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SYMBOLS IN POLITICS: SOME ASPECTS OF THE ROLE OF SYMBOLS IN DEFINING POLITICAL IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE OCTOBER 1970 CRISIS IN CANADA

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The symbolizing capacity is a mode of human expression which is inherent to man's nature and which corresponds to his need for interpreting himself and his experiences. As a political animal, man symbolizes both the various dimensions of political life, and his role within it. However, many aspects of his self-definition as a political creature, and of the larger political context surrounding him remain enigmatic, and cannot be fully and adequately defined through rational, analytical means. Political symbols reflect and express this complexity and enigma: they are the conceptual tools whereby man attempts to interpret political experience, to give it meaning, and to define his political self.

This study discusses political symbols and their role, with specific reference to the October 1970 political crisis in Canada. More particularly, the Front de Libération du Québec's symbols are examined as constituting an important element of that crisis, and as conceptual instruments for defining a political identity.

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PREFACE

The present study is the result of this writer's reflections on what is now commonly referred to as the October 1970 crisis in Canada. Naturally, and along with many others, some of these ruminations dealt with the motives of those who precipitated the crisis, the Front de Libération du Québec (F.L.Q.). What prompts the extreme and desparate measures, such as two political kidnappings and one killing, taken by this group in a relatively affluent part of the world, where diversified political organization and forms of expression, as in citizens' committees, are developing, where the university population is growing rapidly, where military or other dictatorships and all the overt forms of repression which these entail, are non-existent? But, perhaps, this was not a useful or instructive approach, for it invited clichéd retorts about marginality, about rapid change and rising expectations which are not or cannot be immediately fulfilled. However, the crisis aroused various responses which did not correspond with these seemingly facile answers. Another approach was required.

Two political persons had been kidnapped: a civil servant representing Great Britain, and a Quebec provincial French Canadian cabinet minister. On the twelfth day following the first kidnapping, the state responded by invoking special emergency powers, usually

reserved for war-time circumstances. Only after this response was the French Canadian hostage killed. It is true that the crisis was a climax of seven years of increasingly destructive bombings carried out by the Front. Nevertheless, the government's extreme measures seemed to this writer to be incommensurate with the situation in October, despite the acknowledged gravity of two kidnappings and one killing. Had the government been at least willing to provide the Canadian population with even an approximate official figure of the actual number of terrorists, or with an outline of a projected attack of considerable scope as reasons for such measures, perhaps such a precedent, in a country with a predominantly common law tradition and approach, might have seemed credible, realistic and acceptable. After all, a purely "quantitative" revelation about the group or even information as to its tactical plans, could in no way be construed as endangering the security of the state: at the most, it might have increased existing fears and uncertainties. In fact, aside from vague and mostly impressionistic generalizations, the government either could not (for lack of knowledge) or would not, inform the citizens as to the veritable reasons for the exceptional measures, even after these had been declared and implemented. In fact, the impressionistic, vague portrait of the "apprehended insurrection" which it presented, might have been painted by a Riopelle. The right to information in a democracy during a crisis becomes crucial, for a modern, enlightened citizenry is conditioned to a flow of information and needs to know.

The "object lesson" justification is hardly acceptable, if we glance, even quickly, at the scope and nature of urban violence in the United States. Through its response, the Canadian government demonstrated a lack of trust and even a measure of disregard and disrespect for existing laws, and law-enforcement agencies. Paradoxically, this is comparable, although different in terms of values and goals, to the distrust, and even the rejection of existing political institutions among a sector of the youth, which expresses this attitude either by "dropping out", or by opting for radical change as in the case of the Front de Libération du Québec. Generally speaking, so-called "banana republics", which are either governed by dictatorships, or are in the early experimental stages of democracy, usually respond to like situations with force. The Canadian government also deployed a type of force in the forms of the violation of privacy through searches without warrants, of arresting without warrants, of implementing preventive detention without prompt access to legal counsel, and without an expedient appearance before a magistrate. In this way, it fell into the radical dissenters' well-known portrait of liberal democracies' veiled, but undeniably undemocratic practices; the view that these systems cannot apply the theories upon which they are founded.

It occurred to this writer that this unprecedented move by the Canadian government could be viewed as involving more than the

above-mentioned issues and, perhaps, more than ideology. The assertion of the raison d'état, of the state as the repository of ultimate authority and power, was also involved in its momentous decision and, together with this, a demonstrative affirmation of its role of representative spokesman for all Canadians, including French Canadians. To this writer, such a possibility implied another; namely, that the Front could have been perceived, consciously or otherwise, as a rival spokesman, specifically for French Canadians and that, therefore, the danger it represented, was to be found at least as much in what it said, and the way it did this, as in what it did during the crisis. This writer noted, along with many other observers of the situation, that the reaction among a significant portion of the French Canadians in Quebec - be they taxi drivers, teachers, grocers, students - to the Front's manifesto, in particular, was that it generally drew a realistic portrait of many French Canadians, that parts of it corresponded to unspoken thoughts, but that this agreement did not necessarily entail agreement with the group's methods, which up to then had involved bombings and kidnappings. This type of assessment by some French Canadians was heard in radio programmes, in group conversations and was read in magazines and newspapers. In some of its messages, but in the manifesto particularly, the F.L.Q. had succeeded in conveying a present, and a possible, future self-definition to its significant and principal audience, the French Canadian people. Although the question of

national identity has a long history in Quebec, moments of crisis seem to underline it. One example can be found in the heated nationalist debate which was part of the conscription crisis during World War II. This time, through the psychologically powerful vehicle of symbolic expression mass-communicated through the information media, national identity was conveyed as part of a counter myth, as part of a political perspective which redefines a history and its people. Contemporary Western liberal democracies rarely produce clear self-definitions with which masses can directly identify. President Kennedy's "new frontier" was a vague aspirational symbol, "the American way of life" symbolizes a life-style and values for the supporter of the war in Vietnam which is different from what it means for the American who opposes it. In Quebec, where the issue of collective self-definition was deemed burning enough to suscitate the formation of a costly Royal Commission of Enquiry to study the problem in the early Sixties, where a nationalist, separatist or secessionist political party acquired nearly one qurter of the provincial vote the first time it participated in a provincial election; a clear self-definition which entails a new historical perspective and political demands, can conceivably be deemed as dangerous as the political kidnappings and assassination, which successfully communicated that definition to the local population, as well as to many parts of the world. What the Front de Libération du Québec itself symbolized, and what it communicated through symbols could not have been irrelevant

to invoking exceptional emergency measures before the killing of one of the hostages. The "meaning" elements of the crisis became the more fascinating dimension of that political situation for this writer, more than the concrete strategy of either government or of the oppositional group involved. The nature and role of symbols in politics and in the F.L.Q.'s messages during the crisis became the focal point of interest which this study explores, for they can and do reach into those regions of political life which are not always accessible to mere rational analysis or scientific enquiry alone.

These are the principal elements of reflection which form the background to this thesis. Its preparation and completion would not have been possible without the kind advice and assistance of:: Professors Daniel Latouche (McGill University), Yvan Simonis (Université de Montréal), Vito Ahtik (Université du Québec, Montreal). The facilities offered by the French Canada Studies Programme (McGill University) were also essential and are appreciated. Special thanks must go to Professors Charles Taylor and Janice Stein (McGill University) for their invaluable scholarly guidance, and their patience.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The purpose of this study is to examine some of those elements in politics which are beyond the realm of predominantly rational and empirical mechanisms and functions. While political life is no exception to other spheres of human activity in that it reflects and contains all aspects of the human personality, the relatively rational and the empirical dimensions of political behaviour, seem, until fairly recent times, to have been the major preoccupation of analysts.

In the past few decades, new factors have entered into political experience, factors which may have contributed to a new approach to the human personality in the political context. One of these is certainly due to technology and the fact that for the first time in human history, man is capable of total destruction and self-destruction. The Second World War, the application of diverse and opposed ideologies seem to have shaken the foundations of former assumptions about political conduct and political structures. In philosophy, "The Age of Reason" was not only questioned but surpassed. Science and the Marxist secular faith in history and in man as a conscious, rational instrument for the making of his own destiny, were challenged as being inadequate in that they overlooked the complexity of human nature:

> Existential philosophy, as a revolt against such oversimplification, attempts to grasp the image of the whole man, even where this involves bringing to consciousness all that is dark and questionable in his existence.[1]

Political thinking had to align itself with this new awareness.

It is in this perspective that the present study was undertaken. The October 1970 crisis in Canada revealed certain dimensions of political life which, according to our research, have not thus far been elaborately explored. We found that symbolic expression is one channel through which these can be explored. Our readings on symbols in politics indicated a relative paucity of existing material in this area when compared to other objects of study in political theory. While anthropology, for example, explores symbolic expression in all its various forms, for what it can reveal about the culture, religion, beliefs and the general world view of different peoples, political science has, with a few exceptions, largely ignored this vast, potential source of additional knowledge about political life.

Our general approach has been: to outline some characteristics of symbolic expression, to situate these within the political context

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[1]William Barrett, Anchor Books, Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1958), p. 22.

through some of the major political thinkers who have been preoccupied with the subject, and to thereafter examine the October 1970 crisis in Canada in terms of some of its symbolic dimensions. Our most gratifying finding, and one which could point to further study of the implications of symbolic expression in politics, has been that symbols expose part of the way men define and situate themselves within the political arena, just as in religion they disclose some aspects of the way men relate to the deity(ies) and to the supernatural order of the universe dictated by religious myths and belief systems.

CHAPTER ONE

THE NATURE OF SYMBOLS: SOME CHARACTERISTICS

Symbols have been an important subject of discussion in as diverse fields as literature and anthropology, philosophy and archaeology. So vast is the subject that it is involved in all of man's intellectual enterprises:

> Man has discovered a new mode of expression: symbolic expression. This is the common denominator in all his cultural activities: in myth and poetry, in language, in art, in religion, and in science.[1]

But symbols are more than one of man's prime expressive tools in his constant search for the definition of himself, for the meaning of his existence and all that surrounds him. As Ernst Cassirer points out, symbolization is part of the human essence: man is more than a political, rational animal; he is also an "animale symbolicum".[2] As much as, and in some instances more than reasoning, symbolizing means not only codifying and synthesizing any or several experiences, but going beyond them. What Hamlet symbolizes can hardly be fully and adequately explained through rational analysis, although there have been numerous attempts to do so. This is because in addition to our rational understanding of the character, what he symbolizes evokes our emotions, our memory, our imagination, our

dreams; all of which may transport us to realms which may be too vast and complex to be transformed into logical or coherent forms. Jung implies the hidden dimension of symbols when he states that they involve the unconscious and the irrational elements of the mind:

> ... a word or an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. It has a wider 'unconscious' aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. Nor can one hope to define or explain it. As the mind explores the symbol, it is lead to ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason.[3]

The difficulties of studying even limited aspects of the subject - as is the case in this paper - are more than apparent if we consider Jung's foregoing statement. Taking this into account, we will nevertheless proceed with what out readings have suggested to be some of the general characteristics.

Using and understanding symbolic expression involves what can be viewed as a "voyage of the mind", away from the immediacy of sensory experience, and beyond the various realms which are determined by fixed laws:

> Without symbolism the life of man would be like that of the prisoners in the cave of Plato's famous simile. Man's life would be confined within the limits of his biological needs and his practical interests; it could find no access to the 'ideal world' which is opened to him from different sides by religion, art, philosophy, science.[4]

Symbolizing involves abstracting from experience, but it also involves imposing abstraction upon experience. This means essentially that there is a constant interplay between the mind, the imagination and all those phenomena which are external to the human spirit. It also means that man as a self-defining creature can use his symbolizing capacity to go beyond the constraints and limits of both his physical nature and his deterministic, material environment:

> ... man frees himself from being 'stimulus bound' by his capacity for synthesizing, symbolizing, and exploring. This permits him to rebel against the absurdity of atrophying cultures, empty forms, and the repressive banality of physical coercion, and permits him to create new meaning and renew himself and his environment.[5]

Symbols of freedom and justice have sustained men surrounded by injustices and oppression, and at certain times they have driven men to revolt. Czarist Russia produced men who were inspired enough by the symbols from which they drew their vision of the future, to radically change their society. Symbols can express the dialectical elements of existence, so that a man in fetters can still be free, so to speak. One writer points this out by referring to Jean-Paul Sartre's startling remark: "We were never more free than under the Nazis."[6] Instead of being trapped by his environment, man generates alternatives and meaning from his value system. Among the resources of his <u>vie intérieure</u> there are symbols which are not only a solace,

but also a call to action, to change. Repression may prompt not merely to think of freedom, but to do everything to achieve it.

As a part of man's essence, symbolization becomes the necessary function of the mind for the purposes of confronting, mentally reorganizing, and even of appropriating reality so that it can acquire a place within his value framework, so that it will be more meaningful to him:

> No longer in a merely physical universe, man lives in a symbolic universe. Language, myth, art, and religion are parts of this universe .... No longer can man confront reality immediately; he cannot see it, as it were, face to face. Physical reality seems to recede in proportion as man's symbolic activity advances. Instead of dealing with things themselves man is in a sense constantly conversing with himself. He has so enveloped himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical symbols or religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except by the interposition of this artificial medium.[7]

Man does not confront the world naked and unequipped: in addition to his senses, he possesses the instruments and creations of his mind which includes symbolic expression. That form of expression does not only facilitate self-definition, but also an apprehension of the self-definition of others. It will enable him to communicate who he is and to become aware of and/or comprehend who others are. Through symbolic expression, society as a whole, and in its various parts become at least conceptually accessible to man,

> Le symbolisme sera la clef des représentations de la société pour les individus, ... Les symboles désigneront les groupes partiels et les rendront jusqu'à un certain point transparents pour eux-mêmes et pour les autres dans la totalité sociale. Ces symboles seront équivoques et ambigus. Ils seront éclatants, et pourtant traduiront et diront les aspirations secrètes de chaque groupe. Ils uniront chaque groupe contre les autres, et cependant signifieront pour les autres l'existence et la volonté de chaque groupement partiel. Ils seront nouveaux, mais greffés sur d'anciens symbolismes, et même sur de vieux mythes, véhiculés par l'art antérieur ou par la religion. Ils viendront de la société et de l'histoire et ne perdront leur sens que dans et par l'actuel...[8]

Symbolization is not only a component of the essence of man in general, but also of social man. It is part of his self-definition in relation to other men, and it helps him apprehend those external to, and different from, him. Georges Gurvitch sets out the social functions of symbols in the following manner:

> Nous entendons par symboles sociaux des signes qui n'expriment que partiellement les contenus signifiés et qui servent de médiateurs entre les contenus et les agents collectifs et individuels qui les formulent et auxquels ils s'adressent; cette médiation consiste à favoriser la participation mutuelle des agents aux contenus symbolisés et de ces contenus aux agents. Tout symbol social a deux pôles: d'une part, il est signe incomplet, une expression inadéquate; d'autre part, il est un instrument de participation .... On peut donc dire que la fonction symbolique est inséparable de l'homme pris collectivement ou individuellement, le Moi, le Nous, le groupe, la classe, la société étant tout d'abord des constructeurs inconscients ou conscients des symboles variés qui ont pour mission de maîtriser les obstacles ou au moins de les mieux manier.[9]

Symbols, according to Gurvitch, are inadequate and incomplete forms of expression. It is difficult to advance reasons for this, although he intimates that symbols express the type of complex realities which, in any case, are elusive to all forms of expression. Social symbols can only transmit "le tout indécomposable de la réalité sociale, les phénomènes sociaux totaux, dont ils sont des substituts partiels, incomplets, inadéquats."[10] What he does not mention is that although symbols may not convey the totality of any given phenomenon, they will at least suggest or indicate other, related meanings which they do not necessarily always embody. The symbolic resonance of Plato's cave does not necessarily cover the whole domain of the problem of human knowledge as related to values; yet, it points to the importance, the complexity, and even suggests a degree of inaccessibility in the multitude of facets inherent to this subject.

Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss offers another insight into the subject. According to him, symbols are the necessary points of definition and redefinition which ensure a type of "synchronization" between myth and action: "It is the effectiveness of symbols which guarantees the harmonious parallel development of myth and action."[11] Moreover, symbols induce the constant structural reorganization taking place both in the individual and in society. Using an analogy between shamanistic and psychoanalytic

cures, Lévi-Strauss defines the function of symbols:

> It would be a matter, either way, of stimulating an organic transformation which would consist essentially in a structural reorganization, by inducing the patient intensively to live out a myth - either received or created by him - whose structure would be, at the unconscious level analogous to the structure whose genesis is sought on the organic level. The effectiveness of symbols would consist precisely in this 'inductive property' by which formally homologous structures, built out of different materials at different levels of life - organic processes, unconscious mind, rational thought - are related to one another.[12]

Another dimension to this structural view of symbols is provided by Talcott Parsons. For him, symbols not only define, express, mediate and transform; they also provide vehicles of communication which form the framework of culture and outline the basis for human action:

> It is a fundamental property of action ... that it does not consist only of ad hoc 'responses' to particular situational 'stimuli' but that the actor develops a system of 'expectations' relative to the various objects of the situation ... various elements of the situation come to have special 'meanings' for ego as 'signs' or 'symbols' which become relevant to the organization of his expectation system. Especially where there is social interaction, signs and symbols acquire common meanings and serve as media of communication between actors. When symbolic systems have emerged we may speak of the beginnings of a 'culture' which becomes part of the action systems of the relevant actors.[13]

Symbols not only constitute an important part of human communication, but they are also instruments whereby man formulates his expectations.

The latter, in turn, serve to define and even motivate his actions.

Having described some aspects of symbolic expression and meaning, we have not yet exhausted this complex subject, nor do we propose to do so because of the necessarily limited scope of this paper. In order to further understand its functions, we must add a few remarks on what we consider to be the more banal features of this mode of expression. To begin with, a symbol can be anything: an object, a word, a story, an act, an event, anyone or some or even all of these. But, as Harold Lasswell notes, it must convey a special message: "A symbol is whatever has meaning or significance".[14] Necessarily, therefore, symbols operate within frameworks of values. By distinguishing them from signs, which are related but different phenomena, we can further elaborate on their characteristics. A sign has a one-to-one relation with that which it represents. It is usually a proxy for its referent, or a shorthand form of it. The plus sign in mathematics is one example. As we have suggested before, a symbol goes beyond or "over-flows" its referent(s).[15] While it can represent one particular phenomenon, similarly to a sign, it does more than just represent. The Christian cross represents the crucifixion of Christ, but it can mean a multitude of things: it can refer to redemption, to sacrifice, to suffering, to the very definition of "messiah", it can suggest a whole life-style, and it can symbolize the fate of all prophets and idealists in a conformist society. These

are only a few of the meanings embodied in this symbol. In terms of meaning, a sign is unidimensional and a symbol is multidimensional. Although a sign can affect behaviour - a green traffic light commands the driver to stop - that behaviour is usually limited. Usually, a sign operates as a specific command, with the limited alternative of doing or not doing a particular thing. Traffic and most mathematical signs are examples of this function. A symbol does not necessarily provoke action, although as Parsons points out above, action involves not only a response to stimuli, but also a pattern of expectations expressed through symbols. But symbols can influence behaviour in ways that signs cannot:

> In some areas of human concern the efficacy of a phenomenon as a symbol depends neither upon the limitation nor the comprehensiveness of its symbolic impact, but rather upon the poignancy with which it involves human aspirations, moods, or emotions.[16]

But more than the affective function, which suggests the internal appropriation of a symbols, they can suggest a whole way of life:

> Ils [les symboles] ne restent extérieurs ni à ceux qu'ils influencent, ni aux contenus affectifs qu'ils transportent .... Le symbole ne commande pas un comportement; inépuisable et proportionnel, il suggère une façon de vivre ....[17] [Brackets are mine.]

Perhaps the distinction between signs and symbols is best summarized by Ernst Cassirer, for whom signs are operators within the physical

world of being, whereas symbols are designators in the human world of meaning.[18]

More than being part of the essence, and therefore, of the existence of man, symbols can sustain or destroy nations. C.W. Mills provides an instance of this function by referring to an ancient Chinese political practice. The sovereign of a dynasty used to appoint a commission which acted as the watchdog over the various visual, auditory and other emblems, rituals, and ceremonies which characterized the regime. The purpose of this commission was to ensure that these "constituted a symbolic conformity with the genius" of the dynasty.[19] In other words, it supervised the content, the maintenance and the diffusion of that society's symbols. At the end of the Second World War, there was general agreement among the Allies that Nazi symbols had been and would be harmful to German society. Certainly, the power of symbols was recognized by them when they instituted the denazification programme which sought, among other things, to destroy all Nazi symbols. Radical changes in societies necessitate a change of symbols, because these reflect and express the vital processes of society, as well as sustaining them. Even a passing glance will reveal that, for example, the symbols of Czarist Russia gave way to different symbols introduced and used by the makers of the Revolution.

Having discussed some general features of symbols, we will now proceed to examine how and why they function in the political arena.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1]Ernst Cassirer, The Myth of the State (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 45.

[2]Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 26.

[3]Carl G. Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious" in Man and His Symbols, ed. by Carl G. Jung and M.L. von Franz (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1964), p. 4.

[4]Ibid., p. 41.

[5]Charles Hampden-Turner, Radical Man (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1970), p. 34.

[6]Ibid., p. 22.

[7]Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man, op.cit., p. 25.

[8]Henri Lefebvre, Introduction à la modernité (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1962), p. 291.

[9]Georges Gurvitch, "Problèmes de sociologie générale," in Traité de sociologie, ed. by Georges Gurvitch, Vol. I (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), pp. 164-165.

[10]Ibid., p. 166.

[11]Claude Levi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, trans. by Claire Jacobson and Brooke G. Schoepf (New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1963), p. 196.

[12]Ibid., p. 197.

[13]Talcott Parson, The Social System (New York: The Free Press, 1951), p. 5.

[14]Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 10.

[15]R. Barthes, "Eléments de la sémiologie," Communication, II, No. 4 (Paris, 1964), pp. 103-105.

[16]Simon Greenberg, "Symbols and Symbolism," in Symbols and Society, ed. by Lyman Bryson et al, Fourteenth Symposium of the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion (New York: The Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in Their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life, Inc., 1955), p. 544.

[17]Henri Lefebvre, op.cit., p. 274.

[18]Ernst Cassirer, An Essay of Man, op.cit., p. 32.

[19]C. Wright Mills, Power, Politics and People: The Collected Essays of C.W. Mills, ed. by Louis Horowitz (New York: Ballantine Books, 1963), p. 486.

CHAPTER TWO

ON POLITICAL SYMBOLS

Symbols are not new to politics. Certainly, political philosophy have abounded in them. Plato's Noble Lie, Aristotle's political animal, Hobbes' leviathan and Marx's proletariat are all part of symbolic expression in the history of political thinking. The mere names of certain men have in themselves become symbols of political ideas: Robespierre, Lincoln, Hitler, Gandhi, Mao. To these can be added a whole assortment of things and events which symbolize diverse aspects of political life. Yet the awareness of, and interest in political symbols as such seem to have at least partly resulted from the new twentieth century political instrument of propaganda as used in the mass media. One can, like Harold Lasswell, date this pre-occupation back to Marx's discussion of ideology;[1] but perhaps such phenomena as the effects of Hitler's radio speeches and Nazi visual symbols, provided a more urgent impetus for political analysts.

When examining symbols in politics, their multi-faceted nature can be problematic. In terms of content, they can and do represent and reflect any number of aspects of political life and thought. In terms of function, they cover possibilities which range from fulfilling certain psychological needs of the political community,

to inspiring men to political action, and to defining their political nature. Often, it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate content from function, for the latter determines the former. The complexity of this interrelation is illustrated in a study of Gandhi's political symbols:

> Their [Gandhian symbols'] ability to produce appropriate action depends on the fact that they have been voluntarily accepted, and secondly on the moral will and capacity to pursue stably and predictably the particular set of values represented by them. This amounts to saying that one cannot realize the values represented by a symbol without practising corresponding virtues - virtue being the moral will and capacity to pursue values in a stable and predictable manner. In this sense symbols are an aid to virtuous action, either individual or communal. Thus Gandhian symbols were means of acquiring Gandhian virtues and thereby of attaining the final object of Gandhian politics, namely the peaceful or non-violent pursuit of the common good ...[2] [Author's italics, my brackets]

The task of establishing the objective validity or truth of a symbol's referent, or of what a symbol represents is not within the scope of this study. In considering the meaning or content of political symbols, our aim is to "determine and specify the meanings which men in any given context embody in a given symbol".[3] To this distinction, a note must be added about the difficulty of circumscribing, defining and measuring the effects of symbolic expression on men. These may vary from emotional, psychological, and therefore

largely internal responses; to the adoption of verbal symbols into everyday vocabulary; to voting for an issue, person, or party, any or all of which may somehow involve symbols; to taking arms for or against those who symbolize desirable or undesirable values.

We now propose to outline four political thinkers' views on political symbols. We selected these, not only because the existing choice in this field is fairly limited, but also because each one has a different and distinct approach to the subject, all of which seem pertinent to our further, more specific exploration of political symbols.

Charles Merriam

Charles Merriam was perhaps the first political scientist to point to the importance of political symbols. As we shall elaborate below, for him, political power in modern times could not be sought or held without a keen awareness and a conscious use of political symbols. It is true that in the early Thirties when Merriam wrote Political Power,[4] political symbols were flourishing, mainly because of nascent ideologies. On the heels of the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the first Communist state in the world following the Bolshevik Revolution, Fascism and National Socialism were also emerging in the political arena. Hitler had formulated the verbal symbolism of Nazism in Mein Kampf during his

imprisonment following the 1923 "beer hall putsch". By 1933, after a world-wide economic depression and a year before the publication of Merriam's book, Europe was divided into different ideological camps, and the prelude of a civil war (in Spain) that was to reflect this division was slowly unfolding in the new republic of Spain.

Perhaps it was this political context which inspired Merrian to strongly emphasize the role of symbolism in modern political leadership:

> ... modern leadership exhibits strikingly the importance of two factors, the command of symbolism and facility in organization .... The symbolisms of the Soviets, of the Fascists, of the Nazis, are brilliant examples of the newest forms of symbolic interpretation of mass desires or potentialites in varying forms.[5]

If ideology is taken to mean a translation of ideas which claim to have a universal validity, into action,[6] then, for Merriam that translation implies the necessary use of symbols. For symbols, as we have seen, can simplify, condense, and telescope complex ideas and realities so that they can be more readily understood. The process may involve distortion and oversimplification, but a message, no matter how oversimplified, diluted, or superficial it may be, is nevertheless communicated. With the increase of political options, symbols not only facilitate choices, but also the delineation among these. Merriam recognizes the new competition of ideologies and the accompanying related role of political symbols:

> The modern (political) rivals must struggle with each other in desperate efforts to surpass in the creation of competing types of symbolism which shall most broadly include the currents of contemporary life. By this, they may stand, or fall in the rough struggles in which they engage ...[7]

In the tradition of Plato's Noble Lie, and the Hobbesian and Machiavellian prescriptions for the seekers and possessors of power, Merriam offers his guidelines to modern political man. The word "modern" recurs regularly, as can be seen, for example, in the above citations. He seems to be preoccupied with those aspects of modernity[8] which call for a rethinking of approaches to politics:

> Along with other agencies affecting the formation of power in the political system must be place the instrumentality of science in its relation to social and political control .... The scientific techniques of education, propaganda, organization ... may and indeed must be placed here in the center of emerging forms and limits of social and political life. Medicine, psychiatry, constitutionalism, symbolism, these lie close to the centers of human life and conduct, and they enter in to the development of the power holding system of the future ... we have solemn warning that revolutionary changes are on the way, more revolutionary than the most gifted imagination of the most inspired thinker has ever evolved. We may set it down as one of the fundamentals of the study of emerging power patterns that the scientific techniques are moving toward the transformation of human political conduct and forms of association and authority.[9]

Although in 1934 the above is most significant as a presage to new directions in political science, it also points to the new role of symbolism in modern politics. In a world characterized by an increasing multiplicity of choice and rapid change, Merriam postulates the necessity for creating symbols as "tools of social combat":

> While earlier leaders wielded the ax, or invoked the immemorial mumbo jumbo of the clan, or smoked the pipe of peace in conference with their foes, the more modern type must busy himself to a greater extent with the manufacture of symbols of current value in a swiftly changing world, weighing interests, ideologies, personalities with a view to developing them into useful tools of social combat.[10]

Thus what Merriam denotes as "the mastery of symbolism" is as much a prerequisite for those who have, or who are bidding for power, as the knowledge of justice is for Plato's philosopher-king.

Perhaps, Merriam's emphasis on the importance of political symbolism can be partly related to his views on the psychological foundations of political power. In a philosophical language, which nevertheless paved the way to Harold Lasswell's more systematic, later analysis in Psychopathology and Politics,[11] he points to two basic properties of power: credenda or things to be believed, and miranda, things to be admired.[9] In fact, these prove to be the ingredients of consent. This perspective sweepingly dismisses violence as the sole basis of power:

> No power could stand if it relied upon violence alone, for force is not strong enough to maintain itself against the accidents of rivalry and discontent.[12]

The miranda of politics, according to Merriam, began with the attractive symbols surrounding fatherhood and kingship, that is, personalities connoting strength, protection, and authority. This has been carried over to the present where the aureole of miranda surrounds government. Some current expressions of political symbolism which constitute the miranda are: memorial days, songs, flags, history, oratory, mass demonstrations.[13] In fact, according to Merriam; "Modern States still retain symbolism as the center of their political system".[14] This also applies to the credenda or belief systems[15] which surround power, for while these are more rational in that they depend on intellectual acceptance, nevertheless they lend themselves to the use of symbols. Of the fundamental credendum of democracy - "Political power is the will of the majority expressed through some institutional form of consent"[16] - Merriam notes its unique recognition of the value of every individual, and that this in itself is fertile ground for the manufacture of universally acceptable symbols.

> The whole doctrine is so set up as to favor the recognition of the personality, in a manner not provided in any other system of credenda; and it adapts itself to the mass organization of symbolism on a great scale, as symbolism and participation become of very great importance. It is even possible

> to transfer the doctrine of divine right to the mass and make the voice of the people the voice of God. This form of credenda underlies the movement called democracy, and also socialism and communism ...[17]

While throughout, Merriam's views on political symbols could be interpreted as manipulative, that is, symbols are merely instruments to acquire and retain power, he nevertheless hints at another perspective. Within the context of his interest in exploring new methods of study which would correspond to the rapidly changing forms of political life, he proposes three objects of study, among them: "the interchange of symbolisms, as an interpretation of experience."[18] He continues with the determination of a prophet who intuits a momentous turning point: "A new science and art are on the way, which will provide another point of departure for the power problem and will supersede or at least supplement in a very important way the preceding systems of ideology, interests and organization."[19] Symbols, for Merriam, also signify "an interpretation of experience", and as such, their study can reveal politically relevant material to their users, as well as to analysts. Thus, symbols are not only "tools of social combat", used to vie against competing ideologies or even to "affect human behavior favourably in the direction of a specific goal or program or person or all of these."[20] Symbols are also indicative of how people perceive the political world and what images they have of their political experiences, including both their actual and expected experiences.

Harold Lasswell

Harold Lasswell dates the modern preoccupation with political symbols back to Marx and Engels' analysis of ideology.[21] They brought the concept to the fore of political discussion and study because of their view of ideology as a form of false consciousness which, though claiming universal truth, is in fact class-determined and serves the interests of the particular class which also formulates it.[22] This outlook suscitated a deeper probing, by social scientists, into the nature of the concept, and it still remains an object of study in contemporary social science.[23]

Certainly, it is in this perspective that Lasswell defines political symbols as comprising the content of political myth.[24] The latter is, in turn, subdivided into the four major following components:

1. The political doctrine, which essentially includes Merriam's "credenda" and "miranda" of power.[25] It is essentially the philosophy of state and government, or, to put it more succinctly, of power.

2. The political formula which describes and prescribes a given social structure in the form of basic public law.

3. Ideology or that part of the political myth which functions to preserve the social structure.

4. Utopia or counterideology which functions to change the social structure.[26]

Although more elaborate, and perhaps more all-embracing in scope, Lasswell's definition of political symbols does not differ in approaches from that of Clifford Geertz[27] in that they both view political symbols as reflecting normative, and value-oriented, as well as matter-of-fact realities which make up political life. For example, according to Lasswell, the descriptive function of the political formula and of the symbols therein, must at least partially reveal some of the factual elements of the socio-political structure from which it emanates, and which it defines. Accordingly, he points out that "the term 'myth' is not to be interpreted as necessarily imputing a fictional, false, or irrational character to the symbols...."[28]

Although the above situates and defines the operational field of political symbols, it is perhaps in his analysis of the origins of these that Lasswell makes his most significant contribution to what is still relatively scant, and limited literature dealing specifically with the subject. Although he does not make the link explicitly, Lasswell's explanation of the developmental process which forms political man, and that of the causal factors underlying the existence of symbols can, in fact, be related. In 1930, he had already formulated the following hypothesis: private motives transformed by their displacement onto a public object which is, in turn, rationalized to meet the criteria of public interest, define political man.[29]

Thus, for example, "the repressed father-hatred may be turned against kings and capitalists", and this may further be rationalized by maintaining that ruthless exploitation of the masses by kings or capitalists, justify that projected hatred.[30] How does this displacement of private affect into the public arena relate to the origins of political symbols? Prompted by Freudian concepts concerning the workings of symbols as revealed in dreams, or in unconscious projection, Lasswell points to the inner, subjective world of man as being the major source of all forms of symbolic expression. Thus, when we identify with a person, group or nation, we express this process, while simultaneously defining it, through identification symbols; when we formulate demands based on values (desired events or goals), we convey them through demand symbols. Expectations about a past, present, or future state of affairs or occurrence can be defined through expectation symbols. The latter differ from demand symbols in that demands involve desired values and preferences, while expectations are matter-of-fact references characterized by a time dimension which can be coloured by optimism or pessimism regardless of preferences. A symbol of expectation is to be found in the statement: "Computers will be the masters of future wars" because it neither reveals the value position, nor the preference of the speaker, although it might be an indication of his pessimism. Finally, attitudes permeated with feelings can be expressed by symbols of sentiment. Calling a policeman a "pig", is one example

of using such a symbol.[31] Although the foregoing definitions are analytically useful, they are also somewhat pedantic, for political symbols can embrace some, or all of the four categories. Of the symbols of sentiment, for example, Lasswell clearly points out that "all political symbols are sentimentalized to some degree, especially the identifications with locality, church, party, nation".[32]

From Lasswell's analysis, we can deduce the following:

1. Symbols in general (including political symbols) are rooted within the psychological and moral make-up. Consequently, they also project or reflect that make-up. This is close to Cassirer's description of man as "animale symbolicum",[33] and to the Jungian view that man renders his inner, and sometimes unconscious world accessible to human consciousness, by projecting it into various myths.[34]

2. To the extent that they not only externalize inner psychological and moral factors, but they also communicate these to ellicit response, symbols can be considered as elements within the socialization process. Politicization being but a "special instance of socialization", that is, the functioning of interpersonal relations which have a particular bearing on power, political symbols can be seen as the expressive and manipulative aspects of those relations which characterize politicization.[35]

3. Symbols become properly "political" when functioning within

a political myth which, as noted above, includes the political doctrine and formula, as well as ideology and utopia. The nature of the symbols used within the latter components can reveal, or can at least be indicators, of the following: 1) the general perception on the part of the symbol-use of the political process; 2) more specific perceptions, expressed particularly in symbols of identification, demand, and expectation; 3) the symbol receiver's perception of the political process indicated by his response, or lack of it, to the emitted symbol; 4) the political values and goals of both symbol-users and receivers; 5) the importance of the non-rational, emotive, and generally enigmatic elements of political life.

Murray Edelman

That symbolization and political symbols are intrinsic to political life seems to be the central idea in Murray Edelman's The Symbolic Uses of Politics.[36] He basically advances two arguments to support his thesis. The first deals with man's perception of the state and how this affects the latter's role in his life: the second is to be found in how man situates himself vis à vis the political process and how he consequently relates to it.

Starting from the Aristotelian premise that man is indeed a political animal, Edelman proceeds to state that therefore, the state, in all its diverse manifestations, reflects man in all his complexity

and ambiguity, which include his rational, emotional, and moral dimensions. In this perspective, the state is almost a McLuhanesque "extension" of the human psyche. While the state also reflects and embodies physical, tangible needs, and attempts to fulfill these through the distribution of goods and services; it also has an important expressive function: "Political forms ... come to symbolize what large masses of men need to believe about the state".[37] Because the state has a dual, yet contrasting role - that of giving, distributing, as well as that of withdrawing and even destroying - it can symbolize either reassurance or threat for the individual. Edelman contends that for the mass public:

> Practically every political act that is controversial or regarded as really important is bound to serve in part as a condensation symbol.[38] It evokes a quiescent or an aroused mass response because it symbolizes a threat or reassurance. Because the meaning of the act in these cases depends only partly or not at all upon its objective consequences, which the mass public cannot know, the meaning can only come from the psychological needs of the respondents; and it can only be known from their responses.[39]

One phrase in the above citation: "... which the mass public cannot know ...", leads us to the second reason which Edelman provides to substantiate his hypothesis that political symbols are intrinsic to political life. He takes what could be labelled as a pessimistic view of the democratic process; namely, that most people hardly ever participate directly in, or even have access to, vital political activity.

With rare exceptions such as voting, the actual political process is indeed so remote, that it is "for most of us a passing parade of abstract symbols ... a series of pictures in the mind, placed there by television news, newspapers, magazines and discussions".[40] It is in this very remoteness that politics is prone to symbolization, and that the state itself is viewed as a powerful symbol "remote, set apart, omnipresent as the ultimate threat or means of succor, yet not susceptible to effective influence through any act that we as individuals can perform".[41]

This somewhat sinister portrait of the alienation of the masses from political activity is not unlike the one painted by another analyst, William Kornhauser, who also relates this phenomenon to symbolization in politics:

> The focus of attention is remote from personal experience and daily life. Remote objects are national and international issues and events, abstract symbols, and whatever else is known only through mass media.[42] [Author's italics)

Various arguments can be raised against this view. For example, the protest movement in the United States against the Vietnam war began as a relatively small enterprise, which grew to significant proportions, even to the extent of altering the present administration's policy on that subject. Yet, both Kornhauser and Edelman's point may be well taken in the sense, that for most of the people, most of the time, daily life does not include conscious political involvement. The suggestion is that most men can rarely define themselves as political animals, although,

existentially they could be. On the other hand, they can usually identify themselves as working or thinking beings.

For Edelman, moreover, political life being composed of the tangible (distribtuion of goods and services, for example) and intangible manifestations of the state, political goals are names or labels suggested by our dominant values and concepts.[43] These are usually condensation symbols like "freedom", "a higher standard of living", and the like. These are mostly normative, although empirical applications may occur. When extraparliamentary oppositions challenge these symbols, it either means that they symbolize a threat to existing structures and values, or that they evoke an aroused rather than a quiescent response from some segments of the population.[44] This presents an opportunity to challenge existing, dominant goal symbols with more reassuring ones, or else to simply delineate the undesirability, and, therefore, the threat which the existing dominant symbols represent. In these terms, the expression of opposition is more symbolic than anything else, more oriented toward a satisfaction of psychological needs, than "bread and butter", or tangible needs.

Be that as it may, Edelman's thesis can generally be summarized as follows: 1) politics is conducive to symbolization because the state in all its manifestations, generally projects psychological polar images of threat or reassurance; 2) political symbols arise from

political alienation, that is, from the remoteness of the political arena, and the non-participation of most of the people most of the time. Therefore, according to these concepts, the degree of symbolization within a political system at any given time is an indication of the degree of political alienation within that system during that time. Certainly this can only be validated through elaborate content analysis, comparative surveys and studies of operational political symbols, tasks which have not yet been undertaken in political science. Still, the implications are interesting within the limits of our approach in this paper.

Clifford Geertz

In Clifford Geertz's essay "Ideology as a Cultural System"[45] the notion of symbols is introduced and used within the framework of a general criticism which he levels against contemporary social scientists' treatment of the concept of ideology. His basic critique is summarized in his opening remark: "It is one of the minor ironies of modern intellectual history that the term ideology has itself become thoroughly ideologized."[46] Those confronted with the concept often referred to its emotional, elusive, and value-oriented nature, almost dismissing the possibility of analysis: "Men do not care to have beliefs to which they attach great moral significance examined dispassionately, no matter for how pure a purpose ..."[47] Ideology became either untouchable, beyond the reach of analysis, or the subject of disparaging rejections on the part of social

scientists, who found it could not stand up against the formidable demands of scientific objectivity and quantitative measurement. According to Geertz, social science has not yet delved into ideology in a non-evaluative manner, and this is mainly due to certain theoretical lacunae, not the least of which is the lack of a conceptual tool for dealing with meaning. This tool or "missing link" is to be found in symbols, for ideologies must be examined "as systems of interacting symbols, as patterns of interworking meanings."[48] Why and how symbols could, so to speak, "reinstate" ideology in its rightful position as a valid, reliable concept which can illuminate those who study social and political problems, is the crux of Geertz's thesis.

In the broadest sense, Geertz defines a symbol as: "... any physical, social, or cultural act or object that serves as the vehicle for a conception".[49] He further elaborates this definition by a major premise: symbols are models or patterns which can elucidate, guide and transform responses to reality. More precisely, symbols are "extrinsic sources of information in terms of which human life can be patterned, extrapersonal mechanisms for the perception, understanding, judgement, and manipulation of the world."[50] Thus, Hamlet's "to be or not to be" soliloquy which symbolizes the existential dilemma, transforms fears and anxieties into an intelligent contemplation of the problem. Geertz uses one of Gerard Manley Hopkins' poems on death as an example of a symbol transforming the emotional impact and attitudes

so that we can "react to such a tragedy not 'blindly' but 'intelligently'."[51] Here, Geertz introduces a notion which is not unlike Cassirer's description of man as "animale symbolicum".[52] As an incomplete being, man is continually "becoming", constantly defining, and seeking to perfect himself. Although this in itself is not a novel idea, the role of symbols, and therefore of ideology (according to Geertz's definition quoted above) which he attaches to it, is certainly new:

> The agent of his own realization, he [man] creates out of his general capacity for the construction of symbolic models the specific capabilities which define him ... it is through the construction of ideologies, schematic images of social order, that man makes himself for better or worse a political animal.[53] [Brackets are mine.]

Furthermore, viewed in this manner, symbols can provide certain indications or hypotheses when other types of responses or modes of expression cannot.

> As the various sorts of cultural symbol-systems are extrinsic sources of information, templates for the organization of social and psychological processes, they come most crucially into play in situations where the particular kind of information they contain is lacking, where institutionalized guides for behavior, thought, or feeling are weak or absent. It is in country unfamiliar emotionally or topographically that one needs poems and road maps.
> So too with ideology .... The function of ideology is to make an autonomous politics possible by providing the authoritative concepts that render it meaningful, the suasive images by means of which it can be sensibly grasped.[54]

To pursue the simile, the "maps" of ideology which outline symbolic interactions provide a drawing or sketch of problematic socio-political realities, as well as projections of emotions, fears and values. Couched in the elusive, and often unscientific language of commitment in its attempt to justify and defend beliefs and values, ideology through its symbols, is nevertheless founded on reality, otherwise it would not be operational. This is where Geertz's second premise enters: symbols within an ideology can, to some degree, be tested to evaluate whether they correspond to reality and/or to feasibility. As an example, he refers to organized American labour's use of the symbol "slave labor law" to designate the Taft-Hartley Act. This symbol proved to be ineffective in its main purpose; namely, to rally workers to action. But the reason is not necessairly that it either deceived the uninformed, or that it stimulated the unthinking, as those who look askance at ideology may think. According to Geertz, the symbol fails because, although the two images - that of the Congressmen's law, and that of slave labour - are respectively, and separately real enough, superimposing one upon the other removes them entirely from the realm of actuality. The distance between the two realities is too great, and even symbolization cannot bridge the gap:

> The semantic tension between the image of a conservative Congress outlawing the closed shop and of the prison camps of Siberia was - apparently - too great to be resolved into a single conception, at least by means of so rudimentary a stylistic device as the slogan.[55]

This does not diminish the fact that the legislation may have been regarded as a serious threat by the trade unions. Even morally repulsive symbols such as the ones used by Hitler concerning Jews and Aryans, must to some extent, have been grounded in an existing psychological reality in Germany. Their effectiveness as rallying symbols during the twelve years of the Nazi regime's existence is some proof of a degree of correspondence to reality, even if their content is scientifically and otherwise questionable, to say the least. Therefore, Geertz concludes, ideologies seen as systems of interacting symbols, "do make empirical claims about the condition and direction of society, which it is the business of science (and, where scientific knowledge is lacking, common sense) to assess."[56] In the political realm, symbols become a key to that assessment.

Summary

When assembled together in the above order, the four principal authors' views on political symbols reveal the different levels on which these can be considered. In an environment of nascent, applied and competing ideologies, Charles Merriam saw political symbols as being instrumental to the formulation and facilitation of political choices. The parallel emergence of a modern awareness and exploration of the nature and workings of the human mind instigated by Freudian theory, invaded the political arena, as well as other sectors of human life. This, for Merriam, made it imperative for modern political leaders to

consciously manipulate the psychological "credenda" and "miranda" dimensions of power, embodied in various types of symbols, in order to affect political conduct so as to acquire and maintain that power. Rooted in psychological needs, political symbols, according to him, are basically manipulative instruments of power.

Lasswell's is a more complex interpretation. Symbols in politics are projections of the inner, subjective self into the external, public and political whole. They constitute part of the makings of political myth, the powerful and revered "story" which prescribes, describes, sanctifies and justifies the vital foundations and structures of the polity, the paradigm of human organization. Symbols serve to convey, reinforce, and sustain the political myth by being a sort of "lifeline" which feeds subjective inner expressions of identifications, demands, expectations, and sentiments into the political arena. They become part of that arena, and evoke various types of responses from the political collectivity. Still, as we have seen at the beginning of this study, this projective function is but one of the many characteristics of symbols.

Murray Edelman offers a different vision; one that, to some degree, takes into account the hermeneutic role of symbols. The complex nature of political life as a whole can seldom, if ever, be understood by most men. Moreover, existentially speaking, political experience

does not really and consciously enter into most men's everyday lives and preoccupations. While men are political animals, they are generally alienated from political life, with the exception of a few who are directly and occupationally involved. In other words, the majority remain potential political animals because they are, on the whole, spectators rather than actors. Being, for the various reasons we have already outlined, generally remote from the political process, most men perceive it through symbols which either convey diverse types of threats, or reassurance and well-being. The greater part of their relationship with the polity is psychological, and is expressed through symbols which give a somewhat opaque rendition of the vast and intricate entirety of political life. The occasional direct and concrete contact, such as the vote, is largely a fragmentary and equally symbolic form of periodic participation. Generally, political symbols reflect and express that intangible, illusory and alienated relationship.

But, if we perceive man through Cassirer's definition of the "animale symbolicum", then we must view him as constantly attempting to apprehend the enigmatic whole of political life, and as searching to define himself within it. This stance differs considerably from the manipulative or projective levels of meaning attributed to political symbols. For Clifford Geertz, symbols are part of man's "political becoming", part of his continual formulation of a self-definition

within the political realm, and part of his continual translation of that vast realm into accessible meaning. From this perspective, he views ideology as a system of interworking symbols which always reveal some degree of truth and reality about man and his world, no matter how irrational or subjective these may seem when submitted to scrutiny based upon objective, scientific standards. In brief, and somewhat simplified terms, the process of man's self-definition of which symbolic expression is the core, is part of the overall synthesis and codification of the meaningful aspects of political experience in his general search for "the good life". All this extends beyond the limited scope of scientific measurement and definition. He does not deny the latter's usefulness in revealing truths: rather, his is an almost clichéd contention that all that is human is real and must be included and accepted in the study of all sectors of human experience. Geertz maintains that the study of symbols is the study of conceptual, hermeneutic tools which can open some doors to the complex and enigmatic meanings of political life, much of which has thus far eluded existing scientific approaches. It is essentially this perspective which will serve as the basis for our study of certain political symbols which emerged during the October 1970 crisis in Canada.

If we have reviewed the above authors' analyses of the diverse roles of symbolic expression in politics, it is because we felt that their views, taken as a whole, are relevant in terms of examining the

different operational levels on which symbols can function in a given situation. A crisis situation as we shall attempt to outline below, can be viewed on various levels. For example, if we consider the numerous types of strategic elements which can be involved in a political crisis, then symbols - whether verbal, behavioural, or inanimate - can have a corresponding, manipulative function with respect to the implied or stated goals of strategy. In the case of the October 1970 crisis in Canada, this study is an attempt to delve into the role of symbolic expression in man's attempt to interpret and define his political self and his political environment. Specifically, we have chosen the Front de Libération du Québec's symbols, especially the verbal ones, in order to examine that role. We are aware of the manipulative and projective dimensions of symbolic expression, which some of the above authors stressed, and which existed during the October crisis. While these will not be entirely excluded in our discussion of that event, we hope to demonstrate that a more significant level of interpretation of the crisis can be accessible by examining what the group which precipitated it tried to accomplish, and why. This is where we found, that beyond the manipulative and the projective aspects of interpretation, was the more fundamental one, which touched on the vast realm of political identity, of man's hermeneutical approach to the political world. And this is where, as we hope to explain, symbols in politics can reveal dimensions of political life which some of the existing analytical

approaches (which will be discussed below) do not. And this is precisely where symbols in politics can perhaps reveal certain dimensions of political life which other conceptual tools, or even the analysis of empirical phenomena, cannot adequately explain.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

[1]Harold D. Lasswell, David Lerner, and Ithiel de Sola Pool, The Comparative Study of Symbols, The Hoover Institute Studies, Series C, No. 1 (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1952), p. 4.

[2]Anthony Parel, "Symbolism in Gandhian Politics," Canadian Journal of Political Science, II, No. 4.(December, 1969), p. 514.

[3]Ithiel de Sola Pool, "Symbols, Meaning, and Social Science," in Symbols and Values, ed. by Lyman Bryson, et al., op.cit., p. 350.

[4]Charles Merriam, Political Power (New York: Collier Books of the Crowell-Collier Publishing Company, 1934).

[5]Ibid., p. 50.

[6]Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology (2d. ed.; New York: Collier Books of the Crowell-Collier Publishing Company, 1962), p. 393. Of course, this is only one of the many definitions of ideology discussed in the book.

[7]Charles Merriam, op.cit., p. 50.

[8]Here "modernity" is used in the wider philosophical sense and not as a relational term which might refer to preceding periods of history. Nor is it used to mean "modish" or fashionable. This distinction is explained by Henri Lefebvre, Introduction à la modernité (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1962), pp. 9-10.

[9]Charles Merriam, op.cit., p. 293.

[10]Ibid., p. 51.

[11]Harold D. Lasswell, Psychopathology and Politics (2d. ed.; New York: The Viking Press,Inc., 1960). See the section on this author.

[12]Charles Merriam, op.cit., p. 109.

[13]Ibid., p. 109.

[14]Ibid., p. 111.

[15]Ibid., p. 111.

[16]The term "belief systems" is derived from Milton Robeach's analysis of it in The Open and Closed Mind (New York: Basic Book, 1960), pp. 32-40.

[17]Charles Merriam, op.cit., p. 124.

[18]Ibid., p. 125.

[19]Ibid., p. 255.

[20]Ibid., p. 255.

[21]Ibid., pp. 51-52.

[22]Harold D. Lasswell, D. Lerner, I. de Sola Pool, The Comparative Study of Symbols, op.cit., p. 4.

[23]K. Marx and F. Engels, The German Ideology, trans. and ed. by R. Pascal (New York: International Publishers, 1939), p. 14.

[24]In addition to Daniel Bell, op.cit., Karl Mannheim, David E. Apter (ed.) both of which are cited below, further discussions on ideology can be found in the following: Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1960); Andrew Hacker, Political Theory: Philosophy, Ideology, Science (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1961); Herbert Marcusé, One-Dimensional Man (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964); Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966); Charles A. McCoy and John Playford, eds., Apolitical Politics: A Critique of Behavioralism (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1967); Chaim I. Waxman, ed., The End of Ideology Debate (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968).

[25]Harold D. Lasswell, and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society, op.cit., p. 116.

[26]Charles Merriam, op.cit., pp. 109-128. See supra section on Merriam.

[27]Harold D. Lasswell, and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society, op.cit., pp. 116-128. It should be noted that the authors bases their distinction between ideology and utopia on Karl Mannheim's definitions in Ideology and Utopia (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1936) pp. 192-196.

[28]See the section on Clifford Geertz below.

[29]Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, op.cit., p. 117.

[30]Harold D. Lasswell, Psychopathology and Politics, op.cit., pp. 74-77.

[31]Ibid., p. 75.

[32]Ibid., p. 283. Also see Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society, op.cit., pp. 11-21 and Harold D. Lasswell, World Politics and Personal Insecurity (New York: The Free Press, 1935), pp. 23-39.

[33]Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society op.cit., p. 20.

[34]Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man, op.cit., p. 26.

[35]Victor W. Turner, "Myth and Symbol", International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences ed. by David L. Sills (New York: The Macmillan Co., and The Free Press, 1968) X, p. 579.

[36]Harold D. Lasswell, and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society, op.cit., pp. 144-145.

[37]Murray Edelman. The Symbolic Uses of Politics (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1964).

[38]Ibid., p. 2. This can be related to Lasswell's definition of political man. In his hypothesis, private beliefs and emotions are displaced into the public arena by a rationalization of these in terms of public interest, see Harold D. Lasswell, Psychopathology and Politics, op.cit., pp. 74-77.

[39]For Edelman, condensation symbols condense experiences which are meant to evoke emotions corresponding to these experiences. He differentiates these from referential symbols which are not unlike signs in that they directly refer to or represent objective elements in experience. See Murray Edelman, The Symbolic Uses of Politics, op.cit., p. 6.

[40]Ibid., p. 7.

[41]Ibid., p. 5.

[42]Ibid., p. 6.

[43]William Kornhauser, The Politics of Mass Society (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p. 43.

[44]Murray Edelman, op.cit., p. 157.

[45]Ibid., pp. 167-175.

[46]Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in Ideology and Discontent, ed. by David E. Apter (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964).

[47]Ibid., p. 47.

[48]Ibid., p. 48.

[49]Ibid., p. 56.

[50]Ibid., p. 73, see Note 19.

[51]Ibid., p. 62.

[52]Ibid., p. 62. This involves some of the processes, such as abstraction, which are discussed in the section.

[53]See Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man, op.cit., p. 26.

[54]Clifford Geertz, op.cit., p. 63.

[55]Ibid., p. 63.

[56]Ibid., p. 59.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL CRISIS AND VIOLENCE: SOME EXISTING APPROACHES

Based on our discussion so far, we can say, with some degree of assurance, that political symbols do more than represent or reflect elements of political life, and that their functions are more elaborate than being mere instruments for the manipulation of political conduct. Since Socrates' time, if not before, the multiple dimensions of political life have been the object of scrutiny, questions, analyses. Yet, in many ways, some of them remain inscrutable, elusive and enigmatic. Symbols may at once reflect that complexity, and serve to approach it in a different manner. Beyond the apparent, the empirical, the rational components which make up political life, the larger issues of how men relate to the political entity, why and how they are moved by political ideas and ideals, how they define themselves politically, remain fundamental, and as yet, largely unanswered. They are part of the existing challenges of enquiry in the study of politics. Just as in other domains symbols have revealed some vital aspects about human nature, so they may also further the enquiry into the nature of political man.

We have already stated that the major purpose of this paper is to understand some of the more enigmatic elements of the political

crisis which occurred in Canada in October 1970. Political science has dealt in various ways with the problems of political crises and violence within the state. While the limits of this study prevents us from a lengthy study and ennumeration of all existing approaches, we will briefly mention some of them,so as to establish why these were not adopted in our discussion, why, in our view, they cannot contribute adequately to an understanding of the Canadian event.

Generally, the concept of political crisis is viewed as an exceptional occurrence which depending on its nature and scope, can impair and, in some cases, destroy the political system which it afflicts. Basically, it is regarded as being akin to the term employed in medicine wherein crisis "denotes that change in a disease which indicates whether the outcome is to be recovery or death."[1] This suggests that a crisis is an overall turning point, an either/or situation wherein control over a positive or negative, desired or undesired result is limited. To this general view, we can add the following elements which, according to at least two theorists, are said to characterize a political crisis: 1) when there is an immediate threat to the high-priority political goals and values of a system (or systems in the case of international politics) and, therefore, of the formal decision-makers which are part of that system; 2) when there is a limited amount of time for response to the threat before the situation changes, usually in terms of increasing or

actualizing the threat; 3) when the threat comes as a general surprise even to the formal decision-makers; 4) when the risks for a negative or undesired outcome are high for all actors concerned, both for those who are at the source of the threat, and for those who must cope with it.[2] Much of the present literature dealings with the nature and effects of political crises generally stresses the strategic use of all the available resources of a system in its response to threat, the dangers facing that strategy by the overload on formal and informal channels of communication, by the psychological pressures caused by initial surprise, uncertainty and prevailing tension, and how all these factors affect behavioural responses, perceptions, and judgements.[3] This approach underlines the decision-making process, its role in defining a strategy which would adequately respond to the threat so as to eliminate it, thus resolving the crisis. Does it assist us in any way?

In the sense that it defines the boundaries between the problems and difficulties involved in much of political life wherein some measure of control, if not resolution, is assured, in a situation which is so momentous that it requires immediate attention and reaction, this perspective is useful. It points to and delineates, a specific realm of uncertainty in politics, it focuses on a "danger signal" which, as in medicine, denotes that "all is not right in that political world." This is not unlike what we choose to label "the equilibrium

perspective", which contends that serious threats (such as violence or economic failure) within a political system cause a disequilibrium within it which prevents or obstructs the functioning of the inter-related roles and structures which define that system. This type of situation, called a dsyfunction, demands immediate remedial action to restore the equilibrium or create a new one.[4]

Another, related approach, which we designate as "the relative deprivation perspective", views domestic crises, especially those involving violence, as aggressive but justified manifestations of the relative material and psychological deprivations of a sector of the population, which must be recognized as such by the formal political decision-makers whose only recourse is reform. Through legislation and other means, such reform must bring the relatively-deprived sector to a level equal with the rest of the population.[5]

Yet another way of broaching the issue of domestic political crisis is "the rising expectations perspective" which is generally applicable to states which experience rapid economic and technological development. Aside from affecting the nature and functions of roles and therefore groups, such rapid growth brings almost immediate advantages and benefits to certain sectors of the population, but not to all. Those, who, for various reasons, do not have an adequate and prompt share of the benefits, but who nevertheless are aware of

them and their relative inaccessibility, experience a need created by the gap between rising expectations and the fulfillment of these. That experience can be translated into aggressive, hostile attitudes and violence which can constitute the makings of a domestic crisis.[6]

Finally, there is the "endemic violence" approach which views political life, but rather, as inherent to the political process. In a way, it is both a recognition of the irrational factor in political behaviour, and an appreciation of the positive function of political violence. In this perspective, violence functions in "creating and testing political legitimacy and in conditioning the terms of all social bargaining and adjustment."[7] From the standpoint of the perpetrator of violence:

> All violence is reaction ... self-defense ... the desire to fight one's way out of a trap. It is not only the last resort in the bargaining spectrum but also a potentiality or a threat which does in fact change the bargaining equation itself. In a sense, it is the ultimate test of viability of values and customary behavior. [8]

Much of political behaviour can be considered as some type of bargaining, in which different groups vie for different values. Violence is part of the dynamics of that behaviour, in that it tests and redefines relations. As bargaining, political violence demonstrates the will and capacity for action, and the establishment of credibility for future threats.[9] Ultimately:

> Violence is the cutting edge of social integration; it is the process of demarcation and the final measurement between sovereignties. It is immanent in the process by which fetus and mother tear themselves apart into separate organisms. It is always ambivalent because it defines a boundary condition which can lead either to complete schism or to a reintegration at a higher level. [10]

While we consider this approach to be relevant to our study insofar as it emphasizes the necessity for understanding political violence as a mixture of both the rational and irrational components of political life, it still does not satisfactorily explain all the dimensions of what occurred in Canada in October 1970. The foregoing indicate some of the current approaches to the study of political crises, especially those involving violence. On the whole, they suggest that the latter can be defined, and analyzed, and remedied in rational terms. The strategic decision-making approach to political crises which involves minimizing losses and maximizing gains for all concerned is based on rational analysis and rational goals. Violence can be viewed as a pathological phenomenon which can be "treated", or it can be part of the malaise involved in rapid change, or as the outcome of perceived deprivations. All these dictate correspondingly rational solutions in terms of restoring balance, equalizing opportunities and living conditions, more judiciously planned change, and the like. Even Nieburg's perspective, which recognizes the non-rational elements of political experience, nevertheless assumes violence as part of the bargaining and the questioning or challenging processes involved

in political life, suggests that greater flexibility is a preventive measure against violence; that not castigating but accepting a certain level of violence may lead to a reintegration of dissident forces.

Yet, all these approaches leave something to be desired in the sense that they do not tell us enough about what compels men to relate themselves to the polity in a violent manner despite an awareness of the potentially onerous consequences. Frustrations, fanaticism and other psychological factors may provide some answers, but an age which can almost be characterized by diverse forms of violence and numerous violent political crises demands further analysis. In the case of the 1970 October crisis in Canada, that probing seems mandatory if we are to judge by the following statements which suggest the inadequacy of the above approaches:

> ... c'est le propre des crises aiguës de servir de 'révélateurs', de faire monter à la surface des vérités qui sommeillaient.[11]

> ... la crise de l'automne ne nous a rien appris de neuf sur les problèmes économiques ou autres ... C'est dans une aire plus vaste que la crise prend son sens: elle force à s'interroger sur les conditions premières pour que naisse un projet collectif, sur des coordonnées élémentaires que nous connaissions sans doute abstraitement mais que la récente commotion aura enfin rendues à notre expérience concrète .... Un événement est devenu un extraordinaire symbole.[12]

> It is also apparent from the outset that the F.L.Q. action while it shocked most people,

appealed to an indeterminate number, on all sorts of levels. One of these, hardly recognized, was the level at which people respond passionately to symbols that are meaningful to them.... Whatever feelings they had about the F.L.Q. and its methods, many French Quebeckers could not help feeling some thrill as the humbled flag of a suppressed revolt [of 1837] was resuscitated and splashed across the pages of every newspaper in Canada. In the same way, the names of the F.L.Q. cells, and the language of their communiques, emphasized many aspects of the past, which traditional histories had intentionally left out. The extent of such reawakened pride is hard to guage. There was no official way in which it could express itself at that time. Indications of it, however, were frequently evident in conversations with friends and neighbours.[13] [Brackets are mine.]

... cette crise nous arrive à un moment où nous avons lâché sans possibilité de retour notre identité traditionnelle sans que nous ayons encore réussi à nous créer une identité 'moderne' de societé productive et rationalisée. Le défi de la post-modernité nous survient en pleine période de transition, au moment d'une perte d'équilibre provisoire, qu'il risque de rendre définitive. Les actes terroristes du F.L.Q., la large résonance qu'ils ont eue chez beaucoup de jeunes (et de moins jeunes) relèvent, je crois, de cette crise de la post-modernité ... le refus de toutes les structures de notre société, et encore plus, le refus de toute structure quelle qu'elle soit, la recherche d'un modèle tout autre, c'est-à-dire les mouvements révolutionnaires du tiers monde, tout cela reflète plutôt l'aliénation post-moderne ... notre société entre actuellement dans une période de tension et de crise intermittente. La superposition du défi de la post-modernité et de notre modernisation inachevée nous jette dans la transition la plus difficile et la plus dramatique de notre histoire.[14]

These interpretations suggest that there are dimensions of the 1970 crisis which elude some of the existing approaches to the problem of political crisis which are briefly noted above. Their content reveals preoccupations on a level not included in aformentioned existing approaches to domestic political crises and violence. Rather, these interpretations, either implicitly, or explicitly, deal with the intangible dimensions of the October crisis. Two of them refer outrightly to symbols; one to a kind of dramatic moment of truth, wherein issues not usually the objects of daily discussion, were somehow barred; another one views the crisis as a symptom of a transition in values and goals, as a search for new "blueprints" in terms of political life, which also involves identity. Strategic decision-making, dysfunction and relative deprivation are not among the concerns of the above citations. Thus, the manipulative level of interpretation is absent. Violence is not explained in terms of frustrations and injustices; rather, the enigmatic elements of the event in terms of vague allusions to its <u>meaning</u> seem to dominate the above comments.

We could have analyzed the October crisis from any one or all the existing approaches ennumerated above. Yet, they would not have enabled us to begin to explain the reasons for the above interpretations, offered by journalists and social scientists. As a conceptual tool, symbolic expression may further our understanding of other than the manipulative, structural, and quantitative levels which existed in the

Canadian case, as they do in all domestic political crisis involving the threat or the use of violence. We hope to demonstrate, that the level defined by symbolic expression in this instance, comprised some of the fundamental issues of political life mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

We have seen that symbolization is intimately related to man's need for self-definition: that it is also a necessary means for expressing or formulating that identity. As we will attempt to demonstrate, the search for the answer to the question: "Who am I?" was crucial to the political crisis which Canada experienced in October 1970:

> ... for when established identities become outworn or unfinished ones threaten to remain incomplete, special crises compel men to wage holy wars, by the cruelest means, against those who seem to question or threaten their unsafe ideological bases.[15]

In other words, the socio-political identity crisis of a group can constitute the makings of a crisis which endangers the polity. Here, Kenneth Keniston's approach to the problem of violence is helpful in connecting and even in interrelating the identity crisis and the political one. For him, violence is to this age what sex was to the Victorian era:[16] it is forbidden, yet fascinating; it is denounced, yet is practiced. While violence, death and war have always been part of human history, technological violence and death is new and

far more devastating than anything experienced before. The technological aspect was the awesome lesson of the last World War: "The lessons of that war for this generation are summarized in the names of three cities: Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Nuremberg."[17] Violence and death have become continual facts and possibilities in this world, whether witnessed or imagined (through realistic accounts such as film documentaries): the awareness and fear are related to both the external world and the inner psychic world.

> The greater the outer reality of violence, the more the inner fear of it, and for many, the greater the need to create or find external situations in which violence can be experienced vicariously outside themselves.[18]

This too was a dimension of the October 1970 crisis: it was a dramatic dimension. It was dramatic because, as we will attempt to show, men felt compelled, for diverse reasons, to act out certain roles, to define themselves through deeds and words. It was also dramatic because vital issues were involved, because the lives of men were involved, and because the political arena was used as a theater for confrontation, and for self-definition vis à vis an existing and a desired political life.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

[1]Robert C. North, Ole R. Holsti, et al., Content Analysis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963), p. 4.

[2]Charles F. Hermann, Crisis in Foreign Policy (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), p. 29; Thomas C. Schelling, Arms and Influence (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 94-97.

[3]Some of the literature which can serve as examples of this approach includes: Karl W. Deutsch, "Shifts in the Balance of Communication Flows: A Problem of Measurements in International Relations", Public Opinion Quarterly, XX (Spring 1956), pp. 152-155; J.D. Singer, "Threat Perception and the Armament Tension Dilemma", Journal of Conflict Resolution, II (1958), pp. 90-105; Charles F. Hermann, "Some Consequences of Crisis Which Limit the Viability of Organizations", Administrative Science Quarterly, VIII (June 1963) pp. 61-82; James N. Rosenau, Calculated Control as a Unifying Concept in the Study of International Politics and Foreign Policy (Princeton: Center of International Studies, 1963); Ole R. Holsti, "The 1914 Case", The American Political Science Review, LIX (1965), pp. 365-378; J. David Singer, "Threat Perception and National Decision-Makers", in Theory and Research on the Causes of War eds. Dean G. Pruitt and Richard C. Snyder (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1969), pp. 39-42; Terry Nardin, "Communication and the Effects of Threats in Strategic Interaction," Peace Research Society (International), Papers, IX (1968), Cambridge Conference, 1967, pp. 69-86.

[4]One example of this approach can be found in: Chalmers Johnson, Revolution and the Social System, The Hoover Institute on War, Revolution, and Peace. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp. 4-5. See also Lewis A. Coser, "Some Social Functions of Violence" in The Annals, Vol. 364, American Academy of Political and Social Science (March, 1966), pp. 12-15.

[5]For this view see especially: Ted Robert Gurr, Why Men Rebel (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 37-58.

[6]This approach is used principally in the study of developing new nations, and can be found in the following: George I. Blanksten, "Transference of Social and Political Loyalties," in Industrialization and Society, ed. by Bert F. Hoselitz and Wilbert E. Moore from the

Proceedings of the Chicago Conference on the Social Implications of Industrialization and Technical Change (Mouton: U.N.E.S.C.O., 1963), pp. 176-183; Harry Eckstein, "Internal War: The Problem of Anticipation", in Social Science Research and National Security, ed. by Ithiel de Sola Pool et al. (Washington, D.C., Smithsonial Institution, 1963); Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (Binghampton, Vail-Ballou Press for Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 39-56.

[7]H.L. Nieburg, Political Violence and the Behavioral Process (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), p. 5.

[8]Ibid., p. 9.

[9]Ibid., p. 81.

[10]Ibid., p. 100.

[11]Claude Ryan, "Les fruits indirects de la crise," Le Devoir (Montreal), November 9, 1970, p. 4.

[12]Fernand Dumont, La vigile du Québec (Montreal: Editions HMH, 1971), pp. 173-174.

[13]Ann Charney, "From Redpath Crescent to Rue des Recollets," The Canadian Forum, Vol. L, No. 600 (January, 1971), p. 325.

[14]Charles Taylor, "Les cercles vicieux de l'aliénationapost-moderne," in Le Québec qui se fait, ed. by Claude Ryan (Montreal: Editions Hurtubise HMH, 1971), pp. 162, 165. This is one article among a special series published in the newspaper Le Devoir (Montreal), December 30, 1970, all of which have been reproduced in the forementioned book.

[15]Erik H. Erikson, "The Problem of Ego Identity," in Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, IV (1956), p. 119.

[16]Kenneth Keniston, Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1968), p. 248.

[17]Ibid., p. 249.

[18]Ibid., p. 253.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE OCTOBER 1970 CRISIS IN CANADA

Much has been written about the Canadian political crisis of October 1970, as well as about the F.L.Q. which precipitated it.[1] While we do not intend to reiterate the history of this group, nor to elaborate on all the elements of the crisis - for such enterprises are beyond the scope of this paper - we want to preface our further discussion by some general remarks about the group and a brief summary of those aspects of the crisis which we consider to be relevant to our approach. The symbolic dimensions which we will thereafter explore are those emerging from the source of initial threat in the crisis, that is, from the F.L.Q. The reasons for this option will, we hope, become clear.

Some Notes on the F.L.Q. Prior to October 1970

Since its inception in 1963, and until October 1970, the F.L.Q. had made itself known to the Quebec and Canadian people mostly through acts of terrorism, ranging from an initial use of Molotov cocktails, to armed robberies and to powerful dynamite bombings. From the outset, its principal political goal was to further the cause of Quebec's secession from Canada and to promote the establishment of an autonomous French-speaking nation. Interestingly enough, its beginnings in

March 1963 coincided with the final stages of the transformation of the secessionist, nationalist Rassemblement pour l'Independance Nationale (R.I.N.) from a movement to a political party.[2] The R.I.N.'s move into party politics could conceivably have represented a tacit, if not outright, acceptance of the existing political system (of which the parliamentary and federal structures are an essential part) for those who rejected the system and could not play "the game of patience" which the R.I.N.'s choice involved.[3] Be that as it may, in its seven-year history prior to the crisis, F.L.Q. terrorist activities resulted in six deaths, and thirty-seven injuries, including the permanent crippling of one police officer. Although the figures vary, it is estimated that the groups is responsible for over two-hundred bombings, with targets ranging from symbols of the federal government's presence in Quebec, such as mailboxes and federal government buildings; to the private homes of prominent citizens; to symbols of financial power such as the Montreal Stock Exchange building; and to private enterprise experiencing labour difficulties.[4] While, from the outset, the F.L.Q. sent tracts to newspapers explaining its activities and counterideology, very few were actually published.[5] The verbal communication of its views and aims was largely restricted to underground publications such as La Cognëe and Victoire, which had a necessarily limited circulation.[6] Thus, until the 1970 October crisis, the F.L.Q.'s principal form of address to the local population was the act of terrorism.

Let us, for a moment, briefly examine this particular mode of political conduct known as terrorism. There is, to begin with, a distinction to be made between the induced psychic state of terror as experienced by individuals and which is ultimately a form of fear, and terrorism as an instrument for achieving political goals.[7] The latter usually involves action and in this context, terrorism can be viewed as "... a symbolic act designed to influence political behaviour by extranormal means, entailing the use or threat of violence."[8] The symbolic act can be extremely concrete - as in the destruction of things or persons - but its aim, and the way it is meant to be perceived, is symbolic. It is a conscious way of using action which both reflects and points to a wider political meaning. Similarly to placard-waving demonstrations, but with the added "extranormal", violent implications, terrorism is one way of actively interpreting political life. It involves, among other considerations, perceiving the existing political system in ways which prescribe violent action. Whether it is used by a government or by a clandestine oppositional group, the symbolic nature of terrorism is part of its potential efficiency, for it can do much moral and physical damage, with relatively little effort: "If the terrorist comprehends that he is seeking a demonstration effect, he will attack targets with a maximum symbolic value."[9] Stalin's terrorism directed against representative members of dissident minorities, and of the military, professional and intellectual elites produced a quiescent

society during his lifetime. His deadly attack on choice targets served as an example and a message to all potential forms of dissidence. Likewise, the F.L.Q.'s terrorism was meant to serve notice all "enemies" of its cause that it "meant business", that it was to be taken seriously and that it was to be perceived as a threat to those "enemies". Its very first tract, sent to newspapers on March 8, 1963, already reflected an awareness of this dimension for, in it, the group stated one of its goals as being the destruction of: "... tous les symboles et les institutions coloniales (fédérales)..."[10]

Mention must also be made of the F.L.Q.'s relative efficiency as a covert group engaged in numerous and diverse types of illicit action. Although, by October 1970, there were twenty prisoners in Canadian jails and three accused on bail, who had alleged or avowed ties with the group, its organizational vitality was still impressive enough to warrant the following remark from a former executive officer of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police: "Infiltration of these F.L.Q. cells has been difficult, if not impossible."[11] Not only was the group relatively adept at evading police scrutiny, but it also conveyed mixed impressions as to the size of its actual membership, even to those who supposedly have access to some sort of reliable information. Thus, at the time of the crisis, according to then federal Minister of Economic and Regional Expansion, there were between 1,000 and 3,000 members;[12] for Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa "there were only a few hundred ready to be active terrorists", while for

secessionist Parti Québécois leader, René Lévesque, the number was limited to "probably three dozen."[13] The Canadian Prime Minister spoke of "a handful of self-selected dictators" in a television address,[14] and his Secretary of State wrote of a 40 to 100 core group of active extremists, seconded by a smaller group of theoreticians, 200-300 sympathizers who would furnish money and other forms of aid and some 2,000 to 3,000 passive, but approving sympathizers.[15] This somewhat confused image is a great advantage to clandestinity and terrorism, for it reveals effective secrecy and remains a hazy quantity in the strategy of those who seek to destroy the group. Furthermore, the whole shroud of uncertainty leaves room for the imagination of all those outside of the group.

All these factors suggest that the F.L.Q. was capable of sustaining and even of increasing the scope of covert activities over a period of seven years. They also depict a group which sporadically, but relentlessly, represented a largely material threat in terms of human life and property, although such a threat can be deemed political if we consider that part of the function of the state is to protect both lives and property. At best, however, its political appeal prior to October 1970, seems to have been mostly restricted to fervent French Canadian nationalists, especially among the young. Yet, its terrorist attacks, according to the Secretary of State, increased both in numbers and in potency in the two years preceding

the crisis as compared to the 1963-67 period.[16] The life-span of the group indicates not only its ability to survive, but also its growing offensive and efficiency with respect to material damage. But its message through symbolic terrorist action seemed to lack the necessary support among the French Canadian population, in terms of its stated political goal. It need to be reinforced, and even to be restated clearly for all to understand. For this purpose, a special setting and exceptional circumstances would have to be created. The 1970 October crisis was to make this possible.

A Summary of the Major Elements of the October 1970 Crisis

Without giving a detailed account of the crisis, the following brief description[17] is necessary to provide the framework for our discussion of some of the symbolic dimensions of that political situation:

1. The Initial Offensive. The threat element of the crisis was launched by the consecutive kidnappings of two men by members of the F.L.Q. The hostages were political men: on October 5, 1970, James Cross, the British Trade Commissioner in Montreal was taken from his home; five days later, the same thing happened to the Quebec provincial Minister of Labour and Immigration, Pierre Laporte. The kidnappings were apparently used as bargaining leverage for seven demands which the F.L.Q. presented to the government. The element of

surprise consisted mainly in the fact that this was the first instance of political kidnapping in the history of the country. The threat factor was complex, but it involved, among other things, the lives of the two kidnapped men, the fact that the state had somehow "lost face" in not having provided adequate protection, especially for Cross, a member of the diplomatic corps and the supposition that perhaps other political persons could be potential F.L.Q. targets.

2. The Initial Response. This phase reflected a degree of uncertainty on the part of government. The day following the Cross kidnapping, External Affairs Minister Mitchell Sharp told the House of Commons: "Clearly, these are wholly unreasonable demands and their authors could not have expected them to be accepted. I need hardly say that this set of demands will not be met."[18] Yet, two days later, on October 8, the government yielded to one of the F.L.Q.'s demands by accepting that the group's manifesto be read on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's French-language television network. In the meantime, concerted police activity attempted to identify the abductors and their hideout. But the official position was restated, with a slight modification, by the Quebec provincial Justice Minister minutes before the second kidnapping: F.L.Q. demands would not be met, however, there would be clemency and due parole procedures for the twenty-three "political prisoners" (twenty convicted and three on bail pending trial) whose freedom the group stipulated as one of the

conditions for freeing the hostages.

3. The Second Response. The tone of the government's further response was set by the realization that the F.L.Q. "meant business"; that it took a tougher bargaining position in its second kidnapping for it involved a French Canadian provincial cabinet member and this, after one of its demands had been met. While police activity increased and there were some arrests, the government's response during this phase consisted mainly of: a) the designation of a government negotiator to meet with an F.L.Q. spokesman, recognized as such by the group. This could be viewed as a pragmatic move on the part of government in order to "buy" time for police investigation. It can also be seen as a symbolic concession, for negotiation implies some form of recognition of the oppositional terrorist group, a meeting on "equal" footing, so to speak; b) the summoning of soldiers, essentially for guard duty in order to replace overtaxed police resources. This military participation in the crisis began first in the national capital, Ottawa, on October 12, and spread three days later, to major centers of the province of Quebec; c) another rejection of F.L.Q. demands but this time by the Quebec Premier, who again modified the official refusal by adding an offer of safe conduct out of Canadian territory for the kidnappers, as well as, parole for five the the twenty-three "political prisoners".

4. The Final Response. Essentially, this stage consists of the government's ultimate counter-offensive to the threat posed by the F.L.Q. which consists primarily of the threat to the lives of the two hostages, but which, as we will attempt to argue, also included the group's temporary "invasion" of the mass media and its particularly evocative message. The final response occurred on October 16, 1970, when the Canadian government decided to resort to the emergency powers provided by the War Measures Act, and defined the specific nature and targets of the special powers which it would implement in the Public Order Regulations, 1970. Within twenty-four hours, approximately 250 arrests were made without warrants.[19] By October 19, the number of arrests rose to 341, and 1,350 searches were conducted, all these without warrants.[20]

5. The Final Offensive. Less than forty-eight hours after the government proclamation (4:00 a.m. October 16 is the official time), the body of the slain Quebec cabinet minister is found. One threat had been executed, and the other hostage still provided some bargaining leverage. On December 3, 1970, the abductors of James Cross were located and he was released in exchange for their safe conduct to Cuba. While it might be argued that, at this point, the crisis was terminated because the imminent threat to a hostage was removed, the uncaptured kidnappers of Pierre Laporte also represented a potential threat. Their final gesture had eliminated all bargaining

possibilities; hence, all risks, since the ultimate crime - murder - had been committed. They had nothing to lose. Thus, the crisis formally ended with the capture of the last, known source of threat, the kidnappers and slayers of Pierre Laporte, on December 27, 1970.

The above is by no means a full account of all that transpired during the crisis. However, it does reveal a perception of grave danger on the part of government decision-makers, enough to invoke war measures in a time of relative peace during which two political persons were kidnapped. This recourse preceded the killing of one of the hostages. As the authors of one book on the October crisis suggest, not even the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, which involved mass demonstrations, riots, police-citizen confrontations which resulted in deaths and injury, and which lasted for over a month, had incurred this type of extreme measure:

> The government in Ottawa was essentially the same one which had enacted and operated under the War Measures Act for the nearly five years which preceded the tumultous weeks of the Winnipeg General Strike. On many of the days when 'the events in the west' were being discussed, so was the War Measures Act and regulations [mostly economic after the War] made under it. Not once was it suggested that the events in Winnipeg, Bolshevik revolution [which occurred two years earlier] or not, constituted a state of insurrection within the meaning of the act.[21] [Brackets are mine]

It might be argued that, in terms of violence in the world, 1970

offers more fearful prospects than 1919. Yet, as the same authors point out, the "red scare" suscitated by the Bolshevik success in Russia at that time had already been evident in the United States, had been registered in the consciousness of certain Canadian milieux and had been compounded by a nascent trade unionism which was far from generally accepted by Canadian society as a whole.[22] The emergency measures adopted by the government in October 1970 were prompted by two kidnappings, a seven-year period of increasingly destructive acts of terrorism which entailed six deaths and for which the F.L.Q. had been responsible.

However, if we set the Winnipeg General Strike example aside, because of different variables and norms, we can still look south of the border to the violence, extensive material damage, numerous deaths and injuries involved in racial, anti-war and radical leftist demonstrations of militancy in the United States in the past decade, without finding an equivalent to the Canadian government's ultimate global response to the F.L.Q. threat. It is our view that, beyond the kidnappings and the history of that group's terrorist actions, there were deeper, more enigmatic "hidden" dimensions of contemporary French Canadian identity-seeking which were somehow crystallized, or which emerged during the crisis, before the discovery of the slain hostage, and which, in some way, partly provoked the extreme government response prior to the F.L.Q.'s extreme action of killing

Pierre Laporte. Something other than the terrorist threat was perceived by the government as a menace.

Politics and Drama: The "Scenario" of the October 1970 Crisis

Political life and the experience of drama in a theater are both social experiences, differing in many ways; yet, if we consider Murray Edelman's thesis (see Chapter II), both involve actors and spectators, as well as, fundamental, universal issues which concern all men. It is true that both also involve less grandiose elements and themes, but they are usually the background and trimmings needed to set the principal actors and the major meanings apart from the routine, the trivial, and the predictable. Claudius and Polonius are necessary to the makings of a Hamlet. In politics, picayune and often dreary preliminaries precede momentous declarations and decisions which may deeply affect one or several nations.

If we begin with the current Shakespearean formula: "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players...", then politics, drama, and all forms of social experience involve diverse roles. While the dramatic experience is induced in the sense that it is consciously created, the roles on the stage are determined by those already existing outside of the theater. People go to the theater, in many ways, to see themselves: as they are, or as they

dream of being. The Aristotelian premise is that men are political because this role is part of their nature. Men are political animals because they must be: it is part of their self-definition, and part of their role as human beings.

The exceptional moments in the dramatic experience in the theater have their counterparts in political life. Part of the enigmatic dimension of the dramatic experience is to be found in what is known as "the suspension of disbelief", wherein the spectator momentarily forgets that he is sitting in a theater, watching actors on a stage, and he "believes" what is before him, in the sense that he becomes mentally involved, through identification and association, with what he sees. In some ways, he appropriates what is before him, to his own experience. Part of this is achieved through symbols, which arouse his imagination, his memory, his emotions. Often, he is compelled to a type of awareness of himself, of his life, which does not characterize his usual, everyday thoughts and activities. Oedipus, Hamlet, and Willie Loman (Arthur Miller's salesman) interrupt his daily preoccupations because they symbolize, in a condensed and intense manner, elements of the human condition which concern him and all men. He is moved when he sees himself in these characters, and what he sees somehow alters his own self-definition, and the way he relates to the universe around him, even if this is only momentary. This part of the dramatic experience is as

existential and as fundamental as Aristotle's definition of man as a political animal, bearing in mind the initial qualification, that going to the theater, and being a member of the audience per se are a matter of choice, not necessity.

In political life there are various levels of similar momentary and intense "flashes" of revelation and meaningful experience, which involve far more than the rational, logical operations of both behaviour and the mind. The Second World War and the Neuremberg Trials which followed it were certainly analyzed and studied at length, yet they revealed aspects of political man which extend beyond the Machievellian or Hobbesian visions and which today are not fully understood. These events, what they mean in terms of the will and capacity of men to destroy other men, of their deepest motivations and hatreds, of the harmful of modern science and technology in war, of the horror of new tortures, of the ambiguities of a nation which simultaneously produces a Thomas Mann and a Hitler and which can accept the latter for more than a decade, persist even today as intense and arresting symbols which are part of contemporary man's self-definition. As in the phenomenon of "suspension of disbelief", we are, momentarily and perhaps permanently, jolted out of our daily assumptions about political life and the political beings that we are - be they expressed as political opinions or by joining a political party, or by criticizing a politician, or in voting, or by writing to

an elected representative, or by cynically dismissing the whole domain as a sham (which in itself may indicate an imagined, ideal political "ought") - and necessarily forced to assume, to identify with, to relate to these symbols because they somehow point to our unknown, "hidden" selves, to the limits of our destructive, complacent, emotional, aggressive and hateful aspects, which we are usually unwilling and/or unable to perceive and accept. This does not mean that all of those who have contemplated or have been directly involved with these events, have understood their symbolic implications, just as it cannot be assumed that Hamlet is likewise understood by all members of a given audience. Some may look at the objective story of the play from a distance and may concentrate on the events as part of a plot and suspense. Similarly, the war and trials might be viewed, perhaps by those geographically removed from the "theater of action" or totally untouched by it, as a remote blood-bath in which the villains were finally punished. But, in both drama and politics, the symbolic level is there, whether perceived or not, and it remains there to be discovered and defined.

One particular dimension which merits special emphasis in this parallel between drama and politics is that which deals with the processes of role-enactment and identification, which further involve identity or self-definition through symbols. An actor on stage acts out a role with which the audience can often identify. This too is a

part of the "magic" or mystery of drama, for a type of communion is created between the role-enactment on stage and an enactment "in the mind" of the audience which, for example, enables the latter to anticipate various possibilities in the dramatic characters' motivations and behaviour before these actually unfold or materialize on stage. This process is also known as role-taking which is part of identity formation and which begins in early childhood. Play for a child can, and does involve taking or acting out the role of doctor, or of parent, or of cowboy. When he plays games with fixed rules, his strategy must include taking the role of the opponent or competitor. A simple game like hide-and-seek involves choosing hiding places which the seeker is most unlikely to find. All this involves identification with symbolic or actual roles or people (as role-players) and becomes part of self-definition.[23] Audience involvement in drama is an extension of this process, for through role-enactment on stage, we can confront and mentally assume our problems in human relationships, the tensions, guilts, doubts, conflicts and fears which may surround them, without suffering from these, directly, in actual situations.

Social interaction, which necessarily includes political interaction can also be seen as consisting of various forms of dramatic expression, for it involves the enactment of roles or role-taking, through which individuals and groups seek to identify with each other as part of their attempts to define themselves.

Every person "plays" numerous roles, and in doing this, he either uses or responds to symbolic expression. The roles themselves - son, father, employee, husband - are the symbolic, as well as the actual (empirical) ingredients of his symbolic self-definition. As an "animale symbolicum", man's social behaviour is motivated not only by biological, and a multitude of other recognized needs, but also by the need to symbolize the more enigmatic aspects of himself and his experiences which he cannot readily comprehend, define or analyze through reason alone, nor through the use of other, existing conceptual tools.[24] Human interaction involves role-enactment in a series of "ritual dramas" which are based on certain major myths and assumptions. The social dimension of religious experience offers many illustrations of this thesis. The Catholic communion is one instance of a ritual which is a re-enactment of an episode in the myth or story of Christ. The taking of "bread and wine" symbolizes not only a mysterious (in the sense that it cannot be rationally explained) communion with the deity, but also an essential part of the Christian myth. Moreover, the ritual itself involves an "acting out" of the myth, and identification with its tenets and with the larger community of Christians, all of which provide a sense of "belonging" and a religious identity to the participant. Similarly, political life offers examples of this process, one of which is voting. The ritual, that is, the actions involved, can be seen as both an "acting out" and as a general symbol of the democratic myth.[25] On the empirical level,

voting can be described in terms of a decision-making or sanctioning activity which is part of the quantitative measurement of concensus or dissent, and which is necessary to majority rule. On another level, voting symbolizes a series of concepts and beliefs which form the basis of the democratic myth; among them, the sanctity of the individual, "one man, one vote", the principles of representative government, and so on. In this context, the ritual also involves identification with a larger political community which the actor believes in, and wherein he practices the precepts which the myth prescribes.[26] Erich Fromm points to the need for increasing dramatization through ritualization as a remedy to the "lonely crowd" phenomenon of modern times, for these processes brings man out of his increasing social isolation and back into the community:[27]

> ... [when speaking of rituals] we are dealing with various forms of dramatization of the fundamental problems of human existence, an acting out of the very same problems which are thought out in philosophy and theology. What is left of such dramatization of life in modern culture? Almost nothing. Man hardly ever gets out of the realm of man-made conventions and things, and hardly ever breaks through the surface of his routine aside from grotesque attempts to satisfy the need for a ritual as we see it practiced in lodges and fraternities. The only phenomenon approaching the meaning of a ritual, is the participation of the spectator in competitive sports; here at least, one fundamental problem of human existence is dealt with: the fight between men and the vicarious experience of victory and defeat .... All this fascination with competitive sports, crime and passion, shows the need for breaking through the

> routine surface, but the way of its satisfaction shows the extreme poverty of our solution.[28] [Author's italics, my brackets.]

Writing in the relative domestic calm of post-war North America in the early fifties, Fromm might retrospectively revise his view about the unique place of competitive sports.

According to the general perspective set out above, the October 1970 crisis has all the makings of drama within the context of political experience. The dramatic and the ritual elements entail the existence of diverse levels of symbolic interpretation.[29] Similarly to drama itself, there were principal actors involved in a momentous and crucial "scenario" in which human lives and certain fundamental issues of political life were at stake. As a crisis, the usual routines and assumptions of everyday political life, while still operating, were paradoxically and momentarily, suspended. Just as Hamlet the play, is not a reflection of Mr. Everyman, but an intense condensation and an enlargement of issues which concerns all men; so too, the October crisis in Canada, while not representative of much of Canadian political life, can nevertheless be viewed as an exceptional moment, during which certain fundamental questions concerning man's political nature and his political life, were raised. If, indeed, a political crisis is comparable to a crucial turning-point in a patient's medical history which will end with either

recovery or death; then, that political situation involves survival, perhaps on various levels, which is analogous to Hamlet's often-quoted, universal dilemma: "To be, or not to be ...", Finally, and still related to the dramatic experience, but from the audience's point of view, because the principal actors in this political crisis are involved in a basic struggle, the outcome of which imports the entire political community, the identification and role-enactment processes referred to above, become operative between actors and audience.

We have already noted the major elements of the October crisis. In the symbolic language of drama, it was a situation in which, at first, there was a clearly-defined antagonist, the F.L.Q., and a protagonist, consisting mainly of the federal government, although the Quebec provincial government, and politice authorities on various levels could also be included. This clear delineation did not, as we shall attempt to show, remain; nor were these roles perceived in the same way by all members of the audience. Although it is impossible to say how many, certain French Canadians saw the F.L.Q. as the protagonist, reacting to an undesirable, yet existing political system. Except for the F.L.Q., the initial threat came not only as a surprise to everyone, but the nature of that threat was also novel in terms of the Canadian experience. It was the first instance of a political kidnapping, a fact which plunged the country

into the uncomfortable prospect of having poorer nations and "banana republics" as bedfellows. It was also the first time, during a period of peace and not war, that there was talk of "political prisoners": the term is not recognized in a peaceful democracy. The image of the country, however blurred it may have been prior to the crisis, was, for many Canadians and for the world, at least momentarily. altered. The uncertainty and the tension which these factors created can be reasonably related to an ensuing need, on the part of the audience, for identifying with one of the roles enacted by the principal actors. The rituals enacted by both antagonist and protagonist in the political arena would point to fundamental political myths upon which diverse forms of political life are based, and which necessarily captures the attention, and involves even a divided audience in the type of dramatic experience discussed above.

Also worthy of note is another novelty within the Canadian context, which added to the dramatic aura of the crisis, and which, like the first political kidnapping, also emanated from the initial antagonist, the F.L.Q. The suspense surround the fate of a man's life was compounded by a momentary "take-over" of the mass media. Media coverage would have been ensured in any case because of the gravity of the situation. Yet, by using some sectors of the media as "mailboxes" and communicators of its messages, the F.L.Q. succeeded in inserting its own content, expressed in its own phraseology, into

a prominent position within the general hierarchy of mass media information diffusion. Playing on the competitiveness of the mass media, which stresses that the rapid diffusion of "scoops" can increase the clientele, the group sent nineteen[30] messages directly to two Montreal radio stations, CKLM and CKAC, and to an equal number of local newspapers, Le Journal de Montréal and Québec-Presse, over a forty-seven day period (from October 5 to November 21), knowing that most of these would be promptly made public. As Charles A. Reich, author of The Greening of America, puts it: "Has anyone ever been able to see a program prepared by the Black Panthers, or migratory workers, or student draft resisters, or New Left economic critics ... presented on a major network?"[31] In the Canadian crisis experience of 1970, the novelty was to be found in a type of short-lived manipulation of the mass media, since a radical oppositional political group, which operates outside the legal forms of dissent, could not, in non-crisis times, likely be allowed to write its own "copy", to use the journalist jargon, for other than underground or ideologically-committed publications with relatively limited circulation. Yet, as one writer on the crisis comments:

> The country lived through a chapter of its history that was at once bizarre and tragic, unbelievable and terrifying. For three months Canadians knew literally only what the F.L.Q. told them. Their communiques were about the only hard news the public had ...[32]

While the three months' reference may be exaggerated, the F.L.Q.'s skilfull use of the media is, to our knowledge, the first instance of this sort to have occurred within a contemporary, liberal democracy such as Canada's. Moreover, in the identification process which will be described further below, the fact that a group of previously anonymous radicals can accomplish this feat might have been significant to some members of the audience who are equally anonymous in terms of mass media coverage. In some ways, it might have symbolized a type of victory for the "faceless little man".

Still in terms of our dramatic model, prior to the government's recourse to emergency powers, the spotlight was on the antagonist. The F.L.Q. began the ritual of radical oppositional politics, through both a de facto and a symbolic attack, in the form of kidnappings, on the existing political system, its ideology and its political myth. As a representative of the British government, James Cross at once symbolized a historic defeat of the French by the British in Canada's colonial period, and the Anglo-Saxon continental context which surrounds and menaces French Canadians as a distinct, different people. Pierre Laporte, as a member of the provincial Quebec government, is part of the federal political system, and as we shall see, is also a symbol of the betrayal by certain French Canadians, of their true aspirations and destiny as a people. The protagonist is surprised.

The kidnappings are an affront to the state's role in protecting the citizen, in promoting harmony through a certain degree of concensus - components of the existing political myth - and, more specifically, to the government's ability in handling growing French Canadian nationalist unrest in Quebec in the few years prior to the crisis. As one analyst of the crisis points out:

> There is evidence enough in the evolution of the independence movement over ten years to indicate that it is not a flash-in-the-pan, that the draining away of commitment to the Canadian state is chronic, strongly motivated, and irreversible by democratic means.[33]

Confusion reigned and was manifested in various reactions: the federal government initially states it would not meet any of the F.L.Q. demands, a refusal which was followed two days later by an acceptance to telecast the F.L.Q. manifesto (this was one of the group's demands);[34] some prominent Quebec citizens, including editorialist Claude Ryan, propose to strengthen the provincial government's role by offering their concerted consultative services, an offer which was misconstrued by some, to mean a subversive plot to form a type of parallel government which would discredit legitimate elected legislators.[35] Actually that group's main concern was to save the lives of the two hostages. Protagonist and antagonist symbolically met to parlay through representative spokesmen. Again this added to the confusion, for while it may have involved government

strategy to bid for more time, a meeting of "negotiators" conveys the image of a kind of equality, wherein each party recognizes the other's position, even its legitimacy. In the meantime, the mass media played the two-pronged role of narrator of events, and of reporter of both the antagonist's and the protagonist's messages. This was done in a "play by play" fashion, so familiar to Canadian hockey audiences. The F.L.Q.'s antagonist image was somewhat blurred in Quebec when its manifesto was published and broadcasted.

Several analysts of the crisis period noted a considerable degree of acceptance among French Canadians of the portrait painted of their situation in the manifesto:

> ... à cause des circonstances dramatiques qui ontentouré sa [le manifeste] diffusion, il a obligé une grande partie de la population à écouter des choses qui lui sont dites (pour la plupart) depuis longtemps.... Je pense qu'il y également des explications de nature psychologiques à l'acceuil relativement positif réservé par une certaine partie de la population aux revendications énumérées dans le manifeste du F.L.Q. Une de ces explications rejoint l'aspect théâtral ... et s'apparente à la joie des enfants qui voient Guignol rosser le gendarme .... A cet égard, l'insolence de l'interpellation des hommes publics par le F.L.Q. favorisait une sorte de défoulement chez l'auditeur ou le téléspectateur qui se disait, en pensant à M. Trudeau ou au maire Drapeau: 'Ils se font parler dans la face'.[36]
>
> [Brackets are mine.]
>
> Dans une grande partie de la population, qu'il est impossible d'évaluer numériquement, on trouve des

> connivences latentes, implicites ou secrètes avec les idées dont le F.L.Q. s'est servi pour dresser un tableau de la situation. Son manifeste est considéré comme une description très fidèle de la situation actuelle au Québec.[37]
>
> Le F.L.Q. n'intervenait pas pour la première fois; le contenu de son manifeste n'avait rien d'une révélation sur les problèmes du Québec. Pourquoi a-t-il sensibilisé brusquement tant de nos concitoyens?[38]

The Canadian audience became divided as the antagonist took on the momentary appearance of the hero in a "David versus Goliath" type of confrontation for those French Canadians who through their acceptance of the manifesto, momentarily saw the F.L.Q. as a heroic spokesman. Most other Canadians did not and could not similarly identify with a document full of local references and vernacular expressions. Besides, the document dealt with specifically French Canadian issues and problems and was specifically addressed to the French Canadian audience in Quebec. As we will attempt to demonstrate, part of the F.L.Q.'s role-enactment, like David's in the biblical simile, consisted of "saving" its people, the French Canadians, from an almost overwhelming threat, the"Goliath"of English Canada, of a wider continental cultural, economic, and political "foreign" menace. Within the context of this role-enactment, it not only threatened the government through deeds, such as the kidnappings, but it also attempted to threaten its image. Sometimes, it succeeded. While there was a general refusal, on the part of the politicians, for example, to discuss "political

prisoners", a term used by the F.L.Q. in its demands, the Quebec Premier nevertheless used the phrase in a radio address broadcast on October 12.[39] Another example of this type of tactic was evident in the negotiation issue: the F.L.Q. approved a spokesman who offered to negotiate on its behalf, and the government immediately appointed a spokesman. The negotiations at the bargaining table symbolized an apparent recognition, almost a legitimization of the group in much the same manner as the Premier's usage of the term "political prisoners". Furthermore it could even be reasonably assumed that the F.L.Q.'s temporary manipulation of the media might, to a certain extent, have reinforced the audiences's credibility as to the group's capabilities.

While part of the Quebec, French Canadian audience implicitly or otherwise, indentified with the message of the manifesto, much of the rest of Canada, could only respond to the frightening novelty of two political kidnappings, as the following statement by the then Premier of Ontario, John Robarts, reveals:

> There is no way we can yield to these terrorist demands ... this has got to be a law-abiding country where you can bring your family up without fear ... the demands are wrong - morally and socially wrong - we have to stand and fight. It's war - total war.[40]

Soldiers in full combat dress first appeared in the nation's capital, as guards to political and diplomatic persons and their families, and

then in Quebec. The unusual military presence on the streets and in buildings heightened the sense of drama. The state was preparing for its own principal role enactment.

This occurred with the invocation of the War Measures Act on October 16. The state had been challenged, and it dramatically asserted its role as the ultimate repository of power and coercion, as the proponent of the democratic myth which prescribes majority rule through elected representatives operating within a parliamentary context, and as the supreme spokesman (through government and parliament) for all Canadians, including French Canadians. As Denis Smith remarks, the role of the state became clearly defined with the October 16 government decision:

> As much as the governments [federal and provincial] might say they regretted it, the two hostages were now seen as relatively insignificant pawns in a much broader struggle to maintain the integrity of the state.[41] [Brackets are mine.]

What was, at the beginning of the crisis, an undecided, and even a bewildered protagonist: "The picture which emerges of the first few days of the crisis ... of a government in shock, almost in trauma,"[42] was transformed into positive role-enactment. The hesitant protagonist who previously had feebly defined itself through public statements and who had anxiously awaited the results of police investigations, took on not only the role but also the ritual activities prescribed

by the myth which defines it. The ritual began with the Prime Minister's telecast statement on October 16:

> To bow to the pressures of these kidnappers who demand that the prisoners be released would not only be an abdication of responsibility, it would lead to an increase of terrorist activities in Quebec. It would be as well an invitation to terrorism and kidnapping across the country .... It [the government] is acting to make clear to kidnappers, revolutionaries and assassins that in this country laws are made and changed by the elected representatives of all Canadians not by a handful of self-styled dictators. Those who gain power through terror, rule by terror.[43] [Brackets are mine]

The dramatic "duel" between antagonist and protagonist, between myth and countermyth became more clearly delineated, and in the oldest tradition of drama, each was "acting out" a specific role necessitated by the circumstances. Moreover, the survival of each was, in many ways, at stake before a concerned and mixed audience, which diversely identified with one or the other. Strangely enough, each saw itself as a hero, defending a worthwhile cause. And to continue the parallel with drama, the issues were perceived both by the actors and audience as being crucial to the future of the polity. To put it in Fromm's terms,[44] the antagonist and protagonist were acting out what had been thought out in political theory and philosophy. As in drama, the crisis brought out archetypal preoccupations which are always latently present in political life; as Fernand Dumont puts it:

> ... elle [the crisis] force à s'interroger sur les conditions premières pour que naisse un projet collectif, sur des coordonnées élémentaires que nous connaissions sans doute abstraitement mais que la récente commotion aura enfin rendues à notre expérience concrète.[45] [Brackets are mine.]

Part of this dramatization and ritualization during the crisis interests us more particularly: that which emanated from the F.L.Q. We have already mentioned the threats to the existing political power structure, to two lives, the context of its previous terrorist activities. We have drawn a general outline of the crisis in terms of strategic and manipulative elements, and in terms of its dramatic dimensions. We have suggested, along with certain analysts of that period, that through its written messages,and especially through its manifesto, the F.L.Q. somehow struck a sensitive chord in many French Canadians, who did not necessarily agree with the group's methods; but, that through the kidnappings, it "acted out" the vision or countermyth, thus creating a dramatic situation which enabled it to successfully communicate that vision to a population which was also a concerned and attentive audience. We are not, in this study, concerned with the effects of the killing of Pierre Laporte, nor with the motives involved. Suffice it to say that it broke a "spell" momentarily created by the tenor of the vision communicated by the F.L.Q. and by the initial circumstances provoked by the F.L.Q. before the killing. Our hypothesis is that the "spell" and the vision basically involved

symbolic expression, and this is the area which we intend to explore, not for the purpose of providing final answers about the crisis, but because symbols in the political domain, have stirred men's imaginations, their feelings, and have even prompted them to action, in the past, and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. As we have already discovered in this study, examining these means not only delving into those dimensions of political life which extend beyond the rational mechanisms of the mind and those functions and structures of the polity which reason initiates, develops and maintains: symbols are also the necessary tools for interpreting the vast and enigmatic complexity of political experience, as well as being part of the "animale symbolicum's" inescapable and relentless attempt at self-definition within the context of that experience.

The F.L.Q.'s Verbal Symbols and Political Self-Definition During the Crisis

Our main concern, for the remainder of this study, is with the role of symbols in political self-definition. Man, as our discussion has thus far indicated, is both a political and symbolizing animal: as such, he is constantly formulating his political identity and interpreting the political life around him, through symbols. Our particular interest is to examine how, during the October crisis, the F.L.Q. at once reflected, revealed, and defined, in its own terms and through symbolic expression, an "identity crisis" and the accompanying

need for what it set out as being the authentic French Canadian identity. Erik Erikson refers to the "identity crisis" as being a crucial phase, wherein the individual or group identity or self-definition is confronted with some type of change, with which it must either cope by using all available resources to adjust to that change, or be submerged and be even destroyed by it.[46] For him, the human identity is a psychosocial phenomenon: it cannot be separated from environmental societal evolution and change, nor from the ways in which man relates to external reality and constructs convincing images of that reality. The formation of identity, and itssubsequent preservation is a relational process involving the self constantly referring to interrelating with the human environment.[47] The crisis of self-definition was, as we shall attempt to demonstrate, part of the October 1970 crisis and of the dramatic framework which we have outlined above.

We have already noted one interpretation of the F.L.Q.'s message (as conveyed primarily in its manifesto) and its meaningful resonance among many French Canadians, as revealing a type of identity crisis, wherein a modern identity, which had emerged during the Sixties' "Quiet Revolution", but which had not been firmly consolidated or defined, was already challenged by a post-modern and very different identity.[48] The latter is brilliantly defined by Charles A. Reich as "Consciousness III", the youth-initiated counterculture identity, a

product of the material affluence, status-seeking,rational planning, and the progressive, liberal goals which characterize modernity; a heritage rejected by the new consciousness in favour of other life styles and values. These consistof a new type of unstructured and anti-structure humanism, which emphasizes, among other things, the search for an authentic (as opposed to a formal, prescribed pattern) self and equally spontaneous, natural human relationships; peaceful world coexistence; a respect for the ecological balance of nature and for the quality of the urban environment.[49] In Quebec, where traditional identity and roles began giving way to modern ones fairly recently, the still new modern ethos and life-style already coexisted with a nascent post-modern identity, mainly found among certain segments of the youth. Yet, as Reich points out, the essence of post-modern identity is the recovery of the self, and as a real need for this exists in other less youthful sectors of society, which are also experiencing various sorts of disenchantment with the existing state of affairs, the new consciousness might, in time, gain more widespread support in affluent societies.[50]

An important aspect of post-modern identity for this paper, is the process of "radical reinterpretation" which it entails. For Kenneth Keniston, who coined the term, "radical reinterpretation" occurs primarily among the young in their re-evaluation and redefinition of the moral, social and political dimensions of an

environment which surrounds and which has nurtured them. As part of an identity crisis, and the formulation of a new self-definition, "radical reinterpretation" involves perceptual and expressive mechanisms which lead to corresponding action. It can begin with experiencing or seeing injustices which somehow does not coincide with the ideals of democracy learned at home or in school in earlier, formative years. This can be followed by a rejection of the liberal democratic vision, which recognizes the ills, but which believes they can be remedied by existing institutional and other accepted channels. The disillusionment with the socio-political system may lead to confrontations with it, which can reinforce the disenchantment by revealing the "true", oppressive, unjust nature of that system. Furthermore, such confrontations are eventually initiated by the reinterpreters, in order to demonstrate the veracity of their vision, and to persuade others, who may have also experienced some disillusionment or even deprivation, to share in the reinterpretation. An essential part of the process of "radical reinterpretation" is a type of existential apprenticeship inspired by, and based on prior models of radical commitment and vision: a form of necessary identification which cannot operate through the normal channels of varied social interaction since most of these are rejected by the new identity.[51] This in itself is part of the "acting out" of the new identity.

Having established some features of identity formation, we can now turn to the F.L.Q.'s vision covering the vast and complex issue of

the political self-definition of French Canadians in Quebec. It expresses that vision principally through the verbal symbols used in its messages, and particularly in its manifesto, during the crisis. The overall theme is established through symbols which convey a Third World identity, based on Frantz Fanon's moving vision which emerges from his book Les damnés de la terre.[52] Born in the French Antilles, a negro, a psychiatrist, and a participant in the successful Algerian decolonization revolution, Fanon himself is a model symbolizing the abused and exploited, non-white, non-affluent world, as well as the intellectually aware and committed revolutionary who had combined theory and belief with active political involvement. His portrait of colonialism includes economic, political and class considerations. But its most potent and devastating feature seems to come from Fanon the psychiatrist, who diagnoses colonialism as a socio-political sickness which has diseased the colonized man's personality and mind. The non-indigenous, foreign, dominating and exploiting colonialist robs more than land and resources: he robs those he colonizes of their virility, their identity, their integrity as autonomous agents:

> La vérité est que la colonisation, dans son essence, se présentait déjà comme une grande pourvoyeuse des hôpitaux psychiatriques. Dans différents travaux scientifiques nous avons, depuis 1954, attiré l'attention des psychiatres français et internationaux sur la difficulté qu'il y avait à 'guérir' correctement un colonisé, c'est-à-dire à le rendre homogène de part en part

> à un milieu social de type colonial. Parce qu'il est une négation systématisée de l'autre, une décision forcenée de refuser à l'autre tout attribut d'humanité, le colonialisme accule le peuple dominé à se poser constamment la question: 'Qui suis-je en réalité?'[53]

Within the context of colonialism, being a damné does not only mean being dehumanized, for it is a paradoxical condition. An image of the self is imposed by the colonizer, by the outsider. That imposed identity is false; yet, it reinforces itself in a curious manner. The imposed, vilifying identity is gradually accepted by the colonized, to such a point that it becomes self-imposed depreciation:

> La ville du colonisé ... le village nègre ... est un lieu malfamé, peuplé d'hommes malfamés ... Au niveau des individus, on assiste à une véritable négation du bon sens. Alors que le colon et le policier peuvent, à longueur de journée, frapper le colonisé, l'insulter, le faire mettre à genoux, on verra le colonisé sortir son couteau au moindre regard hostile ou agressif d'un autre colonisé. Car la dernière ressource du colonisé est de défendre sa personnalité face à son congénère ... Tous ces comportements sont des réflexes de mort en face du danger, des conduites-suicides qui permettent au colon, dont la vie et la domination se trouvent consolidées d'autant, de vérifier par la même occasion que ces hommes ne sont pas raisonnables.[54]

It is no wonder that Fanon unhesitatingly claims that for the colonized, challenging colonialism is not a rational affair: "La mise en question du monde colonial par le colonisé n'est pas une confrontation rationnelle des points de vues."[55] For Fanon, the only salvation for the colonized man

is violent decolonization, the ousting of the colonialist, the source of the wretched, dehumanizing process:

> La décolonisation ... modifie fondamentalement l'être, elle transforme des spectateurs écrasés d'inessentialité en acteurs privilégiés, saisis de façon quasi grandiose par le faisceau de l'Histoire. Elle introduit dans l'être un rythme propre, apporté par les nouveau hommes, un nouveau langage, une nouvelle humanité ... L'indépendance n'est pas un mot à exorciser mais une condition indispensable a l'existence des hommes et des femmes vraiment libérés c'est-à-dire maîtres de tous les moyens matériels qui rendent possible la transformation radicale de la société.[56]

Both the man's life and his thinking are the models for the F.L.Q.'s "radical reinterpretation". Thus, in its very first message during the crisis, it points to the French Canadians' colonized status and how this motivated the F.L.Q. kidnapping strategy:

> Par cette action, le Front de Libération du Québec veut attirer l'attention mondiale sur le sort fair aux Québécois francophones, <u>majorité bafouée et écrasée sur son propre territoire</u> par un système politique erroné (le fédéralisme canadien) et par une économie régie pour les intérêts de la haute finance américaine, les big boss racistes et impérialistes.[57] [Italics are mine]

In that same message, after having attached the Fanonesque symbols of wretchedness (in above italics) to the French Canadian's present collective identity, the F.L.Q. continues in that vein by sending greetings to other liberation movements, with whom it identifies and

especially to the Cuban and Algerian people who successfully destroyed colonialism and imperialism in their respective countries, to banish forever the exploitation of man by man. Again, the Fanonesque language is invoked:

> ... nous croyons que le seul et véritable appui valable que l'on peut apporter à ces peuples qui marchent vers leur libération c'est d'abord de nous libérer nous-mêmes.[58]

In its first message, the F.L.Q. sets out its major politicization task vis à vis French Canadians in Quebec: to map out the present, false damné identity, imposed upon them from outside, foreign sources, and to set it against a contrasting portrait of a true identity, possible only through "liberation" or decolonization. This is the vision or countermyth upon which the "acting out" of the F.L.Q. during the crisis, is based. But the Fanon-inspired vision is, as we have noted, complex. The colonized man's identity prior to decolonization is not only false: it also entails self-depreciation. The "acting out" of a vision by the F.L.Q. during the crisis did not only involve holding up different images of identity. It also included opening the wounds of self-depreciation, as well as a suicidal type of error such as killing a man, an individual who was by no stretch of the imagination the type of "monster", whose murder might elicit positive response. Desparate actions may have been used to point to the desperate, dehumanizing conditions of those

who assume the role and identity of the wretched of the earth, but they may also reflect the destroyed and self-destructive elements of that assumed identity.

The "radical reinterpretation" of self-definition, which involves a present and a future, possible identity, is best achieved by the F.L.Q. through various verbal symbolic mechanisms in the manifesto.[59] One of these mechanisms is what Lasswell calls the definition of the political "we"[60] and this can be achieved through symbols of identification. The "we" is a symbolization of the individual's identity as a social and political, more inclusive self. In addressing an audience, with the specific intent of influencing it, that "we" must be clearly defined and it must be inclusive; that is, it must surmount any distance or barrier between the communicator and the audience. The F.L.Q. ably inserted itself into its audience to avoid such barriers. It dispelled the heroic aura which it felt many, perhaps among the young in particular, could attribute to its action. Two symbols are rejected at the outset: the group declares that it is neither "le messie" nor "un Robin des bois des temps modernes." The hunger for such figures in a predominantly Catholic population, with a "coureur des bois" adventurous folklore, may have been intuited. In any case, the insertion we referred to is made with the declaration that it is "un groupement de travailleurs québécois."

The political "we" is symbolically defined through local references and issues known and therefore easily recognized while, at the same time, facilitating identification. The disenchantment with the existing state of affairs, the starting point of "radical reinterpretation", is expressed through a symbolic event, which occupies almost half of the manifesto: the April 29, 1970 provincial elections. It becomes the paradigm example of colonialism: all its dimensions point to the fact that there is no other way out, so to speak, than the Fanon-prescribed solution. In fact, it represents the terrorism of the existing way of life on all levels - "Nous vivons dans une société d'esclaves terrorisés" - a situation which is so self-destructive that French Canadian are not only enslaved, but they are also terrorized, fearful, cowering slaves. Again the ambiguity of the inauthentic, self-depreciative, imposed identity which somehow finds the will and the way to discard the alienation image of the self, and gain a new one, through violent decolonization. The April elections provide a perfect blueprint for outlining these ambiguities.

Quoting the respected separatist leader and former Liberal cabinet member, René Lévesque, whose reaction to that event could be summarized as declaring the victory of financial power over other legitimate electoral tactics, the F.L.Q. adds its own indictment: "La victoire du parti libéral ... n'est en fait que la victoire des

faiseurs d'élections Simard-Cotroni." The latter names refer respectively to the welathy in-laws of Premier Bourassa and to a well known underworld figure,a collusion not unfamiliar to those French Canadians who recall the corruption of the Duplessis regime. In choosing the event, the F.L.Q. was consciously dwelling on an issue which had already been the object of furor in the province's nationalist circles. That anger was most coherently explained by Bernard Smith, who through a demographic-ethnic breakdown of electoral districts, claimed with a reasonable research basis, that if the Liberal party had won that election, it was mostly due to a homogeneous, united, and concerted bote on the part of the minority non French Canadians, "foreign" presence in the province.[61] His thesis is, that together with such indirect threats as the exporting of capital outside of the provinces (in the infamous Brink's trucks), and the archaic electoral districts divisions which, he demonstrates, favours the non French Canadian minority, the fact that a minority can elect a party to power constitutes a virtual <u>coup d'état</u>:

> ... pour les quatres prochaines années, le Québec aura le gouvernement élu par les N.F.C. [Non French Canadians] et contre la volonté du peuple québécois. L'élection du 29 constitue de ce fait, une usurpation porale du pouvoir, un véritable coup d'état.[62] [Brackets are mine]

Thus, the last minute evacuation of moneys and stocks in the trucks of the Brink's security agency by the country's largest Montreal-based trust company because it feared a possible victory of the secessionist Parti Québécois, was already seen by many as a breach of trust, if not outright blackmail in the event of such a victory. This was the type of raw material from which the Fanon vision had been drawn. For the F.L.Q., this local incident would symbolize foreign domination which has no respect for French Canadian institutions: "les blindés de la Brinks, véritable symbole de l'occupation étrangère au Québec." The April 29 election did not only unjustly crush French Canadian nationalist aspirations but it also humiliated them as a people, for the Brink's incident was to keep "les pauvres 'natives' québécois dans la peur de la misère et du chômage auxquels nous sommes tant habitués." The image of les damnés become clearer, more understandable in terms of collective experience. The inevitable rejection of the existing political myth ensues in the "radical reinterpretation":

> ...à la victoire libérale montre bien que ce qu'on appelle démocratie au Québec n'est en fait et depuis toujours que la 'democracy' des riches .... En conséquence, le parlementarisme britannique c'est bien fini ... le Front de Libération du Québec ne se laissera jamais distraire par les miettes électorales que les capitalistes anglosaxons lancent dans la basse-cour québécoise à tous les quatre ans.... Oui il y a des raisons à la victoire libérale ... au fait que vous M. Bergeron de la rue Visitation et aussi vous M. Legendre de Ville Laval qui

> gagnez 10,000 dollars par année, vous ne vous sentiez pas libre en notre pays le Québec. [Italics are mine.]

The myth is foreign in origin and nature, as indicated by the italicized words above, and is directly linked to the French Canadian's feeling that he is not a free agent in his own country. This perspective prescribes the rejection of that myth, and the liberation which Fanon claims is the only road to a true self-definition, to the recovery of an authentic individual and collective self.

Significantly, the initial preoccupation of the F.L.Q. manifesto is centred around the provincial election issue, and not on the more Marxist approach of dealing with class struggle and antagonism or the material, economic basis of conflict and false consciousness. Perhaps this is a lesson learned from Fanon's <u>démarche</u>, which avoids ideological dogma and aims at a direct definition of the colonialist-colonized relation, the core of both the dispossessed identity of the colonized, and of the eventual confrontation which will bring his salvation. Yet, another level of the F.L.Q. countermyth, vaguely takes the Marxist vision into account, but still within the context of local references which are meant to symbolize the political "we". The Montreal that is familiar to many Quebeckers becomes a symbolic theater wherein streets and districts become symbols of class differences, inhabited by the "haves" and the "have-nots": "la rue

Visitation ... Ville Laval" is set off against "... des Westmount, des Town of Mount-Royal, des Hampstead, des Outremont, tous ces véritables châteaux forts de la haute finance de la rue St-Jacques et de la Wall Street." But the non-French names and the inclusion of Wall Street suggest that, after all, the Fanon vision is still dominant, for he was insistent on defining the ruling class first within the framework of colonialism:

> La zone habitée par les colonisés n'est pas complémentaire de la zone habitée par les colons. Ces deux zones s'opposent .... Ce ne sont ni les usines, ni les propriétés, ni le compte en banque qui caractérisent d'abord la 'classe dirigeante'. L'espèce dirigeante est d'abord celle qui vient d'ailleurs, celle qui ne ressemble pas aux autochtones, 'les autres'.[63]

The "others", the foreigners, are part of a corporate political structure, which includes those French Canadians, who by their acceptance of and participation in the colonialist non-French Canadian exploiting activities. Their names, or their companies' name evoke the stated and thereafter implied refrain "vous ne vous sentiez pas libre en notre pays, le Québec": "... Iron Ore ... Quebec Cartier Mining ... Noranda ... Vickers ... Squibb ... Seven Up ... Dupont of Canada ... Steinberg, Clark, Bronfman, Smith, Neapole, Timmins, Geoffrion, J.L. Levesque, Hershorn, Thompson, Nesbitt, Desmarais, Kierans." The dispossession ranges from fishing and hunting reserves, bought by American interests, to language - "cheap labour means main-d'oeuvre

à bon marché" - to monopolies, to import policies which fail to protect smaller business enterprises, to trade union activity penalized by the courts.

Symbolic events or groups, like symbolic names, further convey the Fanonesque vision. The "we" is also defined through references to local labour disputes. The "gars de Lapalme", objects of one of the F.L.Q.'s demands, mentioned again in the manifesto, does not only refer to a strike. It is meant to symbolize, in the manifesto, the humiliating callousness of a "colonizing" government which places efficiency above men's material and psychological needs. Thus, a strike which had already been the subject of discussion, particularly in the French language information media, became the symbol of the impending doom of the French Canadian people if they do not decide to take matters into their own hand,so to speak.

The use of language per se symbolizes this dispossession, and is operative within the colonialist perspective derived from Fanon. In the manifesto, the F.L.Q. uses the following English words which is part of the disdainful and dominating language of the "others":

> show, big boss, cheap labour, democracy,
> repeat after me: cheap labour, boss, money-makers,
> commonwealth, lousy French, peanuts, businessman
> natives, hold-up.

Again, while these are foreign and imposed images of the self, and of values and they reflect the "damné" condition, some of them, such as "cheap labour" again suggest an awareness of the self-depreciation involved in that condition. In Black Skin, White Mask,[63] written by Fanon in 1952, prior to his last work Les damnes de la terre, he deals with the complexes of negritude and how to conquer them. Significantly, the first chapter is entitled: "The Negro and Language". He bluntly carves out the relation between language and colonization:

> The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter - that is, he will come closer to being a real human being - in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language .... A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language .... Mastery of language affords remarkable power .... Every colonized people ... every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality - finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation ... with the culture of the mother country.[64]

The French Canadian equivalent of what Fanon is talking about is joual, the patois of the French spoken in Quebec. Back in 1960, a teaching clergyman who played a major role in launching the "Quiet Revolution" which brought the province into the modern era, noted the relation between language and the collective identity of the French Canadian "we":

> Nos élèves parlent joual, écrivent joual et ne veulent pas parler ni écrire autrement .... Le joual est une langue désossée .... Le joual est une décomposition .... Cette absence de langue qu'est le joual est un cas de notre inexistence, à nous, les Canadiens français .... Notre inaptitude à nous affirmer, notre refus de l'avenir, notre obsession du passé, tout cela se reflète dans le joual .... C'est toute la société canadienne-française qui abandonne. C'est nos commerçants qui affichent des raisons sociales anglaises. Et voyez les panneaux-réclame tout le long de nos routes. Nous sommes une race servile. Nous avons eu les reins cassés, il y a deux siècles, et ça paraît.[66]

The issue of language in Quebec is complex because it involves, among other factors, the fear of an overwhelmingly English-speaking continental encirclement: Moreover and until fairly recently, English was the working language in many industries, which also made it a "paying" language, and the proximity of the two languages involves the encroachment of the majority (in national, continental terms) language upon the minority one, which spells the anglicization of French. On the other hand, French Canadian culture until a few years ago, has been marked by a constant reference to the mother culture: intellectuals undertook pilgrimages to France and their French took on a "correct" international hue. In the mid-Sixties, a small group of leftists, mostly contributors to the socialist periodical Parti-Pris began to write about the social and political significance joual. Perhaps this was part of the language revival, the enrichment

of a vernacular tongue that is said to accompany the evolution of nationalism.[67] But a more accurate interpretation of this recent preoccupation is that it consists of a reappraisal of joual: "Le joual, c'est, je crois, alternativement une langue de soumission, de révolte, de douleur."[68] It became directly associated with political aspirations:

> Plus on est d'origine modeste, plus on parle le joual .... Des gens se sentaient donc coupables de parler le joual! C'est à ce moment que je mesurai la profonde imbécilité de nos puristes, de nos chroniqueurs du langage .... Ce n'est pas le bon français qu'il faut défendre et pour lequel il faut combattre, c'est l'homme canadien-français à qui on doit rendre sa dignité, sa fierté et sa liberté d'homme ... Tant que cet état [indépendant et québécois] n'existera pas, il faudra faire son deuil du bon français et assumer l'infériorité du peuple dont nous faisons partie en parlant la même langue que lui: le joual.[69] [Brackets are mine.]

As a vernacular, a local inbred language, joual is also a shield against the "others": it can only be understood by those who are part of French Canadian society, and in a more limited perspective, by those who have learned it. This, then is the background of joual and the F.L.Q. uses it as a language of revolt with which to hurl insults at the "others", be they foreign or French Canadians who contribute to the demeaning and vilification which are the makings of the French Canadian people's damné condition:

> ... les big boss patronneux ... des 'vaisseaux d'or' avec de la belle zizique ... pour les [travailleurs] crisser à la porte ... chien à Molson ... nous en avons soupé du fédéralisme ... d'un gouvernement de mitaines ... Rémi Popol la garcette ... Trudeau la tapette ... juges et politicailleurs vendus ... [Italics are mine]

But the language itself is, as Fanon suggests, a symbol of cultural dispossession, so that while it is used to "kill with words", so to speak, it reflects the colonized man and the warped identity which is part of his condition.

The colonized collectivity's condition and the false identity this engenders in an oppressed people calls for only one solution according to Fanon: decolonization through violence. This is as inevitable as the eventual clash between Marx's antagonistic classes, for the colonialist and the colonized are in every way naturally opposed and their confrontation is inevitable. As soon as the colonized man is aware of his condition and what colonialism has done to him and to his territory, he must get rid of the "cancer". He must use all his resources, or whatever remains of them, to attack the disease. For the F.L.Q., these resources included a rereading of history. It was with Confederation that the French Canadians' authentic self-definition as a people received its coup de grâce. It was also at a moment of history prior to Confederation that French Canadians revealed their true identity. Thus, its messages repeatedly conveyed the two periods which symbolized such radical contrasts between a

self-made, politically creative identity, and one that was imposed, passive and generally servile:

> C'est en remontant aux origines de la Confédération que nous pouvions mieux comprendre quels furent les véritables intérêts ($$$) qui ont animé ceux qu'on a appelés les pères de la Confédération. D'ailleurs, en 1867, le peuple québécois (Bas-Canada) ne fut pas consulté ... C'était une question de gros sous.[70]

> Des miliers de Québécois ont compris, comme nos ancêtres de 1837-38, que l'unique moyen d'assurer notre survivance, tant nationale qu'économique, c'est l'indépendance totale.[71]

> Il nous faut lutter, non plus à un, mais en s'unissant, jusqu'à la victoire, avec tous les moyens que l'on possède comme l'on fait les Patriotes de 1837-1838.[72]

> Nos ancêtres à nous ne sont pas les Pères de la Confédération, ce sont les Patriotes de 1837-1838.[73]

It is this combative, rebellious identity which emerges from the Rebellion of 1837-38, when French Canadians took arms to assert themselves against English Canadians in Lower Canada, that contemporary French Canadians must assume. That moment symbolizes in the F.L.Q. messages the first positive action of "decolonization" that French Canadians undertook, the assertive rather than the servile identity. This "paradise lost", so to speak, must be regained: the acceptance of the imposed and vilifying self-definition of "lousy French" must be crushed once and for all, in favour of one set out

by the model of the Patriotes' action. The kidnappings can reasonably be viewed as an "acting out" of this positive, self-affirmation, as a way of symbolically communicating to French Canadians that they can all be Patriotes, decolonizing their society and assuming their full potential role as agents of their own destiny and makers of their own history. It is also part of the credibility dimension of political violence which was discussed above.[74]

How can the October 1970 crisis be understood? On the highest symbolic level it can be seen as the F.L.Q.'s attempt to politicize French Canadian Quebeckers by describing their present "alien" identity, conditioned by the wretchedness of various forms of dispossession, sapped of vitality and initiative by foreign exploiting colonialists. The purpose is to convey this humiliating self-image so clearly and convincingly that it could motivate them to take the necessary measures to restore a lost, authentic identity:

> Vous les travailleurs de la General Electric, c'est vous qui faites fonctionner vos usines; vous seuls êtes capables de produire; sans vous General Electric n'est rien!
> Travailleurs du Québec, commencez dès aujourd'hui à reprendre ce qui vous appartient; prenez vous-mêmes ce qui est a vous .... Faites vous-mêmes votre révolution dans vos quartiers ... Et si vous ne le faites pas vous-mêmes, d'autres usurpateurs technocrates ou autres remplaceront la poignée de fumeurs de cigares que nous connaissons maintenant et tout sera à refaire. Vous seuls êtes capables de bâtir une société libre .... Nous voulons remplacer avec toute la

> population cette société d'esclaves par une société libre, fonctionnant d'elle-même et pour elle-même. (manifesto)

Attacked and "terrorized", to use the term in the manifesto, by imposed, "foreign" bosses, by a capitalist Catholic Church (owner of the Stock Exchange Building, an ironic coincidence), by debts, by advertising, and generally terrorized by a society in which it is a dispossessed enfeebled minority, which does not really own its resources nor control its territory, and is therefore generally insecure; the French Canadian people have no choice, according to the F.L.Q. diagnosis. The desparate actions of the F.L.Q. during the crisis are meant to convey this desperate condition of an entire people being dispossessed and "terrorized". For the F.L.Q., the crisis was a necessary self-defence as well as a necessary self definition of the sort: we have been terrorized long enough, now it is our turn; because we have been regarded as inferior by those who dispossess us, to the point of having believed that we were inferior, our vision and our actions will demonstrate to our own people, as well as to the "enemy" what we are capable of achieving, how strong we can be. Moreover, as a people, French Canadians are capable of forging their own self-definition, their own history and their own society. It can, as the Castro-inspired[75] slogan "Nous vaincrons" suggests, recover its true identity and reconstruct an authentic corresponding polity, at least according to the F.L.Q.

This is not unlike the spirit of militant Negro emancipation which in the latter part of the past decade, declared the success of its efforts with the symbolic: "Black is beautiful." As Albert Memmi points out, a "myth image of negritude" emerged with growing black militancy: "The greater his past wretchedness, the more the black's negritude must now be made to appear desirable."[76] When oppressed, man denies himself while being awed by his oppressor: when he rejects the oppressor, he asserts himself.[77] Self-definition or identity is central to both conditions for identity formation or deformation is a psychosocial phenomenon. Symbols are part of the way that men define both themselves and their condition. Both are so primordial that they are ipso facto the stuff of political drama: the stakes of the 1970 October drama were high for the F.L.Q. as well as for a government which may have perceived the various levels of threat, both in action and in symbolic expression.

Interestingly enough, back in 1968 the French social scientist, Jacques Berque, saw the issue of French Canadian identity in the following way:

> S'ils se qualifient eux-mêmes de colonisés, ce n'est donc pas, comme ils le croient, pour avoir jadis été annexés par une Couronne étrangère, mais parce que leur coexistence avec l'Autre au sein d'un ensemble imprégné par l'Autre crée entre eux et l'Autre une distance sociologique ui s'abolirait s'ils sortaient de cet ensemble. Toutes les mesures prises depuis quelques années, sous la menace du

> séparatisme, pour réduire les discriminations dont ils souffrent à l'intérieur du Canada, n'ont donc pour effet que d'exaspérer leur recours au distinctif et à l'originel. Ils sont des coloniaux dans la mesure même où leur identité répugne à se fonder sur le folklorique et le résiduel, à quoi on voudrait le réduire. Corrélativement, leur revendication, qui ne peut que jusqu'à un certain point tirer argument de l'oppression politique ou de l'exploitation économique, érige au premier chef l'argument de la dépersonnalisation: celle des moeurs, des styles, du langage. Elle est donc amenée, dans beaucoup de cas, à privilégier, au contraire d'autres revendications sociales, le culturel sur l'économique, et, en définitive, le signe sur la 'réalité'. Les rôles qu'assume la forme dans un société prennent alors pour elle l'importance d'un contenu.[78]

Berque's fascinating analysis, in which he uses "signe" to denote what this study has defined as "symbol", suggests that in the case of the French Canadian contemporary demands, the "forme" of their socio-political existence as an entity has been more greatly emphasized than the "contenu"; that, moreover, the form has become the content of its demands for an authentic identity. What he is saying is that if certain French Canadians define themselves as colonized, it is not so much due to empirical economic and political factors, as to a symbolized self-definition drawn from a vision. He infers, and perhaps modern political history has demonstrated, that men as a collective entity rarely make persistent political demands unless they are based upon the substantial, concrete content of their daily existence. What he says about French Canadians is that the need for self-definition, while it is relatively intangible in itself, has become as vital and "real" as the need for bread. Berque suggests that <u>defining</u> oneself as a

colonized people is equivalent to <u>being</u> colonized, even if, by comparison, other collectivities may be materially more deprived. This touches the core of what we have been saying and of Geertz's contention that political symbols reflect different types of realities, even those which cannot be scientifically measured or totally understood and defined by rational processes.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

[1]Some of the more complete accounts can be found in the following: James Stewart, The F.L.Q.: Seven Years of Terrorism (Richmond Hill, Ontario; Simon and Schuster of Canada Ltd., and The Montreal Star, 1970); Jean-Claude Trait, F.L.Q.'70: Offensive d'automne (Montreal: Editions de l'homme, 1970); Fernand Dumont, La vigile du Québec (Montreal: Editions, HMH, 1971); Gérard Pelletier, La crise d'octobre (Montreal: Editions du jour, 1971); R. Haggart and A. Golden, Rumours of War (Toronto: New Press, 1971); John Saywell, Quebec'70: A Documentary Narrative (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971); Denis Smith, Bleeding Hearts ... Bleeding Country: Canada and the Quebec Crisis (Edmonton, Alberta: M.G. Hurtig Ltd., 1971); Jacques Lacoursière and Pierre Boucher, Alarme citoyens (Montreal: Editions La Presse, 1972).

[2]Claude Savoie, La véritable histoire du F.L.Q. (Montreal: Editions du jours, 1963), pp. 21-22. The author dates the founding of the group at March 6, 1963. The R.I.N. decision was taken at an assembly meeting on March 3, 1963.

[3]Ibid., p. 34. See also James Stewart, op.cit., p. 16. These sources assert that certain early F.L.Q. members were also R.I.N. members.

[4]"Bombings, Deaths Marked Rapid Rise of Terrorism," The Montreal Star, October 12, 1970, p. 9; and Gérard Pelletier, op.cit., pp. 89-91. Pelletier states that there were less than 100 bombings, but he does not count minor ones such as mailbox explosions.

[5]Claude Savoie, op.cit., pp. 27-41.

[6]Even the militant leftist review La révolution québécoise which had a short eight-month run (September 1964 - April 1965) and which was edited and published by Pierre Vallières cannot be included among F.L.Q. publications. According to Vallières in his book Les nègres blancs d'Amérique (Montreal: Editions Parti-Pris, 1968), p. 308, he became a member of the group somewhere toward the end of the review's publishing life, that is, the spring of 1965.

[7]Thomas Perry Thornton, "Terror as a Weapon of Political Agitation," in Internal War: Problems and Approaches, ed. by Harry Eckstein (New York: The Free Press, 1964), p. 71.

[8]Ibid., p. 73.

[9]Ibid., p. 77.

[10]Claude Savoie, op.cit., p. 27.

[11]From an interview with Bill Kelly former executive officer of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.) on a special C.B.C. telecast, October 12, 1970 at 22.00 hours.

[12]John Saywell, op.cit., pp. 111-113.

[13]From televised interviews with Robert Bourassa and René Lévesque on "W5", C.T.V., November 15, 1970 at 22.00 hours. One Montreal daily newspaper The Gazette, October 15, 1970, p. 1 gave an account of an R.C.M.P. report (which was never confirmed or denied) which stated that there were some 130 active F.L.Q. members distributed in 22 cells and an additional 2,000 sympathizing members (not directly involved in the October crisis).

[14]Denis Smith, op.cit., pp. 56-57.

[15]Gérard Pelletier, op.cit., pp. 55-57.

[16]Ibid., pp. 87-89.

[17]The summary was compiled principally from the following sources: J.C. Trait, op.cit., the entire book deals with the various elements of the crisis; James Stewart, op.cit., pp. 57-84; John Saywell, op.cit., pp. 28-110, 121-135.

[18]Quoted in Denis Smith, op.cit., p. 2 from House of Commons Debates (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), October 6, 1970, p. 8836.

[19]Reports of the number of arrests within that time vary. J.C. Trait, op.cit., p. 141 states that there were 301 arrest during this period and suggests there may have been more. On the other hand, James Stewart, op.cit., p. 75 claims there were 242 arrests during the same period.

[20]J.C. Trait, op.cit., p. 160.

[21]R. Haggart and A. Golden, op.cit., p. 143.

[22]Ibid., pp. 135-144.

[23]George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), pp. 47, 76-78, 186.

[24]This "dramatistic" view of society was first expounded by Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1941). This and subsequent works are analyzed in Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Communication and Social Order (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 108-118.

[25]The term "myth" is here used in its widest political context, as comprising the fundamental political beliefs, assumptions and perspectives which are generally accepted by members of the polity. See H.D. Lasswell and A. Kaplan, Power and Society, op.cit., pp. 116-117. Murray Edelman, op.cit., pp. 1, 16-18 stresses the emotional, irrational dimension of myth:

> Politics, like religion, love, and the arts, is a theme that men cannot leave alone: not in their behavior, nor in their talk, nor in their writings of history ... men dwell on lore about the state: what it is and does and should be. The lore includes much that is vague, yet comes to have a powerful emotional pull. In includes much that is plainly contrary to what we see happening, yet the myth is all the more firmly believed and the more dogmatically passed on to others because men want to believe it and it holds them together. (p. 1).

[26]M. Edelman, op.cit., p. 191 indirectly notes the distinction between a polity's myth and ritual, and its daily practices:

> The themes a society emphasizes and re-emphasizes about its government may not accurately describe its politics: but they do at least tell us what men want to believe about themselves and their state.

[27]Erich Fromm, The Sane Society (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1955), pp. 301-306.

[28]Ibid., p. 132.

[29]M. Edelman, op.cit., pp. 12-21.

[30]J.C. Trait, op.cit., passim, pp. 30-204. This number does not include the last F.L.Q. note which stipulated the modalities for the release of James Cross.

[31]Charles A. Reich, The Greening of America (New York: Bantam Books Inc., 1970), p. 130. Also see Harry J. Skornia, Television and Society (New York: McGraw-Hill Books Co., 1965) for an analysis of how the American power establishment (including both the economic and political sectors) control mass media content in the United States and how this poses a danger to democratic principles and functions.

[32]John Saywell, op.cit., p. 3.

[33]Denis Smith, op.cit., p. 140.

[34]See Note 18.

[35]Denis Smith, op.cit., pp. 28-33; R. Haggart and A. Golden, op.cit., pp. 171-187.

[36]Gérard Pelletier, op.cit., pp. 23, 25.

[37]Marcel Rioux, quoted in Maintenant, No. 100 (Montreal, November 1970), p. 277.

[38]Fernand Dumont, op.cit., p. 165. Both Denis Smith, op.cit. pp. 27-28; and John Saywell, op.cit., pp. 61-63, 79, 82 recount the incidents of publicly-stated agreement with the content of the manifesto voiced by certain trade-unionists, students, members of the Catholic clergy, and the municipal political organization, Front d'action politique known as FRAP.

[39]Denis Smith, op.cit., pp. 21-22.

[40]Ibid., p. 33.

[41]Ibid., p. 45.

[42]Ibid., p. 4 from an article by Anthony Westell in The Toronto Daily Star, January 16, 1971.

[43]John Saywell, op.cit., p. 93.

[44]See Note No. 28.

[45]Fernand Dumont, op.cit., p. 174.

[46]Erik H. Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis (New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1968), p. 16.

[47]Ibid., pp. 23, 182-191, 309-315.

[48]Charles Taylor, op.cit.

[49]Charles A. Reich, op.cit., pp. 233-285.

[50]Ibid., pp. 286-321.

[51]Kenneth Keniston, Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1968), pp. 127-131, 135.

[52]Frantz Fanon, Les damnés de la terre (Paris: François Maspéro, 1961).

[53]Ibid., pp. 177-178.

[54]Ibid., pp. 8, 20.

[55]Ibid., p. 10.

[56]Ibid., pp. 6, 228.

[57]J.C. Trait, op.cit., p. 32.

[58]Ibid.

[59]All further textual citations of the F.L.Q. manifesto are taken from the following source: "Manifeste du F.L.Q.," in Quartier Latin, Vol. 53, No. 3 (October 10-23, 1970), p. 9. This a university students' magazine, published by the Centre d'information étudiant, Université de Montréal.

[60]H.D. Lasswell and A. Kaplan, Power and Society, op.cit., p. 13.

[61]Bernard Smith, Le coup d'état du 29 avril (Montreal: Editions Actualité, 1970).

[62]Ibid., p. 43.

[63]Frantz Fanon, op.cit., p. 8, 9.

[64]Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, trans. by Charles Markmann (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1952).

[65]Ibid., p. 18.

[66]Jean-Paul Desbiens, Les insolences du Frère Untel (Montreal: Les Editions de l'Homme, 1960), pp. 24, 27.

[67]H.D. Lasswell, N. Leites et al, The Language of Politics, op.cit., pp. 31-32.

[68]Raoul Duguay, "Gérald Godin ou du langage aliéné bourgeois au langage aliéné prolétaire," in Parti-Pris, Vol. 4, Nos. 5, 6 (January-February, 1967), p. 95.

[69]Gérald Godin, "Le joual politique," in Parti-Pris, Vol. 2, No. 7 (March,1965), p. 59.

[70]J.C. Trait, op.cit., p. 32.

[71]Ibid., p. 32.

[72]"Manifeste du F.L.Q.", op.cit.

[73]J.C. Trait, op.cit., p. 179.

[74]H.L. Nieburg, op.cit., p. 81. See supra, pp. 51-52.

[75]Fidel Castro, "Au peuple de Cuba," and "L'adieu au Che" in Planète-Action, 17 (July, 1970), pp. 33, 85.

[76]Albert Memmi, Dominated Man, trans. by Howard Greenfeld (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p. 12.

[77]Ibid., p. 10.

[78]Jacques Berque, "'Contenu' et 'forme' dans la décolonisation," in Perspectives de la sociologie contemporaine, ed. by Georges Balandier, Roger Bastide et al. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968), p. 30.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The foregoing study began by briefly outlining some of the numerous characteristics of symbols. Through that incomplete introductory sketch, our aim was to establish the vastness and complexity of the subject. While functional in expressing all levels of human experience, and constituting parts of the many and diverse dialogues which man invariably undertakes with himself - including his conscious and subconscious mind - with other individuals, and with society in general, symbols are much more. They are an aspect of human essence, rooted in man's construction of meaning, in the process of defining and situating himself in the universe which surrounds him, and of which he is a part. Both as an individual, and in his relation to that universe, symbols reflect and express the complexity and ambiguity of man's nature: of reason and unreason, of thought and action, of freedom and determinism, of limitless dreams and limited capacities, of being and becoming.

We have also noted how some political thinkers view symbols in the political context. From their varied approaches and definitions, at least one generalized assumption affecting political science as a unique discipline, emerges: we study political symbols as conceptual

tools which "help us understand political meaning and political perceptions at different times and in different communities."[1] They are elements of the intangible, psychological and moral dimensions of political life which generally defy scientific measurement, and which demand more than rational analysis. Some powerful symbols can give an accurate total image of a polity, which may simplify it, but may also facilitate an initial grasp of it which other modes of expressions might not provide. Research in the field of political attitudes could include the use of prominent verbal, pictorial or other types of political symbols for the purposes of evoking and describing responses. This is analoguous to certain psychological tests, in particular those which involve interpretations of visual material. The method in political science might be more effective for the tested subjects than the questionnaire method for defining attitudes, for the respondents could not rationalize their reactions as easily if we consider that unlike straightforward rational questions, symbols involve the emotions, values, beliefs and, occasionally, the subconscience. Our general discussion of political symbols also suggests that the degree of agreement or disagreement, as to the meaning of existing political symbols could be one indicator of the degree of concensus within a political system. It would have been interesting, for example, to test the response to a symbol like the swastika at different times during the Nazi regime in Germany, and in different age and income groups, in order to establish whether interpretations of

it varied, and to what extent.

Then, we attempted to relate theory to a special political setting and circumstance. We did not chose to examine existing, established political symbols which reflect, express, define, and sustain an existing political system. Instead, we decided to explore the nature and functions of verbal symbols in a counter-myth, symbols which reinterpret political reality, and by doing so, somehow alter it, if only in meaning and perception. While, in most instances, countrymyth and counterideology in the Western democratic context are relegated to theoretical textbooks, or elaborated in more popularized language in books and reviews, the nature of the political crisis in Canada in October 1970 involved a unique case of the mass communication of a counterideology and its symbols. This is unique, because unlike the accepted mass communication of a radical dissenting vision which involves a total rejection of the exsiting political system, of its values: a rejection which includes its destruction and replacement with a different system, is exceptional. A brief analysis of what constitutes a crisis, and how such a setting might affect symbols as vehicles of political expression and communication, was necessary to underline the fact that the F.L.Q.'s symbolic language as well as its symbolic action, were privileged by the circumstances: its significance was enhanced by the generalized insecurity and lack of definitions.

A comparison between the dramatic experience and a political crisis experience was part of the analysis of the different symbolic levels involved in such a situation. A crisis situation was seen as revealing certain aspects of political life which might not always clearly emerge in normal circumstances. The processes of identification and of role-enactment in both the dramatic and political experiences were disucssed as a prelude to relating political symbols to political self-definition. As for the symbols themselves, we noted that more than defining the F.L.Q., and more than communicating its political perspectives, they drew a self-image of the French Canadian in a past moment of glory, in the present context of being the "damnés de la terre", and of a future, feasible liberated "true" self. The vision of a national self-definition drawn by various types of symbols, is eminently clear. For in the issue of individual or national identity, the totality of a man's or a collectivity's existential condition is involved. Through intricate symbols, the F.L.Q. attempted to define a political identity which explains aspects of the French Canadian people, how its initiative and creativity - more fundamental than religion or folk culture to the makings of an authentic identity - were crushed by outside forces; and how the depiction of this wretched alienated state, in the context of positive acts of defiance toward the outside, "enemy" forces, such as kidnappings,

would incite French Canadians to wrench off the false identity the way it is done, symbolically, in the manifesto. Thus, political symbols can inject new meaning, new interpretations, into political life. As Marcel Rioux puts it:

> ... les valeurs et les symboles changeant, un peuple acquiert d'autres auxquelles il imprime une forme qui lui est propre. Les valeurs et les symboles qui seront adaptés à notre collectivité [French Canadian collectivity] en devenir et qui, à leur tour, donneront visage à ce monde sont à inventer et à forger.[2] [Brackets are mine.]

If a people reject or disregard a symbolic self-image which is presented to them, it is as if they never saw it. But the fact that it is discussed, mentioned long after the circumstances in which it initially appeared, indicates that this was not the case with respect to the manifesto. In many ways, any grave crisis calls forth fundamental questions about that aspect of life which it affects most. In a political crisis, a political system and its values, a political self-definition can be more than threatened; they can also be questioned. A believable radical reinterpretation and redefinition in such a moment of doubt, could have a powerful impact, not immediately apparent or definable. We have only to think of the consequences attributed to De Gaulle's symbolic 1967 balcony statement: "Vive le Québec libre!" to realize the nature and scope of such an impact.

As an "animale symbolicum", man is essentially a self-defining

animal. The strand of thought throughout this study is that self-definition and self-images entails identity: in other words, an answer to the question: "Who am I?" This is the vital question which the F.L.Q. raised and attempted to answer during the 1970 October crisis. The following might provide some clues to the relevance of this aspect of political meaning and perception; how it can be viewed as corresponding to a need and as being rooted in a more universal vision of political man as an agent or facilitator of historical change.

One of the most piercing analyses of the question of the makings of French Canadian identity is made by Pierre Vadeboncoeur in his book La dernière heure et la première.[3] He begins by noting the paradox of French Canadian history: on the one hand, they have persisted as an entity, with the particular traits necessary for a distinct collective personality and this, despite constant external pressures which menaced that survival. Yet, their virtuosity and achievements as a people have been considerably less impressive than the fact of their survival, so much so that the latter is something of a mystery:

> Son sentiment de permanence n'a jamais eu qu'un rapport assez lointain avec sa position réelle et avec ses virtualités ... Voilà donc le paradoxe: constituer très profondement un peuple, mais un peuple dépouillé, investi, et qui dure et veut durer comme s'il possèdait

> effectivenment ce qu'il faut pour se compter comme une nation .... Nous avons tout d'un peuple et très peu de son pouvoir.[4]

What Vadeboncoeur is really saying is that, until recently, the usual ingredients which provide for the sustenance of national identity - great enterprises initiated and undertaken autonomously by a nation - were relatively rare in French Canadian history. Frenchmen, for example, can refer to Charlemagne, le Roi soleil, the Revolution, Napoleon, the Paris Commune, de Gaulle, to symbolically evoke a history of their national life, and outline a corresponding definition of national identity. By comparison, French Canadians have a short history, much of which was determined by others than themselves. While it can be argued that some of the elements for this self-definition may have been provided by the Catholic Church, the family, shared tradition, and regional features; these did not, according to Vandeboncoeur, constitute the fundamental driving force for a persisting self-definition. The French Canadian people perceived and defined themselves as a nation "in the mind", so to speak, without having the external, concrete trappings of a nation.

> Les Canadiens français, d'une certaine façon, dirait-on, ne sont pas dans l'histoire. On croirait, depuis toujours, qu'ils se perçurent comme un peuple déja établi, malgré les conditions qui démentaient cette prétention et en dépit d'une politique qui n'avait cure de leur illusion et se faisait dans une grande mesure par-dessus leur tête .... Notre histoire fut ainsi, en un sens, une espèce

> d'abstraction .... Nous nous sentions chez nous quoi qu'il arrivât. Notre illusion consistait à nous avancer dans l'histoire, au nom d'une destinée, sans faire avancer l'histoire. Nous n'avons pas cessé de croire que l'histoire ici fût bien la nôtre, même quand elle était fait par d'autres, ce qui était le plus souvent le cas .... Nous nous percevions comme un peuple, par un sentiment d'existence.[5] [Italics are mine.]

Vadeboncoeur's analysis suggests that, from a general perspective, much of the French Canadians' definition of the collective self was achieved through various mental processes which generated symbols. This corresponds with Clifford Geertz's view of man as the agent of his own "becoming" through a continual mental conversion or abstraction of all facets of his existence:

> The agent of his own realization, he [man] creates out of his general capacity for the construction of symbolic models the specific capabilities which define him.[6] [Brackets are mine.]

What the F.L.Q.'s symbolic language accomplished, in some measure, during the 1970 October crisis can, in some ways, be linked to Vadeboncoeur's analysis. His conclusion is that the paradox discussed above can only be resolved through independent political self-rule: "... on ne résiste que par le pouvoir."[7] That is the only road to a true self-definition, for an autonomous polity is part of the collective enterprises which leaves mere dreaming and illusion behind by relating action to thought. If we look at the total vision conveyed

by the F.L.Q.'s symbols, we find a theme of "identity lost, and identity regained" rather than Vadeboncoeur's account of the evolution of a dreamed or imagined identity toward a real one that is rooted in self-determined national activities. Through the various symbols, particularly in the group's manifesto, it "destroyed", so to speak the "grand illusion" of national identity which had thrived despite an economic and political environment which constantly negated it. Instead, the manifesto sought to reveal the "true face" of that environment, and the way it "really" defines the French Canadian people; or rather, how it robs them of all identity. One example of what has already been termed as "radical reinterpretation", is the April 1970 provincial elections in Quebec, which, as used in the manifesto, can be viewed as a prototype of an almost systematic demystification of the "grand illusion"; for in this context it symbolizes the wholesale duping of a people and, therefore, all those elements of the structure of French Canadian society which have supposedly sustained that illusion. The "Brink's coup" is the "véritable symbole de l'occupation étrangère au Québec",[8] one aspect of an alien environment from which an alienated or inauthentic collective identity emerges. The authentic collective self-definition can be achieved by referring to the past, and one glorious moment of defiant action, the 1837-38 Rebellion but, more important, through action which will eliminate the foreign, alienating "enemy" and will "repossess" and create one's own unique environment and history.[9]

The F.L.Q.'s vision, consisting mainly of the symbols which have been discussed in this study, is inspired by a more elaborate one drawn from the phenomenon of colonialism in the Third World. Briefly, in the original perspective, colonialism is viewed not only as an economic and political situation, but also as an existential condition imposed on the colonized. Politically, the colonialist is a foreign occupier and governor of a country that is not his own: he provides the political structures and makes the laws. Economically, he exploits all available resources, and he may either amass and keep the wealth, or send it to his "mother country", which he represents and which he considers his homeland. While colonialism means the general material enrichment and the wielding of power for the colonialist, it spells the total impovrishment of the colonized or the "native", even if it involves an improvement of his standard of living. The colonialist also imposes his culture, which often includes his language, and technology, declaring these to be superior to their indigenous counterparts. The colonized man, by force, economic sanctions or through other means, must comply with this interpretation, and in doing so, he rejects his own capabilities and culture in favour of those imported by the colonialist.[10] Thus, colonialism engenders more than political, social and economic injustices: it invades all aspects of the life of the colonized, including identity:

> C'est le colon qui a fait et qui continue à faire le colonisé .... La société colonisée

> n'est pas seulement décrite comme une société sans valeurs. Il ne suffit pas au colon d'affirmer que les valeurs ont déserté, ou mieux n'ont jamais habité, le monde colonisé. L'indigène est déclaré imperméable à l'éthique, absence de valeurs, mais aussi négation des valeurs .... Les coutumes du colonisé, ses traditions, ses mythes, surtout ses mythes, sont la marque même de cette indigence, de cette dépravation constitutionnelle .... Monde compartimenté, manichéiste, immobile, monde de statues: la statue du général qui a fait la conquête, la statue de l'ingénieur qui a construit le pont. Monde sûr de lui, écrasant de ses pierres les épines écorchées par le fouet. Voilà le monde colonial .... La première chose que l'indigène apprend, c'est de rester à sa place, à ne pas dépasser les limites. C'est pourquoi les rêves de l'indigène sont des rêves ... d'action, des rêves aggressifs.[11]

The dreaming to which Fanon refers above is not unlike Vadebonceour's analysis of an illusory, fantasized identity. Fanon calls for decolonization and Vadeboncoeur for political independence in order to achieve an authentic, viable self-definition. Man must forge his own history, deliberately, consciously, to recover his real self: "La décolonisation est véritablement création d'hommes nouveaux."[12] We turn to the F.L.Q. manifesto and we find the following, corresponding vision:

> Qu'aux quatres coins du Québec, ceux qu'on a osé de traiter avec dédain de lousy French et d'alcooliques entreprennent vigoureusement le combat .... Nous voulons remplacer avec toute la population cette société d'esclaves par une société libre, fonctionnant d'elle-même et pour elle-même ... une société sur le monde .... On

> ne tient pas longtemps dans la misère et le mépris un peuple en réveil.[13]

During the October 1970 crisis, that vision was conveyed through symbolic action and verbal expression. Both these placed the self-definition of the French Canadian people within the context of the Third World. The actions might have been those of the Latin American Tupamaros. The verbal symbols, as we have seen, were inspired by a major spokesman for Third World identity. Both constituted a threat to existing political values and goals. The power of symbolic expression within the political arena is as great as the meanings and dreams they evoke, and the needs to which they correspond. That power was an important element of the October crisis.

> On oublie que les collectivités rêvent aussi; que les symboles, bien loin d'être un quelconque résidu de l'économie ou de l'organisation, sont peut-être le support et même la fin de la vie en commun. On sait quel boulversement des vues sur l'homme a provoqué l'avènement de la psychanalyse: celle-ci aura montré que, par dessous les jeux de la raison, se profilent des forces explosives dont les tensions se disent à peine au niveau du langage articulé et dont rendent mal compte les intellectualisations et les rationalisations de surface. Il serait étonnant qu'il n'en fût pas ainsi, de quelque manière, pour les sociétés.[15]

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

[1]Karl W. Deutsch, "Symbols in Political Community," in Symbols and Society, ed. by Lyman Bryson, et al., The Fourteenth Symposium of the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion (New York: The Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion in their Relation to the Democratic Way of Life, Inc., 1955), p. 23.

[2]Marcel Rioux, La question du Québec, op.cit., p. 181.

[3]Pierre Vadeboncoeur, La dernière heure et la première (Montreal: L'Hexagone et Parti Pris, 1970).

[4]Ibid., p. 5, 7.

[5]Ibid., pp. 6, 8, 9.

[6]Clifford Geertz, op.cit., p. 63.

[7]Pierre Vadeboncoeur, op.cit., p. 74.

[8]"Le manifeste du F.L.Q.," in Quartier Latin, op.cit.

[9]We have already mentioned the symbolic dimension of terrorist activity (see previous chapter, first section); the actions of the F.L.Q. during the crisis can also be viewed as ways of "acting out" the makings of this new identity, no matter how desparate or immoral these may seem or be.

[10]For an elaboration of this interpretation of colonialism, see especially: Frantz Fanon, Les damnés de la terre, op.cit., pp. 5-52; Jacques Berque, Dépossession du monde, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964), pp. 53-105.

[11]Frantz Fanon, Les damnés de la terre, op.cit. pp. 6,10, 18.

[12]Ibid., p. 6.

[13]"Le Manifeste du F.L.Q.," in Quartier Latin, op.cit.

[14]Fernand Dumont, La vigile du Québec, op.cit., p. 175.

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