society
> as a whole, with the ways in which various
> milieux overlap and interpenetrate to form the
> larger structure of social and historical life.
> An issue is a public matter: some value cher-
> ished by publics is felt to be threatened ....
> (I)t is the very nature of an issue, unlike even
> widespread trouble, that it cannot very well
> be defined in terms of the immediate and every-
> day environments of ordinary man. An issue,
> in fact, often involves a crisis in instituional
> arrangements, and often too it involves what
> Marxists call 'contradictions' or 'antagonisms'
> (SI: 8-9).

The relevance of the twin aspects--troubles and issues--of

his political sociology can be illustrated by concrete examples

which Mills himself provides. In particular he names, among

others, only four.

Unemployment: Referring to unemployment Mills asserts, quite rightly, that "when a handful of men do not have jobs, and do not seek work, we may look for the causes in their immediate situation and character. But when 12 million men are unemployed, then we cannot believe that all of them suddenly 'got lazy' and turned out to be 'no good'" (PPP: 331). In both cases

> .... the very structure of opportunities has collapsed. Both are correct statements of the problem and the range of possible solutions require us to consider the economic and political institutions of the society, and not merely the personal situation and the character of a scatter of individuals" (SI: 9).

There is no doubt that the example which Mills cites to substantiate his case for a problem orientated political sociology is very important. By itself, unemployment is one of the few major structural public issues of American society. Despite fabulous achievements by American economy, the problem of unemployment, together with its attendant incidents, has continued to draw attention since the 1930s. "If there is any consistent pattern in the postwar era it is that the recoveries after the recessions tend to become ever more hesitant and to result in an even more incomplete employment of the labor force in proportion to the rise in output" (Myrdal, 1963: 3). Combining the data provided by Bertram Gross, Stanley Moses and Paul M. Sweezy, Anderson reports recently that "we may total some 14.2 million military-dependent employed with the 25.6 million real civilian unemployed to

obtain nearly 40 million persons out of a real labor force of

104 million who are either military-dependent or out of work"

(1974: 220). There are other collateral issues which Mills

has not dealt with but which are legitimately related to his

example of unemployment. For instance, although in general

more whites are unemployed than nonwhites, there is an evident

tendency of growing unemployment among the latter group. The

income gap between them is also growing. "While the Negro

was earning $1 in 1949, his white counterpart earned $1.90;

in 1959, every time the Negro earned $1.75 the white man earned

$3.20" (Shriver, 1965: 157). In addition, the impact of

automation affects more black workers than their white counter-

parts. In effect racism has become an ideological arsenal in

respect of job opportunities. Another glaring aspect is over-

all poverty which stands directly face to face with "affluence"

in the postwar American society. The attack on the so-called

"magnificient abundance" was launched by many radicals in the

early years of the 1960s. The other Americans, the invisible

millions sunk into "huge, enormous, and intolerable fact of

poverty in America", are "the victims of the very inventions

and machines that have provided a higher living standard for

the rest of the society. They are upside-down in the economy,

and for them greater productivity often means worse jobs;

agricultural advance becomes hunger" (Harrington, 1968a: 19).

For many social scientists poverty was only an after thought

(cf. Kolko, 1970: 130). The 1964 Report of the President's

Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) put the figure at 35 million

and concluded that one-fifth of the US population was poor.

Of the total, 22 percent were Negroes who comprised nearly

50 percent of the entire Negro population of the United

States (cf. Seligman, 1972: 101).   Despite problems involved

in the computation of the exact number of the poor, especially

in view of differences as to the changing nature of standard

living or the base line of income level for families or un-

attached families, it may reasonably be said that "poverty

is built into the system, that it is neither accidental nor

individual, but is due to the way the social system is struc-

tured" (Henslin and Reynolds, 1973: 206).   On the one hand,

these problems are not a creation of the moral and education-

al lapses of the poor; rather they should be understood as

result's of government's deliberate policy (cf. Birenbaum

and Sagarin, 1972: 96).   On the other hand, to solve them

adequately is to change the social structure of capitalism

whose major function is, ironically though, to maintain a

massive permanent shortage of jobs.   The truth of the matter

is that capitalism actually benefits by its presence "since

it is primarily by means of such high unemployment that

wages are kept down" (Christoffel, 1970: 259).

War, Militarism and Multinational Corporate Capitalism

        Mills' sociology calls for an abandonment of the

politics of war in favor of "the politics of peace."   Individ-

ually war is a problem of personal survival.   Socially it is

a problem of the existence of <u>homo sapiens</u> and of human society.
And

> .... the structural issues of war have to do
> with its causes; with what types of men it
> throws up into command; with its effects upon
> economic and political, family and religious
> institutions, with the unorganized irrespons-
> ibility of a world of nation-states (SI: 9).

For Mills the questions of war and peace are now political
and moral questions. He calls for the sociological imagina-
tion in this respect since it is also required "to stimulate
the dialogues which will result in basic shifts from cold war
strategies, from the politics of oversimplification, to an
emphasis upon conflicts which threaten mankind" (Fox, 1965:
479). Mills' interest in and concern for issues of war are
basically humanistic in nature, the very roots of which are
interlinked with the political influences behind his intellec-
tual formation.[3] In 1936, when he was only twenty years of
age, Mills found himself "at the watershed of events leading
to WW II" (Gerth, 1962b: 2). The very year of 1936 wit-
nessed a sequence of world-shaking events: Hitler's pene-
tration into Rhineland, his defiance of the Versailles treaty,
and his denunciation of the Locarno pact; the onset of Spanish
civil war, the formation of Rome-Berlin Axis and Japan's par-
ticipation in anti-commitern treaty with Germany. The "news-
paper headlines" created in him a consciousness that would
later find expression in what he termed "the blind drift of
history." For him, who did not take a "moral stand" at the

beginning, war years exercised deep-lying influences on his

intellectual devotion to the study of blind drifts faced by

powerless man within the historical social structure. The

later years only attested to his growing aversion to war or

any violence associated with it. In reviewing Neumann's

Behemoth (1942) he states that any adequate explanation of

Germany's imperialistic war would have to be explained by

drawing attention to "the economic structure and its politi-

cal apparatus that lead dynamically to war" (PPP: 173). In

April 1945, few months before the Atomic Bombardment of

Hiroshima and Nagasaki (6th and 9th of August, 1945 respective-

ly) Mills pointed out the following which, inter alia, at-

tested to his continuing concern for "war," "the integration

of big business with the military elite," "universal military

conscription" or "the drift toward a permanently militarized

society":

> The abolition of war and unemployment requires
> changes that neither monopoly business nor the
> Washington army is apparently willing to accept
> or permit. Both war and depression tend to
> bring these two elites together, and in war, or
> under warlike conditions, both gain in power
> and honor .... In modern industrial warfare, the
> men controlling organized violence need the men
> controlling industry, and both must have some
> arrangement with those in control of educational
> institutions and of labor (Mills, 1945a: 16-17).

In addition, he also noted the dangers in the over-all struc-

tural trends: "If those who monopolize the means of produc-

tion and the means of military violence are unified, they will

continually threaten any democratic control of the political

system" (Mills, 1945a: 17). His democratic concerns as to

war, militarized capitalism, permanent militarization or

military society continued to find expression in various forms

in most of his writings (NMP: 4; CSS: 390; PE: 212). The

most dramatic expression of Mills' anti-militarism, culminat-

ing so far, found its way in The Causes of World War Three

(1958), published a year before The Sociological Imagination

and, from the vantage point of world politics, Fidel Castro's

takeover in Cuba. The Causes, centering around the contention

that "war is not inevitable today" (CWT: 129), signified his

continuing quest for stabilized global peace. While it shows

manifestly Mills' humanist and pacificist concerns, it also

captured the essential spirit of powtwar years--that of the

Cold War (1917/1945-1956/1962) which, though remaining "the

most enigmatic and elusive international conflict of modern

time" (Graebner, 1969: 123), involved in several ways the two

superstates of the USA and the USSR in a politically bipolar-

ized world: ideological disdain, political distrust, arms

race, diplomatic outmaneuvering, espionage, psychological

warfare, military alliances and so on (cf. Fleming, 1961;

Horowitz, 1971; Alperovitz, 1965). The Causes establishes

beyond doubt, I think, that Mills, the Texan Trotsky, was not

intellectually a man of war but morally, politically and in-

tellectually committed against war. The Causes volume is not

flawless (cf. Wisley, 1959: 8-9; Aptheker, 1960: 46-88; Howe,

1959: 195; Warde, 1960: 90; Clecak, 1973: 66). Despite the

validity of many of the criticisms that may be levelled against Mills' theses in the book, his discussion of war and other ancillary matters is extremely important from the point of view of political sociology which, in its discussion of the problems of man and society, is being increasingly drawn into the arena of underdevelopment, militarism and imperialism. In this light let me illustrate some points of his fruitful suggestions.

(1) World War and Its Possibility: Mills says that "the ethos of war is now pervasive .... The drive toward war is massive, subtle, official and self-directed" (CWT: 2). Without entering the debate as to why world war has not broken out so far since 1958, it may be reasonably asserted that the danger of its occurence "still exists, even though the present industrial and military weakness of China, and the detente between the USSR and the USA conceals the fact" (Rex, 1974: 217). In the present multipolar world regional conflicts, containing always potential of global war, are more probable. They more often either provoke new ones or revive old ones, rather than stabilize peace. The general tendency "in world affairs is not toward unity and great common endeavors. The old sources of conflict have not disappeared but new ones have emerged. A more stable world is not in sight. The statesmen will have to work hard in the years ahead to prevent chaos" (Laqueur, 1975: 18-19). Stated plainly, globali-

zation of the world has not assured global peace for the community of mankind. "The forces making for militarism, however, are increasing the opportunities for extinction, and within this milieu of increasing militarism lies the age-old scenario of human tragedy" (Rising, 1973: 110). It is therefore not a casual interest to note that "during 5,560 years of recorded human history there had been 14,531 wars, or 2.6135 a year, with only about 10 generations enjoying relatively undisturbed peace" (Grieves, 1977: 107). That there has not been a global war since 1945 "may be a matter for congratulations; but it does not dispose of all problems involved" (Modelski, 1972: 312). It does not evidence that post-war years are any more peaceful than those prior to 1945. The Great Powers themselves may not have clashed, but they did collide indirectly in cases where third parties were in between. In view of this, Mills' passionate appeal to ban war and call for an adoption of the policy of "peaceful coexistence", first outlined by Khruschev in an address to the 20th Party Congress in February, 1956, is neither cheap journalism nor mere pamphleteering.[4]

(2) <u>Continuing Arms Race</u>: Related to the first point, Mills asserts, not without reason, that the existence of a bureaucratic state, and especially lethal machinery, is the first cause of the next world war. "Without them there could be no war .... The immediate cause of World War III is the preparation of it" (CWT: 46-47). Stated otherwise, despite the

Great Powers' tautologous assertion of the impossibility of

total war, both are engaged in "arms race" and yet they

"search for peace by warlike means" (CWT: 49). The existence

of arms may not directly cause war but war, it may be remind-

ed, is not fought without arms. The international political

scenario has undergone many characteristic changes since

Mills' death: the era of detente, strengthened by Brezhnev's

policy, has replaced the Cold War; detente has relaxed tension

and normalized the Great Powers' relations, thus accelerating

agreements over disarmament, increased social, economic and

cultural ties, settlement of territorial disputes, and so on;

it has softened America's anti-communism since Russia no

longer represents any demonic totalitarianism; and the world

has seen the proliferation of new states freed from colonial-

ism. But all these do not make the world any safer than be-

fore. The nuclear overhang continues to exist and the arms

race continue to remain unabated. "Both parties accuse each

other of waging Cold War policy to extend their spheres of

influence, and of using their respective ideas of deterrence

and prevention of war to justify the arms race and intensive

preparations for war as well as to assert their preeminence

within their own camp" (Lider, 1976: 369). Approximately

nine-tenths of world's nuclear potency is still with the two

superstates that have "tens of thousands of nuclear weapons,

amounting, it is estimated, to the equivalent of over 10 tons

of explosive power per inhabitant of the planet" (Wesson,

1977: 47). Side by side there has also been an upward trend in the development of tactical weaponry with increased offensive capability. Satellites, rockets, MIRVs (multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles), ABMs, ICBM, long-range bombers, scores of nuclear missile firing submarines, together with highly developed computers and sophisticated delivery systems and guidance mechanisms--are all pointer to the "mutual assured destruction" (MAD). The Soviet-American agreement of 1961 to work for "general disarmament, abolishing all military forces under the UN inspection," which still technically remains in force, and the signing in subsequent years of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the Ban on the Employment of Weapons of Mass Destruction on Seabeds, the Ban on the Production and Stockpiling of Biological (Bacteriological) Agents and Toxins, or the Strategic Arms Limitation (SALT) agreements may have helped both superstates in their management of the crisis; they may have reduced risk-taking in a dubious gamble of diplomacy. But the nightmarish potential of turning the world into a veritable inferno still exists. The much publicized agreements and treaties, though breakthroughs, "not only failed to reduce the nuclear overhang but also permitted, and perhaps even encouraged, an acceleration of the arms race" (Wesson, 1977: 56). The very presence of the unimaginably potent nuclear arsenals is an indication that the Great Powers have acquired more insecurity in lieu of desired security (cf. Carter, 1974). In all these Mills' concern to outlaw war is quite conceivable. There is

doubt that in the meantime "the proliferation of nuclear weapons threatens to sever the hair supporting the sword of Damocles above the arena of world politics" (Grieves, 1977: 128).

In this regard it will not be out of place to add a few words to what has generally been called "peripheral militarism." The phenomenon of peripheral militarism has been an aftermath of the dynamics of increased arms production, proliferating nuclearization and continuing transfer of weapons from major powers--the USA, the USSR, the UK and France--to the peripheral societies in the developing countries. The peripheral societies are increasingly becoming testing grounds for the use and further development of newer sophisticated weaponry. The development and maintenance of militarization in peripheral societies is a "necessary pre-condition for the prevalence and further penetration of the capitalist mode of production" (Albrecht et al., 1975: 206). The gravity of peripheral militarization can be assessed from the fact that, whereas the Third World in 1955 accounted for 5 percent of world military expenditure, in 1973 the figure rose to 14 percent of the total. In 1974, 60 percent of American major weapons went to peripheral societies whereas the corresponding figure was only 35 percent for the period between 1962-1968 (cf. Oberg, 1975: 215). Inherent in the arms race and peripheral militarization is what may be called "peripheral nuclearization." Strikingly parallel to arms race and nuclear

confrontation are stories of military competition between peripheral societies, Argentinian-Brizilian, Israeli-Egyptian or Indian-Pakistani, which can result in the outbreak of small-scale nuclear warfare without superpower participation (cf. Dunn, 1977).

(3) Increased Militarization of American Society: In view of advances in global militarism it is instructive to note that Mills' reference to American society, its "permanent war economy" and the imperialist designs of its military-corporate capitalism merits significant attention. Given the contemporary radical and Marxian analyses of American social structure, it seems that subsequent developments have in the main justified Mills' apprehensions. His reviews of Neumann's Behemoth (1942) and Brady's Business as a System of Power (1943), and his articles (1) "A Marx for the Managers" (1942) with Gerth, and (2) "The Conscription of America" (1945) contained his major ideas which in 1958 became firm principles of radical humanism in his Kantian quest for perpetual peace. In 1956 Mills warned about the structural trends of American society by saying that, behind increased personnel traffic between the military and corporate realms, the expansion of the military and the increased military budget, there lies "the great structural shift of modern American capitalism toward a permanent war economy" (PE: 215). Two years later he said:

> .... military institutions and aims have come
> to shape much of the economic life of the
> United States, without which the war machine

> could not exist .... Military men have enter-
> ed political and diplomatic circles; they have
> gone into the higher echelons of the corporate
> economy; they have taken charge of scientific
> and technological endeavor; they have in-
> fluenced higher educational institutions; they
> are operating a truly enormous public-relations
> and propaganda machinery (CWT: 54).

This characterization portrays the other face of what Galbraith

has called The Affluent Society or The New Industrial State.

The other face is the exact opposite of what President Johnson

promised Americans on May 22, 1964: The Great Society. Mills

spoke of the advent of the warlords and the ascendancy of the

military. Whether or not in his tradition, others have point-

ed in other ways to the same developments. Cook designates

America as "the Warfare State" and points illustratively to

the magnitude of the "military-industrial self-interest that

makes peace the antithesis of the new American way of life"

(1962: 175). Aware of "the substantial militarization of

American capitalism," Heilbroner predicts that this semi-

militarized economy "will probably become even more so during

the next decade" (1967: 104-05). The product of overdevelop-

ed capitalism is pentagonism, as Bosch argues. For him,

"the natural expression of a mass society in a system of

free competition is pentagonism, not liberalism" (Bosch, 1968:

71). Nieburg saw it as "The Contract State."

> The interaction between government and its
> contractors has brought a kind of back-
> handed national planning which tends to con-
> fuse the definition of legitimate defense
> needs, the requirements of economic health,
> and the manpower and educational needs of

>the nation with demands for preservation of
>a subsidized and sheltered process of in-
>dustrial and political empire-building.
>The public consensus for defense, space and
>science is distorted to serve the interests
>of the private contractors who penetrate
>government at all levels and inevitably in-
>terpret narrow special interests as those of
>the nation (Nieburg, 1970: 380).

While Lasswell conceptualized the notion of "the Garrison State"

(1941: 1962) and Neumann (1942) saw in Hitler's Germany, Mills

bore their influence in his conceptions of "permanent war

economy," "permanently militarized society" etc. The theme

reoccurs in Dibble's notion of "the Garrison Society" in

which, among others, "the military penetrates into education,

into research and scholarship, into labor unions, into the

political decisions of Senators and Congressmen, and, most

crucially, into business and the economy" (1968: 274). An

essential feature of the garrison society is its possession

of what Lapp calls "Weapons Culture" that has fastened "an

insidious grip upon the entire nation" and that stands for

"massive commitment to weapons development and deployment

in time of peace" (1969: 18). For example, "in 1968 two-

thirds of the total 28,000 million dollars alloted for

scientific research were spent on military research" (Aboltin,

1972: 103).

It is also of interest to note how American mili-

tarism, while establishing a pentagonized-mass society at

home, is exporting its weapons culture abroad. Corporations

like Lockheed, Martin-Marietta or North American Aviation can

hardly survive without contracts from the DOD (cf. Lapp, 1969: 192-93, 197-200). That is to say, with Mills, the leading corporations "now profit from the preparation of war. Insofar as the business elite are aware of their pro- fit interests-- and that is their responsible business-- they press for a continuation of their sources of profit, which often means a continuation of the preparation of war" (CWT: 57). While military assistance has always been a part of American overseas aid program, rising from approximately 26 percent in 1950 to 70 percent of the total aid in 1951-1954, arms sales are now increasingly occupying the most sig- nificant role in America's expanding military capitals. Arms sale has spiralled from $3.6 billion in fiscal 1973 to near- ly $14 billion in 1975. This may be compared to the world arms trade which amounted to only $300 million in 1952, but which jumped to $5 billion in 1969 and nearly $18 billion in 1975 (cf. Wesson, 1977: 81-83). Business Week recently re- ported that "foreign countries have sustained the U.S. in- dustry through the famine years. They ordered $9 billion worth of U.S. military hardware in fiscal 1976; the year before $12 billion in military deliveries went abroad" (January, 1977: 53).

(4) America and its Corporate Capitalist Imperialism: Follow- ing from the preceding analysis, it remains to focus on what Mills calls "capitalist imperialism" and its concomitant con- sequences. It is here that Mills' views remain typically open

to contradictions. For him, the prime cause of war is not capitalism or capitalist imperialism, but mainly militarism. He states that "to a considerable extent, militarism has become an end in itself and economic policy a means of it" (CWT: 57). This position reflects an acceptance of E. H. Carr's espoused epigram that "the principal **cause** of war is war itself." On the one hand, it is, among other reasons, because of his rejection of Marxism as an inadequate social theory. In an interview with Victor Flores Olea, Enrique Conzales Pedrero, Carlos Fuentes and James Gracia Terres in Mexico City on March 30, 1960, Mills said:

> I don't believe that the prosperity of
> United States capitalism can be accounted
> for only by reference to a theory of imper-
> ialism .... As an economic fact, the adequate
> reasons for U.S. economic prosperity cannot
> be cound in any theory of imperialism of
> which I know. It has many other sources,
> that may be one of them, but it is not the
> major one, in my opinion. The permanent
> war economy for example, is probably more
> important (Mills, 1961: 116).

As is probably evident, this position is an affirmation of what Mills had in mind when reviewing Neumann's Behemoth (1942) or writing on "The Conscription of America" (1945). His rejection of the Marxist-Leninist explanation has been coupled with his one-sided reliance on the power elite theory to explain theoretically disparate societies, e.g., America and Russia. As he states, "The categories of political, military, and economic elites are thus as important (or more so) to the analysis and understanding of our times as the mechanics of economic classes and other more impersonal forces

of history-making" (TM: 121). This is indeed an alternative

point of view which he sought to apply "with appropriate

modifications, to the understanding of Soviet types of so-

ciety, to underdeveloped countries, as well as to advanced

capitalist societies" (TM: 121). Therefore, in locating the

causes of the obstacles to "development," which he identifies

with "modernism" and "industrialization," Mills holds, among

other things, that one of them "lies with the ruling groups

of these countries" (Mills, 1961: 117). This theory, though

not without explanatory relevance, is highly questionable

in view of the current assertion by radicals and Marxists alike

that underdevelopment is related to and a consequence of capi-

talist development in all its global ramifications (cf. Baran,

1957; Frank, 1967, 1970; Jalee, 1968; Magdoff, 1969; Rhodes,

1970; Weisskopf, 1972; Cohen, 1973; Amin, 1974; Helen, 1975).

By conceiving socialism as an alternative method of industrial-

ization, Mills tends not only to confuse socialism with in-

dustrialization but also tends to ignore the point that "de-

veloping capitalism, and especially monopoly capitalism, has

restrained the industrialization of the so-called undeveloped

areas" (Aptheker, 1960: 76). Given the current evidence pro-

vided by Development sociologists, it is unlikely that both

capitalist and socialist ways of industrialization--or two

models of development, as Mills implies--could coexist; it is

rather the former that obstructs any development of a society

except what is needed to make it a periphery to its expanding

system. In the modern context capitalist imperialism "comprises a complex of private corporate policies, supplemented by induced governmental support, seeking to develop secure sources of raw materials and food, secure markets for manufactures, and secure outlets for both portfolio and direct capital investment" (Wolff, 1973: R341-1). Without an analysis of war and its causes within the context of capitalism, it makes little sense to say that "war, not Russia, is now the enemy" (CWT: 97). For, he does not get closer to realism to which capitalism is inevitably leading. "War is not a super-class phenomenon .... Preparations for war and the waging of war are integral parts of the politics of the class holding power and reflect the basic drives and aims of its social structure" (Warde, 1960: 87).

Whatever his contradictions, it must be noted that Mills was not unaware of the problems of capitalist imperialism or underdevelopment. Though lacking Marxian sophistication in his analysis of capitalist imperialism, Mills is quite aware of how "the backward region becomes a sphere for the investment of capital accumulated by the advanced nation" (CWT: 64). He thus calls for the abandonment of the doctrinaire idea of capitalism by America. Mills was also not altogether unaware of the international consequences of capitalism, which modern theorists of dependency so illustratively evidence. He said: "That the underdeveloped countries--containing two thirds of mankind--are still underdeveloped is a world historical default of Western capitalism" (CWT: 69).[5]

The post-Millsian analyses of America's capitalist imperialism by radical and Marxist theorists have thrown new light on the continuing defaults of Western capitalism. Business Week reports that the US has an overseas investment of about $120 billion and that 30 percent of all corporate profits are made abroad (May 12, 1975: 72). It also reports that in 1974 Britain had about $35 billion, West Germany $13 billion, Switzerland $16 billion and Japan $12 billion in their respective foreign investments (July 14, 1975: 65). The following tables indicate some pertinent aspects of the US capitalist imperialism:

TABLE   A

US direct foreign investment: 1950, 1960

and 1970

(Book value in billion US dollars

Country or Region	1950	1960	1970
Europe	1.73	6.69	24.52
Canada	3.58	11.18	22.79
Latin America	4.59	8.32	14.76
Asia	1.00	2.48	5.56
Africa	.29	1.07	3.48
Oceania	.26	1.01	3.49
Total	11.79	31.82	78.18

Source: Landsberg (1976: 27); see also Wilkins (1974: 330).

Table A shows characteristically that the major area for US
investment has shifted from Latin America in 1950 to Canada
in 1960 and then to Europe in 1970. It is needless to point
out that long-term effect of the foreign investment is "to
expand and control U.S. foreign markets and hence to support
the home country" (O'Connor, 1973: 152). Table B shows the
increasing rate of returns from direct investment:

TABLE B

Returns from direct investment

(in billion dollars)

Date	US direct investments	Direct investment income
1950	.62	1.29
1960	1.67	2.95
1970	4.45	7.91
1971	4.77	9.46
1972	3.40	10.43
1973	4.87	9.42
1974	7.46	17.68

Source: Landsberg (1976: 28).

The most important aspect of internationalized capitalism is
evident in the dominance of the US multinational corporations.
Despite its positive assessments by many, emphasizing its

role in promoting "globalism," "peace and world order,"
"development/modernization' or in transferring entrepreneur-
ial and managerial skills, or capital and industrial techno-
logy from the developed to the developing nations (cf. Rolfe,
1969; Quinn, 1969; Johnson, 1970; Stauffer, 1973), the ad-
vent of the multinationals is symptomatic of a totalitarian
transformation of the world economy into an integrated global
capitalist system (cf. Baran, 1957; Frank, 1967; Mandel,
1968; Emmanuel, 1972). Bukharin describes the process:

> There grows the intertwining of 'national
> capitals'; there proceeds the 'internation-
> alization'of capital. Capital flows into
> foreign factories and mines, plantations and
> railroads, steamship lines and banks; it
> grows in volume; it sends part of the surplus
> value 'home' where it may begin an independ-
> ent movement; it accumulates the other part;
> it widens over and again the sphere of its
> application; it creates an ever thickening
> network of international interdependence ....
> (1975: 26).

The multinational corporations are now vanguards of totali-
tarian capitalism on a global scale; they are ominously in-
dicative of a regime of satellite transnational managerial
elites; they are neither a prologue to any new world of unity
nor a major force of international integration. They are
the means "to protect 'the free world' and to extend its
boundaries wherever and whenever possible" (Baran and Sweezy,
1972b: 442). Their growth is "a process of centralizing and
perfecting the process of capital accumulation" (Hymer,
1975: 49). They are out in the world to turn it into a

"global factory" with internationalization of finance capital

and alienated labor in the background. On the one hand,

whether or not production goals and techniques, investment

policies, labor relations, profit allocation, purchasing,

distribution and marketing policies are consistent with the

local country's development, they are all decided from the

standpoint of the profit goals of the multinational corpora-

tions (O'Connor, 1970: 46). Thus they offer little hope for,

in the words of Barnet and Muller, "the problems of mass

starvation, mass unemployment and gross inequality" and

create additionally "social, ecological and psychological

imbalance." They are an "institution of unique power"

which has the potential for "colonizing the future" (Barnet

and Muller, 1974: 363). On the other hand, by consolidating

the ownership and control of global production and distri-

bution in the hands of "an international entrepreneurial

elite" they spell "the end of the political boundaries of

capital" (Kimmel, 1975-76: 110). They are also potential

precursors of a global mass society. Turning national so-

cieties into markets for mass consumption, many of them are

increasingly becoming standardizers of mass consumer taste

and culture.

> Soft drinks, automobiles, transistor radios
> and blue jeans are the symbols of a more
> profound homogeneization of culture that is
> well under way and despite possible "nativ-
> istic" reversals, can only be stimulated by
> continued MNC consolidation (Wells, 1977: 53).

Of the world's 50 largest industrial corporations, the number

of US based corporations was 24 in 1975 and 23 in 1976. In

both years 8 companies were American out of top 12 in the

list. The Fortune reports that "the U.S. is still the domin-

ant country on the list, by far. American companies account

for 57 percent of the total sales, 53 percent of the assets,

52 percent of the employees, and 68 percent of the net income"

(August, 1975: 163). Although in recent years American com-

panies are increasingly facing those of Japan, France, Ger-

many and Britain for the hegemonic control over the global

corporate business, their over-all performance statistics

do not forecast their disappearance in the immediate future

from the international market. Recently Fortune reported that

> .....their sales grew 40 percent, and their
> net profits 37 percent. As a result, the
> American companies loom larger than last
> time. They account for 56 percent of the
> total sales, 50 percent of the assets and
> 42 percent of the net income .... If National
> Iranian is set aside as a special case, the
> profits of the American companies look much
> heftier--two-thirds of the combined profits
> of the forty-nine non-Iranian companies on
> the list (August, 1977: 240).

The fact that global corporate investments are more guided

by considerations of profit, on the one hand, and of acquir-

ing a hold over such strategic materials--oil, iron, baux-

ite, chromium, copper, lead, manganese, tin, natural gas

etc. (Barnet and Muller, 1974: 126-27)--, on the other,

than by genuine motives of development and democracy is

more evident. For instance, Business Week reports that

the US has a great deal at stake in Southern Africa which

is one of the world's great storehouses of vital minerals

and that the US companies have more than $1.5 billion in

the racist country of South Africa alone (February 14, 1977:

64). It is reasonable to predict that Americanization of

the host countries is likely to continue for many years to

come in view of the different government maneuvering that

is possible to protect the interests of American or America-

based international corporations. "If means for bringing

other countries into compliance with preferred American

policies are desired, the American government does not have

to look far to find them" (Waltz, 1972: 222). The US govern-

ment may very well manipulate in favor of the multinationals

through its control over such financial institutions as the

Agency for International Development, the International Bank

for Reconstruction and Development, the International Finance

Corporation, the Export-Import Bank etc.[6] It can influence

directly by making it difficult for an offending host country

to receive foreign assistance from these financial institu-

tions. The case of Chile, where Marxist Allende's election

to the presidency in 1970 threatened corporate interests of

the International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT), is a case

in point. Finally, it can be said in summing up that "in-

stability, dependence, 'over-kill' of incentives, the lack of

linkages, etc. makes worldwide sourcing a doubtful tool in

the longer term for solving the problems of the Third World,

despite some job creation and export earnings" (Adam, 1975:
102).

The Family and Marriage

Tonnies could well see that the ordinary human being,
in the long run and for average of cases, "feels best and
most cheerful if he is surrounded by his family and relatives.
He is among his own ...." (1964: 43). Since the family is
the most general expression of social reality, he necessarily
assumes that "the study of home is the study of the Gemein-
schaft, as the study of the organic cell is the study of life
itself" (Tonnies, 1964: 53). What has happened in the course
of its transformations throughout history is that many of
its functions have been transferred to other institutions
like the state, corporate bodies, welfare agencies, etc., and
consequently the family has declined as a preservative influence
in the industrial society. Referring to the family's role in
the context of suicide Durkheim said: "For most of the time,
at present, the family may be said to be reduced to the
married couple alone, and we know that this union acts feebly
against suicide" (1966: 377). Turning especially to the
changes in the role of the family in the corporate capitalism
one can observe that the familial institutions, conditioned
apparently by urbanization, industrialization and bureaucrati-
zation, have become supportive institutions of capitalist
society oriented to goals and interests of corporate owners.

Corporate capitalism is at the bottom of the formation of the

economic and political macrostructure of the society and the

psychological structure of mass attitudes, values and be-

liefs. Having transformed mainly into an instrumentality

for maintaining and reproducing labor power (Morton, 1972:

121)--thus separating men from women in economic corporation,

throwing the former into the wage labor market, subjecting

women to inferior roles in the occupational hierarchy and de-

grading them into sexual objects, and also emphasizing over-

socialization of the children--the family in the industrial-

mass society becomes more repressive and less directive. The

family's functions such as the sexual function, the reproduc-

tion function, the socialization function, the personality-

forming function, the economic provider function, the con-

sumptive function, the expressive or emotional function and

status placement function together with transmission of as-

cribed elements of social position, property, power, culture

and life styles are all fed into, convincingly argues Grønseth,

"the overriding labor-producing function." In corporate cap-

italism these functions serve "to channel the labor force in-

to work, class, economic, and power structures advantageous

to the material well-being and compensatory, life-inimical,

polluting achievement and thus in the long run really false

interests of the upper classes and power elites" (Grønseth,

1973: 257). The power elite is thus emerging as a new exploit-

er and expropriator of the labor-producing function of the family.

When it started, the family in America was for most people a place where they both lived and worked. American society was then, in Mills' words, "the world of small entrepreneur" which was at the same time "self balancing." Its economy was agricultural and predominantly based on family-owned and family-operated business enterprises. There was "a linkage of income, status, work, and property" (WC: 9). The family had the basic productive function in that it was a productive unit in which domestic-familial functions were scarecly distinguishable from economic functions. The pattern ran its full circle until the industrial and technological changes gave way to capitalist transformation of the society resulting in what Mills calls "the transformation of property" with its concomitant "rural debacle." As the American farmer became both "the tool and the victim of the rise of American capitalism" so the American ideal of the family-sized farm became "more and more ideal and less and less a reality." The centralization of property signalled the end of the union of property and work, and it also severed the individual from independent means of livelihood. Within a period of less than 100 years, following the gradual rise of the cities, national markets, transportation systems, mills, mines or factories, the basic productive function of the family was transferred to corporate industry and business, giving way to a sharp differentiation between economic/work roles and familial roles of American people. Whereas in 1882

approximately 72 percent of those gainfully employed were en-

gaged in agriculture, in 1974 the percentages of self-employed

men and women fell to 3.1 and 0.35 respectively. Between

1935 and 1975 the number of family farms also declined. While

the average size of the American farm was 155 acres in 1935,

in 1975 it rose to 385 acres, indicating centralization and

consolidation. In 1974 only 4.1 percent of the farms received

as much as 45 percent of total cash receipts for agricultural

sales in America (cf. Fullerton, 1977: 10-11). In brief, the

urban pattern replaced the rural one. In the process of the

incorporation of industrial capitalism into corporate capital-

ism the family was turned into a corporative institution re-

flecting, among other things, mass man's frantic search for

new corporate status and identity commensurate with the role

demands of industrial-mass society. To quote Mills:

> In identifying with a firm, the young executive
> can sometimes line up his career expectations
> with it, and so identify his future with that
> of the firm's. But lower down the ranks, the
> identification has more to do with security and
> prestige than with expectations of success.
> In either case, of course, such feelings can be
> exploited in the interests of business loyal-
> ties (WC: 244).

In other words, the rise of corporation men coincides with the

rise of "the managerial demiurge," in Mills' words, or of

"the organization society," in Whyte's appellation. Whereas

for lower middle class men families are quite dependent on

corporate business and industry, to many career men, on the

other hand, "the home is almost an adjunct to the job" (Cuber

and Harroff, 1965: 117). When the dividing line between

economic life and family life is indistinct or grows thinner,

business crises become family crises and may turn out to be

sources of private troubles as well as public issues. As

Mills describes it, pointing out th plight of "the marginal

victim" or "unpaid family workers":

> Business competition and economic anxiety thus
> come out in family relations and in the iron
> discipline required to keep afloat. Since there
> is little or no outlet for feelings beyond the
> confines of the shop or farm, members of these
> families may grow greed for gain. The whole force
> of their nature is brought to bear upon trivial
> affairs which absorb their attention and shape
> their character. They come to exercise, as Bal-
> zac has said, 'the power of pettiness, the pene-
> trating force of the grub that brings down the
> elm tree by tracing a ring under the bark' (WC: 30).

An example of the familial trouble or issue is divorce. As

Mills refers to this:

> Consider marriage. Inside a marriage a man
> and a woman may experience personal troubles,
> but when the divorce rate during the first four
> years of marriage is 250 out of ever 1000 at-
> tempts, this is an indication of a structural
> issue having to do with the institutions of
> marriage and the family and other institutions
> that bear upon them .... In so far as the
> family as an institution turns women into
> darling little slaves and men into their chief
> providers and unweaned dependents, the problem
> of a satisfactory marriage remains incapable
> of purely private solution (SI: 9-10).

A certain amount of divorce is likely to occur since at times

it provides "an escape valve for the tension which inevitably

arises from the fact that two people must live together"

(Goode, 1970: 81). Again, divorce is no longer treated as a

personal stigma and can be preferred as an alternative to a

dead marriage. Sometimes its increased rate can be explained

by such factors as liberalization of divorce laws, changes in

the value system of the society, lessened emphasis on marital

instability or availability of new alternatives. Despite

all these countervailing factors, a continuous or sudden rise

in divorce rate is a matter of public concern. When such is

the case, there are other accompanying problems. As a matter

of fact, the divorce rate in the US has doubled between 1965

and 1975. In 1974 there were 19.3 divorces for every 1,000

married women (cf. Fullerton, 1977: 421). Reiss reports that

> .... in 1975 there were over a million of
> divorces among a total population of about
> 51 million married women or a rate of rough-
> ly 20 divorces for every 1,000 marriages in
> existence that year. This indicates that
> 2 in every 100 marriages ended in divorce
> in this particular year. If this divorce
> rate of 2 in 100 continues, then 45 percent
> of all married couples will eventually ex-
> perience a divorce during their life times
> (1976: 306).

To be sure, the effects of divorce are somewhat neutralized

by remarriage since there is "no larger kin unit to absorb

the children and no unit to prevent the spouses from re-enter-

ing the free marriage market" (Goode, 1970: 9). In 1973,

28 percent of all marriages were remarriages. Even then,

it remains a question whether remarriages are in effect a

real solution, especially in view of involvement of increas-

ing number of children affected by divorce and its impact

upon them. In fact their number has tripled since 1953 and,

until 1964, rose at a higher rate than that of divorce ㅗ
In 1972 there were more than a million of children involved
in divorce (cf. Reiss, 1976: 323).

Metropolis

It is instructive to note that sociology "was born in
a world in ferment. The fermentation process was nurtured
in the cities of the West" (Meadows and Mizruchi, 1976: 2).
For classic sociologists too, the problems of the city were
a central aspect of their sociology. To Tonnies, the city
was typical of Gesellschaft in general, and metropolis a
result of the synthesis of capital and city. Here, "money
and capital are unlimited and almighty" and here people come
"from all corners of the earth, being curious and hungry
for money and pleasure" (Tonnies, 1964: 228). Weber regarded
the city as "the seat of commerce and industry" (1961: 235),
looking into its various economic and extra-economic facets
and tracing its relationship to rational capitalism at various
historical stages of evolution. But it was Simmel who bril-
liantly wrote on, in the words of Mills, "the big city from
a humanist as well as a sociological point of view" (IM: 12).
This classic concern on the problems of the city or metro-
polis is reflected quite strongly in Mills who, in his turn,
took it up as both private trouble and public issue.

> What should be done with this wonderful mon-
> strosity? Break it all up into scattered units,
> combining residence and work? Refurbish it as

> it stands? Or, after evacuation, dynamite
> it and build new cities according to new
> plans in new places. What would those plans
> be? And who is to decide and to accomplish
> whatever choice is made .... And insofar as
> the overdeveloped megalopis and the over-
> developed automobile are built-in features
> of the overdeveloped society, the problems of
> urban living will not be solved by personal
> ingenuity and private wealth (PPP: 395-97).

Despite many improvements in some directions, most of these

problems are still responsible for what may be called "urban

crisis" in America. To highlight some of the problems con-

nected with urban crisis in America:

(1) The Urban Apartheid: Though Mills never refers to this

important problem, there is no doubt that the most noticeable

cause of urban crisis relates to continuous concentration of

blacks in the major cities of America. In fact the racial

schism is one of the biggest public issues of contemporary

America (cf. Grodzins, 1973). Given the fact of urban con-

centration of the black population, it is likely that "the

present trends may take the nation farther down the road to-

ward a de facto 'apartheid society'" (Hauser, 1975: 14).

(2) The Housing Crisis: Although many years have passed by

since America was urbanized, the problem of housing seems to

have persisted without any remarkable sign of abatement for

most of the urban dwellers, especially the poor and the blacks.

Still there is no clear set of national housing policies.

Whereas the Department of Housing and Development was initiated

only in 1965, other public housing programs envisaged

in such legislation as the Housing Act of 1943, the Housing
Act of 1949 (Urban Renewal), the Demonstration Cities Act
of 1966 (Model Cities Program) and the Housing and Urban
Development Act of 1968 have had less appreciable effect on
the urban housing blight. The victims are generally the
poor or the blacks, while the affluent whites move to suburbs.
At the present time 500,000 additional units of housing are
required each year for the poor while the yearly construction
averages about 30,000, leaving a net deficit of 470,000
units per year (cf. Butler, 1977: 138). The federal govern-
ment has begun to approach the problem of housing on a
national level but it is unlikely that the private housing
industry, which has annual business close to $25 billion,
employs over 5 million workers and creates a vast market,
would risk investment for building construction for the poor.
The profit motive remains the insurmountable barrier (cf.
Turner, 1976: 218-19).

(3) America as "automobile" and "effluent" society: Ameri-
ca can appropriately be called an automobile city. Most of
the cities are now automobile cities though the poor, blacks,
Chicanos, or Puerto Ricans have rarely any access to private
cars. While a nationally coordinated network of transporta-
tion and construction of highways can be traced to the pros-
perity and growth of corporate capitalism, there has been few
improvements in the direction of cheaper and speedy mass transit

systems. In 1970 there were 90 million automobiles as against

2.5 million of them in 1915. Around the 1970s the number of

accidental deaths from automobiles rose to about 40,000 a

year. The automobiles are also a source of urban air pollu-

tion which ranges between 25 and 50 percent a year depending

upon the city involved. The automobiles are a great symbol

of ecological abuse. However, the question of pollution,

implying ecological crisis, has assumed greater dimension.

Heilbroner goes so far as to predict, commenting on the special

environment-destroying potential of newly developed science

and technology, that the continued ecological decay, if not

arrested ahead of time, may result in "the decline or even

destruction of Western civilization, and of the hegemony of

the scientific-technological view that has achieved so much

and cost us so dearly" (1972: 69). Whatever the blessings

of urban industrialism, negatively it creates environmental

pollution by concentrating residues and wastes into an ever

shrinking ecological space. It is thus no wonder that Marine

characterizes America as "the effluent society."[7]

Although current attempts to counter environmental

hazards and ecosystemic disruption have continued to grow,

in the meanwhile "the greatest polluters are the affluent,

who generate the greatest economic demand (and hence stimulate

industrial pollution), consume the most polluting goods, and

dispose of a majority of nondegradable or nonrecyclable

wastes" (Turner, 1976: 265-66). The emergent pattern resulting

from "the incest between the pollution control business and
the industrial polluters" is increasingly leading to what
Gellen has called "the making of a Pollution-Industrial com-
plex." It is interesting to note that many of the pollution
control agencies are subdivisions or subsidiaries of the
largest corporations which are themselves polluters.
Thus the capitalist motive remains the same: profit seeking
rationality of exploitation and market economics, and oligo-
polistic corporate integration of polluters and controllers.
Indeed this is a paradox of the suzerainty of capitalism of
the few in the public society of liberalism. To.sum up:[8]

> A society whose principal ends and incentives
> are monetary and expansionist inevitably pro-
> duces material and cultural impoverishment--
> in part precisely because of the abundance of
> profitable goods. To make an industry out of
> cleaning up the mess that industry itself
> makes is a logical extension of corporate
> capitalism (Gellen, 1973: 306-07).

Notes

1. An attempt to highlight Mills' contradiction arising out
    of his moral, intellectual and political faith in demo-
    cracy, on the one hand, and his loss of faith in the
    masses as an instrument of radical social change, on the
    other, has been made in Chapters 7 and 8.

2. I agree with Bray that Mills "does not argue that we
    should spend our time as political sociologists con-
    centrating on our personal troubles or worrying about
    them. Instead, he argues that we spend our time con-
    centrating on the analysis of structural troubles and
    the turning of them into public issues" (1973: 44).
    Whereas Mills' thrust is to turn troubles into issues,
    not issues into troubles, it is interesting to note
    that Gouldner's reflexive sociology is somewhat closed
    because of its focus on personal troubles, and because
    of its failure to turn them into larger issues. Gould-
    ner's "reflexive sociology," as contained in The Coming
    Crisis of Western Sociology, achieves in the end "the
    opposite of what Wright Mills advocated at the beginning
    of the radical revival: instead of turning personal
    troubles into public issues, it turns public issues into
    personal troubles, by exhorting the sociologist to give
    his attention narcissistically to the problem of the
    relationship 'between being a sociologist and being a
    person' and to worry about his relation to his work ....
    They are a symptom of intellectual malaise, not a re-
    medy" (Bottomore, 1971: 40).

3. I must point out that Mills' humanism has its roots,
    not in socialism or communism, but in democratic or
    political liberalism. See Chapter 8 or this work.

4. Scimecca (1977: 17) reports that Mills himself called
    The Causes volume a pamphlet.

5. Italics added.

6. In a much powerful critique a recent observer contends
    that the policies of these institutions "are based on
    the acceptance and upholding of the existing internation-
    al and national framework of the capitalist world ....
    there is a strong emphasis in the agencies' policies
    and demands on the principles of free enterprise, or re-
    liance on market mechanisms, and on the respect of pri-
    vate property, domestic and especially foreign" (Hayter,
    1971: 151-52).

7.   For many faces of pollution, see Marine (1972).

8.   An assessment of Mills' political sociology will be
      included in my general criticism of radical sociology
      contained in Chapter 9.

CHAPTER SEVEN

New Leftism

Introduction

As I have already pointed out, Mills was not only a
sociological theorist but also a sociological ideologist.[1]
As a sociological ideologist, he was one of the leading
theoretical architects of the movement known as New Leftism
in sociology or political science. In the present chapter
my purpose is, therefore, to focus on the nature of Mills'
new leftism, and also to show that his protest against the
Bell-Lipset thesis of the end of ideology has become the
cornerstone of his sociological radicalism. While his theory
is not without drawbacks, it has nevertheless pointed to
the urgency and indispensability of structural changes in
American social system.

Mills as an Ideologist: If Mills is a radical, his radical-
ism lies in making issues politically explicit, and as poli-
tically radical, he is also an ideologist. He knows that any
"political reflection that is of possible public significance
is ideological: in its terms, policies, institutions, men
of power are criticized or approved" (PPP: 251).

The word 'ideology' was introduced on 23 May 1979
by the French theorist de Tracy in his newly conceived

"Science of ideas" (cf. Drucker, 1974: 3). Since then, the word 'ideology' has retained its political implications, and as such both 'politics' and 'ideology' go together. This is, however, not to suggest that the word 'ideology' has an all-accepted meaning. On the contrary, it has a wide range of meanings that has changed over the generations. In any case, ideology stands for a complex of ideas, and ideological postulates are politically formulated ideas. Put in the political contexts of American society, the concept of ideology as more or less an integrated body of political belief system implies three distinct but related categories, as suggested by Dolbeare and Dolbeare:

> (1) The 'world view' or general perspective on
> how the American economic and political system
> works today, for whom and why; (2) the values
> that are central to the ideology and the goals
> that it holds out as most desirable for the
> United States; (3) the image of the process of
> social change to which it subscribes and the
> tactics that it deems appropriate in the light
> of its world view, values and goals, and image
> of change (1971: 7).

This definition also fits the facts of Mills' ideological politics. To call him an ideologue, as may be seen, is neither unwarranted nor unjustified. Mills' ideological orientations are a mark of his political understanding of the historical epoch when "our basic definitions of society and of self are being overtaken by new realities" (PPP: 236).

In the 1930s and 1940s radical movements in America had diversified origin in a broad spectrum of organizations and were based on contending interpretations of political ideologies. The national political scene included the

communists, the socialists, Trotskyists, other anti-Stalin-
ists and trade union organizations like CIO etc. In this
forum of ideological clashes radicalism flourished through
political debates between liberal and socialist intellectuals.
By the mid-fifties the radical movements came to a halt the
reasons for which are both complex and varied. In the be-
ginning of the 1960s, Bell wrote: "Such calamities as the
Moscow Trials, the Nazi-Soviet pact, the concentration camps,
the suppression of the Hungarian workers, form one chain;
such social changes as the modification of capitalism, the
rise of the Welfare State, another. In philosophy, one can
trace the decline of simplistic, rationalistic beliefs, and
the emergence of new stoic-theological images of man, e.g.
Freud, Tillich, Jaspers, etc. .... But out of all this
history, one simple fact emerges: for the radical intelli-
gentsia, the old ideologies have lost their "truth" and their
power to persuade" (1967: 402). As a necessary result from
this decline in ideological thinking, the radical tradition
in America reached the point of exhaustion since the intell-
ectuals in place of responding ideologically through divisive
dogmas have now arrived at a rough consensus on political
issues.

> Thus one finds, at the end of the fifties, a
> disconcerting caesura. In the West, among the
> intellectuals, the old passions are spent. The
> new generation, with no meaningful memory of
> these old debates, and no secure tradition to
> build upon, finds itself seeking new purposes
> within a framework of political society that has
> rejected, intellectually speaking, the old apo-
> calyptic and chiliastic visions (Bell, 1967: 404).

The first sociologist to note the end of ideology was, per-
haps, Raymond Aron, writing in The Opium of the Intellectuals
(1955). In America Lipset is the other sociologist who found
closest agreement with Bell on the decline of political ideo-
logy. For him the decline of ideology in

> .... Western political life reflects the fact
> that the fundamental political problems of the
> industrial revolution have been solved: the
> workers have achieved industrial and political
> citizenship; the conservatives have accepted
> the welfare state; and the democratic left has
> recognized that an increase in over-all state
> power carries with it more dangers to freedom
> than solutions for economic problems. This
> very triumph of the democratic social revolution
> in the West ends domestic politics for those
> intellectuals who must have ideologies or uto-
> pias to motivate them to political action (Lip-
> set, 1963: 442-43).

Lipset finds that at the back of this general tendency there
lies "the shift away from ideology towards sociology. The
very growth of sociology as an intellectual force outside the
academy in many Western nations is a tribute, not primarily
to the power of sociological analysis but to the loss of in-
terest in political inquiry" (Lipset, 1963: 453).

The Thesis of the End of Ideology and Mills

Mills' response to this anti-ideological thesis was
both instantaneous and violent. He summed up his own ideo-
logical position in "Letter to the New Left," published
originally in the British New Left Review, September-October
1960, and this critique has become the "Das Capital of the
present radicalism" (Berman, 1968: 136).

Mills defines the thesis as 'an intellectual celebration of apathy' and calls it 'a slogan of complacency.' He writes: "It is no exaggeration to say that since the end of World War II in Britain and the United States smug conservatives, tired liberals and disillusioned radicals have carried on a weary discourse in which issues are blurred and potential debate muted; the sickness of complacency has prevailed, the bi-partisan banality flourished" (PPP: 247). Bereft of liberalism as any political theory, the thesis is rather a liberal rhetoric to be used ultimately "as an uncriticized weapon with which to attack marxism." It is based upon "a disillusionment with any real commitment to socialism in any recognizable form" (PPP: 248). Along with their ideological hostility to Marxism or socialism, the end of ideologists, the self-selected intellectuals of affluent society, seek to discover rationale and then legitimate the corporate-liberal establishment. "The mixed economy plus the welfare state plus prosperity--that is the formula. US capitalism will continue to be workable; the welfare state will continue along the road to ever greater justice" (PPP: 248). Stated otherwise, the anti-ideological perspective is the ideology of corporate liberalism. It is 'a mechanical reaction', and not 'a creative response.' It is an escapade not an involvement, a release from concerns of public issues not a commitment to work out 'an explicit political philosophy.' It is an apotheosis of methodological scientism that stands for and, presumably, stands upon "a fetish of empiricism". At

one end, the Bell-Lipset thesis either ignores the problem

of the historical agencies of change or identifies those

with the existing social institutions. It is also a denial,

at the other, of the human and political ideals. That is why

the anti-ideologists fail to understand 'structural realities'

of the present day social transformations. The end of ideo-

logy, self-managed as it is, is empty pragmatism, a fashion

and, finally, a posture of what Marx calls false conscious-

ness. Therefore, says Mills, "the end-of-ideology is of

course itself an ideology--a fragmentary one, to be sure, and

perhaps more a mood. The end-of-ideology is in reality the

ideology of an ending: the ending of political reflection

itself as a public fact. It is a weary know-it-all justifi-

cation--by tone of voice rather than by explicit argument--

of the cultural and political default of the NATO intellec-

tuals" (PPP: 249).

Despite the amount of truth contained in the Bell-

Lipset thesis, it seems that subsequent events--within and

beyond America--and assessments have pointed to the contrary.

In this light, Mills' critique, the product of the master

ideologue, seems to have been established beyond any reason-

able doubt. Bell has unduly emphasized radicalism to the

extent it was developed in the 1930s. When Germany had Hitler

and Third Reich, America produced Roosevelt and the New Deal.

In the decade of the 1940s, radicalism had its roots in the

economic depression that persistently grew since the beginning

of the last World War, although even then the assumption of

affluence was widespread, By that time there was also a

growing alignment between the private corporations and govern-

ment which is marked by an increase in the military expendi-

ture. Then came, in the 1950s, the sombre and tormented

era of McCarthyism. Politically, during this era communist

suppression reached its all-time peak level; in the realm of

ideas, it was rabidly anti-intellectual; and socially, it was

a period of what Hofstadter calls "status anxiety" due to

rootlessness and heterogeneity in American ways of life.

Despite all this, Bottomore says rightly, "it would be wrong

to conclude, however, that the age was therefore 'unpolitical';

it was simply a time in which the political offensive was

taken by thinkers and politicians of the right" (1968: 52

footnote). In fact there took place a revival of critical

thought in the fifties, and in this revival one of the pro-

minent figures was Mills. Instead of battle cries, founded

on Marx or Mill, there were shifts in the bases of ideological

conflict. To quote Young:

> In the late 1950s, new issues to make an impact
> on our politics, the following of Ayn Rand be-
> came something of a cult, the works of C. Wright
> Mills progressively shifted in emphasis from
> sociology to ideology, and the radical right has
> grown apace. More important have been the grow-
> ing critique of the basic assumptions of American
> foreign policy emanating from both right and left
> and the varitable revolution in civil rights
> (1968: 204).[2]

The anti-ideological stance of the Bell-Lipset doctrine

is rather an ideological attempt to castigate those ideologies
they disapprove of. It not only confuses the line between
description and exhortation but also provides, in conformity
to their anti-Marxist proclivity, a justifying and solidar-
izing ideology to the new class of managers to legitimate
their status quo in a politically "managed economy." The
slogan of the end of ideology functions selectively as an
anti-ideological perspective on the surface but supports, as
Mills rightly pointed out, consistently the ideological posi-
tion of its proponents. Beneath the apparent differences of
terminology that may be imagined, Lipset's "conservative
socialism" has much common ideological alliance with the
"managerial" "welfare" liberalism of Bell. This may be
termed as the ideology of pluralistic liberalism suited to
provide legitimation to the status quo of the bureaucratic
Welfare State that has come into existence in what Eric Gold-
man calls the Crucial Decade following the World War II.
The verity of Mills' fundamental assumptions is distinct in
what Kleinberg has here to say:

> At the least, both seem very serious about res-
> pecting the existing :rules of the game" of
> bargaining among organized collective interests,
> broadly within the established boundaries of
> modern corporate capitalism .... The overlapping
> of conservative-revisionist socialism and mana-
> gerial-welfare liberalism expresses a peculiar
> ideological combination of equilitarianism as a
> political end and centralized bureaucratic organ-
> ization as a technical means, mixing governmental
> acceptance of responsibility for the general wel-
> fare with sophisticated managerialism as a prac-
> tical way of attaining it (1973: 13).

In a powerful critique of the Bell-Lipset thesis, Aiken con-
firms the same apprehensions of Mills. He asserts that the
end of ideology is a liberal-pluralistic posture, a doctrine
of mock pragmatism directed mainly at those political radi-
cals who suggest a thorough-going social change. He says,
therefore, that "what Bell appears to be calling for is, among
other things an end to moral discourse and a beginning of
consistent 'pragmatic discourse' in every sphere of political
life" (Aiken, 1964: 36). At the same time, the thesis is a
reflex-product of methodological scientism based on a facile
interpretation of Weber and also on a typical ideological
positivism.[3]

Mills' reaction to the anti-ideological perspective
takes further ideological posture when he identifies utopian
vision with structural criticism of social institutions re-
miniscent of the Mannheimian tradition. Mills' ideological
stand is quite implicit in what Mannheim says here:

> The disappearance of utopia brings about a static
> state of affairs in which man himself becomes no
> more than a thing. We would be faced then with
> the greatest paradox imaginable, namely, that
> man, who has achieved the highest degree of ra-
> tional mastery of existence , left without any
> ideals, becomes a mere creature of impulses.
> Thus, after a long tortuous, but heroic develop-
> ment, just at the highest stage of awareness,
> when history is ceasing to be blind fate, and is
> becoming more and more man's own creation, with
> the relinquishment of utopias, man would lose
> his will to shape history and therewith his
> ability to understand it (1936: 262-63).

As the master ideologue, Mills, the utopian intellectual hero
in the Mannheimian tradition, conceives that the end of ideo-
logy would only result in shaping human history by default of

few powerful men in the society. It means acceptance prac-

tically of some kind of fatalism as the inevitable aftermath

of the blind drift of history-making through organized poli-

tical interests. However, Mills' ideological role is not,

as Feuer suggests, to provide a redefinition of what he calls,

'the Mosaic myth.' Feuer contends: "During the last decade,

ideologists beginning with C. Wright Mills have given a fresh

version to the Mosaic myth; they have perceived the intell-

ectuals as clearly called upon by history to make the revo-

lution, abetted by their allies located among the colored

races of Asia, Africa, and Latin America" (1975: 7). Feuer's

misjudgement of Mills' position becomes all the more open in

terms of his conclusion which flatly denies intellectuals

any potentials to be of any political use as seekers of

social change in required circumstances. To note this: "Then,

when intellectuals cease to be ideologists, that is, cease

to be 'intellectuals' and become instead scientists, scholars,

teachers, they will find a vocation more enduring than any

that myth can confer, more sincere because without self-

illusion" (Feuer, 1975: 210). This amounts to a denial of

any 'right' of the intellectuals to conceive of social real-

ity that has now become increasingly political. Mills'

politics has beginnings in ideological commitment. For him,

"Indeed, the way to political reality is through ideological

analysis" (PPP: 176), as Neumann taught him by his analysis

in the Nazi Behemoth. To be sure, ideology was not a myth for
Mills, but for those who resist a reversal of capitalists'
socialism. Neither was it based on any self-illusion. His
ideological-utopianism is based upon "any criticism or pro-
posal that transcends the up-close milieux of a scatter of
individuals: the milieux which men and women can understand
directly and which they can reasonably hope directly to
change" (PPP: 254). Stating in unambiguous terms, Mills
enunciates his ideological role: "If there is to be a
politics of a New Left, what needs to be analysed is the
structure of institutions, the foundation of policies. In
this sense, both in its criticisms and in its proposals, our
work is necessarily structural--and so, for us, just now--
utopian" (PPP: 254). It is this ideological Weltanschauung
of Mills that makes him react to the welfare-planning orienta-
tion of the New Deal liberalism implicit in the anti-ideo-
ligical manifesto. Whatever the limitations in Mills posi-
tion as a radical ideologue, there are many who openly sought
identification with his sort of radicalism.[4]

Mills: The Ideologist as a New Left

As a political ideologue, Mills identifies logically,
because of his radicalism, with the New Left. His ideologi-
cal leftism is opposed to the imperialist militarism and the
Rightist McCarthyism, both of which are responsible for the
emergence and continuation of the garrison state in America.

At the theoretical level, his leftism is neither liberalism
nor Marxism but rather a product of an assimilation of the
human values of both. In brief, it is radical humanism.
Mills' leftism seeks to connect "up cultural with political
criticism, and both with demands and programmes. And it means
all this inside every country of the world" (PPP: 253). To
be of the Left politically means, for Mills, to know of im-
personal forces at work within the society, to know how they
lead to structural changes, to apprehend that these changes
have not eliminated problems or issues, and finally, to con-
ceive of historical agency of social structural change. What
is, therefore, the theoretical content of Mills' radical
Leftism? To Mills, it consists in

> .... structural criticism and reportage and
> theories of society, which at some point or
> another are focussed politically as demands
> and programmes. These criticisms, demands,
> theories, programmes are guided morally by
> the humanist and secular ideals of Western
> civilization--above all, reasons and freedom
> and justice (PPP: 253).

This enables him also to encounter the substantive problem
of ideological politics in his political sociology. As he
singles out:

> Which brings us face to face with the most im-
> portant issue of political reflection--and of
> political action--in our time: the problem of
> the historical agency of change, of the social
> and institutional means of structural change
> (PPP: 254).

Furthermore,

> The seeming collapse of our historic agencies
> of change ought to be taken as a problem, an
> issue, a trouble--in fact, as the political
> problem which we must turn into issue and
> trouble (PPP: 255).

Indeed he tried to turn the structural issue and the individual problem into themes--and also problems--of his political sociology. It is here that Mills stands in sharpest contrast to the anti-ideological political sociology of Bell or Lipset. In both of them there is a conspicuous absence of any concern for historical function of ideological politics. Bell's depoliticized ideology of the "Affluent society," implicit in the exhaustion of ideology, found its logical extension in the ideology of technocratic elitism in his The Coming of Post-Industrial Society. Very recently his thesis now, being in the nature of further dialectical improvement upon the preceding ones, researches out the cultural contradictions of capitalism. This time the problem--the cultural contradictions--has locus in the "post-modern" culture of postindustrial society itself. It is a 'dysfunctional conflict' between "functional rationality, technocratic decision making, and meritocratic rewards" on the one hand, and "apocalyptic moods and anti-rational modes of behavior," on the other. Put otherwise, "efficiency, least cost, maximization, optimization and functional rationality," characteristic principles of the "scientifically managed" industrial society, are now in direct conflict with the "anti-cognitive and anti-intellectual cultural trends" of the modernist culture (cf. Bell, 1976: 84). Therefore, on the one hand, "the theory of the end-of-ideology makes a full reversal to suggest, not the exhaustion of movements of ideological or cultural opposition in the developing postindustrial society, but their

expansion to cover the entire culture" (Kleinberg, 1973: 215).

On the other hand, it consistently neglects the persistent

increase of economic power and political influence of the

privately managed corporations in the economy. Let me now

turn to the point of view of Bendix and Lipset who also

stand in sharp contrast to Mills' point of view. For Bendix

and Lipset, "The task of political sociology is .... to

analyze the status structure of a society in terms of the

abstract or logical possibilities of decision-making and

to compare these possibilities with actual decisions made"

(1967: 23). Elsewhere they write, "Like political science,

political sociology is concerned with the distribution and

exercise of power in society. Unlike political science, it

is not concerned with the institutional provisions for that

distribution and exercise, but takes these as given" (Bendix

and Lipset, 1967: 26).[5] It is now probably evident how Mills'

ideological position both as a political man and as a social

scientist differs from that of Bell or Bendix and Lipset.

While the anti-ideology of Bell is addressed to finding out

and also lamenting over the cultural contradictions of capi-

talism, Bendix and Lipset's politics in political sociology

is limited paralytically to the studies of voting behavior

only in terms of documentary evidence, attitude and opinion

research, psychological testing, content analysis or mathe-

matical models. In neither is there any concern for the

political and economic contradictions of the military-expan-

sionist capitalism of America. Nor is there any concern, to
repeat, for historical agency to restructure the institution-
al system. It is in this that Mills' Leftism consists, and
this enables him progressively to look forward to changing
the social order and formulating the problems of private and
public life as themes of political sociology.

Naturally this leads Mills to search for ideological-
political reasons for the absence of a "Left establishment
anywhere that is truly international and insurgent--and at
the same time, consequential" (PPP: 221). If there is any
decline of ideological thinking following the last World War,
Mills argues, unlike Bell and Lipset, that is due to the cul-
mination of increasing disappearance of the Left from the
arena of cultural and political activities in the world
dominated by two super powers with nuclear war-heads in their
possession. Mills' Leftism has roots, therefore, in this:

> In both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., as the political
> order is enlarged and centralized, it becomes less
> political and more bureaucratic; less the locale
> of a struggle than an object to be managed. Within
> both, most men are objects of history, adapting to
> structural changes with which they have little or
> nothing to do (PPP: 227).

Here in this evaluation of the state of affairs in both the
USA and the USSR, Mills comes closest to Marcuse, the other
Marxist-minded theorist of the New Left movement.

> .... the contradictions of corporate capitalism
> today are as serious as ever before, but we have
> immediately to add that today the resources of
> corporate capitalism are equally strong and they
> are daily strengthened by the cooperation, or
> shall I say, the collusion, between the United
> States and the Soviet Union. What we are faced
> with, and I think this is one of the old-fashioned

> terms we should save and recapture, is a
> temporary stabilization of the capitalist
> system, a temporary stabilization, the task
> of the left is a task of enlightenment, a
> task of education, the task of developing
> a political consciousness (Marcuse, 1969: 470).

Like Marcuse, who believes that the task of the new Left is

to 'prepare itself and others .... in thought and action,

morally and politically,' Mills also rests his hope on this

and, thus, in this vein suggests formation of a Left estab-

lishment that "creates and sustains a cultural and political

climate, sets the key task, the suitable themes, and estab-

lishes the proper canons of value, taste, and reality"

(PPP: 221). The existence of a strong Left establishment is,

however, as important as an effective strategy--a lever of

action to cope with the magnitude of structural changes in

the contemporary society. And, here, in respect of the

historical agency of social change Mills and Marcuse differ.

Whereas Mills is on the side of Plato and Mill, Marcuse approx-

imates to Marx. Basically anti-Marxist in this context, Mills'

preference for a leftist approach to issues and problems and

his choice of historical agency are at bottom yearnings of a

liberal democrat for realization of the cherished values of

human life. This differentiates Mills from Marcuse who speci-

fically opts for "libertarian socialism which has always been

the integral concept of socialism, but only too easily re-

pressed and suppressed" (1969: 469). Mills and Marcuse are

close to each other as new Lefts in general sense rather than

as theorists.

Mills, the Role of Labor and the Intelligentsia

At the outset, Mills' political evolution is marked
by an extraordinary enthusiasm about the role of labor as the
live agent of structural change. In the spring of 1943, when
he confronted the labor problem for the first time, he took
up the case for the coal miners against the mine owners and
the Federal administration. Taking a brief on behalf of
those who seek "a way out of the present political situation"
and who "believe intelligently in democracy," Mills thought
in terms of "the formation of an independent labor party,"
though he qualified it by saying that on the basis of the
present labor union it would not come into being "at all in
the forseeable future" (1943: 697). In the same year, Mills
writes, in a review of Brady's Business as a System of Power,
that somehow labor "must become a militant political movement"
(PPP: 76). In 1948 Mills' enthusiasm reached its peak. He
writes: "Inside this country today, the labor leaders are
the strategic actors: they lead the only organizations cap-
able of stopping the main drift towards war and slump ....
What the U.S. does, or fails to do, may be the key to what
will happen in the world" (NMP: 3). By the middle of the
1950s Mills discovers that "the labor unions have become or-
ganizations that select and form leaders who, upon becoming
successful, take their places alongside businessmen in and
out of government and politicians in both major parties among
the national power elite" (PPP: 97). In 1959 Mills' growing

pessimism ran its full circle and he became more disillusion-
ed than not. In categorically open terms he declares: "I do
not believe, for example, that it is only 'Labor' or 'The
Working Class' that can transform American society and change
its role in world affairs .... I .... do not believe in ab-
stract social forces--such as The Working Class--as the uni-
versal historical agent" (PPP: 232). In the following year
he reaffirms his belief by saying that he does not understand
why some New Leftists still "cling so mightily to 'the work-
ing class' of the advanced capitalist societies as the his-
toric agency, or even as the most important agency ...."
(PPP: 256). Such a labor metaphysic, so he thinks, is a
'legacy from Victorian marxism that is now quite unrealis--
tic.' But it must be noted, with much caution, that Mills
never rules out the potentiality of the labor to bring about
structural change. As Mills clearly points out:

> The social and historical conditions under which
> industrial workers tend to become a-class-for-
> themselves, and a decisive political force, must
> be fully and precisely elaborated. There have
> been, there are, there will be such conditions
> .... Of course we can't "write off the working
> class." But we must study all that, and freshly.
> Where labor exists as an agency, of course we
> must work with it, but we must not retreat it
> as The Necessary Lever .... (PPP: 256).

Closely linked to Mills' disillusionment with, if
not rejection of, the working class are his views on the in-
ability of the mass to act as the chief agency.[6] Standing
at the bottom of the mass society, now the mass is "political-
ly fragmented, and even as a passive fact, increasingly power-

less" (PE: 324). At the same time, "The new middle class of

white-collar employees is certainly not the political pivot

of any balancing society. It is in no way politically unified.

Its unions, such as they are, often serve merely to incorporate

it as hanger-on of the labor interest" (PPP: 34). The incapa-

city of the mass or of the white-collar to act politically

leads Mills to explore whether the cultural apparatus is a

substitute for effecting sociocultural change. He finds out

that in America, as also in other advanced industrial societies,

the politics of culture and the culture of politics have

coalesced in the overdeveloped capitalist-industrial economy

of the garrison state. " .... culture is part of an ascendant

capitalist economy and this economy is now a condition of

seemingly permanent war. Insofar as cultural activities are

established, they are established commercially or militarily"

(PPP: 417). So Mills rules out the possibility of this capi-

talistic cultural apparatus to act as the agency.

Whatever the amount of Mills' early optimism and

subsequent pessimism about the role of the working class, his

final dependency on the intelligentsia is neither sudden nor

logically unconnected in point of his own political evolution.

In 1944, Mills finds himself, on the one hand, a political

intellectual and also discovers, on the other, how intellectuals

are incapacitated to act politically and culturally in the

pursuit of "a politics of truth in a democratically respons-

ible society" (PPP: 304). In face of organized irresponsibility,

endangering both freedom and security, and of expropriation of

the intellectual worker from the means of effective communication, Mills realizes "why it is in politics that intellectual solidarity and effort must be centered" (PPP: 299). In order to cope responsibly with the problems of his life experience, the intellectual needs to relate himself to the values of truth in political struggle. In White Collar he focuses on how a new kind of patronage system for free intellectuals has caused "a loss of political will and even of moral hope" (WC: 144). In 1955 Mills points out that "the intellectual ought to be the moral conscience of his society, at least with reference to the value of truth, for in the defining instance, that is his politics. And he ought also to be a man absorbed in the attempt to know what is real and what is unreal" (PPP: 611). In The Causes of the World War Three (1958) Mills now addresses "neither to power elites nor to people in general, but to those who are generally aware of what is going on" (CWT: 8). To break the political monopoly of the current powers as also to break their monopoly of ideas, Mills directly calls upon the intellectuals "to act at once politically and intellectually" (CWT: 137). He now makes it clear:

> It is our first task as an intellectual community publicly to confront the new facts of history-making and so of political responsibility and irresponsibility (CWT: 139).

In the celebrated article, "The Decline of the Left," published in 1959, Mills states that "in our present situation of the impoverished mind and lack of political will, United

States intellectuals, it seems to me, have a unique opportunity to make a new beginning. If we want to, we can be independent craftsmen" (PPP: 231). As a master political ideologue and a left radical, he urges upon the intellectuals 'to offer alternative definition of reality.' In 1960, Mills' conviction in the role of the intelligentsia as the leading live agency of historical change becomes once more solidified. He writes in Listen, Yankee that the revolution in Cuba is "not a revolution made by labor unions or wage workers in the city, or by labor parties, or by anything like that" (LY: 46). The first moves were taken by young intellectuals joined by the students. The Cuban revolution "really began .... when a handful of these young intellectuals really got together with the peasants" (LY: 46). Since 1958, in Cuba "the peasnats have remained decisive, now the wage workers have become very important too" (LY: 47). What is interesting to note is that, whereas these quotes evidence Mills' emphasis on the role of intellectuals as revolutionaries, he does not rule out altogether the role to be played by peasants and industrial workers. As he himself admits, Mills was uncertain, accelerated by experiences in America, Soviet Union, Hungary and elsewhere, about the role of the peasantry and the working class as to their revolutionary potential. This position differentiates Mills from Lenin, and the reason of this basic difference is that, like Lenin, Mills was never a revolutionary in the field of action. Of course he was aware of this limitation. But Mills reminds us

that they should not be "bypassed." Alternatively he said:
"So far as structural change is concerned, these don't seem
to be at once available and effective as our agency any more.
I know this is a debatable point among us, and among many
others as well; I am by no means certain about it" (PPP: 255).
In place of a cultural apparatus, Mills argued in 1960 for
an alternative "cultural apparatus, the intellectuals--as
a possible, immediate, radical agency of change" (PPP: 256).

An Assessment

By now it is probably evident that Mills' early op-
timism and later pessimism about the role of the working class
matches his early negativism and later positivism about in-
telligentsia as an alternative agency. By the same token,
it is also evident that, in spite of his predominant emphasis
on the political role of the intelligentsia, Mills does
neither underestimate nor rule out the potential ability of
political parties, the peasants or the working class to ini-
tiate and effect historical change. However, in whatever way
he might have justified his thesis, Mills has been subjected
to searching criticism from all quarters, regardless of their
political affiliation. There is no denying the fact that
Mills' theory suffers from a Platonic variety of elitism and
is, therefore, somewhat "closed," as I see it, in point of
politics of democracy for all. Warde says that Mills, as a

new Left, mistakes 'the prologue for the play.' The typical

failure of the new Left is that "they fail to grasp the un-

stable and transitory causes for the lethargy of the labor-

ing masses or to foresee the emergence of new conditions which

can transform the mood and movements of the labor into their

opposite" (Warde, 1961: 71). Thus "the error of the New

Left ... consists in identifying and confusing the betrayals

of the labor bureaucracies with the disorientation these cause

in the ranks. The setbacks due to faulty leadership are read

as evidence of a congenial incapacity of the working class

to fulfill its historical mission" (Warde, 1961: 71). Apthe-

ker, another Marxist theorist, notes that one of his basic

failures, among others, is that "Mills' analysis of the poli-

tical situation within the United States leads him to rule

out any significant mass democratic movement for real reno-

vation and change ...." (1960: 80). Closely linked to this

is his "impatience with the imperfections and failures of

socialism. He tends to view socialism in exactly the same

terms as capitalism--and capitalism at its best and most

stable, as in Great Britain and the United States--forgetting

the centuries of political instability, terror and civil war

that marked the achievement of relative stabilization in the

Anglo-American world" (Aptheker, 1960: 81).

From a Marxist point of view, as also viewed in the

general context, it appears in the reappraisal of Mills'

thesis that both Warde and Aptheker are correct by and large

in their respective assessment. But the point needed to be emphasized is that Mills' was not focusing on the role of intelligentsia as an agency of change from the Marxist point of view.[7] He is not Marxist in the sense in which he has been criticized, although it is contestable whether Mills' thesis is basically compatible with the world realities of today. He rather conceives of Marxism in a "plain" way, his basic point being this:

> Is there any doubt about this after Max Weber,
> Thorstein Veblen, Karl Mannheim--to mention
> only three? We do now have ways--better than
> Marx's alone--of studying and understanding m
> man, society, and history, but the work of
> these three is quite unimaginable without
> his work (TM: 13).

Yet Mills believes that Marx's Marxism is as much a part of European culture as is Italian Renaissance architecture. In line with William Morris, Antonio Gramsci, Rosa Luxemberg, G. D. H. Cole, Georg Lukacs, Christopher Caldwell, Jean-Paul Sartre, John Strachey, Georges Sorel, Edward Thompson, Lezlo Kolakowski, William A. Morris, Paul Sweezy and Eric Fromm, Mills claims to be a plain marxist theoretically and intellectually in the classic tradition. How far Mills, as he claims, is a Marxist at least in comparison with some of those he mentioned remains a question which needs to be answered in the near future.[8] For the time being, Mills points out that these plain marxists have stressed "the humanism of marxism, especially of the younger Marx, and the role of the superstructure in history; they have pointed out that to under-

emphasize the _interplay_ of bases and superstructure in the

making of history is to transform man into that abstraction

for which Marx criticized Feuerbach" (TM: 97-98). More

specifically, as also politically, Mills joined Weber in

"rounding out" and revising Marxism. Neither to Weber nor

to Mills was the state a product of class antagonism, a

capitalist apparatus for human exploitation. Sounding like

Weber, Mills believes that "class struggle in the marxist

sense does not _prevail_" (TM: 126). In addition, "the dia-

lectical method' is either a mess of platitudes, a way of

double talk, a pretentious obscurantism--or all three"

(TM: 128-29 footnote). Evaluating Marx's influence on him,

Mills says: "We agree with Weber's evaluation of Marx's

emphasis upon the economic order in the modern capitalist

era: It is a heuristic choice which holds that the economic

order is the most convenient way to an understanding of this

specific social structure. So much is fruitful in the Marx-

ist perspective ...." (CSS: 384). It is in this plain marx-

ist perspective that Mills looked at the problem of historical

change, and this posture is thus different from the standpoint

of Warde's and Aptheker's criticisms. However Mills goes

beyond. He justifies, theoretically, the inadequacy of "the

labor metaphysic."

> Behind the labor metaphysic and the erroneous
> views of its supporting trends there are de-
> ficiencies in the marxist categories of strati-
> fication; ambiguities and misjudgements about
> the psychological and political consequences
> of the development of the economic base; errors
> concerning the supremacy of economic causes within
> the history of societies and the mentality of

> classes; inadequacies of a rationalist psycho-
> logical theory; a generally erroneous theory
> of power; an inadequate conception of the
> state (TM: 127).

It is this Mills' theoretical standpoint that confronts him

to face the Marxist criticism of Warde and Aptheker, who seem

to be on more solid grounds than Mills, and this renders his

thesis more vulnerable than he probably thought. Since his

Marxism amounts to some kind of "liberal Marxism,"[9] it is not

unreasonable for Schneider to say that "instead of calling

himself a 'plain marxist,' Mills should have said along with

Marx and in the precise sense that Marx meant it: 'I, at

least, am not a Marxist'" (1963: 556). Anyway, Mills'

radicalism in his leftist posture of an ideologist includes

three distinct components: (1) the acceptance of the "Weber-

ian" marxism; (2) a "Veblenite" critique of American social

institutions; and (3) a "Mannheimian" utopianism of the role

of the intelligentsia. Precisely put, Mills as a Weberian

marxist poses concerns of the Mannheimian intellectual through

the Veblenite terms in the post-industrial and corporate-

capitalist America. In fact Mills' thesis of the historical

agency of change has its genesis in two sets of circumstances.

In the first place, since liberalism, robbed of its classic

role, has become merely the ideology of legitimation in a

military-industrial complex and the decline of politics has

coincided with the rise and consolidation of the power elite,

Mills correctly thinks that the structural consequences of

capitalism are integrally connected with liberalism. He is

largely backed by evidence to find out that, on the one hand,

the labor leaders, once they are up in the public limelight,

join the axis of the national power elite, and that the work-

ing class movement, on the other, is more a failure than

success in promoting its supposed mission to initiate radical

changes that are long overdue. Therefore, Mills is left with

only one alternative, the intelligentsia. This reliance is

not simply an outcome of but surely related to his independent

radicalism that is embodied in his Leftism. Secondly, Mills'

experience with the Hungarian revolution in 1956 and the

Cuban revolution of 1958 in both of which the intelligentsia

took a leading political role along with the workers and

peasants led him to realize the intelligentsia's hidden po-

tential as the probable, at the same time effective and

powerful, prime mover of change. But it seems very difficult

to buttress Mills' rationale for what may be called excessive

optimism about the intelligentsia which is usually and his-

torically constituted of the rank and file of the bourgeoisie.

To make the point clear, Mills' preference for the intelli-

gentsia, not as a substitute for the governing power elite,

but as a prime mover of historical change and as participants

in the joint cultural and political struggle thus automatical-

ly compels him, despite apparent truths of the apolitical

mass, to underestimate the potential political power of the

mass including the white collar workers. Thompson, a British

laborite, says in this context:

> It is possible that when Wright Mills offers
> the intellectual 'as a possible, immediate,
> radical agency of change' he is thinking of
> them, not as the leading agents of revolution,
> but as the force which may precipitate a new
> consciousness and initiate much broader pro-
> cesses.   In this case I am much closer to
> agreement with him .... since it seems to me
> to be a crucial role of socialist intellectuals
> to do exactly this; and this in fact is what
> is happening all around the world today. But
> while socialist intellectuals may 'trigger
> off' these processes, they will only defeat
> and isolate themselves if they assume the
> hubris of 'main agents,' since the kind of
> socialism we want is one which is impossible
> without the participation of the whole people
> at every level (Quoted in Warde, 1961: 76).

Regardless of the ambiguities in the concept of the whole

people, the conclusion that Mills has underemphasized the

role of the working class seems on all counts inescapable.

However, one should not forget that Mills was one of the very

few intellectuals who took up "the theme of the 'growing

together' of union bureaucracies and the controlling insti-

tutions of capitalism" (Hyman, 1973: 20). Hyman has correct-

ly evaluated him in this regard: "Mills was one of the few

prominent academic writers on industrial relations to dis-

play a basic sympathy for the underlying orientations of the

Marxist tradition. He was also very much in the minority in

his sensitivity to the dialectic between trade unions and

capitalist society" (1973: 21).

Mills' lack of emphasis on the potential political

role of the mass has also invited charges of elitism in his

call for intellectuals' participation in politics.[10] Arti-

culating the charge of elitism in Mills' radical Leftism,

Schneider has the following to say:

> In sum, Mills offers us a view of society that is
> elitist in several senses. First, he views so-
> ciety as dominated by a power elite. Second, he
> calls upon an intellectual elite to influence
> the men of power. Third, he sees in the power
> elite not only a danger to mankind but, perhaps,
> the only opportunity to avoid catastrophe. For
> the power elite can really make and remake his-
> tory as it chooses. In this respect, rule by
> the power elite, dangerous as it is, may be pre-
> ferable to rule by non-rational masses, open to
> the influence of demagogues (1963: 562).

My own findings, however, point to the contrary.[11] Schneider's

assessment of his radical politics is largely based upon his

misunderstanding of the spirit and tenor of the body poli-

tic of Mills' sociology. It certainly remains uncorroborated

by greater weight of evidence, and at the same time, it mis-

understands the over-all impact of Marx on Mills. It under-

values Mills' democratic aspirations. Lawrence Goldman has

also indicated that Schneider's assertion is a "distortion

of Mills' position." As a political sociologist Mills has justi-

fiably depicted that the power elite, despite differences of

opinion as to its magnitude and role or its internal cohesion,

exists and rules in the monopoly capitalist social structure

of America. What Mills means by saying that the power elite

retains the opportunity to make and remake history is that it

could have done so had it not been the case as it is in the

present. He makes it abundantly clear, often repititiously,

that the power elite are "crackpot realists" only interested

in continuing politics by other means. He does talk of

creating the Left establishment--international, insurgent
and consequential in scope and effect--independent of the
power elite and suggests such an establishment as "creates
and sustains a cultural and political climate, sets the key
tasks, the suitable themes, and establishes the proper canons
of value, taste and reality" (PPP: 221). In so far as the
role of the mass is concerned, Goldman nicely estimates
Mills' position in these words:

> The mass could be transformed into a community
> of publics if they rejected the politics of
> drift and blind fate and tried to solve the
> basic political problems of their society.
> Mills did not regard this as a very likely
> possibility but he would not have emphasized
> the importance of reason in political affairs
> or insisted on the need to control the cul-
> tural apparatus if he did not believe that
> the creation of a community of publics was a
> vital task for the radical intellectual (1963:
> 342).

The Millsian political role of the intelligentsia emphasizes
wholesale disaffection and radical dissent from politics of
status quo as practised by the higher circles or politically
immoral men of power. "He was not an elitist," concludes
Goldman quite rightly, "but an intense democrat who believed
in the egalitarian ideal, the continuity of publics. This
ideal is the best hope for America, and Mills insisted that
the radical intellectual must take the responsibility upon
himself and point the way" (1963: 343). Whatever the con-
tinuities with or departures from the other members of the
Left, Mills' work represents more than a mere rebellion
against deceit and irresponsibility of the power elite. Even

if one finds disconcerting caesura in the anti-intellectual-
ism of the 1950s or a lack of political issues at the presi-
dential election of the 1960s, as Macdonald saw, Mills was
consistently a Left in his political radicalism and in his
commitment to the cause of democracy. As a successor to
and a carrier of the values of the Enlightenment, Mills was
one of the very few exceptions to the usual style of life
manifest in most new Leftists in the fifties. "To take this
seriously," says Berman, "is to admit that C. Wright Mills
had some logic when he proposed the intellectual as the
immediate and radical agency of change. It need not be
reiterated that our cultural task is to make that kind of
change unnecessary" (1968: 32).

Notes

1. See Chapter 1, pp. 29-30.

2. Italics added.

3. For an elaboration of this point see Rousseas and
    Farganis (1965).

4. For example, see Johnson (1966: 99). See also Scimecca
    (1977) and Szymanski (1970).

5. Italics added.

6. For details of the rise of the masses and the mass
    society, see Chapter 4 of this work.

7. Mills' differences with Marx on the theme of alienation
    have already been discussed in Chapter 5, especially at
    pp. 213-18. For an assessment, from a non-Marxist
    point of view, of Mills' theory of the intelligentsia
    as a change agent, see Bachrach (1967: 55-59).

8. As already been pointed out in Chapter 1, at pp. 13, 37
    (note 3), Mills is Weberian rather than Marxian in all
    his essential ideas.

9. The term "liberal Marxism" may sound contradictory.
    Whatever it is, in using the term I have in mind the
    fact that Mills was, unlike many liberal sociologists
    of the Establishment, fully aware of the relevance in
    sociology of at least certain principles of Marxism
    as a social theory.

10. One critique of Mills' position, not covered in this
    work, can be found in Bachrach's The Theory of Demo-
    cratic Elitism. Generally speaking he argues "that
    democratic elitism, as an empirical theory, is basically
    unsound; and that viewed normatively, it fails to meet
    the essential political needs of twentieth century man"
    (Bachrach, 1967: 9). Specifically in connexion with
    Mills, he puts forward that despite Mills' "aversion
    to 'men of power,' he could not bring himself to ad-
    vocate the abolition of the power elite here and now"
    (Bachrach, 1967: 57).

11. For elements of Mills' commitment to democracy, see
    the next chapter, i.e., Chapter 8.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Democracy and Liberalism

Introduction

I have shown in different places of this work[1] that
many theorists found elements of elitism in Mills' political
orientations or in his political sociology. While these
theorists are not entirely without some points in favor of
their accusation, it seems to me that Mills, despite his ap-
parent elitist tendencies, was at bottom a democrat, rather
a stubborn democrat. In this chapter, I specifically focus
on this issue, pointing to the different elements of his com-
mitment to democracy and liberalism.

The New Left as a Democrat

Beneath what appears to be contradictions in many of
his political sociological formulations, not necessarily
limited to the intelligentsia, the power elite, the mass
society, the organized irresponsibility, the collapse of both
liberalism and socialism and so on, there is an important
truth in his life, i.e., Mills was a stubborn democrat. Be-
hind all his sociological themes this democratic tradition
is the most dominating fact. In actuality, Mills' lament
for the collapse of both liberalism and socialism has its
root in his unbounded faith in the heritage of the Enlighten-

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ment and in a call for restoration of democracy in America.
Let me illustrate Mills' commitment to democracy in his own
words:

> We should take democracy seriously and literal-
> ly. Insofar as we accept the democratic heritage
> --as not only our heritage but as of use and of
> value to the world tomorrow--we must realize that
> it has been a historically specific formation,
> brought about by a set of factors, a union of pro-
> cedural devices and ideological claims quite speci-
> fic to Western civilization; and that it is now in
> a perilous condition not only in the world but in
> the West itself, and especially in the United
> States of America (CWT: 140-41).

Elsewhere,

> We are free men. Now we must take our heritage
> seriously. We must make clear the perils that
> threaten it. We must stop defending civil liber-
> ties long enough to use them. We must attempt to
> give content to our formal democracy by acting
> within it (PPP: 233).

Mills' commitment to democracy is unequivocal and total. It
is spectacular in view of doubts about democracy of such
classic sociological thinkers as Pareto, Mosca and Michels.
But at the same time he also resembles Weber and Durkheim or
Mill and Schumpeter in their commitment to the cause of de-
mocracy. For Mills, the Enlightenment is the main fount of
liberalism and Marxism, and in both the values of reason and
freedom coincide. In their turn they provide the content of
Mills' democratic tradition. Freedom and reason, the predom-
inant values of liberalism and Marxism, are not mutually ex-
clusive because he believes, not without reason, that increased
rationality is also a condition for increased freedom. On the
one hand, liberalism recognizes freedom and reason as the

supreme facts of the individual being. On the other, Marxism gives central importance to man in the political making of history for himself. However, as it would follow, Mills, as a democrat, is a liberal in an ultimate choice between liberalism and Marxism. Mills is aware that neither Mill examined the kinds of political economy now arising in the world nor Marx analysed the kind of society now in formation in the socialist world. But, compared to the egalitarian classless social tradition of Marx, Mills is rather on the side of the representative democratic tradition of Mill. This becomes evident in spite of Mills' concern that the fundamental values of reason and freedom have become problematic as the ideological mark of "The Fourth Epoch" in the social contexts of post-industrial society. Put otherwise, Mills thinks "liberalism, as a set of ideals, is still viable, and even compelling to Western men" (PPP: 189).

Both liberalism and democracy are reciprocally inter-linked political and social phenomena. Whereas democracy is more often a form of government, it has roots in liberalism as a set of political ideas and ideals.[2] Speaking historically, liberalism as a set of political and social orientations has sustained democracy as a form of government since the seventeenth century. However, it is unwise to make any rigid dichotomy between the two concepts of democracy and liberalism. In consonance with the tradition of the Renaissance and the Reformation, the most fundamental assumption of liberal-

ism consists in viewing man as autonomous individual or as
the "masterless" man. Liberalism, therefore, attaches highest
value to the moral worth and equality of human personality.
Articulating in the Deweyan tradition of liberalism, Mills
says that it looks at "man as the measure of all things:
policies and events are good or bad in terms of their effect
on men; institutions and societies are to be judged in terms
of what they mean to and for the individual human being"
(PPP: 190). In order to develop his dormant potentialities
as fully as possible, liberalism is based ultimately upon
the postulate that the individual is the essential criterion
of all public policy and that he is the maker of his own life
fate. In this autonomous conception of man, there are two
essential ideals which constitute integral aspects of liberal-
ism: freedom and reason. Freedom for the autonomous individual
consists in the cherished fulfilment of his potentialities,
and this can only occur through self-fulfilment. The faith
on man's capacity to reason stresses his participation in
decision-making. In brief, "Based upon a conception of in-
dividuality that emphasized the autonomy of individual will,
the autonomy of human reason, and the essential goodness and
perfectability of human nature, liberalism was the political
expression of this individualistic Weltanschauung" (Hallowell,
1954: 70).

Mills' concept of man "as an actor in historic crises,
and of man as a whole entity," though rooted in intellectually

diverse traditions of James, Mead, Freud and Marx, is not far removed from this classic liberal view of human nature. Based on this concept of man, Mills superimposes his 'sociological conception of fate.' Fate is not an universal constant in man's life; neither is it rooted in the nature of history nor in man's nature. It is intimately connected with the specific kind of social structure within which history-making decisions, affecting life fates of individuals, are made. This is to indicate that "the extent to which the mechanics of fate are the mechanics of history-making is itself a historical problem. How large the role of fate may be, in contrast with the role of explicit decision, depends first of all upon the scope and the concentration of the means of power that are available at any given time in any given society" (CWT: 12-13). Conceived in this way, Mills argues that modern social structures, especially those of the USA and the USSR, offer unique opportunities to shaping human fate and industry. The enormous enlargement and the decisive centralization of all means of power and decision that accompanied the rise of industrial societies have now become unique means of history-making. In the Eighteenth Brumaire, Marx writes: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but rather circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past" (1959: 320). Mills quotes Marx in order to emphasize the

circumstances when man is or is not the maker of his life

fate and history. But it is extremely important to note that

the underlined portions of Marx's statement are conspicuous

by its absence in Mills' quote. This indicates that Mills,

as a plain marxist, is averse to following the Marxian route

of dialectical inevitability of historical materialism.[3] For

certain, he appears to have taken 'inevitability' and 'fatal-

ism' synonymously, contrary to the intent of Marx or Engels.

Considering this aspect, Aptheker was right to observe: "The

inevitability of historical materialism is exactly the oppo-

site of fatalism--and only its position is the opposite, by

the way. The inevitablity of historical materialism is the

unfolding of human history not regardless of man's activity

but rather because of that activity" (1960: 73-74). What

appears apprently to be a misconception of or deviation from

this interpretation of Marxism on Mills' part is in fact in

conformity to his professed position as a "plain marxist."

Like Marx, Mills contends that 'men are free to make history';

but he immedaitely adds, in the context of modern overdevelop-

ed society, that "some men are now much freer than others to

do so, for such freedom requires access to the means of de-

cision and of power by which history can now be made" (CWT:

14). And in this, Mills was haunted by the vision of the

historic capacity of man ingrained in a conception of the

Enlightenment. To quote Mills:

> The facts about the newer means of history-
> making are a signal that men are not necessar-
> ily in the grip of fate, that men can now
> make history (SI: 183).

In view of Mills' conception of man, as based upon the ideal

of the Renaissance or the Enlightenment, it is difficult to

sustain the argument that Mills is basically an elitist. On

the other hand, Mills' theory of democracy is closely connect-

ed with and proceeds upon this basic assumption of free man.

The essence of democracy consists in "the rehabilitation of

political life, making politics again central to decision-

making and responsible to broader publics." Mills defines

democracy in the following way:

> By democracy I mean a system of power in which
> those who are vitally affected by such decisions
> as are made--and as could be made but are not--
> have an effective voice in these decisions and
> defaults (CWT: 118).

Elsewhere,

> In essence, democracy implies that those vitally
> affected by any decision men make have an effec-
> tive voice in that decision. This, in turn,
> means that all power to make such decisions be
> publicly legitimated and that the makers of such
> decisions be held publicly accountable (SI: 188).

To define democracy seems to be a futile task since

to date there is no all-accepted definition of this concept.

Macpherson has rightly indicated that "democracy has become

an ambiguous thing, with different meanings--even apparently

opposite meanings--for different peoples" (1974: 2). There

is no single definition that fulfills all criteria which are

spoken of by different theorists of democracy. In other

words, it is to say that, without attempting to discover its

technical deficiencies, Mills' conceptualization of demo-

cracy includes three components: first, persons affected by

binding decisions of men in power in the government should

have an effective voice, implying their 'consent' and volun-

tary 'participation' in the political process; second, power

exercised by the government must be publicly legitimated,

not necessarily implying in terms of mere constitutional

validity; and thirdly, the decision makers must be account-

able to the publics. This aspect indicates what is called

the principle of public accountability, especially political

accountability. However, there are certain apparent de-

ficiencies in Mills' concept of democracy. For example, he

does not specify the ambit of 'public legitmation'; he does

not indicate how the policy makers could be made accountable

to the public; he does not specifically say how the present

acts of the government suffer from lack of legitimation;

again it is not enough to say that democracy is a system of

power since any system of government is always a system of

power. In democracy, it is people's participation that

counts most, and if so, then the question arises as to how

to maximize their participation. To be sure, Mills was not

concerned with problems of government or state as such.

Naturally, his theoretical limitations are easily understand-

able because after all he was a sociologist. On the other

hand, the point is whether or not Mills was a democrat, not

as a theorist but as a believer. If this is taken as the

starting point, it would seem that the corpus of his writings

indicates that he was a stubborn democrat. As a democrat,

Mills is very close to John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), the best

known political theorist on representative democracy. At

home, he has some parallels to Schumpeter, among others. All

of them--Mill, Schumpeter and Mills--believed in indirect,

or representative, form of democracy. But, it must be noted

here that Mills, like Mill, was not at all concerned as such

to defend how far, to what extent and when the representative

democracy is the most ideally suited form of government to best

serve the needs of the people. Instead, Mills started with

the primary acceptance of the superiority of representative

political institutions. With Schumpeter, Mills regards that

democracy is now a method, a kind of political institutional

arrangement. In this context it is fruitful to remember

Schumpeter's notion of democracy since it appears that Mills

has also been influential in his formulations of democracy.

Schumpeter says that "the democratic method is that institu-

tional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in

which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a

competitive struggle for the people's vote" (1962: 269).

His book, Capitalism, Democracy and Socialism was published

in 1942. Here he formulated a catalogue of conditions for

the successful functioning of democracy, and this catalogue

has a striking parallel in Mills'. Against this backdrop,

it seems worthwhile to discuss Mills, Schumpeter and Mill

together, although my own interest centers around Mills'

position only. Mills particularly mentions that "the poli-

tical structure of a modern democratic state .... requires

at least .... six conditions" (CWT: 118).

Elements of Mills' Commitment to Democracy

(1) <u>The Existence of a Community of Publics</u>: The idea of a
successful democracy presupposes the existence of a community
of publics who form discussion circles. In its turn, it en-
ables people to carry opinion form one to another and helps
them participate in the struggle for power. In this sense,
"Congress or Parliament, as an institution, crowns all the
scattered publics." The existence of a community of publics
is, therefore, integrally linked with the idea of public opin-
ion as the ultimate source of all public legitimation. Speak-
ing of the liberty of thought and expression for the individ-
ual, Mill once remarked: "If all mankind minus one were of
one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion,
mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one per-
son, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in
silencing mankind" (1951: 104). Mills' statement expresses
a vigorous political individualism, the utility of man's free-
dom of expression of opinion in a democracy. In Mills it
has a noteworthy reflection since he always considers that
freedom of political expression of the individual in the form
of public opinion provides an indispensable formal content to
democracy. Therefore, as Mills says, the first condition for
democracy "requires not only that such a public as is projected

by democratic theorists exist, but that it be the very forum

within which a politics of real issue is enacted" (CWT: 118).

Public opinion initiates the free ebb and flow of discussion.

"The possibilities of answering back, of organizing autonomous

organs of public opinion, of realizing opinion in action, are

held to be established by democratic institutions" (PE: 298).

What Mills says of the public opinion is supplemented by

Schumpeter's observation made earlier: "effective competition

for leadership requires a large measure of tolerance for

difference of opinion" (1962: 295). As Mills understands,

the essence of democracy's success consists in organizing

an effective public opinion as the legitimating source of all

exercise of power by the government.

(2) The Need for a Responsible Party System: For its success-

ful operation, democracy requires the existence of "national-

ly responsible parties which debate openly and clearly the

issues which the nation, and indeed the world, now so rigidly

confronts" (CWT: 118). Mills' concern for an effective party

system was reflected in his review of Wilfred E. Binkley's

American Political Parties, published as far back as 1943.

Therein he notes with characteristic seriousness that the

political parties play important role in the making as well

as democratizing the public decisions in a democracy. Parties

decline with the number of compromises they make, and thus,

"the idea of parties as representative of definite interests

becomes a fiasco" (Quoted in Gillam, 1966: 97).

(3) <u>The Indispensability of a Bureaucracy</u>: Mill, Schumpeter and Mills--all of them particularly recognize the importance of a well trained, efficient and independent civil service as an indispensable component of democracy. Schumpeter pointed out, " .... democratic government in modern industrial society must be able to command, for all purposes the sphere of public activity is to include--no matter whether this be much or little--the services of a well-trained bureaucracy of good standing and tradition, endowed with a strong sense of duty and a no less strong <u>espirit de corps</u>" (1962: 293). Echoing this tradition, Mills considers that the success of democracy "requires a senior civil service firmly linked to the world of knowledge and sensibility and composed of skilled men who, in their careers and in their aspirations, are truly independent of any private--that is to say, corporation-- interests" (CWT: 118). Mills' emphasis on a public spirited and merit based civil service also reminds us of Mill who lent his support to the reform of the British civil service through competitive public examinations in 1854.

(4) <u>The Requirement of an Independent Intelligentsia</u>: To be successful, democracy "requires an intelligentsia, inside as well as outside the universities, who carry on the big discourse of the Western world, and whose work is relevant to and in- fluential among parties and movements and publics. It requires, in brief, truly independent minds which are directly relevant to powerful decisions" (CWT: 118). It is now probably clear

that Mills' reliance on the intelligentsia as the prime mover
of historical change does not indicate elitism in his aspira-
tions as a democrat. He does never say that the intelli-
gentsia is a substitute to take the place of the power elite
in the administration of the government or public business.
On the contrary, his reliance on the potential of the in-
telligentsia is a part of his intention, as a democrat, that
they should play the prominent part in the forefront of nation-
al politics in view of the decline of the publics, the working
class or the political parties. What Mills means, insofar
as its role is concerned, is that the intelligentsia, being
men of power by virtue of their knowledge, is better suited
to taking the initiative in the interplay of diverse poli-
tical forces in a democratic society. To be sure, he does
not intend, as Plato does in The Republic, to stratify the
intelligentsia as the political category of ruling class.
Therefore Mills' emphasis on the role of the intelligentsia
should be construed as part of his intellectual concern for
the establishment of a viable democratic society. In this
respect there is an excellent parallel between Mills and Mill.
The latter's enthusiasm ran so high as to lead him to suggest
even more than one vote to the educated intelligentsia.
Though Mill recognizes equal voting for all, he pointed out
this necessity of additional franchise in his Thoughts on
Parliamentary Reform:

> .... if the most numerous class, which (saving
> honourable exceptions on one side, or disgrace-
> ful ones on the other) is the lowest in the ed-
> ucational scale, refuses to recognise a right

in the better educated, in virtue of their
superior qualifications, to such plurality of
votes as may prevent them from being always
and hopelessly outvoted by the comparatively
incapable, the numerical majority must submit
to have the suffrage limited to such portion
of their numbers, or to have such a distribu-
tion made of the constituencies, as may effect
the necessary balance between numbers and educa-
tion in another manner (Quoted in Robson, 1968:
226).

(5) The Need for an Impartial Media: Mills' fifth condition

requires that "there be media of genuine communication which

are open to such men and with the aid of which they can trans-

late the private troubles of individuals into public issues,

and public issues and events into their meanings for the

private life" (CWT: 119). The unprecedented feats of science

and technology have revolutionized the domain of mass communi-

cation and have lessened the distance between the people and

government. In enlarging and broadening the forum of public

discussion, it possesses the unique opportunity to multiply

'the scope and place of personal discussion,' to 'encourage

competition of ideas,' to further 'the conventional dynamic

of classic democracy,' and finally, to stimulate 'the growth

of rational and free individuality.' Recognizing the import-

ance of mass media, the quintessence of any democracy in

large scale industrial societies, Mills goes on to say, "so

long as the media are not entirely monopolized, the individ-

ual can play one medium off against another; he can compare

them, and hence resist what any one of them puts out. The

more genuine competition there is among the media, the more

resistance the individual might be able to command" (PE: 313).
In brief, mass media provide the necessary means of opinion
formation among the publics who, in their turn, make demo-
cracy function.

(6) Pluralism as a Requirement: Lastly, "democracy certain-
ly requires, as a fact of power, that there be free associa-
tions linking families and smaller communities and publics
on the one hand with the state, the military establishment,
the corporation on the other. Unless such associations exist,
there are no vehicles for reasoned opinion, no instruments
for the rational exertion of public will" (CWT: 119). Demo-
cracy in the sense of a balance of constitutionally demarcated
rights and obligations between government and citizens re-
quires the plurality of associations--trade unions, cultural
organizations, educational or vocational institutions, centers
of professional activities, etc. that operate at various social
levels and act as countervailing powers. In large scale in-
dustrial societies, the need for a variety of free associa-
tions is felt in terms of the bureaucratic tendencies that
are characteristic of such societies and also in terms of
their political role in opinion formation and channelizing
the political power and processes ultimately towards the
values of democracy. That Mills was aware of the role of
voluntary associations as a condition for the operation of
democracy is, therefore, needless to mention.

In this regard, it is also worthwhile to take notice
of certain other prerequisites that are needed to make de-
mocracy viable in any society. Mills does not state them
as in a catalogue, but those are emphasized in his writings
here and there. Let me refer to some of them:

(7) The Role of Education: Mills mentions the role of liberal
education in the formation of a politically conscious commun-
ity of publics consisting of knowledgeable men. This pro-
vides the much-needed forum where they can participate in
the political debates that are really open and free. It
was Mill who took the lead in relentlessly emphasizing the
role of education as the essential support of a stable and
progressive society. In Principles of Political Economy Mill
wrote: "The institutions for lectures and discussion, the
collective deliberations on questions of common interest,
the trades unions, the political agitation, all serve to
awaken public spirit, to diffuse a variety of ideas among
the mass, and to excite thought and reflection in the more
intelligent" (1973: 262). Reminding Mill's Inaugural Address
at St. Andrews University in 1967, Mills says, "Alongside
skill and value we ought to put sensibility, which includes
them both and more besides; it includes a sort of therapy in
the ancient sense of clarifying one's knowledge of one's self,
it includes the imparting of all those skills of controversy
with oneself which we call thinking, and with others which
we call debate" (PPP: 369). As far as the political task of

public education is concerned, it aids "to make the citizen
more knowledgeable and thus better able to think and to
judge of public affairs" (PE: 317). Mills thus elaborates:

> In a community of publics the task of liberal
> education would be: to keep the public from
> being overwhelmed; to help produce the dis-
> ciplined and informed mind that cannot be
> overwhelmed; to help develop the bold and
> sensible individual that cannot be sunk by
> the burdens of mass life (PE: 319).

In regard to the role of educational institutions in the
popular participation in democracy, both Mill and Mills
were influenced by Tocqueville's analysis of democracy in
America.

(8) Moral Commitment as Prerequisite: Unlike Machiavelli,
both Mill and Mills stood for a politics that is based upon
morals. Both of them displayed the Platonic distaste for
any differentiation of politics from morality. Mill viewed
with concern, like Mills, that American social institutions,
unless reformed, might prevent the intellectual and moral
improvement of men. For Mill, the community, together with
its institutions, customs and ways of life, must be permeated
with morality. Pointing out the moralizing effects of state,
Mill says in his On Liberty:

> The worth of a State, in the long run, is the
> worth of the individuals composing it; and a
> State which postpones the interests of their
> mental expansion and elevation to a little
> more of administrative skill, or of that sem-
> blance of it which practice gives, in the
> details of business; a State which dwarfs
> its men, in order that they may be more docile

> instruments in its hands even for beneficial
> purposes--will find that with small men no
> great thing can really be accomplished (1951:
> 229).

About Mills, Horowitz writes, he "personally was a man with

deep moral convictions; quite willing to stake his profession-

al reputation on the line in defense of these convictions"

(PPP: 14). And this personal morality in Mills also finds

reflection in public concerns. Reverberating Mill, he

says that "our moral level is now primarily a matter of

corrupting society" (PPP: 331). Individuals are at present

morally defenseless and politically indifferent. Mills thus

views that a mere "call for 'administrative reorganization'"

does not improve what he calls "a moral culture." Like Mill,

he believes that there is "in a democracy no dilemma on this

score, but a dialectic, in which the moral quality of both

men and institutions can be progressively improved" (PPP:

337). In realization of the need for moral men and for

moralizing institutions Mills says, rather in a more caustic

terms that Mill:

> Where there are moral men in immoral institutions,
> you seek to improve the institutions. When there
> are immoral men in moral institutions, you kick
> the rascals out. When you are confronted by im-
> moral men in immoral institutions, you follow
> Jefferson's advice and revolt. If you are fortunate
> enough to encounter moral men in moral institutions,
> you seek to maintain them as a standard for other
> areas of your public life (PPP: 337).

In particular defense of democracy, Mills says in positive

terms that "the moral quality of both men and institutions

must be progressively improved" (PPP: 338).

(9) <u>Commitment to Truth</u>: Mills is in favor of a politics

of truth as the essence of all democracy. Here he also comes

to Mill for whom the role of intellect is the consistent

search for truth. In his <u>Inaugural Address</u> Mill says, "The

most incessant occupation of the human intellect throughout

life is the ascertainment of truth. We are always needing

to know what is actually true about something or other"

(Quoted in Robson, 1968: 154). This enables Mill to conceive

of the realization of his utilitarian ideal, the greatest

good of the greatest number, through continuous approximation

to truth. Basically as a sociologist, orientated in the

pragmatist tradition of Peirce and Dewey or in the sociology

of knowledge tradition of Mannheim, Mills approaches truth

"in terms of some accepted model or system of verification,"

which is not transcendental. On the one hand, Mills views

that truthfulness of propositions may be tested by the veri-

ficatory model generalized by Peirce and Dewey. On the other,

Mills learned from Mannheim that relativity of truth depends

on "the structure of consciousness in its totality" within

specific social-historical situations. Truth is therefore

a probability.[4] The quest for truth is a perennial intellec-

tual concern for Mills. In the realm of politics, he carries

this lesson of the sociology of knowledge further and links

to the ends of his liberal democratic aspirations. In 1944

he opined that the political intellectual should pursue the

"politics of truth in a democratically responsible society"

(PPP: 304). Fifteen years later, in 1959, he states cate-
gorically that "the politics of truth" is the only possible
realistic politics open to the intellectuals.

(10) The Need for Representative Men: Mills, just as Weber
or Mannheim or Mill, also displays his profound concern for
what he calls lack of "Representative Men" in America. The
problem is one of leadership. Stating his position on the
type of public man who might be a popular representative,
Mill said: "One who desires to be a legislator should rest
on recommendations not addressing themselves to a class, but
to feelings: and interests common to all classes: the simple
as well as the learned should feel him to be their representa-
tive; otherwise his words and thoughts will do worse than
even fall dead on their minds; will be apt to rouse in them
a sentiment of opposition" (Quoted in Robson, 1968: 236).
In brief, the free-floating representatives are the physicians
of the body-politic and, as leaders, elevate the moral and
intellectual standard of the citizenry, developing their
active capacities and strengthening protection against tyran-
ny and class welfare. In Mills this tradition continues. He
also feels the need for a set of Representative Men "whose
conduct and character are above the taint of the pecuniary
morality, and who constitute models for American imitation
and aspiration" (PPP: 337). For the quality and the mainten-
ance of representative institutions, these Representative Men
are the political leaders vested with the task of improving

moral and intellectual standards of people. They are to demand

moral change by dramatizing moral issue of public affairs.

In the light of the Watergate scandal that is yet to evaporate

from the memory of the American public, Mills is not without

reason when he laments that "we are today a leaderless demo-

cracy" (PPP: 337). "If public officials are to be morally

responsible, there must also be a sense of morally political

purpose. For in politics those who have no moral beliefs are

likely to become the tools of those who do" (PPP: 336). It

is in this sense that Mills' Representative Men are also moral

men, that political intellectuals are moral men and that de-

mocracy is meaningless without moral ends. To sum up:

> It is to create, to force, to make articulate
> such crises that Representative Men would find
> one major role in a democracy. Being men of
> conscience, they would stand up to corrupting
> institutions and thus become the pivots around
> which these institutions could be redirected.
> But they could not do that if they were not
> sustained by a morally oriented movement ....
> I do believe that the creation of such Repre-
> sentative Men should be a major aspiration of
> our collective political life. For only the
> presence of such men, and the moving conditions
> for their maximum influence, could change the
> sourness of the higher immorality into the
> everyday sweetness of a morally free society
> (PPP: 338).

Mill and Mills: Few Points of Contrast

The broad purpose behind this preceding comparison of

Mills with Mill is that it illustrates how Mills, primarily a

sociologist, shared many of the fundamental democratic aspirations of Mill, the classic exponent of representative democracy. Both were afraid of moral, intellectual and, ultimately, political stagnation of representative democracy in their respective societies. However, it is now necessary to indicate certain discontinuities between the two. Quite understandably, since Mill is a political theorist, he is more comprehensive than Mills. Though both were radicals in their styles of thought and shared similar reformist zeal, Mills' realization of the political role of public opinion and of parties seems to place him in a unique position compared to that of Mill. Though none of them had any political affiliation, they differed much on these points. Mill values the worth of the freedom of expression or the liberty of political dissent for the citizen. But, unlike Bentham or Mills, he is sceptic about the public opinion. For Mill, the rule of public opinion virtually means the rule of the majority, and in the political circumstances of realistic politics, the majority is intolerant of any other opinion but its own. So he can write: "The majority have not yet learnt to feel the power of the government their power, or its opinions their opinions. When they do so, individual liberty will probably be as much exposed to invasion from the government, as it already is from public opinion." (Mill, 1951: 94). Therefore, Mill ultimately comes to realize that "in politics it is almost triviality to say that public opinion now rules the world" (1951: 165). Mills was not unaware of Mill's anxiety

about the tyranny of the majority. In addition, he also knew
Mill's elevation of the selfless, public-minded, knowledge-
able and conscientious few in the forefront of democratic
politics against the obvious mediocrity of the majority.
Mill points to them as "the tribunal of the specially in-
structed" or the "intellectual benefactors of humanity."
This only parallels Mills' primacy attached to the intelli-
gentsia. Despite all these and other similarities with Mill,
Mills recognizes the indispensability of public opinion in
the functioning of democracy, as evident, at least, by his
lament for the transformation of the community of publics
into a community of masses. However, both of them typically
share what might be called some sort of political inability
of the general mass to be the real rulers in the regime of
democracy. But that Mills was in favor of restoring the
public to the seat of legitimate power is much evident in
his analysis of the decline of American democracy. Closely
related to Mill's apprehension of the quality and role of
public opinion was his negative opinion towards political
party system. In fact Mill had no love for it. One immediate
reason is that in his time political parties were looser
bodies than what we find today. However, in spite of this,
Mill always emphasized popular participation in the political
processes of democracy. As Duncan remarks, "Mill, who
certainly had little of Dahl's enthusiasm for party and in-

terest group competition, did believe strongly that continu-

ous participation in political life, even by men who were

initially selfish and short-sighted, would bring about greater

agreement and close community ties than had previously existed"

(1973: 271). Insofar as Mills is concerned, he repeatedly

points out that political parties have much to do with func-

tioning of democracy. Although he was critical of the parties

as they worked in America, Mills strongly believed in the

parties as leading agent and catalyst of political sociali-

zation for the people in general and also as mechanism that

would shape decision-making at various policy levels of demo-

cratic government. At the level of social change, while Mill

favored gradualism, Mills believed in radicalism and, there-

fore, wanted immediate restructuring of American society

within the democratic framework. However, Mills was quite

aware of the hindrances to the resurgence of democracy in

America. As he reminded:

> I do not believe that these six conditions can be
> brought about so long as the private corporation
> remains as dominant and as irresponsible as it
> is in national and international decisions; I do
> not believe that they can be brought about so
> long as the ascendancy of the military, in per-
> sonnel and in ethos, is as dominant and as poli-
> tically irresponsible as it is; and certainly they
> cannot be brought about without filling the poli-
> tical vacuum that is now the key fact of U.S.
> politics (CWT: 119-20).

An Assessment

Any conclusion of Mills' position as a democrat seems

to be a negative one, no matter how authentic he was in his

democratic aspirations. In terms of realpolitik, Mills'
democratic visions of American democracy remain an utopia
far beyond immediate possibilities of any realization.

As a democrat he shares, as already noted, the values
of classic socialism and liberalism, especially the latter.
With Weber and Durkheim, on the side of sociology, and Mill
and Schumpeter, on the side of political theory, Mills ex-
hibits his manifest conviction in the basic superiority of
the democratic ideal as the most utilitarian arrangement of
power sharing between the rulers and the ruled. He is not
a democrat in the sense of what he calls "liberal rhetoric."
Speaking theoretically, he began his intellectual odyssey
with virulent criticism of liberalism, especially that of
pragmatist tradition of Peirce, James and Dewey. Approach-
ing Peirce on a social psychological level, Mills criticized
him on the ground that "he did not have a worked-out view of
politics" (SP: 194-95). James, to whom Mills owes his hu-
manism, moralism and the reverence for truth, was an apolo-
gist of war, a "conservative" and a protagonist of "laissez-
faire." In estimating him, Mills was quick to point out that
he was "at bottom conservative. In his pronouncements on
morals, family life, and temperance this is true. In religion,
the only thing not conservative about his view, the only thing
original is his explanation, the grounds on which he justi-
fied theism. In political matters we have seen that his in-
dividualism was bound to place his weight with the regnant
laissez-faire attitude. On economic and political questions
he was usually in the classic liberal position" (SP: 273).

However, it was in criticism of Dewey's pluralistic relativism
that Mills elaborated his concern for unequal power distribu-
tion in the modern industrial-democratic society. On the
one hand, it is a kind of "politics of reform of situation."
On the other, Dewey's biological model of action and reflec-
tion "serves to minimize the clevage and power divisions
within society." (SP: 382). Commenting on the limitations
of pragmatism, Mills' first love according to Horowitz, he
states that politically "pragmatism is less expediency than
it is a kind of perennial mugwump confronted with rationalized
social structures" (SP: 394). Elsewhere he repeats: "As
a method, pragmatism is overstuffed with imprecise social
value; as a social-political orientation, it undoubtedly has
a tendency toward opportunism" (PPP: 167).

In his discussion of the prospects of a new individual-
ism, Alexander makes a suggestive remark: "liberalism, if
it is to pursue its historic ideals, must become radical"
(1972: 111). By the late 1960s, like many, Mills fought to
break with the liberal establishment; protested against the
merger of political-corporate power system; attacked the mani-
pulative system of pseudo-politics; bemoaned for growing poli-
tical apathy of the intellectuals, the mass and the working
class; and finally, sought a remedy in resuscitation of demo-
cratic reason and freedom for the modern man in the confines
of the technological society. In trying to reinstate "the
image of the self-cultivating man as the goal of the human

being," to overcome social, technological and bureaucratic
rationality as "a means of tyranny and manipulation, a means
of expropriating the very chance to reason, the very capacity
to act as free man," to warn against the advancing menace of
the soft cell of the managerial-technological-welfare and
warfare society as successor to gospels of the New Deal,
Mills indeed became a radical. Rather he became what may be
called "the radical liberal."[5] Or, in other words, he turned
into "a democratic Left."[6] This is the reason why he wrote
on the decline of the Left and appealed to the democrats in
the leftist tradition. Suggesting in broadest terms the ob-
jectives of a realistic politics of truth, Mills summarizes
the tasks lying ahead of all:

> In summary, what we must do is to define the
> reality of the human condition and to make our
> definitions public; to confront the new facts
> of history-making in our time, and their mean-
> ings for the problem of political responsibility;
> to release human imagination by transcending the
> mere exhortation of grand principle and opportun-
> ist reaction in order to explore all the alter-
> natives now open to the human community (PPP: 235).

But, tragically though, it remains more an ideal, an
utopian vision for changed self and society. Despite reform-
ist postures and Leftist offensives, the triumphant march of
corporate capitalism, the liberalized democracy and bureaucra-
tized state apparatus has remained and has grown unhindered.
Smith has said that "the collapse of liberalism might well
lie in the future, but it is not the impending doom or the
imminent inevitability of the near future" (1972: 88). In all

probability, it is more than a prophesy. The question, how-
ever, remains the same which Mills himself raised in 1942:

> As government and business become increasingly
> interlocked, economic questions will more and
> more become: who is to staff the points of
> political decision in governmental hierarchies
> and pinnacles? The new questions of freedoms
> and securities must be put in the fore of these
> decisions .... for today "the political freedom
> of free enterprise" means the power of Corpora-
> tions over and within the state (PPP: 186).

Considered in the Millsian terms, the political problem of

unfreedom has become even more acute in the days subsequent

to Mills' death in 1962. I have already drawn attention to

the chain of developments in America. American society is

now variously designated as "Warfare State" (Cook, 1972),

"Pentagonized Society" (Bosch, 1968), "The Contract State"

(Neiburg, 1970), "The Garrison Society" (Dibble, 1968),

"Weapons Culture" (Lapp, 1969), etc.[7] In fact, these de-

velopments are not so much a pointer to the crisis of de-

mocracy as it is to that of capitalism within which demo-

cracy has been dissolved or is, at least, in the process of

dissolution. In a capitalist society where liberty is a func-

tion of the ownership and possession of property, the im-

portant question which Mills should have asked, is not

"whether democracy will survive, but whether capitalist de-

mocracy will survive, for that is the system which is attack-

ed" (Laski, 1933: 185). Mills, being on the side of Mill,

failed to understand that liberal democracy, in changed cir-

cumstances of modern times, would have to be revised in order

to resolve its built-in contradiction, "the contradiction
between equal freedom to realize one's human powers and
freedom of unlimited appropriation of others' powers, or
between the maximization of powers in the ethical sense and
the maximization of powers in the descriptive market sense
...." (Macpherson, 1973: 23). How far, if at all, this con-
tradiction can be resolved is one question. If resolved,
whether it will remain "liberal" is another. But insofar as
current developments within advanced capitalist societies in-
cluding the US are concerned, they point unmistakably at
least to one uniform pattern: ever increasing accumulation
of private economic power and a concomitant rise of the state
as a guardian and protector of the dominant economic interests.
In a situation like this even the success of the reformist
proposal for a participatory democracy involving "a down-
grading or abandonment of market assumptions about the nature
of man and society, a departure from the image of man as a
maximizing consumer, and a great reduction of the present
economic and social inequality" (Macpherson, 1977: 115), seems
to be quite remote. For, the growing "unequal economic
power, on the scale and of the kind encountered in advanced
capitalist societies, inherently produces political inequality,
on a more or less commensurate scale, whatever the constitu-
tion may say" (Miliband, 1976: 237). The prospect of democracy
then recedes in face of mounting tensions between economic
and political equality in the capitalist contexts of the

society. The democratic state fully emerges as a capitalist
state with the function of sustaining and maintaining a class
structure and relations of production suited to the pre-
dominance of private ownership of property and capitalistic
competition. In the epoch of "late capitalism," to borrow
Mandel's (1975) phrase, the state also becomes repressive,
revealing the "seamy side of democracy" (cf. Wolfe, 1973).
Whatever the other results that might follow, the people are
increasingly separated from centers of democratic participa-
tion. In the crisis of capitalism, while the democratic
form of the state is maintained, its democratic content
suffers constant erosion. Commenting on the growing conflict
between capitalism and democracy in America, Reich and Ed-
wards go on to say the following:

> The isolation of government from the electoral
> system, the capitalists' financial weight with
> both parties, and the sterility of the present
> two-party system have wrung from American govern-
> ment much of its democratic content. Many civil
> liberties and personal freedoms remain, but the
> basic elements of democratic government--consent
> of the governed and control of the government by
> popular majority--have been seriously eroded
> (1978: 53).

Against this backdrop of all these developments, what remains
of American democracy or of Mills' vision for a democratic
society based on values of classic liberalism? Insofar as
Mills' position as a democrat is concerned, it seems that
posterity would remember him ultimately as a humanist. His
success lies in the rebirth and rejuvenation of democratic
ideals of reason and freedom that now form the inexhaustible

fountain of radical protest. With full knowledge of the

constraint of bureaucratized liberalism to contain and sub-

vert "the humanistic tradition with greater and more stream-

lined ease" (Smith, 1972: 83), let us wait to see how soon

Lasch proves right in what he says in conclusion of his own

essay:

> The post-industrial order, far from transcending
> the contradictions inherent in capitalism, em-
> bodies them in an acute form. Having outlasted
> its principal historical function--that of capi-
> tal accumulation--the system of privately owned
> production for profit can only survive by devot-
> ing itself more and more to the production of
> waste. Yet the social effect of waste is to
> generate mounting political tensions. How these
> tension will be resolved--whether in the long
> run they will furnish the basis of a socialism
> of abundance or whether efforts to resolve them
> will usher in a new age of barbarism--no one can
> say with any confidence. What can be said is
> that the post-industrial order is an inherently
> unstable form of society. There are good reasons
> to think that it may not even survive the twen-
> tieth century (1972: 47-48).

Notes

1. See Chapter 4, pp. 161-63; also Chapter 7, pp.

2. Although not directly relevant here, I agree with Macpherson who says that "it was the liberal state that was democratized, and in the process, democracy was liberalized" (1974: 5).

3. I have already made the point clear in Chatper 7 at pp. 296-98.

4. For further discussion on Mills' views about truth, its origin or nature, see Chapter 3, especially pp. 89-91, 96-97.

5. The epithet has been taken from Kaufman (1968).

6. See Harrington (1968b) for an assessment of American social developments from the viewpoint of the democratic Left.

7. For further discussion on these developments, see Chapter 6, pp. 265-67.

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion

Having finished the main burden of the work, I now

propose, in this concluding chapter, to accomplish two re-

maining tasks. First, I intend to summarize the main find-

ings of this work, indicating also Mills' contribution to

sociology in general. Second, I undertake a critical assess-

ment of his radical political sociology, pointing out some

of its major deficiencies.

Summary of the Findings

(A) The basic importance of Mills as a sociologist, it seems

to me, lies in his over-all contributions to the different

areas of modern sociology. As already pointed out in the

first chapter, the importance of Mills as a sociologist or

political sociologist does not consist solely in his thesis

of the power elite. This is to say that his reliance on the

concept of power or his use of the thesis of the power elite

does not exhaust his other basic contributions to the differ-

ent areas of sociology, although there is a distinct tendency

among many sociologists to overstate Mills' position as a

theorist of power or power elite. This becomes quite evident

if one focuses, as I have done throughout this work, on his

contributions in other areas such as his critique of Parsons

or abstracted empiricism, sociological methodology, mass

society, alienation etc.

(B) In Chapter 2, I have shown that an important contribution

of Mills' lies in his demonstrating how Parsons' sociology

is a sociology of legitimation of, and status quo for, the

corporate capitalist society of America. In this demonstra-

tion, Mills was one of the earliest and leading sociologists

who broke with the mainstream currents in academic sociology.

This has positively accelerated the rise of the opposing

current, the radical point of view, in modern American socio-

logy.

(C) Mills' methodological contributions, made out in Chapter 3,

are quite unique. Many of the issues he dealt with are cer-

tainly not beyond controversy. But, in general, they attest

to his methodological consciousness of the discipline and are

significant in laying foundation for a humanistic sociology.

Needless to mention, his discussion of the issues of sociology

of knowledge, values and objectivity, quantification, role of

historical dimension in sociology, and the role of problem

consciousness is quite significant. In this connexion, it

may also be added that his critique of modern empiricism has

become theoretical basis of the radical, and sometimes Marxist,

attack on the establishment sociological theory and research.

Mills' concept of the sociological imagination and his re-

search strategy of sociological craftsmanship have now become

rules of methodological guidance for many of the recent socio-

logists.

(D) Mills' theses of the power elite, the rise of the mass

society, and the advent of alienation in modern industrial and

social life of man are powerful weapons with which he launched

his onslaught against corporate capitalist institutions of

American society. There is no need to repeat the point that

Mills' thesis of the power elite has been very much influential

in stimulating, in modern sociology or political science,

critical debates about the trends of power distribution in

American society. Its importance is quite well known. Mills'

theory of mass society (Chapter 4), as I have constructed it

out of different elements in his writings, is no less important

as a heuristic device for assessing the mass life of individuals

in a society dominated by elites in power. While his theory

of mass society is not necessarily scientific in view of its

lack of coherent or logical postulates, it nevertheless pro-

vides a diagnosis of the emergent social order in America.

In Mills' political sociology, the concepts of mass society

and alienation appear as interrelated aspects of societal

developments that have taken place since World War II. Insofar

as the different aspects of alienation are concerned, as I

discussed in Chapter 5, it is apparent that Mills is not a

systematic theorist comparable to the position of Marx. Al-

though he agreed with Marx on a number of aspects regarding

the origin or nature of the problem of alienation, he differed

fundamentally from Marx in not viewing alienation from the

context of political economy. Since he was more Weberian, he

relied on other variables in addition to its capitalist contexts.

Whatever it is, my own finding is that Mills attached, like

Marx, central importance to the problem of alienation in modern

industrial society. What is really significant in this con-

nexion is that Mills revealed, unlike Marx, more dimensions

of the problem of alienation.)

(E) In Chapter 6, wherein I discuss the ingredients of Mills'

political sociology, demonstrates that Mills is fundamentally

a problem-centered sociologist. He conceives of his political

sociology in terms of what he calls private troubles and public

issues; at the same time, it is oriented to the goals of poli-

tical liberalism, that is, attainment of reason and freedom

for all. Here Mills' uniqueness, as a political sociologist,

consists in three things: First, it is now widely acknowledged

that sociological theory or research should be guided by what

he termed as "the sociological imagination." My investiga-

tions have illustrated how this concept can be fruitful in

sociological or social analysis. Second, Mills has tried, at

least in his own way, to link sociology to political goals

of liberalism. No matter whether one accepts a sociology

based on political liberalism, it is clear that Mills fought

and stood for it. In this he was quite open and explicit.

Third, Mills' views on war, militarism, capitalist imperial-

ism or private troubles and public sissues in regard to mar-

riage and the family or metropolis have largely stood the test

of time. It is my impression that many of Mills' ideas are

still valid and will continue to remain valid.

(F)　An important characteristic of Mills' political sociology
is that it is not only radical but also Leftist in orientation;
at the same time, although his is a liberal sociology, it is
not simply based upon liberalism pure and simple.　In Chapter
7 I have shown that Mills' political sociology, though based
on premises of liberalism, is sharply different from other
varities of liberal political sociology in that Mills proposes
Leftism as a component of sociological tasks.　In other words,
he criticizes the existing corporate institutions, attacks
their status quo and stands for immediate restructuring of
the society within the framework of democratic values and
ideals.　His preference for the intelligentsia as an agency
of radical historical change, which has invited charges of
elitism, is not a sudden appearance.　This is also true of
his disillusionment with the working class.　As a matter of
fact, Mills' early optimism and later pessimism about the role
of the working class matches his early negativism and later
positivism about the intelligentsia as an alternative agency
of change.　My own findings indicate that Mills' disillusion-
ment with the working class was due primarily to two reasons:
first, Mills' orientations in pragmatism, liberalism and his
acceptance of the Weberian evaluation of Marx are one important
reason; second, he was rather a prisoner of circumstances in
the sense that he saw how labor leaders or labor bureaucracy
gradually become integrated with the national power elite.
Similarly, it has been found that Mills' reliance on the in-
telligentsia is not a simple case of personal preference but

rather a consequence of a chain of events and a series of experiences. Therefore, charges of elitism against him can only be made with risks.

(G) I have shown, in Chapter 8, that Mills was at heart a liberal democrat who believed in its classic values. His faith in democracy is quite comparable to that of Mill, who is considered to be the best theorist on representative institutions. I called Mills "a stubborn democrat." My own enumeration of the different elements of his commitment to democracy makes this characterization all the more compelling. While this rules out charges of elitism against Mills, I have also found that his democratic visions of American society are likely to remain an utopia in view of subsequent developments there. Mills failed to realize that the crisis of democracy is a crisis of capitalism; he also failed to realize that growing economic inequality in capitalism cannot bring about political equality for all in the society. In general, it seems to me that Mills failed to appreciate the consequences of growing conflict between capitalism and democracy.

(H) A final point need to be added here. It is my impression, having done this work, that Mills' sociological contributions are of wide-ranging scope and diversity. In him, there flows a rich intellectual tradition; he is a carrier of several currents of sociological tradition. As I see, Mills is a link between classic sociology and modern sociology. In this sense his sociology represents an integrating point between classic sociology and modern sociology.

A Critique of Mills' Radical Political Sociology

The signal contribution of Mills, in contrast to the
conservative and consensual Weltanschauung of the mainstream
sociologists, consists in the fact that he provides a radical
break which, in later years, became the fountain source of
radical school of modern sociology.[1] While this constitutes
a noteworthy achievement of Mills and thus entitles him to
a place in the history of modern sociology, it is also true
at the same time that his political sociology suffers from
serious theoretical and methodological deficiencies. Both
liberals and Marxists have subjected Mills' political socio-
logy to searching criticism. Let me illustrate this, while
drawing my own conclusions.

Shils, a noted liberal sociologist, considers that
Mills' scheme of sociology, centering around society, history
and personality, leads to a kind of "hyper-political histori-
cism." On the one hand he thinks that Mills' "recommenda-
tion that sociologists help ordinary men to translate their
'private troubles' into public issues is reminiscent of the
Marxian idea of 'false consciousness' and its transformation
into 'class consciousness' through the adoption of the Marxian
outlook" (Shils, 1961: 612 footnote). Whereas this statement
reflects a liberal reaction to Marxism in general, he accuses
Mills, on the other hand, of concentrating too much on power.
Somewhat one-sidedly he remarks: "But in our present condi-
tion, where power is and the 'troubles' which occur in sub-

systems ('Milieux'?) are functions of 'public' events, these

lesser phenomena are not worth studying except as emanations

of that all-creative essence: power" (Shils, 1961: 614).

Aptheker, a Marxist theorist, accuses Mills of "moderation-

ist-liberal" approach and of an exaggeration of "the univers-

ality of the defeat of reason in the social sciences" in

America. Mills' limitations in the analysis of capitalist

social structure and its accoutrements--depression, unemploy-

ment, war-making, male supremacy, inhabitable cities--are

apparent because his "main point is not the substantive cri-

tique of the status quo; it is, rather, to insist upon the

social roots of what appear to be and so often are labeled

purely personal problems or difficulties" (Aptheker, 1960: 99).

A more direct criticism has been made by Warde who contends

that Mills' faith in the endurance of capitalist sovereignty,

his underestimation of the role of labor and an acceptance

of the predominant economic and political conditions of the

past have debarred him to expect "countertendencies" and "fresh

advances of the anticapitalist forces" in the capitalist

economy of the US.

> His thinking was a mass of contradictions.
> Repelled by the decay of liberalism and its
> apology for capitalist reaction and militarism,
> he nevertheless adhered to its fundamental
> pragmatic method of approach to the major so-
> cial processes of our epoch. He was attracted
> by socialism but could not accept its scienti-
> fic doctrine. He was a partisan of the Latin-
> American revolution who had no faith in a North
> American revolution. He opposed the autocracy
> of the Power Elite and aspired to a rebirth of

> democracy in our country. But he despaired
> of the capacities of the working people to
> clear the way for its realization (Warde, 1962: 95).

The validity of this characterization of Mills' political

orientation and his coiology derives from the fact that he

either turned to classic masters who were old liberals or

conservatives, or attempted to work out a theoretical syn-

thesis between Weber, Marx and pragmatist liberalism. The

result has not been satisfactory and the failure is especial-

ly visible in that he, despite his attempt to stretch demo-

cratic liberalism to its maximum point of radicalism, ends

up eventually with political liberalism and envisages all

radical changes within the liberal-capitalist order.[2] His

simplistic adherence to "plain marxism" and antipathy for

revolutionary role of the labor or the masses had its impact

on the content of his political sociology. It is of no sur-

prise that Mills' eclectic program fails to produce any "po-

litically-credible synthesis" of Weber, Marx and pragmatism

(cf. Binns, 1977: 141). At the same time the big range socio-

logy, which follows from and is built upon Mills' conception

of a problem-oriented political sociology, has come under

severe attack:

> .... much of the new sociology is over-ambitious,
> pretentious, even downright shoddy, sometimes
> journalistic in the worst sense and only held
> together by the distorted simplifications of the
> ideologically blinkered. The stakes are raised.
> The good is superb, the bad is appalling, the
> average is poor; it is easier to come to grief.
> The new sociologists have no conception of a
> utopia in which freedom, reason and responsibility
> are permanently secured for all men. They may
> bedazzle with striking phrases but they proclaim
> no eschatology (Bryant, 1976: 311).

My own findings indicate that this criticism is too much to

be said of Mills or any other sociologists in the radical

tradition. If it is at all applicable, in which case it tends

almost to nullify the claim of the radicals to conceive of

sociology anew and restructure society accordingly, the same

also holds good for establishment-liberal brand, probably

to a greater extent. The truth of the matter is that both

establishment sociology and Mills' variant are committed,

though in varying degrees in terms of their respective theo-

retical emphases and ideological orientations, to the liberal-

reformist tradition.(Mills' sociology takes the side of a

new social order when it criticizes the existing societal

status quo; it calls for, though in vague terms, basic struc-

tural changes; focuses often social psychologically rather

than structurally on the major social problems; and, finally,

develops a theoretical standpoint, as distinct from social

pathology framework, in dealing with those problems. It also

proposes to be "an action sociology," "a humanistic sociology"

or even "a long range sociology." In spite of these plus

points, whereby it gains advantages over mainstream sociology

and draws popular support of the younger generation of socio-

logists, Mills' political sociology is likely to remain a

perspective, a rising but not a dominating tendency, in socio-

logical enterprise. Its thrust on the immediacy of action

does not in fact radically alter the non-radical character

of his sociology.[3]) Its so-publicized radicalism finds expres-

sion only in proposals of reformism, and that too within a

framework of, as I see it, "limited conflict" conception.
In practical terms it advocates institutional-structural
changes and speaks of, politically, individualistic rehabili-
tation of reason and freedom. Its programs are ad hoc and
eclectic. It borrows from and is in turn strengthened by
Marxism but it rarely rises above mere acceptance of certain
Marxian humanist or social psychological fundamentals. One
can also find in Mills' political sociology a conception that
modern monopoly capitalism could be turned into a democratic
ethic of equal opportunities for all in the United States.
Compared to Marxism as a social theory, Mills' radical poli-
tical sociology neither offers a science of society nor takes
into account objective, structrual and material forces deter-
mining the formation of the society or polity. At the same
time a conception of sociology that is obligated to translate
the personal troubles of the milieu into the public issues of
social structure unnecessarily delimits the range of socio-
logical imagination (cf. Shils, 1961: 619). It is not an
objective analysis of social structure but results in an
exhortation of, as I call it, a moralistic individualism. Its
stress on the role of history does not fully conform to the
way in which it analyses contemporary problems; the relevance
of its idealized version of the role of reason and freedom to
the current capitalist structural realities inside or out-
side of America is also questionable. Within such realities
men are seldom free enough either to make their own history

or to establish the democratic regime of reason and freedom.
Thus both mainstream and Mills' sociology can be seen as, in
the words of Sklair, "sociological utopias fulfilling differ-
ent but complementary functions."

> Now 'Radical' sociology is best understood in
> terms of a relatively unrealizable utopia pre-
> cisely because the social order towards which
> it points has no scientific basis as such. All
> talk about disalienating mankind, restoring hu-
> man dignity, putting an end to inequalities and
> misery without reference to the particular forms
> of economic exploitation characteristic of so-
> cieties in which labor and capital (private or
> state) are in antagonistic relations, is indeed
> more or less utopian (Sklair, 1977: 64).

The radical sociology of Mills mistakes the contradictions of
capitalism as mere reformable failings; for example, the ad-
vent of mass society and its accompanying consequences of
alienation is apparently traced to the postwar changes in the
institutional structures of the society, to the decline of
reason, freedom and therefore democracy, and to urbanization,
industrialization and bureaucratization. Rather than looking
into the internal operations and contradictions of capital-
ism, Mills' political sociology locates mass society or aliena-
tion mainly at the "super"-structural levels. It sees power
relations as the fountain of inequality but turns away from
treating the state as a repressive institutional-administra-
tive apparatus. It catalogues deleterious consequences of
the rise of the mass consumption society but it does not take
into account how production relations are manipulated and
who manipulate them. It is afraid of bureaucratic tendencies

in the modern state but does not treat its growth as a com-
ponent constituent of the capitalist state. It seeks to re-
place corporate capitalism but it does not seek socialism; it
rests its hope on the goodwill of capitalism and the capital-
ists. As a matter of fact, Mills' sociology has not accom-
plished a theoretical integration of its basic, but divergent,
postulates on the basis of which a systematic theory or science
of society is possible. On this count its immediate problem
is, I think, methodological. Its critique of formalistic
methodological empiricism is both encouraging and time honor-
ed. Mills' methodological contributions are quite insightful
and important. The point, however, is that its own critique
of so-called scientism is self-defeating so long as it is
not able to offer its own "science" of society. For this
reason radical sociology, Mills' own variant included, has
to develop at least a scientific framework by which to examine
objective/material social realities of everyday human life
outside the subjective experiences of individuals. Its avoid-
ance of historical materialism has resulted in a virtual ac-
ceptance of historical idealism. As a consequence it has not
only failed to recognize the historical specificity of capi-
talism and its mode of production but was also practically
led to accept the rationality of capitalism and its relations
of production as a necessary, or at least as an alternative,
way of development of the productive forces of other societies.
In this regard, therefore, the future prospect of radical

sociology, Mills' sociology included, will be conditional to the extent to which its principles rest upon a foundation of interrelated and consistent propositions about society. It will succeed to the extent to which it can claim to be a scientific, and not merely a critical, sociology. The defining characteristics of this science would have to be, I think, materialist, deductive and dialectical, rather than only idealist or historicist. Practically this means that the only kind of methodology available to radical sociology is Marxist methodology (cf. Sklair, 1977: 64).

> The need for a reformulation of "science" in
> Marxist terms, and the development of a mater-
> ialist epistemology are the problems which face
> intellectuals today, and if "radical sociology"
> is to confront these problems it must come down
> from the abstract pedestal of "critical theory"
> to the materialistic praxis demanded by real
> life (Pitch, 1974: 58).

Having said all these, the important question, which demands an answer, is this: What is, then, the future of Mills' political sociology or of radical sociology in general? To answer this obviously is a risky venture of prophesy-making. It may be suggested however that, despite its theoretical and methodological deficiencies, Mills' political sociology or radical sociology of more or less of the Millsian tradition will continue to grow in mass and attract attention as long as it capitalizes on the failings of corporate capitalism in America. As long as it takes on the role of the critic of corporate capitalist society and focuses mainly on its failings, such a sociology will have enough grist for its mill since

continuous production of such problems are a function of

corporate capitalism. These problems are many, ranging from

unemployment to militarism of the para state (cf. Kolko, 1976:

346; Melman, 1970: 226). To describe capitalist contradictions

in terms of problems of fiscal crises:

> In modern America individual well-being, class
> relationships, natural wealth and power are
> bound up in the agony of the cities, poverty
> and racism, profits of big and small business,
> inflation, unemployment, the balance-of-payments,
> problem, imperialism and war, and other crises
> that seem a permanent part of daily life. No
> one is exempt from the fiscal crisis and the
> underlying social crises, which it aggravates
> (O'Connor, 1973: 3).

If this is any description of the contemporary problems of

American society, let me conclude by a recent radical response

in the Millsian tradition:

> Men suffer, we are saying, and the direction of
> the world opened up by capitalism and the En-
> lightenment is to ensure an increase in that
> suffering. But the suffering is not due simply
> to the wickedness of individuals. It is not
> even due to the evils of one system as against
> another. The fact is that, having escaped from
> the pre-capitalist, pre-industrial world, this
> is where we are (Rex, 1974: 222).

Notes

1. Although all the members of this school of radical socio-
    logy are not unanimous on the issues of their area, the
    scope of their sociology or the nature of methodology in-
    volved, it is suggested here that they draw their main
    inspiration from Mills. See Horowitz (1968: 203), Howard
    (1970: 7), Coalfax and Roach (1971: 18), Szymanski (1970)
    and Scimecca (1977).

2. In a sense, Mills was also conservative. However radical
    may be his sociology, the appeal of Mills "was not for
    the dismantlement of the American society but rather for
    its purification, for its return, not to the form and
    rhetoric, but to the reality of the principles which first
    animated and were the source of the original American
    vitality and strength" (Kraetzer, 1975: 249). See also
    Hofstadter (1955) who initially put forward this line of
    estimation.

3. For a similar criticism of radical sociology, see Deutsch
    (1970: 90-91).

4. My own impression about this is that Mills neglected to
    explore, somewhat because of his total rejection of ab-
    stracted empiricism, the possibilities of making socio-
    logy a scientific endeavor or of putting sociology on
    scientific foundations. Mills sharply distinguished
    sociology from physical science, stood for the primacy
    of the individual as opposed to team research, and was
    too concerned with all that passed on in the name of
    science. These are points, among others, which sustain
    the view that Mills rejected science. Thus, Willer says,
    "If Concept and Method are the fetishes of some, Science
    was the taboo of Mills" (1967: xviii-xix). However, I
    think that Willer has overstated his case because Mills
    was not completely against science or the use of scienti-
    fic method. The point is that he had his own views.

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