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Democracy, Violence and Emancipatory Movements: Notes for a Theory of Inversionary Discourse

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Preface

In 1990 the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development initiated a research project on Political Violence and Social Movements, which has sought to understand the problem of political violence with reference to a new framework of analysis which treats violence as a kind of discourse of power with its own dynamic. As such, the phenomenon of political violence has been probed from an "interior" as well as an exterior perspective. An attempt has been made to apply this theoretical framework to eight movements which, though widely divergent in their ideology and objectives, have used political violence at some stage as a core element of their overall struggle. The case studies analyse the use of violence in Colombia, Italy, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Peru, South Africa, Spain and Sri Lanka. The studies have now been completed and are to be published in a volume edited by David Apter and Bruce Kapferer. The project has been co-ordinated by David Apter, Henry J. Heinz II Professor of Comparative Political and Social Development at Yale University.

This paper represents an attempt to apply "discourse" theory to violence-prone inversionary and emancipatory movements, most particularly as these relate to democracy. The starting point of the analysis is the generation of certain "contradictions" by the development process. These include polarization between functional élites and the functionally superfluous. The former, by generating new capital-intensive production techniques, contribute to the marginalization of those who, as a consequence, become functionally superfluous. Those so marginalized in economic terms are also likely to be marginalized in other ways and to develop over time attributes defined negatively by the rest of society including criteria of ethnicity, religion, language, race, and other cultural characteristics.

This structural-development process poses political dilemmas of both a moral and political nature. The moral problem is over what principles to apply in order to remove this contradiction. The political problem is that even if one knew what principles ought to be adopted, how in fact they could be rendered as practice, especially in democracies, is unclear. For one of the paradoxes of modern democracy is that those with the greatest need get the least attention. The analysis suggests why it is that political systems are at best "sticky" in their responsiveness and why, from an institutional point of view, it is so difficult to effect policy changes by means of the normal coalitional and bargaining politics essential to what might be called a "choice model". In this sense, and from the point of view of institutional politics, marginality produces political "invisibility".

Political movements seeking to realize alternative policies according to rectifying principles lack the power to effect change in the political system. Hence, they tend not only to use violent methods, but to combine violence with the creation of discourse such that it (i) generates symbolic capital in the absence of economic capital, and (ii) produces discourse communities which come to represent, at least in their own eyes, "chosen people". The basis of such discourse and the process by which it occurs is explored in this analysis in some depth, involving as it does the translation of defining events – which people experience individually – into collectivized and shared attributes which come to constitute a "fund" of power on which people can draw. The process by which this occurs involves retrievals of the past, the generation of political memory, and logical projections. It creates discourse communities out of violence itself. As such, discourse communities generate their own interior moral principles, languages of power, and their own objects. As this occurs, it becomes more and more difficult to deal with them in mediating terms. Hence, when violence does break out, it is difficult to bring to an end. Indeed, as the analysis in this paper seeks to show, in such communities violence creates its own objects.

Most emancipatory and transformational discourses attack democratic institutions not only because of their lack of responsiveness, but in principle, i.e., as a model system of choices based on market principles in both the political and the economic spheres. They seek to

replace models of social life based on ideas of "order" as well as democratic ideas of "choice" with an "inversionary discourse" model. In terms of democracy such inversionary discourse, when combined with violence, both threatens the status quo by challenging institutions and ideas and engenders changes in the prevailing scope and meaning of equity. In so far as they are able to generate symbolic capital, such movements use moral principles to realize some degree of gain in economic and political terms, including compensatory access – economic, social and institutional – for marginals. By stimulating concrete political struggle, inversionary discourses and the movements they represent intensify the depth and magnify the power of public discourse. In these terms, political violence has historically been associated with the evolution of democracy itself. By the same token, the incorporation of changes enables democracies to strengthen themselves. In this sense, and despite the dangers involved, as so constituted democracy is both an open-ended process and an institutional "solution" to any particular movement using political violence.

May 1993

Dharam Ghai
Director

1. Contextualizing Violence

Our aim in the following paper is to formulate some observations about political violence and democracy in terms of discourse theory. Such theory is preferred to more conventional modes of analysis such as rational choice or group interest politics, relevant though they might be, in order to "read" violence through events in a fashion relevant to an understanding of how democracy evolves.

Perhaps the clearest illustration of the theory itself is in relation to the Sendero Luminoso in Peru.¹ In his essay, Degregori shows how a Maoist mytho-logics uses sacral texts to define a logic of revolutionary praxis. By means of exegetical bonding, violent events are retrieved, interpreted, and projected in the form of millennial solutions. Put together by the ideologues of the movement, violence is endowed with special symbolic referents, and a local pedigree enlarged to include a putative Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought. As Degregori suggests, the Sendero Luminoso portrays itself as the last and most pure radical redeeming movement. All others have failed or betrayed the cause. Emphasized are themes such as violation and betrayal which not only define inequities but establish an agenda of violence in the form of a projective or "overcoming project".

The case is also an example of how an inversionary discourse model creates symbolic capital out of violent events, how an internal language is formed, with its own codes, around which a discourse community is organized, while its networks define functions in terms of violent activities. It suggests how difficult it is to negotiate a solution, and also how and when, if a cosmocratic leader like Guzman is captured, the movement will begin to dissolve.

Other cases of violent movements shade off from this extreme example of inversionary discourse. The Irish Republican Army is very high on narrative themes, retrievals, myths, and the symbolism of colonialism, exploitation, etc. - and in religious and ecclesiastical as well as secular terms. It has a remarkable vocabulary of martyrdom. But it is weak on logical texts, and almost at a loss for projected outcomes.²

At the opposite end of the spectrum, indeed, as an exemplar of how violence can become an intrinsic part of the state as an exchange model, is La Violencia in Columbia. Violence follows well understood rules of a game. Its aims are instrumental, with reciprocities of power resulting from and dependent on violent exchanges. Symbolic encounters are of hardly any significance. Violence is less between the state and social movements than competition between groups for clients and supporters. The structures of violence remain in place over time while outbreaks fluctuate according to coalitional gains and losses.³

The Italian Red Brigades⁴ come closer to the inversionary discourse model and the Basque E.T.A.⁵ comes closer to an exchange model. Movements like the Tamil Tigers⁶ are more on

1. See "The Maturation of a Cosmocrat and the Building of a Discourse Community: The Case of Shining Path, 1963-1980" by Carlos Iván Degregori, in David E. Apter and Bruce Kapferer (eds.), **The Legitimization of Violence**, mimeo, 1993.

2. See "'Reading' Violence: Ireland" by Paul Arthur, in David E. Apter and Bruce Kapferer (eds.), op. cit.

3. See "Violent Exchanges: Considerations on Violence in Colombia" by Malcom Deas, in David E. Apter and Bruce Kapferer (eds.), op. cit.

4. See "Italian Political Violence 1969-1988" by David Moss, in David E. Apter and Bruce Kapferer (eds.), op. cit.

5. See "E.T.A. and Political Violence in Spain's Basque Country" by Michel Wieviorka, in David E. Apter and Bruce Kapferer (eds.), op. cit.

6. See "The Facts of Death: Tamil Secessionist Insurrection" by Jagath Senaratne, in David E. Apter and Bruce Kapferer (eds.), op. cit.

the inversionary discourse side, while the African National Congress⁷ in South Africa has moved steadily towards the exchange model side with the Shi'a movement⁸ in Lebanon more or less at the centre.

These movements suggest certain discursive theoretical themes which perhaps can provide the materials or notes for a more general theory of political violence. We say "notes" because given the complexities of political violence they do not lend themselves easily to a more fully integrated theory. Nevertheless we will now attempt to offer some ideas which might in the future be reformulated in a more general way. It goes without saying that any such theory would have to evolve in a context of empirical research. While violence is a terrible oversimplifier, discursively it is infinitely complex.

We begin by asserting the impact and significance of discourse both in terms of the generation of political violence as a thing in itself and in its relation to democracy as a political system. We agree with most theorists of democracy that, as a political system, and at least in the last instance, democracy is a final solution to such violence, because of the sheer resolving power of overlapping and pluralized interests against which no alternative form of discourse community can, for long, remain immune. However, we will also argue that political violence is an intrinsic part of democracy itself and its evolution.

Here we intend to depart somewhat from the conventional literature on democracy, particularly the three main models which have come to dominate the discourse. In these models, the political system works to render difference less rather than more significant while interests come to prevail over principles. Coalition formation is the basis of accountability and public policy is a consequence of compromise, mediation and bargaining. Specific institutional expressions of these processes will vary according to the prevailing type of civic polity. For example, in a "strong state" constructed on the basis of an assimilationist civil society (as in France), groups have few rights as groups while citizens have many rights as citizens.

In a more pluralist polity, group diversity at the level of civil society is considered a virtue and assumes a critical role in the working of the political system. A plurality of interactive networks of roles rather than classes is manifested in large coalitional or catch-all political parties whose clienteles consist mainly of interests large and small (as in the United States). In the third type of democratic political system, a consociational one, groups are not only not the basis of the civic polity but they represent cleavages so deep and fundamental that they constitute separate "discourse communities" which become fault line cracks in civil society based on religious, linguistic, racial or other affiliations. Mediation and compromise at a political level depend on the effectiveness of élite bargaining under non-zero sum developmental conditions, enabling each group to gain more than they lose by remaining within the state (as for example in the Netherlands). By and large none of these models deal with episodes of political violence as other than lapses from normal political life, some being more or less pathological, while others, perfectly understandable, are a consequence of chronic economic failures, unemployment, and/or extreme inequities. None of these theories focus on what might be called the intrinsic place of violence in their functioning, especially since the models themselves, explicitly or implicitly, are solutions to the problem of violence. All share the premise that the historically successful democracies have evolved hand in hand with economic growth. Hence, so as it can be assumed that redistributive opportunities will, with appropriate policies, be increased, political violence (other than purely pathological forms) can be rendered nugatory. Democracy is thus based in principle on the idea of a never-ending developmental teleology, the universalization of which constitutes a logic of principle.

7. See "South Africa and the Politics of Possession" by André du Toit, in David E. Apter and Bruce Kapferer (eds.), op. cit.

8. See "The Lebanese Shi'a" by Elizabeth Picard, in David E. Apter and Bruce Kapferer (eds.), op. cit.

This logic of principle indicates not only how democracy is supposed to work but establishes self-improving criteria, such as Robert Dahl's polyarchy and John Rawls' compensatory justice. These and many other alternatives (including social democratic formula) continue to offer improving criteria for the evolution of democratic institutions but none assume that political violence will be more than a residual political phenomenon. None conceptualize political violence as intrinsic to the workings of democracy itself. Democracy, so considered, is the solution to political violence, and only inadvertently the cause of it.

However, we want to claim that political violence is not only endemic but essential to the practice of political life in democracies, even though necessarily proscribed. To explore this assertion, we will speculate about the role of political violence in democracy by means of a special form of discourse theory, what can be called inversionary form. Our concern is first with what might be called the predisposition to violence brought about when the developmental teleology falters, generating within civil society both marginality and functional polarization, and as a consequence how difficulties in mediating economic and social problems by institutional political means turn such a predisposition into the real thing. Our second concern is with the way in which violence becomes self-generating. Still a third concern is with the way political violence in democratic societies can lead to the fine tuning of ideas and principles of equity and justice precisely at the point at which the developmental teleology is breaking down. In this sense, many movements using political violence - or the threat of violence - in pursuing their own ends in their own terms add a dimension of danger to the usual debates over who gets what, when, and how.

All the more reason then to connect these remarks primarily to democracies bearing in mind, however, that we consider the more general principles of discourse theory to apply universally to political violence. Indeed, in countries where democracy remains at best inchoate, or those in which civil society has been virtually destroyed (as in Russia, for example), the conditions prosper for renewed political violence. To re-create civil society "old-new" boundaries are re-created, and this in turn depends in large part on the revival of discourses constructed around past affiliations redolent of previous discourse communities in such forms as ethnic and religious revivalism, primordial parochialism, etc. Re-constituting civil society becomes a form of re-possession of self and community, and in a context of confrontation, terror and civil war. The tragedy of Bosnia is perhaps the most recent example.

The spread of such movements, especially when emancipatory in intents, and inversionary in scope, poses challenges for which satisfactory political solutions are extremely hard to find, at least in terms of conventional institutional means. All the more so because, to state the obvious, the old world of bipolarism and power blocs, client states, and satellites has come to an end and with it the balancing of power based on the balance of terror. Whatever else it did, the old order contained most of the more localized political hot spots.⁹ Bipolarism defined the interests of smaller powers in terms of the larger which discouraged, even if it could not always prevent, the outbreak of more localized conflicts. Indeed, bipolarism evoked a kind of peace in the feud, to use Max Gluckman's term or, at the very least, kept it in some kind of proportion.

This applied even to such deep-rooted conflicts as those in the Middle East, with the PLO the pivot point and Lebanon the rogue elephant. Cold War considerations played an important role in delimiting the tense relationships between Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, not to speak of Israel. Such considerations applied far less to the I.R.A. which, despite occasional nods in the direction of socialism, remained ideologically very diluted and on the whole largely a British headache rather than a pawn in the Cold War. Basque nationalism was

9. With certain cases, like the confrontation over Cuban missiles, becoming classic illustrations.

always a largely internal Spanish matter while the case of South Africa invoked, in some western minds, the potential radicalization of black nationalism in the ANC, the Black Consciousness Movement or the Pan-Africanist Congress. Similarly, in Italy the Red Brigades were a bugaboo for the Italian Communist Party as well as the Christian Democrats, and of particular concern to the United States which was concerned that terrorist violence would trigger revolutionary insurrection not only against the Italian state but NATO as well.

Yet in a real sense political violence remained, for the most part, a residual of politics. Although hunting down terrorists was something of a growth industry, nothing compared to the potential of the big bang. The real power of even terror attacks remained small beans, and for the most part aberrant.

Thus the overwhelming preoccupation with security between East and West restricted to Cold War concerns the importance of other often very nasty conflicts. By remaining relatively aloof from what might be other more localized causes of violence, attention was paid less to their causes than to their consequences. Hence, whatever else conflicts in El Salvador, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, or Nigeria came to represent in the political scheme of things, not to speak of terrorism in Germany (Baader-Meinhof), France (Action Directe) and many others, the scale of all of them was small compared to the magnitude and power of the larger ideological struggle.

It is thus on the whole correct to say that despite, or even because of, the Cold War, certain difficult political changes with great potentiality for violence were made relatively peacefully. Among the achievements of the bipolar order was the more or less peaceful dismantling of the colonial world. There have been powerful exceptions to this including the mass killings that accompanied the independence of India and the formation of Pakistan, the Biafran War, the slaughter of Indonesian "communists", etc. The list of tragic incidents and circumstances is very long indeed. But a good many nationalist movements metamorphosed into independent states without undergoing traumas of that sort and what political violence occurred and continued to pop up here and there was largely due to inequities unresolved in the process. The point is that one could consider political violence as more or less incidental to the overall evolution of a world of nations out of a world of colonial territories, or of residual inequities of economic growth in industrial societies.

But it was not only the tensed polarities of the world order that gave currency to this notion of leftover conflicts. Each of the protagonists in the larger ideological struggle represented a kind of promissory note for the political future. In both, whether according to the modernization paradigm of Western democracies or the Marxist paradigm of the U.S.S.R., the long-term outlook was benign. Both embodied different expressions of certain common post-enlightenment ideals in the form of preferred visions of a secularized, rationalistic universe of reciprocities based on functions in the first instance and use values in the second. Associated with the liberal modernization paradigm was the universalization of roles and institutions according to modern functions, and in Marxist and dependency paradigms the unifying relations of production based on socialization of the modes of production. Both shared a common certitude that tradition and traditionalism, whatever their forms, and the discourses associated with them, would become increasingly obsolete. Developmentalism, metropole intermeshing with periphery would, in the long run at any rate, result in pluralism and diversity in a multi-cultural world, overlapping roles and classes. In turn ethnic, religious, and other "primordial" beliefs, affiliations, and loyalties would, if they did not actually wither away under the hammer blows of commercial and industrial life, at the very least be converted to interests over which bargaining could occur rather than remaining principles of affiliation and separateness. Even if industry was lacking, commercialization would result in modernization; and commodification, whether one liked it or not, would pull people willy nilly into a world of goods and services. Functional exchanges between things would replace

traditional reciprocities between people. Wants and desires would become the basis of market or plan, and people would grow more and more alike, everywhere.

Nor have such assumptions been entirely wrong. The trouble is that they have not been right enough. Hence we run into a paradox. The very "commoditization" of life brought about by commercialization, the loosening of "traditional" ties, the growing discrepancies between cause and effect, education and work, learning and skill, etc., not to speak of disparities which intensify rather than disappear with development, are randomizing and penalizing phenomena whose polarities, until now obscured, are suddenly coming into their own as focal points for political concern and analysis. It is here that the tendencies towards polarization as well as pluralization, marginalization as well as modernization, and with them the interiorization of "class" and "struggle" begin to emerge to define what might be called emancipatory objects. It is a condition which derives both within and between states when developmental change apparently penalizes some to the benefit of others, and in reality exacts a price from everyone.

There are indeed regions where life is improving, such as Taiwan, South Korea, etc. Democratization and mediation are increasingly occurring even if by slow steps and many lapses. And some countries like China now charging up developmentally may eventually have good prospects for democratization despite the events in Tiananmen Square on the morning of 4 June 1989. But despite these successes or potentialities, even in these countries functional polarization as well as its consequences is likely to occur. If this is correct then the predisposition to violence will grow with development rather than decline.

2. Development Contradiction and Propensities to Violence

We now turn to the general argument concerning the developmental point of departure, which can be summarized as follows.¹⁰ Innovative enterprise as the basis of modern industrial life increasingly depends on changes in design intrinsic to increasing productivity. Theoretical expertise plus increasingly capital-intensive enterprise are among the consequences, changing the character of the labour force in every industrial country such that there is a significant and growing sector of the population becoming "marginalized". In this sense there are net increases in the proportion of people occupying functionally superfluous roles. At the same time an increasingly technical sector is becoming functionally more significant. This polarization has several effects. It generates pariah populations, "negativized others", people increasingly outside the conventional working life of a society, ghettoizes them, makes them "invisible", etc. Those in such conditions have the greatest need for compensatory entitlements from the state, net transfers from the functionally significant to the functionally superfluous. But these transfers tend to be such that they often exacerbate rather than reduce the problem and in any case tend to be the result of fits and starts, sporadic remedial efforts more often the result of violence, or threats of violence, than the persuasive power of the vote. Those who need the most get the least despite often considerable efforts made on their behalf.

One reason for this condition is the growing pressure on the generalized middle sectors who have to pay higher and higher social overhead costs. The larger the proportion of functionally superfluous the greater the social overhead costs and the tax burden on the generalized middle. As well, such disbursements in the form of social overhead mean less available investment capital.

Moreover these tendencies towards functional polarization contribute to a "dis-ease" in the population more generally. Pressures towards upward and downward mobility increase fears of decline, placing critical burdens on educational systems which function both as mechanisms of élite recruitment and ways of validating failure, and agencies for social

10. For a somewhat fuller treatment see D.E. Apter, **Rethinking Development**, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1987.

marginalization as well as social mobility. Such a climate of social uncertainty is a condition in which the propensity to violence grows with growth itself. It is not such a difficult step to move from the growth of crime, to more occasionally organized protests, to more explicit forms of inversionary discourse manifested in violence. Moreover this can occur not only from "below" - i.e., among those penalized by the developmental process - but from above as well, where a beleaguered atmosphere and fear of random violence increases the demand for an order model over a choice model, precisely the conditions which produced fascism and Nazism. In both instances a generalized atmosphere of violence became pervasive, and suitably exaggerated intensified fears of a general political "disordering" of anarchy and nihilism. Similarly, in many parts of the world today military régimes and other forms of authoritarianism have become commonplace.

Many of the same problems confronting industrial countries are magnified a thousand-fold in less developed ones. The proportion of the functionally superfluous to the functionally significant is not only much larger and the generalized middle much smaller but the disparities grow exponentially. Moreover, as the "peripheral" countries move closer in their relations to the political centre in a much more broad spectrum of regionalized "metropolises", the connections between them grow rather than decline in terms of at least three phenomena each of which carries with it a propensity to violence and often occur in conjunction, namely, (1) immigration from poorer to richer countries, (2) marginalization within both (in which immigrants contribute to the marginality of nationals of the "host" country), and (3) dispossession, social displacement as well as economic. These three factors contribute to the conditions under which political violence occurs both in terms of perceived injustices and the growing potentiality for the formation of inversionary discourse communities, including those in which ethnicity as well as political beliefs are involved, and with them too the opportunities for clandestine networks of violence both within and between industrial and less developed countries.

If it is correct to say that the phenomenon of functional superfluosness has become more widespread and functional polarization more generalized it should come as no surprise that instead of the decline of ethnic, religious, and other beliefs and affiliations, they have revived and become both different and stronger, one might say refreshed. It is not as if old conflicts simply remain under the surface, nourished by fresh grievance, to break out when the state is weakened, as some have argued is the case in former Yugoslavia or the former Soviet Union. The old movements are in fact new ones. They may draw on more ancestral traditions and history in order to produce the necessary discourse, as these cases suggest. But one could also argue that in their contemporary forms, a good deal of such parochialization defends people from the worst consequences of marginality. They help create worlds interior to themselves and in industrial countries as well as less developed ones. Only strong democracies can deal with them and with growing difficulty. Localism, petty nationalism, religious revivalism, ethnic parochialism, and the fundamentalistic versions of all these also provide a basis for overlapping definitions of singular membership and affiliation, with linguistic, ethnic, religious and other ties mutually reinforcing. Most are products of retrievals and projections which embody in discourse qualities of thought and action which transform people from being marginals to being actors in a world in which violence is one way to take command, to avoid being pure victim.

3. Discourse Rather than Ideology

People do find ways of taking command. They do create the collective project. Take a leader, add a small band of acolytes, and a larger supporting clientele, mix carefully with ideologies that make truth claims, revealed or logical, and you have the ingredients of political violence. But if there is a sense in which that says it all, it also says nothing. The problem is the term ideology. One of the most common yet elusive terms in the social science lexicon, it has the advantage of rarely being neutral. Not always nor necessarily, but usually, it has pejorative

overtones. It implies views and ideas that if not extreme at least go beyond the rationality of ordinary commonsense claims to underscore it, like religious beliefs. Link ideology with violence and give it voice in emotive emancipatory movements and it easily takes on demonic proportions. Much of the literature on political violence works on the assumption that ideology causes violence and violence causes ideology, thus representing a more or less independent form of power. Whether as ideas, principles, or beliefs systems, and whether for or against the state, ideologies explain so much that they explain very little. It can be said that ideologies of nationalism were used for state formation, as with the rash of independent states that emerged out of the former colonial empires. Or nationalist ideologies can dismember states, breaking them up into autonomous units. The question is, if ideologies have such power of what is that power composed?

Some would argue that when ideologies can take the form of Plato's "noble lies", i.e., attributes of an "original identity" based on religious, ethnic, racial, linguistic, and similar affiliations, they have a kind of primordial power. This is correct, in the sense that they establish boundaries in the mind which may or may not correspond to jurisdictions on the ground. But, by the same token, all these may be regarded as false consciousness and in urgent need of replacement by theory. In the hands of Althusserians, Marxism is science and theories of free market capitalism are ideologies, for protagonists of the latter, the reverse is true. Alternatively, one can treat them, as Geertz does, as symbolic or cultural templates, or pure rationalizations, neither true nor false.¹¹ But if we want to go behind ideology as an explanatory concept to see how, why, and in what forms it can come to have power, then we must eschew it as a research category.¹²

To examine how discourse theory can work in a context of democratic politics, however, we will need to apply such theory in terms of two forms of analysis not normally on good terms with one another, a structural analysis of institutional democracy and its working principles and assumptions, treating it as a "choice" model and an emancipatory discourse model, one which seeks not simply to amend or modify the practices of institutional democracy, but to undermine the discourse on which it is based - to explode the political doxa, to use Bourdieu's term. The question is, how can institutional democracy deal in structural terms with emancipatory movements which create discourse communities at variance with the state itself. These we consider to be "post-modern", with violence intrinsic to their project.

Our point of departure is people interpreting the negative conditions and circumstances facing them, interpretations the aim of which is to transcend those circumstances by "thinking" one's way past them. To accomplish this "thinking", people employ two different but reciprocal propensities. One is to turn events and experiences into stories and myths. The other is to explain those myths by means of logical principles. The propensity to story-telling and to logical interpretation is both individual and collective. When individuals convey their stories and fit them inside a more general one, and accept logical explanatory theories to fill the space the stories create, then we can say that power of discourse is as a mytho-logics. The creation of myth out of events in the telling provides symbolic density. The logical principles in texts (writ-uals) provide a wider context of understanding. In the context of emancipatory movements and their transcending or overcoming projects, what brings these together is instruction, a poring over texts to explain myths, one gaining by being part of the larger collective rather than losing. In this sense, political movements, and especially emancipatory ones engaged in transcending negative poles, generate moral moments and alternative

11. See "Introduction", in David E. Apter, **Ideology and Discontent**, New York: Macmillan Free Press, 1964. See also Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System" in the same volume.

12. All these different usages and their chief protagonists have been carefully examined by Raymond Boudon and there is no need to go over the ground here. See his **The Analysis of Ideology**, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

possibilities. It is the dialectic between these tendencies and the mediating ones of institutional democracy that I particularly want to discuss.

The formation of discourses which become consensually validated bind people together "exegetically" in discourse communities. These discourse communities can be from above, i.e., the state, or below, in terms of "emancipatory movements" using anti-discourses which confront the state.

Our basic argument is that confrontational acts outside ordinary institutional rules and mechanisms of politics, by questioning the taken-for-grantedness of conventional ideologies, will alter the scope and meanings of equity and make changes in patterns of allocation. Inclusions and exclusions are revised. In these terms, not only is political discourse created out of events, but it goes beyond the question of the proper definition of ideology. Examining emancipatory movements we consider a good way to analyse violence or the threat of violence on politics.

The three main types of such movements of special concern here - all of which despair of regularized channels such as electoral or interest politics and thus organize alternative modes of action - are the following. The most frequently encountered is extra-institutional protest (using public demonstrations, sit-ins, strikes, to arouse attention and support). Historically most associated with the evolution of democracy itself in the form of civil rights, trade unions, women's emancipation, and other issues, extra-institutional protest movements are confrontational without challenging the political system as such. Mainly they are interested in effecting changes in the scope and prevailing definitions of equity.

The second, and opposite form is revolutionary insurrection. Here the state itself is the target. Not only has it forfeited legitimacy, it is regarded as structurally non-redeemable but normatively wrong. The aim is to generate sufficient mass power to first disorder the state and then overthrow it root and branch. Whether libertarian and/or democratic, the main historical prototype is the Jacobin phase of the French Revolution.

A third kind of emancipatory movement, where faith in the first kind is lacking and the ability to create a mass following as in the second has not occurred, is "terrorism". This has received the most publicity, and considerable attention, but very little analysis which might fall under the rubric political theory. The phenomenon itself is diverse but so widespread is the use of the term that despite its pejorative connotations it has become common usage. Fundamentally, it involves small groups committing violent acts against persons and property as symbolic or surrogate for society and state.

All three kinds of movement can be left or right, sacred or secular, particularistic or universalistic, etc. All share one thing in common. As movements for they are also movements against. In this sense they are provocations, subversive in their own eyes as well as those of the authorities. Theirs is the politics of the moral moment, disjunctive, redemptive or transformational. Claiming legitimacy against current principles as well as excesses of power, the defects of society are interpreted as failures of the state. Movements like these arouse controversy by their very existence and stimulate debates over political fundamentals. Their chief weapon is a discourse capable of threatening prevailing norms and principles of power particularly when combined with confrontational episodes.

From the present perspective movements falling under these three rubrics are becoming more and more important for several reasons. One is the degree to which they seek to undermine the assumptions on which democracy rests.¹³ Another is that they keep changing the venues of

13. See in particular Anne Baudart and Henri Pena-Ruiz (eds.), **Les préaux de la République**, Paris: Minerve, 1991, passim.

confrontation, for example, from the workplace to the academy. Still another is the way the "emancipatory project" has shifted from rectification of inequalities and exclusions, to the undermining of codes and discourses. Take the example of education. Usually considered a standard route to self-improvement and social mobility from the standpoint of some inversionary discourses and the movements which represent them, the institutional structure of education is hegemonic, its institutions and instrumentalities prefiguring the social hierarchy. So considered, the school is a locus for power imprinting, an incubator perpetuating the discrepancies between the ideally free citizen and the "real" world of lost opportunities.¹⁴ This locates today's emancipatory movements less in terms of conventional notions of equality than victimhood. This is what distinguishes them from "old" social movements which fought for equality or greater participation. Today it is the "negativized other" which takes the moral measure of the whole and especially in democracies. Not surprisingly, movements of this kind are politically irritating even when they are of minor importance. To the extent that they downgrade conventional knowledge while claiming superior moral insight they challenge order. Critical theory is their privileging weapon. Such movements claim as exclusive their right to purposeful enquiry into what is wrong, bringing the norms and principles embodying the idea of free inquiry into disrepute. Such movements want it both ways, attacking society while claiming its protection.

These remarks apply particularly to the more extreme forms of emancipatory movement. Why pay attention to the extreme? It is the extreme that best reveals the more general interplay of conflictual discourse. Inversionary discourse claims "emancipation" as a moral project rather than a form of alternative organization or structure. By studying its components we can explore a little-understood side of democracy. We ask how and why it is that such movements seek above all to rupture the discourse of the state by means of an anti-discourse which undermines ordered jurisdictions and stable networks.

4. Anti-History and Memory

The more inversionary versions of discourse theory derive from such figures as Marx, Bataille and Lacan. It is not only loss, dispossession, deprivation of the patrimony, dispersion, etc., that defines victimhood, but also inability to control the circumstances of one's environment. Hence the importance of collectivizing individual predicaments. Which is where retrieval and projection, story-telling and logical construction, metaphor and metonymy, narrative and text become relevant in the forms of ways and means. Intertwined with political violence they make it into a social text. Reinterpretation, loss, memory, yearning, these are embodied in the retrieval process - most particularly of metaphorical equivalencies - and put together form into an anti-history the omitted or negated part of official history. Moreover, once retrieved, suppressed events, confrontational episodes, submerged political upheavals, abortive uprisings offer symbolic density or enrichment to current circumstances. They enlarge the retina of the political eye. How to transform the unhistory of the negativized, to make the anonymes impinge on history, is one way to put the matter. To enable those penalized by democracy to gain power through loss is another. Among the aims of such retrievals and the projected outcomes which follow from them are the capture of the moral initiative and net gains in imagination, both being necessary to invert the condition of the "negativized other".

This is why to focus on the "marginalized" as the basis for analysing political violence by means of inversionary discourse adds to our understanding of political violence more generally. To the extent that even the most economically successful democracies will have some quota of the penalized, the victimized, the marginals there will always remain

14. The special significance of education is that it enables people to be able to make personal predications based on high information, to deal with the conditions of their immediate circumstances and connect causes to effects.

opportunities for emancipatory movements of one kind or another.¹⁵ Which brings us to the question of how to render their consequences useful for social policy. How should democratic societies respond to movements which violate the law, and refuse to use ordinary institutional rules, especially when because of the magnitude and audacity of their claims they polarize the community and force the state to act punitively? Moreover, since they have the disturbing quality of making visible what at any given time society prefers to render politically invisible, they shock the mainstream of society. That is, they "reveal" negative conditions as more than accidents of individual fortune or collective circumstance but rather as fundamental defects of the system as a whole, and offer a logic to show why democracies depend on such defects in order to survive. They seek to spread the conviction that flaws and gaps in equity are irremediable and decisive in the last instance. The emphasis is not on mere deprivation but loss, dispossession. The solution is not compensation or remediation but nothing less than the repossession of self, society and the state. The object is to naturalize as self-evident the course of action which leads to the possession of self as a repossession of patrimonies. Inversionary protest movements are thus confrontational and violence-prone, and relatively uninterested in rectifying this or that economic, social, or political ill, or providing greater political access to those deprived by reason of religion, gender, ethnicity, race, language, class, role, or other affiliations. Such affiliations are interesting only as provocations requiring the violation of standing jurisdictions.

5. A Dialectic of Violence Rather than a Universe of Choice

Such a view of the universe is not that of a world of choice from which some have been excluded, but a universe of meaning in which insight is inspired by victimhood and confrontation. The original model was Hegel's master and slave. Inversionary discourse is a means of altering prevailing boundaries and jurisdictions on the ground and in the mind. If they reject ordinary claims and demands and remain aloof from negotiation and the bargaining that accompanies democracy, the intent is to create moral and symbolic capital in opposition to economic capital. The aim is the formation of discourse communities, privileged and chosen insiders formed by acts of exegetical bonding instead of social contrasts. Such communities may follow many doctrinal forms. It is not the form that counts or even the ideological content per se, but rather the underlying power of its logic and the evocative quality of its myths.¹⁶

The object then is first to disqualify mediating politics with its ensemble of instrumentalities for coalition and consensus, and replace them by means of action which reveal the outside power and inside weakness of institutional frames. By bringing into contempt party or interest group competition, more extreme solutions appear perfectly logical alternatives. Particular ethnic, religious, or ideological goals become significant not merely as claims to rights but as venues for totalizing alternative political modes. The most ordinary acts escalate as moral meanings. Endowing confrontational events with political symbolism is itself a strategy which changes the political process from accountability and consensus to a politics of spectacle, theatre, violence, drama, a "situationism" combining elements of Dada, surrealism, absurdity. There is irony but the humour is played off with deadly seriousness.

To responsables, movements such as these represent anarchy, randomization, violence. Their redemptive and transformational claims, no matter how democratic in principle and passionate in expression, are fundamentally anti-democratic. Nor do democracies have good ways to deal with the popular radicalism of the more Jacobin variety. For all its emphasis on the disjunctive liberal revolutions, it is always uneasy with the politics of the moral moment, with

15. So, for example, the bitter protest movements in Japan despite its extraordinary economic accomplishments. See David E. Apter and Nagayo Sawa, **Against the State**, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

16. See Jean Levi, **Les fonctionnaires divins**, Paris: Seuil, 1989.

its preference for disjunction rather than mediation. For those in power know that no matter how deeply desired, there is never a politics of the fresh start and that even the most powerful moral movement is short-lived.¹⁷ And, where inversionary movements do come to power, the ensuing transformation reveals that change from below is vastly different in character from change from above. Claims made in the name of a higher rationality wind up making reason unreasonable. Cultural attachments turn out to be far less fragile and vulnerable than was once assumed.

All this is of course clear in hindsight but obscured by confrontation, especially when political discourses are embodied in asymmetries of power. In concrete struggles to transpose or invert such asymmetries by an expropriation of structures of thought, strategies for action become fictive truths. The aim is to prove that transforming the condition of some will rectify the condition of all - thus sanctioning acts outside the framework of democratic politics. It is in the name of the more general equity that the politics of the moral moment becomes significant. Emancipatory movements are the surrogates.

The central object of emancipatory movements of the kind with which we are concerned is to concretize abstract concerns of equity and power, and attack registered boundaries and jurisdictions, moral, cultural, and political. It was suggested above that universities serve as particularly good venues - but any locale will do if it can be converted into a mobilization space and a simulacrum of state versus society, a political arena where the battle over public power becomes gladiatorial. Re-enactment is crucial and ritually stylized.¹⁸ It focuses the public gaze, makes the invisible visible, and upends commonsense notions of practical politics. For only when such notions can no longer be taken for granted can there be a genuine redefinition of rights, sovereignty, and the proper exercise of power.

It should be pointed out that the present emphasis on the "other side" of normal politics needs contextualizing. Emancipatory movements today are engaging in changes in the pattern of normal politics itself. Traditional sovereignties are eroding, jurisdictions in flux, boundaries altering. Regionalism, localism, and new boundaries and jurisdictions are the order of the day and not only in the break-up of states and empires like Yugoslavia in the first instance or the U.S.S.R. in the second, but in the erosion of long-standing sovereignties in Western Europe. Add to changes in jurisdiction the European Community, the interpretation of cultures, immigration, and one sees both internationalism and localism occurring simultaneously. There is less disagreement about democracy than its units and components.

Emancipatory movements are likely to increase under such conditions, and solutions become more difficult to find. By representing not alternatives but anti-discourses - at the moment when conventional authority is being loosened and instrumentalities and institutions being modified - even minor political violence can contribute to a more general unease that things are out of hand. Threatened by such conditions are both instrumentalism and the functional character of democracy, and the principle of methodological individualism, represented by the citizen as the unit actor, the self-conscious and rational agent of civic and group life. The alternative view is less some form of methodological collectivism (for some of the same reasons Elster has suggested in his analysis of Marx) than the politics of the moral moment when there emerges some version of the *mentalité collective* of the Jacobins.¹⁹ "Deviant" affiliations, loyalties and commitments become universalized by a process which itself enhances the individual's sense of self-worth through group association. Symbolic saturation,

17. They have plenty of decisive evidence for the view that fresh starts are bound to be illusory, with the idea of irreversible change the biggest illusion of all. Even a brief glance at the fate of socialism will confirm that where revolutionary disjunctions were the most totalizing, the reversals have been the most extreme.

18. See Mona Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire*, 1789-1799, Paris: Gallimard, 1976, passim.

19. See in particular Marc Bouloiseau, *La République Jacobine*, Paris: Seuil, 1972:10.

moral projection, mythic retrieval, a logical discourse taken together as collective individualism, enable the expropriation of the powers of others to be the condition for taking possession of the self.

Of course, other ingredients are involved including the personalization of power in the name of principle, éliteness given over to populism. Democracy becomes the action of transforming social codes and upending accepted meanings whose extreme is reached when virtue, expressed as discipline, and embodied in texts, displaces those currently in place, and so alters the principles of rule and governance. Thus collective individualism takes on the force of motivation, the individual reinforcing the collective. Commitment is defined as obligations of self to an emergent society, a society-in-becoming, with no anticipated faults or visible imperfections, a utopic community. Both the truth and the form it takes politically constitute an appropriate next stage of the human condition. That, in extreme form, describes what is meant here by the emancipatory process.

Other aspects of this process will be examined further on, including the way emancipatory movements constitute unities of opposites brought together within a single discourse. We will show how competing and alternative tendencies are transcended by a theoretical logic, as well as how concrete opposition to some larger hegemonic entity, most particularly the state, provide internal coherence and structure. Indeed, it is the internal play, the tension of passionate binaries which sets up an interior field of force in which the interplay and mutual attraction of opposite ends collectivizes the individual and individualizes the collective - a process which can be seen as mechanistic like electricity, or organismic, like sexuality. Both, suitably coded, stimulate and intensify meaning, so serving as the basis symbolic capital, a performative politics, a politics of speech as a form of action and action as a form of speech.

One should point out that verbal killing under such circumstances may well be followed by the real thing. Then texts become action and words are associated with wounds, death, sacrifice, and martyrdom. Similarly with the PLO. These too are essential ingredients of emancipatory political movements either in real terms or as a kind of political fantasy. When organized confrontation connects generalized moral predispositions to specific goals and moral moments are generated, they serve as historical punctuation marks. Although emancipatory movements rarely succeed on their own terms when they are successful they leave more than a trace, or better, a deposit which at least for a time may alter thought, provoke new knowledge and challenge predispositions, providing authenticity to the next round of confrontational action. One might call this a politics of the high moral ground. More often than not violence is involved as well as protest which infringes on the rules rather than adapts to them. So emancipatory movements represent themselves as parts speaking for the whole, i.e., as metonymic agents of change, and claim the authority of agency itself - an authenticity of power - and send out shock waves of outrage, bringing down the force of law, behind which is the force of fear - fear above all of chaos and disorder.

From the standpoint of such movements any democracy, and the state in which it is embodied, no matter how ethically sensitive and politically responsive it might be, will always harbour some form of repression. Eliminating repression is a central and permanent democratic project. However, as one kind of repression is eliminated it will be replaced by other forms. The emancipating project is thus a permanent condition. But there is always the danger that in accomplishing its purposes in the name of democracy, it will extinguish democracy itself.

But such eventualities are extremely rare. Rather, such movements are episodic and uneven accompaniments to the more stable processes of democracy. By remaining outside normal politics they influence policy. They constitute an aspect of politics at times more important than the much more studied normal politics of institutional policy-making. To the degree that emancipatory movements are a function of asymmetrical and polarizing political binaries

unrectified by the flow of normal political business, they introduce moral risk as an ongoing political project.

This makes emancipatory movements important in ways that have nothing to do with their size or the rightness or wrongness of their arguments. Moreover, the achievement of democracy is to use risk as a means of political learning and adaptation. Beneficiaries of confrontation, even the most upsetting events have their place in democratic history. Of course there is always a danger that they might overwhelm democracy rather than amend it. But that is what constitutes the basis for risk, and the learning that follows from it.

We call this condition permanent for there can never be, in some final sense, a repression-free state (even where the state is defanged). If one follows a Foucaultian interpretation of oppression, one needs to recognize the dialectical character of discourse politics as distinct from a politics of bargaining. It is the anti-history of democracies which reveals the limits to reforms based on compromise, bargaining, and institutional means. The moral dialectic so engendered effects changes in the evolution of democracy itself. Moreover, all the classic struggles for democratization, securing leadership accountability, enlarging and protecting civil rights and liberties, extending the franchise, reforming electoral systems, broadening compensatory welfare and entitlement programmes for the disadvantaged, etc., have all been accompanied by confrontational violence. Democratic politics depends on what might be called moral friction.

The more inversionary a movement, the more disjunctive its aims, the more it piles up moral claims and equity demands. By the same token, the more symbolically significant the movement, the greater the visible threat perceived by those in power and the more vulnerable those at the centre of power feel. From the perspective of responsables, political life is all dangers and threats, and democratic processes and institutions vulnerable. Where emancipatory movements see the implacable power of the state, those in power see fragility. The more such movements focus on gaps between accepted principles of equity and common practices of justice, the more government must reject them as morally privileged representatives of principle.

From a state perspective the worst consequence of emancipatory movements is that they set arbitrary criteria for evaluating public performance, criteria which, in the name of justice force people, willy nilly, to reassess the way democratic practices actually work. Emancipatory movements which seek to affirm the standards by which democracy should be evaluated are troublesome to the degree that they reject the principle that democracy can impose criteria for judging such emancipatory movements.

6. Re-conceptualizing Power: Order versus Choice

This raises the question of the discourse of democracy itself. Typically characterized as a creature of its institutions and constitutions, examined in terms of decision-making and efficacy, as a system we will call it a choice model. In these terms, the democratic state is an ensemble of individuals and groups representing a prevailing symposium of interests rendered into priorities and preferences of choice by means of the legislative process, with market the basis for community because it converts individual wants into collective goods.²⁰ In this the market is itself a discourse about forces using the language of equilibrium based on a balancing in civil society and the state of recognized needs, wants, and desires, a condition of order balancing equity, allocation, and growth.

20. See Kenneth J. Arrow, **Social Choice and Individual Values**, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963.

In practice, of course, democracy lurches from crisis to crisis, each of which tests its weakest links. It is precisely in the fluctuations and crises so produced that emancipatory movements have their openings, either to produce crises or in response to them.

In short the predominant "ideology" of democracy is a discourse embodied in what today is called a rational choice model. Institutionally, the discourse is embodied in mechanisms and instruments which enable choices to be made at different and intersecting levels of state and society. The common consequence of all these mechanisms and instruments is the generation of information: information refigured in the form of preferential values becomes policies. Markets then are ramified information systems which enable a distribution of choice priorities.²¹ To function, markets require rules and adherence to those governing choice. It is the discourse which validates these rules. Democracy in this sense implies freedom to choose within an open-ended political system. Such a system will be relativistic to the degree that it is pluralistic. Precluded is some Platonic concept of justice. Such qualities, built into institutional democracy, represent what might be called, using Foucault's term, the modern political episteme. This institutional democratic model is not one among several plausible alternatives. It is not only the alternative to all previous forms and other forms but it appears to have history on its side. Built into the discourse is a moral-evolutionary history in which the "choice model" has emerged out of an "order model" as morally and institutionally superior to all other forms of polity.

The transition in terms of discourse can be found in Foucault. He compared the modern choice "episteme" to the order episteme of the "classical age".²² Among the properties of the classical age were a "general grammar" of the sign, representation meant the names of things, and knowledge, like algebraic transformations, made transitive otherwise fixed but relationally flexible qualities. The theory of wealth depended on use values rather than exchange values. The discourse was composed of permanent relationships fixed in their qualities, ordered nature and social life, regularity in change - teleological in the Aristotelian sense, or ideally "conceptual" in the Platonic sense. Comprised of unity and totality, knowledge consisted of locating and defining the boundaries and ingredients or components of this totality, identifying its elements, classifying them, giving them names, establishing their logical ranks, proportionalities, and hierarchies in the social as well as the natural universe. Order was organically rather than mechanically connected. Growth followed form, a telos of the beginning as well as the end.

Such notions as free will and choice were absent. They would have been unthinkable, subversive, revolutionary, explosive. Indeed, as soon as they came to dominate the language of knowledge the old principles of order were destroyed. Wealth was transformed into capital. Use became value. Ranks and hierarchies became functional. Wants and goals became open-ended, potentialities open. Teleology disappeared. The natural as well as the human universe became the object of change by conscious design. Order and obligation were removed from the centre of politics. Totality was shattered. The political focus shifted from the collectivity to the individual.

21. The economic market is coterminous with the political one. But it follows its own dynamics. A modern version equivalent of Adam Smith's assumption that everyone has a "natural propensity to truck, barter, and exchange", it represents a presumption of universal rationality - a rationality applying to individuals everywhere in their roles as producers and consumers. Without it the political marketplace alone, as applied to citizens, would lead to a Hobbesian choice, a survivalist notion of self-protection, making an institutional democratic polity impossible.

22. See Michel Foucault, **The Order of Things**, New York: Pantheon Books, 1970. The chief quality of the classical age is the representation and organization of signs as resemblances. The discourse was a function of recognizing what those signs signified. See especially pp. 56-69.

In contrast, the choice episteme was entirely a discourse based on rationality and exchange, production and reproduction. "Representation" is political, rather than a business of naming and classifying things. Exchange now includes the realm of value translation, apples measured against pears. Individual preferences are changed into schedules and priorities. Embedded in law and manifested in policies, functional instrumentalities enable exchange and translation to take place under a system of rules where the sole discretionary authority has only limited power. A moving equilibrium replaces centralized power. Balance is represented in the re-equilibration between economic and political market-places, the one for goods and services, the other for policies, laws, and orders, the one private, dispersing power, and other public, concentrating it.

The transition from an order to a choice model was rapid and not without difficulties. For one thing, it had to deal with the problem of how to order choice, the solution to which required an entirely new political framework. Hobbes was perhaps the first to recognize it fully.²³ The virtue of his argument was to show clearly just how really fundamental was the conceptual change from an ordered system of mutual obligations and asymmetrical ranks to a universe of rational choice. He made it abundantly clear that order meant protection. But his solution, the conveyance of individual powers to a sole discretionary authority, was too self-limiting. Needed was a political solution which could provide for authority under maximal choice conditions, i.e., freedom. But freedom, the only totally open-ended value, poses the problem not only of how to provide for its maximization - in so doing preventing the strong from prevailing over the weak. To transform a universe of will into a universe of choice requires a new polity. The political becomes a form of order preserving and protecting choice. In this sense the choice model defines the problem of order and the institutional democratic model is a system of order protecting choice.

What is represented is the self-interested individual pursuing interests and by so doing both producing and consuming information. Institutional mechanisms transform information into outputs. Yet because politics is in this sense a transformational grammar in which each institutional form of democracy (presidential or parliamentary, unitary or federal) depends on coalitional games and electoral mechanisms capable of transforming market information into mediating policy outcomes, and so enabling the political system to sustain itself as a moving equilibrium, the individuals are all part of the same discourse community.

Despite crises and lurches, then, the two key features of this model are equilibrium as a form of naturalized equity and a community of sharing in the common discourse. Justice is a function of the extent to which the political and economic markets are mutually self-regulating. To prevent the situation from being zero sum, economic growth is essential. As suggested, the choice model represents a shift from a rationality of wealth to a rationality of growth. (Choice for Hobbes was zero sum.) Hence human beings are at one and the same time atomic particles in a field of political force and mutually interactive in a field of discourse. Add growth and the idea of a self-perfecting-never-perfected institutional democracy follows.

The evolution of an order model into a choice model is not some simple transition from one to the other. It is constituted by punctuating events which create a special and interior history, a consciousness that a different discourse is taking over. In this sense democratic discourse is not just some alternative but an emergent political truth. Nor does such truth evolve in a context of emergent political theory as debated by philosophers. Rather, it is embodied in concrete struggles, revolutions, civil wars, which may draw on such ideas but give them both contextual and situational force - the force of human experiences, sufferings, and sacrifices. In this sense the discourse of democracy, while at a logical level remaining theoretical and

23. Ruthlessly following out the implications of the dissolution of the old episteme, his redefinition of order in terms of centralized power was consonant more with protecting rather than maximizing choice. Hobbes sought the institutional ground for a minimal definition of choice.

abstract, is embedded in immediacy, of people fighting for their beliefs. Nor can constitutional and institutional practices and laws be made effective without it becoming clear that such practices and laws are themselves translations of those human experiences. The entire corpus of democratic ideas and practices derives from narratives and texts which make them appear to be the triumph of mind over obstacles. Which is one reason why it is so difficult to simply set up a democracy by fiat. One needs to struggle to achieve it, and by so doing, make it one's own.

In this sense democracy is both a linguistic achievement and a product of authenticization, something derivative of one's own unique experience. Then it can validate itself as a sovereign jurisdiction different from any other. Not like other political systems which claim to safeguard the conventions and legal boundaries of society, it becomes unique, superior, a final form. The democratic state is thus representative of all other bodies: interest, class, ethnic, religious. It is the guardian of both their right to difference and their acceptance of accommodation to others. This is accomplished by ensuring that all such bodies will have secure means of entering both the political and economic markets, and in ways which sooner or later will make their priorities felt. In this regard one can speak not only of the state, of the total organization of power, but of government as a unique sub-system of civil society with primary responsibility for safeguarding the whole. Government constitutes that ensemble of functioning entities and instrumentalities which together through executive accountability, representation, electoral strategies, administration, and political decision-making, make it possible to generate information and use it for policy. Choice requires information. Linkages between state and society represent information exchanges with political parties and interest groups crucial to but only part of the process.²⁴

7. The Democratic State

The choice model realizes itself in democracy. In this context terms like state and society, institutions and their linkages, functions and processes, constitute the general political "grammar" of choice. But there are certain interior mechanisms which keep choice from becoming anarchy. Required for choice are also rules which restrict it. A politics of choice constitutes a continuous process in which decisions represent estimated points of balance between choice and order, the outcome of which is a moving equilibrium. Hence every functioning democracy is at any moment a particular equilibrium between polar tendencies: choice and order, rules and ends. If the choice principle requires that ends remain open with freedom the central priority, the order principle requires that rules channel and restrict choice, so that institutional means will be safeguarded. Institutional democracy is a political system in tension between the freedom of choice and rules governing freedom.

The maximal unit of the choice model is the state. The critical instrument is government. The state is the predominant jurisdictional boundary around choice. Civil society (composed of individuals and groups) is constituted as an ensemble of group needs and demands. To render these into information, principles are rendered as equity claims, and then converted into negotiable interests (geographical, cultural, business, labour, etc.). Ranked according to the dual market-place in such terms as wealth, saliency, and numbers, a politics of information includes lightning calculations of significance according to two, often competing, criteria. One is constituted by the needs of the state. The other is constituted by the needs of the civil society.

The choice model thus has its own dynamics and democracy is in this sense systemic no matter what particular form it may take. In this regard it should be said that the actual range of alternative constitutional modes remains limited (parliamentary, presidential etc.). Which

24. For a fuller treatment of such matters see D.E. Apter, "Institutionalism Reconsidered", *International Social Science Journal*, (129), 1991:493-526.

institutional model is to be preferred depends on circumstance, history and debate. But whatever the institutional form the common denominator of all democracies is the free exchange of information, the minimization of coercion, and the accountability of the executive to representational bodies.

All concrete constitutional polities aim to realize the mutual reinforcement of choice and order and a balance between them. These tendencies both repel and attract each other. Each exerts a magnetic pull on the other, generating a field of force within which one finds, sharply posed, the crucial question of how to maximize choice within the limits of order.²⁵ The same assumptions and the same dynamics of information which work in the economic market-place work in the political market-place. Political parties replace firms. Votes replace money.²⁶ Particularly relevant is the private sphere. Civil and property rights are crucially interdependent. Private property is balanced by public need. Public power is diluted by economic power. Political power prevents economic inequality from producing political inequality because numbers (votes) represent the counterweight to wealth (money). An equilibrium of these vectors will be modified by developmental needs with its attendant inequalities, and diluted by short-run political needs, i.e., compensatory policies favouring access and participation for the relatively disadvantaged.

A key problem arises when provision of information to decision makers fails because of "noise" or "interference" (a failure of institutional linkages). That is where extra-institutional politics begins. Where compensatory policies fail and equilibrium is skewed, political action, including confrontational social movements, will arise outside of regularized institutional channels. Reform is a process of "incorporation" of the excluded by means of improvements in linkage instruments.²⁷ The practical or institutional evolution of the model in terms of adaptive change has always included extra-institutional processes because of information gaps and failures. The power of the powerless is to threaten the choice boundaries of the rationalistic field. By prejudicing choice on the one hand and order on the other, amendment of both the principles and practices of democracy is required. In this sense emancipatory movements are part of self-improvement.²⁸

25. See Brian Barry, **Political Argument**, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965. See also John Rawls, **A Theory of Justice**, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971.

26. See Anthony Downs, **An Economic Theory of Democracy**, New York: Harpers, 1957. See also Mancur Olson Jr., **The Logic of Collective Action**, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965.

27. See Kay Lawson and Peter Merkl, etc. **When Parties Fail**, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

28. In these terms, the main improved versions are social welfare and the social democratic state. The first evolved out of classic liberal capitalism as the political market assumed greater significance. The result has been an enlargement of the state itself and especially its compensatory and entitlement programs to those "marginal" in terms of effective political participation. In the United States, and elsewhere this has been done on a more or less temporary or ad hoc basis, with fiscal and monetary policy a major mechanism of decisional efficacy, i.e., the social welfare state. In the social welfare state equity and justice are realized first in terms of the political market and then in law, the rights of citizens being universalistic. The other tradition, deriving from class-based socialism, is social democracy. Inspired by the recognition that working class power could be realized by party politics and electoral superiority rather than revolution, it derives from a diverse pedigree, Engels (after 1895), revisionism, Lassalleism, and utopianism. It aimed less at revolution than capturing parliamentary majorities, thus taking executive power. By this means social democracy could then use the authority of the state to eliminate private property and increase social justice. Today however, social democracy is no longer class-based. It accepts private property. It relies less on nationalization and planning and has moved away from socialism except in terms of an appropriate definition of equality. Social democracy assumes that there will be social casualties which result from the private sector and assumes that accordingly compensatory or entitlement programs are necessary and permanent obligations of the state.

It is also the case that more is required than the purely self-interested rationality of the economic market. As suggested, exchange is also a discourse using a language of equity, allocation, growth and order. The terms of these represent at least a residue of principled discourse defining the nature of political rights and obligations sufficient to produce - to use Shils' term - civility. That is, discourse over the terms of what might be called the equity statement itself generates principles of civic obligation which both incorporate the self-interest principle and embody to some degree the public interest. This was a problem of major concern to Simmel, Durkheim and Pareto more than modern rational choice theorists. For them the question was how to convert functional aggregations into a mutualism of responsibility requiring self-denial in the exercise of self-interested rationality rules.²⁹

Above all such mutualism depends on the relationship of rationality and civility to education and knowledge. The two together represent potentiality, i.e., the moral evolution of the community and the individual. Such are the conditions necessary to the exercise of free choice over time. On them depends that necessary confidence without which there would be little sharing of rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities and without which people would be unable to realize preferred ends. In turn, without such confidence the rules which themselves both govern and make choice possible would no longer be independently valued. The normative aspects of the discourse would be undermined. The rules would be less self-monitored rather than a function of state compliance. In this sense, in the model of institutional democracy the normative represents discourse embedded in the rationality rules of the market as well as its political instruments. Such a model of the institutional democratic state is both representational and tutelary.

This does not mean that people must believe in democratic principles. All that is necessary is that people speak, read, and act democratically. This suggests that the discourse of democracy is not only a general grammar of the political system, but also a set of "meta-rules" which include a grammar and a language of politics. Within this framework markets constitute certain boundaries while intersecting others. The aim of the inversionary discourse model is to challenge the meta-rules of democracy, explode the ensemble of choices, and disrupt the market. The dialectic with violence constitutes the perpetual negative to this positive notion of the democratic state.

Would the choice model be able to survive without fundamental challenges? Probably not. Too much self-monitoring, too effective equilibration of the market, and both the meta-rules and the discourse of choice would lose their validity and meaning. No system of rules is entirely free-standing. It is the danger of their violation that gives them vitality. The general tendency in the model would otherwise be to ritualize them and make them perfunctory.

In this sense democracy requires risk, from inside as well as outside. But the question is how much risk before democracy is overwhelmed or destroyed. In general, we would argue that, on the whole, in democracies in which growth is sustained, the discourse that derives from it is much tougher than might appear on the surface. This is first because meta-rules and discourses are to be embedded in role networks within and between boundaries, and second because membership in discourse communities is both overlapping and socially defined, i.e., interlocking.

This suggests that far from being overwhelmed by them, so long as growth is non-zero sum, democracy as a mediating instrument for open ended choice depends on emancipatory movements to define its moral trajectory further than the effective participants operating

29. This is something which Adam Smith recognized in his **Theory of Moral Sentiments**. Even in his day the rationality of the economic market place alone was too primitive a notion, too unadorned a view of human nature. Economic rationality defines a world of insupportable principles. Hence his notion of "sympathy".

within an equilibrating political and economic market. The relationship between choice and order is dialectical. The dialectic operates within an improving frame within which rational action expresses itself as both self and the collectivity, a function of access to bargaining and negotiation. Decision-making mediates choice and reinforces rules while altering the options and modifying the method. In this process the state is "privileged". Without the state, choice would be rendered nugatory.

8. Boundaries and Sticky Change

If the practice is bumpy, the principle embodied in the democratic meta-rules describes instead a smooth generational transmission of shared values and incorporation into the ensemble of role networks centring around the rationality of the double market-place. In the democratic model, choice is open-ended but not pre-ordained. The state intersects with society as the sole jurisdiction which sustains all other boundaries. But in democracies the state is also subject to those other boundaries which it is required to protect. Since the conventions governing social boundaries change slowly and are rarely challenged, challenges when they do arise cause the state to respond cautiously. Change then tends to be incremental, in Lindblom's sense of the term, and boundary-reinforcing. The more things change the more they are the same. The more they are the same, the more they change.³⁰

Because of sticky coalitions and entrenched and organized voting blocs, the amendment process is slow. Moreover, within the process, issues must be converted from principle to interests, institutional-democratic politics reducing even important concerns to the flat grey of interest and bargaining. Change, when it does take place, is more or less imperceptible. Important issues are robbed of their significance.

Such change dilutes the highly visible with the mundane, robbing it of its symbolic or moral significance. An example is afforded by the election of a woman to the presidency of the Irish Republic. One would have imagined such a choice unthinkable in Ireland today. Compared to, say, France or the United States, the Irish Republic discriminates against women both in public and private life. It maintains gender boundaries in law as well as custom, reinforced by the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. And not only between men and women. Homosexuality, for example, is - in theory at least - punishable by life imprisonment. Abortion and divorce remain illegal. There are no laws against sexual harassment. The Irish are deeply conservative on such matters. Nevertheless, Mary Robinson, a member of a small leftist party, was elected president of the Republic. Introducing a certain porousness in the hitherto fixed relationships between men and women in terms of society and state, it is a case of incremental reform by means of institutional modes facilitating boundary changes within the political system by legitimating previously rigorously regulated "spaces" between them.³¹

Change by these means is incredibly slow. It presumes a certain satisfaction with things as they are, even a public preference for political lethargy. It is precisely here that emancipatory movements take on significance. Move from the Irish Republic across the border into Northern Ireland and the world turns upside down. Violence, terrorism, and national struggle towards an emancipatory end are not only directed against British rule, but against the role of

30. If by the very nature of the choice-vector process it can only utilize processes which are slow, cumbersome, and complex, and "boundaries" can only be readjusted haltingly, this is because choice involves changing boundaries while order means sustaining them.

31. Variations in form but not in principle include parliamentary and presidential systems, consociationalism, pluralism, Dahl's polyarchy and Shils' civic culture. On a right-left spectrum one can include liberal utilitarianism and socialist transformationalism, the center-left social democracy and center-right social welfare state, as well Birnbaum's distinctions between strong and weak states. The institutional outputs so generated are designed to make the political system self-perpetuating in the form of a moving equilibrium. This political system contains and reinforces all social boundaries within its jurisdiction, and provides rules governing choice while leaving choices or ends open.

the church, the prevailing relations between men and women, etc. The tragedy is that the conditions for a solution do not exist.

Boundary changes occur in other than interest, ethnic, ideological, or other well-defined groups. Equal in significance may be those boundaries which form around issues which while they fluctuate in importance may burn with a particular intensity and thus intersect with all other groups in powerful ways, becoming focal points of attention and refracting issues to the point where a new discourse is formed. In the United States the matter of abortion can have that effect. Or, to take something much less well defined like changing public tastes, the issue may involve challenges to "good taste". Certain "speech acts" obviously "transgress" conventional limits. Violation of such boundaries easily leads to demonstrations and protest. The flaunting of sexual mores, or obscenity and pornography in relation to art, for example, tend to be directly disordering. But the long-run effect may be to create a discourse which so reinterprets the meaning of "speech acts" themselves that these reinforce rather than violate boundaries.

Defining the "boundary" between life, birth, and the definition of the living person is another one of those "intersecting" issues which redefine equity and by doing so shift the focus of allocation from wealth to power. Such conflicts the state can only mediate with difficulty. For those excluded from the process, the meaning of incremental change is very different. Rather it is evidence of systemic disparities between the purity of equity claims and the compromises of concrete practices of politics. For them if violence occurs it is both self-righteous and diagnostic. It reveals how glaring these discrepancies may be. The more radical the emancipatory movement, the more it challenges not only the way in which democracy works but the working assumptions that over time and by means of an incremental process, sooner or later the worst gaps will be bridged.

9. Boundary Smashing and Discourse Breaks

Emancipatory movements break into the process by challenging both the meta-rules of democracy and its discourse as a political system. We have already described their most characteristic types, of which the most common is extra-institutional protest, with revolutionary insurrection and terrorism as alternatives. But a great deal of such activity occurs between all three and without in fact being any. That is they flirt with all, thus exercising the discourses of violence, without necessarily engaging in it. A good example is that of the Situationists who, attacking conventional taste, parody social civility at all its most sensitive points, and mock the meta-rules on which the choice paradigm itself depends, by calling into question the false consciousness of the choices themselves. They would argue that the basis of rational choice is itself irrational and the moving equilibrium of the institutional democratic model destructive of intelligence and humanity.³² Hence their actions are designed to alter both the rules governing choice and the nature of choice itself. This requires them to make language performative. Directed against the grammar and language of democratic politics, form smashing and verbal killing are aimed at the principle of rationality itself, an implosion of it by caricature.³³

Movements other than the Situationists also aim to alter the discourse of institutional democratic politics, its grammar and language, and its surrogate, the state as the boundary of the boundaries. Action is designed to generate new social texts, semiotic, "sign-full". Occasions, situations, and happenings produce signifiers directed at destroying the rationalistic signifieds, i.e., the concepts embedded in the institutional democratic model itself. So startling are the implications of this that no matter how small such a movement

32. See Sadie Plant, **Most Radical Gesture**, London: Routledge, 1992.

33. A good example is found in Mitchell Goodman (ed.), **The Movement Toward a New America**, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970.

might be, it immediately becomes magnified by those in power, blown out of proportion, a manifestation of visible dangers which not only prejudice the transmittal of the discourse of rationality from one generation to the next but introduce chaos and confusion instead. The movements of the 1960s and early 1970s in Europe and the United States continue to have ripple effects within universities because they challenged the rationalistic choice episteme. They sought to undermine the evolutionary legitimacy of democracy and substitute for it a revolutionary legitimacy. To the extent that they see this as an ongoing project they differ from the "old" social movements which accepted the principles of the democratic political system while seeking to widen their scope. The "new", employing a critical theory which is continuously inversionary, denies political solutions. So that what might be called the discourse of the post-modern variety has as its aim not only continuous challenging of boundaries but treating the democratic discourse as hegemonic. The only possible condition for open-ended choice is in a continuous battle against not only the hegemony of power but the power of the discourse on which it is based.

So considered, the starting point is the perspective of the "victim" - the thief, the homosexual, the madman, the pariah. Any role which denotes marginality serves as the point of departure for a critical and indeed inversionary discourse different from that of democracy. Pariahs are the heroes of transformational change.

The usual tropes include the marginal, or the excluded. More recently, especially in Europe, it is the victim as "outsiders", especially immigrants. From the perspective of the state the problem is how and to what extent immigrants ought to be required to be assimilated in order to become citizens and to enjoy the rights and obligations of citizenship. Or, conversely, to what extent should pluralization prevail so that immigrants will be able to pursue their traditional ways of life in a different terrain. Each alternative involves different limits on choice.

Most states try to integrate outsiders into the political and social life of the country. They define permissible boundaries. Culture and social life fundamentally different from the rest of society becomes "deviant". Hence from the institutional democratic standpoint, the problem is the "absorption" of "difference" - and the difference that difference makes. The inflammation point is reached when there is visible occupation of the same space by "insiders" and "outsiders" a condition which magnifies all forms of difference within the same community and raises questions of how much social and cultural boundary "violation" can be mediated before "cultural tipping" occurs. In France, for example, such problems have entered the political arena in earnest, in terms of Le Pen and the National Front and other national political parties as well, with all the implications of fascist revivalism as an "emancipatory" project.

One sees the predicament virtually every day. A good example is represented in the recent case of "veiling" in France. Among the visible signifiers of differences which define the outsider, and which reveal whole social codes, symbolic expressions are clothes, food, language, the movement of the body in public places, the wearing of the veil. The latter is important among many Arabs in much the same way as the skullcap is for Jews. It is provocative as a signifier of difference between Arab and French culture and a demarcation in the status of men and women in terms of modesty, sexuality, eroticism, etc. Veiling is designed to reinforce difference, especially where young girls are incorporated into the secular institutions of the French state.³⁴

34. The veiling issue was significant because it called into question a number of these assumptions. Moreover, it extended "difference" into the next generation, among those born in France. It infringes on a principle of French education which since Durkheim's day has been virtually sacrosanct, that secular educational institutions are designed to socialize and integrate students into the civic culture of

If the state tries to prevent veiling it imposes on the choice, on the "rights", of people to live their lives according to their own cherished principles. Yet to the extent that Arab immigration raises the "spectre" of "cultural tipping", it poses the perennial problem of how far the "tyranny of the majority" should go.³⁵ How far are boundaries to be altered? How can assimilation be balanced by difference? The answers to such questions depend largely on how people define each other. Define "outsiders" negatively and "balancing" includes rectifying wrongs. But wrongs tend to be retrieved from the past and imposed on the present. In the French case negative differences redolent of the past as well as those of the present, include the residual status of the colonial as pariah. Multiple marginalities - class, religious, ethnic, linguistic - coincide in the case of Muslim Arab immigrants more than with any other group of immigrants in France.

That being the case, a semiotics of "presence" as a "presence" of difference radiates throughout the country. The wearing of Arab dress is a signifier for "violation". The charm of exotic custom is transformed into provocation. The use of Muslim beads, the very sound of Arabic, the insistence on internally maintained exclusionary boundaries having to do with sexuality, marriage, and the restricted nature of exchange between "communities" all serve to reinforce difference socially and culturally while the official position is how to eliminate difference politically. Public reaction varies, of course. Not a few say, in effect, that if foreigners want to live in France permanently they must become French, and if not they should go back where they came from. Others see the matter as people wanting it both ways, to be, say Algerian Arabs enjoying the rights of French citizens, and as French citizens, be free to impose Arab demands - cultural, educational, etc. - on the ways and habits of the French themselves. From the point of view of the French, nothing could be more important to the process of assimilation through the educational system.³⁶ From this standpoint, Algerian problems stand in much the same situation as did French Jews during the Dreyfus period. Anti-Semitism and anti-Arabism are drawn from much the same source (the followers of Le Pen and the National Front not "discriminating" overmuch between the two).

Balancing similarity against difference defines groups rather than individuals as the units of political life, and communities rather than citizens. In these terms, boundary-shifting becomes symbolically loaded. Rectifying equity gaps, giving voice to those who for whatever reason are discriminated against, or economically disadvantaged has always been what a good deal of politics is about. But when changing boundaries is no longer a function of group organization but rather of group representation, the basis of the institutional model is undermined. Instead of overlapping roles, cleavages occur. If in the past the evolution of democracy was a function of conflict and confrontation - civil liberties, religious freedom, enfranchisement, trade unionism and collective bargaining, civil rights, feminism, work-place equality etc. - the end was individualization and incorporation. The sustaining power of the political system as a moving equilibrium depends less on the acceptance of differences than their pluralization and individualization. Indeed, what is assumed is that differences will erode.³⁷

France. Hence veiling, the demarcation of difference for a next generation in the school system, is a provocation.

35. See Mancur Olson, **The Logic of Collective Action**, op. cit.

36. Moreover this was also the case in colonial territories. One could be assimilated in a colony by becoming "evolved". One became an *evolué* mainly in terms of education, and in French language, culture, social role, as well as dress, etc. Assimilation was a legal status. In Algeria those who became assimilated enjoyed the rights and the privileges of being French. But in France there were not such rights for Algerians as Algerians, or Muslims as Muslims, nor was it anticipated that there would be.

37. See D.E. Apter, **Choice and the Politics of Allocation**, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971.

10. Emancipatory Movements and Collective Individualism

This way of putting things should not be taken to imply that the sole or even the predominant way that reform occurs is through emancipatory movements, which for the most part occurs through horse trading, bargaining over interests which one way or another become inputs in the decision-making process. But it emphasizes how it is that such movements do more than simply elevate to the public gaze issues which are troublesome. It emphasizes the symbolic aspects of emancipatory movements and what has been called the symbolic capital this can generate.³⁸ It is when people are excluded categorically from the market and play a limited role in the political bargaining process more or less permanently that a good many emancipatory movements become inversionary and collectivized.

What that means is, for example, that individualism in the context of the choice model becomes defined as an abdication of responsibility, for people refuse to concern themselves with changing the nature of the game itself. Inversionary movements then want to alter the alteration of the taken-for-granted commonsense quality of the political world of interest group bargaining and party politics. In these terms the "new" emancipatory movements aim at exploding the doxa of conventional democracy.³⁹

For this reason alone they are different from older social movements. The latter believed that their actions would come to have salutary effects on democracy, resulting in net gains in the range and scope of equity, increasing the participation of the hitherto excluded, making the political system more representative, etc. Even when acting outside the boundaries of the legal and appropriate institutional structures of democracy, they raised the question of the moral limitations of the politically possible within those structures.

Difference between "old" and "new" social movements can be over-emphasized, however. Illegal actions and the question of moral scope have always been troubling questions. Actions outside the boundaries are taken because they are disruptive of order in its most fundamental sense. There is too always a question of how much "emancipation" people can absorb within a limited time frame, before they begin to react negatively. While there is no clear "absorption limit", how change is mediated is as important as what changes need to be negotiated. In a democracy, majorities may feel that enough is enough, and consider the social fabric more threatened than enhanced by the emancipation process itself. There are limits to what people will absorb in the way of change. If too much change is imposed by a minority on a majority, or those in power become threatened with a sudden loss not of power but authority, they will strike back, using the state as their instrument. Hence, emancipation projects need to be evaluated not only in terms of the worthiness of their projects, goals, objectives, but also their political consequences. Yet it is precisely this last question which change-oriented emancipatory movements are least likely to address.

Thus the paradox of emancipatory movements is that on the one hand they are intimately connected to the democratization of the state while on the other, to be effective they promote responses which prejudice the institutionalization of democracy itself. Two concerns immediately arise from this way of defining the situation. Every emancipatory movement poses risks. To consider negative political consequences or pose the needs of democracy against the claims of a movement would emasculate virtually any such movement from the start. Cleavage politics use a necessary consequence because movements need to mobilize support in the face of political risk and danger. A small amount of protest tends to bring about a relatively high degree of reaction from the state. However, confrontational violence leads to more than specific demands and actions. Challenges to power and authority become loaded

38. See Pierre Bourdieu, **Outline of a Theory of Practice**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972. See also Apter and Sawa, *op. cit.*

39. *Ibid.*

with emotive and symbolic significance, triggering normative responses on all sides. This being the case, neither the virtues nor the faults of emancipatory movements are to be evaluated with Olympian detachment. But because such movements are better at identifying what needs to be remedied than in providing acceptable remedies, they raise the question of how to regard them. Such evaluation is never easy. Meanings change with events. Events change with meaning. The outrageous emancipatory movement of one generation is the glorious history of another. And this tends to be the case whether one is dealing with "hard" demands, involving for example a specific reallocation of resources, land to the peasants, food to the poor, housing for the homeless, or the larger theoretical and moral factors attending them, how to change "the system" in order to eliminate marginality, discrimination, the inadequacies of representation; how to alter institutional mechanisms to provide better access, greater accountability; how to open new routes to political access and power, enlarge the rights of minorities, reduce the tyranny of majorities, etc.

Despite the diversity of the issues and the ambiguities they entail, if we define a political spectrum one end of which represents the erosion of democracy and the other its improvement, then we can think of emancipatory movements not only in terms of the absolute principles they favour or the intrinsic virtue they may claim to represent but their relative effects on democracy as an ongoing process. The same movement in one context may lead to a progressive evolution of democracy while in another, it may seem misplaced, dangerous, and inappropriate.

This would suggest that there are no universal standards of judgement that can be meaningfully applied in some purely abstract way without considering other factors. Ethical fine tuning which results from social protest against, say, gender discrimination, race, religion, the environment, or against nuclear power plants, may be entirely appropriate in Great Britain or France, and involve improvements in the terms of their democracy, while they may impose such burdens in say India or Brazil that would prejudice democracy itself.

11. Emancipatory Movements and the Generation of Power

The lack of universal standards is significant precisely because it is in the very nature of emancipatory movements to move from immediate ends to ultimate values and to define their objects in terms of the widest moral imperatives. They claim discretion over whether to violate the law. They reserve the right to decide on strategies from peaceful protests (say, boycotts) to violent means. Emancipatory movements, then, contain their own teleologies which, raised to the level of principle, are not likely to predispose such movements to be concerned with the question of impact on democracy as it is practised. This is particularly the case among movements whose clienteles are the most marginalized in a society. Because of the social distance between centre and "periphery", it is possible to make the kind of judgements in which the centre is defined by the margin, a kind of moral calculus not so different from the economist's use of the relation of marginal costs to price. In effect, the claim is that the moral cost of marginality determines the moral value of the state as a whole.

If this is the case, then social movements will tend to be radical not only in terms of ends but to the extent they remain concerned about the vitiating effects of compromise on the moral status of the movement itself. Quite often this leads to strategies which are clearly self-destructive, as for example the more militant forms of trade union job actions, which lead to a closure or a flight of firms. In the disastrous miner's strike in England in 1984, job actions occurred under conditions in which history played a crucial part, recapitulating class struggle, not the right to collective bargaining. But the strike was hopeless and its consequences catastrophic.

This suggests that one needs to pay particular attention to the internal dynamics of emancipatory movements including the conditions under which they engage in high-risk

actions, ignoring the dangers of obvious negative political consequences. When protest movements make claims outside rather than within the doxa, their concern is less with extending the scope of effective participation, or enlarging opportunities for their clientele, than changing the state in some fundamental fashion. Such groups not only tend to see the necessity of breaking up the state as it is (in terms of its jurisdictions) and overturning it as a political system, they reject mediating outcomes. They stand outside the normal framework of politics, using doctrine, ideology and theory to challenge the doxa.

The more such elements fit together in a single doctrinal whole, the greater the tendency towards a certain interior orthodoxy. If this produces cleavage politics generally, it also leads to factionalism and splitting within, or to put it a bit differently, the greater the degree of principled and coherent ideology, and the more prone to cleavage outside the movement, the greater the tendency to splitting within. Doctrinal coherence and solidarity give an appearance of locating new truths and political solutions. The greater the concern with such truths, the more people are likely to differ over both method and interpretation. One consequence is that within emancipatory movements one finds a high degree of personalism, cosmocratic or phallocratic leadership, and the elevation of the symbolic side of political life. This double set of tendencies constitutes its own dynamic. A cleavage characterizes the relationship between a movement and the state. Splitting over orthodoxy and dissent characterizes tendencies within the movement.

Tendencies towards factionalism may be held in check in the face of a common enemy - colonialism, imperialism, the state, or some particular enemy the movement wishes to exorcise. On the other hand, over time, if a movement grows as a result of conflict with the state, the greater the likelihood that the same issues which unite will also divide.

In this sense, and especially in a democratic society, emancipatory movements invite the state to come down heavily. The violence sought is that which forces the state to violate its own principles, casting doubt on its propriety and legitimacy. Movements seek some point of state vulnerability to apply the Archimedes lever to overturn them. At the same time, they credit the state with virtually an infinite fund of disposable power. Violence then attends the violation of the boundaries of appropriate political action. Violations lead to violent responses.

From the standpoint of the democratic state, the concern is immediately with the precariousness of democracy - to contain and limit the violence, to force movements to reveal their own rigidities, to resist imposed changes while remaining willing to compromise down the line. The end product of even violent confrontation is eventual co-optation. Movements fractionalize. People become bored. Outrage internal to the movement dissipates. Outrage external to the movement increases. The reason that emancipatory movements go hand in hand with the evolution of democratic polities is that in the long run the one plays into the hands of the other. The state condemns confrontational tactics of emancipatory movements for violating institutional boundaries while recognizing that such tactics are an intrinsic part of the practice of democracy.

Emancipating movements, then, by violating the rules, reaffirm them. No matter how radical the point of departure, most social movements wind up accepting the "hegemony" of the rules while trying to change their scope and administration. Even the African National Congress, for example, never became a fully revolutionary movement despite its use of confrontation and violence, and even though some of its factions proclaimed the most revolutionary intents. It continues to want an end to apartheid and the extension of democracy to the marginalized majority.

To challenge the doxa, the distinguishing feature of the emancipatory social movements with which we are concerned suggests, however, that precisely because of these characteristics, resisting compromise is fundamental to the existence of the movement itself. If violence is endemic, the question is what kind. To have long-lasting effects, and be more than merely episodic (which people can learn to live with and more or less ignore) violence must become coded, part of a narrative, a history, interpreted in terms of an inversionary discourse. The goal of violence is not simply tit-for-tat action in the manner say of blood feud, but rather something more devotional, intrinsically redeeming, sacrificial. Deaths represent ritual killings. Martyrs so generated produce obligations. Violence then becomes a history of sacrifice, connected to the sacred.

Violence so converted from banality is then the ultimate symbolic expression, the social text, the beginning rather than an end to discourse. Required is an agent that stands in surrogate relationship to the marginalized other, proletariat, displaced peasant, slave, untouchable, pariah, woman, homosexual, thief. These define as the enemy whatever group represents the dominant discourse, defines the boundaries by the nature of the discourse itself. Such movements represent discourse communities at variance with the dominant discourse. They reject not only the rules but the authority of authority, the canon, the text. In one form or another they confront not only the state but every aspect of normal life.

The extreme example is the Sendero Luminoso in Peru. Preoccupied not only with a transformation of economic and social life but the formation of a discourse based on a Marxist logic and a retrieval of a lost patrimony, to the extent that logic is "true", it forms a discourse community.⁴⁰ There can be no ameliorating project, only the transformational one.

The object is to prevent the discourse of distributive claims and reallocative justice. Inversionary discourse movements like Sendero Luminoso consider the state as a body already layered with phoney previous efforts of reform which buttress the state with layers of bureaucracy. Such a movement seeks the disjunctive moment in the cannon's mouth, proclaiming some higher truth, some penetrating consciousness, that allows it to push for all or nothing regardless of the consequences.

This is likely to be the case for emancipatory movements which become truly revolutionary and/or terrorist. There is a difference between groups for whom the logic of their position at least fits with the logic of those who oppose them. For then the universe of discourse is the same even if each takes different "sides" within it. For the Situationists, for example, even the normal criteria of rationality accepted by Sendero Luminoso would be rejected. For those who draw their inspiration from Dadaism, futurism, and anarchism, the political problem is not simply the representation of the excluded, or the rectification of inequities and injustices, but an emancipation of which violence and spectacle are themselves intrinsic experiences. Inspiration derives from Sade and Bataille as well as Sartre and Fanon. Such movements display an extreme or heightened irritability with all forms of authority, direct or indirect, in a way not even an old anarchist would have found congenial.

Here the tendency is to textualize violence by making everyone into signifieds, "victims", "colonials", "subalterns" and negativized others. The purpose of form-smashing is to expose the "political unconscious" to use Jameson's phrase, by creating social texts out of events which make use of all kinds of signs, forms of decoration, dress, the spectacular, and the staged mobilization of disjunctions. They orchestrate what can be designated as transformational signifiers whose consequences can become truly demonic if joined with revivalist, religious, linguistic, racial, or ethnic movements. For these bring with them a natural history of retrievable grievances, significant events on which to draw a history of

40. See Carlos Iván Degregori, **El Surgimiento de Sendero Luminoso**, Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 1990.

outrages, the I.R.A. being a good example. Here there is combined spectacle, retrieval of the past, the immediacy of the violent event within the long drama of Irish emancipation. In this context the outrageous condition is the necessary one. Such movements can also draw inspiration from both the ideological left and the extreme right. (Sometimes, indeed, it is difficult to tell them apart, as in Bataille himself.) Those on the left start to assume that capitalist society is so intrinsically a breeding ground of false consciousness, commodification, and hegemony that there can be no reforming project without the displacement of "exchange value consciousness" and the "restoration" of "use value consciousness". The act of emancipation is itself the emancipatory project.

Cautionary admonishment about democracy is mere incitement. Adding fuel to the fire, it merely raises the level of the debate, the tone of the rhetoric. More important, the rhetoric becomes its own reality. To be deeply involved in such emancipatory movements then means conceiving the political differently from those who would accept its ordinary conventions. Politics is a narrative of oppressions, in the mind as well as on the ground, all raw edges, wounds and violation. The body is a simulacrum for otherness, victimness, taking on a symbolic density, offering fresh meaning through sacrifice.

To protagonists of direct action (to use the old anarchist term) the more weakly institutionalized democracy, the more ripe for the kill. But even the best democratic state is so far from reaching the necessary standards of inversionary equity, that should emancipatory efforts breach the limits of the state, and produce a massive negative reaction, this consideration should not be cause for hesitation. Prudence is hardly the watchword of the new emancipatory movements.

Nor, indeed, could it be otherwise. Only by pushing the limits does one redefine the possibilities. If this involves dangers, this is precisely what gives such movements and governments their bite, enabling them to touch the nerve centres of the political, forcing a redefinition of equity claims, providing the discourse which might convert claims into power.

12. Elements of the Inversionary Discourse Model

We now want to bring together the threads of this discussion in terms of elements and ingredients of the inversionary discourse model itself - as it operates within the framework of the choice model. Whatever forms inversionary discourse takes and in whatever movements, all challenge the self-referential rationality of democratic theories of the state. All claim underlying truths by challenging institutional democracy, whether by attacking it as a form of "commodification", or a discourse "magic realism", its democracy as performance or spectacle, and governance a facade behind which ruthless manipulative interests, effectively disguised from public view, act in ways which restrict politics exclusively to the self-interested mode of rationality. These favour a logic of inversionary rather than compensatory outcomes. Hence too the use of symbolic capital as an alternative to economic capital.

Symbolic capital is in this sense intimately connected with violence, whether symbolic or semiotic or in actual confrontational events. And if it has nowhere succeeded in successfully challenging the structure of order, nor has it offered strikingly new solutions that would seem to work, it pushes the limits of democracy. It questions why and how the state creates its own "overload" problems which lead to confusion, disenchantment, and alienation.

Inversionary discourse theories differ greatly in terms of objects and design. In France in the 1960s for example, confrontations against the state produced a variety of inversionary discourses (from Raul Vaneigem, Guy Debord and the Situationists, to more "respectable" theories of Foucault, Bourdieu, and Baudrillard). Today inversionary discourse includes feminism, homosexuality, blackness, otherness, etc. Indeed, in university contexts the "state" is represented by "the canon" and the political battles are over "multi-culturalism". The

university is thus the primary instrument of the state, a surrogate of its conventional discourse, a boundary-maintaining institution within the state.

The critique is the same - that the state marginalizes some people at the expense of others, whether in terms of class, gender, religion, race, etc. Rectifying this condition means more than removing the conditions of marginality. Inversionary discourse theory would argue that in so far as these discriminating features have been boundaries conventionalized within society, the gap between political rights and a transformed consciousness requires a "break" both in power and the power of thought - both an "epistemological break" in the discourse of rationality, and a psychic break which liberates the submerged persona. Both can occur when inversionary discourse is hooked to the "liberating project".

So a Sartre, for example, saw the thief, the homosexual, the pornographer, as the liberating "other". So today it is so-called minorities, or immigrants or whatever "others". Whoever the preferred victim, inversionary discourse will embody him or her in events which become signifiers for transformation, alternative modes of interpretation and languages critical of power. In this regard the unique surrogate for the state is not enterprise, or industrial establishments but universities and other educational bodies which intrinsically function as the boundary which secures all other boundaries, the jurisdiction over all other jurisdictions. In this sense the primary target of inversionary discourse is the institution which best represents and secures the dominant discourse. Thus inversionary discourse is designed not only to disrupt both boundaries and jurisdictions as conventionally given, between men and women, blacks and whites, masters and slaves, but to engender a new kind of thought so subversive in character that it activates events which bring out all the power of the state, revealing its hegemony. To do this inversionary discourse must be composed of particular ingredients, narratives and texts, metaphors and metonymies, oralities and writings. It constructs political languages which serve as bases for affiliation. It produces discourse communities whose existence challenges the rules. In short inversionary discourse redefines choice in terms of violation of rules.

So mobilized the consequences are self-fulfilling. For if challenged the state responds and in terms of pure theatre. It sends out its uniformed police, it uses its courts, in short it affirms its juridical, jurisdictional and boundary proprieties. But in so far as the state is forced to take action against its own population by reacting punitively, spectacle is enhanced but magic realism disappears. A new "reality" becomes apparent. The more it sustains the position of defending the boundaries of society the more this is seen as defending its own interests. The more it claims to speak for universalized principles, the more parochialized these principles become because the boundaries and jurisdictions it seeks to maintain and mediate are by their very nature exclusionary in some fashion and hegemonic, to the detriment of some individuals and groups.

What then are some of the ingredients of inversionary discourse theory? The point of departure is marginality but not any marginality, it is the condition of the other - those beyond the boundaries. This may take several forms. Class and role marginality in its extreme form leads to pariahdom, the result of functional superfluosity. Cultural marginality is represented by extreme otherness and difference. Political marginality is denial of political access, colonialism, slavery, foreigner, etc., i.e., it is exclusionary. Whatever its particular form, marginality rarely follows one line along. Several forms tend to go together.

The inversionary discourse itself begins with how such marginality occurred. It retrieves past events and connects them to contemporary experienced events. A story is constructed that consists of remarkable episodes and the narration of which describes displacement, loss of the patrimony, a fall from grace, a process of defilement, stain, sin. These are the negative poles to be transcended. A future is projected in terms of a logic of transcendence. So one might say

the narrative is mythic but it combines legendary and real experiences. The logic creates a millennial solution embodied in a text. Myth and logic constitute the structural aspect of inversionary discourse. Episodes and events as experienced and out of which intentionalities are interpreted constitute a phenomenology, the texts a hermeneutic. When one speaks of "otherness", "difference", "alterity", in terms of movements organized around such discourse, all these components are involved.⁴¹

There is violation of taboos which define the larger meanings of social existence including what is considered "healthy" as well as "sick". Lynn Hunt, in her introduction to *Eroticism and the Body Politic*, has provided not only a vocabulary for such analysis but applies them to classes within the body politic, the virtuous versus the debauched aristocracy, for example, or the significance of the "king's body" in terms of the reproduction of the state, etc.⁴² So too with the human body which like place, becomes a simulacrum, its special symbolic qualities opening up holes in boundaries, violations, sexual inversions/perversions, etc.⁴³

The political consequences of this model are first to reveal how the "other" is privileged and endowed with special qualities, insight, resistance, revelation, etc., whose implications are to explode the conventionalities of both society and the institutional democratic state. So in its first order, as a praxis, inversionary discourse itself has political consequence. Insight, the poring over texts, instructional practices, educational programmes, etc. not only establish the conditions of association but also exegetical bonding. In turn exegetical bonding creates discourse communities. Usually one finds at the centre a cosmocratic figure - part story-teller part exegete - who generates narrative and text, and, creating symbolic capital, transforms terrains, refigures the body. Exempting space, body, location, venue from their normal signifiers and everyday uses, they become, instead, simulacra. An act like taking over a building, or occupying a particular ground, a Tiananmen Square, creates a "semiotic space". The body may be used to define violation, rape, blood, death.

There is polarization and overcoming. And in the process while polarization sets people apart, it also creates the conditions for their coming together. What is repellent is also attractive. First level inversionary discourse involves codes, signs, insignia. Events are to be read as a social text.

So considered inversionary discourse is directed against boundaries. Often it violates taboos associated with reproduction and the organs of reproduction. Sexual gaze, eroticism, pornography, and the acceleration of violation, are not necessarily inversionary. They need to be placed contextually in inversionary terms, as in the work of Sade or Bataille. These kinds of ingredients, placed in a context of lost patrimonies, disinheritances, marginalization are aimed at the transcendence of negativity by means of thinking past the resistance of conventional boundaries. It involves actions as the basis of thought, insight as necessity.

How important then are such "projects" as "exploding" the "colonial gaze", changing the definition of witnessing, extracting the penalties and pains of difference, showing up the subaltern nature of derivative knowledge, and learning how to read bodies, gestures, dress,

41. For an analysis of how these work in concrete situations see D.E. Apter and Nagayo Sawa, op. cit., and D.E. Apter and Tony Saich, **Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic**, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, forthcoming 1994. See also D.E. Apter, **Rethinking Development**, op. cit.

42. See Lynn Hunt (ed.), **Eroticism and the Body Politic**, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

43. See Michel Foucault, **I, Pierre Riviere, Having Slaughtered My Mother, My Sister, and My Brother...**, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975. See also Michael Feher (ed.), **Fragments for a History of the Human Body**, Vols. I-V, New York: Zone, 1989.

clothes, as well as words, in short to do violence to conventionality, and read violence as a social text.⁴⁴

The figuration involved in inversionary discourse is almost invariably outrageous. In the United States, for example, such cases as the "Central Park Jogger" are examples of how conventional forms of violation can be turned on their heads. Instead of the violation of the liberties of a young woman exercising her rights as a citizen in a public place by the "wilding" tactics of black teenagers, she became instead a surrogate for the rich, the powerful, the successful, the educated. The event itself became a symbol of negative differences so profound that multiple rape, beating almost to the point of death, placed the society on trial. The concept of guilt was inverted. The language of law was flaunted in the jeers and shouts of a largely black crowd in which multiple "wounds" become visible. Indeed, the phenomenon of wilding itself and the violence endemic in it is not political in the specific sense, but totally political in terms of inversionary discourse.

The events are intrinsically shocking not only because of the violence, for similar acts among blacks occur every day without anyone taking much notice, but because of the subversion of boundaries. In the unmasking of the nonrational behind the rational in the courts (the embodiment of equity), the democratic state becomes the instrument to sustain precisely the boundaries against which the inversionary discourse is directed. Indeed, the case is complete with codes, tropes, figures, and the meaning behind meaning. Here too one goes the full distance from individual rationality to social pathology.

Violent episodes make the jump. They focus on rupture. They represent deliberate violations of conventional boundaries themselves. Among the two best ways for doing this are the violation of the boundaries of space, and the violation of the boundaries of the body. Both constitute "simulacra". They telescope large issues within the frame of immediacy. Within that frame events enlarge their symbolic significance. The effect is both the symbolic condensation attached to events and actions, and the layering of these events with symbolic density.

So the thief or Fanon's colonial, the life of the prisoner or the subject. Events associated with emancipation belong to the wider discourse on the negative other. The body of the prisoner, the trial, the cage or cell, stand in stark contrast to the paraphernalia of the chamber of the court, the justices in their robes, the language of the law and justice, the jailer as the surrogate for an entire professional discourse on criminality, the language employed by experts who conduct that discourse. No wonder then that inversionary discourse can, as for example in the case of Bobby Sands in Maze prison, evolve through the body as a social text in the act of refusal, i.e., refusing to eat, wash, smearing body and cell with human excrement, acts which not only violate conventional notions cleanliness and dirt, but are shockingly redolent of the purification by putrefaction of the flesh, as with the early Christian anchorites, (which one might add is embodied in the texts and discourse of Irish Catholicism).

The more resistance encountered the more enhanced their symbolic significance and the more location, space, terrain, body, become endowed with an interior meaning. And the more these meanings penetrate the disguise of ordinary discourse, the more "different" those who use it from the rest of society the more chosen the community becomes - agents of history perhaps, redeemers, salvationists, revolutionaries. And the more confrontational, the more discourse feeds on interiority and interiority feeds on discourse a qualitative jump occurs and it turns

44. Similarly with gender and its boundaries. Maleness and femaleness, as fundamental as night and day, the essential reproductive relationship, are not only eroded by political and economic equality between the sexes but such equality introduces a much wider area of sexual ambiguity. The boundaries are upended by homosexuality especially when it becomes part of the visual display of a violating discourse, transvestism, males kissing each other in public, and of course irony, as in the term "gay".

into symbolic capital. If this happens within the democratic state, then interests convert to principles, mediation gives way to confrontation, conflict replaces co-operation, and cleavages form around fundamentally different notions of society and politics. Pushed to the extreme, this is the logic of inversionary discourse. From this standpoint democratization represents obliviousness rather than rationality. That is, it does not "see" or hear "the other". It is not geared to what might be called "alterity". To be seen and heard in one's alterity would therefore involve a good deal more than a mere claim to equality. Hence discourse theory is designed to do two things. First it is aimed at exploding the "magic realism" emptiness, and superficiality of institutional democracy. Second, by the action of discourse communities, and through spectacular and confrontational performances, the "real" as distinct from the ostensible will be revealed, and true rather than false - or better, critical rather than mediocre intentionalities can be invoked.

Generalized and made into a theory, and applied to institutional democracy, inversionary discourse seeks to inflict wounds on the body politic. It is both disordering and reordering at the same time. In relation to the institutional democratic model it constitutes a would-be epistemic shift in some cases as radical as that of the classical age to the modern. The most extreme versions belong to violence, what I have elsewhere described as the post-modern political condition. The purpose is to reveal to victims their victimness. Hence the significance of marginals, the displaced, the functionally superfluous, those left out in the balancing processes of the institutional democratic model, and who are not part of its moving equilibrium except in a negative way.

13. New Emancipatory Movements

While there is nothing new about inversionary discourse, Marxism being a good example, unlike Marxism inversionary discourse theory challenges the assumptions of the rationalistic discourse of both politics and economics. Economics represents commodification and false consciousness. Politics represents the hegemonic power of the state disguised in the discourse of equity and representation. Inversionary discourse seeks to connect the two not as a double market-place leading to a moving equilibrium but as a double conspiracy against boundary- and jurisdiction-changing.

Hence such "inversionary discourse" challenges both the institutional democratic model and modernism as democracy. In doing so its aim is to constitute a new episteme with which to displace the old, and dismantle the privileged role of state, and especially its position as the Archimedes lever between choice and rule.

None of the three levels of inversionary discourse is concerned with formal or representational notions of equality, participation, or access precisely because these sustain the boundaries they seek to modify. Similarly with compensatory responses by the state for these merely serve to perpetuate the moving equilibrium which is the basis of the institutional democratic state.

In this sense one might consider inversionary discourse theory as anarchic in character, but without the improving formulae of doctrinal forms of anarchism.⁴⁵ They involve the difference between criticism of the democratic state and critical theories of the state.

45. Among the characteristics of inversionary discourse are the uses of spectacle and the spectacular, including visual alterations that violate conventional boundaries, whether in dress, smearing of bodies and faces, hair, gestures, occupation of space, the use of graffiti, etc. See for example Greil Marcus, **Lipstick Traces, A Secret History of the Twentieth Century**, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989.

The whole point to inversionary discourse theory is to exploit what might be called the post-modern paradox. The more finely tuned the concepts of post-Rawlsian equity, the more enlarged the definition and scope of justice, the more hegemonic and dominant the state appears to be. Indeed, the less discriminatory democracy is at the institutional level, unless it explodes the boundaries themselves as distinct from "merely" giving access to those within them, the more hegemonic the state becomes. Its interest and societal interests are the same.

Since this is presumptuous to the extreme, it is important for those engaged in creating an inversionary discourse to use examples where the democratic state denies its own principles, e.g. marginalized groups, the poor, the black, the Arab, the Chicano, etc., in terms which involve loss, lack of patrimony, pariahdom, alterity, difference. Since equity gaps can always be found even in the most advanced and successful versions of the institutionalized democracy, the social welfare or the social democratic state, inversionary discourse theory both augments the fine tuning of political sensibilities, and casts doubt on both the sincerity and efficacy of remedialism. For the sheer enlarging of participation or the expansion of social services, in so far as it acts to sustain the moving equilibrium, also maintains the commonsense universe of exclusionary boundaries intact. The point to emancipatory movements is that in order for them to be effective they must test the democratic state by threatening to divide it at the point where it normally mediates. They take for granted that even if the outer limits of a democratic polity were reached it is highly doubtful that they would be breached. Democratic solutions are regarded as reductionist and dehumanizing. The more concrete the conditions to be rectified, the more one becomes complicit in the bargaining enterprise. Each fresh solution becomes a target. The condition is one in which democracies become breeding grounds for discontent. Conventional civilities are boring, restrictive, and self-monitoring.

It has already been suggested that emancipatory movements as such rarely pose great dangers for democratic states and that they should be expected as a form of periodic disturbance. There is no happy condition out there which will eliminate their causes and indeed, it is among the most privileged where one is likely to find the least satisfied, rather than among the marginals themselves, who on the whole remain relatively inarticulate about their condition. The worst consequence of the new emancipatory movements is the eroding effects of ever more finely-tuned standards of equity when applied to the give and take of democratic politics, (not to speak of the impact on more fragile and tentative democratic régimes like the Czech and Slovakian republics, or Argentina today).⁴⁶

It has also been suggested that institutional democracy, because it is democratic, tends to be self-rectifying. It co-opts those who make equity claims. It mollifies and reconciles (without giving too much away in the process), although more often later than sooner. This tension between the co-opting tendencies of political democracy, and the resistance to them, one of the most interesting and least explored aspects of democratic political life, involves a process of absorption. The state needs to be able to convert the self-proclaimed principles of the movement into interests and then engage in negotiation and bargaining. But this can only be done when those infuriated by the process can no longer wield principle as their only claim to equity.

14. The Dialectic of the Models

This discussion locates emancipatory inversionary discourse at the intersection between state and society and between tendencies toward monolithic beliefs and fragmenting alternatives. The most extreme invent discourses which upend normal standards of rationality. How

46. Fragility in this sense means that democratic principles of the state are weakly institutionalized in society and while forms may be observed and even practices, these are only instrumental - that is, they work as long as they work.

threatening they will be to institutional democracies has not been discussed. But it has been suggested that such movements are not likely to succeed on their own terms because of the way the double market as an information and accountability system works. The market, politically and economically, cuts across the most exclusivist boundaries. It stimulates not only a multiplicity of roles but the cross cutting of their networks. Nothing remains impermeable, neither class nor ethnicity, nor even religion. The political system works because both groups and individuals come to require and indeed rely on funds of practical information that continuously flow throughout the system, from bottom to top and top to bottom. Rhetoric works for a while, and indeed may generate new truths. But it has a way of disappearing in the face of the concrete and the practical. And at that point everything is reversed. The new truths appear as pretentious and false. The old and discredited commonsense returns. Once the market-place begins to work as a choice system it is continuously self-reinforcing. Choice creates wants rather than wants creating choice. Decisions are designed to appeal, please, or placate voters, break down cleavages. Continuously re-forming coalitions within or between parties, interests, and other groups ensures that while no problem is decisively resolved if it offends some, few problems are totally ignored if they become politically relevant as information.⁴⁷

This, it might be argued, is too complacent a view which pays insufficient attention to those for whom choice is illusory and access to the market minimal. But it is also the case that the progressive rectification of such conditions for and by particular groups is a good deal of what the democratic process is about. Which raises the question of whether today's emancipatory movements are really as different from earlier ones as they might appear.

There certainly are some fundamental differences. As suggested earlier, virtually all the old radical movements accepted the same principles of rationality and equity embodied in institutional democracy. Their demands were for more equal political access leading to compensatory social policies. In today's inversionary discourse movements, emancipation is fundamentally different in the sense that it is aimed not at reducing the negativity of otherness vis-à-vis the mainstream, but to "liberate" the mainstream from itself. But of course this is also the oldest and most fundamental principle of emancipatory movements, from Christianity to Marxism, i.e., that those suppressed by the normal boundaries of the society will redeem the whole.

Whatever one can say about them, inversionary discourse movements are not content with claiming simply equity or equality. They want to liberate society from its own institutional and ideological structures. They have to do with fundamental relationships, with Hegel's masters and slaves rather than with the right to vote. They favour the kind of total uprooting that would put the rest of society at risk. They consider the differences between theory and practice in democracies are necessarily so great that only a radical project, continuous and threatening the legitimacy not of this government or that, but of the institutional democratic model itself, will do. If in theory, for example, for institutional democracies a freed slave is no longer a slave but a citizen and an individual, for a good many emancipatory movements he or she remains a freed slave, i.e., neither free, nor slave, nor citizen until the language itself changes and new discourse emerges. Where from a state point of view no further "emancipation" is necessary or desirable, from a movement point of view this represents the

47. The private sphere includes individual rights as well as property. The public sphere is secured by law and authority. The private sector is separate from but not autonomous of the state. The state sector is more or less accountable to the private. The individual is both a citizen and a consumer. As a consumer he or she is a participant in an economic place of material needs, wants, and preferences for goods and services. As a citizen he or she is a voter registering political preferences for leaders, policies, and parties. The two roles intersect in the double market place of goods and services and policies and leadership preference.

myth rather than the substance of democracy. For modern emancipatory movements this is not, and cannot, be good enough.

We have placed in juxtaposition, then, two "models", inversionary discourse and institutional democracy. We now see them in a permanent struggle. The first challenges the second, attacking it as a system of signs, of signifiers which lead to a reductive consciousness which only genuine inversionary movements can reveal. Such movements draw their inspiration from the broad tradition of critical theory beginning with Marx. To seek out and identify those forms of repression which institutional democracy hides or disguises is to expose the institutional democratic model in theory, revealing its exclusionary and repressive characteristics. Emancipatory movements seem to rewrite both the history and pedigree of the state itself and impose on it its own specific agenda. Inversionary discourse turns against both the democratic political telos of open ends and self-improvement, and its operating principles: access, participation, accountability and equality.

The point is, of course, that inversionary discourse models pay little attention to the growing range of diversities in the needs and wants of individuals and groups, public and private, and in their dual roles of consumers and citizens. They condense by focusing on those marginalized in the process. This enables them to articulate tensions at the boundaries of social life and the political system. There is revulsion at administered coalition. But in the name of revealed truths one finds also a politics of illusions.

15. Emancipation as Post-Modern Politics

There is a sense in which the new emancipatory movements, as creators of myth and theory, and of symbolic rather than economic capital, represent a kind of post-modern politics. This is so to the extent that they concentrate on action as social text and interpretation as political reality. They are inversionary not only in terms of classes and groups who have less economic and political power and seek more access, but which regard the discourse of normal politics as itself at best disingenuous and the information based on the market as false, mystified, commodified, and hegemonic. Here the emphasis is not only on shattering the conventional boundaries of political language and discourse but the validity of the boundaries imposed by nations and states. This then is the permanently subversive project, which has less to do with the question of institutional democracy no matter how well it performs than the irritations imposed by social life and the impositions it makes on unconventional forms of freedom. The role of emancipatory movements in terms of struggles between state and society is an old one. But the question is whether this new post-modern form as I have described it is really a claim based on the old form, i.e., a moral claim, which has a new object, the displacement of all forms of social discipline and a return of the ideal of emancipation as the liberated species-being. If so no state is tolerable because it represents a "veil of ignorance" behind which power itself lies. Institutional democracy then is nothing more than a politics of disguise, dissimulation, spectacle, manipulation. It is then the job of emancipatory movements following an inversionary discourse model to explode democracy as a mode of consciousness, and with it the market principle and information itself, and so weaken the hegemony exercised by the state that its legitimacy will be exploded. People will become aware of what is going on in the name of democracy. Democracy itself will be radically altered, how precisely almost doesn't matter. The grand design is in the attack, not in the solution. In terms of inversionary discourse, democracy is the highest stage of false consciousness, the mystified shell of institutional democracy hiding its rationalistic core.⁴⁸

48. The theory behind this interpretation goes back to of course to Marx. More contemporary renditions can be found in the work of Foucault, Baudrillard, Lyotard, Jameson, and Offe. See in particular Claus Offe, **Contradictions of the Welfare State**, Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1984.

These then are some of the objects of critical theory as inversionary discourse. To reveal the audacity of the enterprise it has been necessary to describe how the institutional democratic model works on its own terms, explicating the ingredients of its discourse and state which inversionary discourse theory aims to upend. By showing the dynamics of the inversionary discourse model we can also see how the more far-reaching its scope and aims, the more likely it is that power gained will be abused. But what we have also tried to show is that the more fundamental the desired transformation, and the more "fundamentalist" the movement, the more a conversion will occur for which its leaders are not prepared. That is, if initially they are so able to mobilize public support that they come to represent society against the state, once in power the situation will be reversed. For them it is the public which needs to be transformed. The new state is quickly at odds with the society. Rigoristic and authoritarian methods are used in the name of principle. Hence emancipatory movements, where they succeed, are likely to become the problem rather than its solution, the former Soviet Union or China being good examples. One can hardly think of a more dramatic inversionary, totalizing, emancipatory project than the Chinese revolution, especially in its moral moment in Yan'an in the years from 1936 to 1947, where in caves the survivors of the Long March created the simulacrum of a new society, formed doctrines out of the dialectical interpretation of their experiences, modified Marxism to fit local conditions and indeed, through a process of learning and literacy, pouring over texts in the midst of war with the Japanese and revolution against the Guomintang, formed a discourse community on the basis of a process of exegetical bonding. A revolutionary people of the book, they found in Yan'an their Archimedes point for overturning the world as they found it. By the same token, today those former Yan'anites now represent the oppressive state. There, once liberating principles became hegemonic for those who, in Tiananmen Square, tried to create their own miniaturized version of a democratic alternative.

Inversionary discourse then is always potentially explosive and never innocent. Moreover, since much of the self-evidential superiority of democracy is attached to moral development through knowledge and education, it is not surprising that a prime venue for confrontations involving inversionary discourse has been educational institutions. In the 1960s it was in terms not only of power but also a transformation of the discourse, the smashing of conventional languages, and the creation of situations which upended all forms of conventionality. It is not an accident that the evolution of action into theory along these lines, the text of language smashing, was best personified by the Situationists, who saw in spectacle, the possibilities opened up by semiotic mobilization. There are plenty of those in authority who consider this radical project in the university in terms of conflicts over the curriculum, the canon, and what subjects should or should be taught, but also who shall define the nature of educational experience. Which leads us to what might be called the current state of the debate. If institutional democracy and inversionary discourse constitute adversarial models, they also provide an opening for a third discourse, "neo-institutionalism".

For here we can find critics on both sides of the conflict. Concerned with the inadequate scope of the state in the fine tuning of social justice, they are aware that the more the state widens its arenas of responsibility on behalf of citizens and enlarges the scope of its jurisdiction, the more such intervention spills over, infringes and imposes the public upon the private sphere. The result is that the state becomes more an instrument of its own rather than societal interests.

This introduces an interesting paradox. The more institutional democracy is a project of perpetual reform, the more reform reduces its responsiveness, i.e., makes it less responsive rather than more, and more bureaucratic and less accountable. Decision makers are separated further from those who they are supposed to serve and the state becomes a vast glacial administration. Not that Evans, Skocpol, Birnbaum, Offe, and others would suggest that reform movements, enlarging civil rights, enfranchisement of the working class and women,

trade unionism, and the wide range of other social movements which characterized the evolution of democratic institutions, make the state less democratic. Rather, in considering the gaps between theory and practice, and the history of resistance by the state to reform, they see it as necessarily duplicitous.

Whatever one's specific political preference there is a genuine problem here. Democracy tends to separate the state from society at a decision-making level even if it should become closer to it in terms of public support. In so far as this renders the content of politics relatively empty of meaning, it becomes precisely what critical theorists consider false consciousness. That is, if democracy, which is based on the principle of choice, offers the illusion of choices, then the differences between substance and reality become the focal point of attack. Hence, emancipatory movements using inversionary discourse find ways to show how meaning loss occurs, how the language, discourse, signs, signifiers of democracy become a form of "magic realism". It is precisely this kind of attack which leads one to consider emancipatory movements using inversionary discourse as a post-modern phenomenon, the more so as a good many modern democracies move away from social democracy and socialism, and towards greater privatization and the broadening of interest group politics.⁴⁹

16. Order, Exchange, and Choice Models

For all the talk and on all sides, there are still very few ideas about how specifically the design of the state might be altered to reflect or respond to its critics. If much critical theory has revealed hidden and hegemonic aspects of conventional rationality as it takes different forms - as expertise, knowledge, technique, innovation, etc., it has been short on prescriptive solutions.⁵⁰ Hence its main value is to provide us with terms for evaluating democracy in ways it does not evaluate itself. Such a view suggests that one ought to accept or reject the propriety of demands, the righting of wrongs, the reclaiming of lost patrimonies, or pretensions to some higher truth, in terms of impacts on democracy itself, that is the enlargement of choice such that it strengthens the relationship between equity, allocation, growth, and order.

By the same token one ought never take emancipatory movements at face value, that is in terms of their solutions. Experience shows that movements which best define some overarching or transcendental goal and pursue it in the name of some overriding truth wind up as hegemonic, restrictive, reducing rather than enlarging choice. Such movements need to act in such a fashion if they have any hopes of being successful. But widely different experiences in Africa or in Latin America, or revolutionary transformations as in the former U.S.S.R. and China, show that no matter how principled the ends or admirable the purposes, most movements demonstrate a remarkable lack of success in promoting democratic régimes by any definition of the term. The problem with emancipatory movements is that even when they bring up the right issues they wind up with the wrong solutions. Having said that, one hastens to add that this may also denigrate too much and too sweepingly. One needs to know about specific emancipatory movements, examine their internal system tendencies, their discourses and symbolic power, and the larger political contexts in which they act before assessing

49. See Jean Leca and Roberto Papini, **Les démocraties sont-elles gouvernables?**, Paris: Economica, 1985. See also D.E. Apter, op. cit., Chapter One.

50 See for example Foucault's work on institutions of the insane, prisons, and sexuality, in which he identifies both the oppressive boundaries in society which the state represents "democratically", or how authority and power, validated as "expertise" perpetuate the hegemony of those who define madness, criminality and sustain conventional boundaries. Those whose job it is to relieve the condition of the poor derive power from the principle of responsibility rather than the responsible exercise of it. Hence the tyranny of insane asylums, prisons, and the boundaries that define the very nature of male and female, and their appropriate relations.

whether the result will generate reform, redefine equity, in a fashion broadening the scope of democracy itself.⁵¹

But the value of inversionary discourse is that by defining marginality, victimness and otherness as inversionary discourse, one becomes sensitized to the many levels and layers of sensitivity there are to forms of domination and hegemony which are obscure or entirely lacking from the perspective of the state - even the most democratic state. For example inversionary discourse is rarely content with establishing straightforward legal notions of equity or equality, one in which say women have the same rights as men, or blacks as whites, but towards that network of "dominations" built into the total range of customary boundaries which society and the state take for granted. Inversionary discourse sees the power of the state in its "taken-for-grantedness".

In these terms, the hidden major premise is that the more democratic a society becomes, the more of a facade it really is, a mere expression of popular culture masking hidden power interests. By reflecting institutions as they perpetuate hegemony in the name of democracy, the public is complicit in its own foolishness. Hence, as with Hegel's master and slave, it can only be through the articulation of alternative and subversive discourses that this complicity will be revealed, and democracy made, indeed, more democratic. So behind the notion of inversionary discourse is the idea of a transcending insight. Just as the slave, the victim, transcends the knowledge of the master, and understands how limited the latter's understanding is, so that insight becomes a form of empowerment.

All this raises even larger theoretical questions. How far ought one go in using marginality, victimness or otherness, or any outrageous condition as the basis for evaluating democracy as a system? To what extent ought a whole society be held hostage to inversionary discourse? On the other hand despite the apparent dangers to the institutional democratic state posed by inversionary discourse, in the long term is not its consequence an improving one, i.e., advancing the scope and meaning of the equity statement (equity, allocation, growth, and order)?

Perhaps the best that can be said is that so long as there is a certain deadpan quality to the commonsense world, an imperviousness to injustices that go deeper than ameliorative reform can rectify, inversionary discourse will be required to shock, to get people to pay attention.⁵² One needs inversionary discourse no matter how infuriating and insufferable its protagonists. But to accept this requires one to take the long view. It is especially difficult to accept when its immediacy, and its desire to shock, both the text and violence, raw anger, violation, of place and circumstances, body and soul, the stuff of which inversionary discourse is made, force one's attention to what one might prefer to ignore, not to see, to keep invisible. In this respect inversionary discourse violates everything that appears to be ordinary, stable, and taken for granted. Hence the implication of this analysis is that one must take both the choice model and democracy and inversionary discourse in juxtaposition, to see their alterity as in some sense morally and mutually necessary. Inversionary discourse, by the very challenges it poses, forces people to react, to respond, and sometimes to think even when such responses are more reflexive than reflective. This suggests too that by providing information left out by the double market-place, inversionary discourse models provide an alternative means to

51. It is interesting in this regard that Joseph A. Schumpeter made a somewhat similar argument years ago, i.e., that capitalism would give way to socialism not because it is an economically inferior system to the latter, but because its inability to resolve the unemployment problem would generate alienation and antagonism especially from intellectuals and others whose support is necessary for it to survive. See Schumpeter's **Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy**, New York: Harpers, 1947.

52. This was particularly the discovery of such figures as Bataille, Sartre, and others who in the 1930s in France belonged to the "secret society", the "College of Sociology". See Denis Hollier (ed.), **The College of Sociology 1937-1939**, Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1979.

checking and balancing by stimulating continuous change and alteration of boundaries.⁵³ Change in this sense is a bumpy process, the product of threats, reactions to threats and eventual accommodations.

The genius of the democratic model, and its principle of moving equilibrium, is that along with the balancing of interests between the economic and political market it also absorbs these bumps which are as necessary to democracy as the smoother process of coalition formation and bargaining. For in this way it eventually includes or incorporates even while it appears to exclude. Because inversionary discourses challenge in particular those negativized boundaries whose real consequence is to too narrowly delimit choice for some, it engages the limits of choice while seeking to change the meaning of the rules, and in changing the terms of choice, affirms the rules themselves.

17. Conclusion

Which leaves us with the question - can choice really serve as the moral basis of the democratic state? In so far as choice requires non-zero sum developmental growth, which we have seen is less and less likely in most parts of the globe, the answer would have to be no. If not choice, then what about exchange. The exchange model is becoming virtually universalized with the market as the strategic instrument, and in political and economic terms.

If, however, we combine marginality, functional superfluosity and the "sticky principle" to which the political market is subject, then one would be forced to argue that for the immediate future at least, propensities for violence are likely to grow while opportunities for mediation decline. One can anticipate more rather than fewer emancipatory movements using inversionary discourse. One can then see the alternatives as a trade-off between three possibilities, an order model, an exchange model, and a choice model. If the developmental argument made here is correct and opportunities to convert order and exchange into choice decline, then we will see two predominant modes of violence. One will occur within the framework of the state, an order model using violence from above to maintain control, and the form of one kind of authoritarianism or another, including new combinations of extreme left and right, corporatist, fascist, populist.

The other will be exchange models, and particularly those which are democratic in form. The first will manipulate, as sources of symbolic capital, all those national particularisms which take the form of ethnicity, religion, language, i.e., Ur-affiliations as well as populist doctrines. The second will attack from below all those prevailing democratic systems of allocation which shade off at one level into plunder and at the other into fine-tuned equity rules, their juxtaposition providing plenty of opportunities for all three kinds of extra-institutional political violence, protest, terrorism, and radical insurrection as the case might be.⁵⁴

We conclude this discussion with several gloomy propositions. For reasons given, political violence using inversionary discourse will be increasingly endemic in modern life, whether from above or below. Democracy as a choice model will remain, at least for the foreseeable future, the ideal whose time will perhaps come again when choice and development are at least in part made independent of one another. In short we can expect the proliferation of emancipatory movements using symbolic capital in the absence of economic capital, using the

53. See for example V.Y. Mudimbe, **The Invention of Africa; Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge**, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988, and Tlal Asad, E., **Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter**, New York: Humanities Press, 1973.

54. The first use public protest and non-legal methods in order to make themselves heard where institutional barriers would ignore their demands. The second seek in the mobilization of discourse communities the disjunctive moment in the canon's mouth. The last relies on the symbolism of the outrageous act to paralyze the state and transform its citizens into bystanders.

raw materials of their own experiences, especially violent events from which to pursue disjunctive moral moments, to probe the fault line cracks in society and state which can be exploited to the point of a total transformation of both.