The Political Culture of the Agrarian Radicals:

A Canadian Adventure in Democracy

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January, 1990.
A Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Ph.D.

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Abstract

The agrarian radicals, in the first few decades of this century, particularly on the prairies, entered into a dramatic adventure in democracy. This involved them in the development of a unique political culture based upon a self-formative citizenship, and a prefigurative praxis of social transformation. Their intent was to generalize throughout Canada the practices and sensibility that characterized and animated their adventure in democracy.

This agrarian radical experience would have much to teach us about democracy and the political heritage of our country. This history, however, has been obscured by the post-depression, academic scholarship on the agrarian radicals that we have inherited. This inherited scholarship has assumed the historical determination of common people's lives to lie with forces outside of their control: heteronomy. The agrarian radicals assumed the capacity of common people, if properly prepared, to determine their own history: autonomy. The inherited scholarship's heteronomist perspective suffered a lacuna that made it nearly impossible to grasp the nature of the agrarian radical political culture.

A recent new approach attempting to revise this legacy has been only partially successful. It has recognized the importance of the self-formative citizenship, but perpetuated the lacuna on prefigurative praxis.

The notion that the agrarian radicals developed to characterize their political culture was that of a school of citizenship. Recognizing this dimension of their political culture is the key to unlocking the history of their adventure in democracy, and the insights they could provide for the modern age.

RÉSUMÉ

Durant les premières décennies du siècle, les radicaux agrariens se trouvèrent engagés dans une extraordinaire aventure démocratique, notamment dans les Prairies. C'est ainsi qu'ils contribuèrent à l'élaboration d'une culture politique originale fondée sur un civisme "autoformateur", et d'une praxis annonciatrice de transformations sociales. Ils se proposaient de généraliser au Canada les pratiques et la sagacité qui caractérisaient et animaient leur aventure démocratique.

Cette expérience des radicaux agrariens pourrait nous en apprendre long sur la démocratie et l'héritage politique de notre pays. Cette histoire a pourtant été obscurcie par la période qui a succédé à la grande crise et les théories spéculatives sur les radicaux agrariens dont nous avons hérité. Ces théories partent de l'hypothèse que les gens ordinaires tirent leur volonté historique de forces dont ils ne sont pas maîtres: l'hétéronomie. L'hypothèse fondamentale des radicaux agrariens estimait que les gens ordinaires, à condition d'être bien préparés, pouvaient déterminer leur propre destin: l'autonomie. La perspective hétéronomiste héritée des intellectuels a rendu presque impossible la compréhension exacte de la nature de la culture politique des radicaux agrariens.

Une nouvelle méthode récente pour tenter de réviser cette théorie n'a pas atteint entièrement son but. Tout en reconnaissant l'importance du civisme "autoformateur", elle perpétue le manque de compréhension de la praxis annonciatrice des transformations sociales.

La notion que les radicaux agrariens ont créée pour caractériser leur culture politique était celle d'une école de civisme. Pour comprendre l'histoire de leur aventure démocratique et les idées qu'ils pourraient offrir à l'époque moderne, il est nécessaire de reconnaître cette dimension de leur culture politique.

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Glossary of Abbreviations

GGG	*Grain Growers Guide*
GGA(s)	Grain Growers Association(s)
MGGA	Manitoba GGA
SGGA	Saskatchewan GGA
GGGC	Grain Growers Grain Company
UFA	United Farmers of Alberta
UFM	United Farmers of Manitoba
UFO	United Farmers of Ontario
CCF	Cooperative Commonwealth Federation

The usefulness of our Association...depends on the attitude and intelligence manifested by our members in dealing with public questions. We must study politics and discuss public questions as never before, and there is no better school in which the farmer can educate himself in what is requisite to fit him for taking his place as a useful citizen in his community, than his local Grain Growers Association.

Editorial, *Grain Growers Guide*, 1908

We are now...about to emerge from a mob-created government to the intelligent self-direction of an organized people. At the same time, it is of no use to blind ourselves to the fact that the mob is still most in evidence. A mob is a mob whether it is engaged in a lynching operation, or in throwing little pieces of paper into a ballot box.

William Irvine, 1920

Prefatory Remarks: Democracy and Communications

William Irvine had a sardonic vein for political reflection. For example: "There is much said and probably more written about democracy, but the real thing is constantly obscured by clouds of ink and words. Democracy is a very popular term - chiefly because nobody knows what is meant by it." [1]

In light of this remark, it would seem incumbent upon anyone writing a doctoral thesis about the adventure in democracy played out within the movement of which Irvine was a vital part to clarify just what is meant by the central term. In another light though, since this thesis is being submitted toward a Ph.D. in communication studies, some might consider it equally incumbent upon the author to demonstrate the inherent relevance of the subject matter to the discipline. I will take advantage of this preface to clarify these points.

On the former issue, my bias is undeniably in favour of the original, classical - I will argue, only genuine - understanding of democracy. In this I refer to the classical experience of ancient Greece, particularly in Athens. I am completely at odds with the generation of empiricist sociologists who, measuring Western capitalist society against the classical definition of democracy, and finding them incompatible, rather than relabelling their society, chose to redefine democracy. [2]

In the original understanding, democracy refers to a way of life, embedded in an autonomous society, which can be articulated on cultural, psychological, economic and even aesthetic levels, as well as social and political ones. Unlike the method-of-election or decision-procedure revision, with its basis in a formal and limited, prescribed civic exercise, the classical vision of democracy presumed a citizenship which was a dynamic, fluid and continuous articulation of collective self-expression and self-creation. For a democracy, citizenship can only exist when and where it actively participates in a self-governing community. [3]

This is so not merely because of the elemental justice in people controlling their own destiny in human affairs, but also because only such responsibility and experience provides the individual and the collective with the basis for active citizenship. As democracy is dependent upon such an engaged citizenship to bring about a self-governing community, the democracy of a self-governing community provides the best context within which such citizenship can be nurtured. The next several pages then endeavour to demonstrate these two points: the term "democracy" rightly belongs to the polity developed by the ancient Athenians; and the character of that polity is grounded upon a self-formative, intersubjective and discursive political culture. [4]

The classical scholar Moses Finlay has observed that it was the Greeks who "discovered" democracy, and indeed politics. [5] That this is so is generally accepted in classical scholarship. Less consensus, however, has existed concerning which particular aspect of the ancient Greek experience this term refers to. As a couple of dissidents in the tradition have suggested, the tendency among so many scholars of antiquity to use the term as a loose designation for any moderately egalitarian republicanism - indeed, to particularly glorify the more aristocratic phases - perhaps only reflects their own elitist sympathies. [6]

A more historically specific definition of democracy, however, has been rigorously advanced by the eminent classical philologist J.A.O. Larsen. Larsen argues on two levels. First, there is no evidence of the word democracy being used as a positive epithet prior to the "extreme democracy" associated to Periclean Athens.[7] It had been used as a vague epithet of abuse by the enemies of democracy prior to this period. But it was only Periclean Athens that embraced it as a term of positive-substantive self-definition.[8] The notion of the people's collective self-rule, as a competing political theory, certainly preceded its (until that time) highest achievement in Periclean Athens.[9] But the transparent appellation, which democracy was in the ancient Greek language, did not appear. Rather, this political theory was first called by the term *isonomia* : equality before the law.

The second, though contingent, argument advanced by Larsen is based upon Periclean democracy's self-defined heritage. The militant democrats of Periclean Athens claimed their historical legacy to derive from Cleisthenes and the reforms he implemented. Despite the fact that Cleisthenes himself could hardly be considered a militant democrat, this view provides a conceptual substance to this newly embraced positive self-description. It was Cleisthenes' reforms - breaking the tribal bonds that had upheld oligarchical hegemony, elimination of all birth and wealth barriers to citizen participation in politics, and the introduction of, almost universal, use of sortition[10] - that served as the demographic and institutional foundations of Periclean democracy. It was the radical nature and militant defense of these aspects of Periclean democracy that distinguished it from all other forms of Greek government - including some who later, diplomatically, called themselves democracies.

If the militant democrats of Periclean Athens saw these historically unique political aspects as the distinguishing characteristics of their polity

-for which they were the first to adopt as a substantive-positive appellation the word democracy - then it would indeed support the notion that this historically specific, narrowly defined, conception has a special claim to the word. This is the conclusion arrived at by Larsen: "For the student of the Greek state this means that, while he may think what he will of Periclean democracy, he should recognize its special claim to the name. He should also recognize that of the many varieties of democracy mentioned by Aristotle [in the *Politics*], only the more extreme - call it debased or perverted, if you will - has a special right to the name. The others, in fact, are perversions which claim a name which really does not belong to them." [11]

Larsen attributes this confusion in the historical scholarship to an insufficiently critical evaluation of the ancient sources. It is well established that throughout the period considered by such scholars as the golden age of Greek democracy there persisted a sizeable, militant, destructive and salient - although, in some ways, highly clandestine - hard-core of oligarchist opposition that attempted over the years, by a variety of means, to sabotage the democracy. [12] What is less well acknowledged is that, following the failure of two attempted oligarchical *coup d'états* in seven years (411 and 404), the subsequent appearance of the opposition's dissipation actually reflected a change in strategy. Taking their cue from the democrats' lionizing of Cleisthenes, whose credentials as a democrat were wanting - despite his reforms and their apparent intent - the opposition began to work from within the democracy.

In a phrase Larsen used in a later essay, as "crypto-oligarchs" the opposition undertook the strategy of embracing democracy in rhetoric and, behind the veil of allegiance, seeking to undermine it by extending the parameters of its heritage in such a fashion as to dilute the more radical and militant aspects of its conception. From Larsen's perspective then, those historians of antiquity who have accepted at face value the statements of, later-period, self-acclaimed democrats as deriving their heritage from the legacy of Solon's reforms, or Aristotle's taxonomy of democracies in the *Politics*, have only been deluded by the historic strategy of the oligarchical opposition to the authentic democracy.[13]

In his1954, Presidential Address to the American Philological Association, Larsen reaffirmed this thesis in responding to his detractors. But he also took advantage of the opportunity to extent historical appreciation of the fundamental legacy of that, specifically and narrowly defined, democracy: "The greatest contribution of Greece was the theory of the superiority of the collective judgment of the people - a doctrine without which, expressed or implied, democracy is impossible. Her second contribution was her actual experiment with democracy."[14]

The reasons that this happened as, and when, it did in Greece, and particularly Athens, are in part to be found in a complex series of historical, cultural, and to some extent geographical, developments far too elaborate to explore here. Understanding the consequences of those developments though is essential to our purpose. The superiority of the collective judgment of the people, along with the principle and practice of sortition, were the philosophical and institutional foundations of democracy. But both these were based on the intersubjective and discursive confidence and competence aquired by a self-formative citizenry engaged in a richly participatory political culture.

Amid their critique of the Socratic (i.e., aristocratic) vision of the *polis,* Ellen and Neal Wood state:

> Political relations exist where kinship and tribal custom, as well as the relation of master and subject and the arbitrary will of the master, have been overtaken by civic bonds, a territorial organization, and the rule of law as the fundamental principles of social order; where the command and obedience relations and the arbitrariness of the master-subject nexus have at least in principle been superseded by deliberation by a free citizen-body within a framework of law; where reason and *persuasion* rather than force of a master or the violence of the tribal vendetta are regarded as the essence of social order. In all these respects, too, democracy can be said to be the most perfectly *political* form of state, the form in which these departures from traditional associations are most developed. [15]

This statement emphasizes two important ideas. The first of these is the idea that democracy is the logical, if not the teleological, end of politics as participatory life within the *polis.* The other important idea is that this participatory life within the *polis,* as politics, is fundamentally constituted by the equal opportunity for citizens to resolve conflicts through rational discourse in deliberative and deliberate communication. Both of these are frequently cited, and compelling points. For instance, as Finlay has observed, *isegoria* - the ancient Greek term for the universal right to speak in the assembly, was used as a synonym for democracy. [16] And, in discussing the polity in such terms, one must be careful to emphasize that reference is not only being made to the actual institutional forums of public policy formation. Such institutional forums themselves were in fact erected upon the ongoing, informal practices of politics as a way of life. [17]

In his unique study of politics in antiquity, Finlay gives an account of the rich network of formal, and informal, forums for public discussion that gave structure and diversity to the Athenian political way of life, upon which the democracy was based:

> This was not only a face-to-face society, it was also a Mediterranean society in which people congregated out of doors, on market-days, on numerous festive occasions, and all the time in the harbour and the town square. Citizens were members of varied formal and informal groups - the family and household, the neighbourhood or village, military and naval units, occupational groups (farmers at harvest time or urban crafts which tended to concentrate in particular streets), upper-class dining clubs, innumerable private cult-associations. All provided opportunities for news and gossip, for discussion and debate...." [18]

Thus the culture of democracy was a distinctly *political*-culture in the Greek sense of that term - highlighted above by the Woods. It was a culture of oral discourse concerned with reasoned argument, explored in the dialogues and debates of persuasion. It would be, however, a tremendous reduction to view this political-culture as simply an instrument for focusing public opinion prior to assembly day. Indeed, assembly day itself and the entire Hellenic notion of citizenship were dependent upon the thriving of this political-culture. This is revealed when considering the role of this political-culture, not just in the *polis* generally, but in democracy particularly. For the Greek democrats election was not considered an appropriate institution for determining the personnel of rule. A democracy required the twin, and reciprocally supporting, institutions of rotation and sortition. These were the hallmark of democracy. [19]

The democracy elected a handful of officers - especially its generals, and later some magistrates and finance officials - but the overwhelming majority of officers (administrative, executive and magistrative) were selected by the drawing of lots, as were the popular juries. These latter tried political as well as civil cases, and hence had an important influence over the practical implementation of constitutional law. All officers chosen by sortition had terms of office strictly limited to one year. For some offices a second term was allowed, but not consecutively. This rotation of citizen-officers selected by sortition had the effect of integrating the democracy's political-culture with its governing structures. Not only did such institutions presuppose the political confidence and competence of the individual citizens, but they helped nurture it.

Noting that in any given decade, between a fourth and a third of the total citizenry over thirty years of age would have served on the Athenian democracy's ruling council, Finlay approvingly cites another scholars characterization of the council as a "school of democracy." [20] But as Finlay had illustrated elsewhere, this was only the tip of the iceberg:

> A considerable proportion of the male citizens of Athens...had some direct experience in government beyond anything we know, almost beyond anything we can imagine. It was literally true that at birth every Athenian boy had better than a gambler's chance to be president of the Assembly, a rotating post held for a single day and as always, filled by the drawing of lots. He might be a market commissioner for a year, a member of the Council for one year or two (though not in succession), a juryman repeatedly, a voting member of the Assembly as frequently as he liked. Behind this direct experience, to which should be added the administration of the hundred-odd parishes or 'demes' into which Athens was subdivided, there was also the general familiarity with public affairs that even the apathetic could not escape in such a small, face-to-face society." [21]

The participatory nature of the democracy's institutions required, but also contributed to, the constitution of a citizenry capable of confident and competent participation in the democracy. And the democracy, like the citizenship it was grounded upon, evolved out of the richly articulated intersubjectivity and discursivity of a face-to-face political culture. As the democracy molded the citizens, and the citizens molded the democracy, so did the citizens mold themselves into the form of democratic citizens, by means of their political culture of democracy.

This is the sensibility that animates democracy in its radical, critical, original meaning. Within this thesis the term democracy will be reserved for politics imbued with this sensibility. The more conventional exercise of politics in the parliamentary tradition - the motive force of Irvine's paper dropping mob - known to the agrarian radicals as "partyism" and "electoral aristocracy," will be referred to as parliamentarianism. Not only does its exclusion of the vast majority of people from direct participation in the decisions that affect their lives warrant this distinction.[22] But its fundamental notion of popular political practice - anonymous, isolated individuals singularly passing through hermetically enclosed areas of decision to select one from a small set of options, each only vaguely associated to a pre-determined agenda - establishes conditions diametrically opposed to those inclined to facilitate a participatory, responsible, self-confident citizenship.

It is precisely the fundamental intersubjective and discursive dimensions of democracy that are lost when it is reduced to a method-of-election. It is when we recognize and recover these dimensions that the inherently communicative character of democracy becomes self-evident. Seen in this light, the study of sexism in advertising, or of the social impact of new technology, is no more or less inherently about communications than is the object of the current study: an examination of how a self-consciously intersubjective and discursive community thought and acted to extend and deepen its political culture of democracy.

The term "democracy" can only be denied its rightful place in the lexicon of communications studies if that flagrant imposture properly called parliamentarianism is allowed to monopolize our vision of the term. That this deception can be accepted as convention in the late 20th century cannot be solely placed on the shoulders of the empiricists and their redefinition. It also required the loss to historical memory of those who struggled to keep democracy alive. Only when the agents of democracy are missing from sight can the parliamentarian imposture hope to monopolize our vision of democracy. This thesis is also about the historiographic process by which what is probably the most important adventure with democracy in Canadian history has been rendered nearly invisible. Agrarian radicalism's adventure in democracy must be said to begin by at least 1908, and it went well into the 1930s. Nearly three decades is a substantial period in the history of a country less than a century and a half old. To miss the event so thoroughly required participation in a very special lacuna. Exploring that lacuna is the concern of the third part of this thesis. How have the historians and theorists who have so thoroughly mined the "agrarian revolt" managed to so completely misunderstand, misapprehend, or simply miss, the agrarian radical adventure in democracy?

The reasons for this lacuna will be found to reside in the epistemological assumptions shared by the major schools of thought and scholarly disciplines. Their assumptions, completely at odds with those that animated the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy, has rendered it impossible for the latter to communicate their vision through time to future generations - excepting, of course, those who for whatever reasons seek out the primary sources. Thus, this thesis has a second aspect to its relevance for communications studies. It is also a case study in the distortion of communication through time.

There is also a third dimension in which we may speak of this study as being about communications. And this dimension adheres more closely to a canonal stream of communications theory. In a sense, it could simply be described as taking Harold Innis seriously. In this, I find myself recalling a remark by Michel Foucault from his inaugural lecture at the College de France. Discussing philosophers' continuous efforts to evade, to transcend, Hegel's intellectual dominance, Foucault laments that each new corner we turn, believing we have finally left him behind, there again stands Hegel, waiting for us, motionless.[23]

I fear that a similar separation-crisis characterizes my relationship to the intellectual legacy of Harold Innis. A certain aspect of his communications history played an important role in my master thesis - a revisionist history of communications technology in Canada. By the end of that study, though, I had become disenchanted with its orientation. I would continue to stand by the accuracy of the arguments (indeed, recent events, such as the evolution of *The Globe and Mail* under Thomson ownership, illustrates the veracity of those arguments all too painfully), but their orientation had become problematic in my mind. I cited Frederic Jameson's description of "winner-loses logic" as being the source of the problem for much of revisionist history, including my masters thesis. By incessantly revealing the ubiquitous machinations of domination beneath the surface of daily life, popular resistance is undermined. The extent to which domination is treated as ever-ahead, coopting and transforming previous venues of emancipation, closely adheres to the extent to which people's sense of their capacities to resist are compromised. The better domination is described, the more are emancipatory aspirations compromised. In this logic, the theoretic or historiographic winner loses on the practical level.

In the conclusion to my masters thesis I called for radical scholarship to enhance, not undermine, the potential in popular resistance and emancipation. I quoted from among Raymond Williams' closing lines in his final political work: the forms of domination "have been named so often that they are not even, for most people, news. The dynamic moment is elsewhere, in the difficult business of gaining confidence in *our own* energies and capacities." [24] What was called for was not a rehashing of the forms and modes of domination, but beginning a process that emphasized the means for and potential of popular resistance and emancipation. This doctoral thesis is a partial fulfillment of that agenda. It is an effort to regain historical insight into such means and potentials.

At that time I took some comfort in the fact that Innis' work also offered inspiration in this direction. I drew specifically upon his elaboration of the oral tradition. This did a tidy job of tying together the loose ends, but when it came down to it, I didn't see where I could go with Innis' insights. Involved as I was in an increasing familiarization with 20th century European critical thought, I found myself drawn to two other scholars also discussed in that conclusion: Jurgen Habermas and Alvin Gouldner. (The later of course was not a European by birth or residence, but the substantive content and theoretical concerns in his later work seemed to me much more connected with that tradition than anything I was then able to identify in North American history.)

So my initial explorations of an emancipatory "oral tradition" involved abstract reflections in the domain of the "public sphere" and the "critical and careful discourse" of the "new class" of intellectuals. I soon became disenchanted with both. Habermas' public sphere proved more than a little too conservative for my taste. Anyone who cannot see the profoundly political character of modern technology can have few useful notions to offer of a public sphere in the late 20th century. And Habermas' later elaboration of his ideas still appear to me as little more than a highly occulted idealism. Be that as it may, I accept both Disco's critique of Habermas as exploiting the crisis in marxism to attract alienated intellectuals to a revamped critical theory as new class ideology, and Bookchin's critique of his proceduralism, draped in arcane academic discourse, as leading ultimately to a severe political quietism.[25] This was obviously not the route I was looking for.

Gouldner took a little longer to breed disenchantment. But that came too. Though he had spoken well of Habermas' early work, Disco's critique using Gouldner's theoretical framework clearly revealed the former as an ideal case study of this new class. An obsession with discourse is a some what suspicious phenomenon among people who spend most of their professional time discussing. Yet this would not necessarily constitute disapproval of Habermas' work by Gouldner - despite Disco's critical style. After all, Gouldner's tentative conclusions were hardly edifying. In place of the proletariat as historical agent, we are supposed to accept the intellectuals - despite Gouldner's own revelations, and ambivalence, about the abuses to which they have been historically inclined. While Gouldner's work called for caution in elaborating a radical scholarship of an emancipatory oral tradition, I could not really go on with my thesis unless I at least put his warnings temporarily in parentheses. But I was still in lack of a theoretical entry point to the study I wanted to write.

For a while, I thought I had found that entry point in the work of Hannah Arendt. Her dual emphases upon the revolutionary potential of spontaneous popular activity and the democratic traditions of classical political philosophy opened up a door through which I was to permanently pass. Arendt's own work was a host of fascinating suggestions and explorations that, for me, far too often were riddled with irrecuperable lacunae. Her fetish for spontaneity as radical discontinuity, her exaggeration of the agonal in classical political philosophy, her arbitrary dichotomy of the realms of freedom and necessity, and her general elitism, rendered her work too flawed for beneficial elaboration. But through her innovative and uncompromising forays into politics, history and philosophy I came to recognize the theoretical framework I sought in the classical notion of democracy itself. Was it really surprising that the framework for a radical scholarship of popular resistance and emancipation would arise - not from the thought of a single thinker - but from a history of practical experience in popular activity? It was not the elaboration of theoretical constructs, but institutional ones that - once studied - provided the theoretical insight I sought.

In light of the elaboration of democratic theory sketched out above, it was obviously also in this framework that I disposed of Gouldner's new class albatross. The new class'-power-through-discursive competence and confidence was based upon its relative monopoly of the relevant practical experience for cultivating such conditions. Democracy rejected expertise in political matters and structured its institutions to maximize popular political participation - hence, the experience out of which grows discursive competence and confidence. The new class enjoyed its power by means of distinctly non-democratic social priorities. Democracy meant the dissolution of the new class - and all oligarchy and aristocracy - by definition. From this perspective the important question became one of praxis.

Innis might have said that democracy necessitated smashing the "monopoly of knowledge" upon which the power of the new class was based. He would also point out that tending to the needs of temporal awareness - his famous "plea for time" - involved breaking with the technophilia upon which is based the modern reign of expertise. But it does not end there.

This thesis too, and the doctoral research projects preceding it, have also been a process of intellectual and personal growth. Without prematurely anticipating the arguments to follow, my philosophical reflections and historical inquiries have suggested to me that democracy itself is only a case in point of the broader issue at stake here: an autonomous society. And, as will be briefly discussed in part four below, examining the psychology of autonomy reveals its inherently self-formative, discursive and intersubjective character.

Democracy requires social autonomy both in its literal historical sense - as self-legislation - and in its general philosophical sense - as self-determination. But, as Innis observed, in an age where the cult of expertise crushes the insight and awareness that could make such a social sensibility possible, autonomy requires some catalyst. For this dilemma, of which he was so abundantly aware, Innis had no better recipe than autonomous initiative itself. As the experience of democratic activity makes democratic citizenship, so the experience of autonomous activity makes autonomous selfhood. Innis' "plea for time" *was* a plea for an alternative mode of communication. However, it required not a technology, but a psychology, of autonomy. The specifics of that communicative mode's practical constitution was indicative of an autonomous society. While the fact of the plea itself presumed the possibility of the very autonomy that it prescribed.

And there he stands again, motionless, waiting.

Notes

[1] William Irvine, *The Farmers in Politics* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart,1976 [1st pub.1920]), p.149.

[2] For critical examinations of this "empiricist" turn in democratic theory, see G. Duncan and S. Lukes, "The New Democracy," *Political Studies*, 11, 1963; Q. Skinner, "The Empirical Theorists of Democracy and Their Critics," *Political Theory*, 1, 1973; and the first two chapters in Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.)

[3] Not everyone living in Athenian democracy was considered a citizen. This view, now no longer sustainable in a rigorous vision of democracy, compromises the Athenians' application of democracy, not their definition of it. The corrective to this inadequate application calls for greater participation and presumably greater decentralization of scale.

The longstanding prejudice that a large leasure time for democratic life was built on the backs of women and slaves, or the exploitation of the empire, has been subjected to thorough critique. The criticism of these ideas *via à vis* slaves and the empire has been elaborated by A.H.M. Jones, *Athenian Democracy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957.) Also, a fascinating treatment of the role of women in Athenian democracy has been provided by Janet Biehl, "Women and the Democratic Tradition," 2 parts, *Green Perspectives*, 16 and17, June and August 1989.

[4] The following six to seven pages that advance these arguments are an edited excerpt from my second doctoral project: Mike McConkey, "In Search of Common Ground: Two Essays on (Dialogical) Communication and (Political) Democracy."

[5] M.I. Finlay, *Democracy Ancient and Modern* (London: Hogarth Press, 1985,) pp. 13-14.

[6] Ellen Meiksens Wood and Neal Wood, *Class Ideology and Ancient Political Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell,1978.)

[7] As an Athenian General, Pericles held one of the few elected positions in the radical Athenian democracy. The tremendous duration of his influence in Athens, and the rigor with which he defended the form of self-government associated to his name, has led to the common historiographic practice of identifying him as spokesman and symbol of the most militant tendency in ancient Greek democracy. The validity of that historiographic practice, however, is questionable. As another classical scholar, sensitive to the sensibility of Athenian democracy, has pointed out, such celebrating of great leaders

undermined confidence in the egalitarian competence of the citizenship upon which the democracy was based - a fact to be demonstrated shortly in the text: J.S. Morrison, "The Place of Protagoras in Athenian Public Life," *Classical Quarterly*, (1,2) Jan.-Apr. 1941.

[8] The question here is as simple as asking which sources should be used to establish a historical ideal for the social theory of Anarchy, the Mutualist followers of Pierre Joseph Proudhon, or the Jacobin and Gironde demogagues of the French Revolution?

[9] This point is made in the article by Victor Ehrenberg, "Origins of Democracy," *Historia*, 1, 1950.

[10] The selection of officers by the drawing of lots.

[11] J.A.O. Larsen, "Cleisthenes and the Development of the Theory of Democracy at Athens," in *Essays in Political Theory, Presented to George H. Sabine*, (eds.) M.R. Konvitz and A.E. Murphy (Ithica, N.Y.: Cornell University Press,1948.) The quotation is from pp. 15-16.

[12] For a concise statement of this opposition and its activities c.f. Finlay *op. cit.* p.139.

[13] In an article of a few years later, Victor Ehrenberg sought to refute Larsen's argument. The article fails in this precisely because of Ehrenberg's confusing of the concept of democracy as a political ideal and practice with the use of the word democracy as a positive self-description: Ehrenberg, "Origins....

[14] Reprinted as J.A.O. Larsen, "The Judgment of Antiquity on Democracy," *Classical Philology*, XLIX (1), January 1954. Quotation from p. 13.

[15] Wood and Wood *op. cit.* p. 27. The Woods' interpretation of the meaning of politics for the ancient Greeks is supported by Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958,) pp. 26-27. Unfortunately, Arendt's brilliantly nuanced exploration of ancient Greek political philosophy is of minimal use to the present study due to her uncritically Aristotelian dismissal of democracy. Her political philosophy and social theory, by the standards of the modern age, are deeply problematized by her reliance upon a reified dichotomy between dubiously defined spheres of necessity and freedom, founded in turn upon an intellectual elitism and a naive faith in technological neutrality.

[16] Finlay *op. cit.* p. 19.

[17] Finlay makes this point in discussing the build up to a controversial decision by the Athenian assembly to launch an invasion of Sicily *op. cit.* p. 22.

[18] M.I. Finlay, *Politics in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987,) p. 82.

[19] Most ancient historians only grant sortition this status. For instance, c.f., Finlay, *Democracy...op. cit.* p.19; Jones, *Athenian Democracy...op. cit.* p. 3; and Victor Ehrenberg, "Sortition," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (eds.) N.G.L. Hammond *et. al.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1970,) p. 1004. However, when one explores their reasons for granting sortition this status, it becomes evident that sortition without rotation would be meaningless as an instrument of democracy.

[20] Finlay *Politics...op. cit.* p. 74.

[21] Finlay *Democracy...op. cit.* p. 20.

[22] To not make such distinctions would in fact reduce the study to absurdity. Consider this remark from the founder and leader of the so-called New Democracy movement in Canada in the 1930s: "The people can jettison the democratic processes, smash the constitution and defy the law. But they cannot originate a specific proposal or lay down a definite plan. It was never meant that they should diagnose their own diseases and prescribe for them. Democracy has doctors for this purpose. These doctors are our leaders, the executive and legislative branches of the state. It is for these leaders to take action." This diagnosis is simply a prescription for aristocracy as either Protagoras or E.A. Partridge, Aristotle or Irvine, would have easily pointed out. Cf. W.D. Herridge, *Which Kind of Revolution?* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1943,) p. 139.

[23] Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971,) p. 74-75.

[24] Raymond Williams, *The Year 2000* (New York: Pantheon, 1983,) p. 268.

[25] Cornelis Disco, "Critical Theory as Ideology of the New Class: Rereading Jurgen Habermas," *Theory and Society*,1979; and Murray Bookchin, "Finding the Subject: Notes on Whitebook and 'Habermas LTD.'," *Telos*, 52, Summer 1982.

PART ONE: The Problematic Stated

Prologue

The *Grain Growers Guide*, the central periodical of agrarian radicalism, regularly published a section by each of the three prairie province farmer organizations. These sections frequently included reports from the local unions of the organizations recounting their activities. It is from these reports that the vignettes in this prologue have been randomly drawn. They have been moderately edited in the interest of focal emphasis and grammatical continuity. Their original narrative language and tone has been maintained out of respect for the discursive style that the agrarian radicals cultivated within their political culture:

At a Monday evening organizational meeting of the Carmen local of the Manitoba Grain Growers Association in early November, 1909, at Robinson's Hall, Mr. Moffatt of Souris addressed a few remarks to his Carmen neighbours. In his remarks Mr. Moffatt emphasized the importance of involving the young folks in the activities of the grain growers movement. Encouraging debates of important issues within the local would be of great interest in itself, but also would help train the young men in public discussion and help enlist them in the work of the movement.

Mr. Crerar, president of the Grain Growers Grain Company, and Mr. Henders, vice-president of the Manitoba Grain Growers Association, also addressed the gathering on the history of the grain growers movement and issues facing farmers that it was working toward settling. At the end of the evening, nearly all those present joined the Manitoba Grain Growers Association and resolved to form a Carmen local. Another meeting was held the following evening to elect officers.[1]

The Prairie Dell union of the United Farmers of Alberta held a banquet and social in early November, 1909. It was a great success, attended by over 150 members of the community. Uplifting speeches and frivolity were the order of the evening. During the event the union announced that it had arranged for plenty of good seats, large lights and a cheerful schoolroom for its meetings in the coming winter months. Meetings would be held every two weeks for general improvement and social intercourse. A strong growth of the association was expected in the coming winter.[2]

The founding meeting of the Waldron local of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association on April 2, 1910, was quite successful. Eighteen paid their membership fee, and a short time later H.R. Waite, the secretary of the local, could report that he had over 30 more promised new members. Already, at this first meeting, there was intense discussion among those present about the many issues confronting farmers.[3]

The second organizing meeting of the Okotoks union of the United Farmers of Alberta was held on May 14, 1910. Twenty-five new members joined, bringing the locals total membership up to fifty. Much discussion ensued on a wide range of important local and provincial issues. [4]

The event of re-electing local officers and discussion of some important business - including the report of a committee appointed to investigate flour mill prices - brought out another large turnout for the Queenston union of the United Farmers of Alberta in the local school, on December 13, 1912. The schoolhouse was crowded to suffocation and talk began of dividing the union into separate east and west branches. [5]

A large number of farmers attended the annual meeting of the Bergheim local of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association in the Bergheim school on Tuesday, January 21, 1913. It was a four hour meeting that involved enthusiastic discussion. The Bergheim Concordia Band gave a number of bright selections during the course of the event that were greeted with hearty applause. [6]

In its February 1, 1913, meeting, the Stretton union of the United Farmers of Alberta resolved, after much debate, that the present methods of the grain growers movement was not adequately recognizing the common ground between the exploitation of farmers and labour. Consequently, they chose to also affiliate with the Alberta Federation of Labor. [7]

On January 23, 1913, the McConnell local of the Manitoba Grain Growers Association held a lively meeting that, after an address on the relation of farmers to the village, opened up to a lengthy discussion on the means and merits of farmers cooperating both among themselves, and with local merchants. Later in the evening it was decided to hold a social night, the main feature of the program to be a formal debate: Resolved, "That the world is growing better from a farmer's standpoint." [8]

Though only six weeks old, by the time of its February 20, 1913, social meeting, the Crocus Plains union of the United Farmers of Alberta's get-together at Mizpah school brought out over 150 people. Those in attendance were treated to an evening of song and recitations, which highlighted political debate. [9]

Meanwhile, the very next day, February 21, the Blackfoot Union had a memorable occasion. It began with the formal meeting, attended by over 50 members, which involved much enthusiastic support for continuing and expanding the union's cooperative buying activities. The ladies present were formally invited to officially join the union. Not only was it believed that this would improve the union's social life, but it was hoped that such measures would contribute to the ultimate full enfranchise of the ladies. An instructive paper on the recent provincial convention was presented, following which an evening of entertainment ensued involving songs, recitations and other items. The evening was capped off with an all night community dance. It was only the crowing of a neighbouring cock that gave notice to the merrymakers of a new day breaking, and reminded them of breakfast. [10]

At the St. Adelarde Post Office, on the 27th of February, 1915, the Sandridge local of the Manitoba Grain Growers Association came together for their regular meeting. Eleven new members joined on this occasion, bringing the total membership for the local up to 40. [11]

In the late winter of 1915, the Edwell union of the United Farmers of Alberta initiated a series of presentations of papers at their regular meetings. The first of these, presented by Mr. Lawrence of the Pine Lake union, was on "Eugenics." If the attendance at this first presentation was to be any indication, the series was sure to be a great success. [12]

The Salem and Oakville locals of the Manitoba Grain Growers Association took a distinctly new turn on March 21, 1915, with the organization of a grain growers church service. Dr. S.G. Bland, the famous social gospel preacher and theologian of Wesley College, was the chosen speaker for this first service. In his address, Dr. Bland equated "partyism" in government to "denominationalism" in the church. [13]

Despite the fact that spring planting was well underway, the April meeting of the Warmen local of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, in the Warmen school auditorium was a big success. The area's German population, which had been showing increasing interest in the grain growers movement, reflected tangible evidence of that interest with twelve fully paid-up members in attendance. Also the ladies auxiliary was much in evidence. With the great success of recent cooperative activities, there was much lively discussion of the possibility of formally incorporating to facilitate business affairs. And further action was taken to set on route the Warmen local's sponsored travelling library. Mr. G.W. Elliot was appointed librarian of this book collection that will travel around to the communities of the area with a variety of reading materials for people of all ages. [14]

Notes

[1] *GGG* Nov. 10, 1909, p. 20.
[2] *Ibid.* Nov. 17, 1909, p. 19.
[3] *Ibid.* Apr. 27, 1910, p. 20.
[4] *Ibid.* June 1, 1910, p. 17.
[5] *Ibid.* Jan. 15, 1913, p. 12.
[6] *Ibid.* Mar. 5, 1913, p. 15.
[7] *Ibid.* Mar. 5, 1913, p. 17.
[8] *Ibid.* Mar. 5, 1913, p. 16.
[9] *Ibid.* Mar. 12, 1913, p. 13.
[10] *Ibid.* Mar. 12, 1913, p. 13.
[11] *Ibid.* Mar. 17, 1915, p. 15.
[12] *Ibid.* Mar. 3, 1915, p. 13.
[13] *Ibid.* Mar. 31, 1915, p. 15.
[14] *Ibid.* Apr. 28, 1915, p. 13.

Introduction

For the casual reader of standard Canadian historiography, the accounts in the preceding prologue likely invoke an alien sense. We have here imagery that seems to recall the radically democratic U.S. tradition of town hall meetings. And, as will be seen, this image is not a mistaken one. For most Canadians, though, this is not thought a conventional part of their heritage.

It is of considerable interest, for instance, that even Canadian scholars and theorists who are extremely sympathetic to radically democratic forms of society and social transformation have been more or less neglectful of the legacy left to Canadians in the adventure in democracy evoked by the vignettes of the prologue. To cite just a few of the more salient examples: George Woodcock - Canada's lone celebrated anarchist - in both his detailed study of the history of radical democracy and in his most famous polemic in support of radical democracy in Canada, never discusses the agrarian radical adventure in democracy. Gerry Hunnius, an important theorist of workplace democracy, in something of a classic defense of radical democracy only mentions the UFA in the context of its critique of partyism. Philip Resnick, in his book length essay on democracy and Canadian political culture, which advocates a structure of radical democracy reminiscent of E.A. Partridge's most elaborated school of citizenship thesis, does not discuss the agrarian radicals' contribution to such a vision. And in a recent article in *This Magazine*, Robert Chodos cites the agrarian radicals' advocacy of direct legislation as representing their vision of a genuine democracy - a claim the inadequacy of which will soon become evident. [1]

It would seem that the extremely different conditions of the Canadian west's development has led most influential historians to treat the Canadian state as an entrepreneur that has been overwhelmingly responsible for the historic development of the country. [2] This is as opposed to the embrace of the Turner thesis, in the United States, with its emphasis on the environmental conditions of the frontier and their development of rugged, independent individuals. The point here is not to revise Canadian historiography along the lines of Turner's frontier thesis. Canadian historians have been quite right in emphasizing its inapplicability to the dramatically different context of the Canadian frontier. Indeed, the applicability of Turner's thesis even to the U.S. frontier is probably much exaggerated, at the expense of greater attention to the formative intersubjective and discursive influences at work there. At the same time, though, the state-as-dynamic-entrepreneur approach to Canadian scholarship does not go very far in explaining this grassroots democracy reflected by the excerpts in the prologue. Except, as will be seen, insofar as it merely explains them away.

Once recognized, however, this is a legacy not so easily dismissed. These agrarian radicals, as they came to be called, do indeed represent a rather different story from that history which celebrates our heroic mercantile and political nation-builders in Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto. They represent this not simply because they were not adequately pliable, occasionally mounting movements to resist various inequalities. But because, in response to these inequalities, they developed a radically different vision, not only of western development, but of Canadian democracy. What is important in this legacy is not some vague, visceral "agrarian revolt," but an articulate and innovative agrarian radical adventure in democracy.

Such a vision was hardly an appendage to the story of the great nation-builders and their entrepreneurial state. On the contrary, the agrarian radical vision repudiated the legacy of these forces, past and present. Their vision entailed the elimination of what they called the "electoral aristocracy," and its concomitant "aristocracy of wealth," and the power these latter had to build self-serving nations out of other people's lives. They envisioned instead, proud, morally stout and civically invigorated people cooperatively building together their own lives, within their own communities. It is then perhaps not surprising that the great nation-builders and their adulators have not included this part of the tale in their heroic story of western progress.

It is the remembering of this other story, this other vision, that occupies the present thesis. What history lies behind these fragmented moments, glimpsed in the prologue? What was the vision that fueled this history? How is it that this striking aspect of our history occurs to us as so alien? And how might we think our history differently in the future, so that such oversights might be avoided? These are the questions that the following study attempts to shed light upon.

Part two explains the vision fueling the history lying behind these fragments glimpsed in the prologue by means of a reconstructive history of the agrarian radicals' political culture - focusing upon the numerous and various contributions to the central organ of that culture, *The Grain Growers Guide*, and several of the more outstanding texts produced by some of the agrarian radicals' most important theorists. How it is that this aspect of our history strikes many of us as so alien is explored in part three by a review of the most influential contributions to our inherited post-depression, academic scholarship. Also, a couple of recent attempts to redress the inherited scholarship through discourse theory will be critically examined. Part four concludes the study with suggestions for an alternative perspective through which we might think our history differently in the future, exploring the historical and philosophical grounds of autonomous, discursive (inter-)subjectivity. It concludes with an epilogue that illustrates the applicability of this material to Canadian communications studies. From this perspective we will be better able to appreciate the significance of the history that lies behind these fragments from the prologue, their implications for Canadian scholarship, and their importance for us, remembering the agrarian radicals, today.

An excursus following the introduction, that places agrarian radicalism in its larger historical context, includes a brief overview of the pre-history of the agrarian radical political culture. Western agrarians had a long developed tradition of voluntary and spontaneous civic association out of which graduated their strong attachment to local autonomy. This tradition, however, was only briefly acknowledged in the legislation of the Territorial Government with municipal forms that reflected the agrarians' inclination for democratic structure of decision and human scale of operation. This brief adherence to the Western agrarian tradition of civic association was quickly revoked in the interest of larger, executively administered units based upon "representation." Furthermore, the introduction of parliamentarianism in 1905, with the arrival of provincehood for Alberta and Saskatchewan, also insulted the non-partisan and directly democratic character of Western agrarian civic association and local autonomy. This is the backdrop against which emerged the distinctly agrarian radical political culture.

The first several decades of the 20th century in western Canada were marked by a dramatic agrarian insurgent movement spurred on by the economic injustices confronting farmers on the prairies and in Ontario. It is useful to draw a distinction here between the agrarian dissidents - those whose participation in western agrarian protest and cooperation was based more or less exclusively in the immediate remedying of the economic injustices, though often bolstered in this by a sense of outrage - and the agrarian radicals. These latter always had broader concerns than the economic direct action and parliamentary lobbying that occupied the energies of the more moderate agrarian dissidents. The agrarian radicals pursued a penetrating critique of the political and cultural dimension of the social order that had created the injustices in the first place. It was only the remedying of these preceding conditions that could constitute a radical, hence enduring, solution to the ills that plagued the farmer. It is the adherence to such a vision that defines an agrarian as "radical" in the context of this study. Furthermore, it is in this light that we can best appreciate the agrarian radicals' ongoing struggle toward a discursive and intersubjective, participatory political culture.

Their political culture was one informed by a sense of moral community: a community wherein the undenied importance of the individual was not procured at the expense of the public good. Indeed, the classical notion of a public or common good frequently received explicit valorization in the texts of the agrarian radicals. Such a notion stood in diametrical opposition to the dominant culture of monopoly in economics and partyism in politics. These were the institutions of the financial and electoral aristocracies that created and enforced the conditions of agrarian ill-content. These were the villains in the radicals' most poignant critiques of the status quo.

The agrarian radicals' alternative to this dominant order was the forming of a molecularly structured organization with its moral and intellectual strength decentralized into the autonomous locals and with its effective decision-making process embodied in periodic regional, and annual provincial, conventions. These networks of democracies, or farmers' parliaments as they were sometimes called - these humanly scaled forums for face-to-face discussion - were envisioned as the sources of agrarian radical political culture and the grounds for generating autonomous, though, associated communities. If the agrarian radicals could speak confidently and enthusiastically about the foundations of democracy in an inspired and thoughtful popular intelligence, it was this notion of democracy and their practical experience with it that so enlivened them.

Perhaps nothing speaks so clearly and pervasively for the rich and vigorous character of the political culture created by the agrarian radicals than do the actual political debates carried out within it about the specific institutional manifestations that should be developed to advance the cause of agrarian radical democracy. Both the variety of visions explored, and the depth and breadth of discussion about those visions that moved to the forefront, suggest the actual range, richness and fecundity of that political culture as it was lived out in practice.

Fascinating as all these debates were, the one notion that continually reappeared as the *raison d'être* of agrarian radical democracy, and indeed can be seen to have in fact upheld its practical accomplishments, was what I will call the "school of citizenship" thesis.

This was a term frequently used by the agrarian radicals, but the notion was elaborated upon and celebrated regularly in the absence of the phrase.

The school of citizenship thesis referred to a belief that the locals of the GGAs - and indeed all the participatory forums of agrarian political culture - ought to serve as schools within which farmers could raise their individual consciousness and intelligence by contributing to the raising of the collective's consciousness and intelligence, while simultaneously cultivating the personal competence and confidence in intersubjective and discursive skills upon which an outstanding citizenship was based. At the same time that the school of citizenship provided a place for farmers to find solutions to their common problems by means of cooperative study, it also cultivated the means for each to act as effective citizens in putting into effect those solutions. One entered this school as a disempowered individual farmer, and left a member of an empowered collective of citizens.

Insofar as this was, in varying graduations, both a major theoretical tenet of the movement and the character of its practical political life, the school of citizenship notion will require concentrated exposition. As these two dimensions of its role in the agrarian radicals' political culture are substantiated, the school of citizenship notion will come to be understood as characterizing that political culture, both in theory as well as in practice.

On its own terms, the school of citizenship thesis could constitute a praxis of social transformation. In the 19th and 20th centuries it has done so for some of the anarchist and council communist movements in Europe. Most of the agrarian radicals, however, do not seem to have been patient enough to follow this path. And, considering that much of the farmers oppositional movement was formed out of agrarian dissidents rather than radicals, the pressure to find quick and expedient solutions was considerable. Seeking solutions to the question of institutional intervention was the source of most of the major political debates mentioned above. Of the many options explored, the two that gained the widest following prior to WWI - many others wound up being simply appendages to one of these - were third or new partyism and direct legislation. As the call for a new party rarely transcended the logic and assumptions of parliamentarianism, as such, it will not be examined at length here. Though, again, it often was intertwined with a more complex constellation of concerns. To that extent it will demand attention.

With the exception of the school of citizenship thesis, however, no other non-economic project in the pre-war period became so widely identified with the agrarian radical movement as did direct legislation: a form of popular self-government exercised through frequent - often popularly instituted - referenda, and revocable mandates of representatives. The need for direct legislation's implementation was widely advocated. Demand for it was quickly incorporated into the GGAs' programs, and it soon was assumed to be part of the agrarian radical vision of democracy. Indeed, as a self-conscious end - as opposed to means - direct legislation came to eclipse the school of citizenship as the emblem of agrarian radical democracy.

However, rare as its critics from within the movement were, they did raise important and difficult questions. The most fundamental of these questions was that of how direct legislation was to be established constitutionally. If one were to forego the long and difficult school of citizenship route, a route the successful pursuing of which put in question the need for direct legislation, some other institutional intervention was necessary. This led some back to third partyism.

Within the partyist debates that occupied much of the discussion in the agrarian radical political culture, the main rivals to third partyism were what I will call the infiltrationists: those who advocated taking control of the existing parties by strength of numbers through infiltration of the memberships. An examination of the third partyist-infiltrationist debates, and the series of strategic complications they incurred, emphasizes the validity of some of those critiques of direct legislation from within the movement referred to above. And the vantage point staked out in those critiques of direct legislation likewise serves as a valuable perspective from which to assess the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy in this early phase.

Allowing direct legislation to eclipse the school of citizenship thesis undermined the agrarian radical movement's strength as a political culture. The manner in which direct legislation agitation was defeated in all three prairie provinces only serves to underline this fact. Direct legislation *per se* was not up to the agrarian radicals' vision of democracy; its simplicity and forthrightness was no substitute for its crude proceduralism. The strength of agrarian radical democracy in practice - and with the school of citizenship thesis, in theory - was its moral, political and cultural substantiveness.

The agrarian radicals were never to make this mistake so dramatically again. But then, neither were they to resolve the dilemma that was at its root.

The next several years following the defeats of direct legislation - mostly dominated by the First World War - were marked by theoretical uncertainty within the agrarian radical wing of the farmers' movement. The infiltrationists and new partyists continued to debate the relative merits of each position. It might seem at first glance - especially if viewed through the lens as focused by inherited scholarship - that from 1919 to 1921 the issue was resolved in favour of the new partyists. The provincial UFO, UFA and the federal Progressive Party along with its UFA colleagues, made dramatic electoral gains during this period - actually establishing the government in the former two cases. This was not, however, nearly as transparent as it has been presented in some quarters. Especially in the case of the UFA, which was to prove the historically most significant of these electoral gains, in the minds of many Alberta farmers, electoral mandate had a qualitatively new implication. Notwithstanding history as it happened, it is undeniable that for many Alberta farmers parliamentarianism-as-usual was nowhere intended in the election of a UFA government. A new factor had arisen, not from among the traditional new partyists, but - perhaps surprisingly, given the form the new theory took in practice - from within the ranks of the infiltrationists.

At its richest and most sophisticated, though, infiltrationism never succumbed to crude or naive parliamentarianist fantasies. It was always a pragmatic response to the farmers' history of electoral self-destruction, anchored in an appreciation of the need to develop a solid citizenship as the basis of any genuine social transformation. Hence, with the seminal school of citizenship theorist, E.A. Partridge[3], infiltration far from undermining the political culture of democracy and citizenship, actually became articulated as an elaboration of the institutional forms in which civic virtues were nurtured. Perhaps then it should not be so surprising that it was a former infiltrationist who introduced this new theoretical dimension into the agrarian radical agenda: a dimension that not only offered to transcend the new partyist/infiltrationist impasse, but offered to do so by means of an integration of the school of citizenship thesis into agrarian radical praxis in a manner that was unthinkable under the sway of direct legislation promotion.

Henry Wise Wood's theory of group government ushered in a new chapter in the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy.[4] Economic groups, or classes as he some times called them, articulated into autonomous locals would elect specifically mandated delegates who would gather with the delegates of other groups to discuss and settle issues of public policy. This way, via the democracy of local autonomy, it would be the economic groups - in Wood's view, the lone important categories - of society that would constitute the government. The popular self-government problems of structure, scale and legitimacy that direct legislation saw solved by referenda and revocability, group government sought to solve by federation, delegation and cooperation. And, it is important to mention, often the rationale for pursuing this line of political organization was traced back not just to the actual practice of the agrarian radical political culture - though that was central too - but also to a progressivist narrative of natural history.

Nowhere did Wood's theory have a more intriguing possibility for practical enactment than in Alberta, the province in which the UFA, the farmers' organization that he was president of, stood as the provincial government for over a decade. Consequently in chapter three attention will be focused upon the events that unfolded in Alberta. Particularly of interest in this section will be the intellectual events. The school of citizenship in practice, as the agrarian radicals' political culture of democracy, only furthered, deepened and widened during this period. It remained the basis of agrarian radicalism, and indeed the farmers' movement generally. In this sense, its changes were quantitative - notwithstanding the qualitative change to the province's civic life. For the agrarian radicals what was qualitatively new in this period was the effort to theoretically integrate this activity into a praxis of social transformation. It is for this reason that chapter three concentrates upon the intellectual efforts of the UFA's two most important theorists: H.W. Wood and William Irvine.[5] Also to be considered, however, as a nod to the fleeting potential that ever so briefly presented itself in Ontario - and in the interest of not lapsing into an overly narrow focus in the chapter - will be the thought of the most influential group government theorist in that province's farmer organization: W.C. Good.[6]

As will be seen, group government theory as such had its theoretical weaknesses to be sure: most distinctly, its crude economism. It was not these, though, that sealed its fate. In this, personal character weakness played no small part. But that alone need not have stopped the social transformation pursued by the agrarian radicals in the group government phase of their adventure in democracy. If the group government promoters were never as naive as had been the direct legislation promoters, the lessons of the latter's failures were not adequately assimilated. It was never parliamentarianism *per se* which was the problem, but the form of social relationships it typlified. And the evolution of human relationships could not be reduced to a heteronomous natural history. These were the theoretical lacunae that historically undermined the group government movement.

Careful attention to the character of social relationships nurtured in the agrarian radicals' own political culture might have facilitated these insights. Indeed, it very nearly did so - a point to be taken up momentarily. But as it finally did not - at least, not with an adequate level of self-consciousness - group government theory too floundered on the rocks of a naive trust in the viability of parliament as, at least, a site of struggle for social transformation.

The exhaustion ensuing from the parliamentarian debacle that became of the group government movement, combined with other contributing factors - most dramatically the onset of the depression - left the agrarian radicals with little left to put up the struggle necessary in the organization of the CCF. Although agrarian radicals were instrumental in the formation of the CCF, they had little of a coherent movement left to wrangle with the social democrats and unionists about the political forms of the new broader based movement being established. As the more hierarchical, centralist and authoritarian elements gained ascendency, individual agrarian radicals were left with few options. Some, like William Irvine - by whatever compromises or reformulations - found it in their heart to become active participants in the new reality. Others, like W.C. Good, stood back and offered a clear headed critique of the CCF's political praxis from a militant agrarian radical perspective.

Individual choices notwithstanding, however, the agrarian radical adventure in democracy as a unique vision of social transformation was at an end, and the way in which the group government theory obscured the enduring values of the school of citizenship thesis, even as it proported to promote them, played a major role in the former's demise. Perhaps, though, what is ultimately more interesting about group government theory, then its theoretical weaknesses, is the inadvertent articulation it gave to the practical character of agrarian radical political culture even in denying the terms of that character's existence. Despite the heteronomous history with which the group government theorists sought to enbolden their aspirations, what filtered through their theoretical analyses when they reflected upon the actual practice of agrarian radical democracy, was not heteronomy, but autonomy. Though claiming historical heteronomy to advance the cause of group government, the theorists nevertheless recognized that only popular autonomy could actually bring it into effect.

This antimony in the thought of most of the influential group government theorists is both irresovable and unnecessary. But it is helpful to the scholarly observer in providing a key to understanding how it is that the legacy of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy has been so thoroughly obscured in what I will call inherited scholarship. In this study, the term refers particularly to the inherited post-depression, academic scholarship. The pre-depression scholars of agrarian radicalism, often not formal academics, tended to be - when they were not agrarian radicals themselves, as they frequently were - much more sympathetic to, not just the cause, but the sensibility of that legacy. It is only in the late-depression and during the war that the heteronomist perspective of inherited scholarship on agrarian radicalism became dominant.

Canadian academic historiography in particular has a long history of heteronomism: uncritically assuming heteronomy to be at work in the unfolding of history. From the constitutionalist quasi-hagiography of George Wrong, to Harold Innis' thesis of staple-driven development, and back to the strange marriage of these two performed by Donald Creighton and so many following his lead, Canada's and Canadian's historical development has been depicted as heteronomous. [7] Whether the bold initiative of wise statesmen and Founding Fathers or the fluctuations of the North Atlantic beaver-pelt trade, it was the heteronomy of forces other than the majority of the people that were depicted as guiding and molding Canadian history, in most Canadian historiography. Canadian social scientists who have followed in this tradition have generally replicated the viewpoint. Whether articulated through liberalist or marxist translations, this basic heteronomism remains consistent.

This tendency is evident in the inherited scholarship of the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy, and is demonstrated in part three of the present study. In the case of the historians, it most strongly presents as narratives of inevitability. This was true for the "liberal-democrat" W.L. Morton[8] who evaluated the historical potential and significance of agrarian radicalism in terms of parliamentarianism-as-standard of reasonable conduct - and narrated their story within the narrow parameters of this assumption. It was likewise true of the "social-democrat" Walter Young[9] who not only recorded, but celebrated, the marginalization of agrarian radical democracy in the early history of the CCF. For Young, this marginalization was the necessary, and beneficial, complement of Robert Michel's so-called iron law of oligarchy, which Young favourably compares to the law of gravity.

In the case of the social scientists, this heteronomism most strongly presents as incongruent analyses. As a consequence of the heteronomist perspective though, these analyses are incongruent in a double sense. They are analyses of perceived incongruence on the part of the agrarian radicals, but their perception of incongruence is in fact determined by their analysts' heteronomism - so thoroughly incongruent with the autonomist sensibility of the analysands. (In this sense, of course, the historians' narratives of inevitability rely upon incongruent analyses, just as the social scientists' incongruent analyses are grounded on assumed narratives of inevitability.)

In this matter, the case of the "social-democrat" C.B. Macpherson[10] can be pointed to in which his critique of the agrarian radicals' anti-partyism is based upon an unspoken dismissal of the very ideas that grounded that anti-partyism. To achieve their vision of democracy the agrarian radicals are chided to adopt parliamentarian practices and outlooks, despite the fact that parliamentarian practices and outlooks were held to have major responsibility for the absence of the democracy to which they aspired. Or, there is the case of the "liberal-democrat" S.D. Clark[11] who - again, so stuck in the narrow universe of parliamentarian assumptions - criticized the agrarian radicals insensitivity to the needs of effective party organization and the discretionary authority of elected representatives as impediments to the effective functioning of democracy. Yet, these aspects of parliamentarianism were central parts in the constellation of practices that the agrarian radicals believed had to be transformed to achieve their autonomist vision of democracy.

Guided by an outlook that presumes the normality and necessity of parliamentarianism specifically, but social heteronomy generally - with its centralized, authoritarian, hierarchical characteristics; and its reduction of history to narratives of inevitability and incongruent analyses, inherited scholarship has approached agrarian radical political culture in a manner guaranteed to obscure, not only its *telos* and praxis - though these too - but its very *raison d'être*. Each of these scholars are united by a common thread in their heteronomism. This is their inability to recognize or appreciate the school of citizenship that animated the agrarian radical political culture.

Without understanding the school of citizenship, and how it infused the debates and strategies embodied in agrarian radical political culture, the heteronomist can only see in the agrarian radical adventure in democracy various approximations of sensible parliamentary activity. The other potentials that were always there, struggling to emerge, and continually helping mold what did emerge, remain an empty black hole. Interestingly, it is this same failure to appreciate the role of the school of citizenship in agrarian radical political culture that undermined the efforts to transcend the conventional reductionism by recent structural/post-structuralist approaches. The school of citizenship thesis is the key to unlocking the original contribution of the agrarian radical political culture. Without that insight it has proved all too easy for aspiring revisionists to lapse into the very reductionism they sought to transcend.

The school of citizenship, like democracy itself, presumes autonomy. Where people do not, or are not capable of, cultivating self-determination, self-legislation, self-rule, democracy is a mere charade. Equally, where people do not, or are not capable of, cultivating self-activity, self-consciousness, self-direction, the school of citizenship - as the agrarian radicals meant it - is an empty phrase. To have understood the agrarian radicals and their school of citizenship, and hence to have gained insight into their political culture, would have required inherited scholarship's acknowledgment of their profound commitment to autonomy. Acknowledging autonomy, though, involves taking seriously (inter-) subjectivity and its potential for historical agency. But here we are in defiance of the very terms of heteronomism. And it has been heteronomism that has formed the inherited scholarship's perspective.

The agrarian radical adventure in democracy, driven by the school of citizenship, could only be grasped by an outlook that took seriously a belief in the historic potential of the autonomous (inter-)subjectivity that underpinned the agrarian radical political culture. The inadequacy of the inherited scholarship's heteronomist outlook beckons the thinking out of another perspective through which such experiences might be better understood. The final part of the present study can suggest only the first rudimentary outlines of an autonomist perspective.

Recent turns in philosophies of nature and history provide a picture of autonomy and subjectivity as grounded in, and evolving through, ever greater degrees and diversity, out of natural history into genuinely social history. The new biology and natural history arising out of the work of those associated to both the hypotheses of Gaia and punctuated-equilibria emphasize this view of evolution and ecology in which autonomy and subjectivity are measured in degrees rather than absolutes.

The libertarian philosopher Murray Bookchin has emphasized how these insights can lead us to a view of autonomous subjectivity as a characteristic aspect of natural history and its graduation into social history. Furthermore, Bookchin suggests, this aspect of natural history is inherently susceptible to objective study and ethical reflection despite its more-normative-than-empirical character. Such development is never inevitable however. And Bookchin also points out the intersubjective dimension of potentially autonomous subjectivity in his reflection upon the psychical heteronomy capable of being cultivated in social conditions unconducive to the development of autonomy.

A more penetrating appreciation of this latter insight is provided by Cornelius Castoriadis, a psychoanalyst as well as a philosopher. Castoriadis emphasizes the mutually dependent character of individual and collective autonomy. The individual psyche, it is suggested, is as much a social as a personal domain: partially composed from the residues of others the individual experiences in the course of life. He couchs these insights, however, in a depth analysis of social process in which all societies are recognized as actually autonomous - or "self-instituting" - however self-alienated the process, by the substance, of this institution.

The notions that autonomy can be a self-alienated actuality, now on the personal level, and that its self-conscious actualization is dependent upon the intersubjectivity of autonomy, are explored by Steven Mitchell in his effort at revising psychoanalytic thought. Mitchell's ideas mirror, as they support, those of Castoriadis. What Castoriadis suggests about the importance of personal to social autonomy, Mitchell suggests about the importance of social to personal autonomy.

The impression that grows out of these speculations upon this rudimentary, emerging autonomist perspective suggests a dramatically new way of regarding social and historical movements such as that of the agrarian radicals. This speculative perspective will not serve as a standard against which to criticize the inherited scholarship. It remains entirely too rudimentary for that. But even in its very suggestiveness, it provides a tentative backdrop against which we can gain a better appreciation of the universe of thought that lies between the assumptions of the inherited scholarship and those of the agrarian radicals. From this perspective, speculative though it is, it will become obvious how virtually impossible it was for the scholars of this heteronomist outlook to record the achievements, much less the sensibility, of the agrarian radical political culture.

It is then this recovery of the agrarian radicals' political culture, out of which emerged their unique adventure in democracy, which is the first order of events to be expanded upon here. An important caveat, though, must be added to the terms of the discussion as thus far elaborated. It should be noted that the agrarian radical adventure in democracy necessarily and self-consciously involved a vision of social transformation. After many convoluted efforts, the attempt to include the term "social transformation" in the title of this study was abandoned. This exclusion should not allow neglect of the fact that for the agrarian radicals, during the period studied, the elaboration of their political culture was never merely an exercise in self-improvement. The democracy they nurtured within their own political culture was self-consciously practiced as a demonstrative, indeed a prefigurative, praxis that could provide both the means, and the inspiration, for a reconstructed Canadian democracy. To speak of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy is to speak not only of a unique political culture, but also of a particular vision of social transformation.

Before turning to this study in detail, it might be of value for some readers less familiar with conventional Canadian history, to briefly outline the historical contours of the events that culminated in the agrarian radical movement. Also, quickly reviewing the outlines of that movements' history will facilitate a more casual narrative within the study itself. We turn then to this brief historical excursus.

Notes

[1] George Woodcock, "Democracy, Heretical and Radical," *The Case for Participatory Democracy,* (eds.) C. George Benello and D. Roussopoulos (New York: Grossman, 1971); and his, "A Plea for the Anti-Nation," *Nationalism or Local Control: Responses to George Woodcock,* (eds.) V. Nelles and A. Rotstein (Toronto: New Press, 1973); Gerry Hunnius, "Participation vs. Parliament," *Thinking About Change,* (ed.) David P. Shugarman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974);
Philip Resnick, *Parliament vs. People* (Vancouver: New Star, 1984); and Robert Chodos, "The Election No One Can Win," *This Magazine,* 22(5), Oct. 1988, pp. 4-5.

[2] For an overview of this tradition, with special reference to its relevance to Canadian communications historiography: David J. Adams, "The Nationalism of Communications in Canadian Historiography: A Survey of Sources," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism,* 7, 1980.

[3] Partridge was among the most prominent of early agrarian activists. There will be much discussion of his work and ideas throughout part two of the present study.

[4] The long time president of the United Farmers of Alberta, Wood was the initial articulator, though arguably not the most articulate spokesperson, for the quasi-syndicalist ideas of group government. His contribution to the agrarian radical adventure in democracy is dealt with in chapter 2.

[5] Primarily know as a labour politican or journalist, only occasionally as a farmer or minister, with roots in the British socialist and social gospel traditions, it was Irvine who came to be the most articulate spokesperson for group government.

[6] Good held a number of prominent posts within the Ontario and Canadian farmers' movement, in addition to being one of the successful candidates in the Progressive Party's invasion of federal politics in 1921, and being known affectionately as the philosopher of the United Farmers of Ontario.

[7] Though inadequately critical of this trend, it is well described by Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976.)

[8] Morton has been among Canada's most important historians. The history of the west and of the farmers protest movement have particularly attracted his attention.

[9] Young has been called the closest thing that the CCF-NDP has to an official historian.

[10] Macpherson was arguably Canada's most internationally influencial intellectual. His mature work has considered how particular economies and theories of economy influence ideas about liberty and democracy. This concern is already evident in his first book, on the unique polity of Alberta.

[11] Clark is the father of Canadian historical sociology, and was the editor of the extremely influencial series of works on the Social Credit, of which C.B. Macpherson's *Democracy in Alberta* was a volume.

Historical Excursus

The early development of the northern half of North America involved very little rhetoric about cities upon hills and promised lands. Unlike the United States, whose early history involved an intended break with European ways, Canada's early history was molded by people fleeing European prisons and seeking European fortunes. From the start, what we now call Canada was valued primarily for the commodities it could provide European markets.

Recent Canadian historiography, in the form of the staple thesis, has concentrated upon the economy, technology and geography of early staple commodities. This has been understandable if, as will be seen, somewhat excessive. In this historical excursus the insights accumulated by the staple thesis will be employed as a methodological focus simply because it lays out clearly the most widely accepted current ideas about Canadian historical development. By the conclusion of the present study, however, it should be abundantly clear that reliance upon this methodological focus is dangerously inadequate.

The North American continent had become the field of operation for both French and British colonialism by the 17th century. The easy transport offered by the St. Lawrence river system in the French region - stretched out along that system and down the Mississippi river - maintained firm relations with its metropolis through the trade of first fish, and then fur. The lack of such facile transport in the southern, largely British dominated region, combined with the utopian visions that motivated many of its early settlers, encouraged a higher degree of self-sufficiency.

Eventually, in 1763, both regions came under British military control, but the inner inertia built up in each region over the previous century, as well as the immovable fact of persisting geography with the transportation it facilitated, perpetuated the previous tendencies. The St. Lawrence region was now connected to the British metropolis in the fur and later the timber trade. Meanwhile, the economic independence developed in the older British region led to political independence and the establishment of a United States.

The new nation built upon its inner strengths and prospered, while British North America (BNA) continued to put its energies and resources into the staple trades. Furthermore, as first BNA, then later Canada, evolved its staple trades to suit the needs of its European markets with the dairy, livestock and later Western wheat industries, greater and greater levels of American influence came to bear upon Canadian production through the use of advanced U.S. technologies. The growing insecurity of the European markets for Canadian staples, accentuated by the demise of the British mercantile system, led to a decline in the mercantile importance of the St. Lawrence river, and subsequently an increased Canadian regionalism. This regionalism, combined with rulings of the Privy Council which strengthened the provinces' rights over resources, laid the basis for regional competition over U.S. investments. In addition, as U.S. staple reserves depleted, American markets for Canadian staples increasingly replaced the less dependable European ones. This displacement of European by U.S. markets was facilitated by the development of newer Canadian staples such as minerals, pulp and paper, hydro-electricity and petroleum. The extreme capital-intensity of these staples' production, for which both the development capital and markets were American, cemented the North-South bond. Finally, the historical tendency to concentrate all energies on staple production in BNA, and later Canada, detracted from the diversification that would have been necessary to develop a prosperous and self-reliant indigenous Canadian industrial sector. The Canadian government is thought to have attempted to overcome this deficiency by the formal National Policy of import tariffs instituted in 1879. [1]

In fact, the National Policy was only a culminating moment in the long history of Canadian constitutional and governmental history being molded by the staple trades and their transportation needs. As the Lower Canada revolts in 1837-38 were spurred on by struggles over the building of new commercial canals, facilitating the movement of the wheat harvest to British markets, so was the 1841 Act of Union a direct consequence of the revolts. This historic act of consolidating the mercantile connection to Britain, however, was thwarted in just a few short years as the British protectionist mercantile system fell apart with the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, and the Navigation Acts in 1851. The mercantilist nation-builders then tried to follow the logic of BNA's economic development by establishing a Reciprocity treaty with the U.S. However, they were again frustrated, following the victory of the more isolationist North in the civil war, when the U.S. abrogated the treaty in 1866.

The final stroke of genius, according to the chroniclers of the nation-builders, was to build a continental country across the northern half of North America, incorporating the various British colonies. By developing a homesteading population in the west, subject to prohibitive tariff, they would necessarily create a large demand for the industrial production of the protected eastern industries. Likewise the agrarian production of the new rural development could provide the foodstuffs for the workers in the eastern industries. The mercantile capitalists, who had always been more interested in profiting off the movement of goods than actually producing anything, could be accommodated in the building of the railroad necessary to connect the two mutually dependent markets. The Confederation Act of 1867 was the first chapter in this epic. The informal national policy of 1879 - including the National Policy tariff, the Homesteading Act and railway network - was the triumphant moment in the heroic history of Canadian nation-building. [2]

It was out of these conditions that arose the early western agrarian settlements of Canada. Given the inherited scholarship's general neglect of the importance of democracy, citizenship and autonomy in agrarian radical history, it is not surprising that it has also tended to neglect the nascent emergence of such sensibilities amid these early agrarian settlements.

There have, however, been some efforts that offset this tendency. Based upon the research conducted by the Centre for Community Studies, at the University of Saskatchewan, for instance, Donald E. Willmott has emphasized the organic development of an autonomous civic culture in early prairie settlements. The formation of school boards was often the opening act in such local developments. The building of the school and organizing of a school board brought the neighbourhood together as a community and facilitated the development of diverse civic associations. These activities can be seen as a nascent political culture, with local self-government usually following later.

Willmott's discussion of this early local self-government and its eventual transposition into heteronomy is worth examining at some length. In the last decade of the 19th century the Territorial Government established autonomous districts to self-administer local development:

> Under enabling legislation of the Territorial Government, fifty-seven Statute Labour and Fire Districts were established in the Saskatchewan area between 1890 and 1896. These had two functions: the construction of roads and the ploughing of fireguards. Both were carried out by compulsory labour of local residents. Ratepayers, through annual meetings were given almost complete control over the work to be done and the means of doing it. They were subsidized by the Territorial Government, but could not borrow money. [3]

During the following period a larger number of localities were formally organized, with a more explicitly democratic decision-making structure and humanly scaled mode of operation:

> In 1897 the Territorial Government reorganized the settled area under its jurisdiction into 438 Local Improvement Districts. These LID's were run in 'town meeting' style - annual meetings of ratepayers levied taxes, determined what work should be done, and elected an overseer to supervise it. Assessed taxes could be commuted to day labour, and most ratepayers chose this alternative....
>
> These early LID's were one township in extent - that is, only six miles square.... [4]

However, this organizational form lasted less than a decade, when the Territorial Government - in its final year of existence - dramatically altered both the structure and scale of these administrative localities. Willmott points out that this simply initiated a process of gradual loss of the locality's autonomy - an autonomy generated out of a tradition of voluntary and spontaneous civic association, well before it had been formally acknowledged in the legislation of the Territorial Government. Short as were these early experiences in local self-government, though, they were apparently long enough - buttressed, no doubt, by the forementioned tradition of civic association - to cultivate an allegiance to local autonomy that was significantly offended by the Territorial Government's usurpation and distortion of local autonomy:

> Against considerable local opposition, a new Local Improvement Ordinance was passed in 1904. The LID's were reorganized into units of from three to six times the size....The new ordinance introduced representative government into the LID's. Instead of making policy decisions, the annual ratepayers meetings in each township elected councillors. The new LID Councils chose their own chairmen and conducted the business of the area in regular meetings. Revenue was divided among them, and each councillor became, in effect, an independent overseer of public works in his own division.
>
> Much the same structure was maintained in the nine-township Rural Municipalities which succeeded the LID's between 1909 and 1912. Since that time the boundaries and structure of these three-hundred-odd RM's have remained virtually the same, but their autonomy has been undetermined by Provincial financing and control in most areas. [5]

What we have here is a striking temporal condensing of the processes of popular political disempowerment, in which democracy is displaced by the hierarchy of parliamentarianism. As Willmott observes: "Thus we see local government evolving from very small units, involving collective labour and a high degree of citizen participation, to medium-sized units in which citizens have little to do but to vote and to dicker with their divisional councillors." [6]

The full impact upon the developing political culture of the agrarian west of this unpopular, unilateral transposition of local democracy into executive administration by the Territorial Government, in 1904, can be more fully grasped if we recognize how a comparable process undermined the Territorial Government's own traditional quasi-delegational form, in the interest of establishing a parliamentarianist regime. Upon the creation of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, in1905, the federal Liberal government appointed Liberal lieutenant-governors to both provinces. These latter, in straight contradiction to the regional political traditions and clearly stated desires of the prairie population, effectively imposed parliamentarianist regimes upon the new provinces by calling upon the Liberal leaders in each to form the first provincial administrations. As a consequence, only partyism became an effective mode of political participation. [7]

It was within this context of democracy and autonomy being transposed into hierarchy and heteronomy that the turn of the century farmer-discontent, in the western part of Canada, evolved into the agrarian radical movement for social transformation. That this process was the consequence of parliamentarianism unilaterally imposing its own self-image upon very different political traditions may have been enough to cultivate the agrarian radical critique of partyism. If this experience was not enough, though, the prairie farmers also had reference to the fate of the movement that provided them with a most dramatic model of agrarian radical political culture.

The U.S. populist movement, particularly the Farmers Alliance, within the life time of many who later participated in the formation of the GGAs, built up an extraordinary alternative political culture within the context of American monopoly capitalism's integration. Constructed out of an extensive lecture circuit and numerous movement publications, there arose across vast expanses of the United States, in the latter decades of the 19th century, a rich culture of self-help and mutual aid, which gradually articulated itself into a vibrant civic sphere and a genuinely democratic political vision and movement. However, after nearly two decades of painstaking and patient grassroots organization, populism in the U.S., embodied in the People's Party, suffered a meteoric crash in its 1896 venture into what a later generation on the Canadian prairies would call crass partyism. [8]

And just in case the lesson was not adequately impressed upon the agrarian radicals, the fate of the Patrons of Industry in Canada, particularly Manitoba, in that province's 1896 election, also emphasized the self-destructive potential of farmers' organization involving themselves in partyism. [9] These experiences, and their impact on the memory and consciousness of agrarian leaders in the farmers' movement of the 20th century, have been frequently cited as explanations for the latter's apprehension about endorsing new political parties as appropriate means to redress the injustices suffered by farmers. Limiting the observation to this though reveals a significant insensitivity to the sensibilty of agrarian radicalism. For far more than tainting partyism as an effective vehicle for agrarian radical discontent, these experiences of the ways in which party politics undermined movements of social transformation - set against the historical background of how centralized misrepresentative governments unlilaterally imposed unpopular.governing structures on prairie peoples, goes much further: it provides an insight into the inspiration for the sweeping and penetrating critique that the agrarian radicals levelled against the entire edifice of parliamentarianism itself.

As distressing as were the political conditions that frustrated western farmers, though, these were always infused with a deep sense of deception and economic injustice. That what these new settlers found upon their arrival in western Canada was something less than the utopia that had been painted by Canadian immigration agents is perhaps to be expected. But conditions were, in fact, far harsher than they had any right to expect. The natural obstacles were formidable enough - loneliness and a taxing climate took their toll. More disturbing for many, though, was the harshness of the human-made conditions that the western homesteaders faced.

Land prices ran rampant due to widespread speculation, and the huge land grabs delivered to the railway, among others. And the marketing of their grain was exceedingly volatile. The grain elevator companies and railway colluded to limit the amount of grain that could be marketed thereby protecting their selling price, but as monopoly and oligopoly buyers in a large productive area, they were able to maintain a low buying price. Even apparently benign practices such as the grading of grain could become an instrument for robbing grain growers of the value of their crop. Millers skimmed off the best quality grain. Futures speculators in the Winnipeg Grain Exchange played havoc with the wheat market. And bankers followed policies seemingly more concerned with forcing the grain grower to market at the period of maximum supply, rather than helping them develop their farms. In addition to all this, farmers bought their necessary durable goods and farming implements from tariff protected, monopoly industries in the east at prices far higher than what they would have had to pay for the same, far closer, just south of the border.[10]

Over the years, farmers tried a number of reform projects to change these conditions. Some were moderately successful, such as farmers' cooperatively owned grain elevators, and a farmer owned and managed grain marketing company. But the general frustration of their efforts led many to look more closely, and critically, at the established structures that seemed to so consistently stand in the way of significant reform. It is out of these efforts, spurred on by the earlier experiences in Canada, and especially in the United States, that agrarian radicalism was born. Indeed, even those reform projects that were successful tended to have a large measure of agrarian radical initiative behind, and supporting them.

The establishment of the Grain Growers Grain Company (GGGC), the various Provincial Grain Growers' Associations (GGAs), and the *Grain Growers' Guide (GGG)*, were the major moments in the institutionalization of agrarian radicalism. The elaboration of the latter two particularly was always a living part of agrarian radicalism's own historical development. This part of the story is the focus of the current study. The conventional history found in the inherited scholarship, at this point, typically turns to a discussion of the agrarian radicals' participation in electoral politics. After much debate about a bewildering range of rather bizarre ideas, so the account generally goes, the agrarian radicals finally got down to serious politics, settling upon third partyism as the appropriate venue.

The fascination this phase of activity holds for inherited scholarship is not entirely surprising. If parliament is taken as the locale of the real action, a lot of people seemed to be suddenly becoming very active in the early 1920s. In point of fact, it actually began in 1919 with the election of the United Farmers of Ontario (UFO) minority government. This minority administration fell apart before it had completed its full term, then disappeared from the electoral map.

In 1921, the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) won a landslide electoral victory for the provincial legislature. They were re-elected with an even greater majority, and again with a diminished, but still substantial, majority - until 1935, when they were electorally defeated by Bible Bill Aberhart and the Social Credit in an even more awesome landslide.

The same year as the UFA's initial victory, the so-called Progressive Party, with a large contingent of UFA members, and the labour group - small group though it was - were elected in sufficient numbers to establish the official opposition of the federal government. Before the parliamentary term was complete the Progressive coalition had disintegrated as agrarian dissidents attempted to align with W.L.M. King's Liberal Party, and the radicals withdrew into a militant "Ginger Group."

Each self-destructed in its own way. The story of those events, and the various arguments about why the most important of them did so, that are found in the texts of the inherited scholarship will be examined in the second and third parts of this study. All that needs to be said at the moment is that this dramatic, sweeping and brief moment in Canadian parliamentary history cannot be properly understood if it is intellectually severed from its roots - from the source of its strength and inspiration. That source was the agrarian radical political culture developed within the locals of the grain growers' associations. If we neglect, or forget, to place these electoral activities in the context of that political culture, or if we fail to understand the aspirations and motivations of those who breathed life into that political culture, we cannot possibly understand these electoral activities as the ambitious, if deeply misguided, contribution that they were to the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy. It is the endeavour to remember the political culture of the agrarian radicals that we now begin.

Notes

[1] The preceding page and a half of the main text is an edited excerpt from my masters thesis, Mike McConkey, "Monopoly Capitalist Communications in Canada, 1879-1932," Montreal: Concordia University, 1985. For a series of concise explorations of these issues from a variety of angles see the collected essays of the father of the staple thesis: Harold Innis, *Essays in Canadian Economic History*, (ed.) Mary Q. Innis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956.)

[2] W.T. Easterbrook and H.G.J. Aitken, *Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956.)

[3] Donald E. Willmott, "The Formal Organizations of Saskatchewan Farmers, 1900-65," *Western Canada: Past and Present*, (ed.) Anthony W. Rasporich (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1975.) The quotations cited in the text are found at pp. 31-33.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] C.B. Macpherson, *Democracy in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953), pp. 23-24.

[8] The definitive work on U.S. populism, returning the Farmers' Alliance to its rightful place at the centre of the drama, is Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.)

[9] Brian R. McCutcheon, "The Patrons of Industry in Manitoba, 1890-1898," *Historical Essays on the Prairie Provinces*, (ed.) Donald Swainson (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970.)

[10] For an excellent study of the historical complaints of the grain growers: V.C. Fowke, *The National Policy & the Wheat Economy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957.)

PART TWO: A History of the Agrarian Radicals' Political Culture

Chapter 1: The Grain Growers and the School of Citizenship Thesis.

A history of the agrarian radicals' political culture as it developed in the early decades of this century will help us return to prominence, a central concept in their adventure in democracy, and one that has been seriously neglected in the inherited scholarship on the farmers movement: the school of citizenship. Concentrating upon the main voice of agrarian radicalism, *The Grain Growers Guide (GGG)*, and the intellectual contribution of some of the agrarian radicals' most important theorists, the history of their political culture will help reconstruct the central role of the school of citizenship in agrarian radical thought and action, theory and practice. By way of this reconstruction, it will also be possible to suggest a more general reconstruction of agrarian radical history that better explains the popularity of some of their more notorious attempts at political intervention: direct legislation and group government.

Early in the history of the *Grain Growers Guide (GGG)*, founded in 1908, one of the most salient of fundamental principles that gained widespread expression was the notion of a moral community. It is a classical political notion and one that hardly seems to sit right with the dominant liberalist legacy of the last couple centuries with its emphases on procedure and form rather than substance and content. And yet somehow it has managed strangely to persist.[1] At its most libertarian it has insisted upon the importance of individual autonomy. But unlike liberalism, it has never left this door open to atomism and unbridled egotism or hedonism. The autonomy of the individual had its source in the autonomy of the community. Should individual behaviour become corrosive of community welfare it inherently abdicates any claim to legitimacy.

Despite the highly individualized character of much farmwork, it is this notion of a moral community that first suggests the substantive contours of an agrarian radical political culture. This vision was already evident in the founding editorial statement of the *GGG*: "This newspaper would help in the work of freeing the people from [capitalist] slavery by assisting them to organize and get a clear insight into the causes of the present unsatisfactory conditions, and the nature of the remedies, educative, legislative and co-operative, to be applied. It would also try to teach them to escape from the slavery of selfishness, petty greed and the crime of disloyalty in their relations with one another." [2]

The notion of a moral community is expressed in several early articles, often lengthy book reviews, which had a salient position in these early issues of *GGG*. A case in point is a lengthy review of a book by Henry Demoarest Lloyd, "Man the Social Creator." This article involves a discussion of "love" as a "universal, most matter of fact natural force." Lloyd wants it clear however that this love is not "a flabby, sentimental affair. It does not destroy self interest, it harmonizes self interests. It is the self interest of the individual; and more, it is the the self interest of the community; and more, it is the self interests of the individuals and community harmonized; it is the creator and reconciler of all. It is the law of service, and service calls for service. It means not good owners but free men, not good kings but enfranchised citizens, not employees but self-employing workingmen." [3]

This same notion of a moral community is evoked in a piece by Rev. Lewis J. Duncan when he discusses the growing recognition of a more reflective people, critical of "modern individualism," who are said to know:

> that the 'economic man' actuated by purely selfish motives, who is so prominent in the classic political economics and who still lingers on in the popular theories of the multitude, is a pure abstraction; that no such individual ever did nor ever will exist. They doubt that the best good of the community is realized through the free play of individual cupidities. They doubt that every individual knows his true interest, or, if he does, that he will infallibly pursue it. They doubt that the economic advantage of the individual always coincides with that of the whole social body. They are certain that in many cases its does not, and that where it does not, it is not the social advantage that should suffer. [4]

In both these cases the fundamental principle of the moral community - that the individual liberty or interest must be tempered by the communal interest or common good - is clearly expressed. While these early expressions of a moral community are not voiced by agrarian radicals, it seems unlikely that so many such expressions would find their way into the *GGG* if there was not a supportive audience attending them. And from the same issue of the *GGG* as Duncan's article appeared in, we find one of the most prominent agrarian radicals of the early period expressing views entirely in keeping with those above. In the words of E.A. Partridge:

> We have to create material wealth but we must also create mental, moral and spiritual wealth.
>
> We must purify, expand and enrich the individual life, the community life and the national life.

> Let us fight for our rights that we may become more efficient champions of the rights of all; looking forward to an ideal commonwealth where the strife of competition will be replaced by the peace of co-operation and the lust for private gain by zeal for the common good. [5]

Previous scholarly treatments of the agrarian radicals, emphasizing the latter's petty bourgeois character, have perhaps not taken seriously enough, or not adequately appreciated the implications of, the agrarian radicals' vision of a moral community. Certainly, if taken seriously, it stands in diametrical opposition to the aspirations of a liberalism founded upon abstract, formal procedures and unbridled market economy. The logic of this conclusion was expressed by R.C. Henders in his 1916 presidential address to the MGGA convention: "We must recognize in some reasonable way that right of the community in the wealth it creates and, therefore, private property becomes a trusteeship for the continuance of which the community has a right to demand service for the good of all." [6]

Such expressions are hardly in keeping with what is conventionally taken as a petty bourgeois outlook. While such expressions were not a frequent feature of agrarian radical texts, they were regular enough to warrant much more serious consideration than they have received to date.

Even clearer than their vision of what they desired as the basis of an ideal political culture was what the agrarian radicals rejected in their critique of the dominant political culture - in a sense, the mirror image of what they aspired to. The immoral community of crass individualism lent legitimacy to profiting at the community's expense. This was the basis for the behaviour of the monopoly capitalist industries and banks of the East who, with their immense wealth, controlled the nation's political economy to their own advantage - at the expense of all others. They were able to control the nation's economy through the maintenance of the tariff trade barrier and like-legislation. Through expenditure of their great financial resources they wielded the political clout to enforce such legislation due to the fatal flaws of the parliamentarian system. Those fatal flaws were partyism and cabinet domination.

Political parties required large financial resources to operate - and he who paid the piper called the tune. But given the realities of parliamentary procedure, parties also served as instruments of control over the individual elected representative. As defeat on any vote would bring the government down in a vote of no confidence, the individual representative on the government side was continually drawn into becoming a rubber stamp of cabinet, less he or she topple their own government and provoke an untimely election which could result in electoral defeat. Hence, through a subtle extortion the member of parliament became less and less a genuine representative of the constituency that elected him or her, and became more and more a mindless appendage of the party or, more precisely, the small clique that ran the party and controlled the cabinet.

As a consequence, the agrarian radicals quickly arrived at the conclusion that parliamentarian democracy was a sham. Partyism constituted the misrepresentation of the people, who were actually governed by an elective aristocracy, itself the handmaiden of a financial aristocracy. In another presidential address to the MGGA convention, this time in 1912, R.C. Henders put it in pretty much precisely these terms: "[The people] are sovereign de jure but not de facto, except at election times. The actual power experienced by the people consists chiefly in the periodic choice of another set of masters who make laws to suit themselves and enforce them until their term of office expires, regardless of the will of the people. We are governed by an elective aristocracy which in turn is largely controlled by an aristocracy of wealth." 7

From the earliest days of the grain growers' movement this critique of the dominant order was invoked, elaborated and expanded upon. As a negative model, it obviously helped guide the agrarian radicals' development of a reconstructive political project. As parliamentarianism was revealed to be illegitimate as a model of political culture, so was its foundation on wealth. If the farmers were to engender a new political culture, so must they engender a new foundation to build it upon. The notion of a moral community went part of the way in this direction, but finally it was a mere negation: calling that much more urgently for the replacement of wealth as a foundation, but still not providing the positive resources for such a political culture. If the agrarian radicals were to replace elective aristocracy with democracy, they would have to replace the aristocratic resource of wealth with an equally formidable democratic resource.

From day one of the *GGG* there was never any doubt about what was to serve as this foundation for the agrarian radicals' political culture of democracy: the culture of grassroots, participatory discussion. The agrarian radicals continually struggled toward the self-formative, discursive, intersubjective, participatory political culture that could cultivate the high standard of citizenship necessary to generate a new, authentic democracy. Only the citizenship capable of being nurtured in a culture of grassroots, participatory discussion could serve as the foundation for agrarian radical democracy.

The practical organizational form of this political culture was the locals of the GGAs. In 1910 there were already 600 local branchs of GGAs throughout the west - many of them holding weekly meetings.[8] Within slightly over three years though, the number of locals had more than doubled in numbers to 1,300. And it was estimated that there was between10 and 200 members in each of these.[9]

These locals, organized in the different districts of the provinces, became the multiple centres of the farmers' dissident culture. It was here that the farmers organized their direct action and cooperation against the capitalist interests. But the agrarian radicals saw a far greater potential in these locals. For the radicals they became the nascent foci for an emergent network of democracies: the forum for the face-to-face politics of a humanly scaled political culture in which all could participate, and hence benefit.

Week after week the many reports from the locals in the three pages of the *GGG* dedicated to the prairie province GGAs, of which only a very minute taste is provided in the prologue, would suggest that this vision took significant effect. It was these decentralized and effective forums of public discourse that were molecularly structured up into the regional and provincial conventions that determined the GGAs official policy positions. The locals would send instructed delegates to these conventions on the basis of a ratio of one to every ten members.[10]

It was these conventions which had the final say in all GGA affairs. And, while it cannot be denied that the process had its difficulties with leadership cliques, and the fear thereof[11], even critical scholars have generally agreed that the GGAs lived up to their democratic ideals to an extraordinary degree. In time, it became relatively common practice to refer to the provincial conventions as "farmers' parliaments", and even the locals as "local parliaments." But while these characterizations give a sense of the seriousness with which the farmers approached their new political culture, it hardly does justice to the latter's democratic nature.

Though agrarian radical democracy differed substantially from the liberalist version, they did have in common a commitment to procedures of free expression. As the enduring record of the agrarian radicals' political culture, the *GGG* illustrates the breadth and depth of this commitment, and the intellectual vitality it cultivated. The *Guide* was never short of disputes about the meaning and value of socialism. But the most common topics revolved around suggestions and debates as to the best means for the agrarian radicals' political culture to institutionally establish itself. Aside from the most common positions - a new party, infiltration of old parties and proportional representation - there were suggestions for coordinated voting, district conventions, pledging of candidates and parallel elections. And in a dispute that would have heartened J.S. Mill, after a lengthy debate involving a large number of participants, a most reactionary proposal that the franchise be reduced to property owners, was finally beaten intellectually into the ground by a number of radical opponents. Though the most prominent of these disputes - that between the new partyists and infiltrationists - does not directly concern the present discussion, we will be examining some aspects of their debates in relation to their positions on direct legislation, shortly. The most important notion to arise from these considerations, however, in a sense transcended and subsumed them - for it made them possible. At the same time, it constituted the sharp discontinuity with liberalism.

The democracy that the agrarian radicals engendered in their political culture was of course not the formal proceduralism developed in the liberal tradition. Their democracy was one in the classical sense in which only the substantive experience of active participation in the political culture nurtured the confidence and competence necessary for the quality of citizenship upon which the continued health and maturation of democracy depended. As agrarian radical democracy depended upon a certain quality of citizenship so it helped cultivate that quality of citizenship. In the words of the quotation cited to begin this study, the agrarian radicals' political culture of democracy served as a school of citizenship.

The initial, and most elaborate, explication of this school of citizenship thesis appeared already in the sixth issue of the *GGG* - the same issue in which appeared the above mentioned quotation. This earliest - and always most eloquent and persistent - proponent of the school of citizenship thesis was E.A. Partridge. In the scholarly literature Partridge tends to be treated as a visionary in the derogatory sense. He is portrayed as a man more occupied with dreams than practicalities. And there can be no denying that Partridge was a man whose thought was thoroughly animated by richly articulated visions of a more humane world. But the day-dreaming visionary label seems a strange one to pin upon a man who was the catalytic organizer of the GGGC, one of its central leaders in its early battles with the railway and grain merchants, and the founding editor of the *GGG.* [12]

To grasp the context of Partridge's discussion of the school of citizenship thesis, we must point out that he was an infiltrationist. Though we have not yet arrived at the point in our discussion at which a lengthy explanation is called for, it should be explained that the infiltrationist position advocated - in opposition to the advocates of new parties and independent candidates - that the farmers should infiltrate the existing parties and take them over. As Partridge put it in the article under consideration: "[farmers] must enter the arena of politics as active, intelligent voters, and dominate BOTH political parties by force of numbers, NOT FROM WITHOUT, BUT FROM WITHIN..." 13

In this way there was no danger of the farmers' association being sucked into the political turbulence and destroyed as North American farmers had seen befall predecessors such as the Farmers Alliance in the U.S., and the Patrons of Industry in Canada. This left the association free to pursue other directions: "the concerted entry of the farmers into politics through their party organizations suggests the desirability of making the Association a non-partisan school for the study of political questions as social and economic problems to be solved by legislative means, that is to say, a school of citizenship wherein our farmers will use to learn the franchise in such a way as to result in the enactment of wise laws...." 14

The basis of such organization Partridge identifies - merely pointing out the reality of what was already coalescing - as the local sub-associations of the GGAs. These locals had been originally organized as adjuncts to associations whose future and potential was still unknown. But with the flourishing of the farmers' movement, Partridge insisted it was now time for the locals to be organically wed to the GGAs. He advocated the meetings of the sub-associations being regulated and systematized as the popular underpinnings of the GGAs. They must each become "an active organized centre of thought in every rural community."

For Partridge the locals should become a vast, coordinated democracy-network. The plan calls for cooperation in the establishing of set regular meeting dates - he suggests a figure of 24 annual meetings - operating with an agreed upon pre-determined agenda: "At the beginning of each year a programme for the year in the nature of a topic for discussions for each of the twenty-four meetings should be announced and essays on each topic, with contributions of facts and figures connected therewith, should be solicited from the membership and published in advance of the date of discussion." 15

The vision that emerges from these proposals is quite striking when imagined in practice: Partridge is advocating the creation of a public space for collective political self-empowerment. It is the space for a political culture that makes all else possible by means of the cultivation in its participants of a vibrant citizenship. This for Partridge was always the first priority. There were many interesting institutional schemes about, some of which Partridge favoured: infiltration and direct legislation. But all such schemes could only be adequately evaluated and comprehended by a community of citizens with the standard of civic consciousness that only the sub-associated locals' school of citizenship could provide. This was a point that Partridge was to continually emphasize throughout his life.

The school of citizenship thesis as both an explicit statement of what was already developing and an exciting vision of a potential future, rapidly caught on in the farmers' movement. Though few elaborated it with the detail and thoughtfulness of Partridge, it quickly became used as a celebratory description of the agrarian radicals' political culture. For instance, Secretary of the MGGA R. McKenzie, in his address to the convention in 1913: "In many instances the meetings of the Grain Growers'

Associations have become the social centre of the community in which they are held. They become responsible for a development in the social side of farm life. They train members to interest themselves in public questions. They become the happy medium for building of character and training for usefulness." 16 Indeed, even two years earlier McKenzie, former long time editor of the *GGG*, already looked upon this training for citizenship as "the most valuable acquisition to the country" provided by the grain growers' movement. 17

However, while the long term benefit of an elevated citizenship was frequently cited, in the short term the school of citizenship was usually conceived as a means for farmers particularly to elevate their citizenship and hence improve their own political culture of democracy, strengthening their movement in its struggle for social transformation. A couple of concise statements of this view appeared in October of 1910.

In the Manitoba Section: "In the national, social and political worlds vast forces are being brought into being which will mightily influence the future of humanity. The progress of opinion is bringing many of our social problems within the sphere of practical politics. The power of democracy is being organized so as to bring our institutions more under the control of the people. Hence, it becomes the duty of every citizen to fit himself to understand the various aspects of these problems so that they may assist in their solution by intelligent effort. The different branches of the Grain Growers' association affords an excellent opportunity to our farmers for educational work along these lines." 18

And in the Alberta Section: "What chance would there be for farmers [in parliament]...to compete against the trained men of the other professions? Much as it goes against the grain of every man to do so, he is compelled to admit that without some training in the public questions of the day the farmer members would develop into mere voting machines and would not be of much value to the community at large. This education must begin at once, and the surest and safest plan is to have these questions threshed out in the local school house when the farmers and their families get together as members of one common organization to take up these problems." 19

As a letter to the editor from Wm. R. Ball put it with elegant precision: the association "will be a school to educate young and old...teach them how to express their views in public, and to think for themselves, so they will not be as putty in the hands of the party leaders...." 20 And, again, with the clarity and pointedness that characterized his presidential addresses, R.C. Henders addressing the 1911 convention of the MGGA: the GGA must establish an association "in every locality; [and] make every local branch a school where the people shall meet for the study of trade, economic and sociological questions. Where our young men will not only study these questions but receive training in the preparation of papers and addresses on the same. Where rule of order of debate will be studied and such general equipment furnished as shall fit them for the responsibilities of higher citizenship." 21

Even a cursory examination of the *GGG* during this period can leave little doubt about the extent to which the basic assumptions of the school of citizenship thesis, in just a few years, became not only the practical experience, but a - if not *the* - major theoretical *raison être*, of the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy. It was this determined faith in the people's capacity as an educated citizenship to exercise a thoughtful popular intelligence that occasionally leaves the mistaken impression of an anti-intellectualism among the agrarian radicals.[22] They were not against intellectuals as such, though they were suspicious of those financially-kept by the same institutions responsible for the evident injustices of the established order. Rather, their more positive - and more fundamental - belief was that the sturdy citizens of a discursive and participatory political culture were at least equally as likely to provide wisdom in the application of their collective intelligence as were the so called experts.[23]

Despite the contradictions that remained buried just below the surface, it is possibly the widespread conviction in these vague assumptions associated to the school of citizenship thesis that contributed to the equally remarkable adopting by the farmers' movement of direct legislation as one of its most consistently and enthusiastically pursued institutional reforms. Formally, direct legislation referred to the referendum and initiative, but as it was rarely advocated in separation from the advocacy of the recall, all three will be implied by the use of the term herein.

Direct legislation caught the agrarian radicals' attention on the basis of the advances it had made in the U.S. farmers and non-partisan movements. In Canada, for the most part, the active agitation for direct legislation was carried out by independent, progressive intellectuals or those close to the labour movement[24] - though the agrarian radical John Kennedy was an exception to this, acting as a vigorous direct legislation promoter.[25] Nevertheless, very quickly, direct legislation became adopted as perhaps the most widely shared objective of long term agrarian radical political reform. As early as January 1910 all three prairie province agrarian associations had endorsed direct legislation as an important institutional reform requiring the soonest possible enactment.

The proposed practice of the three dimensions of direct legislation are really quite simple and rarely vary from one proposal to the next. The "initiative" acknowledges the right of a certain percentage of the population - usually around eight percent - by means of petition, to initiate legislation. Such a petition upon receiving consent of the required percentage of the population is forwarded to the legislature to be enacted into law according to the ordinary course of procedure. It is usually suggested that if a legislature declines to enact into law an initiative petition, that same proposal must be put before the people as a referendum at the time of the next general election. If a particular matter is considered pressing enough, or too controversial, a special referendum - which in no way endangers the standing government's mandate - can be called to settle the matter. The "referendum" refers to the right of the people - around five percent of the population - to demand that bills either enacted or rejected by the legislature be submitted to the people for final approval or disapproval by means of a referendum. The "recall" refers to the rights of a particular constituency - based on about 25 percent of its members - to demand its representative to stand for re-election on the basis of lost confidence. These then are the rough outlines of a vision of direct legislation.

To get a flavour for direct legislation, we can do no better than examining the first full length article by an agrarian radical in the *GGG* advocating its promotion. While there is usually little variance in the outlining of the scheme, there often is some variance in the particular arguments made on its behalf. In this regard, it is of particular interest to see what this initial article in the *GGG* had to say - and recognize the interesting congruence its arguments have with the school of citizenship thesis. It lists nine arguments: 1) "Direct legislation is essential to self government in complex communities - a necessary element in a true democracy." Considering the legislative power controlled by the private monopolies: "The fundamental questions are, shall the people rule, or be ruled? Shall they own the government, or be owned by it?" 2) Direct legislation will eliminate corruption, e.g. "$5000 may buy five councilmen to vote against the people's interests, but it cannot buy 5,000 citizens to vote against their own interests." Bribery will be impossible and the lobby will be useless. 3) It is practical and would clarify popular decision-making: "instead of voting on a candidate and a complex platform as a unit, it would be easy to put the main questions on the ballots and to vote yes or no on each issue." 4) "Better men" will be attracted to politics. 5) It will lessen partisanship. 6) "It WILL EDUCATE THE PEOPLE, intellectually and morally - more responsibility, more discussion of measures and public affairs, wherefore more understanding, more sympathy and civic patriotism, more mind, morals and manhood." 7) Understandably, therefore, reason will play a greater role in politics. 8) It will eliminate class legislation. And, 9) it will open the door of progress currently controlled by "the plutocrats and political bosses."

Furthermore, the article goes on to cite the positive experience with direct legislation in Switzerland where it has, among other things, "elevated...the methods of political discussion, helped to educate the mind, heart and conscience of the people, developed the manhood and improved the citizenship of the nation...." It concludes with the slogan, "Let the people rule!" 26

Much of this same emphasis upon elevated citizenship and civic education is repeated shortly later in John Kennedy's first major article on direct legislation in the *GGG*.[27] As the agitation for direct legislation grew over the next couple of years these emphases remained central - even among some who remained otherwise skeptical about the scheme.[28] There would seem to be at first sight an evident correspondence between direct legislation and the school of citizenship thesis. They shared similar objectives, and seemed to lend support to each other: the former could provide momentum for the latter; the latter could inspire the former.

This neat package, however, was not as tidy as it first seemed. The messier side of the story is suggested by a consideration of the critiques of direct legislation from inside the movement. Unlike the school of citizenship thesis - which to reject virtually entailed rejection of the entire universe of agrarian radical political culture, and essentially constituted withdrawal from the farmers' movement - direct legislation developed a relatively loud and high profile opposition within the movement. No less prominent a farmer activist than Fred Green opposed direct legislation as an object upon which agrarians should be exerting great energy. This fact led to something of a controversy in the pages of the *GGG* which Green finally diffused by publishing his definitive views on the subject in an unusually conciliatory tone.[29]

While it is true that many of those who opposed direct legislation did so out of deeply conservative attitudes, fueled by imaginations incapable of transcending the parameters of parliamentarianism, there were more thoughtful criticisms raised. Green, for instance, was concerned that a controversy over a proposal - the benefits of which remained considerably unclear - might rip apart what was developing into a powerful farmers' organization.[30] Whether the factions over the issue of direct legislation were as equally balanced and polarized as Green's reservations suggest seems unlikely. Yet, it is true that in the case where one local actually voted down direct legislation the fall out in the pages of the *GGG* was loud and harsh.[31] In any case, Green's deeper ambivalences seem to have been grounded in his distrust of the country's non-farmer population, and hence his reluctance to trust the levers of government to the vagaries of demographic shift.[32]

Fear that direct legislation would backfire on the farmers was in fact not uncommon.[33] Occasionally, however, the criticisms levelled against direct legislation were more sophisticated than the above mentioned examples might suggest. Two in particular warrant closer consideration. Joseph H. Andrews, while not in complete opposition to direct legislation, expressed strong caution in regards to it: "[direct legislation] might be useful and efficient in deciding any 'straight' political question...but a government bill, or a budget, or succession and such like could not be decided by its means. They would involve, not one simple proposition, but a series of propositions."[34] The either/or logic of referenda does not lend itself to the nuances of actual self-government.

Another interesting critique was that of Lewis Gabriel. He criticized the widespread enthusiasm for direct legislation as missing the central point: "Direct Legislation, when in force is an indication of power and not the cause of the power."[35] Those who envisioned direct legislation as providing the means for "true democracy" and "the reign of the people," were getting the cart ahead of the horse. Direct legislation could not give the power to the people, because the people had to have the power to put direct legislation in place. When examined more closely these critiques point to the messier side of that apparent neat symmetry between direct legislation and the school of citizenship thesis.

Andrews, for instance, is not simply siding with the reactionaries who disbelieve that the common people are capable of governing themselves. Rather, he is drawing attention to the much more subtle and complex issue of agenda setting. Important policies of governance are never simply yes or no prospects as the advocates of direct legislation often implied. Any proposed policy has been structured in a given way to the exclusion of other ways, and other considerations of content; it is by necessity a pre-determined agenda. If people are truly to govern themselves they cannot allow their civic participation to be reduced to the mere endorsement or rejection of someone else's agenda.

Gabriel's criticism emphasizes the catch-22 logic of structural reformism. When the structures of government need reforming because they are inadequately responsive to popular demands, how is one to introduce reforms to those structures, if only prepared to operate from within them? This is the riddle that all advocates of direct legislation had to work with. If direct legislation was to empower the people, it had to be put into law somehow - but how?

Another movement within the agrarian radicals' political culture that slowly built up momentum over the years provided a partial solution. This was the pledge movement. Those advocating the pledge were in fact trying to sneak the recall in the back door, prior to, as a means toward, getting direct legislation. The basic idea was to have the candidates of a particular area sign a pledge to support the farmers' demands. Needless to say, farmers' support was conditional upon signing. For the direct legislation promoters, the pledge was wonderfully simple to adapt to their cause. Direct legislation could be achieved by simply making a commitment to it the object of the pledge. Whether one was a new partyist, independentist or infiltrationist, the pledge was equally as applicable. And all shades of opinion made use of the notion to this and other ends.

The pledge too, however, had its detractors. Indeed, the debate over it became one of the most hotly contested and divisive political debates to unravel amid the agrarian radicals' political culture during this period. And while many of the criticisms were as simplistic as the object of their critique[36], there were others that pointed to more revealing lacunae in the assumptions of the direct legislation promoters that adopted the pledge as their instrument of choice.

Particularly instructive in this regard was the letter to the editor by Thomas Saxby. The scenario he sketchs out is so bluntly probable, one is left wondering about the judgment of those who could have overlooked it:

> if the whole members of the government are pledged to support something that does not suit their private interests they can so arrange business, and organize mock crisises [*sic*], and bring in harmless measures of so-called immediate importance, that when the member is called upon to explain his conduct before a constituency of honest and straight-forward electors he can speak of the unexpected difficulties that have arisen and tell them a tale of the strenuous efforts he has made to give effect to their desires, and probably he will weep with them because his pledge could not be carried through Parliament. The sincere electors judge the member by their own standards; they give him credit for his expressed intentions and are very often credulous enough to send him again. [37]

Perhaps we live in a time when cynicism regarding the motives and actions of government are at an unprecedented high, but from our perspective the likelihood of such a scenario seems painfully obvious. But even if this is so it does not detract from the value of Saxby's point, nor the excessive naivety it reveals on the part of the direct legislation promoters. This should hardly be surprising though. Faith in direct legislation as an instrument of social transformation reveals the same naivety, as Gabriel's criticism pointed out. In the end, nothing animated the direct legislation promoters so much as a naive faith in the capacity of the political system that they found so intransigent to - nevertheless, somehow - change itself. This fact is highlighted by reference to that one direct legislation supporter who never lost track of its proper place in a praxis of social transformation, E.A. Partridge. As early as 1909 Partridge had put issues such as direct legislation in their proper perspective: "The introduction of the initiative, referendum and recall, the fixing of times of election, the introduction of fairer methods of registering the popular will in choosing representatives...are desirable subjects of investigation, at the hands of the electorate, while organization is being completed to enable the popular will to eventually prevail." [38]

Partridge was an infiltrationist as a matter of pragmatism, but he was never ready to let anyone, willing to listen, forget that all institutional intervention toward social transformation could only be built upon the solid foundation of a consciousness and community molded and bound by a rigorous citizenship. This was a view that Partridge was still advocating in the mid-1920s. [39] It is for this reason that he became the most vigorous and articulate theorist of the school of citizenship thesis.

Direct legislation might have been a fine policy-making instrument to be introduced by a new polity, toward establishing institutions of democracy. Such introduction, however, would be dependent upon the substantive existence of the new polity. And the participants of such a new polity would surely be dissatisfied with the zero-sum political culture of endorsing or rejecting a public agenda pre-determined by professional politicians. Generating its own public agenda out of its participatory political culture of grassroots discussion would be the ideal of a new polity concerned with establishing democracy.

It was this new polity which was the slumbering promise of the school of citizenship thesis at its most visionary. Other movements for social transformation had grasped the potential in this strain of thought and attempted to articulate from it a revolutionary praxis - particularly among the Guild Socialists, anarchists and council communist movements.[40] The simplistic solutions of direct legislation however were too attractive to the agrarian radicals at this point when too many were still too naive about the malleability of parliamentarianism. And we should not forget that the agrarian radicals were always under considerable pressure from those I have called the agrarian dissidents to demonstrate the value in these activities that continually threatened to strain the ties that bound the farmers' organizations together as mutual aid societies.

The varying means that parliamentarianism found to defeat direct legislation in each of the three prairie provinces must have come as a rude awakening in the private heart of many direct legislation promoters. In any case, following the final of the three defeats, in the unambiguously definitive case of Manitoba, it would have been sheer fancy to continue entertaining the illusion that direct legislation could serve as the instrument - rather than the prize - of social transformation.

All the attention and energy put into the agitation for direct legislation not only was dissipated with its final defeat, but more importantly, eclipsed conscious reflection upon the school of citizenship, in theory and practice. Consequently, the radically different path it provided was overshadowed for many years. It was only the defeat of direct legislation that reopened that pathway: a pathway that continued to exist - even if largely taken for granted, or reduced to banalities - because the agrarian radicals' political culture continued to exist. Though the agitation for direct legislation had eclipsed theorizing the school of citizenship, it was precisely the daily practice of the school of citizenship which sustained that agitation.

These lessons were taken to heart by the agrarian radicals in the subsequent phase of their adventure in democracy. But as will be seen, their implications were not adequately extended.

Notes

[1] A very instructive discussion of the parallel and ultimately contradictory histories of these two traditions can be found in William M. Sullivan, *Reconstructing Public Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.)

[2] *GGG* 1(1) June 1908, p. 4.

[3] *GGG* 1(2), Aug. 1908, p. 29. See also in this regard the review of John Graham Brooks, *The Social Unrest, ibid.*

[4] Rev. Lewis J. Duncan, "Modern Individualism," *GGG*, 1(4) Oct. 1908, p. 29.

[5] "Address of Mr. E.A. Partridge - At Annual Meeting of Grain Growers Grain Co.," *GGG*, 1(4) Oct. 1908, p. 9.

[6] *GGG* Jan. 12, 1916, p. 29.

[7] *GGG*, 4(28) Feb. 7, 1912, p. 7. Anyone vaguely familiar with Rousseau's critique of British parliamentarianism in *The Social Contract* can hardly not be impressed with the similarity in tones and terms.

[8] Editorial, *GGG* 2(27) Feb. 2, 1910, p. 6.

[9] Editorial, *GGG* 6(23) June 4, 1913, p. 6.

[10] Fred. W. Green, "An Engine of Democracy: The Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association," *GGG* 4(19) Dec. 6, 1911, p. 12.

[11] See for instance the presidental address of James Bower to the UFA in 1912, *GGG* 4(26) Jan. 24, 1912, p. 20; or the exchange between W.A. Kennedy and Fred Green in the Saskatchewan Section, *GGG* 6(15) Apr. 9, 1913, p. 10.

[12] There is an extraordinary absence of scholarly literature on this most fascinating and important Canadian farmers' activist and political theorist. The one and only scholarly article I have found that examines Partridges colourful life is the rather fanciful treatment by Ralph Hedlin, "Edmund A. Partridge," *Papers Read Before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba*, series III, 15, 1960, which gets off to a some what indicative start with its title that states Partridge's first name incorrectly. It was actually Edward, a fact - the etymology of which - he took some pride in.

[13] E.A. Partridge, "Work for Subordinate Grain Growers' Associations," *GGG* 1(6) Dec. 1908, p. 49.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[16] *GGG* 6(3) Jan. 15, 1913, p. 23.

[17] R. McKenzie, "Work of Past Winter," *GGG* 3(39) Apr. 26, 1911, p. 24.

[18] *GGG* 3(11) Oct. 12, 1910, p. 11.

[19] *GGG* 3(13) Oct. 26, 1910, p. 16.

[20] *GGG* 3(3) Aug. 17, 1910, p. 12.

[21] *GGG* 3(27) Feb. 1, 1911, p. 8.

[22] For some examples see the article "The Farm and Home: The New Rural Life," *GGG* 1(12) June 1909, p. 46; the letter from 'READER', *GGG* 2(1) July 1909, p. 12; and the letter "More Light Needed," *GGG* 2(3) Aug. 21, 1909, p. 10.

[23] A distinct exception to this general view was E.A. Partridge. He had something of a fetish for expertise which, as will be seen in the next chapter, along with some of his other confining views, compromised his otherwise immensely emancipatory vision.

[24] For a couple of the more important texts in this regard: Seymour Farmer, ***The Reign of the People: A Brief Summary of the Case for Direct Legislation***, (Winnipeg, 1911); and Robert L. Scott, ***Direct Legislation, or The Initiative and Referendum: What it is and Why We Need It*** (Winnipeg, 1911.)

[25] This is not to deny that agrarian radicals were involved in the movements agitating for direct legislation. For instance, such prominent farmer activists as R.C. Henders, R. McKenzie, T.A. Crerar, G.F. Chipman and J.W. Scallion were involved in the Direct Legislation League of Manitoba. But only John Kennedy among the farmers seems to have played as large a role in the active agitation for direct legislation as did Seymour Farmer, Robert Scott or F.J. Dixon. The foremost and lattermost, incidently, were to make their way into the history books not as direct legislation promoters but as activists and publicists during the Winnipeg General Strike.

[26] "Direct legislation - Canada's Greatest Need," *GGG* 1(12) June 1909, pp. 24-25.

[27] John Kennedy, "Direct legislation - An Address delivered before the Brandon Convention [of the MGGA]," *GGG* 2(22) Dec. 29, 1909, pp. 10, 30.

[28] See for instance, editorial, *GGG* 3(19) Dec. 7, 1910, p. 5; and the letter of Levi Thompson, *GGG* 3 (23) Jan. 4, 1911, p. 9.

[29] F.W. Green, letter, *GGG* 4(43) May 12, 1912, p. 12.

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] See letter in Alberta Section by Bert Huffman, *GGG* 4(25) Jan. 17, 1912, p. 14. And the responses of J.B. Cannon, *GGG* 4(29) Feb. 14, 1912, p. 12, and Austin Droney, *GGG* 4(30) Feb. 21, 1912, p. 12.

[32] Saskatchewan Section, *GGG* 4(37) Apr. 10, 1912, p. 20; and Saskatchewan Section, *GGG* 4(42) May 15, 1912, p. 20.

[33] For another example: letter by W.H., *GGG* 2(35) Mar. 30, 1910, p. 13.

[34] Letter, *GGG* 4(41) May 8, 1912, pp. 12-13.

[35] Letter, *GGG* 3(11) Oct. 12, 1910, pp. 13-14.

[36] Letters by Richard Fletcher; J. Bousfield; and William Lilwall, *GGG* 3(33) Mar. 15, 1911, p. 16; 3(34) Mar. 22, 1911, p. 15; and 3(44) May 31, 1911, p. 10, respectively.

[37] Letter, *GGG* 3(42) May 17, 1911, p. 13.

[38] E.A. Partridge, "Farmers' Day," *GGG* 2(2) Aug. 14, 1909, p. 9.

[39] See the preface to E.A. Partridge, ***A War on Poverty: The One War That Can End War*** (Winnipeg: Wallingford Press, 1926), p. vii.

[40] I have explored the latter two cases at length elsewhere: Mike McConkey, "The Uses of Radical Democracy in the European Left's Revolutionary Praxis, 1864-1921," Doctoral Research Project #1, Montreal: McGill University,1987.

Chapter 2: From Direct Legislation Promotion to Group Government Theory

The struggles to achieve direct legislation unfolded into particular dramas in each of the three prairie provinces. First, in Saskatchewan, the establishment of direct legislation was dependent upon its being endorsed by the general population in a referendum. From the start, however, the capacity of the "elective aristocracy" to determine the game rules - even, and especially - in a game that put its future at stake, allowed direct legislation to be undermined through what appeared to be the very process it advocated. It did not receive the necessary percentage of the eligible vote to be enacted into law. To the direct legislation promoters, though, this whole process was ludicrous in that the percentage of the eligible vote determined to be necessary by the provincial legislature was nearly equal to that which had elected the existing government. In light of the Direct Legislation League's absence of funding, and the government's unwillingness to finance a genuine debate, such an exacting percentage made a mockery of the process. In the minds of the direct legislation promoters this amounted to counting the non-votes of the uninformed and apathetic as votes against - which they could hardly be considered. [1]

For some of the direct legislation promoters this was just as well; the direct legislation bill that was voted upon was so inadequate that they considered it preferable that the slate be wiped clean to begin again. And yet no new beginning ever had the opportunity to develop. In Alberta a direct legislation act was put in place, but its applicability was narrowly limited and most importantly it was defined as inapplicable to any matters concerning the public treasurery. To the minds of the direct legislation promoters, this was a strange form of direct government; not allowing the ostensibly self-governing to allocate their own financial resources.

Finally, the most interesting case was that of Manitoba, where a comparatively rigorous law was slated for enactment. However, the Liberal government, despite its public display of support for the measure, decided to seek ruling on its constitutionality prior to enactment. First the Manitoba Court of Appeal, in December 1916, and then the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London, in 1919, ruled this new act as *ultra vires* of the provincial legislature. As one of the justices, A.E. Richards, in his infinite and blunt wisdom, stated: in the British parliamentary tradition sovereignty resided in parliament; it did not and never had resided in the people. [2]

How much of a blow this may have come as, to the direct legislation promoters, is an interesting question. Certainly it was the culmination of many years work and struggle into a vast wave of frustration. And yet, could they really have been surprised, when the entire rationale of their efforts was the incontestable inadequacy of the British parliamentarian system as an instrument of genuine popular self-government?

Whatever the actual explanation, the substance of which scholarly accounts differ upon, the latter do agree that the direct legislation movement suffered a permanent set-back following these provincial defeats - especially that in Manitoba. Direct legislation never disappeared from the agrarian radicals' agenda, but never again was it to achieve the central position in their visions of social transformation.

Despite the setbacks of direct legislation promotion, the agrarian radicals' political culture and its form of what has been called "delegate democracy" thrived in the early years after the war as even the UFA's critics have acknowledged.[3] The membership figures and number of locals, which had increased steadily for the first decade of the UFA's existence experienced a dramatic leap in 1919. These vast increases continued each year for the next couple until the 1921 election after which the numbers levelled off.[4] And although these membership increases put some strain on the organization, causing some procedural changes the UFA remained a vibrant democracy in which the decentralized locals remained the centre and strength of initiative and decision-making.[5]

Though his study focuses on Saskatchewan, the findings of American sociologist Seymour Lipset provides insight into the character of this thriving school of citizenship - in fact, he explicitly acknowledges the relevance of his research to Alberta, the most important site of agrarian radical democracy's next phase.[6] Lipset examines at some length the vast array of organizations that throughout the history of Saskatchewan called for widespread participation by the farmer population in practical self-management, self-organization and self-government. Though he does not identify it by name it is precisely the school of citizenship and its benefits of a political culture incurring civic virtues that he sees as the most important factor arising from this history. A valuable example is provided by the description one of Lipset's informants gives of the school of citizenship at work from a more personal perspective:

> My father was elected vice-president of the S.G.G.A. local early in the twenties. He hadn't wanted the job, but he was a leading farmer in the district and had been a member for a long time so some of the other officials prevailed on him to take the post.
>
> Shortly after he was elected, the local sponsored a meeting by a Progressive M.P. The Chairman of the Lodge took sick and my father was told that he would have to

> preside over the meeting. He tried to get out of it for he had never made a speech in his life. He couldn't however and had to preside. For days before the meeting he stopped all work and went around the house reciting a five minute speech which he had memorized. The family almost went crazy listening to it.
>
> On the day of the meeting, he delivered the speech and afterwards was complimented on his ability by the M.P. After that he lost his fear. He would chair meetings and gradually began to make speeches for the organization. By the time the C.C.F. was organized he had no fear in facing a crowd of hundreds and speaking for hours. Before he died he must have delivered hundreds of speeches at C.C.F. meetings, co-operative meetings and other farmers' gatherings. [7]

Though the farmers of Saskatchewan were to follow a different course after the war from that pursued by those who expounded and explored the group government theory in Alberta[8], this radically democratic articulation of an agrarian political culture remained the life blood of the farmers' movement from Alberta to Ontario. Indeed, W.C. Good was to later emphasize the importance of this fundamental activity in the rapid development of the Ontario farmers' sudden eruption onto that province's electoral map. [9]

Perhaps one of the most interesting practical applications of the agrarian radicals' political culture of democracy was the creation of the Farmers' Platform. The initiative for the individual planks in the platform were generated by the locals across the prairie provinces and Ontario. They were forwarded to the offices of the Canadian Council of Agriculture where the farmers' elected executives constructed a cohesive, integrated platform proposal which was then submitted to the various provincial conventions for further discussion and finally endorsement and adoption. To many at the time this represented the epitome of agrarian radical democracy at work. It became a model for how the farmers' political culture could be articulated into a coherent instrument of public policy formation. [10]

It is out of this context that the innovative theory of group government was elaborated. Paradoxically though, while the actual self-activity of the agrarian radicals' political culture served as both the model and inspiration for group government theory - causing the explication of the latter to be continually elaborated in a rich autonomist language - the theory arising from that model and inspiration was consistently embedded in a deeply heteronomist philosophy of history.

It was Henry Wise Wood who first introduced these ideas. [11] In Wood's mind there were two great forces or principles at work in the world. One was that of competition with its implications of autocracy and destruction; the other, that of cooperation with its implication of democracy and construction. The process of history was no less than the ongoing evolution of the struggle between these diametrically opposed forces continually reworking themselves at ever higher levels of organization. Beginning with a Hobbesian world of universalized individual competition, it is proposed that small groups of such individuals managed to come together to cooperate to their common end, creating an exploitative advantage over the individual competitors, and hence forming clans. Following the logic of the process, other individuals - responding to their exploitation - cooperate to form further clans, hence offsetting the original advantage. Clan competition then becomes the new form of universalized competition. Thus, clans respond to the newly constituted conditions of competition by cooperating to form tribes and hence creatings new exploitative advantages, which are eventually in turn offset again by the spreading of cooperation to a new level of universalized competition, beckoning further forms of cooperation at still higher levels and more encompassing scales. This process was to have played itself out during the course of history leading to its logical *telos* in the early 20th century in which a small handful of classes or groups stood toe to toe over their conflicting interests. The autocratic forces of monopoly capitalist industry and finance had raised the level of exploitative competition in the formation of their cooperative organization - the Canadian Manufactures Association usually being cited as the most salient evidence of this fact. It was now up to labour, and especially agriculture, to respond in kind. By working out their own cooperative organizations, the exploited could raise the level of competition to its highest conceivable level and scale. Aside of total social war, the only solution would be for the different classes to come together and cooperate in the form of an agreed upon basis for cooperative self-government. It was here that Wood's discussion of the practical exercise of group government would enter the picture.[12]

William Irvine continued and in places elaborated Wood's heteronomous evolution of history. If in places the ambiguity of Wood's language and the fluidity of his presentation left doubts about the heteronomy of the historical process he presented, Irvine's clear and crisp discourse removed most of those shady areas. For instance: "When society is seen as a living organism developing in harmony with the laws of life, and not as something that politicians have put together, as it were, with hammer and nails, we shall cease to think of destruction and use time and effort for the purpose of cultivation; we shall see that society, like the individual, is part of all it has met with - part of all it has experienced; imbedded in its being is all of the past, and that past, combined with the present, determines its future." [13] And a little further along: "If the laws of society do not call for the uprisings and revolutions which the governments dread, neither agitators nor revolutionists can bring them about. The iron laws of society are stronger than temporary laws of politicians." [14]

While the autonomist tone in Irvine's thought is already seen creeping in, with his reference to cultivation - no doubt nurtured by the agrarian radicals' own political culture - this tone is difficult to accommodate to the severe quietism implied in a worldview in which iron laws of society render impotent all dissonant human passion and creation. The heteronomy of history has its own purposes and the success and meaning of all human actions are only to be measured by the degree to which they complement that trajectory. If restricted to the area of abstract theorizing it would be inconceivable that anything but the most incoherent, irrational thought processes could project a sphere of autonomous human action from this philosophical grounding. Incredibly though, it is precisely this that emerges from the group government theorists, particularly in the context of discussing the actual vision of, and practical - as opposed to historical - arguments for, group government.

What emerges from these discussions is an elaborated exposition of the self-creation of autonomous social institutions of self-government by way of a broad and rich participation. Here self-government is democracy, and democracy is only actualized in the form of collective self-directing citizenship. And indeed, citizenship itself is only meaningful and effective collected in the self-determining exercise of democracy.

As early as 1917 Wood had posed the problem for agrarian radical visions of social transformation in precisely these terms: "in no democratic country in the world have the people really learned to rule. We have democracies in theory, but in no country in the world have the people taken advantage of their opportunity. The power has always been in their hands, but they have never used it.

"The lack of intelligent citizenship is the reason why the people cannot govern themselves today." 15

By the early 1920s, though, as the group government theory took ever clearer shape the role of the collective citizenry as articulating a common interest that could contribute to genuine self-government was explicitly formulated. In an article in the *GGG* Wood explained it this way:

> the individual unit of citizenship is so low that the masses of the people have no citizenship strength. They have been like sands of the desert, blown back and forth by the changing winds of false propaganda. The unit of citizenship strength must be raised to an infinitely higher degree...The only material out of which higher citizenship units can be built is individual citizenship. This means transferring the unit from the individual to the group, and to do this the group must be stabilized and permanent. Building individuals into the group unit means that the individuals have got to act together and think together, thus gradually building all the elements of their individual strength into the group. As the individuals make progress in thinking together they gradually build their intelligence into the group intelligence, each making his best contribution, and the group receiving the sum total. Thus the group gradually becomes articulate, and speaks the combined intelligence of all the individuals. The group intelligence is higher than that of any member, and the intelligence of the active group is continually being raised to a higher level. 16

This notion that citizenship can only effectively contribute to a democracy by means of its collective fermentation and expression is a sentiment frequently expressed by Wood. As he put it in his 1921 presidential address to the UFA: "An individual can no more build his citizenship directly into a true civilization than a drop of rain, falling on hill or plain, can contribute its volume directly to the sea." [17] Genuine democracy requires genuinely democratic group organization, and this is dependent upon the groups constituting themselves as a collective citizenry, articulating its collective will from the grassroots on up to whatever federations of common association deemed necessary, while retaining the autonomous, or self-governing character of the organization. As Wood expressed it in an article for *Canadian Forum*: "Democratic organization among the people means that the people must organize themselves, and organize in such a way that they can initiate, direct and control all the activities of the group thus organized. This is distinguished from autocratic organization by being self-governing, or governed from the 'bottom up' instead of from the 'top down.' If the farmers succeed in establishing organization on this basis to stability and efficiency, it will be the first successful attempt to develop democratic organization to any considerable extent." [18]

It should be noted that in these formulations, while incorporating the sensibility, and even the form, of the school of citizenship into his group government theory, Wood actually conducted an implicit reform of its central thrust. In the pre-war period the school of citizenship thesis emphasized the contribution to individual citizenship of participation in the discursive political culture. It was the practice of the collective that elevated the individual. The benefit of the collective was assumed to follow, but it was the elevation of individual citizenship that was focused upon in the first instance. With Wood the process is turned inside out: it was the practice of the individuals that was to elevate the collective. While the benefit of the individual from an elevated collective seemed assumed, it is the collective's elevation that is focused upon in the first instance. For Partridge, collective practice distributes civic virtue to the participating individuals; for Wood, participation submerges the individuals into the collective practice. [19]

There is, however, nothing intrinsic about group government theory that necessitates this reversal as can be seen by reference to the UFO's group government theorist, on this issue. W.C. Good's comprehension of democracy covers Wood's concern for the individual's contribution to the collective, but also evokes the original school of citizenship thesis. In this it is reminiscent of the classical notion of democracy: "We are quite aware that progress towards the realization of the Co-operative Commonwealth requires intelligent devotion on the part of the individual, requires, in a word, the social mind. Every step towards the co-operative ideal, however, has a reflex action upon the mind of the individual, even if it be no more, at the start, than the clear statement of an objective. Every step in the direction of real democracy makes democracy easier to apprehend, and easier to secure. Man learns to do by doing, and there is constant action and reaction between men and institutions." [20] Although this elaborated expression of his views dates from the early1930s, the core of such views can be documented from a decade earlier, as demonstrated in this somewhat more abstract and terse statement: "The perfection of the individual is, indeed, the purpose of all our institutions, and there is an essential reciprocity between the development of the individual and the growth of social institutions." [21]

While he maintains the original school of citizenship outlook in fine balance with Wood's collectivist perspective, Good still of course shares both Wood's and Partridge's emphasis on democracy as practical self-government constituted out of a rigorous citizenship, and evolving from a process of historical-social maturation:

> If there is any such thing as learning from experience then systems of self-government ought to give the opportunity so to do. For progress towards democracy in society corresponds very closely to growing up on the part of the individual. As the child grows to manhood, and as experience is gained, parental control and guidance loosen, and the individual assumes more and more responsibility for his own actions. He becomes in a very real sense, *self-governing*. Similarly, as society grows, it, too, gains experience, and assumes more and more responsibility for its actions; it, too, becomes self-governing...
>
> As I see it, experience must determine wise social conduct, and society must look after its own political future...Popular education, education for citizenship in its widest sense, is a necessary condition of democracy, without which democracy is but a formula...character building is the purpose and justification of popular government. It may, indeed, be stated that democracy as properly conceived demands and develops character. 22

While a heteronomous note characterizes Good's historical analogy - who are the parents of society? - the autonomist thrust of his vision of democracy as a self-governing citizenry, educating its citizenship through democratic experience, still prevails. Similarly, and perhaps even more pronouncedly is this thrust found in the thought of William Irvine. Although all of human history is characterized by him as heteronomy - the inevitable unfolding of iron laws of society that set the limits to human possibility - suddenly when he begins discussing the rise of democracy and the united farmers' movement's potential contribution to it, all talk of laws and natural forces falls by the wayside and is miraculously replaced by a language of human self-direction, creation and autonomous thought.

For democracy to evolve human thought and action must be self-directed and self-created: "The humble beginning, on the part of groups of people, to think and act, and to accept responsibility for the conduct of their common life constitutes what may be called the birth of democracy." And Irvine sees this process culminating in the contribution of the united farmers' movement to the history of democracy: "The United Farmers are making their group a social entity capable of creative thought, and of self-direction, and as such it will be one of the greatest, if not the greatest, contribution to democratic progress in a century." And on the issue of autonomous thought particularly: " People must not be thought for any longer, they must do their own thinking; and must themselves create social thought. Collective thinking is the greatest achievement of the United Farmers' movement." [23]

These remarks are from Irvine's highly influential work *The Farmers in Politics,* published in the early 1920s. And he continued to express such views throughout the decade. For instance, in an essay on democratic organization, he roundly criticizes those who presume to exercise their citizenship out of any sense of "duty." Irvine explains,"to do things from a sense of duty is the lowest type of morality conceivable, if indeed it can be called morality at all. Duty does not ask for reason. It is an external, mechanical means of direction, and is the opposite of that inward, vital, intelligent, responsible self-direction which alone is worthy of a modern human being."

And in criticizing the parliamentarian tradition and its cooptation of the rhetoric of democracy: "Democracy must turn from all its saviours and save itself. If the people still believe that they are capable of governing themselves, they must begin to build the organization by and through which, alone, it is possible for democracy to function. So-called democratic government has failed most lamentably in those very high-sounding principles claimed for it by its defenders. It is not representative, it is irresponsible, it does not govern. It is itself governed." Once relieved of his heteronomous history, Irvine's vision of democracy finds its hallmark in popular autonomous self-activity: "The democratic spirit is one of self-help and self-doing. Leaders must abandon the idea that they can govern people or do things *for* people, and the people must be made to see the folly of expecting anyone to do things for them."

It is this self-activity, elaborated as self-direction which is the core of self-government as democracy: "It is not democracy when the people sit by and watch some one else acting in their name: they must decide what is to be enacted and direct the enactment. Groups of people must follow the vital organic principle of growth from inside, and be self-directive. If this is not done, neither democratic nor co-operative government is possible." [24]

As suggested above, this distinctly autonomist outlook that characterized the group government theorists' discussion of the organs of democracy in practice is most likely explained by their own practical experience with the agrarian radical political culture of the farmers' movement. It certainly strikes a surprising and dissonant cord with the heteronomous historical fabric it is supposed to have emerged from. This is not a simple inconsistency that could be corrected through careful fine-tuning. Upon closer reflection it appears a irresolvable contradiction. Of all the dimensions in which this contradiction manifests itself[25], the one that is most relevant to this discussion is that of theoretical coherence.

The group government theorists wanted to argue that people are capable of autonomous thought and action within their organizations and societies. Yet they also wanted to argue that the history of those organizations and societies was subject to the heteronomy of iron laws of historical evolution. But what then does determine the history of human organizations and the societies they constitute? Either human thought and action is capable of determining the evolutionary direction of such organizations - in which case their history is not strictly heteronomous - or human thought and action is incapable of influencing the evolution of such organizations - in which case human thought and action is not, and cannot be autonomous.

It cannot work both ways. It is one thing to say that autonomous society evolved out of heteronomous nature. As will be briefly discussed in part four, however, new work in natural history suggests that this is not even an adequate description of our biotic evolution. But even if this *were* so, it would be quite a different claim from the one that an autonomous human society can evolve from a heteronomous human history, with discreet and isolated instances of autonomy appearing in some limited fashion. Subjective consciousness makes possible society as such, but once such society takes form all iron laws are no longer a necessary heteronomy, but a symbolic one that mystifies the actuality of autonomy - even though veiled or unconscious - in practice.

Imagining an autonomous polity arising from a heteronomous history is the central theoretical weakness in the thought of the group government theorists. The autonomous polity received a descriptive legitimization in their work as a reflection of their own practical experience. This was the agrarian radical political culture. But to be soundly grounded in a theory of politics and a philosophy of social transformation, it had to be divorced from the heteronomous human history. A heteronomous human history no doubt gave the group government theorists the same sense of comfort and security that it had given so many, so often before. But it simply could not be reconciled with a vision of social transformation articulated out of practical experiences in autonomy. They had to accept that group government was not inevitable, ever, before they could coherently propose its autonomy in the forms of self-activity, self-direction and self-government.

Theoretical lacunae are not mere word play. More that once in actual human history have they manifested themselves in grotesque distortions of the sensibility that had animated a theory once it was put into practice. Whether or not this would have been the fate of group government however remains strictly speculative. Like direct legislation, group government too only caught a fleeting glimpse of its potential realization.

Though group government theory undermined new partyism *per se*, as it happened, it also bolstered it. A particular package of reforms, more or less consistently presented, was felt to be necessary for reforming existing parliamentarian institutions in a direction amendable to group government practice. [26] But the direct legislation experience had demonstrated that moral injunction would not be enough, so the farmers' movement turned on a large scale to campaigning for election. Some of those who got elected did make a practical effort to introduce the required reforms. This was particularly so at the federal level of government. But not consituting the majority of the House of Commons such reform measures were of course defeated. [27]

More interesting could have been the consequences of the provincial elections of united farmers parties in Ontario and Alberta. Constituting the actual government, these farmers' parties could have enacted the necessary reforms to introduce group government and put an end to partyism. The Ontario election however was a bit premature. Bringing the farmers to government in 1919, it occurred when group government theory was still in its infancy and hardly commanded any serious following among the province's farmers. And W.C. Good's efforts to urge such a course upon the Drury cabinet was greeted with perplexity.[28] It might be added though that even if the UFO cabinet had been more sympathetic, its minority, coalition government status may well not have constituted a mandate for such sweeping reform.

The election of the UFA in Alberta would seem to constitute a completely different situation. Coming two years later, group government theory was well publicized and popular among Alberta farmers. Indeed, it was arguably part of the mandate for the UFA election.[29] And the landslide nature of the electoral victory left little doubt about the extent of the mandate's popular endorsement. Yet, group government was not introduced. Why?

While, as always with such affairs, a wide range of factors played varying roles, it seems that UFA president Wood's contribution was particularly derisive in its effect upon the UFA provincial government's reform capacity. Though strenuously pursuing adherence to group government principles at the federal level, at the provincial level he helped undermine the radical influences on the UFA government. Propounding group government at the federal level helped maintain influence over the UFA federal M.P.s. Whereas, since the local UFA provincial government remained more firmly in Wood's sphere of influence, rather than pursuing group government initiatives there, he pursued instead a policy of centralizing power in the UFA executive which he personally dominated.[30]

Whether motivated by a nefarious, authoritarian power-mongering, or an innocent, paternalistic fear of partyism's effect on farmers' movements, the net effect of Wood's actions was the same. A single individual's power and influence, formal and informal, was allowed to significantly undermine the emancipatory project of a large group of people. And Wood, of course, was not entirely alone in this informal, unspoken, perhaps even unconscious conspiracy. The members of the UFA provincial governments over the years for the most part managed to forget the inspirational ideals of agrarian radical democracy in the course of their day to day parliamentarian activities - despite calls for more group government principled policies from UFA conventions.

This, of course, was not universally so. There were fiesty rebellions by group government inspired back-benchers in the UFA administration, who took various measures to oppose cabinet domination. It is interesting though that the damage control against this element was handled by the UFA Attorney General John Edward Brownlee. Brownlee was the only lawyer in the UFA government. His candidacy had been approved on the basis that he had been soliciter of the UFA and the United Grain Growers Company. It is worth noting that he had belonged to the same law firm as R.B. Bennett and James Lougheed. He was the point man for the parliamentarianism-as-usual mindset in the UFA cabinet, and assumed the premiership of the UFA government in November 1925.[31]

It was never merely partyism, or even parliamentarianism, as such that was the foe of the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy, but something deeper and more pervasive: the form of social relationships it typlified. As Justice Richards had emphasized in his ruling on the Manitoba direct legislation act, parliamentarianism was, and had always been, profoundly heteronomous. At their most visionary, the group government theorists effectively acknowledged this fact in their celebration of autonomy. But such acknowledgment was grounded in their own practical experience with the autonomist and autonomous character that pervades a political culture of democracy. So, their autonomist insights were lost once woven into their profoundly heteronomist evolutionary theories of social transformation. What was fascinating was that these autonomist insights seeped to the surface of this heteronomist soil when actually discussing the political practice of a political culture instituted as a formal democracy. Not the fact that this heteronomism obscured the extent to which any struggle for popular self-government would self-destruct under the effort to act through thoroughly heteronomous forms of instituted social relations. In the absence of this insight there is no evident or necessary connection between means and ends in the struggle for social transformation. Thus, despite the group government theory's initial stroke of brilliance that incorporated the agrarian radical political culture as a coherent and integral part of the vision of social transformation, a continued lacuna - especially on the part of the Albertan theorists - about the viability of parliament as a site of radical social struggle perpetuated the condition under which that political culture remained an aspect of the *telos* rather than of the praxis of social transformation.

A more thorough and rigorous critique of heteronomy as such, of which parliamentarianism is only a special case, might have steeled the wills of the agrarian radicals and contributed to strategic approaches that would not have been so susceptible to personal betrayal. To acknowledge this is not to call for a consciousness beyond its historical boundaries of possibility. Such a critique was ever immanent in the practice of the agrarian radicals' political culture, just as it animated their entire adventure in democracy - as such the group government theorists expressed it despite themselves. Such critique, though, was not rendered adequately explicit by Alberta's group government theorists, and the profound defeat that followed in the history of the UFA government, combined with the pressures of the depression, drained the morale and exhausted the popular base of agrarian radicalism. When the time came for it to directly confront the proudly heteronomist attitudes of the social democrats and political labourists, in the formation of the CCF, there was little left to put up as constructive resistance.

Before turning to a brief examination of that conclusion to the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy, it would not properly reflect the character of agrarian radicalism if it were not pointed out that group government theory did not exhaust its options - even during this period. And the specific insights of those who took a critical distance in this regard are of interest. We will restrict ourselves to a review of the thoughts of E.A. Partridge as expressed in the mid-1920s.

In 1926, Partridge published a book titled, *A War on Poverty*, in which he advocated the succession of the four western most provinces, along with a portion of Ontario, from the rest of Canada. Succession was hardly a new notion among the agrarian radicals, but Partridge had stood against it during some difficult times. What is of interest for this discussion though is not his transition to successionism - or the frustration that fueled it - but his vision of the succeeded entity. In this fully elaborated statement, it is perhaps a little strange to realize how little Partridge had been affected by the group government agitation, and to what an extent this elaboration just expanded the initial vision of federated autonomous, local democracies that was so easily teased out of his early *GGG* articles.

Partridges eutopia (some where, as opposed to utopia, nowhere) is to be a political entity situated between Lake Superior and the Pacific Ocean. He suggests as a name COALSAMAO, drawing upon the first two letters of the names of each of the existing provinces which would merge to form it: (Br.) Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba - with the final "O" for the part of Ontario to be included. His discussion of the federal level of "government" already provides a flavour of what is to come: "[COALSAMAO] is a fully self-governed, self-constituted state with a single one-chambered legislative and administrative body, corresponding to a House of Representatives, but called 'The High Court of Control,' consisting of twenty-five members elected annually, sitting in perpetual sessions, during their term of office, chiefly for investigatory, supervisory, and administrative purposes, there being but little legislative work for them to do." 32

The reason for this distinct absence of legislative activity at the federal level would be the existence of a vast network of local, autonomous polities. These polities - in keeping with Partridge's some what irritating continuous use of military imagery - are called Camps.33 The Camps are to consist of not less than three thousand five hundred, nor more than seven thousand members. When a Camp meets the upper limit it is to be divided in half to produce two Camps conforming to the lower limit. [34] Camps hold regular "Camp Meetings" on fixed dates at which they arrive at their common positions and institute their cooperative activity. Each Camp has a Board of Control that is elected annually. In emergencies the Board of Control can initiate irregular Camp Meetings. [35]

To repeat, these Camps are to enjoy almost total local self-government. The High Court intervenes primarily in affairs affecting inter-Camp relations, and matters that affect the entire citizenry of the federation. The totality of the Camps are then graduated on up into 25 "Rallies" or assemblies with each Camp sending an instructed delegate to its respective assembly to directly represent its position on the full range of issues. The assemblies have no actual decision-making authority; they are public forums in which the delegates of the Camps can settle issues amongst themselves and convey their collective views on to the High Court. The latter body is constituted by 25 members each one elected by one of the assemblies from among its own members. [36]

It would be wrong to suggest that Partridge's vision would sit comfortably with the modern democrat. Many of his specific ideas are quite disturbing - seeming to verge on a form of totalitarianism, the possibilities of which had not yet been revealed to most people living in the 20th century by the mid-1920's. In keeping with the tiresome military imagery, his discussion of the assumedly consensual, voluntary, abandonment of individuating, expressive clothing for soldier-like uniforms, as well as his strongly stated views on child-rearing and sexuality, are both unsettling to the modern democrat. [37] And in general, his uncritical worship of technology, expertise, standardization and scientific discourse do not bode well for a radical vision of democracy.

This though is judging Partridge's vision by a criteria that he himself did not possess access to. That others have shown more foresight than him on these matters is hardly to be denied. But in the absence of knowledge as to how he would have revised his vision following the rise of Stalinism, Naziism, the Spanish Revolution of 1936, the Second World War and the Final Solution, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, American cultural conformism, and the new left and popular social movements of the last three decades, it would be disingenuous for most of us living in the early 1990s to presume to take Partridge to task on these matters. In any case, it is the positive content of his vision which is most striking once set in its historical context.

Partridge maintained an unflinching commitment to the school of citizenship vision as he developed it within the context of the grain grower associations, despite the widespread popularity of the transmutation of this vision into group government theory. If the effort to marry the school of citizenship to a praxis of social transformation in group government theory improved distinctly on the naive parliamentarianism of the direct legislation promoters, it did so at some very serious costs. The greatest of these were the sacrifice of the means to ensure solidarity within a tangible community: a community based upon concrete activity, rather than abstract interest. It was only the former that could cultivate a consciousness in-keeping with a moral community, as the foundation of a political culture of democracy. In Partridge's view, group government theory sacrificed the very possibility for democracy in preference to a crude plurality of endlessly warring interest groups.

As early as the preface to his book, Partridges makes his position clear: for some the notion that the "happiness of each" depends upon the "happiness of all" merely means "a developed and alert class-consciousness busied in the building-up of fully organized economic groups on class and vocational lines for co-operation of sorts within them, and competition or class war between them, with inter-group justice dependent upon group power to compel it - the social, or rather, the unsocial system we now have come to full fruition - selfishness gone to seed." His conclusions about this state of affairs is sharp and dismissive:

> The more equal the opposed strengths the quicker the catastrophe in wars to the death. Co-operation which eventuates in a fiercer kind of competitive strife and a more inflamed class antagonism presages no alluring future for a lover of peace. A co-operative association, under whatever name it functions, which seeks advantage for a group without regard for, or at the expense of those outside that group is in fact a 'plunderbund,' - its loyalty is the loyalty of the wolf-pack, its honor thieve's honor - whether its members be plutocrats, peasant proprietors, or proletarians. In weakness it may preach "defense," in strength it will practice aggression.
>
> The development of a keen sense of solidarity in "most" must precede effective, beneficent re-construction and co-operation. [38]

H.W. Wood would have found the critique illegitimate. He had always insisted that a balance of forces was necessary to prevent existing organized classes from taking advantage of their organization. It is the final sentence though that is Partridge's *coup de grace*. Entirely in keeping with what he had been arguing for a decade and a half, he still insisted that organization and agitation of structural reforms not grounded in the practical activities that cultivated the consciousness of a citizenship in a moral community was clearly unconstructive - possibly destructive. A praxis of social transformation married to a valorization of self-interest, even if collectivized, could not cultivate such a consciousness. This consciousness and solidarity could only arise amid the cooperative practice of collectively pursing a common good: "Communal Co-operation [is] superior to all other forms of co-operation because, being co-extensive with the autonomous political unit in which it functions, it precludes the divisive clash of interests where vocational co-operative enterprises collide with non-co-operative ones and with each other, making a fiercer kind of competition than existed before these partial co-operative schemes, still pursued for vocational group advantage rather than the common good, took form." 39

And it is also Partridge's focus on the actual practice of the agrarian radicals' political culture as concrete activity, rather than its theorization as abstract interest, that enables him to break with the group government theorists heteronomous history. While he does not deny the importance of natural evolution, Partridge has no use for the plodding, predetermined heteronomous evolution of Wood and Irvine. Evolution has its place, but human history is built out from, and on top of, that unreflexive movement. Where the practical experience of the agrarian radical political culture led the group government theorists to implicitly acknowledge the radically autonomous character of genuine democracy, for Partridge - who never neglected agrarian radical political culture as a practical school of citizenship - this recognition can be stated explicitly: "Ah, the unassisted progress of old Evolution is too slow - generation by generation we die while we wait. He, Old Evolution, like everybody and everything in this scientific age must have artificial assistance. We have used Science for every purpose save to make men sensible and sociable." [40] Notwithstanding the crude rhetoric of scientism that animates it, the autonomist spirit of Partridge's vision is thoroughly and richly layered throughout his arguments. We can make the human social world substantially in keeping with our vision of a moral community, if we are able to make ourselves, our consciousnesses, amid the self-formative interaction of a vibrant political culture of democracy - constituted as a school of citizenship.

And yet, despite the force and clarity of these arguments reverberating throughout the text of *A War on Poverty,* there is a strange lacuna in the book that demands attention by the very centrality of its absence. The book contains surprisingly little talk about the actual process of citizen-self-making *per se.* Its constructive aspect is almost exclusively a detailed outline of the institutional transformations required to put into effect the school of citizenship thesis, as worked out in the GGAs, on its grandest scale. Yet, there is a sadness in this explicit statement of his vision.

In the earlier decades Partridge's vision encompassed an unusual persuasiveness, due entirely to its nuance and implications. Partridge always had his ideas about the direction of structural transformation, but the power of his approach was always to emphasize the need to develop a richly articulated and self-conscious political culture of democracy in which such questions could be rigorously and seriously discussed. One recalls with particular fondness the democratic spirit that animated a note he attached to one of his early *GGG* articles, responding to some critics: "Any assertion of human rights as being superior to legal rights provokes the shout of 'Anarchist', any effort to [eliminate] the tyranny of capitalistic commercialism by the introduction of co-operative methods is straightway [sic] dubbed 'communism'; any movement to replace the inadequacy of service and the greed of private ownership and operation is characterized as 'Socialism'...

"Don't let us call each other names, friends; let us read, reflect and reason together. Wisdom won't die with any of us. None of us have a corner on the truth." [41]

The graphicness of Partridge's vision in *A War on Poverty* lacks the nuanced reflections upon discursivity and intersubjectivity that had rendered his school of citizenship thesis so compelling. Indeed, it seemed to vaguely acknowledge defeat. The school of citizenship had not been lost in practice. Quite to the contrary, it flourished giving life to the widespread group government agitation. But it had, as it were, forgotten itself. While group government incorporated the agrarian radical political culture in a manner that direct legislation was never capable of as *telos* or praxis - the theorizing of group government and its popular perception was rapidly becoming unconscious and inarticulate in regards to the school of citizenship, not just as the basis for a potential new Canadian democracy, but as the foundation of the farmers' own adventure in democracy. In group government theory the school of citizenship was made the function of a *telos* rather than incorporated into a dynamic praxis of social transformation.

In surrendering the nuance of his approach, Partridge seems not merely to be abandoning the persuasiveness of his school of citizenship thesis, but to be acknowledging its futility as a contribution to social transformation - even as he appears to advocate it. If Partridge was able to recognize the complex way that the confused group government theory was leading the school of citizenship movement for social transformation down a blind alley to its ultimate destruction, his own dispairing turn to wanton utopianism is hardly surprising.

Partridge died of gas asphyxiation in a small room in Victoria B.C., in September 1931, so we have no record of his response to the early history of the CCF. But if the radical decentralist, democratic and autonomist vision of *A War on Poverty* can be taken as any indication he would most certainly have denounced the rapid rise of the CCF's statism, hierarchy and authoritarianism. Whether or not there would have been anybody still listening is perhaps another matter. In any event, it was these events and the agrarian radicals' questionable participation in them that closed the book on their adventure in democracy as a distinct struggle for social transformation, and aborted any hope of Partridge's vision of citizenship being realized in this century.

Notes

[1] Elizabeth Chambers, "The Referendum and the Plebiscite," *Politics in Saskatchewan,* (eds.) N. Ward and D. Spafford (Don Mills, Ont.: Longmans, 1968), p.69. Passage of the direct legislation bill required 30 percentage of qualified voters; the Liberal government had been elected with less than 33 percentage of the same.

[2] W.L. Morton, "Direct Legislation and the Origin of the Progressive Movement," *Canadian Historical Review,* 25(3), September 1944, p. 287. Morton provides a helpful thumb-nail sketch of the direct legislation story in Manitoba, pp. 285-88. For discussion of the events in Saskatchewan, see Chambers "The Referendum...

[3] C.B. Macpherson, *Democracy in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953), chap. 3.

[4] *Ibid* p. 64.

[5] *Ibid* pp. 62-66.

[6] S.M. Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971 [orig. 1950],) p. 262.

[7] *Ibid.* p. 194.

[8] D.S. Spafford, "The 'Left Wing' 1921-1931," *Politics in Saskatchewan,* (eds.) Ward and Spafford (Don Mills, Ont.: Longmans, 1968); and his, "The Origins of the Farmers' Union of Canada," *Historical Essays on the Prairie Provinces,* (ed.) Donald Swainson (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970.)

[9] W.C. Good, *Farmer Citizen* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1958), pp. 92-93.

[10] For instance, William Irvine, *The Farmers in Politics* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976 [orig. 1920]), pp. 168-69, celebrates the process as a model of democracy both for its grassroots procedure as well as for its empowering effect upon the individual farmers.

[11] While it was Wood who first introduced these ideas in the elaborated form in which they were to become famous, or infamous, it is worth noting that such ideas were not entirely original with Wood. Indeed, though not using the terms cooperation and competition, a rudimentary outline of the same basic philosophy of history was presented in the pages of the *GGG* as early as 1913 in a series of articles by D.W. Buchanan. His approach to the material is also of special interest for being one of the very few voices amid agrarian radicalism's political culture that explicitly acknowledged the importance of the ancient Athenian legacy for the history and theory of democracy: D.W. Buchanan, "Toward Democracy: Direct Legislation, the Next Stage in Democarcy," *GGG* Mar. 12, 1913, pp. 9, 20, 21.

[12] This is dealt with effectively in W.L. Morton, "Social and Political Philosophy of Henry Wise Wood," *Agricultural History,* 1948.

[13] Irvine, *Farmers* pp. 89-90.

[14] *Ibid.* p. 93.

[15] "Alberta Section," *GGG* Sept. 19. 1917, p. 10.

[16] H.W. Wood, "The Efficient Citizenship Group," *GGG* Mar. 22, 1922, p. 16.

[17] "The Presidental Address," United Farmers of Alberta, *Annual Report and Year Book* (1919).

[18] H.W. Wood, "In Defence of Group Politics," *Canadian Forum,* December 1922, reprinted in *Forum: Canadian Life and Letters,* (eds.) J.L. Granatstein and Peter Stevens (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), p. 18-19. Page references refer to the latter source.

[19] At the risk of oversimplification, we could say that Partridge's position resembles de Tocqville's view of civic associations, whereas Wood's position resembles Rousseau's view of the general will.

[20] Good, *Farmer* p. 206. This is from a manifesto that Good wrote in 1933.

[21] W.C. Good, "The Farmers' Movement in Canada," *Dalhouse Review,* 2, January 1923, p. 480.

[22] W.C. Good, *Is Democracy Doomed?* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1933), p. 9.

[23] Irvine, *Farmers* pp. 149, 173, 167.

[24] William Irvine, *Co-operative Government* (Ottawa: Mutual Press, 1929), pp. 142, 157-58, 144, 208. This book is a collection of essays and addresses delivered by Irvine during the 1920s.

[25] In fact a number of contradictions are posed, some that would have presented themselves quite forcefully if anything resembling group government had ever been achieved. How, for instance, could the harmonization of interests supposed to arise from the autonomous thought and doing of group government be reconciled with a heteronomous worldview of scarce resources and crass economically determined self interest. A rather different vision of what constituted valuable resources and the limits of their availability would be required to overcome the necessitarian logic of economic determinism.

[26] For some discussion of these reforms: Good, *Is Democracy* pp. 17-19, 23-25; and Irvine, *Co-operative* pp. 219ff.

[27] For instance see the discussion in Anthony Mardiros, *William Irvine: The Life of a Prairie Radical* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1971), pp. 130-32.

[28] Good, *Farmer* p. 121.

[29] See the "United Farmers of Alberta Provincial Platform" (1921). This can be found in "Correspondence, Records and pamphlets relating to the Society of Equity and the United Farmers of Alberta, 1905-1935," Microfilm 1264, McGill University.

[30] Even scholars with quite different sympathies regarding the theoretical coherence and radical potential of agrarian radicalism can agree upon the obstructive role played by Wood in this regard: Mardiros, *William Irvine* p. 95; Macpherson, *Democracy* pp. 73-74.

[31] A good discussion of these matters, as well as Brownlee's final downfall in scandal, and the concomitant demise of the of the UFA government, can be found in Carl Bethke, "The United Farmers of Alberta, 1921-1935," *Society and Politics in Alberta,* (ed.) Carlo Caldarola (Toronto: Methuen, 1979.) The reference to Brownlee's law firm, though, is from Mardiros, *William Irvine* p.189.

[32] E.A. Partridge, *A War on Poverty: The One War that Can End War,* (Winnipeg: Wallingford Press, 1926). p. 130-31.

[33] Though Partridge's penchant for military imagery in *The War on Poverty* is surely playing upon the Wilsonian rhetoric of WWI - the war to end all war, and the like - he clearly did have a proclivity for this sort of thing. In a letter he wrote to his agrarian radical companions from San Antonio, Texas, in 1910, where he was recuperating from a leg re-amputation, he salutes them for holding high the banner of "ideal citizenship," but characterizes this as recruiting for the "Army of the Common Good." On the other hand, while his militarist imagery perhaps grates on the end-of-the-century democrat, in the same letter Partridge also expressed the goals of the movement for this "ideal citizenship" in such a full, integrated manner that those same people may have characterized it as holistic: "This great movement of the tillars of the soil in which we are ranked as leaders is only truly great will only be truly successful so long as it remains fundamentally seeking after social justice wider than the advancement of self or even class interest - a desire to enjoy the fruit of our labors that we may the more efficiently discharge our duties as husbands, fathers and citizens, not forgetting, however, the duty we owe ourselves to cultivate our powers of body, mind and spirit that we may live as fully our individual lives, as the discharge of our duties to others will permit," E.A. Partridge, letter, Feb. 16, 1910, p. 21.

[34] Partridge, *War* pp. 130-31.

[35] *Ibid.* p. 133.

[36] *Ibid.* p. 132.
[37] *Ibid.* pp. 148 & 154, respectively.
[38] *Ibid.* pp. vi-vii.
[39] *Ibid.* p. 207.
[40] *Ibid.* p. 114.
[41] *GGG* 2(18) Dec. 1, 1909, p. 9.

Chapter 3: The CCF and the Decline of Democracy

This study offers no rigorous explanation for the decline of agrarian radical democracy. It does have critical observations to make upon the explanations for this provided by inherited scholarship, but this will be dealt with in part three. For the final chapter of part two it is merely necessary to acknowledge the decline of the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy, and give some sense of its character.

Contrary to the inherited scholarship on the agrarian radicals, the CCF - as a viable political and cultural entity - was much less the product of eastern Canadian intellectuals, than it was of western farmers. In both its uniquely participatory social movement character, as well as its original grassroots structure, it was the agrarian radical movement that initially built the CCF. [1] Despite their best efforts to retain a federated organization that would ensure local autonomy - maintaining the spirit of their adventure in democracy[2] - by the 1930s, the intellectually and physically exhausted agrarian radicals had little resistance left to oppose the gradual steering of the CCF toward ever greater hierarchy, centralization and proceduralism by the political labourists and social democrats who soon dominated the new organization. [3]

This new constellation of political forces required some response by agrarian radicals. Many, like William Irvine, who had been instrumental in the formation of the CCF, did their best to adapt to the new circumstances. However, as Irvine himself was to eventually discover, they had thrown their lots in with many people whose commitment to the radically democratic spirit of social transformation on occasion proved to be some what less rigorous than an old agrarian radical might have hoped. [4] Whereas others, such as W.C. Good, recognized the inherently statist character of the earliest orientation of the CCF, with all that that involved, and took a healthy distance from it right from the start. We will conclude this chapter, and this part of the study, with an examination of Good's reasons for abstaining from participation in the CCF. Particular emphasis will be put on an unusually explicit expression of the two philosophical positions at loggerheads: a debate between the agrarian radical and one of the wise men of the social democratic strain in the CCF, Frank Underhill, as put on record in the pages of the *Canadian Forum.*

Through his connection to the UFO, W.C. Good attended the Regina convention that inaugurated the CCF, in July 1933, with the famous Regina Manifesto. A draft of the manifesto was presented to Good by Frank Scott on the train to Regina, at which time Good denounced the document as too doctrinaire. At the Regina convention he voted against the manifesto, to no avail. His reasons for taking such a sharp opposition to the document, viewed by much of inherited scholarship as the birth of mature socialism in Canada, were concisely expressed 25 years later, in the true spirit of an agrarian radical: "My chief objection to it was that it proposed greatly increased responsibility of the political state in the direction of our economic affairs, and at the same time completely ignored the need of reforming our political methods and techniques so as to make democracy effective in political affairs." [5]

Good responded to these events by penning his own manifesto for the cooperative commonwealth movement. It advocated familiar agrarian radical visions, including direct legislation and group government, all delicately woven into the fabric of a radical democracy in which institutions and consciousness interact in a continuous mutually-formative dialectic. This comprehensive statement of agrarian radical philosophy, apparently never finding its way out of Good's desk-drawer, was perhaps the dismal last hurrah of agrarian radicalism. But the latter was not to go down without a fight. And one of the finest records of that fight was the debate in the pages of the *Canadian Forum* between Good and the shadow author of the original draft of the Regina manifesto, Frank Underhill.

A month after the Regina meeting that set the CCF on course, Underhill wrote a critical review of W.C. Goods small book, *Is Democracy Doomed?* Underhill uses a wide variety of argumentative approaches in responding to Good's book. Many of the technical issues of reforming political machinery are discredited by association - generally to American origins, and a frontier context. For the most part this is merely part of a pseudo-history entirely concerned with closure - locking the program of agrarian radical democracy into an antiquated context. But it also leads into one of Underhill's two major arguments against Good's positions: the technocratic apology for parliamentarianism. In essence, in a highly complex society, such as our own, most of the important issues are over the heads of the common folk, they need experts to run things for them:

> This [agrarian radical] kind of thinking was natural to American pioneer democracy in the days when the individual citizen in the simple, isolated frontier community could decide intelligently upon all the problems which came before them. But today, when the really important problems arise out of a complex, unseen environment which the individual has not the time to study or understand, the plan of referring difficult technical matters of legislation to the electorate is surely looking in the wrong direction. American experience has shown that the greater the burden of making decisions and casting votes which is put upon the elector, the more ineffectively he will perform his functions. He is capable of making broad decisions upon general issues

> if the issues are presented clearly to him. The idea that he has a mysterious fund of virtue and insight from which, like an oracle, the correct answers to all questions can be elicited must be given up in our disillusioned age. [6]

Underhill also takes specific issue with Good's anti-partyism - with its corollary of group government theory. The problem is not partyism, but particular parties. What is needed is not the abolition of parties, but the creation of new and better parties. The party remains necessary precisely because of the common peoples incapacity to wrestle with a broad range of complex issues. Parties distill the complexities into a couple of clear options, from which people can be reasonably expected to be able to choose. [7]

The absence of real choice in the existing political juncture in Canadian history was not due to partyism as a form of social relation, but due to the economic domination of the existing parties by wealthy interests - the latter fact being one that Good freely acknowledges. Good admits himself that democracy is distorted by economic inequality. But then, suggests Underhill's second major argument, is not Good getting the cart ahead of the horse:

> If democracy will not function until economic exploitation of one class by another is abolished, surely the thinking of all democrats should be directed to the question of how this result is to be brought about...
>
> If the farmers and workingmen of Canada are determined to emancipate themselves from this economic domination the first thing they must do is to build up a political movement which is strong enough to face the political servants of big business, i.e., the two old parties, on equal terms. Far from decrying party solidarity or trying to abolish parties they will have to achieve a party in which cohesion and unity are stronger than they have been in any of the parties to which we have been accustomed. They will

> have to overcome the localism and sectionalism which have been endemic in our Canadian Politics. They will have to work out a common policy and stick to it through thick and thin. This means a leadership in the party which must not be afraid of imposing itself upon dissentient or doubtful minorities, and it means a degree of internal discipline in the party which men of Mr. Good's temperament are likely to find extremely distasteful. You cannot carry on a fight against the powerfully organized interests who control Canada at present without both leadership and discipline. [8]

Thus, Underhill concludes his remarks, "Mr. Good's ideas of how democratic governmental machinery should function may be applicable in the classless society of the future. But if he and his fellow Ontario farmers insist on applying them to the present situation the net result of their political activities will be a few plaintive vegetarian bleatings in the midst of the carnivorous jungle of economic exploitation in which we live." [9] Hence, here Underhill resorts to what I have called elsewhere a post-transition consolidative strategy. The messy, vague, confused political stuff must wait till after the priority issues of economic equality have been settled; after the regime of economic inequality has been overthrown, we will consolidate a new politics. What form of regime is to govern during this transitional phase is always a curious question. That post-transition consolidative praxes of social transformation are usually advocated by theorists who also subscribe to technocratic notions about the means for popular decision making is perhaps no coincidence. [10]

Needless to say, Good began his response with a first paragraph that pointed out how Underhill's critique amply justified the publication of the work in question. He quickly dispatches with the pseudo-history and guilt by association tactics and turns immediately to the technocratic apology:

> I believe in availing ourselves fully of the services of experts in all departments of government. I fully recognize that the average elector has neither the time nor the facilities for securing information which will enable him to decide wisely on many complicated questions of legislation. But that does not mean that I would deprive the people themselves of that ultimate authority which I think they ought to have. I employ technical advisors myself - lawyers, doctors, engineers and so forth; but I do not give them blank cheques, nor do they presume to take the attitude common among politicians under the party system. They recognize my final authority, and if they control, they control by virtue of greater knowledge and by persuasion. 11

Good moves from there on to dispute Underhill's critique of his anti-partyism. It is not an issue of nicer people forming a purer or more ethical party. Partyism as a form of social relation, as a characteristic form of political activity - closely akin to warfare - is indeed at the heart of the problem. This leads Good into his critique of Underhill's post-transition consolidative strategy:

> There is no use deluding ourselves with the idea that members of one political group are essentially a different kind of people from those in another group. That is a common but nevertheless a mischievous delusion.
>
> Therefore I look with dismay upon Professor Underhill's final advice to all those who would oust 'big business' from its present dominant position. The proposal to create a new party with even greater discipline and solidarity than in the two old parties, with a leadership 'which must not be afraid of imposing itself upon dissentient or doubtful minorities,' is clear indication that belligerency has assumed a major place, and is proof enough to him who reads between the lines, that in 'winning first base' we shall ultimately lose the game. 12

Though he does not state it here in so many words, Good's views on the possibility for a praxis of social transformation have been made clear enough above: "there is an essential reciprocity between the development of the individual and the growth of social institutions." [13] How could heteronomous, hierarchical and authoritarian institutions produce individuals disposed to and capable of autonomy, democracy and authentic citizenship? If agrarian radical democracy was to be a serious objective - whether "in the classless society of the future," or anywhere else - it called for not heteronomously structured organizations, but the consciousness forming praxis of a prefigurative political culture such as Partridge had tirelessly advocated in his school of citizenship thesis.

The time for such visions and such praxis was now clearly past however. In the next few years, the voices of those sharing the visions of Good and Partridge were finally buried under the machinations and rhetoric of the social democrats who tightened their grip on the reigns of power in the new party. By 1935, both the UFO and the UFA, albeit for different reasons, had withdrawn form the CCF and a new phase had begun within the farmers' movement. Their culture of discursive participation had turned back inwards, returning to the mutual aid and cooperative roots in civil society from which it had emerged. [14] If there, they still exercised an experiment of sorts in democracy, their distinctive adventure in democracy as a praxis and visions of social transformation was over.

The reasons for this of course are many. The psychical and material devastation of the depression and the dust bowl, along with their concomitant depopulation surely played its part. So too did the effect on consciousness of the growth of the welfare state and the spread of technologies that inadvertently eradicated the very foundation of cooperation as a permanent aspect of daily rural life. [15] There is, however, no way to measure the impact of that exhaustion ensuing from the collapse of the agrarian radicals' nearly three decade long struggle for a new Canadian democracy.

Year after year of grassroots organizing and frequent, often difficult, and tiring local meetings, culminated in a couple of ever so brief brushs with the dramatic presentation of the means to achieve their objectives, only to find again the sands shifting beneath their feet, leaving them once more face to face with unforeseen frustration. Certainly the most successful popular movement in Canadian history in terms of its capacity for inspiration and motivation, its final legacy nevertheless remains a short series of failures incurred by their very inability to recognize how incompletely they, themselves, had escaped the assumptions of the very parliamentarianism they had sought to eradicate. Even as the agrarian radicals sought to transform the parliamentarian character of Canadian politics through their political culture of democracy, parliamentarian assumptions insidiously insinuated themselves into the agrarian radicals' conception of social transformation itself.

To have survived one such failure indicates the extraordinary depth and conviction of the agrarian radical movement.[16] To have survived a second, especially amid the desolation of the depression, would have been too much to expect. Perhaps this was the long term, secret hope of those like William Irvine who plunged themselves into the new party with great relish. All such speculation notwithstanding though, no such third round of agrarian radicalism was to be forthcoming.

As will be seen in part three, the defeat of agrarian radicalism at the hands of "social democracy" and political labourism had its costs in the kind of scholarship on the farmers' movement that was to be written for decades to come. This though can be remedied through critique and revision. The cost to the fabric of Canada's political culture in the loss of the agrarian radicals' sensibility of democracy over these last five decades is incalculable and irrecoverable. It can only be hoped by those sympathetic to their vision of social transformation, that a setting of the record straight on the actual character of the agrarian radicals legacy might yet contribute to a revival of their inspiration and motivation for a new Canadian adventure in democracy.

Notes

[1] Seymour Lipset has dealt with these issues at length in *Agrarian Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971 [orig. 1950].) The conclusions that Lipset draws from his research remain another matter, to be dealt with in the next part of this study.

[2] For a very clear expression of early agrarian radical optomism that this is what had been achieved in the formation of the CCF: Norman Smith, "The Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the U.F.A.," *The U.F.A.* Feb. 1, 1933, p. 6.

[3] The history of this steering of the CCF by heteronomously minded "socialists" is carefully detailed by Walter D. Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-61* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), *passim.*, but esp. chap. 6. Again, Young's characterization of this process is another matter, to be examined more closely in part three.

[4] To cite a more dramatic example, Irvine's efforts to breach the hostilities of the Cold War brought him into frequent conflict in the CCF and perhaps almost got him purged from his position within the party: Anthony Mardiros, *William Irvine: The Life of a Prairie Radical* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1979,) chap. 11.

[5] W.C. Good, *Farmer Citizen* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1958), p. 200.

[6] Good, *Farmer* p. 185-86.

[7] *Ibid.* pp. 186-87.

[8] *Ibid.* p. 188.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] These ideas have been developed in my study of the European left: Mike McConkey, "The Uses of Radical Democracy in the European Left's Revolutionary Praxis, 1864-1921," Doctoral Research Project #1, Montreal: McGill University, 1987.

[11] *Ibid.* p. 192.

[12] *Ibid.* p. 195.

[13] W.C. Good, "The Farmers' Movement in Canada," *Dalhousie Review,* 2, January 1923, p. 480.

[14] Ian Macpherson, "An Authoritative Voice: The Reorientation of the Canadian Farmers' Movement, 1935 to 1945," *Historical Papers,* Canadian Historical Society, 1979.

[15] Donald E. Willmott, "The Formal Organizations of Saskatchewan Farmers, 1900-65," *Western Canada: Past and Present,* (ed.) Anthony W. Rasporich (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1975), pp. 39-40.

[16] And to point out that the economic complaints of farmers remained unresolved misses the point. This is merely a heteronomous explanation for the persistence of agrarian dissidence. The persistence of agrarian radicalism within the larger farmers movement is an issue of political and intellectual conviction, and moral determination.

PART THREE: The Heteronomist Lacuna of Inherited Scholarship

Chapter 4: The Roots of Heteronomist Scholarship in Canada

By the 1990s it should not be a revelation to point out that a scholar's own biography significantly effects his or her scholarship across a broad spectrum of concerns. A good, and relevant, example of this is the manner in which inherited scholarship has erroneously emphasized the individualism of prairie farmers. This study of agrarian radical political culture with its emphasis on a democracy grounded in mutually self-formative citizenship and a moral community adequately indicates the narrowness of this view. But other scholars, with very different perspectives and orientations, have elaborated the shortcomings of this celebration of individualism in some detail. [1]

If individualism has been emphasized by inherited scholarship, however, it has been so as a reified dimension of character. It is an abstract individualism with no intelligible basis in living history: i.e., real individuals are never abstract, but always social and historical persons. [2] It is only this notion of abstract individualism that allows for such a view of the prairie settler's character to be accommodated to the predominant lacuna in the outlook of inherited scholarship on the agrarian radical movement. A truly living history - natural as well as social - out of which genuine choices and creativity were possible, would be necessary for the evolutionary graduation of authentic subjectivity out of unreflexive, simple life forms. But this is getting ahead of the appropriate discussion of these issues in part four. What needs emphasis here is that this living, historical individualism, would not accommodate itself to the severe heteronomy animating inherited scholarship on the agrarian radicals.

Both historians and social scientists have studied the agrarian radicals. And despite their many differences, the uniformity of the heteronomist character of their studies has been striking - even among those relatively sympathetic to the movement. As the forces that make history operate over the heads of common folks, these scholars could hardly be expected to take seriously the subjectivity of the agrarian radicals' political culture and their visions of social transformation. This "protest" or "revolt" by the farmers in the West was an understandable reaction against the monumental unraveling of events - but sufficient grounds for comprehension of this phenomenon lay in that unraveling, not in the (inter-)subjectivity of those who made the phenomenon. Indeed, the specific consciousness of that (inter-)subjectivity too was explicable only within the grander context played out over the heads of living participants - penetratable only from the Archimedean perspective of serious scholarship.

The roots of this heteronomism are buried deep in an extremely important reorientation in Canadian historiography in the 1930s and 1940s. The previous emphasis on legal/constitutional and financial history gave way to a unique economic history of Canadian development. This version of history, usually referred to as the staples approach or thesis, constituted a sharp break with the old approach, celebrating the individual political heroism of nation- or empire-builders, and the march of progress that they embodied. The staples approach instead concentrated upon the geographical, economic and technological factors that interacted to make Canadian history, with emphasis upon the demands characteristic of the dominant commodity in the major trade nexus. If the staple thesis successfully defused triumphant liberalism, with its heroic individualism and progressivism, it did so at the expense of providing a starkly, dehumanized history. It is also of interest that in the hands of Donald Creighton and those following in his footsteps, the staples thesis was reworked to once again extoll the heroic nation-builders. In this version, though, the Laurentian water-system itself, also, became anthropomorphized into a heroic nation-builder. The major opposition to this approach for a number of decades was a mirror-image of the staples thesis - in the work of those like Fowke, Pentland and Morton - that acknowledged the original's validity, but decried the consequences of regional disparity that it quietly recorded. But in all such turns of event, the virtual hegemony of the staple thesis, with its heteronomous history, remained sovereign. [3]

The central and seminal author of this heteronomous history was Harold Innis. His exhaustive study, *The Fur Trade in Canada,* announced the historiographic arrival of the staples approach in 1930, and has remained one of its most outstanding examples to this day. [4] Innis' staples thesis is one of Canada's few contributions to the intellectual history of the Western world. It has been especially benefically applied to the study of post-colonial dependency in the Third World. Yet, there is a cost to such an approach. Nowhere has this been more evident than in the effect that the orientation of the staple thesis has had on the inherited scholarship of agrarian radicalism in Canada.

As both a political economist and an economic historian, Innis has managed to have an extraordinarily broad impact upon Canadian scholars studying the agrarian radicals. Historians and social scientists alike have been influenced by his staunchly heteronomous history. In Innis' historiography people merely react to overwhelming conditions, and even that reaction is conditioned by the logic of those same overwhelming conditions. Human action arises in these texts always from motivations external to those carrying them out - even if couched in evasive language of "implication" and "facilitation" - it is never principles or ideals that direct human action against the apparent flow of historical momentum. At least, not in these economic history texts. [5]

It is then perhaps understandable how both triumphant liberalism with its emphasis on the irrepressible march of human progress on up to the heroic achievement of responsible government in parliamentarianism; and scientific or economistic marxism with its dual lacunae, exaggerating the importance of class struggle as the motive force of history, while neglecting critical reflection upon the place and role of the revolutionary intellectual, have both been able to embrace the Innisian legacy. A liberalism that finds its *telos* in parliamentarianism, no less than a marxism that reduces human will to the transcendence of class struggle, are equally as heteronomist as Innis' staple approach, where geography, economy and technology make history over the heads, behind the backs - even under the feet - but never through the intentions of human beings.

A scholarship that cannot take seriously human creativity, the dynamism of human relationships and the uniquely elaborated spontaneity, flexibility and rationality that characterizes human beings as such, is incapable of even recognizing - much less understanding - autonomy as human *telos*, even less as human praxis. Without some notion of human beings as self-conscious, self-directing historical subjects, historiography and social theory both remain perplexed inquiries into the futility of humanness itself.

This has been the sad tale of inherited Canadian scholarship on the agrarian radicals. Driven by their heteronomist Old World ideologies, molded by their heteronomist New World methodology, they were no more capable of recognizing the richly autonomist spirit animating the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy, than they would have been able to recognize the revolutionary autonomist tradition of which it was a part. Their own heteronomist outlook rendered the object of their study so alien, its own complex self-consciousness seems to have been incomprehensible to them.

In the other two chapters of this part of the study, first some historians, than some social scientists, will be individually examined. I will restrict myself here to an exposition of their views, with critical corrections drawn from the history sketched out in part two. More general observations about the larger significance of the tendencies revealed will be left to part four. It is also only there that I will briefly reflect upon the implications of the strange irony that pervades these considerations. Just as W.L. Morton and C.B. Macpherson were producing their staples thesis-influenced heteronomist studies, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Innis himself - while discovering communications history - was coming to recognize what the most visionary agrarian radicals had known all along: the only means to halt the expansion and domination of monopoly capitalism, and its bureaucratic state, was the recovery of an intersubjective and discursive, face to face community, grounded in the prefigurative praxis of an autonomous society.

Notes

[1] John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl, "Characterological, Strategic and Institutional Interpretations of Prairie Settlement," *Western Canada: Past and Present,* (ed.) Anthony W. Rasporich (Calgary: University of Calgary, 1975.)

[2] For an excellent critique of abstract individualism along these lines: Carole Pateman, *The Problem of Political Obligation: A Critique of Liberal Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.)

[3] All this can be discerned from a careful reading of the relevant chapters in, Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976.) Also, incidently, chapter three of this book offers a discussion of Frank Underhill that substantially confirms the conclusions reached above on his technocratic outlook.

[4] Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956 [orig. 1930].)

[5] This interpretation is elaborated at some length by Berger, *The Writing...*in his chapter on Innis. For a taste of this aspect of Innis' work compare the intersubjectivist history of the agrarian radicals' political culture delineated in part two above and Innis' own terse treatment of this same material in his essay, "Labour in Canadian Economic History," *Essays in Canadian Economic History,* (ed.) Mary Q. Innis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956), pp. 189-92.

Chapter 5: The Historians

It is of course the nature of the historian's craft to create an intelligible narrative out of the grand flux of differentia that composes the past. To object to this is to object to historiography itself. It should be obvious that this is not the intent here. It is, however, one thing to create a narrative of events unfolding, and quite another thing to create a narrative of inevitability out of unfolded events.

Inherited historiographic scholarship on the agrarian radicals has generally presented a narrative of inevitable heteronomy. Whether presented as the transcendent necessity and/or normality of parliamentarianism in society at large, or the immutable law of oligarchy operating within the oppositional social movement, it is the uncritical - often unthinking - assumption of heteronomy's inevitability that pervades the inherited historiography. Unlike the social scientists whose heteronomism is mainly manifested in their incongruent analyses, the historians' heteronomism is revealed mostly in their very telling of the story itself. This is nowhere more evident than in the work of the person who is the closest the agrarian radicals have had to an official historian in the post-world war II era: W.L. Morton.

Morton's work in this area includes a major book, numerous articles and many briefer discussions in other studies. To deal with all these treatments would involve much redundancy. Hence, I will confine myself to giving a flavour of the approach that pervades his work through examination of a couple of the articles and a broad overview of the book.

Morton's case is especially interesting for the obvious sympathies that he felt for the farmers' movement. Indeed, his personal biography was significantly entwined with the history of that movement.[1] And his sympathies to the oppositional interpretation of the staple thesis, noted above, can be largely attributed to this personal background. But this only makes all the more fascinating his incidental sleight of agrarian radical autonomy and democracy.

In one of his earliest publications on the farmers' movement, an article published in 1944, Morton relates the legacy of direct legislation to the origins of, what he calls, the progressive movement. The whole legacy of direct legislation promotion in the agrarian radical movement is of course open to considerable criticism, and I have tried to examine much of that ground above. Morton too finds fault with direct legislation, but from quite a different perspective. While for us, its problem lies in the manner in which it effectively undermined the agrarian radicals' visions of democracy and social transformation, for Morton its problem is its inadequacy as measured against the criteria of a realistic world that stands in harsh contrast to the visions of agrarian radicalism.

As I have tried to show, direct legislation promotion was a failure because it relied upon the heteronomy of parliamentarianism as a means to achieve an autonomous political culture. Morton does not find fault with it for this, however. The fault he finds is with the inability of direct legislation promotion to measure up to the cold realities of a harsh parliamentarian world. The very goals and visions of social transformation in agrarian radicalism are assumed away in the assessment of its practical efforts to achieve social transformation.

Continually throughout this article Morton's highly personal voice intervenes in the historiographic narrative as the solemn regulator of realism. For instance, on occasion of quoting a resolution passed by the Killarney local of the MGGA which expresses a rigorous agrarian radical vision of democracy, Morton introduces the quotation as an example of "political innocence." [2] A couple of pages later, Morton presents Manitoba Conservative Premier Roblin's denunciation of direct legislation as a denial of responsible government and degenerate republicanism as possessing "good constitutional sense." [3] And in a similar vein, Morton refers to an argument against direct legislation, because it violates responsible government, as touching "the political core of the matter." And a little further down he baldly asserts that the government's anti-direct legislation case had "had the better argument." [4]

Yet, these remarks are premised upon the assumption that parliamentarian government was in some sense - more than merely rhetorically - responsible to the citizenry. But the utter and complete denial of such a notion was always at the heart of the agrarian radical critique of partyism. To condemn direct legislation for being incompatible with parliamentarianism is an implicit rejection of agrarian radicalism's own philosophical and ethical foundations. Far from being confined to the limits of the constitutionally possible, the socially transformative project of agrarian radical political culture was always concerned with the going beyond of such limits. Indeed, the constitutional limits of parliamentarianism were the object of the socially transformative aspect of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy.

This is not to deny that the agrarian radicals were always concerned to maintain at least the appearance of consistency with the British political tradition. They did not, however, accept that the prevailing constitutionality of the parliamentarian regime could be taken as exhausting the democratic potential of the British tradition. And even at that, its not at all clear that the expression of the former concern was anything more than rhetorical pragmatism.

It was precisely at these constitutional limits though that Morton found his own limits. Early in the article, after commenting upon the specifics of direct legislation, he goes on to comment: "In Canada, where the legislatures are sovereign, [direct legislation] could in fact be only consultative, except in municipal government."[5] And in concluding the article, Morton observes: "Responsible government and direct legislation are hardly to be reconciled without destroying the initiative and responsibility of the former." And yet, he had insisted just prior to this remark: "Given real necessity, no doubt the constitution could have been adapted to the working of direct legislation."[6]

This latter remark seems to leave a choice of Morton being immensely hostile to agrarian radicalism - a view not well supported by other evidence - or profoundly misunderstanding the sensibility that animated the movement. To suggest that there was no "real necessity" for transcending the established constitutional limits of parliamentarianism is either to dismiss the project of agrarian radicalism or to totally miscomprehend its self-styled objectives. Given his personal biography, it seems certain that it is the latter alternative that prevails in Morton's case.

This view is both supported, and explained, in Morton's complete neglect of the school of citizenship thesis. In an article attempting to deal with agrarian radicalism and direct legislation, there is not a single reference to this notion as a coherent political vision - despite its frequent elaboration in the pages of the *GGG.* But, based on the history of the agrarian radical political culture that has been documented above, this represents a historiographically fatal lacuna. Not only did the school of citizenship form the foundation of the political culture and its visions of social transformation of which direct legislation was only a manifestation, but the initial embrace of direct legislation by the agrarian radicals appears to have been immediately associated to the manner in which it was perceived as complementing the primary and fundamental school of citizenship thesis. Separation from the school of citizenship thesis distorts the perspective on both agrarian radical democracy and direct legislation.

That Morton entirely missed the relevance of the school of citizenship thesis is reflected in the instance of a quotation from E.A. Partridge. Morton cites the remark by Partridge that direct legislation and a variety of similarly intended measures "are desirable subjects of investigation, at the hands of the electorate, while organization is being completed to enable the popular will to eventually prevail," as evidence of Partridge's enthusiastic support of direct legislation. Partridge was a supporter of direct legislation, but as we have seen above, unlike many other direct legislation promoters, he never lost sight of the necessary order of things in a coherent praxis of social transformation. And indeed, to interpret this statement in the manner that Morton does seems to require the most jejune reading. Partridge unambiguously says that these subjects - including direct legislation - are to be *investigated,* "while organization" that will allow the popular will - i.e., democracy - to prevail is *"being completed."* He does not give primacy to direct legislation or any of the other "subjects" but to the completion of the organization in question. And anyone familiar with Partridge's writings during the period - much less the particular article in question - could have no doubt about the organization in question: the school of citizenship, in its most elaborated form as a political culture articulated through a vast federated network of small democratic and autonomous assemblies.

The school of citizenship, and the entire sensibility that animated agrarian radicalism was characterized by a deep autonomism. As we have seen, even imbedded in a thoroughly heteronomist philosophy of history such as the group government theorists imposed on it, this autonomism surged to the surface nevertheless. The limits of Morton's own political vision limited his interpretation of that of the agrarian radical movement. The effect was to remove the "radical" from that constellation of concepts. With his own vision of the possible reduced to the constitutional limits of parliamentarianism, Morton could not seem to grasp the vision of agrarian radicalism, nor recognize its foundation in the school of citizenship as both theory and practice.

This outlook pervaded Morton's work on this subject in more or less obvious ways throughout his life. In a 1955 article presented to the Royal Society of Canada, the same crude parliamentarian constitutionalism inhibits his analysis. And as his treatment of direct legislation reveals this lacuna in the earlier article, so does his treatment of group government theory in the later one. To characterize Wood's expounding of group government theory as greatly "a tactical device" that was in its essence "conservative," misses entirely the reason so many agrarian radicals' embraced Wood's ideas, notwithstanding their undeniably tactical nature. To comprehend why Wood's ideas were radical, even as his motives were preservative - though certainly not conservative in a political sense - one must grasp their relationship to the history of the school of citizenship thesis. But again, Morton's analysis of the failure of agrarian radicalism, drawn out against the back-drop of an unquestioned parliamentarian constitutionalism, indicates that the autonomist spirit of the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy remained alien to him.[7]

First published in 1950, Morton's book, *The Progressive Party in Canada,* though not actually a history of agrarian radicalism *per se,* remains nevertheless one of the two basic historical works to consult on the details of that movement's history.[8] The study is rich with careful, detailed documentation, and Morton's narrative style takes on less of a regulatory tone than was so obvious in the 1944 article. Indeed, it is unnecessary here, the material is so much more accommodating.

Morton's book is a story of partyism-rising, and the distinct features of agrarian radical democracy are lost in the telling. This may be just a question of emphasis, but emphasis is a question of choice. In any case, when Morton turns to his analysis of the Progressive Party's failures he again cites the constitutional limits of parliamentarianism. But here the criteria seem so much more reasonable.[9] And why should they not be? The Progressive Party was dominated by agrarian dissidents who intended to play by the parliamentarian rules: explicitly, to reform the economic game by means of the political rules. Judging these Progressives by the incommensurability of their praxis with the specific limits they confronted is fair, as this hits at the heart of the project that most of them set for themselves. But it is precisely the evident fairness of the analysis in this context that illustrates the dubiousness of applying the same criteria to the agrarian radicals for whom parliamentarianism as such had to be transformed.[10]

While it is true that the subject of Morton's book is the Progressive Party and not agrarian radicalism itself, to explain the rise of the former he must place it in its originating environment within the latter. But his story of the Progressive Party's rise is so linear and probable that one might doubt whether or not there was ever a serious alternative. That many opposed all new partyism; that many who supported infiltration did so little more than tactically; that other options always objectively existed and had in fact fueled the distinctly anti-partyist initiatives of direct legislation and group government, almost none of this is gleaned from Morton's narrative. And when he does cover the material that would constitute a pivotal phase in agrarian radicalism, he reduces it to a narrative of dawning partyism, seeming to unfold as little more than the working out of a series of logical propositon. [11] To have avoided this would have meant acknowledging, and taking seriously, the school of citizenship thesis. And this Morton was clearly incapable of doing.

Despite its inadequacies, Morton's work in this area broke important new ground and has been deservedly influential. But at the same time his lacuna on the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy has been passed on to the historians that have succeeded him. For instance, Carl F. Betke has written a history of the UFA, from 1921 to1935, presented as virtually synonymous with its provincial administration, in which Wood's group government theory is depicted as essentially constituting an effort at agrarian professionalization. [12] And in Duff Spafford's history of triumphant partyism among the Saskatchewan agrarian radicals direct legislation is described as a "mirage" which merely "distracted [farmers] from the task of finding an effective basis for action within the existing political system." [13]

In the case of Betke, the depth of the inherited scholarship's influence is revealed in another article where he categorically asserts that group government "could not work," and confidently refers the reader in the accompanying footnote to Morton and C.B. Macpherson.[14] The folly of this in the first instance has just been demonstrated. The comparable folly in the second instance will be demonstrated shortly. Betke's central argument in this article does have a point - but it is compromised in arguing it from the heteronomist perspective of normative-parliamentarianism.

He argues that Wood's emphasis on farmer independence in politics worked against the involvement of non-farmers, and the capacity hence of the UFA administration to act legitimately as a government. Betke draws from this a picture of the UFA government increasingly distancing itself from the grassroots agrarian direction of the UFA convention in the pursuit of a broader, common interest. In a sense the cooperative goals of group government theory are supposedly being realized in rupturing the delegational goals of local control of representatives.

As already discussed, the resort to parliament as a means to institutionalize the school of citizenship was deeply contradictory. It was this contradiction that group government theory had to, but was unable to, resolve. Still, to imply that the partyist adaptation of the UFA government represented a more legitimate approach to the goals of cooperative government, as Betke seems to, is quite another matter. I have already explained how the failure of group government theory, on its own terms, was due to its uncritical evaluation of the social relations imbodied in parliamentarianism, and how diametrically at odds these were with the social relations that grounded and inspired the agrarian radical political culture. The cooperative ideals of agrarian radical democracy and autonomy were not to be realized by resort to parliamentarianism-as-usual.

Group government would probably have had to be constructed as a parallel structure to which farmers could divert not only their political allegiances, but also their economic resources - including ultimately taxes. The LIDS of the Territorial Government would have had to be revived and radicalized as the locus of a humanly scaled autonomous political community. This is the level where group cooperation, and autonomous government, had to be first established. But such institutional talk is somewhat fanciful. For, as Betke's own evidence suggests, a lot of individual farmers were still a ways from the consciousness that Wood, Irvine, Good, etc. recognized as being the basis of cooperative group government.[15] And as Partridge argued in 1926, without that consciousness, group organization was all too likely to lapse into the self-serving, self-interested class competition that Betke illustrates as still being prevalent despite the UFA election. But, again, recognizing this required openness to the possibility that it was the school of citizenship, and not triumphal parliamentarianism, that was the inspirational basis of the rather confused group government theory.

Still, Morton's brand of narrative of inevitability was not exclusively successful. A slightly different perspective on the same basic set of assumptions appears in Walter Young's history of the national CCF. Here, the inevitable law of oligarchy, operating within the social movement, is combined with economistic marxism's prejudice toward all forms of agrarian radicalism to produce the most depreciating depiction of western Canadian agrarian radicalism's adventure in democracy in all of inherited scholarship. The rise of heteronomy within the CCF is applauded by Young on the grounds of its inevitability given the law of oligarchy, and its desirability given the uncritical valorization of a marxism so entirely foreign to the political project of agrarian radicalism that its use to measure extents of radicalism seems hardly short of sheer hostility. Young's intellectual and political outlook is so entirely alien to the spirit of the agrarian radicals' political culture that, in comparison, Morton seems like a virtual soul-mate.

Young's main analytical device is his uncritical use of French sociologist, Robert Michels' "iron law of oligarchy." To put it simply, Michels argued that where individuals come together for common ends in social or political organization a small handful of leaders eventually reify into a leadership caste which acts as an oligarchy - all democratic rhetoric notwithstanding. This is not merely an empirical description, but a sociological fact - an inevitability. In Michels' famous, terse epigram - the crudity of which actually does injustice to the nuanced and tentative analyses that get him to his conclusions - "Who says organization, says oligarchy." [16]

Young does an admirable job describing the unfolding of this experience within the early history of the CCF. And if he regularly portrays the process as moments in the evolution of natural history, his study is detailed and rigorous enough to undermine his own bias by demonstrating the ways in which deliberate decisions were made by the consolidating leadership caste to ensure the marginalization of the agrarian radical element within the party. [17] But there should be no doubt that for Young, like Michels, this is not merely a descriptive fact - it is an inevitability. He begins his chapter on organization and structure with an exceedingly simplistic quotation from Gaetano Mosca - "no matter what form of government the universal fact is the rule of the many by the few" - which he endorses as a truism. [18] And in the conclusion of that same chapter Young favourably compares the immutability of Michels' famous law to that of Newton: "The inevitability of oligarchy under the circumstances described above is not an inherently evil condition; like the law of gravity it is easy to live with as long as we keep our awareness of it." [19]

This quotation serves a double purpose. Not only does it demonstrate in no uncertain terms Young's conviction that oligarchy was inevitable, but it also suggests his lauding of this process as beneficial, indeed necessary, for the building of a genuinely radical social movement. Young's presumptions along these lines surface frequently throughout his book. The agrarian radicals are dismissed for possessing attitudes conducive to criticizing capitalism on the basis of its production of "popsicles, processed cheese and packaged breakfast cereals." As the farmers themselves were capitalists, their criticism of monopoly capitalism was inherently compromised. It was the eastern intellectual faction of the CCF that had to be relied upon to develop a genuinely radical vision of social change: "The intellectuals in the [League for Social Reconstruction] could be more objective in their opposition to capitalism than the agrarian radicals." [20]

Young's explanation of the content of the intellectuals opposition to capitalism is quite interesting in this regard: "They opposed it because of the social and economic inequality it caused, because it perverted democracy, caused maldistribution of income, produced an execrable level of culture and, finally, because it was inconsistent with Christian fundamentals. In short, because it perverted the liberal democratic ideal. Only socialism could make democracy work; politics would then be freed from the unwholesome influence of monopoly capitalism and government would reflect the best interests of the whole nation." [21]

It is quite striking, the extent to which this uncritical assessment, from the authoritative voice of the disinterested historian, actually approximates Underhill's arguments in his exchange with W.C. Good in the pages of the *Canadian Forum*. Democracy can only be saved by first eliminating the economics that distort it under capitalism. Given Underhill's prescription for that elimination - an imposing leadership and strict internal discipline - and in light of Young's apparent sympathy to his outlook, the latter's enthusiasm for the iron law of oligarchy can hardly be surprising.

Young's treatment is, of course, one-sided. Good's response to Underhill remains a vital consideration. To put it in the language of my own thesis: democracy requires autonomy; but autonomy is incompatible with heteronomy; how, then, can heteronomy be seriously expected to facilitate democracy? In words closer to Good's, if in the pursuit of democracy we breed a culture and consciousness accustomed to centralization, authoritarianism and hierarchy, would we not lose the struggle even in the very appearance of victory?

Young's uncritical sympathizing with the social democratic marxism of the CCF leadership oligarchy, a pervasive feature of his book, personifies his belief in heteronomy as necessary and beneficial attributes of a genuine radicalism. Particularly irksome is his near idolization of David Lewis, long time national secretary of the CCF. In one instance he refers to Lewis' brand of socialism as "not the reformist socialism of the prairie radical, it was the hard, determined, and organizational socialism of the trade unionist, the class-conscious anti-capitalist." Remembering that

Michels' study was based on the German Social Democrats, it is not surprising that in an accompanying footnote Lewis is earnestly quoted as self-consciously associating himself to "the Karl Kautsky type of socialism." 22

The moral implications of this association should hardly be edifying. Are we expected here to reflect glowingly upon the same German Social Democrats who butchered the Spartakus League in the streets of Berlin, invaded Bavaria to destroy its government of popular councils, and colluded in the murders of Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and Gustav Landaur - to mention only a few? Nevertheless, the parallel in philosophical proclivities is highly accurate. Probably no single individual played as large a role in bringing about the kind of party urged by Underhill than did David Lewis during his fourteen years as national secretary.

Typically, though, Young's celebration of the heteronomist attitudes of European proletarian socialism are not based upon any demonstrated superiority to North American agrarian radicalism, but merely upon reference to crude ideas about capitalism and socialism - which already by the late1960s were desperately in need of substantiation, not ritual incantation. As the agrarian radicals were property owning, independent commodity producers they were said to be objectively aligned with capitalism. Their complaints boiled down to injustices within capitalism, not the injustice of capitalism. In this they stood in historical opposition to the real socialists. This is a view that Young took over from C.B. Macpherson and must properly be criticized in the treatment the latter receives in the next chapter.

For the time being it need only be emphasized that such views are necessarily based upon an utter disregard for the agrarian radicals' own self-perception. And this disregard is legitimated by reference to the categories of a philosophy of history that disregards the consciousness of its own historical agents, reducing their consciousness to an epiphenomenon of technological development, itself conceived as an aspect of natural history. The awesome heteronomy of such a notion is as diametrically opposed to the autonomist spirit of the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy, as it is complementary to a belief in an iron law of oligarchy at work in all human organizations.

Though in a different way, just as much as Morton, Young was incapable of giving agrarian radical democracy its due precisely because he was incapable of recognizing its vision. Concentrating merely upon extrapolations from the agrarian radicals' presumed view of property, and their apparent implications for the economic distribution of wealth, Young was incapable of seeing or understanding the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy. Indeed, his own conception of democracy, not surprisingly akin to Underhill's aspiring technocracy on the issue of intra-party organziation, and reflecting a staid parliamentarianism for the general polity, was foreign to the spirit of agrarian radical political culture. [23]

In Young's hands the iron law of oligarchy conveniently predetermines the very marginalization of agrarian radicalism in the history of the CCF which is in fact necessitated, in the interest of authentic radicalism, according to his crude marxism. Laws of history, even iron ones, were hardly foreign to the thought of agrarian radicals. But that such laws could dictate as thorough-going a heteronomous social organization as applauded by Young was a universe removed from the thought of the agrarian radicals. Young was probably incapable of understanding the agrarian radicals. This view is supported by the horridly truncated description he gave of "the emergence of organized farm protest" [24] in another book published the same year. But even if he could have understood them, the depth of heteronomism imposed upon his thought by his embrace of economistic marxism rendered such misunderstanding a valuable asset.

Young was not alone in being handicapped in his perspective of the agrarian radicals by this kind of distortion. In the next chapter, I will begin with a discussion of the thought of C.B. Macpherson, to illustrate the case of a social scientist under the similar influence of economistic marxism. Before turning to that though, I will take a few moments to look at an example of vigorous heteronomism drawn from one of Canada's foremost intellectual historians: Carl Berger.

Working more with ideas than events, as typical with the historian, the case of Berger will provide a useful bridge between our discussion of the historians with their narrative heteronomy, and the social scientists with their analytic heteronomy. In a short piece collected in an anthology of works by many well-known Canadian scholars on Canada's, and the world's, prospects for the 21st century, Berger contributes a critical piece on the vision of E.A. Partridge as presented in *A War on Poverty*. More than a simple piece of historiography, its context and conclusions make this critique into a philosophical reflection upon the future of Canadian radical thought and utopian radicalism generally. In this, its objective resembles my own - even as its perspective stands in stark opposition to mine - and, hence, warrants a depth of consideration out of proportion to its actual length.

Berger's description of both Partridge and the book is dismissive and selective. In the first paragraph he is already dismissing the book as "cranky, eccentric," and possessing "no literary merit." The product of a "folksy philosopher," it is characterized as the intellectual equivalent of a quaint by-gone charlatanry. It has no real reason to hold our attention except as a rare example of Canadian utopianism - and, as will be seen, the contribution on that level is entirely negative.

Partridge's biography fares no better in these early remarks. After a sweeping, cursory sentence, rattling off Partridge's many institutional accomplishments as a farmers' activist, in a limp undistinguished manner, Berger goes on to allocate about equal space to a description of Partridge's "peevish and irascible" personality, claiming that he was "recognized in the farmers' movement as an impractical and loquacious idealist." Partridge's political vision is thereafter resolutely associated to parliamentarian praxis.[25]

Above, I have already pointed out the inappropriateness of portraying Partridge as an impractical idealist - common though the exercise may be in the inherited scholarship. I might also add that from an exhaustive reading of the letter columns of the *GGG* in its first decade, when Partridge's contribution was having most impact, I saw very few examples of this opinion expressed by the local agrarian radical activists. Quite to the contrary of Berger's claim, such farmers regarded Partridge and his opinions with great respect and high esteem.

And any suggestion that the trajectory of Partridge's political vision could be accommodated by the practice of political parties, should be revealed as seriously misguided in the face of the many pages of documentation marshalled in part two of this study. Particularly unsettling is the suggestion that anything vaguely resembling Partridge's notion of a cooperative commonwealth is even hinted at in the actual history of the CCF. More fundamental though, to attempt to summarize Partridge's political and philosophical vision in just a few sentences without any mention of the school of citizenship thesis is pushing credibility to its limit. It can only be assumed that Berger is unfamiliar with Partridge's early *GGG* articles. If so, this ignorance manifests itself amply in his analysis of the institutions of COALSAMAO.

Considering how short the article is, Berger goes to some length to emphasize the powers of the High Court of Control. It is characterized as "identical with the state," and he cites a quotation from Partridge indicating a broad range of exercised authority on the part of its various departments. The regional rallies or assemblies are explained in the cursory remark that they are the site where "questions are raised and remedies suggested by petition." And the camps themselves are described as "governed by elected boards of control." [26]

To point out that all this dreadfully misrepresents the spirit of Partridge's vision is perhaps to state the obvious. The claim that the High Court of Control is identical with the state is premised upon the autonomy that Berger attributes to its authority. But Partridge insisted that it was the local camps which were the autonomous, self-governing units of his political vision. And in regards to the High Court of Control, he says there will be "little legislative work for them to do." This shift in emphasis is partially made by a denuding of the regional assemblies. The portrait that Berger draws of these assemblies - "questions asked and remedies suggested" - depicts the image of deferent subordinates begging the grace of their generous superiors. But let us recall Partridge's own description of these assemblies in operation: "the delegates come [to the assembly] prepared to put the view-point of their respective camps on certain questions they desire to see dealt with by the High Court before the assembly, and to confer with fellow delegates as to what the High Court...*should be advised* by resolution or solicited by petition to enact as a legislative body, or to perform in its executive capacity."

The italics I have added here help emphasis the rather different flavour of Partridge's own description from that of Berger. These are not subordinates begging the favour of an autonomous authority; it is an assembly of citizens setting the agenda of their political executive. And as Partridge also emphasized, it is the local, self-governing camps that set the agenda of the delegates who congregate in the regional assemblies. But the image of these camps too are seriously distorted in Berger's description.

To suggest that the camps might be governed by the boards of control is to flagrantly disregard the essential thrust of Partridge's vision of social transformation right from the beginning. In fact, upon close consideration, it is obvious that the institutions of COALSAMAO are simply idealized renditions of the vision into which Partridge had sought to mold the institutions of the farmers' movement. The High Court of Control was simply an elaboration of the Canadian Council of Agriculture - the forum through which Partridge struggled for years to bring about the realization of his vision. The regional assemblies were the elaboration of the provincial conventions of the GGAs and the united farmer organizations. And the camps were of course the locals of these farmer organizations. Partridge even introduces the camps by referring to them as "sub-associations" - the term he used in his early school of citizenship articles.

In this context, it just obscures understanding to divorce the COALSAMAO vision from the school of citizenship thesis. The much larger numbers of participants proposed for the camps, than had existed in the locals, would justify an instituted executive such as the boards of control. But to suggest that this executive is the actual governing authority of the camps is completely dissonant with the personal history of thought that culminates in the COALSAMAO vision.

And even if we were to make the rather grand concessions that perhaps Partridge had abandoned the school of citizenship thesis, and granted that maybe the striking parallel in organizational structure between the institutions of COALSAMAO and those of the farmers' movement were merely imposing coincidences. What purpose would Berger attribute to the regular camp meetings? And if the control board governed the camps, why would it need to call special camp meetings in the case of emergencies? Again, the extent to which Partridge's vision of the autonomous camps grows organically out of his original school of citizenship thesis is just too striking to be ignored.

As already acknowledged, though, Berger was either unfamiliar with or uninterested in the school of citizenship thesis. The effect was to radically distort the emancipatory decentralist, democratic and autonomist thrust of Partridge's radical vision and intellectual life work. However, if the narrowness of Berger's outlook poorly serves an accurate recollection of Partridge's contribution to the agrarian radical adventure in democracy, it does serve well Berger's primary purpose of defaming utopian thought as inherently self-contradictory, and insidiously totalitarian. The last few pages of the article are given over to a discussion of the more menacing side of Partridge's utopia in detail that overwhelms the paragraph on COALSAMAO's institutions of democracy.

The disturbing standardizing and regulatory, as well as the deindividualizing, aspects of Partridge's utopia are elaborated. In the end, Berger concludes on this dark and somber note:

> Partridge's utopia may be regarded as embodying different things - a nostalgic hankering after some vanished past when a high degree of homogeneity and unanimity of opinion prevailed, or as revealing the totalitarian implications of populism, or as a rendition of agrarian progressivism in so exaggerated a fashion that it recoiled upon itself and became a caricature and criticism of the very ideas he championed. It may also be seen as an example of the paradox of the reformist impulse employing the utopia mode. The central ambiguity of that style of thought is that the price of social solidarity is the elimination of uniqueness; the absence of tension is accompanied by the loss of liberty and the freedom from the past is achieved through uniformity and dreariness. Partridge's utopia is as good an example as any other of the pitfalls of projecting ideal commonwealths. His war on poverty begins in humanitarian outrage and ends with the 'rule of the Right-minded,' an existence as joyless as that of the barracks, and life perpetually at war with human nature. [27]

The strains of homogenization, and even totalitarianism, running throughout Partridge's book are disturbingly evident, and I have drawn cautious attention to them above. But to emphasis these aspects of the book, along side the utter distortion of the deeply emancipatory and richly autonomist spirit that pervades its intellectual and political project, is not merely selective in the extreme, but a sad abuse of history. Without some recognition of, and insight into, the school of citizenship thesis that constituted Partridge's most important intellectual contribution to the agrarian radical adventure in democracy, and constituted the theoretical foundation of his utopia, such distortion and abuse would be difficult to avoid. Berger's heteronomist outlook - so thoroughly antagonistic to

Partridge's own autonomism - ambitiously trying to use a single book to discredit an entire stream in radical thought and impose a solemn political quietism, seals the fate.

Thus in his own way, though one slightly different from the other historians, Berger's treatment of agrarian radicalism too is inhibited by a deeply heteronomist outlook. This outlook will be characterized in the next chapter as incongruent analyses. Unless we are to propose an awesome conspiracy theory, we must conclude that the character of this heteronomism kept the historians at such a distance from the objects of their study that the latter's aspirations, motivations and visions were so entirely alien that they were simply incomprehensible to the historians. Without some understanding of the way that the school of citizenship thesis underpinned the agrarian radical vision of social transformation, their political culture is distorted, and their historic adventure in democracy is lost.

Notes

[1] Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 238-41.

[2] W.L. Morton, "Direct Legislation and the Origins of the Progressive Movement," *Canadian Historical Review*, 25(3), September 1944, p.283.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 285.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 286.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 280.

[6] *Ibid.* p. 288.

[7] W.L. Morton, "The Bias of Prairie Politics," *Historical Essays on the Prairie Provinces*, (ed.) Donald Swainson (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970.)

[8] The other central work in this regard is Louis Audrey Wood, *A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1924.)

[9] W.L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950,) p. 270.

[10] To illustrate the point: a genuine Progressive like T.A. Crerar went into parliament to ensure the passage of legislation desired by agrarians, but unlikely to be enacted due to the levers of government being controled by forces hostile to agrarian interests. W.C. Good, on the other hand, while nevertheless supporting such legislation, sought explicitly to transform the nature of government so that the specific strategies of a Crerar would in fact be unnecessary. Thus a criticism of the Progressives, such as Morton advances, for failing to take over the mantle of official parliamentarian loyal opposition in a conventional manner, may make some sense when directed at Crerar. When directed at Good, however, it becomes a meaningless critique which simply misses the point.

[11] *Ibid.* chap. 2.

[12] Carl F. Betke, "The United Farmers of Alberta, 1921-1935," *Society and Politics in Alberta*, (ed.) Carlo Caldarola (Toronto: Methuen, 1979.)

[13] D.S. Spafford, "'Independent' Politics in Saskatchewan before the Non-Partisan League," *Saskatchewan History*, Winter 1965.

[14] Carl F. Betke,"Farm Politics in an Urban Age: The Decline of the United Farmers of Alberta after 1921," *Essays on Western History*, (ed.) Lewis H. Thomas (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1976,) p. 175.

[15] *Ibid.* p. 182.

[16] Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* (New York: Free Press, 1961.) The famous epigram appears on page 365.

[17] See, for instance, Walter D. Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-61* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969,) pp. 85-87.

[18] *Ibid.* p. 139-40.

[19] *Ibid.* p. 175.

[20] *ibid.* pp. 70-73.

[21] *ibid.* p. 73.

[22] *Ibid.* p. 81.

[23] *Ibid.* pp. 139-40. And, Walter D. Young, *Democracy and Discontent* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1969,) p. ix: "As long as the few with a complaint can get a hearing, and as long as the many can change governments periodically through the electoral process, then we have a stable and working democracy."

[24] *Ibid.* pp. 22-27.

[25] Carl Berger, "A Canadian Utopia: The Cooperative Commonwealth of Edward Partridge," *Visions 2020,* (ed.) Stephen Clarkson (Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig, 1970,) p. 257-58.

[26] *Ibid.* p. 260.

[27] *Ibid.* p. 262.

Chapter 6: The Social Scientists

Like the historians, the social scientists too have their own version of heteronomism regarding the agrarian radicals. While narratives of inevitability have not been entirely absent, neither do they predominate. Instead, the social scientists' heteronomism has been primarily manifested in incongruent analyses. These analyses have been incongruent in a double sense. They have been analyses concerned with incongruence: seeking to indicate how the agrarian radicals' activities were incongruent with the particular circumstances and specific ends that underpinned those activities. But, as in the case of Carl Berger, they have also been incongruent with the source of their analysis: their interpretation of those particular circumstances and specific ends have been guided by a heteronomism thoroughly incongruent with the outlook of those they analyzed.

The most obvious example of this was the economistic marxism that we have already encountered in the work of Walter Young. This analysis saw no revolutionary place for agrarian radicals in the class struggle of modern capitalism. Whatever role such people may have played in previous history, by the time that modern capitalism was established they had become historically redundant. Now all revolutionary hope lay in the hands of the proletarian. Hardened into *de facto* cooperation by the yoke of factory discipline, and as the sole producing class not in possession of the means of production, they had become the emancipatory agent of human history. As their function and growing numbers made them the most important class, they were the collective revolutionary agent *par excellence*. They had a world of justice and freedom to win; they had nothing to lose but their chains.

Agrarians were a rather different lot. Not hardened by factory discipline, they were presumed to maintain bourgeois attitudes towards work, individuality and property. Indeed, as most were small property owning, independent commodity producers, they had an interest in the maintenance of private property and free market exchange. The radicalism they inspired was the radicalism of the shop-keeper. By struggling to maintain the middle class they contributed to the slowing down of the great historical process of social polarization that ultimately fed the proletariat's strength. While romanticizing individualism, private property and free market exchange and inhibiting the growth of the proletariat - hence its ultimate rise to power - the agrarian radical was objectively an agent of capitalism, all rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding.

This is precisely the pattern of thought into which fell Canada's most influential marxist scholar of the agrarian radicals. C.B. Macpherson's seminal treatment of what he called the quasi-party system in Alberta was most noteworthy for precisely its unconventional use of this traditionally European outlook in the study of Canadian agrarian radicalism. And it should not be suggested that this approach was not without some significant insight.

Macpherson's influential book, *Democracy in Alberta,* in fact goes far beyond our own concerns in its scope. Examining both the UFA and Social Credit phases, Macpherson tries to show how the economy arising out of the particular staple commodity of wheat engendered a class structure and class consciousness that explains these strange almost single-party experiments with democracy. The strength of the overall thesis is not of importance here. And even that thesis' bearing on the UFA

- and, presumably, by extension, the agrarian radicals - only really is of concern presently insofar as it reflects upon interpretation of the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy. Some of Macpherson's insights do help us to better understand the agrarian radicals' vision of democracy. For instance, as Macpherson points out, their ideas about exploitation were excessively - though perhaps not as exclusively as one might deduce from reading Macpherson - oriented by the notion of fair exchange in a free and open market place. But then, to deduce from this that they have the basic outlook of simple propertarians is unsupportable. The modest evidence documented above to indicate a deep commitment to achieving a moral community, in which ownership rights were subject to a quality of public service, should be enough to place in serious doubt any notion that agrarian radicalism can be passed off as advancing any simplistic notion of capitalist property rights.

Furthermore, Macpherson's suggestion that this orientation to fair trade as non-exploitation was an uniquely debilitating outlook of independent commodity production is also dubious. The modern factory worker's experience of how exploitation could be imbedded in the very process of production itself perhaps immunized against this particular orientation. But the factory worker's experience was repressive as much as it was enlightening. By failing to take this fact adequately into account, Macpherson fails to grasp how the distanced perspective of the agrarian radical may likewise be able to tell us things about exploitation and democracy that the factory worker's consciousness might be unable to grasp. This too is a matter to be explored further in part four.

For the present, the discussion will be restricted to Macpherson's treatment of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy as expressed through his analysis of the UFA. To begin with, Macpherson's approach to this material can only be understood if his notion of what democracy meant for the agrarian radicals of the UFA is clearly recognized. For him their political theory of democracy was oriented by a concern to achieve a two-fold purpose: one, to bring about what they imagined would be a non-exploitative social order; and two, to ensure a scheme of popular control of elected representatives.[1] It is due to this latter consideration that Macpherson characterizes the UFA's conception of democracy as "delegate democracy." While all this may be true as far as it goes, it should be evident by now that we are again entertaining the conventional lacuna within inherited scholarship. But we will put this aside for the time and turn to a couple cases of his detailed analysis.

As Macpherson does not particularly dispute either the effectiveness of the agrarian radicals' political culture of democracy - as far as he acknowledges it extending - nor the widespread commitment among agrarian radicals to their adventure in democracy, my remarks here will be restricted to reviewing his critical analysis of their anti-partyism.[2] There are two dimensions to this that I will consider.

First, Macpherson explains the prevalence of the agrarian radical partyist critique - and indeed the area's entire non-partisan tradition - as being none other than "a natural outcome of the economic characteristics of Alberta." It was the very conditions of the wheat economy that produced a thorough homogenization of the Albertan population. In essence, Alberta was all but a single class society, thus there was no need for different parties: "The absence of any serious opposition of class interests within the province meant that alternate parties were not needed to express or to moderate a perennial conflict of interests. There was apparently, therefore, no positive basis for an alternate-party system."[3]

Thus, the partyist critique was not to be understood on its own terms - open to rational reflection and empirical verification - but to be recognized as the product of heteronomous economics and geography. The first thing that may strike one as strange about this reasoning is the typically economistic marxist presumption that class alone is an explicable basis for interest conflicts and, thereby, party organization. Surely there are many divisions within a class, and across classes, that might incur partiality, and eventually partyism. Whatever one may think of the actual analysis that Macpherson undertakes to eventually arrive at this rendering of anti-partyism as heteronomous, the evidence he brings to bear on the case seems, upon closer examination, to undermine the very case for which he is using it.

He claims class homogeneity in Alberta on the basis of an independent commodity producer population of around 48 percent of those "gainfully occupied." But, in the process of emphasizing the uniqueness of this figure, he happens to point out that industrial employees in Ontario constituted around 70 percent of the total gainfully occupied.[4] Of course, there is a large range of variation in this industrial employee category, but Macpherson acknowledges that this is also so of the independent commodity producers.[5] So why does the far more homogeneous class structure of Ontario not result in a general aversion to partyism in that province?[6]

The second dimension of Macpherson's analysis of agrarian radical anti-partyism is, perhaps surprisingly, a strategic critique. Despite being a some what superfluous exercise given the apparent inevitability of anti-partyism among those operating within the framework of the UFA, Macpherson nevertheless puts their political theory through a vigorous dissection. In the end, he concludes, they could only have achieved their chosen goals by discarding their chosen means:

> The democracy the United Farmers willed as an end involved a decisive attack on the established economic order, yet in the name of democracy they rejected the necessary means. If they had been able to set aside for a moment their preoccupation with the faults of party, they could scarcely have failed to see that nothing less than party organization would serve. A political force sufficient to subvert an economic order which was, on their own recognition, strongly entrenched politically, can only be built within that order, and within the limits of parliamentary action (that is, without extra-constitutional means) by an organization prepared to take and use parliamentary power. It must be prepared, so long as it eschews revolutionary action, to impose its will through the conventions of cabinet government. Thus, whether it be called a party or not, it must act like a party and must develop the characteristics which the U.F.A. most distrusted, namely, central leadership, coherence in the legislature, and a considerable measure of control of the whole organization by those elected to the legislature. Certainly it must, wherever there is a strong opposed party, abandon the constituency autonomy of which the U.F.A. made such a point. [7]

Frank Underhill lives. Or, at least, his post-transitional consolidationist approach lives on in the mind of C.B. Macpherson. The agrarian radicals are only to realize their vision by abandoning it. By embracing the centralized, authoritarian and hierarchical structures of a heteronomous party, they are to realize the decentralized, cooperative and democratic institutions of an autonomous society.

Macpherson's position might seem reasonable enough if we began with the same premise upon which he begins his analysis of UFA political theory: that the objectives were a non-exploitative society and better popular control of representatives. But this is already wrong, and again inherited scholarship's heteronomist lacuna defeats all efforts at genuine understanding. The agrarian radicals' objective was not some vague non-exploitative situation; they had very definite ideas about what would constitute and contribute to such a situation. And better control of representatives only scratches the surface of their vision of democracy. Again, without a recognition of the school of citizenship as theory and practice, the agrarian radical adventure in democracy remains incomprehensible.

The agrarian radical vision of democracy called for conventional representative government to be transformed - not merely refined. Direct legislation or group government, either one, could have dramatically and irreversibly changed the fundamental nature of the relationship between the mutually reified others of "governor" and "governed." And indeed, just such a change, accompanied by a radical reformation of civic culture and the nature of citizenship, was necessary to achieve the quality of society that they could genuinely describe as non-exploitative. But none of this can be discerned from the thought of the agrarian radicals unless one initially recognizes the school of citizenship thesis, and its central place in the history of agrarian radicalism's political culture. But to recognize this would have meant taking the intellectual history of agrarian radicalism seriously. That is difficult to do, however, if one begins with the position that the key coordinates of that intellection are heteronomous phenomena.

This, of course, has implications for Macpherson's larger thesis. The UFA and the Social Credit cannot be simply collapsed into the same model by the mere fact that they were elected by a similar demographic profile. That the two were in practice radically different is freely acknowledged by Macpherson. The elections - especially, the vitally important initial elections - of each occurred at quite difference historical moments. One constituted a bold, if ill-advised, initiative by a thriving social movement; the other constituted the final deception visited upon the desperate adherents of that movement - by now in disarray. Lumping them together into the same bag could only be justified on the grounds of a heteronomous history. And such a lumping could only function if they were adequately streamlined to meet the fit. Without the school of citizenship thesis as the basis of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy, this streamlining was made possible by reducing the UFA's political theory to a form of delegate democracy. The heteronomist outlook, already evident in Macpherson's heteronomous version of history, must have made the autonomist spirit of the school of citizenship thesis rather difficult for him to comprehend. In the absence of such comprehension, incongruent analyses such as these grew increasingly probable.

The numerous twists and turns in the history of agrarian radicalism present many problems for any efforts at narrative and analysis. Explaining shifts or apparent shifts in behaviour or thought are particularly treacherous ground for the incongruent analyses of heteronomist social scientists. Even in areas where we do not have documented evidence to conclude differently, the heteronomist character of such incongruent analyses, with their blaring assumptions about the normality of parliamentarianism and its concomitant social relations, are often difficult to miss. For instance, we can cite a couple of examples commenting upon certain theoretical shifts in the life of William Irvine.

In what is otherwise an informative master's thesis, on the theoretical relationship between the CCF and the thought of Wood and

Irvine, M. Marcia Smith presents Irvine's adoption of group government theory as being an unconscious, or contrived, accommodation to the political culture of the UFA. Whereas, his later apparent rejection of that theory, upon joining the CCF, is presented as a self-conscious, theoretically principled act. And yet no evidence is ever cited to document these implications.[8] Similarly, in his introduction to the Carleton Library version of Irvine's *The Farmers in Politics,* a sympathetic Reg Whitaker - who even criticizes economistic marxists for their attitudes to the agrarian radicals[9] - nevertheless provides much the same analysis almost a decade later:

> it had become clear to [Irvine] that however much the party system might offend his sensibilities, the only possible way for the workers and farmers to fight back against class oppression was to organize themselves as a political party and to make compromises in their own organization for the greater good of the idea of socialism. Irvine was a realist. Ends and means could not always match perfectly, in an imperfect world. When they did not, it might be necessary to adopt means that were not entirely consonant with the ultimate goals. Party organization and party discipline were among such means.[10]

This would perhaps seem acceptable enough if one could simply reason upon the assumption that participation in partyism was more realistic, rational or moral. If viewed from an agrarian radical perspective the matter is hardly so self evident. If it was true that Irvine's participation in the CCF represented a view that means no longer had to be consistent with ends - a view for which no evidence is cited - then one could hardly still call Irvine an agrarian radical. Certainly, we know that W.C. Good would not have.[11] And why it would necessarily be that this type of choice constituted a more reasoned and realistic position than the traditional agrarian radical one seems only explicable within the confines of a heteronomist mentality. The problem with group government theory is seen to be its unrealistic stance in the face of harsh parliamentary realities. That the assumptions underpinning those realities were precisely what the agrarian radicals refuted; that the real failure of group government was that it was not nearly radically enough removed from those realities and assumptions - this is incomprehensible to the heteronomist scholarship that we have inherited. [12]

In a 1954 article, "The Frontier and Democratic Theory," Canada's foremost historical sociologist, S.D. Clark, makes his contribution to the legacy of incongruent analyses. His argument ranges along the lines that the agrarian radicals, in keeping with frontier-style democratic theory, attempted to impose a more simple, primitive political world through their efforts at reform. Where Clark believes they should have been seeking more subtle means for ensuring the responsibility of representatives, the agrarian radicals merely sought the means for more direct popular control of government. Clark goes on to acknowledge, both, that the *raison d'être* of the agrarian radical political culture was to undermine parliamentarianism in the interest of popular sovereignty, and that it did enjoy some limited success to this end. [13]

In a sense, Clark's problem with their practice was precisely the extent of its success:

> The truth is that the forms of political organization which grew out of the frontier experience were not well designed to secure the effective, continuous control of the population over its affairs. Immediately, the revolt from outside authority did lead to an increased control over matters of local concern, but such a result was secured at the price of destroying some of the most important of the safeguards of political organization against the concentration of power in the hands of irresponsible leaders or groups. Such an

> effect was not intended, of course, but the insensitiveness of frontier democratic theory to the importance of executive responsibility meant inevitably a failure to provide the conditions necessary for effective democratic control. [14]

The reasoning that leads Clark to this conclusion is a little bit curious. First of all, it is incredulous to suggest - as he appears to - that the federal government executive wielded more power subsequent to, and because of, the agrarian radical efforts at reform. More problematically though, he criticizes the federally elected UFA members for not being accountable for the actions of the official opposition party. And he finds even more fault in Alberta itself, where the "governing authorities" are freed from political responsibility in their being dictated to by the UFA convention. In fact, this latter arrangement is also faulted for its susceptibility to intrigue and manipulation, which is said to have been only avoided due to the high standards of moral and political virtue exhibited by Wood and Brownlee. [15]

Again, however, the analysis of the practice is so incongruent with the objectives of the theory that it simply misses the point. How can the agrarian radicals' political practice be criticized for its insensitivities to the needs of partyism and the discretionary authority of governors, when these were among the very things that it sought to radically transform? If they failed to achieve "effective democratic control," this was not due to an "insensitiveness" to their emasculation of the governing executive's authority, but was due to their failure to adequately eradicate that authority. And to cite Wood and Brownlee as beacons of virtue in these matters is an embarrassing revelation. As has been noted above, Wood's theorizing notwithstanding, probably no individual played as important a role in inhibiting the practical development of group government under the auspices of the UFA than did these two.

Not surprisingly, Clark winds down into a staid celebration of Canadian parliamentarianism. Its fine balance between popular contribution and autonomous executive authority is the ideal government for a mature nation in the modern world: "Canada can assume a more responsible and thus more effective role in world affairs than can the United States not because its government is less responsive to the people but because its government's freedom of action is not continuously hampered by the behaviour of irresponsible parties and groups." [16] But in this outlook, it is obvious that the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy is beyond the pale of his comprehension. Nowhere is this so clear as in Clark's remark to the effect: "One of the primary objects of convention rule, as the U.F.A. sought to establish it in Alberta, was to make the individual a bad party man and thereby in a sense a poor citizen." [17] The agrarian radical vision was a universe removed from Clark's parliamentarian apologetics.

Seymour Lipset's analysis of the structural conditions that facilitated a high degree of citizenship among Saskatchewan farmers provides a slightly different case. While the analysis is enlightening in ways, his emphasis upon structure obscures the role of autonomous human action. This kind of structuralism is a different kind of heteronomism. This structural version of heteronomism in the inherited scholarship will serve as an appropriate transition to our discussion of some recent new approaches to agrarian radical democracy, characterized by a structural/post-structuralist orientation.

Lipset provides a variety of explanations for Saskatchewan's, and by implication Alberta's, distinctive popular institutions, along with their concomitant high standard of citizenship. Many of these are quite interesting, and some anticipate Macpherson's study to be released some years later: the absence of class fragmentation within the agrarian communities; single-crop dependency; sparse settlement; the vagaries of weather; and the newness of the settlements. Furthermore, in a more general sense, rural conditions alone take some of the credit for the state of citizenship. Lipset's comparison of Saskatchewan civic life to that in cities like Vancouver and Toronto is intended to illustrate this point. The example though is also illustrative of Lipset's empiricism - a condition that contributes to heteronomism in structuralist analysis:

> The few urban co-operatives which do exist tend to be led by members of the middle class. The breakdown or absence of real neighbourhoods in urban centres has also served to prevent the creation of any real local corps of leaders. Neighbourhoods in cities are not areas of action or organization. The political [party] machine has provided the only effective urban leadership group, and it could hardly be expected to be a vehicle for new ideas and for social change. Outside of the factory, the urban working class is atomized. There are no real channels for intra-class communication.
>
> The building of a new mass political organization is, therefore, much more difficult in a city than in a rural community or small town. It is almost impossible to locate the informal leaders of the lower classes. People are not accustomed to dealing in political matters. They are never part of small organizations which must make political decisions. The anonymity of city living means that organized person-to-person political contact is difficult. [18]

If exaggerated, the account does have a distinct strain of truth to it, and its contrast to the historic rural conditions of Saskatchewan and Alberta are evident. Lipset well describes the conditions to which, and within which, agrarian radicalism responded with its popular institutions. However, with very few exceptions[19], Lipset presents these structural conditions as the causative agents of the discussed institutions. If structural analysis itself tends toward heteronomism, once informed by an empiricist outlook, it has little else left to provide for causative explanation, but the structures themselves.

For instance, early in his essay on political participation in the Saskatchewan CCF, Lipset refers to the "unique combination of [social and economic] factors which have created the formal structural conditions for widespread individual participation in community affairs." [20] It takes a zealous heteronomist to propose that "factors" can "create" "formal structural conditions." Surely formal structures of any kind are created by people. "Factors" only provide the context to which people respond, in which they create. To take both creativity and autonomy seriously, people's responses to given conditions must be approached as specific and potentially surprising. Only a heteronomist can assume that people's context determines their choices.

Less it be feared that we are merely tripping him up in a figure of speech, Lipset reinforces this interpretation a few pages further on: "The repeated challenges and crises which Western farmers faced, forced them to create many more community institutions...than are necessary in a more stable area." [21] Here, at least, Lipset credits people with the creation of institutions, but in the heteronomist perspective, they indeed have no choice: they are "forced" to "create" as they do - a rather peculiar notion of creativity, certainly.

And yet, cannot examples of crisis-challenged societies that failed to create, or to successfully create, such institutions be cited? During the period of agrarian radicalism's maturation, poor urban Canadians were continually confronted by economic, cultural and health crises. Some cultural marxists have attempted to highlight the institutions of Canada's poor and working people during this period. But if Lipset exaggerated in his observations on the dearth of such institutions, surely they appear meagre affairs when contrasted to the widespread, grassroots libertarian and communitarian institutions articulated out of agrarian radicalism, and the farmers movement generally.

So, why did not the challenge of crises "force" these people to "create" such institutions? The implication would seem to be that crises do not force people to act in any particular manner. The agrarian radicals' act of creativity, and their choices of what to create, were independent historical initiatives that cannot be exclusively reduced to the specific context within which they so created. Saying this should not be taken to imply that the influence of context is unimportant. And indeed, as Lipset himself emphasizes, the contrast between certain rural and urban experiences in Canada during this period may have explanatory value. But his actual approach to the matter suggests sociological problems.

It is from this perspective that the lengthy quotation cited above is so revealing. After a straightforward empirical description of the absence of popular institutions in Canadian urban areas, Lipset leaps to an undiscussed and unsupported conclusion: "The anonymity of city living means that organized person-to-person political contact is difficult." But this is a mere tautology - the reverse can be equally claimed on the basis of the evidence: the anonymity of city living could just as easily be ascribed to the absence of organized person-to-person political contact. Absence of person-to-person political contact and social anonymity certainly go together. This though says nothing about chronology, much less causation. In the guise of a truism, Lipset has told us nothing.

Without some explanation of why popular institutions - such as those of agrarian radical democracy - were created in response to rural crises, but not urban ones, Lipset's fundamental conclusions about the uniquely fertile soil for democracy in Saskatchewan and Alberta are baseless - perhaps not entirely untrue, but without an explanatory base. In fact, the history of popular movements and radical initiatives for social transformation is rich with evidence that, given the opportunity, people participating in grassroots struggles for social transformation have an enthusiastic proclivity for forming popular institutions of radical democracy.[22] Perhaps what should be concentrated upon here, in understanding the contrasting cases, is not so much the facilitating conditions of rural Saskatchewan, but the debilitating conditions of urban Canada.

If we bear in mind that, historically, urbanization is related to industrialization, and take into account the substance of my response to Macpherson's suggestion that factory workers have a superior appreciation of exploitation, then a fascinating venue opens up for exploring the limits and potentials of autonomy. The resulting insights, as Lipset intuited, could deepen our understanding of the agrarian radical political culture. Certainly, his statement that "outside the factory, the urban working class is atomized," is about as important for what it glosses over, as for what is acknowledges. For the final part of this study, such insights contribute to an alternative autonomist perspective in which the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy could be viewed from a perspective commensurable with the sensibility that animated that adventure.

A Canadian scholarship, sympathetic to the need for social transformation, will require a significantly different outlook to be able to grasp the rich legacy of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy, and similar contributions to Canadian radical thought. In the last few years, there have been efforts to provide such an outlook - interestingly enough, through methodologies grounded in traditions of communications scholarship. However, at the same time as they have criticized the specific heteronomism of the inherited scholarship, their post-structuralist inclinations have undermined their own capacities for taking seriously the autonomous intersubjective and prefigurative character of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy. These efforts will be briefly examined before presenting my own speculations on the outlines of an emergent, rudimentary autonomist perspective.

Notes

[1] C.B. Macpherson, *Democracy in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953,) p. 44ff.

[2] He acknowledges the efficacy of their delegate democracy on page 62. And he suggests that it was in part the actual failure of the UFA governing administration to make any serious effort to bring about group government that caused the disillusion of many agrarians, leading them to vote instead for Social Credit, p. 92. And, he points out that, at least in the beginning, Social Credit fed off this disilluision of agrarian radical democrats in presenting itself as an alternate form of delegate democracy, p. 217. All page references to *ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 6, 21.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 15, 16, 20.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 19.

[6] Seymour Lipset subjected Macpherson's entire use of class analysis as an instrument for examining the history of specific parliamentarian tendencies to a thorough critique in an exchange between them in the *Canadian Forum*. The exchange is helpful in revealing the differences in their analytical approaches, to an essentially common heteronomy, which are never for a moment disturbed by the spirit - or even the history - of agrarian radical political culture: S.M. Lipset, "Democracy in Alberta," 2 parts, November & December 1954; and C.B. Macpherson, "Democracy in Alberta: A Reply," January 1955.

[7] *Ibid.* pp. 58-59.

[8] M. Marcia Smith, "The Ideological Relationship Between the United Farmers of Alberta and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation," Masters Thesis, Montreal: McGill University, 1967.

[9] Reginald Whitaker, "Introduction," William Irvine, *The Farmers in Politics* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p. xii.

[10] *Ibid.* p. xxx.

[11] In fact, by the mid-1950s, Good reported having had a problem with Irvine's propensity to advocate social transformation through use of the state as far back as the latter's *Farmers in Politics*. See, W.C. Good, *Farmer Citizen* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1958,) pp. 173-74.

[12] Anyone familiar with Irvine's biography - notwithstanding whatever unsavory intellectual compromises he may have indeed made in participating in the CCF - can hardly believe that in1933 he suddenly became a good chain-of-command-man: Anthony Mardiros, *William Irvine: The Life of a Prairie Radical* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., 1979.)

[13] Reprinted as "The Frontier in the Development of the Canadian

Political Community," in S.D. Clark, *The Developing Canadian Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968,) p. 217.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 218.

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.* p. 219.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] S.M. Lipset, "Political Participation and the Organization of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, xiv(2), 1948, p. 204. This article is reproduced almost verbatim as the chapter "Social Structure and Political Activity," in *Agrarian Socialism* (Berkeley: University of Calfornia Press, 1970 [orig. 1950].) Page references are to the former.

[19] In *ibid.* I found only one example of a more cautious language, p. 207.

[20] *Ibid.* p. 192.

[21] *Ibid.* p. 197.

[22] Though almost all problematic in their own way, some of the fundamental works in the rediscovering of this tradition of autonomous liberation in the 1950s and1960s are: C.L.R. James, *The Future of the Present* (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill & Co., 1977); C.L.R. James, Grace C. Lee and Pierre Chaulieu (aka Cornelius Castoriadis), *Facing Reality* (Detroit: Bewick Editions, 1974 [orig. 1958]); Cornelius Castoriadis, *Political and Social Writings: Volume 2, 1955-1960*, trans. and ed. David Ames Curtis (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin, 1965); and Murray Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1971.)

Chapter 7: Recent New Approaches

Many of the problems in the inherited scholarship have been effectively redressed by David Laycock in his 1985 doctoral thesis: "Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies, 1910-1945." Laycock points out the democratic sensibility of agrarian populism, and reveals the neglect of this dimension in the inherited scholarship. In doing so, he illustrates the tremendous variety, subtly and complexity of prairie populist democratic discourses which is lost amid the standard reductionisms of inherited scholarship.

He does not reveal the philosophical basis of agrarian radical democracy, hence failing to demonstrate the theoretical coherence of its intellectual and political history. This becomes a major problem for his analysis. Nor does he reveal the epistemologically incompatible assumptions of the inherited scholarship that caused it to so entirely neglect not only the democratic sensibility but the more profound autonomism that animated the agrarian radical adventure in democracy. With this, the agrarian radical contribution to a prefigurative praxis of social transformation is likewise lost.

Laycock takes past scholarship, liberalist and marxist, to task for its economic and class reductionism. This reductionism is said to have caused the variety, subtly and complexity of agrarian radical populist democratic discourse to be seriously neglected and distorted in the interest of a crude class analysis reduced from sweeping claims about the agrarians' economic circumstances. [1]

For himself, in the structure of his analysis, as much as in the claims of his narrative, Laycock emphasizes this neglected variety, subtly and complexity. He divides agrarian radical populism into four ideolects -

borrowing a term of Roland Barthes. An ideolect, Laycock explains, "is a distinctive, and intricate but cohesive, pattern of explicit and implicit (that is, connoted) meanings and relations between linguistic terms...The notion of an ideolect forces us to look at individually minor but often cumulatively major differences in the way central terms and themes are defined and interrelated within a larger ideological competition." [2]

The four ideolects that Laycock identifies are: radical democratic populism, social democratic populism, crypto-Liberalism, and plebiscitarian populism. These four ideolects are then examined to reveal their contribution on six themes: the role of "the people," the role of popular democracy, concepts of cooperation, influence of technocratic ideas, concepts of the state, and visions of the good society. Across this breadth and depth of coverage Laycock is able to convincingly demonstrate that the standard practice of inherited scholarship has obscured a great deal of variety, subtly and complexity. (Laycock's contribution is particularly strong in its analysis of the contradictory role of technocratic and democratic ideas in prairie populist discourse. [3])

Perhaps strangely, though, given this context, Laycock does not distance himself from the inherited scholarship to the extent one might expect. Early on he even refers to his work as complementary to previous approaches. [4] It seems at first that this is just excessive conciliation. But when discussion turns to the work of C.B. Macpherson, this attitude suddenly seems surprisingly sincere. It is not just that Laycock takes an uncritical approach to Macpherson's treatment of agrarian radical democracy in the UFA, but that he endorses some of Macphersons' most problematic notions in this regard.

For instance, Laycock accepts uncritically Macpherson's designation and description of UFA politics as "delegate democracy." This largely procedural characterization is at odds with Laycock's more sensitive awareness of agrarian radical political culture in other parts of his study. Laycock seems to be aware of a problem here when he observes : "As Macpherson indicates, and as is clear in U.F.A. pronouncements on the matter, delegate democracy went beyond the notion of direct legislatory popular control over public policy, and beyond the vague liberal-democratic idea of an elected representative's duty to take his constituents' wishes into account. The logic of radical democratic populism requires its concept of representation to involve instruction of elected representatives by electors on particular items of policy that a representative body might act on. The *sine qua non* of such delegate responsiveness was constituency association control over the organization and financing of the competitive political machinery that sponsored the delegates bid for elected office." [5]

This is all fine, fair and true, as far as it goes. But it remains a procedural description that misses the ethical and praxical concerns of agrarian radical political culture that can only be addressed through attention to the importance of (inter-)subjective development by means of a participatory discourse. Delegate democracy would be merely another empty procedure, like parliamentarianism itself, without the citizenship capable of exercising it. It was the praxis and social vision oriented to this concern that distinguishs agrarian radical democracy.

More problematic still, Laycock slips all too easily into agreement with Macpherson's characterization of the UFA government's continual compromises of group government theory and agrarian radical ideals as the necessary pragmatism for coping with the real world, and maintaining the movement. [6] This though - miraculously, in light of the rest of Laycock's treatment - effectively glosses over the fact that the *raison d'être* of agrarian radical political culture was the transforming of the standard set for democracy by parliamentarianism, as well as parliamentarianism itself as dominant governing institution. When this is kept in mind, it is merely fanciful to portray this triumph, of partyism particularly and parliamentarianism generally, engineered by Brownlee and accomplices as a pragmatic compromise protecting the movement. It constituted the effective capitulation of agrarian radical democracy to the very forces it sought to transform.

This position was understandable for Macpherson whose heteronomist inclination toward a social democratic praxis of parliamentarianism prevented his comprehension of, or sympathy for, the unique dimensions of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy. It was unsurpising to find him simply reiterating the words of Frank Underhill two decades later. But Laycock's nuanced considerations of the importance of democratic discourse to the agrarian radicals as expressing an alternative vision of society and social transformation should have led him to greater comprehension and sympathy than this. It is surprising then to find him here uncritically accepting Macpherson's heteronomy.

Macpherson's problem arose from his failure to appreciate the role of the school of citizenship in agrarian radical political culture. This opened him to the procedural interpretation of agrarian radical democracy as delegational and the instrumental interpretation of agrarian radical social vision as a "non-exploitative" society. Without understanding the agrarian radical political culture with its emphasis upon the school of citizenship, the substantive, positive character of agrarian radical democracy and social vision is impossible to grasp and the rudimentary prefigurative praxis that they pioneered is lost. This is how Macpherson could comfortably advocate the heteronomy of his strategic critique of agrarian radical anti-partyism, resonating with its sentiments of Underhill.

Upon reading his thesis, it seems that Laycock should not be a party to this exercise. Not only is his discussion of democratic nuance distinctly undogmatic, but he is evidently aware of the school of citizenship, at least in effect. His discussion of "the importance of local community institutions to the participatory element in radical democratic populism," especially its emphasis upon the role of the UFA local in Alberta, illustrates the decisive role that the school of citizenship was perceived to play in the agrarian radical political culture of that province in the 1920s.[7]

Yet, he never uses the term "school of citizenship," despite its popularity during the earlier part of the period he studied. And on other occasions he seems to outright deny the existence of what he has demonstrated to be a central aspect of the movement under consideration: "Radical democratic populist theoreticians failed to develop an *explicit* rationale for popular democracy in self-developmental terms, except (As with H.W. Wood) when the powers of organized individuals were seen to be *diminished* by the state."[8]

As I suggested in part two, the group government theorists tended to put their emphasis upon the development of the collective, assuming its benefits to thereby accrue to the individual. So, if by self-development is meant the development of an individual self, what Laycock says is true of them. But surely there was more to the "radical democratic populists" than group government theorists. Surely, the early advocates of the school of citizenship thesis, particularly E.A. Partridge, are included here with their obviously explicit rationale for popular democracy based on individual self-development. Alas, they are not. Partridge, along it would seem with the school of citizenship thesis rendered mute, is found in a different ideolect: social democratic populism. It is this peculiar construction, more structural than historical, that is the main cause of confusion in Laycock's treatment. Not only does his categorizations obscure agrarian radical history by imposing important discontinuities, but they inadvertently reveal his own dubious adherence to a normative radicalism recalling the heteronomism of economistic marxism and "social democracy."

There is no problem with the fact that the advocates of what Laycock calls crypto-Liberalism and plebiscitarian democracy both fall into the general category I have designated as agrarian dissidents: a category of agrarians who had an influence upon the history I have told in part two, but whose details are not of interest to my narrower focus upon the agrarian radicals specifically. Laycock's social democratic populism and radical democratic populism categories, however, are not equally complementary. As already noted, the placing of H.W. Wood and E.A. Partridge in different categories on the issue of agrarian radical democracy is at serious variance with my own approach. This, though, is only a symptom of the real problem, which is based on the criteria determining these categories.

Laycock does acknowledge a good deal of openness within and fluidity between the radical and social democratic populisms. And his qualifications - particularly in the case of Partridge - are sometimes striking. But still he insists upon a distinction which is dominated by the social democratic populists' greater openness to parliamentarianism. Whereas the radical democratic populists condemned partyism and the elective aristocracy as characteristic of parliamentarianism's inherently anti-democratic character, for the social democratic populists the evident problems of partyism and parliamentarianism generally were due to the corruption and incompetence of those holding elected power. Thus, for the social democratic populists, radical transformation was not called for, but merely the triumph of more honest, competent and caring politicians. So the social democratic populists can be characterized as having accepted formal British parliamentarianism as appropriate institutions of government. [9]

The social democratic populists did have a discourse of popular democracy, but it was one that raised instead the question of "economic democracy." We see again, that our review of Frank Underhill's and W.C. Good's debate, at the founding of the CCF in the *Canadian Forum*, continues to serve well as a proto-type of the historical arguments between agrarian radicals and social democrats - especially in as the CCF is Laycock's most frequent source for social democratic populist discourse. On the basis of the evidence he cites, Laycock observes: "After 1932, the C.C.F. prairie provincial organizations provided very little in the way of official proposals for alterations to representative public institutions. They chose, instead, to accept the parliamentary institutions, practice popular representative democracy within their own organizations, and emphasize the need for 'economic democracy' as a means of democratizing public life." [10]

Though the distinction here between "radical" and "social" democratic populists seems to do injustice to Partridge's inclusion in the latter, it is perhaps in general not an inappropriate point of distinction. What Laycock makes out of this distinction, however, seems considerably less appropriate, and it is in this that the limits of his corrective to inherited scholarship's heteronomism becomes evident: "Within a capitalist society, that populism whose identification of the social antagonism is most explicitly and precisely anti-capitalist is, by definition, the most radical form of populism. By this measure, social democratic populism was the most radical of all four prairie populist types." [11]

Is a radicalism rooted in a critique of the exploitative economy of capitalism as a mode of production necessarily more radical than one rooted in a critique of the social heteronomy of capitalism as a way of life? Is the perspective of the proletariat on the same capitalism that created its consciousness necessarily more radical than that of those who resist capitalism from outside of its assumptions? We have seen that Macpherson thought so. It is a matter of record that Lenin did too. It seems that Laycock concurs.

Even if one thought "economic democracy" more important than "political democracy," accepting the whole structure of parliamentarianism at face value is also to accept the myths of social heteronomy that the agrarian radicals worked so diligently against in their political culture. After all, from the perspective of the social democratic populist, where is this highly esteemed "economic democracy" to come from, if not as a delivery benevolently offered by wise and fair "socialist" politicians. But this is not autonomy. And in the agrarian radical sense of the term, neither is it democracy. The school of citizenship, and even group government theory, were premised on the belief that people - through participation in their local community - had to cooperatively develop the quality of citizenship compatible with a democracy, in the process of achieving democracy. No genuine democracy could be simply delivered like a present to the people from leaders - however wise and fair.

The problem is not just that it is somewhat arbitrary to designate one over the other as superiorly radical on the basis of its ideal social vision. It is that in calling the social democratic populists more radical, the prefigurative praxis of social transformation developed amid the agrarian radical adventure in democracy is obscured. In this Laycock effectively endorses the same attitude to praxis - in which "ends" of social power are severed from "means" of prefigurative self-empowerment - exercised by the very Leninism he criticizes elsewhere. In this light, it is not surprising, after all the criticism is said and done, how amenable Laycock remains to Macpherson's heteronomy.

Laycock's inclination toward a heteronomous socialism is occasionally glimpsed in a clarity that stands in stunning contradiction to his more general sympathy to the agrarian radical tradition[12]: "A socialist who did not believe that [material good redistribution and aggregate enhancement] were desirable goals, or *that the state had a major role to play in achieving them*, would not be a socialist." [13] The sweep of this generalization is a little awesome. How is it that Gustav Landauer and Peter Kropotkin's historical claims to this rubric are arbitrarily defined out of existence? Indeed, how this position is to be reconciled with Partridge's inclusion as a social democratic populist - or even a hybrid form[14] - is a bit puzzling. It is this peculiar insistence upon the superior radicality of social democratic praxis and vision that reeks such havoc with Laycock's treatment of Partridge.

Since Partridge advocated various socialist ideas, including notions of economic democracy, he is situated in the superiorly-radical social democratic populist pantheon. But as a member of a group that neglected the critique of partyism, accepted parliamentarianism as a legitimate institution of government, and avoided reflection upon the means of an autonomous prefigurative praxis, Partridge is clearly in unaccommodating company. Strangely enough, Laycock all but acknowledges this peculiarity of Partridge's situation. For instance, in discussing his authorship of the 1913 No-Party League manifesto: "At this point in his political career, E.A. Partridge was almost as concerned with the promotion of the principles of grass-roots democracy as he was with the policy objectives of the democratic struggle." [15]

For one committed to a prefigurative praxis, the separation of these two concerns did not have a particular value. This was all the more so in a period when the autonomist consciousness of a democratic citizenship was still much in need of popular cultivation. It is Laycock's apparent surprise at this prioritization of concerns that actually seems surprising when Partridge's contribution to the agrarian radical adventure in democracy is seen through his early elaboration and promotion of the school of citizenship thesis. Here, though, Laycock is criticized from a perspective he obviously was not in possession of. More inherently strange for his situating of Partridge is Laycock's own acknowledgment that the latter remained a devote anti-partyist till "at least" 1926. [16] Partridge's views after that date may be a matter of debate - or the appearance of their debatability may be largely a function of heteronomist assumptions. But given that his agrarian activism began near the turn of the century, and that he died in 1931, to acknowledge his firm anti-partyism till "at least" 1926 would seem to call into serious question his inclusion in a group that accepted the legitimacy of parliamentarianism as a matter of political course.

None of this, however, leads Laycock to rethink his situating of Partridge - rather we get this weak suggestion of a hybrid. But to include Partridge as a radical democratic populist would entail recognition that the distinctions upon which Laycock has based his categories here are suspect. The real issue of difference is not in ends: economic democracy or political democracy. Rather it is a difference in means: the heteronomist means of parliamentarianist praxis or the autonomist means of a prefigurative praxis.

Laycock has managed to surmount part of the inherited scholarship's heteronomist lacuna. His narrative is not pervaded by the assumed inexorable march of parliamentarianism-triumphant - as with Morton or Clark - nor does the structure of his analysis presume the determining historical force to lie in over-riding economic or social forces - as with Macpherson or Lipset. Muchless does he succumb to any assumed political teleology of normative hierarchy - as with Young and perhaps Berger.

In short, Laycock has freed himself from the heteronomism of inherited scholarship's narratives of inevitability. Refuting the assumption that the determining one is an other external to the historical subject was a motivating factor in his study and he remained true to the elaboration of this perspective. But, despite his sympathies for, what I call, the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy, his own bias for a standard of radicality measured in terms of an economistic view of capitalism, led him to overlook the genuinely radical contribution of those whose focus of transformation was political. Economic democracy was a more radical demand than political democracy. Transforming the infrastructure is a more radical act than transforming the superstructure.

To embrace this thinly veiled economistic marxism, however, leaves unanswered the question of praxis. Are we to go with Lenin and his vanguard of professional revolutionaries; Kautsky and his patient wait for the collapse; or Luxemburg's spontaneism, insisting that revolution cannot be peddled door-to-door? Whether the praxical crisis in economistic marxism is due to its economism is not an issue appropriately engaged here. But it is important to realize that these economistic blinkers have to be discarded before the potential contribution of the agrarian radicals to the resolution of this crisis can be recognized. When their political culture's radicality is devalued because of its apparent superstructural orientation, the articulation of an autonomous prefigurative praxis that they began within that political culture is necessarily obscured. It is in this that Laycock falls victim to the incongruent analyses of inherited scholarship.

Laycock may think that the social democratic populists were most radical, but those I call the agrarian radicals did not think so. Without recognizing this fact, and acknowledging the reasons for it, all the nuanced analysis and categorization that can be mustered will not grasp the importance of their political culture. Without grasping that importance, the history of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy remains a victim of inherited scholarship's heteronomist lacuna.

We now turn to another - the most recent, but - unfortunately, less salutory attempt at coming to terms with agrarian radical democracy. Jeffery Taylor begins his article on "The Language of Agrarianism in Manitoba, 1890-1925," with a warning against the tendency to reductionism characteristic of "historical materialist interpretations" of agrarian radicalism. He tries to offset this danger with the cautious use of discourse theory. While this allows him a broader perspective of the agrarian radical movement's self-consciousness then has been usual in post-depression academic scholarship, in the end he succumbs to the worst dangers of both approaches.

Its questionable whether everything he claims is even true of Manitoba, but in not carefully distinguishing the differences, he often lets such claims stand for agrarian radicalism generally. And in this serious distortion arises.

Taylor's analysis of the agrarian radical movement suggests a continual struggle between the accommodationist and producerist discourses. The former generalized farmers interests into those of the citizen, while the latter emphasized the farmer's role as a producer who recognized his or her social role in terms of a labour theory of value, and the means to advance that role in a class oriented organization and strategy. The late 19th century Patrons of Industry were supposed to have embodied this producerist approach, with its emphasis upon class oppression and alliance with "labour." During the MGGA/UFM phase, however, this genuinely radical discourse - while never obliterated - was eclipsed by a "pro-bourgeois" accommodationism that emphasized the building of citizenship and community as both neigbourhood uplift and national reconstruction. Further evidence of this tendency was the cooperative activities designed to spare farmers from the ravages of the markets and unfair trade. The genuinely radical discourse of the producerists, however, continued to smolder during this period, to finally re-emerge with the new insurgencies of the 1930s and 1940s.

Such a view stands at diametrical opposition to the one I have delineated in part two of this thesis, so it will be of some importance to examine how Taylor arrives at these conclusions. The problems for the most part do not lie in Taylor's choice of evidence but in his largely unsupported interpretations of it. For instance, cooperative marketing is called accommodationist, and a decisive break with the radical producerist critique of monopoly capitalism, because it represents "an adjustment to the apparently permanent reality of the capitalist economy." [17]

This attitude, though, begs at least two important questions: would the capitalist economy as such necessarily survive widespread organization of cooperative activities?; or viewed slightly differently, in light of the democratic nature of the cooperatives that Taylor acknowledges, are cooperatives capitalist? They are of course market-oriented, but markets were not invented by capitalism. Indeed, as the agrarian radicals frequently observed, in the age of monopolies, the economy of capitalism had very little to do with the economy of markets. And the mercantile markets of medieval European towns avoided capitalism for centuries by limiting the terms and nature of exchange. In light of the agrarian radicals' views on a moral community, it cannot be assumed that their visions of ideal markets would be the *laissez faire* ones idealized by capitalism's publicists.[18] He entirely ignores the contradictory agrarian radical vision of a moral community enunciated by, among others, R.C. Henders - a source that, as will be seen, Taylor gets extensive mileage out of.

The real problem Taylor sees for the agrarian radicals, though, is their turn to an emphasis upon the role of citizenship. Indeed, while I completely disagree with his interpretations of the evidence, Taylor does provide a wealth of evidence to support my own claims about the centrality of the school of citizenship thesis during the GGAs and united farmers period. [19] But for Taylor this constitutes an abandonment of the producerist radicalism of the Patrons. For one thing, this discourse of citizenship is supposed to have displaced the more radical Patronist emphasis on non-partisanship. [20] And, as opposed to the producerist discourse's focus on class struggle, this citizenship influenced discourse now focused its concern on working out a common interest among social groups toward social cooperation. The development of agrarian citizenship was the means to enhance this process.[21] With this displacement of the radical discourse of class struggle, the citizenship emphasis is revealed as an accommodation to the persisting social order: the new farmer citizen cultivated by the agrarian radical movement "was, simply, the ultimate product and personification of the movement. The movement, after all, had become more concerned with socializing and raising the status of farm people than with facilitating radical social change." [22]

His entire analysis hinges on two problems. First, it operates with the standard economistic marxist assumption, already reviewed at length above, that the social perspective of the proletariat within the process of industrial capitalist production is somehow privileged as more genuinely radical. Second, it does serious theoretical violence to the agrarian radical outlook by severing connections that were cultivated and appreciated in that movement. This would seem to be a consequence of Taylor's reliance upon discourse theory. Each of these points will be briefly considered in turn.

Taylor's producerist category involves the agrarians in seeing their position in the same terms as do the proletariat. And yet, clearly they were not in the same position. So how does submerging themselves into the perspective of this largely alien outlook render them more radical? For instance, Taylor cites W.D. Lamb's observations from a labour theory of value on the building of grain elevators as part of this radical discourse surviving the Patrons. This is fine, as far as it goes, but to leave it at this is to replicate Macpherson's reductionism in which exploitation within the process of production constitutes a special and superior perspective. But to repeat the now belaboured point, the perspective of the proletariat is not inherently privileged, certainly not Archimedean. As clogs in the industrial capitalist production process the proletariat have lacked the insight into exploitation and domination that the agrarian radicals' distance from that process facilitated. Viewing this process from within is no less partial than viewing it from without. There then is really no reason to confer a mantle of genuine radicality on the perspective of the proletariat, over that of the agrarians.

The second problem with Taylor's approach is the sharp dichotomy that severs the connections in agrarian radical thought: conflict is radical, cooperation is accommodation. For instance, Taylor refers to an attitude among some farmers to find cooperative common interests with other social groups as accommodationist. Surely he exaggerates the accommodating dimension, and does not adequately reflect upon the nature of the audiences who receive the addresses that he cites as evidence on this point. (The failure to remark on this for the quote from Hender's address to the Joint Committee on Commerce and Agriculture is particularly striking.) But even insofar as his claim is valid, it was rarely so simple as this. The group government theorists for example sought cooperative social harmony, but recognized the importance of organized, conflictual group or class competition as an aspect in the process of achieving higher stages of cooperation. And in any case, does belief that there might be a general will or interest to ultimately unite different social groups make one bourgeois, as Taylor suggests? Was the J.J. Rousseau who so thoroughly condemned British parliamentarianism in *The Social Contract* a bourgeois? If not, then why call the promoters of the school of citizenship thesis by this epithet? If so, and Rousseau and Jeremy Bentham can be lumped together, then "bourgeois" is not a terribly useful term of distinction to be employing here.

Taylor's approach in this regard is even stranger when we examine the speakers of his discourses. When R.C. Henders speaks of citizenship and social cooperation, he is part of the accommodationist (bourgeois) discourse, but when he speaks of the conditions and origins of exploitation and domination, he is part of the producerist (radical) discourse.[23] A similar curiosity presents in the case of J.W. Scallion.[24]

This is truly privileging the autonomy of discourses over those of subjects. Only two options seem possible: either in true post-structuralist fashion, it is discourses and not subjects that are autonomous, or else there is something seriously wrong with the categorical parameters Taylor has set up. For instance, is his claim about the emphasis on citizenship displacing non-partisanship valid? Or was non-partisanship in fact a precondition of citizenship? My reading of the agrarian radical history is that partisanship - commitment to a electoralist party - rendered one partial, thus inhibiting insight. To be an authentic citizen, to be free to conceive and pursue the common good, required non-partisanship.

In essence, Taylor has severed agrarian radical ends from means. Or, perhaps more accurately, critique from praxis. There were periods when the farmer movement, or elements of it, imagined emersing itself in the worldview of labour. What is far more interesting, and important, though, is the nearly thirty years in which the agrarian radicals, rather, attempted to elaborate an original praxis and vision of social transformation. When R.C. Henders or J.W. Scallion, or E.A. Partridge or Fred Green, spoke the language of the school of citizenship, they were not participating in a different discourse from those occasions when they condemned the monopolies, class exploitation, and the capitalist ethos. They were merely articulating the outlines of a means - a prefigurative praxis of social transformation - for remedying the object of their critiques.

Despite his early warning about the history of historical materialist reductionism, Taylor too operates with a crude economistic marxist notion of what is radical, and haphazardly slaps the dismissive epithet "bourgeois" on anything that does not fit the mold. And despite his early warning about the excesses of much discourse theory, discourse is rendered autonomous, and the subject is killed off. The historical legacy of an attempt to articulate a coherent, alternative vision of social transformation grounded in autonomous intersubjectivity is distorted beyond recognition by the heteronomy of a discursive analysis that does indeed lead to an "immobilising anarchism" - though, nihilism would be more accurate.

Thus, Taylor no more - perhaps even less - than Laycock, has been able to develop an analysis of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy that avoids the heteronomist pitfalls of inherited scholarship. Certainly, as has been demonstrated in the previous two chapters, an autonomist perspective has been hard to come by in the inherited scholarship on agrarian radicalism in Canada. Looking at the work of the most influential scholars, historians and social scientists, their representation of the agrarian radical movement has been shown to seriously distort the later's historic adventure in democracy. A popular movement of quite special significance and proportions in Canadian history is rendered virtually invisible by a heteronomism that is so thoroughly antithetical to the object of its study that it has been unable to grasp the key coordinate: the school of citizenship thesis.

Without understanding the school of citizenship thesis; without understanding how the school of citizenship, in practice, underpinned the agrarian radical political culture; without understanding how the school of citizenship in theory and practice lent coherence to the interventionary movements for direct legislation and group government; without understanding how from, at least 1908, the school of citizenship grew and matured, like a subterranean source of inspiration and motivation, under the feet of agrarian radicals - without any of this, the heteronomist outlook on the history of agrarian radicalism can only see various approximations of sensible parliamentarian strategy. In the end, all is judged by the efficacy with which it responds to the hardnosed world of parliamentarian *realpolitik*. Partyism-triumphant is uncritically employed as a presumably unproblematic criterion by which to judge a vision of social transformation that began with the rejection of the very criterion it is being judged by. The heteronomist outlook of inherited scholarship has all but blotted-out from history the agrarian radical adventure in democracy.

Despite formidable efforts, particularly in the case of David Laycock, his and Jeffery Taylor's attempts to overcome this legacy are seriously marred. Both rely upon structural/post-structuralist analyses that fragments the historical continuities in agrarian radical political culture, obscuring the role played by the school of citizenship thesis in that political culture. Without a recognition of the centrality of the school of citizenship thesis in agrarian radical political culture, the agrarian radicals' prefigurative praxis and their philosophical autonomism remain buried under the reductionism and heteronomism of inherited scholarship, and their historic adventure in democracy remains but a crude image of its uniquely radical self. That the substance of those analyses are already informed by an abiding heteronomism only appears ironic. In fact, it illustrates the plentitude of ways in which heteronomism, as an ingrained intellectual habit of mind, can suddenly reappear from some unexpected shadow to undermine even the most critical intentions. That a scholar as theoretically sensitive as Laycock to the importance of autonomous subjectivity in critical scholarship can fall prey to this heteronomism recommends caution and modesty on the part of anyone attempting the type of study pursued here.

If we are, however, to go beyond the level of revision that Laycock has provided, it will be necessary to develop an alternative outlook for regarding such popular movements, despite our concern for caution and modesty. Insights into the emergence of such an outlook can be gleaned from the work done by a variety of international scholars, in the last few decades, working in political philosophy and the philosophy of history and nature. The final part of this study begins with some speculative reflections upon the paths toward such an emergence.

Notes

[1] David H. Laycock, "Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies, 1910-1945," Doctoral thesis, Toronto: Univeristy of Toronto, 1985, pp. 7-8, 37, 523 n.11, and the appendix.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 36.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 15-18, 204-11, 247-51, 326-35, for some of the strongest examples of his treatment of this matter.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 6.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 180.

[6] *Ibid.* p. 183.

[7] *Ibid.* p. 175-80.

[8] *Ibid.* p. 248. Emphasis in original.

[9] *Ibid.* p. 490.

[10] *Ibid.* p. 296.

[11] *Ibid.* p. 259.

[12] For a couple of striking examples of this sympathy: *ibid.* pp. 174, 251-52.

[13] *Ibid.* p. 328. Emphasis added.

[14] The notion that Partridge - along with William Irvine and Robert Gardiner - represented a hybrid form of radical-social democratic populism is offered, *Ibid.* p. 498.

[15] *Ibid.* p. 285.

[16] *Ibid.* p. 260.

[17] Jeffery M. Taylor, "The Language of Agrarianism in Manitoba, 1890-1925," *Labour/Le Travail*, 23 (Spring 1989), p. 98.

[18] The seminal work on the historical distinction between non-capitalist economy of markets and capitalist market economy is Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957 [orig. 1944].)

[19] Taylor, "The Language... pp. 110-113.

[20] *Ibid.* p. 111.

[21] *Ibid.* pp. 112-113.

[22] *Ibid.* p. 114. A similar sentiment is expressed in the final lines of the article, p. 118.

[23] *Ibid.*, compare pp. 112 and 116-117.

[24] *Ibid.*, compare pp. 110 and 117.

PART FOUR: Beyond Heteronomy

Philosophical Excursus: Toward an Autonomist Perspective

Part three has demonstrated that the inherited scholarship has been unable to grasp the character and hence the vision or sensibility of agrarian radical political culture. This would seem to be due to a failure to recognize the central role of the school of citizenship thesis in orienting its theoretical and practical activity. This inability to recognize the school of citizenship thesis is an unsurprising outcome of the heteronomist outlook that characterized that scholarship.

Before this examination can be confidently concluded, it would be preferable - perhaps necessary - to consider the coordinates of an outlook that might be better able to grasp the richly autonomist sensibility that animated the agrarian radical political culture. It is not possible to provide here a definitive statement, serving as a normative standard against which the contribution of the inherited scholarship can be conclusively assessed. However, even the rudimentary suggestion of how the emerging outlines of such a perspective might look is adequate to illustrate the vast philosophical distance that laid between the assumptions of the inherited scholarship and the agrarian radicals. Only with this kind of understanding is it possible to begin grasping the kind of perspective necessary to appreciate the significance of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy.

Of some help, in this speculation upon an autonomist perspective, is the gradually emerging elaboration of a historiography and philosophy, largely concerned with realizing radical visions of democracy, that has increasingly suggested the theoretical foundation for autonomism - even in this age of aggravated epistemological and ontological insecurity.

Autonomism may never be provable in any definitive, "scientific" way. But its thoughtful elaboration could provide a comprehendible and comprehensive explanation of the human world - one that, at the same time, would make sense of human subjectivity and autonomy without resorting to either a triumphalist individualism or a crude relativism.

It could make sense of these by grounding them in nature, while still emphasizing the unique social and psychical evolution of the human world. Furthermore, insisting upon the distinctly historical character of subjectivity and autonomy, in both nature and society, this approach could valorize these as legitimate objects of scholarly concern, rather than in need of superceding heteronomous explanations. In this light, it might be possible to imagine a perspective that treats subjectivity, not as some epiphenomenon of supposedly "objective" forces, but as a continually emerging graduation into autonomy, that in fact characterizes evolution and ecology, the natural and the social.

In a very practical sense - though a rarely self-conscious one - any social, or even personal, history is always underpinned by epistemological assumptions that derive their coherence from a more basic and general view of a metahistory as natural history or supernatural history. So, it is understandable that the group government theorists would aspire to ground their theory in an progressivist natural history. In constructing such a history however they were largely restricted to a Victorian mindset lingering on from the previous century. Their vision of evolution, social as well as natural, was deeply influenced by the Spencerian and Huxleyian interpretations of Darwin, which essentially dovetailed with the views of science and the world so popular in the period. [1] This view of natural history was a necessarily heteronomist one. The keystones of that view -

gradualism, competition and progressivism - could perhaps be debated as to their details, but the essential heteronomism was rarely questioned.

Given this, the issue of constructing a natural history to underpin a philosophy of social history would appear to only offer the option of a sublime history or a redundant one. Either we are on a progressive march to greatness, or we are not - in which case all our efforts and aspirations were pointless. By amending the emphasis on competition with a balance of consideration for cooperation, the agrarian radicals reworked the progressive heteronomy into a sublime history. As has been seen, however, this was not only unnecessary theoretically, but also inconsistent with their political experience. It can also be added, though, that such a history is now, not only inconsistent politically, but unnecessary biologically. The recent work of a new generation of biologists and natural historians has begun to totally revise our perspective on the natural history of biotic evolution.

The older views - which treated human will and self consciousness as, at best, unique bequeathals in radical opposition to all "lower species," or, at worst, as mirages that obscured the reality of passions and instincts that inexorably determined human action - have been subjected to deep reconsideration. This is as true of their past forms as of their most recent incarnations in scientific creationism and sociobiology, respectively.[2]

These new biologists have congregated around two important revisionist biological hypotheses: Gaia and punctuated-equilibria. The former has tended to be more important for its contribution to rethinking natural ecology, while the latter's importance has tended to be in rethinking natural evolution. But both have contributed to new ideas about the subjectivity and autonomy of life on earth.[3]

This group of new biologists, of whom some of the better known are James Lovelock, Francisco Varela, Lynn Margulis, Nils Eldredge and Stephan Jay Gould, taken together present a picture of natural history in which inexorable progress is absent, mutualism is at least as important as competition, and - most important for our purposes - rudimentary autonomy is seen as existing in tremendously varied stages of elaboration, graduated through organisms of dramatically different degrees of complexity and simplicity. In place of the heteronomy of mechanical adaptation and physiological economy, a vision of biological evolution is presented in which natural history is truly historical; in which rudimentary forms of subjectivity are articulated through genuinely contingent choice, individual and specific. Mimicking Marx - in a manner his Victorian consciousness might have found outrageous - it can be said that non-human organisms really do, even if only in crude and particular ways, make their own history - though obviously not just as they choose.[4]

As obvious as was the political implications of Herbert Spencer's and Thomas Henry Huxley's interpretations of Darwin, so would seem to be the political implications of this new synthesis. In place of the pervasive heteronomy of greed and cruelty, there is now emerging the biological basis to imagine nature as the matrix of subjectivity, self-consciousness and intersubjectivity - ultimately even, rationality, creativity and flexibility. Some of the efforts to elaborate this biological material into a coherent philosophy of history and political praxis has been exceedingly disappointing.[5] But there has been at least one such attempt that warrants our attention. To re-emphasize though, only a rudimentary, speculative outline, of the autonomist perspective that might yet fully emerge can be suggested here.

Murray Bookchin has built upon these ideas of the new biology to argue that the emergence of rudimentary subjectivity into autonomy is a pervasive aspect of world history, natural and social. As such, the world - including the natural world - possesses an inherent meaningfulness, continually unfolding. By careful attention to the ecology and evolution of this inherent meaningfulness, we would be better able to assess the dynamic possibilities and potentials always immanent within the ongoing history of subjectivity. By making this emergent, graduated subjectivity the object of consideration from a perspective that necessarily takes potentials and possibilities seriously - given its elaboration out of reflection upon the meaningfulness inherent in the world, constituted by that very history of subjectivity - it would be possible to articulate the grounds of an ethics that is not merely normative, but actually objective: in a strictly historical sense. That this objectivity could not be exclusively rendered in empirical terms would be its strength, not its weakness. Similarly, these insights could point to an objective study of nascent (inter-)subjectivity as the continually emerging potential for autonomy.[6]

Bookchin explores these ideas in great detail and across a wide-range of concerns. This is not the place to examine the specifics of his views. All that needs to be emphasized here is the way that Bookchin's work draws out and renders explicit, in a deeply radical libertarian manner, the implications of the new biology. If the evolution of autonomous subjectivity is a more general aspect of natural history, then humans may not forever be alone in its possession.[7] With this insight all illusions of dualism instantly vanish. We may possess a special place in nature, but it is neither permanent nor independent of that same nature upon which our evolutionary existence depends. It then becomes reasonable to ask whether the wounds we inflict upon non-human nature might be avoided by a social order organized less around the assumption of our necessary superiority, and whether the solutions to our rampant social problems could be informed by a delicate observation of nature. Thus, as our capacities for autonomous rationality, creativity, spontaneity and flexibility arise out of nature itself, so exercising our autonomy might be ethically informed by an organically sensitive observation of nature's ecology and evolution.

Bookchin's history of emerging autonomous (inter-)subjectivity is not a tale of crass progressivism. And he emphasizes particularly the ways in which the graduation of modes of social hierarchy and domination can cultivate within individual persons a psychical heteronomy incapable of recognizing its society's capacity for autonomous activity, and his or her own capacity for autonomous selfhood.

The slowly evolving graduation of a psychology of hierarchy and domination out of organic society consumes much of the narrative of his major work in this area, *The Ecology of Freedom*. But Bookchin does also emphasize the manner in which current social practice contributes to that psychology, with a special focus upon the rise of the factory in capitalism. He highlights the historic role of the factory-system, and all its subsidiary agencies, in creating the complete dependence of workers upon the factory and industrial labour market, and its concomitant fragmentation of workers' lives, consciousness and communities. [8]

This same theme of the centrality of the "self" in any vision of self-determination is brilliantly explored by Bookchin in a 1979 essay. [9] Here he launchs a devastating critique of the long-held marxist view of the factory as a school of revolution. To the contrary, Bookchin insists, it is marxism's much despised petty bourgeois commodity producers who have the real training for the critical, intelligent, sensitive reflection essential to autonomous revolution. [10]

This type of insight perhaps helps toward a better understanding of Lipset's dilemma in not being able to explain the absence of collective self-activity among the urban Canadian working class in the first part of this century. It was not just "outside of the factory" that the urban working was atomized - not to mention psychically fragmented and alienated - but at least as much within the factory. This recognition also contributes to better understanding the onesidedness of Macpherson's critique of the agrarian radicals' view of exploitation. Self-activity, like self-consciousness, required a selfhood that was already under serious attack by the first part of this century in the capitalist factory particularly, and capitalist urbanity generally. [11]

This continual interaction between the formation of the individual self and the society is an important theme for an elaboration of an autonomist perspective. While Bookchin points out the historical connection between individual and social autonomy, he does not explore the relation with the theoretic intensity that some others have. A deeper exploration of these insights is provided by examining the work of Cornelius Castoriadis.

As one of the leading theorists in the French journal *Socialisme ou Barbarie,* in the post WWII period, Castoriadis developed a revolutionary theory growing out of the council communist tradition associated to Pannekoek and the early Gramsci. [12] But he took, if anything, an even more radical and militant position than those before him on the absolute necessity of hierarchy's elimination - both within the society at large and the revolutionary movement that would aspire to bring about such a society. This view was more and more extended with his studies of the Soviet Union and the manner in which new forms of domination and exploitation arose from the hierarchy preserved in the Communist bureaucracy, and always attendant in the Bolshevik Party prior to 1917. [13]

These analyses grew out of Castoriadis' rejection of his earlier Trotskyism, and eventually led him to reject Marxism itself. The reasons for these rejections, particularly the latter, would be of considerable interest to a full-fledged intellectual history of autonomism, but would take us too far a field from the current, more limited task. The important point for the present is that in the absence of the long-standing Marxian underpinning - a still committed revolutionary required some philosophical and historical sense of the conditions for social transformation and revolutionary praxis. It was to fill this vacuum, that Castoriadis set out on the long intellectual journey that culminated in his philosophy of, what he calls, the "social imaginary." [14]

Castoriadis sees in society an always present, and active, autonomy - however self-alienated at any given moment - that acts through the continual creation and recreation of reality he terms the self-institution of society. The terms by which a society institutes itself is set by the social imaginary: the apparent totality of the thinkable and do-able. But the social imaginary is dependent upon, and never exhausts, the individual's radical imagination - an aspect of a social-historical radical imaginary. These radically imaginative, radically creative, functions had been uncovered by Freudian psychoanalysis. Generated from within this radical imagination could come the significations that would challenge and ultimately transform the instituted social imaginary, and hence could alter the society's self-awareness of its self-institution. It is for this reason that Castoriadis sees autonomy, however self-alienated, as always present in fact, and always potentially emerging into self-consciousness. It would be the achievement of an instituted social imaginary that acknowledged society as perpetually self-instituting that would constitute for Castoriadis the achievement of genuine social transformation: what he calls an autonomous society. [15] And it is the approximations of this achievement that he has pointed to as the fundamentally important historic contribution of ancient Greece's creation of both democracy and philosophy, as well as the truly revolutionary instances in the current era. [16]

The relation between the radical imagination and the social imaginary already suggests the interactivity of the relationship between individual and collective autonomy. It is important to emphasize that for Castoriadis the relationship between these two foci of autonomy are mutually dependent. Basing himself on an interpretation of psychoanalytic theory reminiscent of the object relations tradition[17], Castoriadis points to the ubiquitous intersecting otherness composing psyches in the world. Each subject's life is full of interactions with others. These interactions leave psychic residues of otherness - presumably in the form of internalized objects, though this is not made clear - in each subject's psyche, as residues of the subject resides as otherness in the psyches of others. This otherness is not something that can be eliminated - it contributes to the constitution of self. We can only imagine eliminating the other from our psyche precisely because of the selfhood that the other contributes toward constituting. There can be no return to a mythic, pristine self. The point is not to eliminate otherness, but to understand and ultimately control it. A myth of its elimination could only contribute to the otherness' own insidious control. Its presence must be accepted, but it must not be allowed to control one's life. It is this "active situation" of continually struggling against our constitutive otherness gaining an authoritative voice in our minds that makes for individual autonomy. The social dimension of this same autonomy is evident in the potential of this authoritative voice of our constitutive otherness gaining a widespread social articulation. People of a common culture are likely to have common life experiences, tending toward similar psychical patterns that would facilitate the articulation of shared personification or anthropomorphization of the common psychic other. [18] In a very real sense then, an autonomous society is not possible in the absence of autonomous persons.

Incidentally, we can also note that these insights suggest the primary weakness in E.A. Partridge's contribution in *A War on Poverty*. His efforts to defend a vision of collective/social autonomy was inadvertently undermined by his deliberate undermining of individual/personal autonomy. Partridge wanted to dictate the ethics that would govern the activity of the individual person while maintaining a society that was collectively autonomous. But these speculative reflections upon an emergent autonomist perspective would suggest that the only way to ensure social autonomy is to have the autonomous society decide upon its own ethics to govern individual activity - and even the extent to which such an ethics should be imposed. An autonomous society that does not determine its own social content would be hardly autonomous in anything but name. Partridge would have had to either abandon the political project that had animated his public life, or else accept that the school of citizenship had to be an exercise in student directed learning.

With Castoriadis then, there emerges a notion of autonomy as part of a vision of social transformation that, firstly, recognizes actual autonomy as the always existing historical fact of social self-institution. This fact is only obscured through social, self-alienation. Secondly, he emphasizes that part of the means to transcend such self-alienation is to discard inherited notions of subjectivity as pristine selfhood - what Castoriadis calls an unhistorical state.[19] This latter insight obviously dovetails with Bookchin's arguments that subjectivity is part of historical evolution, both natural and social. Furthermore, the evolution and ecology of subjectivity's history could provide the insights for approaching subjectivity objectively - as not merely a demonstrable presence, but a continually emerging potential. And, whereas Bookchin's arguments draw attention to the historical connection between the personal psyche and the social institution, Castoriadis' contribution suggests how this connection could be in fact a co-substantiation: how the individual subject's self resides in the world beyond mere physical presence as the otherness embedded in other selves; just as the world, articulated into otherness, always resides in the subject.

From this psychoanalytically derived perspective, the validity of W.C. Good's insistence upon the relation between social institutions and people's minds is exceedingly evident. And in light of Castoriadis' reliance upon psychoanalysis in developing these insights, it is both relevant and of value to take a moment to reflect upon a recent turn in psychoanalysis that supports and elaborates these views from a distinctly autonomist perspective. At issue here is the recent effort at synthesis and reformulation attempted by Stephen Mitchell.

In his book, *Relational Concepts in Psychoanalysis: An Integration,* Mitchell has sought to distance himself from both the more conventional Freudism of drive theory with its reification of the id-beast and the relationally turned developmental-arrest theory - including object relations theory - with its reification of the ego-baby. In the overall picture, drive theory and developmental-arrest theory both come down on the side of determinism. Whether it be the tension of endogenic pressure or the psychic distortion of early infantile deprivation, the analysand relates in the world, in the manner he or she does, because of the determining influence of these forces. Mitchell argues though that psychoanalytic theory can only be coherent, and psychoanalytic practice can only be effective, if the analysand is recognized as autonomously creating his or her own relational pattern, however miserable it may be. This position carries important implications for psychoanalytic practice, that can also provide insight into the practical character of autonomy.

The drive theory analyst must be outside of the analysand's relational matrix so that there is no danger of giving in to the analysand's infantile and beastial wish fulfillment. Only from without the matrix can the analyst act as the interpretative expert and slowly, skillfully guide the analysand to rational, self-recognition. The developmental-arrest theory analyst too must stay outside of the analysand's relational matrix - not for the purpose of disengagement, but better engagement. This analyst wants to draw the analysand out of the established matrix by establishing an *a* rational relatedness that precedes it; that allows a return to the experience of infancy which provides the support, care and satisfaction that had been initially absent. By this means the arrested development may resume maturation again.

Mitchell's "relational-conflictual theory" analyst, though, cannot view the issue in exactly this manner because he or she does not see the analysand as a reified thing - beast or baby. Not static, but active, the analysand creates his or her own relational matrix, and creates it as he or she finds necessary, to protect against a profound fear of object loss and abandonment - as security against anxiety. Any attempt then to direct or induce from outside the matrix can simply be ignored by the analysand who finds no comfort or security in such a relation. It is only by entering the analysand's relational matrix; to use Mitchell's phrase - by "discovering" oneself within that matrix that the analyst can establish the requisite trust by the analysand. It is only within this trusted realm that the analyst can "find a voice" to speak to the analysand, eventually, about the nature of this relationship; how they got here; why this instead of another; and what might be the costs of this exclusive mode of relatedness.

At least one of the important implications of Mitchell's arguments would be that, where the subject's psychic otherness has become heteronomous, there is a necessarily therapeutic contribution available in a discursive, intersubjective engagement. As Mitchell rejects the heroic individualism of an existentialist psychology with its notion of Victorian willpower, and also rejects the determinism of both drive theory and developmental-arrest theory, he posits a picture of the analysand's activity as actual autonomy draped in heteronomist creativity. The analysand reveals his or her capacity for autonomy in the very process of creativity, but in the same swoop undermines that autonomy in the content of the creativity.

Only in a critical, intersubjective engagement with another subject, genuinely present as an admitted other, can the analysand, or subject generally, encounter the spontaneity and flexibility that might call into question the rigidity of his or her heteronomous self-creation. It is only within a social context that valorizes and facilitates autonomy that the individual person has the opportunity to achieve his or her own autonomy. Autonomous persons are not possible in the absence of autonomous society.[20]

As it would be, following Castoriadis, the ever-present vestiges of the always mutually intersecting otherness of related subjects that makes personal autonomy always a feature of social autonomy. So it would be, following Mitchell, the discursive, intersubjective means to transform the reification of that otherness, as heteronomy, which makes social autonomy always a feature of personal autonomy. As Bookchin's contribution endeavours to make the history of subjectivity's emerging autonomy a comprehendible object of scholarly inquiry, Castoriadis's contribution - supplemented by Mitchell's - endeavours to illustrate how the history of this emerging subjectivity can never be reduced to the level of either individuality or the collectivity. It is both or it is neither.

Examined cumulatively over a broad horizon the arguments of Bookchin, Castoriadis and Mitchell, in their different ways, suggest that the evolving of an autonomy, which is not merely biotic, involves the historic emergence of a psychology of autonomy articulated in our personal, social and natural relations. And the practical elaboration and development of such a psychology is rooted in a discursive and intersubjective engagement with others. [21]

Buttressed by the groundwork of the new biology, a genuinely radical new autonomist perspective could emerge from this path of inquiry. If this initial, rudimentary, outline of an autonomist perspective can be substantiated over the long term in research and reflection, then the intellectual and scholarly challenge becomes, not explaining particular manifestations of (inter-)subjectivity in terms of superceding heteronomy - in the fashion of inherited scholarship - but grasping their role in the far grander history of subjectivity's emergence into ever more articulate graduations of autonomy. Or put slightly differently, rather than asking whether the aspiration to autonomous (inter-)subjectivity is the result of a consciousness that is itself a product of a particular stage in the history of heteronomous forces, it could prove more appropriate to ask whether the heteronomist consciousness that heralds these forces is not itself the product of a particular stage in the history of autonomous subjectivity's emergence.

Notes

[1] Nils Eldredge and Ian Tattersall, *The Myths of Human Evolution,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982,) esp. chaps. 3-5. There were of course heretics of the period. It is enticing to speculate what might have been the full effect upon agrarian radicalism if its members had been exposed to the work of Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution* (Boston: Porter Sargent, n.d.[orig.1902].)

[2] Which is not to imply that many of the insights informing the new biology were not appreciated by some of the older generation. René Dubos stands out particularly in this regard.

[3] See Nils Eldredge,*Time Frames: The Rethinking of Darwinian Evolution and the Theory of Punctuated Equilibria* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985) and James Lovelock, *The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of Our Living Earth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988,) for elaborated statements from pioneers in each hypothesis.

[4] In addition to the sources cited in the previous note, some of the important work of this group can be found in Francisco Varela, *Principles of Biological Autonomy* (New York: North Holland, 1979); Lynn Margulis, *Symbiosis and Cell Evolution: Life and its Environment on the Early Earth* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1981); and with Dorion Sagan, *Microcosmos: Four Billion Years of Microbial Evolution* (New York: Summit Books, 1986); S.J. Gould, *The Panda's Thumb* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980); "The Meaning of Punctuated equilibrium and its role in validating a hierarchical approach to macroevolution," *Perspectives on Evolution,* (ed.) R. Milkman (Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Assoc., 1982); and *An Urchin in The Storm* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987.)

[5] A case in point is a scholar who has been personally associated with some of these new biologists. William Irwin Thompson, in a book he edited for the Lindisfarm Association that included contributions from Lovelock, Varela and Margulis among others, *Gaia, A Way of Knowing: Political Implications of the New Biology* (Great Barrington, MA: Lindisfarm Press, 1987,) offers interpretations of the said "political implications" that seem unable to move beyond the level of trite metaphors: c.f. introduction and chapter 9.

[6] For his most important work in these areas see Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Cheshire Books, 1982); "Thinking Ecologically: A Dialectical Approach," *Our Generation,* 18(2), Spring-Summer 1987; and, "Rethinking Ethics, Nature, and Society," in his, *The Modern Crisis* (Montreal: Black Rose, 1987.)

[7] The research of John Lilly might suggest that communication barriers

alone prevent us from realizing that we already possess no monopoly: *Communication Between Man and Dolphin* (New York: Julian Press, 1978.)

[8] Bookchin, *Ecology*...p. 312-13.

[9] Murray Bookchin,"Self-Management and the New Technology," in his,*Towards an Ecological Society* (Montreal: Black Rose, 1980.)

[10] *Ibid.* pp. 123-24.

[11] The manner in which the urbanity is a component of industrial capitalism with the same destructive historical relationship to an autonomous selfhood has also been explored by Murray Bookchin in great depth: *The Rise of Urbanization and the Decline of Citizenship* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1987.)

[12] Anton Pannekoek, *Workers' Councils* (Melbourne: Southern Advocate for Workers' Councils, 1948); and Antonio Gramsci, *Political Writings, 1910-1920*, ed. Q. Hoare (New York: International Publishers, 1977,) part II, "L'Ordine Nuovo and the Factory Councils."
The clearest statement of Castoriadis' council communism is in the second part of his three part article "On the Content of Socialism," originally published in *Socialisme ou Barbarie.* This article is now available in English: Cornelius Castoriadis, *Political and Social Writings, vol. 2*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988,) chap. 7.

[13] For one of many examples of work along this line, Paul Cardan (aka Cornelius Castoriadis), "Le rôle de l'idéologie bolchévik dans la naissance de la bureaucratie," *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, 35, Jan.-Mar. 1964.

[14] Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987.) The book was first published in France in 1975, a decade after he posited the need for the philosophy it attempts to provide amid his break with Marxism - and the final, definitive schism in the *Socialisme ou Barberie* group.

[15] Castoriadis is the only one whose work is discussed here that explicitly posits an autonomous society as the end of his political and intellectual project: "Socialism and Autonomous Society," *Telos*, 43.

[16] See, Cornelius Castoriadis, "The Greek Polis and the Creation of Democracy," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, 9(2), Fall 1983; "The 'End of Philosophy'," *Salmagundi*, 82-83, Spring-Summer 1989; and, "The Hungarian Source," *Telos*, 29, Fall 1976, respectively.

[17] A seminal intellectual history that clearly identified the object relations tradition was Harry Guntrip, *Personality Structure and Human Interaction* (London: Hogarth Press, 1961.) Perhaps the most thorough treatment of the object relations tradition up to now, but in which Guntrip's theoretical contribution does not fare well, is in Jay Greenberg and Stephen Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.)

[18] Though problematic in many ways, the seminal, and still important, exploration of these ideas is in Freud's own work: *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921) and *The Future of an Illusion* (1927.) Both of these can be found in Sigmund Freud, *Civilization, Society and Religion: The Pelican Freud Library, vol. 12* (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Peguin, 1985.)

[19] Castoriadis, *Imaginary...op. cit.* p. 104

[20] Stephen A. Mitchell, *Relational Concepts in Psychoanalysis: An Integration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988.) I have written a lengthy review of Mitchell's book, currently seeking publication, that explores these issues in greater depth, as well as other aspects of his psychoanalytic integration that carry valuable insights for social and political theory.

[21] In Mitchell's case, this view has been examined at length in the text: c.f. *ibid.* Between the other two, Bookchin has been more ready than Castoriadis to advocate a specific praxis on the basis of these insights. See particularly the final chapter in Bookchin, *The Rise of Ubanization...*; chapter four in his, *The Modern Crisis...*; and Murray Bookchin, "Theses on Libertarian Municipalism," *Our Generation,* 16(3-4). Castoriadis' expression of such a praxis has been more dispersed, contingent and general. In regards to the sentence in the text prior to that with the note referral number, Castoriadis also has not been prone to express his views on the relationship between social autonomy and human society's connection to the natural world. Barely a beginning to such expression is found in the text with the alluring title *De l'ecologie à l'autonomie,* co-authored, so to speak, with Daniel Cohn-Bendit (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1981.)

Conclusion

The autonomist perspective suggested in the previous chapter is far too rudimentary and speculative to be used as a normative, or corrective, standard. In opening up fresh lines-of-vision, however, it does help recognize the distance that laid between the underlying assumptions of the agrarian radicals and those of the post-depression academic scholars who have purported to write their history. Such scholarship was informed by an assumption that human actions were necessarily channeled by heteronomous social, political and economic forces and structures. Whether it be Morton's regulative norm of parliamentarianist *realpolitik*, Young's Michelsian iron law of oligarchy, Macpherson's proletariatist fetish, Lipset's determining environment, or the almost universal replication of Frank Underhill's contemporary claim about the inexpungible necessity of partyism, a reliance upon an unquestioning heteronomy - a convinction in the impossibility of common people making their own history - has prevaded the inherited scholarship.

The agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy, and the political culture that underpinned it, however, were upheld by the assumed existence of an autonomous (inter-)subjectivity, always evolving, and ever capable of further emergence. It was a goal of this study to reconstruct a picture of the political culture that craddled these assumptions. It has been seen in part two of the study that the agrarian radicals developed far-reaching critiques of the dominant political economy and political culture in response to the difficult circumstances within which they found themselves. An important aspect of that radical critique was their condemnation of the existing governmental order. The established order of government was found to be unresponsive to the popular will, serving instead the narrow moneyed interests of Eastern business.

Unlike the agrarian dissidents who sought remedies to the specific unresponsiveness, the agrarian radicals carried their critique to the very form of political culture that sustained such a governmental order. They identified democracy, in the classical sense, as being the necessary remedy. Implied therein was a vision of self-formative citizenship. In the very process of organizing to change the unresponsiveness of the existing form of government, the agrarian radicals sought to generate the radically democratic political culture and concomitant citizenship, in practice, upon which a new form of government could be erected. This vision soon came to be articulated in theory as the school of citizenship thesis.

Within the individual locals of each of the provincial farmers' organizations the agrarians would come together at a humanly scaled, face-to-face forum for discussing their common problems, towards the end of identifying collective action that could remedy those problems. As such activity generated concrete proposals for collective and cooperative direct action, in the very process of such generation the farmers involved would necessarily exercise the dimensions of their intersubjective and discursive skills, cultivating their competence and confidence in their own effective and affective qualities of citizenship.

In the process of cooperatively identifying the remedies to their ills, they would simultaneously develop the means to enact those remedies. Thus in acting at the level of their own community (or *polis*), under the belief in their right and capacity to self-manage that community (as political), they recognized the role of such action as being the sphere for cultivating the disposition for such self-management (or culture) - as citizenship. In this way, the agrarian radicals' school of citizenship articulated the practice of a *political culture* in its genuine, literal sense.

In a few short years the school of citizenship became the central form, symbol and description of the agrarian radical political culture. Failng to recognize this early foundation of the agrarian radical political culture leaves one in danger of a skewed appreciation of those more notorious events that are usually cited as the substantive moments in agrarian radical political history: direct legislation promotion and the group government experience.

Whether done deliberately or not, direct legislation was promoted among agrarians in language likely to endear it to those already convinced of the merits of the school of citizenship thesis. Emphasized as a tool of popular grassroots democracy that also served as a boon to the development of public consciousness, informed popular wisdom and engaged citizenship, direct legislation quickly came to be perceived as a virtual adjunct to the school of citizenship. Very few agrarian radicals managed to maintain a distance from the steam-roller character that direct legislation promotion took on in the prairie farmers' organizations in the first half of the second decade of this century.

Those few who were able to maintain this distance were usually able to do so because they appreciated, and took seriously, the other central component of the school of citizenship thesis: that agrarian radical political culture must work toward social transformation by means of a prefigurative praxis. Farmers had to first give figure to a political culture of democracy in their own movement, with the development of consciousness implied thereby, before they could hope to erect a government of democracy. A democratic government would require a democratic political culture upon which to be erected. Such a government was dependent upon the very consciousness of citizenship that the agrarian radical political culture had to prefigure in its school of citizenship praxis.

In this light, it is clear why an E.A. Partridge never embraced the direct legislation promotion with the reckless abandon of so many other agrarian radicals, and why direct legislation's failure as an instrument of social transformation was inevitable. Direct legislation could be a tool of a genuine democracy, but it could not bring one about. It was a mere procedural technique dependent for its implementation upon the very political forms it was designed to supplant.

This probably should have been evident to more agrarian radicals than seemed to actually recognize it. The fact that it was tied in by implication with the school of citizenship thesis - which did have a sound praxical rationale - is a possible explanation for this widespread oversight. If so, this is as much a comment on the pervasiveness and depth of conviction in the school of citizenship thesis among agrarian radicals, as it is also, obviously, one upon the shallowness of many agrarian radicals' critique of the political order they sought to transform.

A more promising interventionary embodiment for the school of citizenship presented itself in the form of group government theory. The idea, primarily developed in the Alberta movement, was that the political form of the agrarian radical organizations, along with their distinct political culture, should be itself embodied as a structure of government, then replicated by other groups or classes, to provide delegates at federated levels for cooperative government. This approach seemed to preserve and extend the school of citizenship thesis at the same time as it provided a practical political intervention without tempting agrarians with the all too common form of farmer political suicide, conventional partyism.

Group government too, though, was no panacea. While considerably more sophisticated, and even more practicable, like direct legislation promotion, it sleighted the school of citizenship's essential quality of a prefigurative praxis. This was reflected in the strategic route worked out for group government activity. Something like group government might have had a fascinating potential if it could have been pursued as a parallel structure. This, though, could have been too easily conceived as a form of insurrection, and I have seen no evidence that any significant number of agrarian radicals would have contemplated leaving this impression. Yet, trying to work out group government within existing parliamentarianist structures, as was the chosen strategy, revealed again the shortcomings of too many agrarian radicals' critical vision.

A parallel structure might have been possible eventually if the logic of the prefigurative praxis in the school of citizenship thesis had been followed. The pressure for immediate remedial action, however, fueled a drive to use a narrower agenda, founded upon agrarian common interest, bolstered by their sheer electoral numbers, to implement agrarian radical ideas of government in the short term. This was the motive force behind the development of group government theory as it arose in Alberta. But the short term expedient version of the school of citizenship thesis, unable to construct parallel structures, had little other choice but to attempt acting through the heteronomous structures of parliamentarianism in blunt disregard of their incompatiability with the autonomous character of agrarian radical political culture.

Examining the ideas of the most prominent group government theorists illustrated this dilemma. In seeking to lend inexorability to the urgency that drove their advocacy, the Alberta theorists particularly couched their theory in a progressivist heteronomous natural history of which the projected pinnacle was group government. And yet, when they came to write about the practice of group government, based upon the actual practice of agrarian radical political culture that inspired them, their discourse exuded a rich and deep awareness of, and commitment to, autonomy. It was only the autonomous activity of a humanly scaled, face-to-face political forum that could found the genuine democracy that group government sought to achieve.

The heteronomous natural history was part of the intellectual tenor of the times. That the autonomous politics spoke through it so clearly is indicative of the extent to which this sensibility - whether explicitly articulated or not - animated the agrarian radical political culture out of which group government theory grew, and upon which it was based. The idea that the thoroughly heteronomous structures of parliamentarianism could be used to achieve such a vision was perhaps facilitated by the heteronomous natural history, but it surely contributed to the destruction of the autonomous politics. As the UFA's experiment with group government degenerated into an utter fiasco, amid the deepening of the Great Depression, the last of agrarian radical creative energies were on the verge of exhaustion.

Despite having the influence to ensure an initial structure within the CCF that complemented agrarian radical visions of democracy, and prefigurative and self-formative political culture, the history of that organization was by in large the story of the gradual demise and marginalization of its agrarian radical components and aspirations. Most fundamentally, the agrarian radical belief in the necessity of a socially transformative political culture as a school of citizenship gave way to the standard notions of partyism and parliamentarianism..

In our own age, dubbed by its critics as the administered society, with all the destructive trends so well publicized - if poorly analyzed - the inspirations and insights of the agrarian radicals could be of great importance to us. But recognizing that importance is dependent upon recognizing the centrality of the school of citizenship to agrarian radical political culture. It is precisely this central factor that the inherited scholarship, and even recent new approaches, have failed to grasp. Without understanding how the school of citizenship thesis tied it all together, direct legislation promotion, the group government experiment and the rise of the CCF, are all too easily regarded as steps in the gradual growth out of utopian fantasy into parliamentarian reality. This is a regard that flatters our age, as it abuses the legacy of the agrarian radicals' political culture.

It is precisely the existence, nature and role of the school of citizenship that the inherited scholarship has been consistently blind to. To take the school of citizenship seriously would be to take the agrarian radical vision of society and social transformation seriously. A heteronomous outlook does not lend itself to such a perspective. This is not to say that explicit recognition of the school of citizenship thesis would have reformed the scholars of the inherited scholarship. A scholar from the inherited tradition might well have spotted a frequented term, and recognized an associated consistent pattern of argument, only then to situate this new formulation as the initial step, preceding direct legislation promotion, on the long climb up from fantasy to reality. The point, rather, is that inherit scholarship's inability to take agrarian radical visions seriously, and its unrelenting lacuna in regard to the assumptions and sensibility founding the political culture that cultivated and pursued those visions, were mutually supportive and logically interlocking.

The problem was not superficial research or analysis - though in some cases this seemed to be true too. It was rather a fundamental incompatiability in basic perspective on the world, and common people's ability to act in that world. For many scholars of the inherited, post-depression, academic tradition, it would seem that popular movements can only be seen as subordinate to larger historical processes. And their historical value, perhaps even their ethical validity, are measured in terms of the extent to which they contribute positively to the mission of this superordinate historical process - whether it be the triumphant march of "responsible government," the iron law of oligarchy, or the proletariat's fulfilment of a predetermined historical dialectic.

In the most frequently invoked of these, the recent revisionist approaches, as much as the inherited scholarship, have consistently criticized the agrarian radicals in light of some idealized proletariat, and romanticized site of social stuggle - the economic infrastructure. The autonomist perspective speculated upon above would suggest, however, that celebrating this fantasy proletariat - whose lives were fragmented, mechanized and commodified in the very process of being a proletarian, within this most honourable sphere of social struggle - as nevertheless constituting an objective agent of social transformation, or at least holding the objective high-ground for such transformation, demanded an exceedingly crude heteronomy.

And yet, it may have been precisely the insight into these processes that the agrarian radicals might have brought with the advantage of their practical distance and historical difference, which is lost when they are routinely dismissed exactly because of this distance and difference. The emergent autonomist perspective leads us to question whether it was the extent to which they could still lay claim to traditions and cultures, valorizing and nurturing self-formative and autonomous intersubjectivity and discourse that the agrarian radicals might have provided insights into the manner in which capitalism damaged personality, deteriorated community and threatened the natural basis of society - insights that were harder to achieve for those whose personalities and cultures were on the front-lines in that struggle. In this context, and in light of the rapidly swelling current literature on our poisoning of the food chain and denutritizing of our own diet, Walter Young's blithe dismissal of the agrarian radicals' for their characterization of "popsicles, processed cheese and packaged breakfast cereals" as evidence of capitalism's corruption, offers an embarrassingly revealing insight into the relative durability and profundity of the alternative perspectives at issue. [1]

This is not to suggest that the agrarian radicals possessed some unique and universal insight into the roots of bureaucratic and technologic domination. We have already seen that in the case of one the most emancipatory visions of agrarian radicalism, that expressed by E.A. Partridge, a fetish for expertise, standardization and science, threatened the collapse of his vision into a suffocating technocracy. But the perspective that they advanced, with its emphasis on democracy and a highly evolved citizenship, provided the means to transcend hierarchy and heteronomy -even that implicit in the concrete versions of their own formulations.

This is the enduring legacy of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy and their notion of political culture as a school of citizenship. But the most significant aspect of the lacuna that has plagued inherited scholarship has not been this neglect of the agrarian radicals' potentially unique perspective on the dominant society, nor even the blindness to their innovative perspective on how to transform that society. Even more fundamental has been the simple neglect of the agrarian radicals subjective worthiness.

The agrarian radicals (inter-)subjectivity in both its theoretical articulations and practical manifestations has been treated as an unworthy source of insight and an irrelevant source of agency. (Only David Laycock has begun to break this pattern.) Hence, it became inevitable that whatever original contributions they may have had to offer would be lost to the hegemonic scholarly outlook. As must be evident by now, what has been lost has been much more that an important moment in history. It has been an outlook on human potential that is diametrically at odds with the bureaucratic sensibility reigning since the post-depression period that saw the consolidation of the inherited scholarship.

That outlook had a simple, if infrequently explicitly stated, basis. (Inter-)subjectivity does matter, can achieve autonomy, and hence can transform the world. When E.A. Partridge, Fred Green, R.C. Henders, Henry Wise Wood, William Irvine, W.C. Good, spoke about the potential of an elevated citizenship - nurtured within the participatory, interpersonal local forums of an agrarian political culture - qualitatively changing the rigor of personality, the morale of community and the direction of national history, this was the deeply radical message they were communicating.

The agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy was more than just an experiment in forms of government, or a dramatic moment in the history of popular movements. A study of the political culture that underpinned that adventure is only, in a narrow historiographic sense, an examination of the means, merits and mishaps of the school of citizenship thesis. In a broader, philosophic sense, it is a case study of a vision of human autonomy, and the social conditions and the personal character with which it was bound.

Grasping this autonomist character of the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy requires approaching their history from a perspective radically different than the heteronomist one characterizing the inherited scholarship. The emergent autonomist perspective, in political philosophy and the philosophies of nature and history, that could only be speculated upon in the philosophical excursus, indicates the possibility of such an approach. A major, long-term, interdisciplinary study of the natural and social history of autonomy, synthesizing work in paleobiology, applied ecology, anthropology, psychology, psychoanalysis, ontology, political philosophy and nature philosophy - to mention only the most obvious - must be undertaken to fulfill the ultimate potential of the conclusions evoked herein. It is in this direction that points the paths of future research arising from this thesis.

The importance of establishing an intellectual history of autonomism, and constructing an autonomist paradigm, does not lie solely in the value of being better able to appreciate the potentials and contributions of popular social and historical movements. Important as this is, there is another point of great significance at issue here. It is in probing and expanding our understanding of the nature and history of autonomy that we will be better able to recognize the relevance of autonomist ideas, like those of the agrarian radicals, in their contribution to a richer communications scholarship.

This is finally evident when the emergent autonomist perspective is fleshed out of the thought of the central figure in the distinctly Canadian contribution to communiations history and theory. It is on this appropriate note that this study comes to a close, with an epilogue on autonomy and communications, that renders explicit the place of the agrarian radical adventure in democracy in communications scholarship.

Notes

[1] Incidently, Murray Bookchin, under a pseudonym, published a seminal study of this self-destruction of our food source six years prior to the publication of Young's book: Lewis Herber, *Our Synthetic Environment* (New York: Alfred A. Knopt, 1963.)

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Epilogue

Autonomy and Communications; Or, Taking Innis Seriously

In the preface to this thesis I elaborated a number of ways that what was to follow could be recognized as a legitimate study in communications. A central notion there was the inherently communicative character of democracy once understood in its genuine sense, detached from the distinctly discommunicative social institution of parliamentarianism. While I still stand by that position, during the course of the above examination it has become evident that to pursue the notion of democracy, one can not settle with this notion, and must move on to a vision of autonomy. Democracy is merely one of the forms of autonomy. Thus, an adventure in democracy - if the word is used seriously, not as a euphemism - is necessarily, whether the participants are conscious of it or nor, also an adventure in autonomy.

The autonomist perspective speculated upon in a previous chapter, suggests that autonomy, like democracy, is finally about the way that subjects interact with each other, and this is necessarily about communication. But if we reflect upon what has been learned about the agrarian radicals, there is also a manner in which their lessons can be incorporateed into one of the canonal *oeuvres* in communications history and theory. In the process, the memory of their political culture is done justice, rendering it not a historical relic, but a source of scholarly insight, as well as political inspiration.

Communications studies, as a formal discipline - including the traditions of radical scholarship associated to it - consolidated in the aftermath of the Second World War, converging from a variety of different sources. And yet, despite their obvious differences, there was a strikingly common concern - not surprising in light of the timing: how could the ghastly nightmare of this war have been possible? Those initially beating the path in two of the most influential sources of communications studies, American sociology and German philosophy, took this dilemma as their more or less explicit starting point. Another influential source of a communications discipline, British cultural studies, did not set out the problematic so explicitly - but its fundamental concern with collectivities, symbolism and consciousness indicated a common constellation of concerns.

However, there has been another important source of communications studies - not as influential outside Canada as it deserves to be - that can also be understood as wrestling with these same issues. This source is Canadian economic history, and its communicational-turn is almost solely represented in the person of Harold Innis. The heteronomism of Innis' economic history of Canada, briefly discussed in part three, might suggest that the solutions he would have posed to these issues would be of little interest to the perspective sketched out here in part four. The tragedy of the war, though, seems to have caused in Innis not only a reconsideration of the historical object - from Canadian economic history to universal communications history - but also a reconsideration of the subjective potential infusing that object. There are instances to be cited in Innis' texts on communications that imply a reoriented perspective on the capacity for historic human autonomy.[1] But more central than any of these gleanings is the very thrust of this work in the last years of his life. Innis' incessant plea for time was indubitably a plea for human autonomy.

Our intentional action, and that alone, could turn the tide of a civilization spatially obsessed to the brink of self-destruction. Innis never proposed that some new technic of communication was to dialectically arise and deliver us to the salvation of communicational balance. And if he had believed this his relentless and urgent plea, continuously reiterated in his final years, would have been pointless. The plea itself only had meaning if Innis presumed that the object of his plea was capable of acting in response to it as autonomous subjects.

And in an even deeper sense, the thought to preserve time was by necessity the initial moment in that preservation. To think in terms of temporal preservation was the first step in actually preserving. But to so think, in the face of the awesome spatial bias of Western civilization, required a hardly neglible autonomy from the prevailing crisis. Thus, not only did Innis' plea presume the capacity for autonomy, but the structure of his arguments required autonomy as the solution to its central problematic. The ghastly events of the war were part of a larger process which far from being disrupted by the war, were perhaps accelerated by it. Though he does not use the term - at least not in this context - an examination of Innis' reflections reveal that the solution he posed for this frightful process destroying Western civilization was essentially what has been discussed above as an autonomous society.

Innis discussed the modern crisis, and universal communications history, in terms of space and time. Sometimes these terms were meant to be taken literally, on other occasions they served as metaphors. On a simple level, and one that tends to lead extrapolations from Innis' thought into the direction of economic determinism, it could be said that he argued for a view of all communication media as directing society toward either temporal or spatial biases. Spatial bias was reflected in territorial expansion of commerce and administration. Temporal bias was reflected in historical durability of culture and community. Spatial bias entailed an outward gaze that became all-consuming at the expense of self-insight. Temporal bias entailed an inward gaze that became parochial at the expense of fecundity. One brought exhaustion, the other stagnation. Both eventually led to self-destruction. In the words of one of Innis' more cynical moments, "Each civilization has its own methods of suicide."

As noted above, though, Innis could not have been as fatalistic as this statement suggests because the entire project of his intellectual life, in the last years, was a plea for time: for the need to pay attention to the concerns of temporal awareness as reflected in efforts to ensure cultural durability as a means to offset the obsessive spatial bias that had become the hallmark of the modern age. Only by raising consciousness about the importance of temporal awareness could the modern world hope to achieve the kind of balance necessary for a civilization to thrive. It was this balance between temporal and spatial concerns that was essential in Innis' mind.

For him, though, the modern age of Western civilization was on the brink of disaster characterized by militarism and industrialism. The United States, and other militarist states, destroyed cultural durability in foreign lands through their aggressive imperialism:

> Lack of interest in problems of duration in Western civilization suggests that the bias of paper and writing has persisted in a concern with space. The state has been interested in the enlargement of territories and the imposition of cultural uniformity on its peoples, and, losing touch with the problems of

> time, has been willing to engage in wars to carry out immediate objectives. [2]

Meanwhile, on their own domestic fronts, the same states destroy cultural durability - hence the potential for balance - through engendering the fragmentation of daily life in keeping with the special demands of industrialism:

> The concern with specialization and excess, making more and better mousetraps, precludes the possibility of understanding a preceding civilization concerned with balance and proportion. Industrialism implies technology and the cutting of time into precise fragments suited to the needs of the engineer and the accountant. The inability to escape the demands of industrialism on time weakens the possibility of an appraisal of limitations of space. Constant changes in technology particularly at they affect communication, a crucial factor in determining cultural values...increase the difficulties of recognizing balance let alone achieving it. [3]

Innis found it only slightly more outrageous that this erosion of temporal awareness had been carried out under the banner of slogans and assumptions that pretended to protect precisely what they were destroying. The freedom of speech doctrines and tradition had fueled the building up of massive newspaper chains and entrenched, what Innis called, their monopoly of knowledge. But challenging these self-serving myths required the very cultural ground that was all but eliminated by such monopolies. Hence the critic's position was a precarious one at best:

> We are all familiar with the claims of the printing industry to the effect that it has ushered in a new superior civilization. No other civilization, we are told, has enjoyed our advantages. Democracy, education, progress, individualism, and other blessed words describe our new heaven. At this point the water becomes swift

> and we are in grave danger of being swept off our feet by the phenomenon we are describing. We are in danger on the one hand of losing our objectivity and on the other hand of being placed under arrest.[4]

As a dedicated scholar and academic Innis was particularly aware of, and concerned about, the impact of this historic process upon the university. The very institution that should stand as the bulwark against the bias of space was in serious danger of becoming a complaisant accomplice with its most destructive facet:

> We are compelled to recognize the significance of mechanized knowledge as a source of power and its subjection to the demands of force through the instrument of the state. The universities are in danger of becoming a branch of the military arm. Universities in the British Commonwealth must appreciate the implications of mechanized knowledge and attack in a determined fashion the problems created by a neglect of the position of culture in Western civilization.[5]

This then was Innis' vision of the crisis facing the modern age: mechanization of knowledge and fragmentation of daily life ensuing from the spatial bias of industrialist and militarist societies. And to repeat, he saw the solution lying in the balance that only could be achieved with attention to the stability and self-awareness ensuing from a compensatory temporal bias. It is true that in his universal communications history texts Innis discusses a number of temporally biased communications media. Most of these are archaic; to suggest their introduction today would seem absurd. Indeed, for the modern age - the phase Innis explicitly discussed least, but whose crisis seems clearly at the root of his concern - he did not really have a technology to recommend. Occasionally, there is the impression that he believed radio might fill this role. But this is hardly a consistent position, and in any case applying his own method to the medium quickly reveals the tenuousness of this hope. [6] Perhaps in this the heteronomist is still grasping at straws.

James Carey, possibly the most outstanding Innisian scholar, both for his innovativeness and prolificacy, in his most important treatment of Innis' work, has made an observation on this aspect of his thought that is of particular interest in light of the ends to which I am pursuing this enquiry. He observes: "While [Innis] speaks of clay, stone, parchment and the oral tradition as time binding, the only effective exposition he presents is in the case of the latter...he recognized that it is only through oral communication that the demands of time and democracy can be met." [7] Shortly thereafter Carey elaborates this notion at greater length:

> Print and electronics were *biased* toward supporting one type of civilization: a power house society dedicated to wealth, power and productivity, to technical perfection and ethical nihilism. No amount of rhetorical varnish would reverse this pattern; only the work of politics and the day to day attempt to maintain another and contradictory pattern of life, thought, and scholarship. As Innis pointed out, the demise of culture could be dispelled only by a deliberate cutting down of the influence of modern technics and cultivation of the realms of art, ethics, and politics. He identified the oral tradition with its emphasis on dialogue, dialectics, ethics, and metaphysics as the countervailing force to modern technics. [8]

All that Carey says is valid. One could cite, for instance, a reflection from the final paragraphs of Innis' one sustained monograph on universal communications history: "Mass production and standardization are the enemies of the West. The limitations of mechanization of the printed and the spoken word must be emphazied and determined efforts to recapture the vitality of the oral tradition must be made." [9] But this does not say enough. The implications of Innis' extolling of the oral tradition go beyond what Carey implies, and meet up with the concerns that animates both Bookchin's and Castoriadis' exploration of ancient Greek philosophy and democracy. And while Innis' exploration of what he calls the oral tradition is centred on the example of ancient Greece there is no ambiguity about the fact that he perceives its virtues as constituting the prescription required to heal the crisis of the modern world. One of these virtues is its capacity to facilitate effective and affective intersubjectivity, a point not to be taken lightly if we recall the previous psychoanalytic discussions of the conditions for autonomy in the work of Castoriadis and Stephen Mitchell:

> Reading is quicker than listening and concentrated individual thought than verbal exposition and counter-exposition of arguments. The printing press and the radio address the world instead of the individual. The oral dialectic is overwhelmingly significant where the subject-matter is human action and feeling, and it is important in the discovery of new truth but of very little value in disseminating it. The oral discussion inherently involves personal contact and a consideration of the feelings of others, and it is in sharp contrast with the cruelty of mechanized communication and the tendencies which we have come to note in the modern world. [10]

But the quality of this intersubjectivity was not just a matter of compensatory aesthetics - a rebellious art for art's sake - as one might gather from Carey's remarks. Rather, in his observations on the Greeks' elaboration of the oral tradition, it was evident that Innis saw this intersubjectivity engendered by oral discussion as being the basis for institutions of an autonomous society. This is reflected in his concluding remarks on the Greek accomplishment, when he identified their unique achievement of balance with the *polis* itself. After all, it was precisely the proportions of the *polis* that made possible Greek democracy, and hence its autonomous society: "They drove a wedge between the political empire concept with its emphasis on space and the ecclesiastical empire concept with its emphasis on time and reduced them to the rational proportions of the city-state." [11] More explicitly, in discussing the reforms of Solon that helped usher in Athenian democracy, Innis equates the oral tradition to the very social orientation that Castoriadis - inspired by the same historical experience - identifies above as the permanent self-instituting of society: "The power of the oral tradition was reflected in the institution of [political] machinery designed to permit continuous adjustment." [12]

In fact, Innis frequently cites the flexibility or elasticity of the oral tradition as providing the freedom from dogma or capacity for continuous adjustment that characterizes the social institution of self-instituting society.[13] Such social autonomy involved the capacity to introduce sweeping and sudden changes into the political course of the society. But this capacity was dependent upon the intersubjective, more broadly, the cultural maturity of the society - a maturity, as has been seen, dependent upon the quality of the oral tradition. In the absence of such maturity and tradition a society was inclined to spatial bias, and - though Innis does not use the term - quite evidently when seen in this light, heteronomy:

> In nations without cultural maturity...drastic changes become unthinkable and the statute books become cluttered with constitutional amendments and legislation. The totalitarian state or the welfare state with rigid constitutions is compelled to resort to endless administrative activity. [14]

When the notion of a constitution is understood this way, as the *raison d'être* of bureaucratic domination, we can better grasp Innis' concern about writing and the printing press as spatially biased media. As he offhandedly remarked in one context: "Reading assumed submission to authority." [15] It is the reification of authority in the rigidity of the written/printed that undermines the forces of social autonomy. It is not surprising that these forms of communication are biased toward militarism, industrialism and technocracy. And more fundamentally, when Innis speaks of a spatial bias in the modern world, we can now also recognize implied thereby a bias to heteronomy. For the same form that could offset the spatial bias of writing/printing (and, following Carey, also electronic media), was also the form that entailed the effective and affective intersubjectivity and cultural maturity that could displace heteronomy with the social institutions of autonomy: i.e., the tradition of oral discourse.

Hence, the answer to Innis' plea for time did not reside in some counter-cultural innovation in the application of communications media, nor certainly not in some mystically dialectical development by the state or corporate capitalism of an unpredictably emancipatory technology. Rather, Innis placed his hopes, meagre though they were, and whatever one may think of them, on the capacity for people to take autonomous action to revive the oral tradition and its autonomist sensibility through the elaboration of communities and cultures of intersubjective discourse. This alone could provide the self-conscious self-determination that might build the institutions of an autonomous society and retrieve for Western civilization the balance that might save it from its utter destruction. [16]

If we take Innis seriously, his plea for time is not answered by technophilic bravado nor bold bureaucratic initiative. What does answer Innis' plea for time is precisely the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy and the political culture that sustained it - the very social movement that he had so matter-of-factly dismissed to the margins of relevance amid his heteronomous history of Canada. Indeed, in a more general vein, the very heteronomist history Innis elaborated in his staples thesis, along with the Morton's and Macpherson's he so influenced, in obscuring our understanding and obstructing our memory of that adventure in democracy, considerably contributed to the very desperation that infused his plea for time by the post-war period.

Innis' hope to spare the university from the spatial bias and render it a bulwark in support of temporal durability seems modest indeed when compared to the agrarian radicals' vision of social transformation. If Innis would settle for carving out a niche from public life to safe-guard the university as a sphere of discursive and intersubjective activity, the agrarian radicals sought no less than to transform public life itself into a school of citizenship. And it was amid this school of citizenship that the discursive and intersubjective competence and confidence of a genuine democracy, and an autonomous society, could be nurtured. And just as, for Innis, the act to preserve time was by necessity the initial moment in time's preservation, so in still more profound a way, for the agrarian radicals the exercise of the democracy and autonomy, that inherently addressed Innis' concern for preservation, was the essential moment in their own realization and perpetuation.

It can hardly be denied that Innis hurt his own cause in his easy use of the term technology. The fragmented nature of his prose encouraged the snipping of catchy one-liners out of his texts. Frequently, the term technology would be prominently placed in those one-liners. Hence, it has been all too easy for the Marshall McLuhans, Barrington Nevitts and Arthur Krokers to read him as the prophet of technology.

But technology, like psychology, is a derivative of ancient Greek terms. It means reasoning about *techné* - or, the applied arts. In his pleas for time, Innis rarely had anything to say about the applied arts - of, say, architecture, town planning, local government, or cooperative management - that would have facilitated the recovery of the oral tradition in the modern age. What Innis discussed amid his plea for time was the necessity and possibility of nurturing human affinity, affectivity and meaningfulness. His concern for the oral tradition was in its capacity for cultivating a richer appreciation of human self-worth, for ourselves and for others, that could heal us from the cold instrumentalities dominant in an age where ethics were subordinated to the requisites of the applied arts.

For the ancient Greeks, psychology was reasoning about the psyche - or the soul: reasoning about the depth of the human condition. It was a concern with the relevance to, and hope for, the human soul that informed Innis' plea for time in his communications scholarship. If Innis' texts are not treated as reservoirs for easy one-liners, but used to reflect upon the substance of his arguments, it becomes clear that Innis' plea could not be answered by a technology, but only by a psychology of communication. And it is only when those communications scholars who imagine themselves building on the Innisian legacy break their attachment to communications technology, and acknowledge the superceding importance of communications psychology (genuinely so, not crudely considered as techniques of psychological manipulation; superceding because, as Innis' work demonstrated, the most significant effect of the applied arts is upon the human soul) - only then can the meaning of Innis' contribution to communications scholarship, and the weighty questions it began with, be fully understood. And only then can the relevance of the agrarian radicals' adventure in democracy to his contribution be appreciated.

Innis implored us to recover a classical citizenship. The agrarian radicals helped show how we might do so. The crisis articulated by Innis, in the forty years since, has reached staggering proportions, threatening our very existence as a species. So, the manner in which the agrarian radicals addressed that crisis demands our attention with unparalleled urgency. It is upon this ravaged terrain that communications scholarship first established itself. And it is to here it must return, with greater wisdom, if it is to be a resource for emancipation, rather than a description of apocalypse.

Notes

[1] See for instance, his discussion of the human spirit breaking through monopolies of knowledge, or the reciprocity of determinism between human intent and technic: Harold Innis, *Empire and Communications* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972 [1950]) p. 117; and his, *The Bias of Communications* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951,) p. xvii, respectively.

[2] Innis, *Bias*...p. 76.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 140.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 139.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 195.

[6] For a couple examples of Innis' suggesting that radio might be temporally biased: *Bias*...p.60; and *Empire*...p. 170. A number of scholars have refuted this curious lapse in the consistency of Innis' theoretical application. For one example: Daniel Czitrom, *Media and the American Mind: From Morse to McLuhan* (Chapel Hill, Calif.: 1982,) pp. 159-60.

[7] James W. Carey, "Canadian Communications Theory: Extensions and Interpretations of Harold Innis," *Studies in Canadian Communications,* (eds.) Gertrude Joch Robinson and Donald F. Theall (Montreal: Graduate Program in Communications, McGill University, 1975,) p. 51.

[8] *Ibid.* p. 53.

[9] Innis, *Empire*...pp. 169-70.

[10] Innis, *Bias*...p. 191.

[11] Innis, *Empire*...p. 84.

[12] *Ibid.* p. 69.

[13] *Ibid.* pp. 57, 66, Innis, *Bias*...pp. 7, 42, 68.

[14] Innis, *Bias*...p. 130.

[15] *Ibid.* p. 18.

[16] And it is worth adding that his increasing concern about the atomic bomb suggests that even in the late 1940s and early 1950s Innis realized that it was perhaps more than the destruction of just Western civilization that was at issue. "The average reader has been impressed by the miraculous, and the high priests of science, or perhaps it would be fair to say the psuedo-priests of science, have been extremely effective in developing all sorts of fantastic things, with great emphasis, of course, on the atomic bomb. I hoped to get through this paper without mentioning the atomic bomb, but found it impossible": Innis, *Bias*...p. 193.

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