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THE SOCIOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF AMERICAN
SOCIOLOGY, 1960-1978: ITS SHORTCOMINGS AND ITS PROMISE

BY

Gerald Ginocchio
B.S., University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, 1974
M.A., University of New Hampshire, 1976

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
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This dissertation has been examined and approved.

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ABSTRACT

THE SOCIOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF AMERICAN
SOCIOLOGY, 1960-1978:   ITS SHORTCOMINGS AND ITS PROMISE

by

GERALD GINOCCHIO

University of New Hampshire, May, 1981

This dissertation represents an attempt to explicate
and critically analyze an important movement in contemporary
American sociology. This movement, which I am calling the
sociological critique of American sociology, aimed to change
predominant trends in American sociology. Basic tenets of
sociological practice were called into question, such as the
principle of value neutrality, an empirical methodology, and
a functionalist theoretical framework. The goal of this critical
movement was to bring about a more significant sociology, a
sociology which would lead the way to the realization of a more
humane social order. In general, however, the criticisms offered
by these critical sociologists represent no significant advance
over "mainstream" sociology. The lack of depth in their criti-
cism, it is argued, relates to an unwillingness to address
underlying philosophical questions, such as the validity of a
subjective view of value. In this context, the suggestion of a
more significant direction for this criticism and for a more
significant sociology is seen to lie in philosophical argu-
ments put forth by principal members of the Frankfurt School
and by a twentieth-century American philosopher, Elijah Jordan.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The history of sociology, as is the case in the history
of other intellectual disciplines, is one marked by contro-
versy and debate. Although considerable effort went toward
establishing sociology as a legitimate discipline with its
own particular object of investigation, sociologists have
continually called into question all aspects of their disci-
pline and of its relation to the larger society. Such inter-
nal criticism is, of course, basic to the further advance of
any intellectual discipline.

In the history of sociology in America, the past two
decades has been a period characterized by a tremendous amount
of such internal criticism. It is with an account of this
internal critical movement, the sociological critique of Amer-
ican sociology, that this dissertation will be concerned. In
the chapters to follow, the basic arguments, criticisms and
proposals made in the context of the sociological critique
of American sociology will be presented and discussed. Al-
though the bulk of this dissertation will involve an expli-
cation of this critical movement, an attempt will be made to
assess its shortcomings and its promise. That is to say, a
determination will be made as to what in this movement points
in the direction of a more significant, relevant sociology
and what in this movement represents no significant advance
over so-called "mainstream" sociology.

To address such questions, of course, presupposes some notion of what constitutes a significant sociology. This is a question which, I will argue, can only be answered by determining the adequacy of the fundamental tenets of the sociological approach to understanding our world. And to make such a determination, I believe we must turn to philosophy, which suggests that a <u>sociological</u> critique of American sociology must ultimately fall short of the kind of analysis that is necessary to erect a new sociology on a sound methodological and theoretical foundation.

Nonetheless, I believe the sociologists involved in this critical movement are to be credited with highlighting some serious problems in sociological thought and practice. Moreover, they did have some notion of a more significant direction for sociology -- that, for example, it would be one which would emphasize a close working relationship between sociologists and various social movements aimed at improving society. Yet, I would maintain, that insofar as they have failed to articulate a sound theoretical and methodological base for sociology, they have failed in one of their principal aims -- to make sociology relevant to our eternal efforts to improve society.

Let us, then, turn our attention to the task of delineating the broad outlines of this sociological critique of American sociology. This will encompass a brief discussion of all of the most significant issues raised by critical sociologists. In addition, I will present an in depth analysis of the work of three important forerunners of this critical

movement; namely, Robert Lynd, Pitirim Sorokin, and most im-
portantly, C. Wright Mills. This will provide a good back-
ground for the more detailed, specific discussion of the
major points of contention raised by critical sociologists
in the 1960's and 1970's.

(1) Origin and Major Manifestations of the Sociological Critique of American Sociology

The selection of the year 1960 as the starting-point
for this examination of the sociological critique of American
sociology was, in part, an arbitrary decision. More importantly,
however, that particular date was selected both because it
marks the beginning of one of the most turbulent decades in
American history and because it is around this time that this
critical movement began to blossom and take on far greater
dimensions than anything of its kind in the past.

By 1960, sociology had come of age as an academic
discipline. It had become an accepted part of the college
curriculum and its research activities had become widely re-
cognized and suppoted by both private and public organizations.
Given this newly-won status, sociologists were increasingly
called upon to contribute their knowledge and insight to the
solution of pressing social problems. As such, sociologists
could not help but be deeply affected by the social move-
ments of the 60's, especially the civil rights' and anti-
war movements, which brought these pressing social problems
to the attention of the world. Sociologists could no
longer ignore the question of where they and their disci-
pline stood with respect to the important social issues of

the time.[1]

Among the first discoveries made by sociologists who
began to reflect critically on themselves and their profes-
sion was the conservative bias that was built into the prin-
ciple of value-neutrality, a principle generally accepted
as an essential aspect of a truly scientific approach to the
study of society. This principle came to be viewed as a kind
of mask which concealed an underlying commitment to the es-
tablished social order and a disavowal of all forms of rad-
ical social change. Such characterizations of sociology as
the following became commonplace during the 60's: "Mainstream,
contemporary sociology is largely the creation of cold war
liberals who, for the most part, have been content to ob-
serve and rationalize the operations of the American co-
lossus from a position of privilege in the name of science
[that is, as value-neutral observers] ."[2]

For many of these critics, synonymous with "mainstream"
sociology was the theoretical framework known as structural-
functionalism which had been developed by Talcott Parsons
during the previous decade. During the late 50's and early
60's structural-functionalism came under increasing attack
not only for its inadequacy as a general theory of social
action but also, and more significantly, because it contained
a built-in conservative bias which sanctified the established
social order.

As most critical sociologists saw it, the problem here
was fundamentally one of a lack of awareness on the part of
sociologists of where they stood, of what their implicit biases

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were and of how these biases affected their work as sociologists. That is to say, these critics very soon discarded the possibility of a value-free sociology; all aspects of sociological work were seen as involving value judgments.[3]

Such considerations as those discussed above gave rise to one of the first major manifestations of the sociological critique of American sociology, the "sociology of sociology". Since the problem was conceived as basically one of either a lack of awareness of one's biases or a lack of honesty in not forthrightly declaring what these biases were, the solution was seen to lie in a self-reflective study of sociologists and their profession using sociological research techniques and theories which had been developed to investigate other occupations and professions. In the words of Alvin Gouldner, a leading figure in the sociology of sociology:

> What is needed is a new and heightened self-awareness among sociologists, which would lead them to ask the same kinds of questions about themselves as they do about taxicab drivers or doctors, and to answer them in the same ways. Above all, this means that we must acquire the ingrained habit of viewing our own beliefs as we would those held by others. It means, for example, that when we are asked why it is that some sociologists believe sociology must be a "value-free discipline", we do not simply reply with logical arguments on its behalf. Sociologists must surrender the human but elitist assumption that <u>others</u> believe out of need whereas <u>they</u> believe because of the dictates of logic and reason.[4]

This call for a "heightened self-awareness" among sociologists echoes throughout the work of those who have contributed to the sociology of sociology. Along with greater awareness, it was argued, goes not only improvement of the individual sociologist's understanding of himself and his

work as a sociologist, but also eventual improvement of the discipline as a whole. The practice of sociology would become more profound, more self-conscious, resulting, ultimately, in more complete and valid knowledge of society. All this was to accrue from sociologists using sociological perspectives to study themselves and their discipline.

One does not have to reflect very deeply, however, to see that the mere attainment of self-consciousness by sociologists could not possibly lead to all the improvements envisioned by these sociologists of sociology. Recognition of one's implicit biases or of the inherent conservatism of mainstream sociology, although important, is not sufficient in itself to provide substance and direction for the creation of a new and more significant sociology. An element of critical evaluation is necessary, in the context of which suggestions for the revision of the predominant modes of sociological method and theory can be made.

Judging from the kinds of studies that have been carried out under the rubric of the sociology of sociology, critical evaluation is hardly in evidence. The kinds of studies which predominate are descriptive in nature. They are descriptive in the direct sense that they seek to describe the current situation of sociologists and their discipline -- what personal and social factors influence the work of sociologists. But as far as evaluating the current situation and proposing more viable alternatives to current sociological practice, sociologists of sociology are noticeably silent.

This point is further illustrated by what have been two prominent topics for empirical studies in the sociology of sociology contained in The American Sociologist; namely, the allocation of prestige to sociology departments (i.e., the ranking of sociology departments) and the measurement of sociologists' productivity.[5] These topics certainly involve reflection on certain aspects of the sociological profession, but in addition to being arguably trivial,[6] none of these studies includes a significant element of evaluation. Outside of some suggestions for the improvement of measuring productivity or prestige, there is no indication of how the knowledge gained from these studies is to lead to the development of a more significant sociology. Indeed, in reviewing the first ten years of publication of The American Sociologist, incoming editor Allen Grimshaw decried the growing interest in issues having to do with the measurement of productivity and prestige in sociology.[7]

Another such study in the sociology of sociology concerned the relationship between an author's theoretical orientation and the method of data collection employed.[8] The final result of this investigation was a table which cross-classified the author's theoretical orientation and the kind of research technique used. Again, although this knowledge may help us better understand an aspect of current sociological practice, there is absolutely no suggestion as to how such information can be used to bring about a more significant sociology.

The descriptive aim of the sociology of sociology bears
a close resemblance to the sociology of knowledge. In both,
the principal concern is with seeking to uncover those social
factors that help to shape a sociologist's work, the aim being
to make sociologists aware of how such social factors influence
their work. This aim is clearly in evidence in Alvin Gouldner's
first major excursion in the sociology of sociology, Enter
Plato, in which Gouldner is principally interested in discus-
sing the relation between Plato's social theory and Greek
civilization. At one point Gouldner characterizes his effort
this way:

> Some social scientists are interested in studying
> industrial workers; some study physicians, and
> still others, drug addicts and prostitutes. I
> happen to be curious about social theorists. They,
> as the anthropologists would say, are "my people".
> The ultimate objective is to contribute to an
> empirically testable social theory about social
> theorists, as part of a sociology of science.[9]

Using sociology to study social theorists is quite
clearly within the confines of a descriptive, sociology of
knowledge approach. Indeed, Gouldner appears to be engaged
in what could more accurately be called a "sociology of
sociologists", as he himself indicates in the above passage.
His treatment of Plato and later, of Talcott Parsons in The
Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, certainly bears this out.

An element of critical evaluation is necessary if one
is to address the crucial issue of whether these influences on
the work of sociologists are of beneficial or detrimental
import. Knowing, for example, that the conduct of social
research has been heavily influenced by preconceptions of

members of granting agencies as to what constitutes an acceptable methodology is of no real help in addressing the more important question of the validity of various methods. Perhaps in recognition of such questions, Gouldner himself diverges from a purely descriptive, neutral discussion of the social factors influencing Plato's social theory.

Although the bulk of Enter Plato is devoted to a descriptive analysis of the relation of Plato's social theory to Greek civilization, Gouldner leaves no doubt that he considers Plato's ideas unsatisfactory; hence the introduction of an element of critical evaluation. To be accurate, then, we must add to the above-quoted passage from Enter Plato the following statement: "Put otherwise, it is the task of the historian of social theory not simply to describe but critically to evaluate a theory in its historical setting."[10] This recognition of the need for a critical sociological approach to the study of sociology, one which goes beyond the descriptive emphasis in the sociology of sociology, I would argue, represents a second major manifestation of the sociological critique of American sociology.

It is really only with the addition of this element of critical evaluation that we come to the heart of this critical movement as a whole. In distinguishing a "critical sociology" from a "sociology of sociology", I do not mean to imply that they can in reality be separated. These two manifestations of the sociological critique of American sociology are so closely intertwined that to speak of them as separate and distinct

would be to distort them.[11] Indeed, those engaged in the soci-
ology of sociology have frequently expressed the hope (and
belief) that their research, although basically descriptive
in nature, would lead ultimately to significant revisions of
mainstream sociology.[12]

Behind this entire critical movement there lies this
hope: that a more valid, and hence more relevant, sociology
could be brought about, a sociology which would be of more
genuine practical benefit in seeking solutions to the complex
social problems which became all too evident during the 60's.
Some sociologists saw that this hope could only be realized
if a thoroughgoing critique and revision of current sociologic-
al method and theory were carried out. Mere descriptive
analysis of the present status of sociology was seen as
insufficient.

In terms of sociological theory, structural-function-
alism has clearly been the major target of this critical
movement. I have already briefly discussed the built-in
conservative bias in this theory which runs contrary to the
principle of value-neutrality. Beyond this, functionalism
is argued to be an inadequate theory of society, principally
because it leaves out of account the important elements of
social conflict and social change. Simply put, such critic-
ism represents an attempt to revise a major theoretical
framework in sociology with the intent of developing a more
valid one. That more valid theoretical framework has been,
logically enough, some form of conflict theory which recog-
nizes the central place of social conflict in the analysis

of modern society. Moreover, conflict theory, it is argued, avoids the conservative bias of functionalism, in particular the charge that it is a rationalization for the established social order.

In addition to conflict theory, critical sociologists turned to other alternatives such as a phenomenological-existential perspective. It was maintained that functionalism, with its emphasis on the functional interrelation of society -- viewing society as a system, a whole -- tended to lose sight of the individual. Indeed, as we will see in much more detail later, many of these critical sociologists appear to have felt obligated to come to the defense of the individual in the face of what they believed to be both actual social domination and domination of the system idea in sociology. Alfred McClung Lee's "existential humanism" represents perhaps the clearest, and certainly the most forthright, expression of this view, as is plainly evident, for example, in the heading of Chapter 2 of his Toward a Humanist Sociology, "How Sociology Can Magnify the Individual." In the eyes of the majority of these critics, humanism is synonymous with the defense of the individual.

The development of a phenomenological sociology during the 1960's was not only part of the attempt to reaffirm the important place of the individual in society and in sociology, but it also encompassed a distinctive methodology which represented a significant departure from the predominant survey and quantitative research techniques. Although the debate between advocates of quantitative and qualitative research

had been going on for many years prior to this time,[13] the increasing acceptance of the phenomenological perspective gave rise to greater use and discussion of qualitative research techniques. Conventional research methods, especially any form of survey research, were argued to be artificial instruments capable, at most, of obtaining people's reports of their behavior and beliefs, which may or may not reflect their actual behavior and beliefs. In contrast, phenomenological sociologists maintained that only by studying the actual behavior of individuals and groups in various social settings can one obtain a valid picture of social life. This usually involves some form of participant observation in which the researcher actually participates in the everyday lives of the people being studied; it is only in this way that a researcher can approach a "true" perspective, that is, the perspective of individuals and groups themselves which is defining of social reality according to phenomenological sociologists.

A specific manifestation of this distinctive approach to sociological research is that of ethnomethodology, which, in the words of Don H. Zimmerman, "...studies on-going social activity in order to discover the properties of the social organization of natural language which provide for the accomplishments of definite meanings, convergent definitions, warranted accounts, all in the lively context of their occurrence."[14]

Some critical sociologists argued that conventional research utilizes a "consensus" methodology whereas ethnomethodology and similar approaches utilize a "conflict"

methodology. The use of the term "consensus" to characterize conventional research indicates that such research requires the cooperation of the people or groups being studied, a limitation which confines one to investigating the surface phenomena of society and which precludes investigation of the hidden, repressed aspects of social phenomena. Conflict methodology challenges those being studied rather than seeking their cooperation; it utilizes such devices as the law suit to uncover otherwise hidden aspects of social life.[15] In sum, the keynote in this entire line of criticism of predominant methodological approaches is that the only really valid approach to studying social life is to get deeply involved in it first.[16]

In this brief discussion of the second manifestation of the sociological critique of American sociology, so-called "critical sociology", we have seen that the focus is basically on inadequacies in the discipline of sociology and not on inadequacies in the character of sociologists. This focus, I believe, gives rise to the most significant contributions to the sociological critique of American sociology. Nonetheless, there remains a further manifestation of this critical movement.

Beyond the implications of this sociological self-criticism for the discipline itself, there lies the question of the impact of sociology upon the larger society. For the most part, these critical sociologists see their criticism of conventional sociological practice issuing in a more significant sociology, which they believe will ultimately contribute

to the realization of a more humane, just social order. That is to say, a significant sociology, in this view, is a radical sociology -- radical in the sense that the work of sociologists contributes to a thoroughgoing transformation of the established social order.

That this sociological self-criticism has implications beyond the discipline itself and includes a commitment to radical social change is another feature of the work of Alvin Gouldner, in whose work we have already seen the other two major manifestations of this critical movement. In response to the criticism that his "reflexive" sociology is mere navel-gazing (i.e., sociologists contemplating themselves), Gouldner counters: "My call for a Reflexive Sociology was... scarcely intended to confine sociology to a study of sociology [i.e., navel-gazing]. The goal was surely not to prevent studies of other parts of society but, rather, to enable them to be done more profoundly by sociologists with a deeper self-awareness, who had committed themselves and their work to human self-emancipation."[17]

A radical sociology also entails actual participation in social movements seeking to transform the status quo, as did members of the so-called "Sociology Liberation Movement" during national sociological conventions in the late 1960's.[18] Having seen through the facade of value-neutrality so to speak, these critical sociologists perceived the need to make explicit their position on social issues. The principal position adopted by these critics, in contrast to the cooperative nature of the relationship of conventional sociology with

the established social order, was one of direct opposition
to the status quo. This opposition tended to take either of
two closely-related forms: either (1) a commitment to a
Marxist analysis of capitalist society and a Marxist vision
of a just society, or (2) a commitment to what Gouldner calls
"human self-emancipation", that is, to the radically demo-
cratic vision of a society consisting entirely of self-deter-
mined individuals.

Those adhering closely to a Marxist analysis of mod-
ern society frequently denounced conventional sociology as an
instrument of the capitalist ruling class who are solely
concerned with maintaining their privileged position in the
status quo. Sociologists are exhorted to join ranks with the
working class, indeed with all oppressed classes, and take
part in the struggle to overthrow the capitalist system.
Such radicalism is forthrightly proclaimed in the preface to
Radical Sociology: An Introduction edited by David Horowitz:

> The present text, by contrast to most sociology
> texts, adopts a perspective more in harmony with
> the interests of those further down the social
> hierarchy: it sees social conflict as a reflection
> of the imbalances of property and power at the
> heart of the present social order, and their
> intensification as possible preludes to the over-
> throw of its inequitable, racist and imperial
> framework. It is in this sense a "radical" text-
> book, unorthodox in its methodology and approach,
> and untypical in its concern with the consequences
> of accumulated power and wealth, and its dis-
> interest in the academically fashionable (pro-
> fitable) problems of social administration.[19]

In another anthology entitled Radical Sociology, the
editors go as far as to include a number of articles on how
sociologists can organize to help bring about major political

and economic change.[20] Along with the advocacy of radical

activity there also goes an adherence to a dialectical view

of social change. One consequence of an adherence to a dia-

lectical view of social change is that it encompasses no

clear conception of a just society -- the logic of this view

suggests that there is no culmination to the dialectical

process, no final resting place in history in which all

contradictions will be resolved. Hence, the view of a better

society which is adopted by many of these critical sociolo-

gists is characterized by what I will later call an "endless

dialectic". In this view, then, a radical sociology is one

which assists in the creation of a social order characterized

principally by continual debate, conflict, and change.

Even more widespread than this commitment to some of

the basic tenets of Marxism was the closely related commit-

ment to the realization of a society in which individuals

would be free from all forms of domination, whether that

domination be manifested in the inequality of a capitalist

economic system, a massive state bureaucracy, or the concep-

tual structure of sociology itself. The vision of a society

of educated, free individuals engaged in a constant dialogue

concerning the future direction of their society is a radical

democratic vision that has deep roots not only in American

history but also in the history of American sociology. In

the history of American sociology one of the most influential

expressions of this radical democratic vision is contained in

the work of C. Wright Mills, whose overall influence on the

sociological critique of American sociology has been great,

as we will see shortly.

Among the most fervent defenders of individual autonomy among critical sociologists is Alfred McClung Lee. No better expression of this faith in democracy can be found than is contained in the following passage from Lee's Sociology For Whom?:

> Whatever optimism or pessimism we might have about the future of the human lot depends upon the relative speed with which broader popular participation may be achieved in the control and employment of social power. Will people learn how to participate in time to save themselves from the short-sightedness and greed of entrepreneurs? Will people discover in time how to control themselves and their resources for human ends? Or will they continue to serve mostly as pawns in the vast and hazardous game-plans of the self-serving manipulators while the earth's resources are being exhausted and human population continues to increase.[21]

Alvin Gouldner's commitment to "human self-emancipation" is no less clear than that expressed by Lee in the above passage. It is significant to note, however, that Gouldner draws heavily upon the work of members of the Frankfurt School, an influential group of twentieth-century Marxist thinkers. The need to overcome the domination of individuals in our modern technocratic world is a pervasive theme in the work of these critical theorists of the Frankfurt School.

The preceding discussion of the broad outlines of the sociological critique of American sociology should give us some notion of the various forms this criticism has taken. Our primary concern in the rest of this dissertation will be to add detail and critical analysis to the basic issues that have been merely touched upon thus far. As I indicated previously, the discussion of these basic issues (such as the debate

over the merits of quantitative versus qualitative methods)

had gone on in American sociology for many years prior to

1960. Indeed, one could very well argue that the most signi-

ficant and influential critiques of American sociology were

written prior to 1960. In particular, I have three major

works in mind: Robert S. Lynd's Knowledge For What? (1939),

Pitirim Sorokin's Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology (1956),

and most significant of all, C. Wright Mills' The Sociological

Imagination (1959). Each of these works deals, at least to

some extent, with all of the issues raised in the sociolo-

gical critique of American sociology. The Sociological

Imagination alone encompasses all the basic arguments put

forth, and greatly elaborated upon, by contemporary critical

sociologists. Despite the significance of these earlier

works, however, I would still maintain that it was not until

the early 60's that the sociological critique of American

sociology took on the dimensions of a full-fledged movement,

a movement which has already had and will continue to have

a significant impact on the future course of American

sociology.

Nevertheless, I believe a brief synopsis of these

earlier critiques will provide a good deal of insight into

the nature of this critical movement, of its shortcomings

and its promise.

> (2) Precursors of the Sociological Critique
>   of American Sociology

First published in 1939, Robert S. Lynd's Knowledge

For What? is temporally the farthest removed from this cri-
tical movement, yet the similarities between Lynd's book and
the work of these later critical sociologists is striking.
To begin with, the respective periods in American history in
which they were writing were among two of the greatest periods
of social unrest and social change in this country.[22] In the
late 30's, America was still struggling to recover from the
depths of the Great Depression. The Roosevelt administration
had proposed and implemented many new social programs to put
people back to work and to get the country back on its feet
economically. Radical groups such as the communist party
achieved their highest membership during these troubled times.
In short, the seriousness of the problems which beset America
at this time suggested the need for profound socio-economic
change. It is within this general context that one must view
Lynd's criticisms of the social sciences; and, as I have
indicated previously, it is within a similar general context
of social unrest and social change that one must view the
work of critical sociologists during the 60's and 70's. In
the forefront of both critiques is the common concern with
developing a more significant sociology, one which would
contribute to the amelioration of the pressing social prob-
lems of the time.

Lynd's analysis of the status of the social sciences
is based upon a tenet which will later serve as a funda-
mental point of departure for the sociology of sociology,
namely, that social scientists are human beings as well as

scientists and that, as such, they and their work are subject
to all of the general social influences which affect the life
of any individual.[23] Social scientists do not and cannot sit
aloof from society and study it in a totally detached and
neutral way. The personal and social backgrounds of social
scientists invariably find their way into social scientific
research and theory.

The recognition of the existence of such extra-
scientific influences leads directly to the call for greater
self-awareness among social scientists -- that they become
honest and forthright in acknowledging their biases and that
they do not try to hide behind the illusion that their work
is of a purely neutral, scientific nature. So, Lynd comes
out in favor of a position which is very close to one of the
major themes in the work of critical sociologists, a theme
that will be discussed in more detail later in Chapter III
as the "let's be honest" theme:

> A social scientist has no place qua scientist
> as a party to power politics...But also, when
> the social scientist hides behind the aloof
> "spirit of science and scholarship" for fear
> of possible contamination, he is likewise
> something less than a scientist. We social
> scientists need to be more candid about our-
> selves and our motivations. We should be more
> sensitive and realistic about what our evasions
> do to ourselves and to our science.[24]

The point here being that the principle of value-neutrality
is illusory in the actual practice of social science.

But rather than leave the value question with the
simple assertion of the need for acknowledging one's biases,
Lynd takes this discussion a significant step further in

actually proposing an objective base or ground for value judgment.[25] Lynd proposes a standard by which one can judge of the soundness both of social scientists' understanding of society and of their contribution to the realization of a better society. He proposes that: "The values of human beings living together in the pursuit of their deeper and more persistent purposes constitute the frame of reference that identifies significance for the social sciences."[26] These values, he goes on to argue, are not just the stereotyped values of people in a particular culture, but they connect with what Lynd calls "persistent cravings" of human beings in general. To identify these persistent cravings and to use them as a basis for social reform is the fundamental task of the social scientist. This is what a significant social science involves.

Although one may certainly take Lynd to task for the vagueness of his conception of a sound social order and of how social scientists can help realize it, one must acknowledge the boldness of his proposal of an objective base for value judgment in the social sciences. It is a proposal, moreover, which does not dodge difficult philosophical issues. It is a proposal which the vast majority of critical sociologists are unwilling to hazard.

Lynd is particularly concerned with what he believes to be significant deficiencies in the predominant modes of research and theory in social science. Most prominent among these deficiencies is the lack of a psychological perspective.

The social sciences, according to Lynd, had in a sense lost sight of the individual -- an assertion not all that different from the later criticism of functionalism as a theory which diminishes individuals by considering them as subordinate (ultimately, manipulated) elements of a social system.

Part and parcel of this emphasis on the individual for both Lynd and later critical sociologists is the notion that the basis of social reality is to be found by focusing on the behavior of individuals and not on the type of analysis which utilizes large, abstract concepts such as institutions, social systems, and the like. As Lynd clearly states, "...this viewing of culture in terms of the behavior of individuals provides the basis for a more realistic and coherent theoretical structure for the social sciences."[27] Likewise, the individual is seen as the key to efforts directed at improving society. Psychology, "With its field...fortunately concentrated on the central powerhouse of culture, individuals, it is in the strategic position of having the other social sciences turn increasingly to it for the solution of realistic problems -- mental health, education and child development, labor problems, advertising and market research, public opinion and propaganda. It is a safe prescription to almost any young social scientist-in-training to 'get more psychological underpinning'."[28]

Putting aside for the moment the question of the validity of this line of reasoning, in bringing to the attention of social scientists their blindness with respect to the crucial place of the individual in society, Lynd is

indicating that a major problem with social science is the inadequacy of its general theoretical framework.

In a similar vein, Lynd also highlights deficiencies in the predominant research techniques utilized in the social sciences. Most notably, he criticizes the inherent conservatism of descriptive, empirical research techniques, having in mind the gathering of data by means of questionnaires, interviews, and variants of these basic survey techniques. Lynd argues that the strict adherence to an empirical approach involves an implicit acceptance of the values and goals of the established social order.[29]

The job of the social scientist is not merely to reflect the prevailing opinions and beliefs of individuals but to penetrate "current folk assumptions" and get at the underlying reality. Put otherwise, the job of the social scientist is basically a critical one, one which the predominant descriptive, empirical approach in sociology does not encompass. Nonetheless, Lynd does not advocate the abandonment of any specific research techniques, just as later critical sociologists ultimately argue that all research techniques have a place in a more significant sociology.

What is perhaps more important, as we will see Mills also maintain, is that these research techniques have as their focus American society as a whole, that significant problems in our society guide the selection of topics for research rather than let the requirements of a particular research technique dictate the topics to be studied.[30] Ultimately, for Lynd,

the task of social scientists involves the careful investigation of what he calls "outrageous hypotheses" -- hypotheses such as the following: "It is possible to build a culture that in all its institutions will play down the need for and the possibility of war."[31] This is, again, to emphasize the practical nature of social science research, since as Lynd notes, "There is no other agency in our culture whose role it is to ask long-range and, if need be, abruptly irreverent questions of our democratic institutions; and to follow these questions with research and the systematic charting of the way ahead."[32] That social science has largely failed to live up to these expectations can be attributed, in large measure, to deficiencies in its theoretical and methodological underpinnings.

Writing some seventeen years later, in the midst of the emergence of structural-functionalism as the major theoretical framework in sociology, Pitirim Sorokin chose a similar focus for his critical analysis of sociology in Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology. Although Sorokin has little to say about the practical implications of a more significant sociology for society (certainly the central feature of Knowledge For What?), he does discuss in detail major theoretical and methodological issues in contemporary sociology. In his own words:

> The creative renaissance of our disciplines
> requires a basic reconstruction of the prevalent
> conceptions of sociology and psychology. The
> central task of this reconstruction consists of
> replacing the prevalent defective views on what
> constitutes psychosocial reality, what is valid

knowledge of it, and what are the methods of
its cognition, by more adequate conceptions
of these fundamentals.[33]

In a general way, the above statement indicates Sorokin's
willingness to attempt to resolve some very difficult and basic
issues in sociology, issues which ultimately cannot be resolved
without addressing underlying philosophical questions. For
example, the question of what constitutes valid knowledge of
society (or, "psychosocial reality" in Sorokin's terms) neces-
sarily takes Sorokin into two major areas of philosophical
endeavor, namely, metaphysics and epistemology.[34] Indeed, if
one had to point to the major topic of discussion in Fads and
Foibles in Modern Sociology it would be Sorokin's persistent
criticism of sociology's "sham-scientific" methodology,[35]
during the course of which he not only exposes significant
problems in predominant research techniques but also proposes
what he believes to be a more adequate approach to studying
society. And it is principally within the context of this
crticism that we also get some notion of what Sorokin believes
constitutes sound sociological theory.

In attempting to expose the methodology employed by
sociologists in their research as being in fact unscientific
and, in some cases, plainly invalid, Sorokin strikes a central
nerve in American sociology. Characteristic of American
sociology as a whole has been the constant effort to improve
the validity, reliability, and overall accuracy of various
research techniques by drawing increasingly upon developments
in other sciences and in mathematics. It is precisely this

borrowing from other sciences and the field of mathematics
that Sorokin casts considerable doubt upon. For example, he
spends a good deal of time discussing the dangers of what he
calls "quantophrenia" in modern sociology. He sees the use
of elaborate statistical procedures and the results of these
procedures as conveying a false sense of precision about
what is essentially unquantifiable social phenomena.

When confronted by tables, graphs, or numbers of
various kinds one tends to assume that studies employing such
devices are accurate, objective scientific reports. Perhaps
it is because of this that research utilizing some statistical
procedure often receives favorable treatment by public and
private organizations which support sociological research.
But this is precisely the false impression which Sorokin seeks
to dispel: the introduction of statistics does not by itself
make a study any more objective or scientific, much less
valid.

Throughout his treatment of predominant modes of
research, Sorokin brings to our attention the existence of
strong subjective elements in so-called "objective" research
-- a theme which we will see is later greatly elaborated upon
by phenomenological sociologists and ethnomethodologists. The
fact that most of the data collected by sociologists, particu-
larly by means of questionnaires or interviews, is of a
subjective and therefore, highly uncertain, nature is not
fully appreciated by most sociologists. Such weaknesses in
sociological research are aptly summarized in the following

passage:

> In brief, the bulk of recent psychosocial
> research deals with speech-reactions, gathered
> by speech-reactional operations, centered around
> wishful, hypothetical, "syndromatic" and sub-
> jective utterances, rarely checked for their
> accuracy, sincerity and correspondence to the
> facts. This sort of "hearsay" is the material
> out of which most recent psychosocial theories
> and "research conclusions" have been manu-
> factured by mechanically processing the "stuff"
> through the calculating gadgets of the
> statistical routine.[36]

Although Sorokin contends that there is this sub-
stantial element of subjectivity in current sociological re-
search, he himself advocates a highly subjective approach to
the investigation of social phenomena, which he refers to as
"supralogical, suprasensory intuition." Such intuition, he
goes on to argue, only comes through actual involvement in
the particular aspect of social behavior one may be studying;
that is, it takes a "direct cofeeling and coexperiencing" with
those being studied for one to gain this kind of insight. It
is through such intuition that the most truly creative thought
has come, and certainly not through the "statistical routine."

In line with Lynd's call for social scientists to
draw more heavily upon psychology, I believe Sorokin's argu-
ment here represents another attempt to make room for the in-
dividual in sociology -- specifically, to acknowledge the
contribution of individual intuition and insight to social
research.

In contrast to Lynd, however, Sorokin does affirm
his belief in the viability of the system concept, of viewing
society as a whole. Indeed, his depiction of the stages of

civilization development as the _ideational, idealistic,_ and _sensate_ represents a much more all-embracing conception of society than most American sociologists are willing to hazard. In this context Sorokin also notes the futility of the search for "social atoms", whether these atoms be individuals, small groups, roles, or the like. Society cannot be understood by breaking it down into these so-called social atoms. Insofar as empirical research does just that (i.e., break society down into smaller units) the knowledge gained from such research is vastly inferior to the knowledge which can be gained by an intuitional grasp of the whole.

This brief discussion of some of the principal themes in _Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology_ has revealed Sorokin's fundamental concern with exposing and seeking to correct serious defects in the predominant theoretical and methodological approaches in contemporary sociology. Congruent with the major thrust of Lynd's criticism of the social sciences in general, Sorokin is, in essence, arguing that the problem with sociology lies in the discipline itself and not in sociologists.[37] The meaning of this important distinction will become clearer when we discuss the work of later critical sociologists whose attention is, more often than not, focused on sociologists themselves -- on their biases, on their complicity with the established social order, on their lack of courage to speak out forthrightly on controversial social issues.

Sorokin, in fact, provides a much more detailed criticism of sociology than does Lynd, particularly as regards its

methodological foundations. Sorokin goes as far as to challenge the validity of empiricism as the dominant theory of cognition underlying sociological research. But for all the fury of his criticism, Sorokin concludes his book on an equivocal note, which tends to undermine the strength of that criticism. Imagine that after nearly 300 pages of detailed, vehement criticism of "empirical psychosocial science" Sorokin can say:

> The prevalent empirical psychosocial science has delivered especially during the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, important knowledge of man and his sociocultural universe. Helped in part by the logico-mathematical method, this empirical science has labored strenuously for several centuries. At the present time it is tired and has become somewhat neurotic and less creative.[38]

This is to argue that empiricism was at one time a valid, creative basis of psychosocial science and that it is only because of its overuse that its validity and creativity have diminished, as if this theory of cognition, like a biological organism, was once young and vital but now is old and tired. The weakness of such a line of argument should be obvious enough.

What is significant about this equivocal stance which Sorokin takes here is that this represents no isolated phenomenon, for there are numerous examples of such equivocation to be found in the work of critical sociologists. Much of the severe criticism of current sociological practice is burdened by such numerous qualifications that one gets the distinct impression that, as critical as these sociologists

may believe they are, none of them seems to want to rock the boat too hard.

As insightful and significant as one may consider the criticism of sociology found in the work of Lynd and Sorokin, there can be no doubt that the most influential precursor of the sociological critique of American sociology was C. Wright Mills. Perhaps the most obvious evidence of his tremendous influence lies in the fact that some of the important anthologies of critical sociology are dedicated to the memory of C. Wright Mills who died unexpectedly in 1962.[39] Mills has, on occasion, been referred to as the "father" of this critical movement, as, for example, Robert W. Friedrichs notes in A Sociology of Sociology: "...only as the discipline discovered its consolidating paradigm -- system -- in grave difficulty was it tempted to open the pandora's box that was the sociology of sociology. Indeed, it took the explosive impact of C. Wright Mills' The Sociological Imagination in 1959 for a sociology of sociology to intrude upon the sociologists' collective conscience."[40]

In addition to the great praise for his insight into the shortcomings and promise of sociology and his courage in challenging the sociological establishment, many of these critics discuss at length many of his major arguments, particularly those contained in The Sociological Imagination. As I hope to point out throughout my presentation of the major themes of the sociological critique of American sociology, all of these themes derive in whole or in part from The

Sociological Imagination. So, a brief discussion of this seminal work here will set the stage for the later, more detailed analysis of the major themes of this critical movement.

Mills' interest in sociology and sociologists as objects of study and critical analysis actually goes back much further than The Sociological Imagination, published in 1959. As early as 1943, Mills wrote an article entitled "The Professional Ideology of Social Pathologists" in which he sought to expose the implicit biases in the work of social pathologists. Particularly significant in this early essay is Mills' attempt to demonstrate that the similar social backgrounds of these social pathologists were largely responsible for the similarity in their approach to and definition of social pathology. Mills argued that their perception of what was wrong with American society reflected their small town, rural, middle-class backgrounds. They saw urban and industrial expansion as the principal culprits in most social problems, and to counter such "pathological" conditions, it was argued, we must strive for community welfare, stability, and the like, these being among the principal characteristics of a "healthy" society.[41]

Mills' discovery of an implicit conservative bias in this early literature on social pathology parallels the later discovery of an implicit conservative bias in functionalism. The existence of bias, of course, indicates the influence of extra-scientific factors in the work of sociologists -- that value judgments enter into the work of all sociologists in spite

of all the protestations of value-neutrality.

In this early essay, Mills also criticized the atomistic, fragmented view of society contained in the work of these social pathologists, a view of society which provides an inadequate basis for any program of political action to correct these ills. Social reform, in this context, becomes primarily concerned with correcting (i.e., adjusting) individuals rather than addressing the larger, more crucial problems of social structure.[42] What is important to note about Mills' criticism here is that it is based upon the recognition that a fundamental shortcoming in American sociology is the inadequate conception of society which sociologists, for the most part, presuppose.

In The Power Elite, another of Mills' major works, he takes up a highly controversial subject and treats it in a way which also reveals some fundamental shortcomings in modern sociology. Among the most significant of these shortcomings is the failure to appreciate the existence and power of modern institutions. Mills focuses on three such centers of power: "These hierarchies of state and corporation and army constitute the means of power; as such they are now of a consequence not before equalled in human history -- and at their summits, there are now those command posts of modern society which offer us the sociological key to an understanding of the role of the higher circles in America."[43] Sociologists' failure to perceive this fundamental fact of modern society, Mills goes on to argue, derives in large part from the inadequacy of an empirical

methodology. An empirical approach to the study of society may yield a lot of data but very little in the way of understanding of modern society as a whole.[44] Hence, it is because of an inadequate methodology that sociologists have failed, by and large, to appreciate the true nature of modern society. Needless to say, such criticism goes to the heart of sociology.

That the most significant shortcomings of modern sociology derive from its inadequate methodological and theoretical foundation is a theme which receives its most detailed and insightful attention in The Sociological Imagination. In addition, Mills' critical analysis of sociology is clearly tied to the potential practical benefit sociologists can bring to the society which they study. From the opening pages in which Mills depicts the malaise of contemporary American society,of people being unknowingly swept along by the blind drift of social forces they do not understand, the practical implications of sociology are highlighted (that is, how sociology can help alleviate this unhealthy condition of modern society). But sociology cannot contribute to social reform in a meaningful way -- fulfill its promise -- in the absence of sound method and theory.

The basic defects of the predominant modes of theory and research in sociology are brought out in the context of Mills' discussion of "grand theory" and "abstracted empiricism". Grand theory, for Mills, is synonymous with structural-functionalism and, even more specifically, with one of Talcott Parsons' major works, The Social System. Mills argues that

Parsons' work represents an attempt to develop a universally valid theoretical framework to account for every important aspect of social life. He contends that this grandiose task is carried out with little regard for the historical record and with no thought of any significant social or sociological problem as a point of reference, which amounts to saying that Parsons was writing in a vacuum with no firm connection to the reality which he was attempting to capture in his theoretical framework.

In spite of the alleged thoroughness of Parsons' theoretical framework, Mills perceptively notes that his analysis of the social order is in fact limited to "the institutionalization of values", a focus which leaves out of account many important structural features of modern society (such as property, for example).[45] Moreover, in focusing on common values as that which holds society together, grand theory tends to enshrine the current normative order as necessary to social stability, as functional; hence, Parsons is led to assume that virtually all power is legitimated.[46] So, grand theory could not possibly be a part of a significant sociology which seeks to change the status quo. Indeed, to carry Mills' analysis a bit further, it can be argued that grand theory actually helps perpetuate the ills of modern society by regarding them not as evidence of something wrong in society as a whole but as sources of dissension and disorder in an otherwise stable, ordered society. The problem for grand theory, then, becomes one of adjusting to the status quo rather than seeking to change the

present state of American society by trying to increase the

scope of reason and freedom, as we will see Mills advocating

later.

Whereas grand theory suffers from its implicit justi-

fication of the established social order, the most serious

defects of abstracted empiricism derive from its having been

significantly shaped by the increasing bureaucratization of

modern society.[47] That is to say, empirical research in soci-

ology has largely become bureaucratized:

> In each and every feature of its existence and
> its influence, abstracted empiricism, as it is
> currently practiced, represents a 'bureaucratic'
> development. (1)In an attempt to standardize
> and rationalize each phase of social inquiry,
> the intellectual operations themselves of the
> abstracted empirical style are becoming
> 'bureaucratic'. (2) These operations are such
> as to make studies of man usually collective
> and systematized: in the kind of research
> institutions, agencies, and bureaus in which
> abstracted empiricism is properly installed,
> there is a development, for efficiency's sake
> if for no other, of routines as rationalized
> as those of any corporation's accounting
> department. (3) These two developments, in
> turn, have much to do with the selection and
> shaping of new qualities of mind among the
> personnel of the school, qualities both
> intellectual and political. (4) As it is
> practiced in business --...in the armed
> forces and increasingly in universities as
> well, 'the new social science' has come to
> serve whatever ends its bureaucratic clients
> may have in view... (5) Insofar as its
> research efforts are effective in their
> declared practical aims, they serve to in-
> crease the efficiency and the reputation --
> and to that extent, the prevalence of bureau-
> cratic forms of domination in modern society.[48]

All of the above-mentioned bureaucratic characteristics

of the predominant modes of empirical research run directly

contrary to the kind of creative insight (gained by means of

the "sociological imagination") necessary to come to the best possible understanding of modern society. Rather than employ the talents of creative, independent thinkers, research organizations tend to rely on technicians, those who utilize set procedures defined by "The Scientific Method". Mills notes that scientific method, statistics, and the like have become so important in sociological research that they have become the determining factors in sociologists' selection of topics to study. Topics of investigation which cannot be easily quantified and are not amenable to scientific method tend not to be pursued, which leads Mills to note: "...surely it is evident that an empiricism as cautious and rigid as abstracted empiricism eliminates the great social problems and human issues of our time from inquiry."[49] It is this "methodological inhibition" which precludes the investigation of such important issues as the one Mills himself outlines in his opening remarks in The Sociological Imagination.

An even more fundamental defect of contemporary sociological research lies in its dubious philosophical base, in particular, the theory of knowledge which it presupposes. In a passage reminiscent of criticism put forth by members of the Frankfurt School, Mills argues that empirical research can never penetrate the realm of appearance, the realm of opinion; it only reflects people's perception of reality which may or may not be accurate and which, in our mass culture, is quite often manipulated: "Many problems with which its practitioners do try to deal -- effects of mass media, for example -- cannot be

adequately stated without some structural setting. Can one hope to understand the effects of these media -- much less their combined meaning for the development of a mass society -- if one studies, with whatever precision, only a population that has been 'saturated' by these media for almost a generation?"[50]

Closely related to the above observation is Mills' criticism of the "building block" theory of knowledge which holds that the results of these narrow empirical studies can somehow be added up to yield more significant general con- clusions. But no matter how many studies of the psychological reactions of individuals sociologists add up, Mills argues, they will never gain any insight into the nature of social structure and its significance for the lives of individuals.[51]

Although Mills does not pursue this line of criticism much further, he leaves no doubt as to what he believes is a more adequate approach to the study of social life. This approach, broadly defined, involves historical and comparative research in the tradition of classical sociological theorists, the most important representative of which for Mills is Max Weber. Weber's work in the areas of religion and economics is particularly noted for the depth of its historical and comparative analysis.[52] Just what such an approach involves is indicated in the following observation: "Comparative study and historical study are very deeply involved with each other. You cannot understand the underdeveloped, the Communist, the capitalist political economies as they exist in the world

today by flat, timeless comparisons. You must expand the temporal reach of your analysis."[53]

What is especially significant about Mills' approach is its holistic nature; that is, rather than study isolated segments of social life or individuals in isolation from the larger social structure, these classical theorists clearly perceived the necessity of studying social life in its full historical, structural setting if one is to get a valid picture of social life. This alternative approach is, of course, captured in what Mills calls the "sociological imagination" which he defines at one point as that which "...enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and external career of a variety of individuals."[54] Put somewhat differently: "The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise. To recognize this task and this promise is the mark of a classic social analyst."[55]

Not only does the sociological imagination have implications with respect to methodology but it also clearly entails an alternative conception of society, a conception of society which emphasizes social structure. Social structure, for Mills, basically involves the institutions of modern society (government, economy, religion, etc.) and their interrelationship. The most inclusive unit of social structure is the nation-state, for it is "The nation-state which is now the dominating form in world history and, as such, a major fact in the life

of every man."[56] Such a view of society contrasts significant-
ly with both Parsons' focus on institutionalized values and
abstracted empiricism's "psychologism".

Perhaps the most significant element of Mills' critique
of the predominant modes of method and theory in contemporary
sociology is his discussion of the value question. Mills'
basic argument with respect to the question of the proper
relation between the work of sociologists and value consider-
ations is repeated on numerous occasions, sometimes almost
verbatim, by later critical sociologists. Although Mills' ar-
gument certainly appears to be the immediate reference-point
for these critical sociologists, there is nothing in his argu-
ment which could not be derived from Max Weber's discussion of
the principle of value-neutrality, as Alvin Gouldner clearly
demonstrates in his widely-cited essay, "Anti-Minotaur: The
Myth of a Value-Free Sociology."

Among the many clear expressions of what I will later
characterize as the "let's be honest" position is the follow-
ing passage from The Sociological Imagination:

> Whether he wants it or not, or whether he is
> aware of it or not, anyone who spends his life
> studying society and publishing the results is
> acting morally and usually politically as well.
> The question is whether he faces this condition
> and makes up his own mind, or whether he con-
> ceals it from himself and from others and drifts
> morally.[57]

There are two aspects of this statement that need to be empha-
sized here: first, that Mills is arguing that value-neutral
sociological work is a myth -- that all sociological work not
only presupposes an explicit or implicit value perspective but

also the results of sociological research have definite

moral and political implications for society. A major task

for the critical sociologist (indeed, the obligation of all

sociologists), then, is to uncover the moral background and

moral implications of all sociological work. Secondly, once

the full extent of this relationship between one's work and

questions of value is explored, sociologists are enjoined to

declare what these values are rather than take the cowardly

route of continuing one's work under the pretense of value-

neutrality.

Consistent with his injunction to sociologists to

declare their own value orientation, Mills offers his own view

of what constitutes the proper work of sociologists.[58] As was

noted earlier, Mills opens The Sociological Imagination by

depicting the situation of individuals in modern society as

one of feeling trapped, of being carried along by the blind

drift of events. With the encroachment of bureaucratic modes

of organization and thought in all aspects of social life, with

the rise of a "power elite" which exercises effective control

over the course of American society by way of their control

of politics, economics, and the military, Mills sees American

society increasingly becoming a society of masses, that is, a

society of manipulable individuals. Such a development, Mills

goes on to note, runs directly contrary to the ideals of

American society contained in its democratic heritage.[59] And

for Mills, if there is any ideal worth fighting for -- that

sociologists and, indeed, all intellectuals should defend --

it is the democratic ideal of a nation of free individuals making free and rational decisions about the future course of their nation. In Mills' own words: "What he [the sociologist] ought to do for the society is to combat all those forces that are destroying genuine publics and creating a mass society -- or put as a positive goal, his aim is to help build and strengthen self-cultivating publics. Only then might society be reasonable and free." (my emphasis)[60]

One specific way that sociologists can help enlighten people (i.e., develop genuine publics) is to translate, by means of the sociological imagination, personal troubles into public issues; that is, to show people that problems in their own lives have their source in larger problems in society as a whole. This would involve, for example, showing that the impersonal, faceless character of life for many people in modern society is basically not the fault of individuals (the "cheerful robots", as Mills describes such people), but that this is the result, in large part, of the encroachment of bureaucratic modes of organization and thought in modern society. The scope of reason and freedom has diminished considerably, and it is the principal task of sociologists to try to enlarge their scope.[61]

In essence, then, Mills can be seen as an advocate for the democratic ideal of social order and, ultimately, for the individual. Interestingly enough, this very position will emerge as the predominant one among critical sociologists -- a position which will be called into question in my critical

analysis of this aspect of the sociological critique of
American sociology.

(3) Summary and Outline of
Chapters to Follow

Throughout the discussion of the work of Lynd, Sorokin,
and Mills, it has been noted time and again that a principal
focus of their criticism has been the methodological and theo-
retical foundations of American sociology. On the whole, I
believe their critical analysis is more insightful, more
thoroughgoing, and more significant than the bulk of the work
done by later critics. These qualities of this earlier work
derive in large part from the willingness of these sociolo-
gists to address some of the basic philosophical issues which
underlie the major controversies in sociology. This is not
to say that later critical sociologists do not discuss im-
portant theoretical and methodological issues; however,
those critical sociologists who do look into such issues
almost invariably avoid discussing related philosophical
questions. As I hope to demonstrate more fully in the chapters
to follow, the most significant shortcomings of the principal
arguments put forth by these critical sociologists derive
from their reluctance to discuss the more basic philosophical
questions involved.

I believe it is questionable that any insight of any
real significance can be derived from a _sociological_ critique
of American sociology.[62] Put otherwise, I am suggesting
that no significant criticism of contemporary sociology is

possible unless sociologists are willing to come to grips with and attempt to resolve the epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical issues which clearly underlie the defects in contemporary sociology which they point to.

In my own reflections on the nature of this critical movement I will be drawing on essentially two philosophic sources. First, there is the work of some of the principal members of the Frankfurt School who directed much of their critical attention at positivistic thought in general and, on occasion, specifically at sociology. I will argue that the insight of these "critical theorists" into the shortcomings of current sociological practice and into the larger question of what is wrong in modern society is generally more profound than anything offered by critical sociologists. What is particularly interesting about the work of these critical theorists is that it has had an impact upon some of the major figures of this critical sociological movement, most notably, Alvin Gouldner. Nonetheless, I believe some interesting and informative differences will emerge in looking at their respective critiques of sociology and society.

Secondly, and more importantly, is the criticism of sociology and the kind of thinking sociology represents offered by a much-neglected twentieth-century American philosopher, Elijah Jordan. The impact of Jordan's work for the sociological critique of American sociology goes far beyond the specific criticisms he levels at sociology in Chapter Two of his Forms of Individuality. More fundamental are his general

contributions to an understanding of the nature of modern society and of its basic constituent elements. Finally, as Jordan emphasizes throughout his work, a sound understanding of society is a necessary prerequisite to any meaningful effort at social reform. It is with this in mind that we must require of sociologists that in their investigation of society they bring forth knowledge which will contribute, rather than detract, from the effort to improve society. And this requirement can be fulfilled only insofar as sociologists critically evaluate the methodological and theoretical foundations of their discipline.

Although the bulk of the discussion in the chapters to follow will be taken up with the presentation of the basic arguments put forth in the context of the sociological critique of American sociology, I will present some critical reflections based upon the work of members of the Frankfurt School and Elijah Jordan at the end of each chapter. In some instances, the reader may get the impression that I have left him hanging at the end of a chapter without having resolved the issue discussed. This may very well be the case, for my final judgment of the shortcomings and the promise of the sociological critique of American sociology will be brought to light in the concluding chapter, after having considered this critical movement as a whole. It is perhaps a commonplace observation, but true, that all of the issues discussed by critical sociologists are closely interrelated, and therefore require that they be treated as interrelated in making a

critical assessment of them.

Each of the chapters to follow will focus on a basic issue discussed in the sociological critique of American sociology. In Chapter II, the relation between sociological research and social policy will be discussed. Critical sociologists will consider the question of how sociologists have and should relate to the private and public agencies which fund sociological research. The charge that mainstream sociologists are working hand-in-glove with the established social order emerges in Chapter II but is given much fuller consideration in Chapter III which is on the value question in sociology. In this chapter, we will consider what place, if any, values have in the work of sociologists. Critical sociologists argue that values affect all aspects of the work of sociologists, which, being the case, critical sociologists are obliged to express their value preferences. In Chapter IV, then, their preference for the democratic ideal being applied to both sociology and society will be considered. Chapter V will build on this analysis by presenting what have been some other prominent attempts to develop alternative conceptions of society as a basis for a new and more significant sociology. These alternatives will be found wanting for many of the same reasons the discussion of issues presented in previous chapters was found wanting. In a concluding chapter, I will bring together the important shortcomings of this critical movement and suggest a new direction for developing a new and more significant sociology.

[1] Indeed, as J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach (eds.) bring out in Radical Sociology, from 1967 through the early 1970's the Vietnam War, among other social issues, was the source of disruption at national American Sociological Association conventions.

[2] Ibid., p.3.

[3] In discussing the concept of value here, I want to point out that I am using the term in a sense adopted almost universally by these critical sociologists, namely, that value is more or less equivalent to personal preference. Value judgments, then, are essentially expressions of personal preference. Later, I will attempt to develop an alternative, objective conception of value. This will be one of the most crucial distinctions I will make in reflecting upon the shortcomings of this critical movement.

[4] Alvin Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, pp.25-26. In a later essay Gouldner provides us with another brief, insightful synopsis of the sociology of sociology. He says, "... our [sociologists'] circumstances compel us to examine ourselves. We now require 'a sociology of sociology', a sociology that can deepen the sociologist's awareness of who and what he is as a member of a specific society at a given time, and of how his social roles and his personal life affect his professional work." "Remembrance and Renewal" in For Sociology, p.77.

[5] Jeffrey Pfeffer, et. al., "Stability and Concentration of National Science Foundation Funding in Sociology, 1964-1971", The American Sociologist, 9(Nov. 74), p.194.

[6] The shallowness of many of these studies being captured in Charles Peck's characterization of these studies as mere "shop-talk". "The Sociology of Sociologists: A Bibliographical Evaluation" in The Phenomenon of Sociology, edited by Edward A. Tiryakian, p.447.

[7] Allen D. Grimshaw, "A Note From the Incoming Editor", The American Sociologist, 10(Aug. 75), p.192.

[8] William E. Snizek, "The Relationship Between Theory and Research: A Study in the Sociology of Sociology", Sociological Quarterly, 16(Summer 75), pp.415-428.

[9] Alvin Gouldner, Enter Plato, pp.170-171.

[10] Ibid., p.168.

[11] As we will see shortly, the work of just one critical soci-

ologist, Alvin Gouldner (and, indeed, his book <u>Enter Plato</u> by itself), encompasses the three different manifestations of this critical movement: what I refer to as the sociology of sociology, critical sociology, and radical sociology.

[12]As Larry and Janice Reynolds (eds.) state in the preface of one of the major anthologies in the sociology of sociology: "The sociology of sociology may provide more accurate perceptions of where we now stand and why. With such knowledge in hand, real alternatives for the future can be evaluated." <u>The Sociology of Sociology</u>, p.5.

[13]See Roscoe C. Hinkle Jr. and Gisela J.Hinkle, <u>The Development of Modern Sociology</u>.

[14]Don H. Zimmerman, "Ethnomethodology", <u>The American Sociologist</u>, 13(Feb. 78), p.11.

[15]T.R. Young, "The Politics of Sociology: Gouldner, Goffman, and Garfinkel", <u>The American Sociologist</u>, 6(Nov. 71), pp.279-280.

[16]Involvement in social life is not only crucial for a valid methodology, but as we will see, some critical sociologists go as far as to argue that a radical sociology entails the personal involvement of sociologists in various social movements.

[17]Alvin Gouldner, "The Politics of Mind", <u>For Sociology</u>, pp.84-85.

[18]See J. David Colfax and Jack L.Roach (eds.), <u>Radical Sociology</u>. It includes an account of the origin and activities of the "Sociology Liberation Movement".

[19]David Horowitz (ed.), <u>Radical Sociology: An Introduction</u>, p. v.

[20]J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach (eds.), <u>Radical Sociology</u>, pp.341-418.

[21]Alfred McClung Lee, <u>Sociology For Whom?</u>, p.5.

[22]This is a point which Dennis Foss fails to appreciate in wrongly assigning 1949 as the original date of publication of <u>Knowledge For What?</u>. Dennis Foss, <u>The Value Controversy in Sociology</u>, p.23.

[23]Robert S. Lynd, <u>Knowledge For What?</u>, p.116.

[24]<u>Ibid</u>., p.178.

[25]As I hope to show, Lynd's attempt to spell out an objective ground or base for value judgment runs contrary to the views of the vast majority of later critical sociologists who see

value judgment as necessarily subjective and therefore completely arbitrary.

[26]Robert S. Lynd, Knowledge For What?, p.189.

[27]Ibid., p.32.

[28]Ibid., p.160.

[29]Ibid., p.120.

[30]Ibid., p.202.

[31]Ibid., p.241.

[32]Ibid., p.250.

[33]Pitirim Sorokin, Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology, p.315.

[34]The reason I emphasize this point here is that I will later point to evidence of an unwillingness on the part of contemporary critical sociologists to get involved in any discussion of such difficult (yet crucial, I would argue) philosophical issues as does Sorokin.

[35]As Sorokin clearly states in the Preface: "The purpose of these essays is to expose the nonscientific and half scientific elements in modern sociology and related disciplines." Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology, p. v. Moreover, Sorokin clearly acknowledges the underlying philosophical issues here in arguing that the defects he discusses at length largely derive from a faulty theory of cognition -- what he calls empiricism "in one of its primitive variations" (i.e., positivism and operationalism). p.279.

[36]Ibid., p.298.

[37]With perhaps one significant exception: the charge that Parsons and Shils, in developing their theory of social action, plagiarized most of the basic concepts from work which Sorokin had published many years earlier. As Sorokin explicitly says at one point: "...in an unpublished mimeographed manuscript, Similarities and Dissimilarities Between Two Sociological Systems, I have shown by a long series of parallel quotations from my works and the volumes of Parsons and Shils that their basic definitions and concepts are practically identical with mine; often they are identical even in wording." Ibid., pp.14-15.

[38]Ibid., p.317.

[39]Most notably, Sociology on Trial, edited by Maurice Stein and Arthur Vidich and The New Sociology, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz.

[40]Robert W. Friedrichs, A Sociology of Sociology, p.31.

[41]As Mills succinctly puts it, "The aim to preserve rurally oriented values and stabilities is indicated in the implicit model which operates to detect urban disorganization; it is also shown by the stress upon community welfare. The community is taken as the major unit, and often it sets the scope of concern and problematization." "The Professional Ideology of Social Pathologists" in The Sociology of Sociology, edited by Reynolds and Reynolds, pp.136-137.

[42]Ibid., pp.133-135.

[43]C. Wright Mills, The Power Elite, p.5.

[44]Ibid., p.245.

[45]C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, p.35.

[46]Ibid., p.42.

[47]It is here that the influence of Max Weber can be most clearly seen. At times, Mills' analysis of the rise of bureaucracy also parallels that of members of the Frankfurt School.

[48]C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, p.101.

[49]Ibid., p.73.

[50]Ibid., p.52.

[51]Ibid., pp.67-68.

[52]Later, we will see that the work of classical sociological theorists often provides the model for a more adequate approach to the study of society for these critical sociologists.

[53]C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, pp.150-151.

[54]Ibid., p.5.

[55]Ibid., p.6.

[56]Ibid., p.135.

[57]Ibid., p.79.

[58]This commitment to a particular moral and political position, for Mills, is of a relativistic nature: "Not every social scientist accepts all the views I happen to hold on these issues, and it is not my wish that he should. My point is that one of his tasks is to determine his own views of the nature of historical change and the place, if any, of free

and reasonable men within it." <u>Ibid.</u>, p.192.

[59]This is a point which Howard Press, in his intellectual portrait, <u>C. Wright Mills</u>, continually emphasizes in attempting to characterize Mills' politics.

[60]C. Wright Mills, <u>The Sociological Imagination</u>, p.187.

[61]This point has direct bearing on arguments put forth by members of the Frankfurt School, in particular Max Horkheimer's <u>Eclipse of Reason</u> and Herbert Marcuse's <u>One-Dimensional Man</u>. Although on the surface their arguments are quite similar, I will later try to demonstrate the superiority of Horkheimer and Marcuse's treatment of this problem of the constriction of reason and freedom in modern society.

[62]Part of the point being made here is captured in T.B. Bottomore's characterization of Gouldner's "reflexive sociology" as "...the sociologist contemplating his own navel." T.B. Bottomore, <u>Sociology as Social Criticism</u>, p.44.

CHAPTER II

SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND SOCIAL POLICY

Among the first issues to be addressed by critical
sociologists was the close relationship which they argued had
grown up between sociological researchers and the public and
private agencies which provided funds for their research.
This relationship was taken as evidence of the complicity of
mainstream sociologists with representatives of the established
social order -- that researchers were allowing their work to
be dictated by powerful interests in our society whose primary
concern is the maintenance of the status quo. That is to say,
other than scientific considerations have been involved in
the selection of topics for research and in the process of
carrying out the research. This very serious charge goes to
the heart of the canons of empirical research, and it will be
the focal point of what critical sociologists see as wrong
with sociological research.

> (1) Project Camelot: The Initiation of the Debate
>   Over the Proper Relationship Between Sociological
>   Research and Social Policy.

An important facet of the development of sociology in
America has been the increasingly close relations that have
been built up between the sociological profession and the
federal government. With the growing involvement of the
federal government in the formulation and implementation of
social policy, there has been a subsequent growth in the need

for comprehensive, accurate knowledge about our society and its problems -- knowledge which ultimately could serve as a guide for those who make social policy. Hence, since the passage of the National Health Act in 1946 (from which came the National Institute of Mental Health), the federal government has allocated larger and larger amounts of money to basic and applied research in the social sciences.[1]

Official recognition of the importance of social science research, however, has generally been overshadowed by the high regard in which the natural and physical sciences have been held. The natural and physical sciences have always received the bulk of government research funds. Nonetheless, by the mid-1960's the social sciences, and sociology in particular, had come a long way toward gaining an equal footing with the so-called "hard" sciences.

This newly-won status was exemplified by hearings in Congress concerning a proposal to set up a National Social Science Foundation (NSSF) apart from the National Science Foundation (NSF) which has been a principal source of funding for social science research although, again, the bulk of the grants went to research projects in the natural and physical sciences. Moreover, there was discussion in Congress of a proposal, which grew out of testimony of sociologists concerning the establishment of NSSF, that a Presidential Council of Social Advisors be set up, modeled after the existing Council of Economic Advisors.

In general, one can notice a direct correlation between

the increase in the number of social programs in the 60's and the increase in federal money for social science research. A sociologist who has looked into this phenomenon notes, "The Kennedy-Johnson years were boom times for social science researchers. Federal expenditures for such research more than quadrupled in the years between 1960 and 1966, rising from $73.1 million to $325.1 million."[2] But just as the policies of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations were to come under attack from social critics, so too were sociologists criticized who, having carried out research under government sponsorship, were indirectly tied to these policies.

Critical sociologists charged that sociological researchers, in accepting government funds for their research, had by and large surrendered their autonomy and become instruments of government policy. This charge was given credence by a scandal which grew out of a U.S. Army-sponsored research project entitled "Project Camelot". The years of debate and discussion which ensued upon the cancellation of this ill-fated project would serve to bring to the fore many important issues concerning the question of the proper relationship between the sociological profession and its sources of research funding. Perhaps it was because Project Camelot appeared to represent such a direct and blatant attempt to influence the conduct of sociological research that it became the cause celebre among critical sociologists, particularly Irving Louis Horowitz, a former student of C. Wright Mills who was to become a principal figure in this whole debate.

Initiated in 1964, Project Camelot was to have involved several noted sociologists from the United States and abroad in a study of the causes of revolution and insurgency in underdeveloped and developing countries throughout the world, with the specific focus of this study being Chile.[3] The source of the funds for this research, a generous $4-6 million spread over three or four years, was the United States Army. The study was to have been done under the aegis of the Special Operations Research Organization (SORO), an organization nominally connected with American University in Washington D.C. and funded principally by the Defense Department.

The fact that the United States Army was funding this project was not made clear to social scientists and administrators at the University of Chile in Santiago, whose cooperation was needed to carry out this research. During the initial phases of the project, however, a sociologist from the University of Oslo who had been asked to join the project, Johan Gatlung, revealed to University of Chile administrators that the funding for this project was coming from the United States Army. In light of the United States' image as an imperialist power in the world, highlighted just a few months later by United States' military intervention in Santo Domingo in May, 1965, Gatlung's revelation led to charges of imperialism in the Chilean press, culminating finally in Congessional hearings in Washington and the cancellation of Project Camelot.

Whether true or not, Chileans regarded Project Camelot as an unwarranted intervention in their internal affairs; they

feared that the knowledge gained from this research would only serve to enhance the effectiveness of the C.I.A. in its efforts to insure the existence of a Chile amenable to American interests. In this country, the effects of the cancellation of Project Camelot went far beyond those sociologists who had agreed to participate in it. What was at stake here, ultimately, was the credibility and integrity of the sociological profession itself. What had begun as one of the most auspicious and well-financed research projects ever undertaken by sociologists, thus, turned into one of the most controversial chapters in the history of the sociological profession in America.

Critical comment on the nature and implications of Project Camelot appeared almost immediately after its demise and continued unabated for several years to come. In the context of this critical commentary most of the central issues surrounding the question of the proper relationship between sociological research and social policy were raised. Indeed, for critical sociologists such as Irving Louis Horowitz, Project Camelot represented all that was wrong with the existing relationship. The basic position argued by critical sociologists is nicely summarized by Herbert Blumer in an article contained in <u>The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot</u>, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz. Blumer comments:

> The major issue is not that of entrenching and extending the role of sociology in the federal government but of protecting the integrity of sociology as a scientific discipline....
> The threats that appear to me to be of crucial significance are (1) the restraints

imposed on the scientific pursuit of truth,
(2) a disrespect of the rights of human
beings being studied, and (3) an unwitting
corruption of scholars engaging in agency-
determined research.[4]

The criticism that those sociologists involved in Pro-
ject Camelot were, in a sense, instruments of the Defense De-
partment is later reasserted in an article by Horowitz in which
he compares the corruption of sociologists involved in this
project with the corruption of social scientists brought to
light in The Pentagon Papers which revealed American military
planning to intervene in Vietnam. Clearly hearkening back to
Mills' discussion of the "bureaucratic ethos" in sociological
research in The Sociological Imagination, Horowitz describes
Project Camelot as being prepared "...with the same bloodless,
bureaucratic approach that characterizes so much of federally
inspired social science and history."[5]

In addition, another group of sociologists focused on
the methodological deficiencies in the research design itself.
For example, Marshall Sahlins argues that a conservative bias
was built into the design of the project from the start, a
conservative bias which in many ways reflects that of the
functionalist view of social order. Sahlins notes, "...revo-
lutionary movements are described as 'antisystem activities',
indications of 'severe disintegration', varieties of 'destabi-
lizing processes', threats to 'legitimate control of the means
of coercion within society', facilitated by 'administrative
errors'. Movements for radical change are in Camelot's view
a disease and a society so infected is sick."[6] Considered

along with the criticisms of Project Camelot mentioned above, this criticism is indicative of these critical sociologists' fundamental belief that sociological research is a scientific endeavor -- that the validity of the sociological enterprise, as with any scientific enterprise, rests upon the degree to which sociologists are autonomous, the degree to which their research is an unbiased pursuit of the truth.

In direct response to the potential threat to the integrity of the sociological profession which Project Camelot represented, the American Sociological Association initiated the process of drafting a code of ethics for the profession. The drafting of a code of ethics was seen as essential to insure continued public support for sociological research. That such an action was viewed as an appropriate response to this situation is an indication of the degree to which the blame for Project Camelot was placed upon the individual sociologists who had agreed to participate in it. As one sociologist noted in this context: "Where the issue of professional ethics entered most significantly in Project Camelot, it seems to me, was in the initial acceptance of the mission of the project by social scientists acting in their role as social scientists."[7]

In general, I believe it is accurate to say that the principal focus of the criticism of Project Camelot was directed at the actions of the individual sociologists involved. These sociologists, it was argued, had: (1) surrendered their autonomy in agreeing to participate in the

project; (2) had failed to disclose all of the background information on the nature of the project and its source of funding to officials at the University of Chile; and (3) had allowed their conservative bias to enter into the design of the study. In all of this there is nothing which suggests any problems with the nature of sociological research itself or with its philosophical basis. Indeed, in the view of the critics of Project Camelot, the ultimate problem was that sociologists involved in it did not adhere closely enough to the tenets of scientific research.

The serious charges raised by critics of Project Camelot did not go without rebuttal from some of the sociologists who had agreed to participate in the study.[8] Interestingly enough, in defending their participation, these sociologists appealed to some of the very same arguments that critics used to attack Project Camelot. They denied the contention that the Army was using them to gather intelligence information; rather, they expressed the belief that they had a substantial amount of freedom, that their autonomy as scientific researchers was not as severely curtailed as the critics had maintained. Moreover, these sociologists believed that this research project, with such generous financial support, represented an unparalleled opportunity to investigate the phenomenon of social change in a truly comparative sense. This was the kind of "Big-Range Sociology" that one of the principal critics of Project Camelot, Irving Louis Horowitz, had argued so strongly for in the introduction to The New

Sociology just a few years prior to this. Hence, although the two sides of this debate disagreed as to the nature and implications of Project Camelot, there was agreement on one basic point; namely, that sociological researchers must seek to preserve their autonomy which is vital to all truly scientific work.

From reading the numerous charges and countercharges put forth by critics and defenders of Project Camelot, I am at a loss to make any determination of which side is painting the most accurate picture of the whole situation. The fact that Project Camelot never got past the design stage further complicates matters. Many of the criticisms and their rebuttals are premised on what someone believed would have been the case _if_ Project Camelot had been carried out.

Nonetheless, one thing can be said for certain: Project Camelot was the source of considerable debate and controversy in American sociology during the 1960's and 1970's. Indeed, the debate which it engendered raised issues that would be discussed time and again in later critical analyses of the relationship between sociological research and social policy.

Let us, then, turn our attention to some of these other critical analyses of the relationship between sociological research and social policy.

(2) The Power of Sociological Research

Perhaps the most serious charge brought against Project Camelot was that it represented an attempt by the

Defense Department to use legitimate social scientific re-
search as a means of gathering intelligence information about
a foreign country -- the ultimate purpose of that information
being to enhance the United States' ability to control the
political situation in that country. Put bluntly, those soci-
ologists involved in the project were being accused of being
tools of United States' imperialism. As fantastic as such
criticism may appear at first glance, it, in fact, is repre-
sentative of one of the principal arguments put forth by
sociological critics concerning the growing ties between
sociological research and social policy.

Sociologists' increasing willingness to assist in the
formulation, implementation, and assessment of social policy
was seen as more than just a reflection of their desire to
assist in the task of social reform. Critical sociologists
charged that such willingness was more a reflection of
(1) sociologists' interest in gaining access to more funds
for research and (2) their interest in having the status quo
preserved in which their own positions were relatively secure.[9]
That is to say, mainstream sociologists were being accused of
working hand-in-glove with the established social order to
help insure that things remain as they are. As Mills had
pointed out in The Sociological Imagination, a "bureaucratic
ethos" predominated in sociological research, which meant
that sociological research came "to serve whatever ends its
bureaucratic clients may have in view..."[10] Those bureau-
cratic clients, according to these critical sociologists,

were for the most part representatives of the most powerful

interests in our society whose principal concern is with the

preservation of their own privileged position.

Although some of these critics push the beginnings of

sociologists' collusion with the established order back as

far as Elton Mayo's Hawthorne Studies in the late 1920's and

early 1930's,[11] it is not until the 1960's that such criticism

reached full bloom in an atmosphere in which "the establish-

ment" was being attacked from a variety of perspectives by

people involved in the numerous social movements which had

sprung up around this time. Just as Mills had singled out

government, the military, and business as the master insti-

tutions of modern society, the leaders of which constituted

the "power elite", these critical sociologists focus on the

alleged collusive relationship between sociological researchers

and those who paid for such research in government, in the

military, and in corporate America. In all cases, these critics

charge that sociological researchers are wittingly or unwit-

tingly working in the interest of their clients which is to

maintain the status quo. This charge is epitomized in the

following statement by Martin Nicolaus, who paints a very

dark picture of the nature of this relationship:

> In addition to the general dissemination of
> propaganda, professional sociology has the
> major specific functions of aiding industrial,
> civil, and military authorities in the solution
> of manpower control problems of a limited order,
> and preparing university candidates for careers
> in the official bureaucracies. As a source of
> legitimation for the existing sovereignty, and
> as a laboratory of refinements in the processes
> by which a tribute of blood, labor, and taxation

> is extracted from the subject population,
> the professional organization of sociology
> today represents the concrete fulfillment
> of the charter vision of its founding
> fathers.[12]

As extreme as Nicolaus' charges are,[13] they are indicative of
the basic position put forth by critical sociologists.

Sociological research and the sociological profession
in general are variously characterized as: part of the "tech-
nology of repression",[14] disguising "the practical and poli-
tically oppressive realities of the scientific and social
worlds",[15] "serving...as the _avant-garde_ of the corporate
reality,...";[16] "a tool of the Welfare State,...",[17] and
finally, and most directly, the "servant of the power elite".[18]
By and large, however, these charges are made in very general
terms, with little in the way of evidence to back them up.

Nevertheless, in a general sense, I believe there is
considerable evidence to suggest that such characterizations
of contemporary mainstream sociology are not entirely astray.
One may be hard pressed to prove that an actual conspiracy
existed involving members of the power elite and their intel-
lectual "servants", but one does not have to look very hard
to uncover evidence of the conservatism of much of contempo-
rary American sociology. For example, Dusky Lee Smith, in
analyzing the work of Nathan Glazer, Amitai Etzioni, and
Seymour Martin Lipset, cites numerous passages in which these
prominent sociologists clearly defend the status quo --
suggesting by this that nothing is basically wrong with
modern American society. I believe the title of her essay

aptly describes these sociologists and their work: "The Sun-

shine Boys: Toward a Sociology of Happiness".[19]

An important and highly questionable assumption, I

would argue, underlying this charge that sociologists have

become the intellectual servants of the most powerful interests

in corporate America is the belief that the knowledge gained

from sociological research is of such strategic value that

whichever groups gain control of this knowledge will have a

tremendous advantage over other groups which may be vying for

power. The nature of sociologists' strategic function in our

society is well-outlined by J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach

in their introduction to Radical Sociology:

> ...the point should not be lost that the
> sociology of the postwar period was not as
> irrelevant as some of its humanistically-
> oriented critics have charged....Sociologists
> as consultants, managers, and administrators,
> directly or indirectly contributed to govern-
> mental policy formation and implementation.
> Liberal sociologists could not design weapons
> systems or develop methods for the transport-
> ation of raw materials to American industries,
> but they could advise the military on ways of
> mobilizing support for its programme and
> develop, in the name of economic growth and
> democracy, rationalizations for the exploi-
> tation and pacification of the domestic poor
> of the Third World.[20]

More than anything else, the above passage brings to

light the fact that sociologists quite often serve as apolo-

gists for the established social order.[21] Functionalists,

who associate that which is functional with that which is es-

tablished, would be an example of such apologists. On this view,

a social problem becomes that which deviates from accepted

social standards, when, in reality, it may be those very

standards which need to be questioned.[22]

In addition to sociological research providing rationalizations for the status quo, a number of critical sociologists have charged that sociological researchers have tended to pry into the lives of powerless groups of people: the poor, Blacks, the working class, etc.. At the same time there has been relatively little sociological scrutiny of the lives of the powerful in our society. The knowledge gained from studying the powerless is said to be of great value to the powerful who can use this knowledge to enhance their control over these powerless groups. In Martin Nicolaus' characteristic style: "Sociology has risen on the blood and bones of the poor and oppressed; it owes its prestige in this society to its putative ability to give information and advice to the ruling class of this society about the ways and means to keep people down."[23] Hence, as David Horowitz notes, "The task of a radical sociology is to reverse this process, to study the structure of social oppression and to bring this knowledge, and the power it conveys, to the powerless and exploited majority."[24]

The truth of such claims aside, what is particularly significant about them is that they indicate an underlying belief in the viability of current modes of sociological research. Rather than question the validity of these modes of research, these critical sociologists are more concerned with the question of who controls this research and of whose interests it serves. It was to be expected , then, that

during the 1968 American Sociological Association Convention
in Boston the "Sociology Liberation Movement", with which
some of these critical sociologists were connected, organized
a number of workshops which focused on the question: "know-
ledge for whom?"[25]

That sociological research has a substantial impact
on the direction of social policy and of society in general
is an assertion made with even greater force by some critics
who argue that the influence of sociological research goes
beyond mere service to the powerful. Sociological knowledge,
which represents an attempt to conceptualize and order social
phenomena, is argued to possess such power that the mere
recognition of it has the power to influence significantly
the course of major events.[26] This line of argument, which
is particularly emphasized in the work of Robert W. Friedrichs,
amounts to nothing less than assigning the discipline of soci-
ology itself a crucial place, if not the most crucial, in
effecting social change.

Friedrichs is not arguing that sociological knowledge
alters society in any direct sense; rather, what is argued is
that this knowledge acts as a kind of self-defeating prophecy.
That is to say, sociological predictions (which constitute the
bulk of this knowledge) tend to have a negative influence on
social behavior -- people respond to such knowledge by acting
in ways opposite to that which is predicted. For example,
in commenting favorably on a study done on the social impact
of the projections made by Karl Marx and Arnold Toynbee,

Friedrichs makes the following questionable and undocumented assertion concerning the power of Marx's projections in particular: "The very truth of much of Marx's analysis of the nineteenth-century European and American bourgeoisie appears to have acted in part as a self-defeating prophecy as that bourgeoisie acceded to modifications in its power _vis-a-vis_ the proletariat."[27] This whole argument is based on the incredible supposition that the bourgeoisie, through a careful study of _Das Kapital_, came to the conclusion that they would be overthrown unless they gave in to some of the demands of the proletariat.

Anticipating Friedrichs' argument, John R. Seeley comments in an earlier article that: "The very 'recognition' of something as a scientific problem, instead of some other kind of problem, marks a shift, an implicit act of legislation so profound as to deserve the title revolutionary...a change that by itself threatens to shake the foundations of the present society and to erect a new one of unforeseeable characteristics--..."[28] This, again, highlights the potentially powerful influences of sociological work on society in general.

Significantly, however, none of these and similar claims are ever factually substantiated, outside of some general observations on contemporary American society. I know of no revolutionary change in the structure of American society which has been the result of the recognition of some social problem as a scientific problem. Moreover, one is

left to wonder just who it is who recognized the scientific nature of these problems since the vast majority of people rarely have occasion to peruse the reports of sociological findings tucked away in various professional journals and monographs.[29]

In the context of this discussion of the power of sociological research, we find also the straightforward assertion that this research has made and can potentially make valuable contributions to the solution of our society's problems. In one of Talcott Parsons' several attempts to spell out what he believes to be the proper job of the sociologist, he attributes sociological research with having made substantial progress toward the solution of poverty and juvenile delinquency,[30] in spite of the fact that these problems are as serious today as they were at the time that Parsons made this comment.

The argument is also made that the reason we have failed to solve some of these major social problems is because leaders in government and people in general have failed to appreciate the advances toward solving such problems that have been made in recent and past sociological research. This argument is typified by the following extremely positive assessment of the potential impact of sociology: "Having achieved a quantum advance toward solving major social problems, sociologists, with characteristic reticence, have allowed their accomplishments to remain unnoticed."[31] What that "quantum advance" is is not specified in this article and in many articles of its kind, with the possible exception of

Melvin Tumin's discussion of our government's failure to institute racial policies based on the many significant studies of race relations dating all the way back to Myrdal's The American Dilemma, published in 1942.[32]

In contrast to the above sanguine assessments of the accomplishments of sociological research, there have been some critics who have argued that sociological research has failed to come up with any findings relevant to the solution of major social problems.[33] For these critics, the problem is not that sociological research has gone unnoticed but that it is largely irrelevant, which means that its findings could confer on no group any substantial power because these findings are themselves flawed by having been arrived at on the basis of an inadequate, invalid methodology. Certainly, one would have to look hard in Mills' The Sociological Imagination to find any positive comment on the predominant modes of sociological research; indeed, in terms of the knowledge needed to correct the major ills of our society, these predominant modes of research represent precisely the wrong way to go about acquiring such knowledge for they preclude the use of the "sociological imagination".

As was noted in the Introduction, the thrust of Mills' critique of contemporary sociology is directed at its methodological and theoretical foundations and not at sociologists themselves, as is largely the case with those critical sociologists who pose the question: "sociology for whom?". For these critics, the moral culpability of sociologists is what

is at issue -- it is a question of whose side are we on, the powerful or the powerless, or in Gouldner's terms, the "over-dogs" or the "underdogs".[34]

For those critics to adhere more closely to Mills' argument, however, this is to miss the point that sociological research may be incapable of rendering an accurate picture of modern society and social behavior. I believe the failure to address the question of the adequacy of the predominant methodological approaches in contemporary sociology is a fundamental shortcoming of the sociological critique of American sociology -- it reflects, in the final analysis, either the inability or the unwillingness of most of these critical sociologists to address the crucial philosophical issues of the validity of empirical sociological research.[35] The question of who controls this research, with which we opened this section, is minor in comparison to the question of whether or not predominant modes of sociological research are capable of uncovering significant knowledge about society.

(3) The Question of the Adequacy of Sociological Research

Within the context of the sociological critique of American sociology there was at least one prominent attempt to confront the issue of the adequacy of predominant modes of sociological research. Some critics directed their attention to what they believed to be the artificial nature of large-scale survey research which utilizes a questionnaire or interview format, the results of which are usually presented in

quantitative terms. Such an approach, it was argued, tends

to distort the object of investigation by introducing some

foreign element into the natural flow of social life. Soci-

ologists administering questionnaires or conducting inter-

views inevitably have some kind of effect on those individuals

or groups they are studying, an effect which is frequently

glossed over in analyzing the results of such research.[36]

Moreover, as Sorokin had earlier pointed out, such research

may yield answers to the question of people's attitudes and

beliefs toward their's and others' social behavior, but it

cannot give us any insight into the actual behavior of people.

What people say about their behavior and what they actually

do are all too often entirely different. In short, these tech-

niques, the hallmarks of so-called "objective" social re-

search, were seen as inadequate approaches to the study of

social life.

With the rejection of the scientific, "objective"

approach, these critical sociologists maintain that the only

true approach is a subjective one in which sociologists at-

tempt to study social behavior from the perspective of the

individuals and groups being studied. Drawing on Max Weber's

empathetic approach, as encompassed by his notion of verstehen,

and on the more recent development of a phenomenological soci-

ology, emphasis comes to be placed on the personal involvement

of sociologists in whatever aspect of society they happen to

be studying. It is argued that only on the basis of actual

involvement in the ongoing process of social life can sociolo-

gists come to understand it most adequately. With this in
mind, Jack Douglas claims, "...the finest sociological studies
of groups have been done by people which at some point had
been totally involved insiders or had committed the sin of
going native (becoming 'too-involved') but then returned."[37]
Douglas, then, discusses William Foote Whyte's classic study,
Street Corner Society, as one prominent example of this.

To some critical sociologists, personal involvement
meant more than merely having sociologists immerse themselves
in whatever aspect of society they happen to be investigating.
Personal involvement, for them, also means actively assisting
the individuals, groups, or communities that they intend to
study.[38] For example, in response to increasing difficulties
sociological researchers were having in gaining the cooper-
ation of ethnic and minority groups in the inner-city, two
researchers suggest the establishment of what they call
"research communes". These research communes would give
community residents a voice in all aspects of the research
process: in the design phase, in carrying out the research,
and in the publication of its results.[39] Despite the potential
hazards such an approach poses to the reliability and valid-
ity of such research, in gaining the fuller cooperation of
the people they are studying, these researchers argue that
such an approach will in fact enhance reliability and val-
idity, as they apparently found in their study of Boston's
Chinatown.

Even more directly, another sociologist suggests that

those interested in doing research in poor and oppressed communities should take a hand in attempting to alleviate the plight of people trapped in these communities. Rather than follow the usual procedure of a sociologist going into a community, collecting his data, and then leaving the community in the same state in which he found it, "Institution Formation Sociology proposes that sociologists initiate the organization of new institutions and simultaneously study the institutions that are created. These new institutions should be organized to help meet the social needs in areas of society where no institutions exist to solve the problems that people face and cannot resolve by themselves."[40] In studying the formation of these institutions the usual questionnaire or interview format would be dispensed with in lieu of the use of tape recorders, movie cameras, and other such devices which can capture "the natural interaction of the institution as it occurs."[41]

Throughout the rest of our exposition and critical analysis of the sociological critique of American sociology we will see this emphasis on the personal involvement of sociologists in the society which they study surface in a number of different contexts. In general, the virtues of personal involvement, of focusing on the everyday lives of individuals, of being a forthright and courageous individual oneself, are held in high esteem by these critical sociologists. More than one critical sociologist has equated such virtues with humanism. For example, Alfred McClung Lee speaks of "humanist"

research methods in terms of the virtues of personal involvement: "...a humanist social scientist has to have a sufficient sense of empathy and of participation to gain understanding through joining in the emotions and the activities of those observed to the extent that might be possible or practical."[42] On this view, then, the closer sociologists get to the individual, the closer they get to a valid research methodology and to a humanist perspective.

This discussion of the need for personal involvement, for studying social behavior in its natural setting, really does nothing to improve sociological research, much less constitute the only true humanist perspective. Advocating increased personal involvement of sociologists in those aspects of social life they are investigating, in itself, offers no guarantee that such research will be any more valid or ultimately more significant than conventional modes of research. This is not to take anything away from their often insightful criticisms of conventional research techniques such as the questionnaire and the interview, but the question they fail to confront adequately is whether or not the deficiencies in these conventional techniques can be overcome by adopting their alternative approach.

I maintain that just as the affect of a sociologist on a group of people to which he is administering a questionnaire or conducting interviews is largely unknown, so too, the affect of the participant observer (the major form of personal involvement of sociologists) on the groups he is

studying is largely unknown. That there is a great deal of uncertainty concerning the question of the appropriate degree of participation and detachment necessary to a successful participant observation study is evident from reading these studies themselves.[43]

Although we may believe, along with these critical sociologists, that such an approach will yield more insight into the nature of social life, particularly into the actual behavior of individuals and groups, there still exists no guarantee that this will be the case.

Even more difficult to sustain, I believe, is the claim that through personal involvement in the everyday lives of people sociologists can acquire knowledge of the motives which prompt people to behave in certain ways.[44] The desire to see social reality from the point of view of those being studied is not a realizable goal, unless, that is, we are to believe that sociologists can somehow enter the minds of these people. And even if sociologists claimed to have acquired such knowledge, there is no way that one could be sure they had in fact uncovered the mental processes that lie behind social behavior.

Finally, this emphasis on personal involvement clearly implies an individualistic view of the nature of society -- that, as Robert Lynd commented, individuals are seen as "the central powerhouse of culture". In the context of our modern, corporate social order such a view of society must be seen as narrow and, ultimately, mistaken. Such an individual-

istic view of society precludes the kind of "Big-Range Soci-
ology" that C. Wright Mills had in mind in writing The Soci-
ological Imagination. For Elijah Jordan, as well as for Mills,
the study of the major institutions of modern society is the
starting-point for a significant sociology.

The above-mentioned shortcomings of this alternative
to the predominant modes of sociological research are indica-
tive of the shallowness of the sociological critique of Ameri-
can sociology as a whole. Although these critics were willing
to address the important question of what constitutes a valid
approach to the study of society, in the context of which they
did offer some insightful criticisms of some of the convention-
al techniques in contemporary sociology, they presented an
alternative which is clearly as flawed as the approaches it
was designed to replace. This alternative, in fact, repre-
sents no fundamental departure from mainstream sociology; in-
deed, it can be derived almost entirely from the work of Max
Weber who, interestingly enough, is revered alike by both
critical and mainstream sociologists. This "new" approach,
moreover, does not challenge the underlying philosophical
tradition on which sociological research has always been
based, namely, the empiricist tradition. Finally, the indivi-
dualistic, subjective view of society which this alternative
approach presupposes is extremely narrow; it leaves out of
account the tremendous institutional, objective growth of
modern society which, I will argue later, is the most crucial
fact of modern society.

(4) The Essential Weakness of the
Argument for Increased Autonomy

If the Project Camelot controversy revealed anything
to critical sociologists it was the need to guarantee that
sociologists conduct their research in an atmosphere of com-
plete autonomy. In the eyes of most of these critics, the
basic defect of contemporary sociological research was that
it was increasingly becoming an instrument of the private
and public interests which supported it. Being a mere in-
strument of external interests, it thus violated the cardi-
nal principle of all scientific endeavor: that scientific re-
search must be an unfettered search for the truth. So, more
than anything else, these critics argued that sociologists
need to be freed and need to free themselves from the corrupt-
ing effects of having any external interest dictate the nature
and aim of sociological research. As Irving Louis Horowitz,
perhaps the leading advocate of increased autonomy among
these critics, simply put it: "Social science needs autonomy,
freedom of inquiry being its most vital outcome. Any incur-
sion upon autonomy in the name of Big Sociology, or Impor-
tant Sociology, or even to serve governmental operations,
would constitute a direct assault on the very basis of social
science itself."[45]

The stress placed upon autonomy in sociological re-
search is not only designed to address the problem of that
research being used to enhance the position of powerful groups
in our society, but also, it is designed to insure that this

research complies with the canons of all truly scientific work. In other words, basic to this whole line of argument is an abiding faith in the validity of a scientific methodology. Contrary to the criticism directed at some of the predominant modes of sociological research which are discussed above, the advocacy of complete autonomy for sociological research guarantees a place to all modes of research, however flawed they may be.

What is at issue, then, is not the validity of these various methodological approaches but the extent to which the domain of sociological research as a whole is organized along democratic, pluralistic lines. In commenting on the proposal to establish a National Social Science Foundation which would serve as the principal source of government funding for research in the social sciences, Irving Louis Horowitz stresses the imporatnce of operating this foundation in a strictly democratic fashion: "It is...extremely important that the pluralistic basis of social science research facilities be strictly maintained. Care should be taken to prevent the multiple forms of social science research from being smothered or obscured by the development of a monolithic agency committed to a single, limited orientation."[46] To make room for all kinds of research techniques may open the way for some more significant approaches to the study of society, but it will also insure the continued use of conventional research techniques, the adequacy of which has been seriously questioned by both early and contemporary critical

sociologists.

The advocates of increased autonomy for sociological researchers further maintain that along with increased autonomy will go the adoption of a more critical stance on the major social issues of the day. No longer having to bow to the wishes of any particular public or private interest group, sociological researchers would be free to design more controversial research projects. Although there can be no doubt that increased autonomy would give sociologists the freedom necessary to investigate more controversial topics, this is by no means an inevitable consequence of increased autonomy.

Quite the contrary, I believe a good case can be made that increased autonomy would have just the opposite effect, for there does not appear to be any aspect of current empirical research which incorporates anything of a critical perspective. Being basically descriptive in nature, empirical research can, at most, help us explain existing social behavior,[47] but to suggest that this can serve as a basis for a critical approach to society is to stretch empirical research beyond the limits of its applicability.[48] What is more, by accepting all modes of sociological research as legitimate, these critical sociologists sidestep the more important question of the validity of these various modes of research and whether, in fact, they should have a place at all in the study of society.

Significantly, two sociologists, in commenting on the code of ethics that was being drafted by the American Sociolo-

gical Association in direct response to the Project Camelot incident, do not agree that increased autonomy will have such a salutory effect on the sociological profession. To the contrary, they believe the principal function of this code, which emphasizes maintenance of a "value-free" image of sociology and protection of the members of the sociological profession from any external threats to their professional autonomy, would be to serve as a symbolic gesture to the public in order to allay any fears that sociology is not a legitimate scientific discipline. So, instead of opening up the prospect of a more critical, controversial sociology, "...the Code appears to be based on the role of the sociologist as 'bureaucratic social scientist'."[49] That is to say, the adoption of this code of ethics would only serve to protect the _image_ of sociology as a scientific endeavor and obscure the fact that the work of sociologists is largely governed by outside interests.[50]

That these sociological critics would be staunch advocates of increased autonomy for sociological researchers is understandable in the context of their overall approach to this question of the relationship between sociological research and social policy. Throughout, the focus of their criticism has not been on the inadequacies in the predominant methodological approaches in sociological research; rather, they have directed their criticism at individual sociologists who have chosen to sell their talents to the highest bidder, so to speak. If sociology has gone astray, according to this view,

it is not because of problems with respect to its methodolo-
gical and theoretical foundations but because sociologists
themselves have not adhered to the canons of truly scientific
work. Although greater autonomy would not necessarily
alleviate this problem, it would help insure that this re-
search is carried out with far less outside interference.
That, in itself, would undoubtedly be a positive step, but
as I have continuously pointed out, it does not guarantee
that future sociological research will be any more significant,
more valid, or, much less, critical. Only a detailed critical
analysis of the methodological foundations of contemporary
sociological research will tell us how significant, how valid,
and how critical this research is and can be. Ultimately,
such critical analysis would take us into the more funda-
mental question of the adequacy of empiricism as a theory
of knowledge.

(5) The Inflation of the Power
of Sociological Research

Even more wrong-headed, I believe, is the argument
that mainstream sociologists, through their research, provide
important information to the centers of power in our society
who then use this information to enhance their control over
our society. This argument rests on the unsubstantiated
assumption that current sociological research provides ac-
curate, useful information about social behavior in general
and, in particular, about the poor and oppressed classes of
our society.

If anything, however, I believe sociological research has been largely irrelevant. It has been irrelevant because its focus has been on peripheral aspects of society. This is the essence of Mills' charge that "abstracted empiricism" reduces society to a matter of beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and the like, leaving out of account the larger social structure.

Moreover, the questions so frequently posed by critical sociologists, such as, "whose side are we on?" or "sociology for whom?" must also be seen as largely irrelevant, for unless sociologists first straighten out some fundamental problems with respect to the way they go about obtaining their knowledge of society, it will not matter whose side they are on.[51] The argument that sociologists have wittingly or unwittingly served as tools of the power elite I also find very weak for similar reasons.

These critical sociologists imply that if sociologists of the "stature and courage" of an Alfred McClung Lee or an Alvin Gouldner were to have their way that sociology would come to stand for something significant rather than kow-tow to the powers that be. This theme emerges with even more force in these critics' treatment of the value question, which we will take up in the next chapter. In the following chapters I intend to present further evidence to support my contention that the fundamental problem with contemporary American sociology is not that it is controlled by corrupt sociologists, but that it is the very discipline of sociology that requires alteration. Ultimately, sociologists'

contribution to social policy stands or falls on their
ability to render an accurate picture of the nature of our
modern corporate social order.

NOTES

[1]This is not to say that private sources of research funding have not also been important for the development of American sociology. However, in the case of government-sponsored research there is more of a direct link with social policy, and it is this link between sociological research and social policy that is of primary concern to critical sociologists.

[2]Benjamin Chinitz, "The Management of Federal Expenditure of Research on Social Problems" in The Use and Abuse of Social Science, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, p.71.

[3]For a more detailed account of the history of Project Camelot see: Irving Louis Horowitz (ed.), The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot, pp.1-67.

[4]Herbert Blumer, "Threats From Agency-Determined Research: The Case of Camelot" in The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, pp.156-157.

[5]Irving Louis Horowitz, "The Pentagon Papers and Social Science" in The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, p.378.

[6]Marshall Sahlins, "The Established Order: Do Not Fold, Spindle, or Mutilate" in The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, p.77. See also: Irving Louis Horowitz, Professing Sociology, p.299.

[7]Robert Nisbet, "Project Camelot and the Science of Man" in The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, p.318.

[8]For example, articles by Robert Boguslaw and Jessie Bernard in The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, pp.107-127 and 128-152.

[9]In The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, Alvin Gouldner's analysis of the origins of the conservative bias in the work of Talcott Parsons is indicative of such criticism. Gouldner argues that Parsons' functionalism owes much to the fact that Parsons had a secure position at Harvard during the Great Depression in the relatively insulated environment of Cambridge, Massachusetts, away from the poverty and social strife that was characteristic of this time.

[10]C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, p.101.

[11]Daniel Cohn-Bendit, et. al., "Why Sociologists?" in Radical Sociology, edited by J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach, p.61. As the authors clearly note: "He closed the epoch of social philosophy and speculative systems concerning the society as

a whole, and opened the glorious era of empiricism and of scientific data collection. At the same time, in selling his services to the management of an enterprise, Mayo initiated the age of large-scale collaboration with all of the powers of the bourgeois world -- which was then hard put to rationalize a capitalist system strongly shaken by the crisis of 1929."

[12]Martin Nicolaus, "The Professional Organization of Sociology: A View From Below" in Radical Sociology, edited by J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach, p.45.

[13]And this is by no means the most extreme of Nicolaus' charges. His "Text of a Speech Delivered at the A.S.A. Convention, August 26, 1968" (in The Sociology of Sociology, edited by Larry T. and Janice M. Reynolds, pp.274-278) gives an even harsher assessment of the function of professional sociology. For example: "Sociologists stand guard in the garrison and report to its masters on the movements of the occupied populace. The more adventurous sociologists don the disguise of the people and go out and mix with the peasants in the "field" returning with books and articles that break the protective secrecy in which a subjugated population wraps itself, and make it more accessible to manipulation and control." p.276.

[14]T.R. Young, "Transforming Sociology: The Graduate Student", The American Sociologist, 9(Aug. 74), p.135.

[15]John Horton, "The Fetishism of Sociology" in Radical Sociology, edited by J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach, p.171.

[16]Dusky Lee Smith, "Sociology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism" in The Sociology of Sociology, edited by Larry T. and Janice M. Reynolds, p.80.

[17]Alvin Gouldner, "Romanticism and Classicism: Deep Structures in Social Science" in For Sociology, written and edited by Alvin Gouldner, p.335.

[18]Alex Thio, "Class Bias in the Sociology of Deviance", The American Sociologist, 8(Feb. 73), p.9.

[19]Dusky Lee Smith, "The Sunshine Boys: Toward a Sociology of Happiness" in The Sociology of Sociology, edited by Larry T. and Janice M. Reynolds, pp.371-387.

[20]J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach, "Introduction: The Roots of Radical Sociology" in Radical Sociology, edited by J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach, p.6.

[21]As Alvin Gouldner comments in this regard: "It has become the essential role of the sociologist-as-liberal-technologue to foster the optimistic image of American society as a

system whose major problems are deemed altogether solvable within the existing master institutions if only enough technical skills and financial resources are appropriated." The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, p.501.

[22]This argument is perhaps brought out most clearly by sociologists such as Alex Thio who question the traditional approaches to deviance (and criminology). They suggest that the customs and laws of a society may themselves be considered deviant rather than the people who violate them -- the larger implication being that it is society which is wrong and not those individuals who deviate from society. See: Alex Thio, "Class Bias in the Sociology of Deviance", The American Sociologist, 8(Feb. 73), pp.1-11. In criminology this point of view is forcefully expressed by Richard Quinney, Critique of the Legal Order, 1974.

[23]Martin Nicolaus, "Text of a Speech Delivered at the A.S.A. Convention, August 26, 1968" in The Sociology of Sociology, edited by Larry T. and Janice M. Reynolds, p.276. Also see: Charles H. Anderson and Jeffrey Royle Gibson, Toward a New Sociology, p.16.

[24]David Horowitz, "Preface" in Radical Sociology: An Introduction, edited by David Horowitz, p.5.

[25]J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach, "Introduction: The Roots of Radical Sociology" in Radical Sociology, edited by J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach, p.9. It is significant also that a major figure in the sociological critique of American sociology, Alfred McClung Lee, would write a book entitled Sociology For Whom?

[26]This, however, is to underestimate the power of sociology in the eyes of Alvin Gouldner, for "...one implicit task of sociology in the modern world is not simply to study society but to conceptualize and order it: that is, to conceptually constitute social objects and to map their relationships with one another...."
     "In short, much of sociology -- from the elementary textbook to the work of Talcott Parsons -- is engaged in constituting social worlds, rather than simply in researching them." The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, p.84.

[27]Robert W. Friedrichs, A Sociology of Sociology, p.188.

[28]John R. Seeley, "Social Science: Some Probative Problems" in Sociology on Trial, edited by Maurice Stein and Arthur Vidich, p.57.

[29]In general, I believe the truth is more adequately served with regard to this whole line of argument when Dennis Wrong comments, "Neither I, nor any sociologist, nor all sociologists together, have that much influence or power, though we have

some." "On Thinking About the Future", <u>The American Sociologist</u>, 9(Feb. 74), pp.29-30.

[30]Talcott Parsons, "The Editor's Column", <u>The American Sociologist</u>, 2(May 67), p.63.

[31]Leonard Reissman, "The Solution Cycle of Social Problems", <u>The American Sociologist</u>, 7(feb. 72), p.7. Even more sanguine is the following assessment of the potential of sociology by Jack Douglas: "<u>The complexity of social problems in a technological and urbanized world makes the effective application of sociological knowledge to our social problems the crucial determinant of our society's future.</u>" Preface in <u>The Relevance of Sociology</u>, edited by Jack Douglas, p.vii.

[32]Melvin Tumin, "Some Social Consequences of Research on Race Relations", <u>The American Sociologist</u>, 3(May 68), p.117.

[33]As Peter Park points out: "...it is indeed doubtful that sociologists have begun to solve the problems that have received their intense attention: crime, racial strife, juvenile delinquency, mental disorder, alcoholism, drug addiction, rebellions at home and abroad, alienation, and anomie." "The Cretan Dictum: A Functional Analysis of Sociology", <u>The American Sociologist</u>, 2(Aug. 67), p.155.

[34]Gouldner's terminology is to be found in his article, "The Sociologist as Partisan: Sociology and the Welfare State" in <u>The Sociology of Sociology</u>, edited by Larry T. and Janice M. Reynolds, p.240. In that article he critically analyzes Howard Becker's essay entitled, logically enough, "Whose Side Are We On?", which appears next to Gouldner's article in the same anthology (pp.204-217).

[35]The collection of essays entitled <u>A Critique of Empiricism in Sociology</u>, edited by Kewal Motwani, does deal with the question of the adequacy of an empirical methodology. Significantly, however, these essays were, for the most part, written prior to the development of this critical movement by such prominent sociologists as Robert MacIver and Pitirim Sorokin.

[36]Jack Douglas goes as far as to make the following charge with respect to the effect of scientific social research: "In one sense, of course, scientific analysis of our everyday,concrete experience is detrimental to that experience: it destroys that experience or transforms it into something different." "The Relevance of Sociology" in <u>The Relevance of Sociology</u>, edited by Jack Douglas, p.187.

[37]<u>Ibid</u>., p.198.

[38]This, of course, is not all that different from radical sociologists arguing for the necessity of all sociologists getting involved in various social movements aimed at over-

throwing the established social order.

[39]Richard M. Hessler and Peter Kong-ming New, "Research as a Process of Exchange", The American Sociologist, 7(Feb. 72), pp.13-14.

[40]Henry Etzkowitz, "Institution Formation Sociology", The American Sociologist, 5(May 70), p.120.

[41]Ibid., p.120. Etzkowitz, however, overlooks entirely the problem of how these mechanical devices will be able to capture this "natural" interaction without either being used covertly or having some effect on this interaction.

[42]Alfred McClung Lee, Sociology For Whom?, p.63.

[43]More often than not, the question of the appropriate degree of participation and detachment is left to the judgement of the individual researcher. And even when there is some attempt to spell out some standard or model in this regard it is often just as vague as Hortense Powdermaker's description of how she gained insight into the religious life of Southern Blacks by participating in their church services. She says, "It was one way of having an important part of Negro life seep into "my bones",..." (my emphasis), Stranger and Friend: The Way of an Anthropologist, pp.172-173.

[44]Indeed, as we will see, Jordan calls into question the significance of such knowledge. Ultimately, he argues that knowledge of the motives of individuals is not important to a sound understanding of social life.

[45]Irving Louis Horowitz, "Social Indicators and Social Policy" in Professing Sociology, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, p.338.

[46]Irving Louis Horowitz, "International Social Science Research: The Case for a National Social Science Foundation" in Professing Sociology, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, p.252.

[47]And, indeed, as some sociological critics have pointed out, empirical research does a rather poor job even in its purely descriptive function -- a point for which we have already seen ample evidence in the work of such earlier critics as Sorokin and Mills.

[48]In One-Dimensional Man (p.114), Herbert Marcuse argues that, rather than being critical, sociology's empirical methodology is inherently conservative in the sense that it cannot transcend the established social order and see that order as but a passing stage in world history.

[49]Dean S. Dorn and Gary L. Long, "Brief Remarks on the Associations' Code of Ethics", The American Sociologist, 9(Feb. 74), p.34.

[50]In this context, one sociologist has suggested that the salvation of sociology lies in its becoming more professional in the sense of directing its attention more toward clients and less toward colleagues. Although behind this proposal is the well-intentioned desire to make sociology more accessible to non-sociologists, there is nothing in it to guarantee that the beneficiaries will be the people rather than certain powerful interests in our society, as some critics have charged. Nelson Foote, "Putting Sociologists to Work", The American Sociologist, 9(Aug. 74), p.134.

[51]This is why I would tend to agree with Melvin Tumin who, in his article, "In Dispraise of Loyalty" in The Relevance of Sociology, edited by Jack Douglas, criticizes all attempts to make sociology into a partisan tool of any group however powerful or powerless that group may be. The only loyalty of sociologists should be to the pursuit of truth. Yet, I would argue, this is precisely what contemporary sociological research seems incapable of doing, for it is by and large restricted to a very limited portion of reality , namely, summary descriptions of people's attitudes and opinions about their own and others' behavior in society.

CHAPTER III

"LET'S BE HONEST": THE VALUE QUESTION
IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGY

(1) Max Weber's "Science as a Vocation" as
    the Key to the Debate Concerning the
    Value Question in Contemporary Sociology

At the center of critical sociologists' analysis of
contemporary American sociology is the claim that sociology
is a science. In the previous chapter, critical sociologists
discussed the need for greater autonomy in sociological
research -- autonomy, or that freedom to pursue the truth
wherever it may lead, being an essential condition for scien-
tific work. A related and even more widely discussed facet
of sociology's claim to scientific status is the principle of
value neutrality. A scientific study of society is said to
be distinguished from other approaches, such as a philosophic-
al one, in that its methodology is based on empirical obser-
vation which does not and cannot include any element of eval-
uation.

The job of the scientist is to describe, explain,
classify phenomena dispassionately; to allow any preconceptions
or prejudices to influence any aspect of one's work is to
diverge from this scientific ideal. Indeed, the eradication
of all preconceptions and prejudices was seen by Emile
Durkheim, a major figure in the early development of soci-
ology, as basic to this new discipline, which he argued was
distinctive precisely because it was a _scientific_ study of

society.[1]

Another major figure in the early development of sociology, Max Weber, was no less insistent that, as scientists, sociologists must be value neutral. As he noted in his famous essay "Science as a Vocation", the historical and cultural sciences may help us "...to understand and interpret political, artistic, literary, and social phenomena in terms of their origin [i.e., explain them] ...But they give us no answer to the question, whether the existence of these cultural phenomena have been and are worth while."[2] Nor, in Weber's view, should social scientists take it upon themselves to attempt to provide the answer to that question during the course of their work.

If Durkheim and Weber can be cited favorably by defenders of value-neutral, scientific sociology, these two important figures in the history of sociology can also be, and have been on numerous occasions, cited favorably by critics of value-neutral sociology. In contrast to sociologists today who blindly follow the injunction against making value judgments, D.J. Gray, in his hard-hitting article, "Value-Free Sociology: A Doctrine of Hypocrisy and Irresponsibility", notes that although Durkheim and Weber conducted their research as objectively as possible, neither of them refrained "...from offering their most reasoned judgments."[3] Among the two, Weber is clearly the more central figure in this debate for both mainstream and critical sociologists. Indeed, one can trace the arguments of both sides in this debate back to that

single essay of Weber's, "Science as a Vocation".

In "Science as a Vocation" Weber stipulates what he believes are the basic preconditions that must be met for any study to qualify as scientific. Among these preconditions is the principle that the realm of fact and the realm of value constitute two entirely separate and distinct realms. The scientist's proper work is in the realm of fact -- investigating the causes of natural or social phenomena, developing classificatory schemes to organize this knowledge, and the like. This work, to be scientific, must be carried on without any admixture of values such as racial prejudices, political biases, or religious beliefs.

Although the work of scientists may be used by politicians to achieve certain ends, it is not the job of the scientist to say what those ends should be. This pertains with special force to the scientist who is also a teacher. The classroom is not the place for a teacher to express his political views, however well-reasoned they may be.[4] In Weber's words:

> One can only demand of the teacher that he
> have the intellectual integrity to see that
> it is one thing to state facts, to determine
> mathematical or logical relations or the
> internal structure of cultural values, while
> it is another thing to answer questions of
> the value of culture and its individual
> contents and the question of how one should
> act in the cultural community and in poli-
> tical associations. These are quite hetero-
> geneous problems. If he asks further why
> he should not deal with both types of
> problems in the lecture-room, the answer is:
> because the prophet and the demagogue do not
> belong on the academic platform.[5]

Value judgments have no place in either scientific work or
in classroom lectures precisely because value judgments, in
the eyes of Weber and those who adhere to his position, are
essentially nothing more than a reflection of personal op-
inion. The validity of personal opinion, being entirely rela-
tive, is thus not scientifically demonstrable. "Scientific
pleading is meaningless in principle because the various value
spheres of the world stand in irreconcilable conflict with
each other."[6]

Defenders of the ideal of a value-neutral sociology
have appealed to the above interpretation of Weber's stance
on this issue. Talcott Parsons, in one of his many commen-
taries on the sociological profession which appeared in The
American Sociologist during his editorship (1965-1967), cites
Weber in the following context:

> The basic valuational position of the soci-
> ological profession is that classically
> formulated by Max Weber as 'value-neutrality',
> which is not to be interpreted as neutrality
> toward all values, but lending clear primacy
> to the values of the intellectual enterprise
> as such and refusal to let it be dominated
> by other values, notably those, on the one
> hand, of immediate practical interests, on
> the other hand, those of a particular 'world
> view' at religious or political levels.[7]

Philip Hauser, a former President of the American
Sociological Association, adopts a similar argument in criti-
cizing members of the "Sociology Liberation Movement" who,
during the late 1960's and early 1970's insisted that the
A.S.A. take a stand against the Vietnam War. In criticizing
this "actionist" orientation, Hauser set down six premises

which, taken together, constitute what he calls the "Weberian model".[8] These premises clearly emphasize that sociology, as a scientific endeavor, should have nothing to do with value judgments. Value judgments, being expressions of personal beliefs and convictions, are perfectly appropriate insofar as one is a religious person, a citizen, a politician, and indeed, just a human being, but in scientific endeavors of any kind they have no place. For the sociological profession to take a stand on the Vietnam War would only serve to undermine its hard-won scientific status.

There is, however, another side to Weber's argument, brought out most influentially in Alvin Gouldner's essay "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology", which is the basic reference-point for critical sociologists' attack on value-neutral sociology. Gouldner argues that what most contemporary sociologists refer to as the "Weberian model", in fact, represents a one-sided interpretation of Weber's stand on this issue. Contemporary sociologists tend to gloss over those aspects of Weber's argument in which he does acknowledge the importance of taking a definite value position in the sociologist's capacity as citizen or member of a political party, although maintaining that his professional work must be considered separately from this. Thus, the same Weber who denounces the practice of making political speeches in the classroom, asserts: "When speaking in a political meeting about democracy, one does not hide one's personal standpoint; indeed, to come out clearly and take a stand is one's damned

duty."[9] As Gouldner goes on to argue in this regard, then, to adopt Weber's argument for value neutrality by no means entails the disavowal of any and all value judgments, for sociologists are also citizens, also human beings, and as citizens and as human beings they will form opinions and adopt certain value orientations. So, as Gouldner asserts, it is a mistake to interpret Weber's doctrine of value neutrality as simple indifference to all values, as many contemporary sociologists appear to have done.[10]

Where Gouldner and other critics of the doctrine of value neutrality disagree with Weber is in his belief that social scientists can successfully isolate their scientific work from the other activities of life which inevitably involve values. For Gouldner, it is not possible for a sociologist to cut himself off from his connections with family, country, and indeed, his very humanity. That is to say, everyone carries with himself a certain value orientation which, in the sociologist's case, will inevitably have some effect on his work as a sociologist, whether this effect manifests itself in the selection of research topics, the way the research is carried out, or the statement of the results.

A value-free sociology is thus seen as a myth, a myth which only serves to hide the fact that all aspects of the work of sociologists are tinged with implicit and explicit value commitments.

Given the broad definition of values (i.e., any personal opinion, belief, conviction, etc.) which underlies

the critics' view here, one would be hard-pressed to dispute
their claim that values enter into all of our life activities.
If this be the case, then there appears to be only one viable
alternative to continuing the charade that the work of soci-
ologists is value-free. This alternative, stated by Gouldner
in specific reference to Weber's argument, clearly sets forth
the predominant position among critical sociologists general-
ly:

> If sociologists ought not to express their
> personal values in the academic setting,
> how then are students to be safeguarded
> against the unwitting influence of these
> values which shape the sociologist's selection
> of problems, his preferences for certain
> hypotheses or conceptual schemes and his
> neglect of others. For these are unavoidable
> and, in this sense, there is and can be no
> value-free sociology. The only choice is
> between an expression of one's values, as
> open and honest as it can be,...and a vain
> ritual of moral neutrality.11

By declaring his values openly, the sociologist can retain
some degree of objectivity, whereas, those sociologists who
hold on to the myth that their work is value-neutral must
surrender any claim to objectivity.

Overriding this apparent disagreement between Gouldner
and Weber is, I believe, a basic agreement on the value of
objective, scientific research in sociology. Both the de-
fenders of the doctrine of value-neutrality, such as Weber
and Parsons, and those who espouse what I will call the "let's
be honest" position, formulated by Gouldner and other contem-
porary critical sociologists, concur in the belief in the
efficacy of an objective, scientific approach to the study of

social phenomena. However, whereas mainstream sociologists merely enjoin their fellow sociologists to be dispassionate in their research and teaching, critical sociologists see such an injunction as futile, maintaining that the only alternative is for sociologists to declare openly their values and by doing so significantly neutralize the potential biasing effects of these values on their research and in their teaching.

This concurrence of views goes beyond the overriding belief in the efficacy of an objective, scientific approach to the study of society. Underlying both sides of this debate is the notion that values are synonymous with personal, subjective beliefs, opinions, convictions, etc.. As such, values are relative -- they are the exclusive property of each individual and their applicability cannot extend beyond the individual. Put otherwise, critical and mainstream sociologists alike subscribe to the notion that the realm of fact and the realm of value are entirely separate and distinct. The validity of any value judgment, thus, cannot be demonstrated scientifically. The most sociologists can do, as critical sociologists argue so forcefully, is to acknowledge those values that influence their research and teaching with the hope that that part of their work which represents factual contributions to our understanding of modern society can be salvaged from that part which merely reflects the personal views of any particular sociologist.[12]

The above discussion of Weber's "Science as a Vocation"

and the interpretation of that work by mainstream and critical sociologists provides the essential frame of reference for the entire debate concerning the value question in contemporary sociology. Most significantly, there appears to be an underlying area of agreement on some crucial points in this debate. For the most part, those who criticize value-neutral sociology do not call into question the validity of an objective, scientific approach to the study of society. Moreover, value judgments are viewed as representing no more than the expression of personal biases; hence, value judgments are relative -- their validity cannot be demonstrated scientifically.

I believe the existence of such a wide area of agreement among critical and mainstream sociologists on this fundamental issue is indicative of the shallowness of this critical movement as a whole. As I hope to point out further in the rest of this chapter, the criticism of value-neutral sociology goes no further than the injunction to "be honest" and declare one's values. There is no questioning of sociology's status as a scientific discipline, nor is there any significant attempt to discuss the basic philosophical issues that are obviously involved here -- most directly, the concept of value and the validity of a relativistic theory of value. On both these points I hope to shed some light by presenting an alternative, objective conception of value that could point the way toward a more significant sociology, which is, after all, the basic goal of the sociological critique of American sociology.

(2) Origin and Nature of the Criticism
of the Doctrine of Value Neutrality

The place of values in sociology has been a question
that has given rise to considerable debate and discussion
throughout the history of sociology. One can find a clear
statement of the doctrine of value neutrality in one of the
early essays of Auguste Comte,[13] not to mention the later
discussions of this issue contained in the work of Durkheim
and Weber which have already been touched upon. In early
American sociology this doctrine of value neutrality was
largely dropped in favor of an emphasis on social reform as
an important practical aim of sociology. Although one con-
temporary critic has argued that "the founding fathers of
American sociology were ideological protagnoists for corpor-
ate capitalism",[14] one cannot deny their clear commitment to
social reform. But American sociologists' desire to gain
respect and recognition as a scientific discipline and pro-
fession required that they drop this social reform emphasis
and develop more along value-neutral lines.[15]

In spite of the steady drift toward a strictly scien-
tific, value-neutral approach to the study of social phenome-
na, some prominent American sociologists have challenged this
trend. They argued forcefully for the adoption of certain
value orientations in the work of sociologists. Among these
are included the two most influential forerunners of the
sociological critique of American sociology, Robert S. Lynd
and C. Wright Mills, whose work we have already discussed.
However, as important as their discussion of this issue is,

it cannot begin to compare in volume and intensity with the
criticism of the doctrine of value neutrality produced in
the 1960's and 1970's by critical sociologists.

What sparked this outpouring of criticism at this
time is not easy to delineate in specific terms, but I believe
it is possible to link the resurgence of this issue with two
general conditions.

First, one could reasonably argue that during the
1950's a strictly scientific, value-neutral approach to the
study of society reached its fullest development. Pitirim
Sorokin's Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology (1956) amply
documents (albeit in a critical vein) social scientists' emu-
lation of the work of scientists in other fields. Given this
increasing scientific emphasis in sociology, I believe it was
to be expected that a reaction would set in against this
trend -- a reaction which was helped along considerably both
by Mills' and Sorokin's criticism of this trend and by the
tradition of social reform which had been a strong element in
the early development of sociology in America.

Second, and more importantly I believe, the doctrine
of value neutrality became a central target for critical soci-
ologists because the events and mood of the country at this
time demanded it. The civil rights and anti-war movements,
in particular, called into question some basic social policies
of our country, policies which sociologists, among other
academics, had become associated with. Since the scientific,
value-neutral approach precluded any kind of critical analysis

of these social policies, several sociologists perceived the
need to break with such an approach. The time had come for
sociologists to take a stand on these pressing social issues
and this required a reassessment of the doctrine of value
neutrality.

Among the first and most important discoveries made
by sociologists who began reassessing the doctrine of value
neutrality was that it was, in fact, a myth. So-called "value-
neutral" sociological research and theory were discovered to
contain numerous implicit value presuppositions. All facets
of the work of sociologists, from the initial choice of topics
to be investigated to the theories which these investigations
provided evidence for, were found to have been influenced by
the value orientations of the sociologists involved.[16] Hence,
as Howard Becker clearly notes in the following passage, it
is no longer a question of having values or not having values:

> This dilemma, which seems so painful to so
> many, actually does not exist, for one of
> its horns is imaginary. For it to exist,
> one would have to assume, as some apparently
> do, that it is indeed possible to do research
> that is uncontaminated by personal and
> political sympathies. I propose to argue
> that it is not possible and, therefore, that
> the question is not whether we should take
> sides, since we inevitably will, but rather
> whose side are we on. 17

For example, choosing to focus one's research on members of
an oppressed minority group rather than investigate the insti-
tutional policies which may have helped create and perpetuate
the oppression of this minority group reflects a value
preference on the part of the researcher: that the plight

of this minority group is better understood by focusing on members of it rather than on the larger circumstances within which it exists.

So, those who claim that their work is value-free do not, in fact, escape "taking sides", as Becker puts it. This point is further emphasized in D.J. Gray's provocative article, "Value-Free Sociology: A Doctrine of Hypocrisy and Irresponsibility". At one point Gray comments that:

> ...while sociologists may congratulate
> themselves on their newly attained
> "scientific" status, the fact is that
> as opposed to being truly value-free,
> rather, they have become but professional
> handmaidens of the going value system.
> In effect, by refusing to make value
> judgments themselves, they have tacitly
> accepted the values of others. No longer
> truly intellectuals, they have assumed
> a new role as employees, consultants, or
> technicians serving the present establish-
> ment which, on the matter of values, is by
> no means shy.[18]

In the view of critical sociologists, then, value-neutral sociology is not only a myth, but it also serves to conceal mainstream sociologists' basic commitment to maintaining the status quo.

The implicit conservatism of value-neutral sociology is no more clearly evident than in Talcott Parsons' structural-functionalism, certainly the dominant theoretical perspective in American sociology during the 1950's and the early 1960's. The conservatism of Parsons' framework is a principal theme in one of the most important and most influential books to come out of this critical movement, Alvin Gouldner's The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology. A good portion of the

book is devoted to a discussion of Parsons' personal background as it relates to the development of his structural-functionalist framework. Gouldner takes note of Parsons' relatively tranquil life in Cambridge, Massachusetts, isolated from the real horrors of the Great Depression, in addition to the fact that he had a secure position at Harvard during these turbulent times, as two aspects of his personal background which, in part, explain both his implicit and explicit defense of American capitalism. Although the existence of this link between Parsons' personal background and his contributions to sociological theory is really never proven by Gouldner, there can be no doubt about the inherent conservatism of the functionalist perspective itself.

The nature of this conservatism is well-captured by Gouldner in attempting to account for the emphasis in functionalism on the adoption of a common morality rather than any kind of fundamental socioeconomic change as the key to future social stability. What this amounts to, according to Gouldner, is a commitment "...to the present society, with all its dilemmas, contradictions, tensions, and, indeed, with all its immorality....It [functionalism] is committed to making things work despite wars, inequities, scarcity, and degrading work, rather than trying to find a way out."[19] That which is already established being associated with that which is functional, anything which challenges the existing social order, thus comes to be looked upon as deviant.[20] In essence: "Functionalists,...constitute the sociological

conservation corps of industrial society."[21] -- and this is true in spite of all the claims to value neutrality.

Value neutrality is not only considered the hallmark of scientific sociology but it is also considered essential to professional sociology, as reflected in the American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics. As a basic component of this code, this doctrine of value neutrality again reveals its conservative implications. Some sociologists charged that the A.S.A.'s move to adopt a code of ethics almost immediately following the Project Camelot scandal was a calculated move designed to allay the public's fear that sociologists were in fact social advocates rather than value-neutral, scientific researchers they professed themselves to be. What this amounted to is explained by Gouldner in the following terms: "What seems more likely is that it [the adoption of a value-free position] entails something in the way of a tacit bargain: in return for a measure of autonomy and social support, many social scientists have surrendered their critical impulses."[22]

In surrendering their critical impulses, value-neutral sociologists have clearly allied themselves with the established social order, for "...the man who attempts to stay 'above or beside' the battle by not taking sides on social issues, actually, by the consequence of such 'non-choice' becomes an ally of the existing power structure -- and has, thus, taken sides after all."[23]

In attempting to locate the source of this inherent conservatism, few critical sociologists have focused on the

nature of empirical sociology itself; rather, they have, for the most part, sought an explanation for this inherent conservatism in the personal backgrounds of individual sociologists. In one form or another, the argument has been that mainstream sociologists and their professional association have been primarily concerned with their own survival. Thus, Gouldner suggests that the conservatism built into Parsons' theoretical framework derives from his desire to see a capitalist social order preserved, which had provided him with a secure existence even during the Depression. In a similar vein, the motive behind the American Sociological Association's adoption of a code of ethics is argued to be mainstream sociologists' concern with guaranteeing continued public support for their research efforts. Significantly, no attempt is made to prove these charges; they are usually presented as possible explanations and left at that.

Although C. Wright Mills had argued that this conservative orientation in mainstream sociology is rooted in the very nature of empirical sociology (in its bureaucratic ethos), this line of argument was largely dropped by later critical sociologists. The reason it was dropped, I believe, derives from a general reluctance of these critical sociologists to discuss philosophical questions of any kind. Clearly, an examination of the nature of empirical sociology and its inherent value implications would encompass a discussion of some basic epistemological and ethical issues. This reluctance, which will be noted time and again in the chapters to follow,

constitutes what I contend is one of the basic shortcomings

of this critical movement as a whole.

Members of the Frankfurt School, who have commented

extensively on the epistemological and ethical implications

of the predominant empirical-positivistic mode of thought in

contemporary social science, clearly perceived the connection

between empirical sociology and a conservative value position.

In its emphasis on collecting data on people's attitudes and

opinions, empirical sociological research can do no more than

reflect the established order (or, better, reflect the propa-

ganda about the established social order). These attitudes

and opinions are said to constitute the empirically real; any

attempt to uncover the true nature or basis of the established

social order is considered futile. As Max Horkheimer puts it,

"The so-called facts ascertained by quantitative methods, which

the positivists are inclined to regard as the only scientific

ones, are often surface phenomenon that obscure rather than

disclose the underlying reality."[24] Thus, the ideological

conservatism of sociology's empirical methodology is disclosed,

for insofar as this methodology goes no further than a de-

scriptive analysis of the status quo, it cannot come to tran-

scend that status quo and come to see it as it truly is -- as

just another phase in the historical development of a society.[25]

Put otherwise, empirical sociology can provide no base for a

critical analysis of the established social order. So, in

the view of these members of the Frankfurt School, the absence

of any kind of critical analysis in mainstream sociology (hence,

its inherent conservatism) derives primarily from its founda-
tion in empiricism and not from the personal backgrounds of
individual sociologists.

Among the few instances in which critical sociologists
do acknowledge that empirical sociology does entail a certain
value orientation is an argument put forth by Robert W.
Friedrichs. As does nearly every other critical sociologist,
Friedrichs exposes the doctrine of value neutrality as a myth,
arguing that all sociological work has value implications.
Taking a different tact, however, Friedrichs goes on to argue
that the specific nature of this value orientation is an out-
growth of mainstream sociology's empirical methodology. In
stark contrast to the argument that this value orientation is
basically conservative, Friedrichs asserts that it is in fact
revolutionary. He maintains that the very discovery of stable
sequences of behavior (i.e., "social laws") in sociological
research influences the social behavior which these "laws"
describe (for example, that Marx's discovery of the relation-
ship between labor and capital influenced the bourgeoisie in
the twentieth century to modify their control of the prole-
tariat[26]). In this vein, Friedrichs comments:

> Though the great mass of Western sociologists
> remain completely unaware of the fact, the
> person who enters upon social research is
> committing himself to the dialect of change,
> to frustrating the continuity of the rhythms
> that course through social existence, to
> freeing the future from the past. What he
> has been viewing as a neutral delineation
> of things as they are appears instead to
> involve our implicit commitment to change
> per se. 27

Friedrich's argument rests upon two highly question-

able assumptions: (1) that empirical research can indeed un-
cover basic continuities in social life, and (2) that the
results of such research have a profound effect on future
social behavior.

As Sorokin, Mills, and others have argued, a basic
problem with empirical research is its tendency to consider
only relatively trivial aspects of society; as such, it can
give us no insight into basic continuities in social life as
Friedrichs contends. Even more questionable is the assumption
that the results of such research have a significant impact
on subsequent social behavior. If anything, the work of soci-
ologists has largely been ignored by the general public,[28]
with a couple of possible exceptions being David Riesman's
work in social psychology and C. Wright Mills' discussion of
the power elite.

In short, although Friedrichs does focus on the nature
of empirical sociology and its connection with a certain value
orientation, his argument rests on a couple of assumptions
which, as was pointed out in the previous paragraph, are of
doubtful validity. Indeed, these assumptions underscore
Friedrichs' underlying commitment to empirical sociology.
In contrast, we have seen that Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse,
three prominent members of the Frankfurt School, are prepared
to reject mainstream sociology's empirical methodology be-
cause they argue that such an approach cannot uncover the
true nature of modern society.

In general, critical sociologists' treatment of the

value question in contemporary sociology betrays their un-
wavering commitment to sociology's empiricist foundations and,
in particular, to Max Weber's view of the place of values in
sociology. Along with Weber, underlying the criticism of the
doctrine of value neutrality is the implicit conviction that,
in an ideal sense, values have no legitimate place in any
phase of a sociologist's work. However, given the fact that
sociologists are human beings as well as scientists, their
work cannot help but reflect to some degree their personal
beliefs, biases, convictions, etc. (i.e., their values). That
values, and the wrong kind of values at that, have influenced
the work of sociologists is thus seen as a matter for which
sociologists themselves must take personal responsibility.
As one critical sociologist puts it: "...If a sociologist
practices rhetoric (preaching a biased truth), but identifies
himself (to self and/or others) as a scientist (the carrier
of unbiased "truth"), he renders his rhetoric immoral, the
immoral rhetoric of identity deception."[29]

From this view, then, the problem sociologists con-
front is not one that derives from the philosophical found-
ations of their discipline; rather, it is a problem which
must be dealt with personally by each sociologist. The only
way to neutralize to some extent the unavoidable effect of
values on a sociologist's work is for that sociologist to
acknowledge them openly -- hence, the basic injunction to all
sociologists: "let's be honest".

(3) The Basic Solution to the Problem
    of Values in Sociological Work:
    "Let's Be Honest"

As we have seen, critical sociologists argue that value-neutral sociology is a myth, an illusion, which more often than not conceals an implicit conservative bias. In one way or another, then, values enter into all aspects of sociological work. So, rather than falsely deny their existence, sociologists must somehow deal with the question of how these values influence sociological research and theory. In this regard, critical sociologists have overwhelmingly recommended one basic solution to this problem, a solution which leaves the fundamental tenets of empirical sociology intact. This solution, as I have already indicated, can most aptly be characterized by the injunction: "let's be honest".

Enjoining one's fellow sociologists to be honest about their values is not unique to the sociological critique of American sociology. Earlier statements of this position by Robert S. Lynd[30] and C. Wright Mills capture all of the essential aspects of its later use. For example, as Mills notes:

> There is no way in which any social scientist can avoid assuming choices of value and implying them in his work as a whole....Increasingly, research is used, and social scientists are used, for bureaucratic and ideological purposes. This being so, as individuals and as professionals, students of man and society face such questions as: whether they are aware of these uses and values of their work, whether these may be subject to their own control, whether they want to seek control of them. How they answer these questions, or fail to answer them, and how

they use or fail to use the answers in their
work and in their professional lives determine
their answer to the question: whether in their
work as social scientists they are (a) morally
autonomous, (b) subject to the morality of
other men, or (c) morally adrift. 31

Clearly, for Mills, as for later critical sociologists, moral
autonomy is preferable to the other two alternatives -- the
other two alternatives being those which apply to those soci-
ologists who hold on to the myth that their work is value-
neutral. As both Mills and later critical sociologists argue,
the work of mainstream sociologists is, in reality, either
ideologically aligned with or a tool of the established social
order. To be morally autonomous, on the other hand, requires
that sociologists take definite positions (whatever they may
be) on the kinds of questions that Mills poses above.

Although the above passage from Mills contains the
basic elements to be found in later expressions of the "let's
be honest" position, I believe these later expressions have
a significantly different emphasis. Whereas Mills' remarks
are directed at the sociological profession as a whole, cri-
tical sociologists focus more on the integrity of individual
sociologists.

Among critical sociologists, Alvin Gouldner has been
one of the staunchest advocates of the "let's be honest" posi-
tion. In his 1962 essay, "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-
Free Sociology", Gouldner comments on Max Weber's strong op-
position to teachers expressing their political opinions
(i.e., value preferences) in the classroom:

If sociologists ought not to express their
personal values in the academic setting,

> how then are students to be safeguarded
> against the unwitting influence of these
> values which shape the sociologist's
> selection of problems, his preferences
> for certain hypotheses or conceptual
> schemes, and his neglect of others.
> For these are unavoidable and, in this
> sense, there is and can be no value-free
> sociology. The only choice is between
> an expression of one's values, as open
> and honest as it can be,...and a vain
> ritual of moral neutrality. 32

In these terms, a sociologist has only two options open to

him: either being forthright in declaring what his values or

biases are or being wittingly or unwittingly hypocritical and

cling to the myth of value neutrality.

In the work of Gouldner and other critical sociologists

these two options, honesty or hypocrisy, are linked with other

personal characteristics such as courage, passion, and coward-

ice. Those sociologists who are unwilling to acknowledge that

their work is influenced by value considerations in any way --

those who hide behind the myth of value neutrality -- are ac-

cused of being cowards. These are the same sociologists who shy

away from becoming personally involved in any controversial

social issue. As one critical sociologist argues, "Although

greed and sloth may account for a significant number of those

who choose to remain on what they think is dead center, I am

personally convinced that cowardice is the most important

single explanation."33

Those sociologists who are willing to reflect upon

their work and openly acknowledge those values that have

influenced their work are deemed courageous. As Gouldner

observes, "The pursuit of awareness,...remains rooted in

the most ancient of virtues. The quality of a social sci-
entist's work remains dependent on the quality of his man-
hood."[34]

Not only is courage said to be involved in the very
pursuit of awareness (or "Reflexive Sociology", as Gouldner
labels this pursuit), but courage and, indeed, passion, are
also involved in taking clear positions on controversial
social issues. It is because of a lack of these qualities
that Gouldner, for example, criticizes Howard S. Becker's
attempt to define the proper job of the sociologist in his
article, "Whose Side Are We On?". Gouldner argues that,
although he seems to favor having sociologists take up the
cause of the "underdogs" or underprivileged people in our
society, Becker does not declare his own sympathies. That is
to say: "...while Becker invites partisanship he rejects
passionate or erect partisanship. In the very process of
opposing the conventional myth of the value-free social
scientist, Becker thereby creates a new myth, the myth of the
sentiment-free social scientist."[35] Continuing in this vein,
Gouldner calls into question Becker's motivation in suggest-
ing that sociologists identify with and become advocates for
the poor and oppressed. He charges that Becker's concern with
the plight of the underdogs is really only "...part of a titil-
lated attraction to the underdog's exotic difference...."[36]
Moreover, Gouldner maintains that the "real" reason for
Becker's failure to state his position clearly is due to the
vested interest he has in guaranteeing continued funding for

such research, which a strong statement of support for the underdogs on his part may jeopardize by antagonizing those who control such funds.[37] In sum, then, Becker's work is viewed as self-serving and lacking a true and passionate commitment to the alleviation of suffering among the poor and oppressed; and these shortcomings derive from defects in Becker and not from defects in the discipline of sociology itself.

The kind of personal criticism Gouldner directs at Becker is manifest throughout this critical movement. The worth of a sociologist's work is often judged in terms of the degree to which it reveals a courageous, passionate commitment to a particular value position -- usually one which is critical of the established social order. Hence, in Enter Plato much of Gouldner's criticism of Plato's social theory focuses on what he perceives as shortcomings in Plato's character -- that he does not measure up to the emotion-filled, full-blooded individual that social thinkers, in Gouldner's view, ideally should be. Plato's lack of courage and passion are linked to what Gouldner sees as the overriding conservative implications of his basic concern with social order. This last point applies with equal force to Gouldner's treatment of Talcott Parsons in The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology. Finally, one critical sociologist has even applied this type of analysis to graduate students in sociology. They are characterized as "dry, small-gauge humans" because they do not use "...concepts imbued with emotion; concepts eliciting

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sustained lines of political activity;..."[39]

The realization of a more significant sociology, then, hinges upon a change in the character of sociologists -- that they become courageous, forthright social scientists. As Alfred McClung Lee notes, "The future of sociology as a scientific discipline in the service of humanity...rests on the creative scientists, upon their curiosity, courage, integrity, and concern for the human condition."[40]

In addition to the injunction to declare one's values openly, some of these same critical sociologists called for the establishment of a new field of inquiry, a sociology of values, in which values people hold would become an object of study just as people's beliefs, attitudes, and opinions have been objects of sociological investigation. In the main, this sociology of values parallels Emile Durkheim's "science of ethics" which was designed to investigate the changing moral foundations of society. Both of these approaches are basically empirical and descriptive in nature -- their object, like that of all sociological research, being to analyze and explain, not to advocate or recommend. Irving Louis Horowitz, a principal spokesman for this sociology of values, comments in this regard, "...that the future of social science as a whole, as well as in its parts, is intimately connected to the development of a science of ethical judgment. This is a necessary compliment to the sociology of knowledge -- a sociology of ethics that would render information about why men value what they value under given life conditions."[41]

In connecting the sociology of values with the sociology of knowledge, Horowitz is clearly indicating what the main purpose of such an investigation will be: it will simply be to bring an increased awareness to sociologists of what values shape their work and how they shape it. With this, we come back again to the basic assumption contained in the "let's be honest" position: the recognition that, as human beings, we all carry around with us certain value preferences which will manifest themselves in one way or another in all that we do.[42]

       (4) Advocating the Adoption of a Particular
           Value Commitment as an Alternative
           Solution to the Problem of Values
           in Sociology

To overcome the continued adherence to the illusion that the work of sociologists is and can be value-neutral, critical sociologists have offered essentially two alternative courses of action. The first alternative is the "let's be honest" position which we have just finished discussing. A second alternative, which we will discuss presently, is very simply the advocacy of a certain value commitment as an appropriate guide for all sociologists to follow. That is to say, on this view, sociologists are urged to embrace a particular value position rather than continue to seek in vain for a way in which one can avoid altogether the contaminating effects of values.

If there is one value position that most critical sociologists explicitly or implicitly endorse it is the

democratic principle of individual freedom as it applies both to society and to sociology itself. The classic argument for the adoption of this value position is presented in The Sociological Imagination. As was noted in the Introduction, Mills was concerned with the growing predominance of "masses" (or "cheerful robots" in the specific case of white-collar workers) in modern society. These are the kind of people who are easily manipulated into supporting whatever political-economic system happens to be established, even if that system adversely affects their own lives.

To counter this trend, Mills advocated the cultivation of "publics", or those people who constitute the informed, questioning, free citizenry of a truly democratic social order. It was by means of the "sociological imagination" that Mills hoped to cultivate publics, for this sociological imagination would help translate "personal troubles" into "public issues" and thereby open people's eyes to the fact that their own individual problems derive from larger problems in the society as a whole. In Mills' own words: "What he [the sociologist] ought to do for society is to combat all those forces which are destroying genuine publics and creating a mass society -- or put as a positive goal, his aim is to help build and stregthen self-cultivating publics. Only then might society be reasonable and free."[43]

For Mills, sociologists' involvement in the creation and maintenance of a truly democratic social order must begin with the sociological profession itself. Classic social

analysts such as Max Weber, who Mills argues had made the values of freedom and reason a central part of their work, should be emulated by contemporary sociologists. Moreover, sociologists should always be committed to the free and open discussion of their work -- the free exchange of ideas being crucial to the further development of sociology. For Mills, then, increased democracy in the sociological profession is seen as a necessary condition for the realization of a more significant sociology.

This call for greater freedom in society, as well as in sociology, was to become a rallying point for critical sociologists during this turbulent period in American history. One must remember that during the 1960's the academic community in general was being increasingly pressured to take definite positions on controversial social issues. No one felt this pressure more than did these same critical sociologists who had rejected the doctrine of value neutrality as a pernicious myth. Drawing upon Mills' (and, indeed, Max Weber's) observation of the growing influence of the "bureaucratic ethos" in society and in sociology, these critical sociologists embraced the democratic principle as a counter to bureaucratic domination. They did so in much the same terms that Mills used in expressing his commitment to the democratic principle.

First of all, there was much discussion of bringing greater freedom to the sociological profession itself. In the previous chapter, we saw that the principal reaction of critical sociologists to the Project Camelot controversy was

to argue for greater autonomy for sociological researchers --
that they be freed from the real and potential manipulation
exercised by those public and private agencies which fund
sociological research. This point is forcefully stated by
John H. Kultgen in his provocative article entitled "The
Value of Value Judgments in Sociology":

> Sociology should be autonomous, a self-
> governing polity. Only then will it
> succeed in its primary aims and, more
> important, be an enterprise in which
> self-respecting moral agents can partici-
> pate.
>   My reaction to the value-free scientist
> ready to serve any master is disgust. This
> is a moral judgment which I consciously
> make and recommend to sociologists. 44

Just as Mills believed that the realization of a more
significant sociology ultimately rested upon autonomous,
creative social scientists willing to investigate large,
controversial issues -- that is, sociologists who do not al-
low their investigations be dictated by pre-determined, bureau-
cratic methods of research -- so too these critical sociolo-
gists maintain that a significant sociology rested upon the
degree to which sociologists are truly autonomous.[45] To cite
one prominent example, Alvin Gouldner's proposal to establish
"theoretical communes" in which free and rational discourse
replaces mechanical research techniques as the guiding prin-
ciple of operation is based upon the view that a significant
sociology is first and foremost an autonomous sociology.

More important, however, in the eyes of these critical
sociologists is the obligation to contribute to the realiza-
tion of a truly free society -- a society run by self-governing

publics (to paraphrase Mills' vision of such a society). One
way in which sociologists can contribute to greater democracy
is to make the results of their work more accessible to the
people in general. Sociologists should serve the people, not
the special interest groups which pay for much of the research
which sociologists do.

Unfortunately, in the view of most critical sociolo-
gists, the latter has more often than not been the case. This
is to pose the question which Alfred McClung Lee chooses as
the title of one of his critiques of contemporary sociology,
Sociology For Whom?. His answer to that question captures the
general sentiment of critical sociologists: "The excuse for
the existence of sociologists is not simply the maintenance
of academic employment and research funding [as mainstream
sociologists would see it] . The chief excuse is the answering
of the question, 'Sociology for whom?' in this manner: Soci-
ology for the service of humanity."[46] And, as Lee goes on to
indicate, "In serving humanity, sociologists act principally
as critics, demystifiers, reporters, and clarifiers...they
try to report more accurate information about the changing
social scene and with it help to clarify ways of under-
standing human relations and of coping with personal and
social problems."[47]

In addition to acting as educators of the masses,
adherence to the democratic principle also brings with it a
commitment to the realization of those social conditions which
allow greater human freedom. This particular point is brought

out clearly in Dennis Foss's attempt to spell out a new orientation for the sociological profession. Foss draws upon basic tenets of democracy laid down in the United States Constitution in defining his new orientation: "Ultimately, then, what is proposed is: the optimization of alternatives open to every individual compatible with the equal optimization of alternatives open to all -- each individual's freedom should be continually increased up to the point that it begins to interfere with the optimization of freedom for others."[48]

Sociologists are thus enjoined to work toward the "optimization of alternatives" for everyone in our society. In a similar vein, and in equally general terms, two sociologists suggest that the "dignity of man"principle become the guide for sociological practice. A man's dignity is defined "...in terms of his ability to pursue alternative courses of action -- to have available significant choices. The idea of alternatives, when defined in terms of significant structural choices, emphsizes man's effort to control his own destiny."[49]

We shall leave off our discussion of this commitment to the democratic principle here and take it up again in more detail in the following chapter where we will consider the equally strong and related commitment to the individual. Although I will comment more extensively on their vision of a truly free society in the next chapter, it is important to note here that none of these critical sociologists gets much more specific than the above general statements. The generality and vagueness of their position, I believe, ultimately

derives from a weakness in the philosophical basis of their overall approach to the value question -- a topic we will get to shortly. However, before taking up this shortcoming in the sociological critique of American sociology, let us look briefly at a few more prominent examples of specific value commitments urged by critical sociologists.

In addition to being staunch advocates for the democratic principle, critical sociologists also express sympathy for the plight of the poor and oppressed. Alvin Gouldner, for example, urges his fellow sociologists to take a stand against the suffering of these people. This position is most clearly ennunciated in the context of his stinging attack on Howard Becker's reflections on this subject, which was briefly discussed earlier in this chapter. Gouldner charged that Becker himself fails to answer the question posed in the title of his article, "Whose Side Are We On?". This failure on Becker's part Gouldner takes as evidence of his lack of courage to declare his value position openly and honestly. To avoid being accused of the same fault, Gouldner makes clear his own commitment: that sociologists support the "underdogs". "The essential point about the underdog," says Gouldner, "is that he suffers, and that suffering is naked and visible. It is this that makes and should make a compelling demand on us."[50] Gouldner argues, moreover, that this kind of "feelingful commitment" will open up aspects of society for study which have previously been totally neglected.[51] By adopting the standpoint of the underdog, one such new area of investigation

which would be opened up is the critical scrutiny of the "power elite" who, in the view of most critical sociologists, are directly responsible for the plight of the underdogs.

Another prominent value commitment critical sociologists have embraced is that of a Marxist vision of a good society and of how such a society can be realized. Critical sociologists, by and large, subscribe to the notion that Marx's work can be divided into two distinct periods: (1) the philosophical-humanistic, early Marx (or, the "youthful Karl" as Friedrichs prefers to call him) and (2) the later scientific, economic determinist Marx. If passages from the early Marx are used to support these critical sociologists' basic commitment to the free development of all individuals, the later Marx is uniformly denounced as an economic determinist who denies the possibility of significant human freedom. This indicates that the commitment to Marx is really secondary to the overriding commitment to human freedom.

There was, nonetheless, a group of critical sociologists who adhered quite closely to Marx's recommendations for social change. These critical sociologists enjoined their fellow sociologists to get involved in revolutionary movements -- that they, in a sense, take up the position of the vanguard of the proletariat. As J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach, the editors of an anthology entitled Radical Sociology, assert: "At the present time,...we would argue that the immediate and primary task of the radical sociologist is to continue to raise public and professional consciousness through

radical research and practice as well as to engage in radical organizing on and off campus."[52] The Sociology Liberation Movement's attempts to prod the American Sociological Association into making a statement condemning United States' involvement in Vietnam represents such an effort to raise public and professional consciousness.

On the surface, the various value commitments espoused by critical sociologists, from the commitment to democracy to advocating the overthrow of capitalism, appear to be expressed forthrightly and consistently. Nonetheless, underlying these arguments is the view that values are, at base, merely expressions of personal attitudes, convictions, preferences, and the like; as such, they are entirely relative.[53] Indeed, built into the argument for greater democracy and freedom in society and in sociology is a pluralistic and relativistic notion of values.

What at first glance appears to be a clear commitment to a particular value position, then, is clouded by the simultaneous adherence to the view that one's values are no more than expressions of personal preference and so cannot be demonstrated to be more or less valid than the values of someone else. Since there is no way of objectively determining which value commitments sociologists should adopt, the most sociologists can do is be honest about what value commitments they adhere to. As C. Wright Mills says in the context of making the point that all sociological work has moral implications: "The question is whether he [the sociologist] faces this

condition and makes up his own mind, or whether he conceals it from himself and others and drifts morally."[54] Significantly, the question is _not_ whether the value position a sociologist adopts is valid or right.

The overriding relativism of critical sociologists' view of the nature of values not only serves to compromise their own value commitments, but I believe it is also largely responsible for the characteristically vague way in which these commitments are stated. Such statements rarely go beyond high-sounding, impassioned pleas for increased freedom or the occasional call to sociologists to become actively involved in movements designed to overthrow the existing capitalist social order.

(5) Philosophical Considerations of the Problem
of Values in Sociology: The Need for an
Objective Base for Value

The disagreements between mainstream and critical sociologists concerning the question of the place of values in sociology appear to be deep and strong. The repeated harsh denunciations of sociologists who espouse the doctrine of value neutrality can be taken as an indication of this. The basic arguments presented by each side do seem to express clearly opposing positions: mainstream sociologists arguing that, as a scientific discipline, sociology must be value-free; and the critics charging that value-free sociology is a myth, that values inevitably find their way into all aspects of sociological work.

However, for all the fury of this debate and the seemingly irreconcilable positions each side defends, I believe there exist some significant similarities. This is a point for which evidence has already been presented in the discussion of critical and mainstream sociologists' interpretation of Max Weber's "Science as a Vocation". That similarities exist, indicates that perhaps mainstream and critical sociologists do not differ all that much on this issue, which leads one to conclude that the criticism of the doctrine of value neutrality does not represent a significant challenge to mainstream American sociology.

Most significantly, both sides of this issue hold a similar view of the nature of values; namely, that values are merely expressions of personal opinion, bias, prejudice, and the like. That is to say, values are universally seen as subjective, as having their locus within the individual; and hence, they are also relative.

Given such a conception of values one can readily understand how both positions in this debate can be defended. For mainstream sociologists to allow such subjective values to enter their work would mean giving up a basic goal of all scientific endeavor: achieving objective, reliable results. Hence, as defenders of sociology's status as a scientific discipline, mainstream sociologists are perfectly justified in arguing that sociology must be value-free. On the other hand, those who criticize the doctrine of value neutrality do

so on the basis of the very same subjective conception of the nature of values. It is argued that because sociologists are human beings as well as social scientists, it is impossible to eliminate values entirely from their work because values are an inherent part of being human. So, rather than falsely espouse value neutrality, these critical sociologists take what they believe to be the more truthful, realistic stance of advocating a policy of honesty -- that sociologists open-ly acknowledge their values so that the potential biasing effects of these values can be understood and neutralized to some extent.

Although the achievement of truly objective results is ruled out in the critics' view, objectivity, nonetheless, remains a principal goal for them, just as it is for main-stream sociologists. As one sociologist notes:

> Objectivity or value freedom do not define a
> science. If they did, not only sociology
> but physics, chemistry, and all the rest
> would fail the test. What defines a science
> is the <u>attempt</u> to be objective, a commitment
> to try to filter out ideology from empirical
> knowledge, even while it is clear that the
> attempt ultimately fails and the commitment
> is basically in vain. 55

It is precisely this attempt "to filter out ideology from empirical knowledge" that the "let's be honest" position is designed for.

In those cases where critical sociologists have gone beyond the call for greater self-awareness and advocated the adoption of a particular value commitment, these value com-mitments, in line with the predominant view of the nature of

values, have tended to be subjective and relative. From Alvin Gouldner's call to oppose human suffering, to Alfred McClung Lee's "existential humanism", to Dennis Foss's "optimization of alternatives", each position is presented as just one of many acceptable value commitments sociologists can adopt.[56] As any mainstream sociologist would also assert, Dennis Foss points out that: "...the value of the orientation [the optimization of alternatives] is assumptive and not demonstrable."[57] Built into each position is a vagueness and a relativism which guarantees that it will never present a serious challenge to mainstream sociology and its conservative bias.

In short, in spite of all the high-sounding rhetoric -- advocating greater freedom and fighting against bureaucratic domination and human suffering -- these critical sociologists have no well-defined view of a better society to oppose to the conservative view presented in mainstream sociology that they find so inadequate.

To my knowledge, none of these critical sociologists makes any serious attempt to address such important questions as those posed by Gideon Sjoberg and Ted R. Vaughn in the following passage -- questions which go to the heart of what is perhaps the most serious shortcoming of this critical movement:

> In recent years social scientists have sought
> to formulate ethical codes or ethical guidelines
> by which their actions, particularly those in
> the research context, can be evaluated. Despite
> the emergence of, and attempt at, codification
> of these norms in the scientific community,

almost no attention has been given to such
fundamental (and corollary) questions as:
What is the ultimate moral basis of the
scientist's conduct? What is the ultimate
standard by which the scientist is to
justify and evaluate his actions? 58

This is to point to the need for a base or ground both for

judging the value of a sociologist's work and, ultimately, for

judging the adequacy of the conception of the kind of society

toward the realization of which sociologists should be work-

ing (i.e., the appropriate goal orientation of sociologists).[59]

To suggest the necessity of attempting to resolve this complex

and difficult issue of what constitutes a sound base for value

judgment is also clearly to indicate the necessity of address-

ing some long-standing philosophical questions.

Despite the obvious importance of philosophy, many

critical sociologists have explicitly disavowed any discussion

of the relevant philosophical issues. One of the most widely-

cited essays on the value question, Alvin Gouldner's "Anti-

Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology", begins with

such a disavowal. Gouldner says, "I do not wish to enter into

an examination of the logical arguments involved, not because

I regard them as incontrovertible but because I find them less

interesting to me as a sociologist. Instead what I will do

is to view the belief in a value-free sociology in the same

manner that sociologists examine any element in the ideology

of any group."[60] Ultimately, it is this failure to address

the underlying philosophical issues which is indicative of

the shallowness of the sociological critique of American soci-

ology as a whole.

In clear contrast to critical sociologists' disavowal of philosophy, critical theorists of the Frankfurt School have argued that philosophy must be the basis of any truly critical analysis of society or sociology. As was brought out earlier in this chapter, some of these critical theorists perceived that the explanation for the inherent conservative bias in mainstream sociology lay in its philosophical underpinnings rather than in the social and psychological backgrounds of individual sociologists.

With its methodology, and the theory built upon it, rooted in empiricism, critical theorists argue that sociologists can do no more than reflect the given reality -- there is no way that an empirical approach to the study of society can disclose anything more than how individuals, groups, or societies perceive themselves. Any judgment on the accuracy or propriety of these perceptions is left totally out of account, for to make such a judgment presupposes insight into the true nature of society and such an insight is precisely what the empiricist tradition denies we can attain. The point is, as Theodor Adorno asserts: "In tabooing the inquiry into the essence of things as an illusion, as a demand that method is incapable of fulfilling, one is a priori shielding the essential relationships, those which really determine the nature of society, from cognitive analysis."[61] In the view of these critical theorists, only by means of a dialectical approach can one hope to disclose the true nature of the present social order, that is, come to see its inherent contradictions and

the tendencies within it which point in the direction of a
new social order.

What is at issue here, ultimately, are two different
views of the nature of knowledge and reality. Sociologists,
basically following Kant's lead, have maintained that all
knowledge derives from experience, with our minds imparting
a certain order to this experience (specifically, by way of
the categories of the understanding for Kant). On this view,
then, knowledge is based entirely on the appearance of things,
on individuals' perception of things; what things are in them-
selves (or, what society is in itself, what is its true nature)
belong to the realm of the unknowable. To base a study of
society on such a view of the nature of knowledge and reality
is to rule out the possibility of knowing society as it real-
ly is and of defining what society could or should be, for
all one can know is what society appears to be as this is
usually reflected in the countless studies of the attitudes
and opinions of individuals.[62]

For the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School
the above view of the nature of knowledge and reality can
encompass no critical dimension, for in rejecting the possi-
bility of ever coming to know the true nature of society there
can be no ground or basis for criticism. Rather, as Marcuse
argues so eloquently in "The Concept of Essence", reality
consists of appearance and essence. The job of the philosopher
(and, indeed, of the sociologist) is to penetrate appearances
and get at the essence of things, which means coming to see

things both as they really are and as they are capable of becoming. All genuine thinking requires that one transcend the given reality,[63] the present social order, and look upon it not as an absolute (as the functionalists tend to do) but as a moment in the historical development of society. A given society can only properly be understood as an outgrowth of the past and as containing tendencies which point in the direction of a new social order in the future.

Ultimately, in the view of these critical theorists, it is in terms of a conception of the as yet potential, future utopian[64] social order that criticism of the present is possible -- that the shortcomings and problems of present-day society become visible. This conception constitutes the ground or base for the Frankfurt School's critical analysis of modern society.

A close reading of the work of Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse, three major figures of the Frankfurt School, does reveal the broad outlines of a philosophical or critical base. Among the three, Marcuse clearly goes the farthest in attempting to define this base in specific terms. Early on in <u>One-Dimensional Man</u> Marcuse describes this base in the following terms:

> In order to identify and define the possibilities
> of an optimal development, the critical theory
> must abstract from the actual organization and
> utilization of society's resources, and from
> the results of this organization and utili-
> zation. Such abstraction which refuses to
> accept the given universe of facts as the
> final context of validation, such "transcending"
> analysis of the facts in the light of their
> arrested and denied possibilities, pertains

to the very structure of social theory. It
is opposed to all metaphysics by virtue of
the rigorously historical character of the
transcendence. The "possibilities" must be
within the reach of the respective society;
they must be definable goals of practice.
By the same token, the abstraction from the
established institutions must be expressive
of an actual tendency -- that is, their
transformation must be the real need of the
underlying population. Social theory is
concerned with the historical alternatives
which haunt the established society as
subversive tendencies and forces. 65

What is particularly important to note about the above state-

ment is the emphasis placed on the concrete, factual nature

of the definition of this "optimal development". The good

society is to be defined in terms of actual tendencies in the

present society, that is, of what society is capable of becom-

ing. For example, one important tendency in modern society

that Marcuse frequently calls attention to is that of automa-

tion. Automation, he argues, has the potential of liberating

people from necessary labor so that they may develop to their

fullest potential as whole persons rather than have to waste

their energy and talents performing menial tasks. The social

critic, then, has the task of revealing these inherent tenden-

cies and working to further their realization.

In general terms, I believe one could accurately charac-

terize these critical theorists' view of a truly humane social

order as consisting of three basic elements: (1) that the

natural and industrial resources of the society are used toward

the end of providing the necessities of life for everyone;

(2) that the toil and misery of necessary labor be reduced to

a minimum; and (3) that genuine freedom is maximized for every-

one. The real fruit of this humane social order will be the "whole person", the person who is able to develop all of his capacities to the fullest.

Although critical sociologists talk a lot about individual freedom being _the_ integral aspect of a future, better society which a more significant sociology is to have a hand in bringing about, their view of freedom is primarily a negative one. On their terms, freedom means essentially freedom _from_ bureaucratic domination, freedom from all forms of social and sociological domination. Critical theorists do include this negative freedom in their conception of genuine freedom. After all, it was because of the strongly bureaucratic, manipulative nature of Soviet communism that they came to reject it, along with American corporate calitalism, as contrary to their vision of a humane social order.

But much more important than negative freedom is "positive" freedom, that is, freedom _for_ an individual to develop as a whole person. Such freedom requires the development of a social order which provides significant opportunities for everyone. Among other things, this would require the establishment of a more just property system. In the context of sociology itself, it would require the adoption of a view of reality which most critical sociologists express vehement opposition to. As Marcuse sees it:

> ....This real context in which the particular
> subjects obtain their real significance is
> definable only within a _theory_ of society.
> To say that this meta context is the
> Society (with a capital "S") is to hypostatize
> the whole over and above the parts. But this

> hypostatization takes place in reality, is
> the reality, and the analysis can overcome
> it only by recognizing it and by compre-
> hending its scope and its cause. Society
> is indeed the whole which exercises its
> independent power over individuals and this
> Society is no unidentifiable "ghost". It
> has its empirical hard core in the system
> of institutions, which are the established
> and frozen relationships among men. 66

It is statements such as the one above which have earned for Marcuse denunciations from some critical sociologists for being overly pessimistic and anti-individual. Nonetheless, we should take note of what this statement implicitly suggests: that the resolution of the value question in sociology requires a sound conception of social life and society as its basis. This is to make the important point, as I have emphasized all along, that what is wrong with contemporary American sociology derives primarily from a faulty methodological and theoretical base.

That a sound basis for value judgment requires a more adequate conception of society (i.e., of the facts) than those that have been offered in sociology and in the history of social thought in general is a principal theme running through the work of Elijah Jordan. Critical sociologists (as do mainstream sociologists) separate the world of fact and the world of value, with the world of value having its locus in the bio-psychological individual and the world of fact refering to that world outside the bio-psychological individual. Jordan argues, on the contrary, that: "The relation between fact and value is one of constitutional mutuality,..."[67] Value is the meaning of a fact. One judges something in terms of the

larger system of relations in which it stands, that is, in terms of the meaning or implications something has to the larger natural and cultural order of things. That larger natural and cultural order of things must be properly understood in order to make correct judgments about how things fit in this larger whole, of how they contribute to or detract from this life whole.

Ordinarily, ethical or value questions are thought to involve the acts of individuals, the judgment of which is based on the perceived beneficial or detrimental effect of these acts on other individuals or on the particular individual involved. There is little in the work of critical sociologists that would suggest any fundamentally different view of ethics. Indeed, by maintaining that values are both subjective and relative, they place themselves clearly within the framework of an individualistic ethics.

Jordan takes issue with such a view of ethics because it is founded upon an inadequate conception of the person or individual. Persons, considered as separate and distinct bio-psychological entities, are not an appropriate base for ethics; they cannot be considered the real actors of modern society. Rather, as Jordan points out, the real actors are "instrumented or embodied persons"; that is, institutions or orders of objects directed toward some human end. It is through institutions that bio-psychological individuals act to achieve ends. A doctor, for example, achieves the end of healing the sick through the medical institution which encompasses the

schools, the laboratory facilities, the drugs, the hospitals, etc. that are organized in such a way (or, at least, should be) to facilitate the end of healing the sick.

Ultimately, then, to judge things properly one must focus on this institutional structure and how it serves to enhance or detract from a sound social order. In Jordan's words: "...we shall have to redefine the person in terms of a corporate structure of interinstitutional relations if our ethical theory is to have conformity to the fact that is necessary to give it validity and to ground its formulas as law."[68]

This redefinition of the person represents nothing less than a redefinition of society -- that society is essentially an organized system of institutions. It is this fact which forms the essential basis of value -- the value of some aspect of society being the meaning that aspect has for the larger whole of which it is a part.

In the second chapter of his Forms of Individuality Jordan addresses the question of where sociological thinking stands with respect to this redefinition of the person and society. He argues that sociological thought is inadequate because its focus on bio-psychological individuals and how they are held together in groups by subjective ties fails to take into consideration the objective development of the vast institutional structure of modern society. Although critical sociologists vehemently reject many aspects of contemporary American sociology, they tacitly accept the subjective view

of society described above. Indeed, many critical sociologists go even further in emphasizing the subjective, as can be clearly seen, for example, in Alfred McClung Lee's "existential humanism". But, again, such an emphasis overlooks the fact that the lives of individuals are bound up with a larger institutional order, and that it is this larger institutional order on which sociologists need to focus.

In Chapter V we will come back to Jordan's conception of society and discuss it in greater detail in the context of a presentation of some alternative conceptions of society offered by critical sociologists. For now, let us just note how this all relates to the resolution of the value question in sociology.

In contrast to the subjective and relativistic view of values, Jordan is arguing that objective, sound judgments of value can be made, but they can only be made on the basis of a sound understanding of society. Therefore, the ultimate resolution of the value question rests upon a thoroughgoing reexamination of the most fundamental aspect of sociology's theoretical base; namely, the conception of society with which it connects. Unfortunately, such a reexamination has taken up but a small portion of the voluminous writings of critical sociologists.

NOTES

[1] Emile Durkheim, <u>The Rules of Sociological Method</u>, p.31.

[2] Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation" in <u>From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology</u>, translated, edited, and with introduction by Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, p.145.

[3] D.J. Gray, "Value-Free Sociology: A Doctrine of Hypocrisy and Irresponsibility", <u>Sociological Quarterly</u>, 9(Spring 68), p.178.

[4] Is not and <u>should</u> <u>not</u> be a forum for a teacher's political views. The "should not" is added in this footnote to underline the fact that the defenders of value-neutral sociology are pronouncing value judgments just as clearly as any of the radical sociologists they castigate for expressing their political views. Quoting from correspondence I had on this point with Eric A. Ahrens, he states: "Indeed, sociologists make no value judgments! Yet directly they pronounce that the only mode of thinking that is sound is that of science, all other thinking is false. If this is not a value judgment I fail to grasp what they do mean." Robert W. Friedrichs makes a similar point in his book, <u>A Sociology of Sociology</u>, pp.99-100.

[5] Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation" in <u>From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology</u>, translated, edited, and with introduction by Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, p.146.

[6] <u>Ibid</u>., p.147.

[7] Talcott Parsons, "Editor's Column", <u>The American Sociologist</u>, 2(May 67), p.64.

[8] Philip M. Hauser, "On Actionism in the Craft of Sociology" in <u>Radical Sociology</u>, edited by J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach, p.428.

[9] Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation" in <u>From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology</u>, translated, edited, and with introduction by Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, p.145.

[10] Alvin Gouldner, "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology" in <u>For Sociology</u>, written and edited by Alvin Gouldner, p.6.

[11] <u>Ibid</u>., p.24.

[12] This is not to say that these critical sociologists do not urge the adoption of certain values, as we will see later on in this chapter. However, when they do take a definite position on an issue they quite often preface their remarks

with the observation that they are merely presenting their biases, which the reader can accept or reject as he wishes.

[13]Auguste Comte, "Plan of the Scientific Operations Necessary for Reorganizing Society" in Auguste Comte and Positivism: The Essential Writings, edited by Gertrud Lenzer, p.54.

[14]Dusky Lee Smith, "Sociology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism" in The Sociology of Sociology, edited by Larry T. and Janice M. Reynolds, p.68.

[15]This aspect of the development of American sociology is nicely covered in Roscoe and Gisela Hinkle's The Development of Modern Sociology.

[16]Dennis Foss provides a fairly comprehensive summary of those aspects of a sociologist's work which can be influenced by "extrinsic value decisions". The Value Controversy in Sociology, pp.16-19.

[17]Howard S. Becker, "Whose Side Are We On?" in The Sociology of Sociology, edited by Larry T. and Janice M. Reynolds, p.204.

[18]D.J. Gray, "Value-Free Sociology: A Doctrine of Hypocrisy and Irresponsibility", Sociological Quarterly, 9(Spring 68), p.184.

[19]Alvin Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, p,281.

[20]This point is clearly brought out in two articles critical of the functional approach in research in foreign countries which, it is argued, tends either to overlook or to label as deviant any movements for social change. Charles C. Moskos, Jr. and Wendell Bell, "Emerging Nations and Ideologies of American Sociologists", The American Sociologist, 2(May 67), p.72. Marshall Sahlins, "The Established Order: Do Not Fold, Spindle, or Mutilate" in The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz.

[21]Alvin Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, p.332.

[22]Alvin Gouldner, "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology" in For Sociology, written and edited by Alvin Gouldner, p.15.

[23]Thomas Ford Hoult, "...Who Shall Prepare Himself to the Battle", The American Sociologist, 3(Feb. 68), p.3.

[24]Max Horkheimer, The Eclipse of Reason, p.82.

[25]Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man, p.114. Also, as Theodor Adorno comments, "Empirical social research becomes

an ideology itself as soon as it gives public opinion absolute status." "Sociology and Empirical Research"in <u>Critical Sociology</u>, edited by Paul Connerton, p.256.

[26]C.f. Chapter II, note #27.

[27]Robert W. Friedrichs, "Choice and Commitment in Social Research", <u>The American Sociologist</u>, 3(Feb. 68), pp.10-11.

[28]Melvin Tumin, "Some Social Consequences of Research on Race Relations", <u>The American Sociologist</u>, 3(May 68), pp.117-123.

[29]Andrew J. Weigert, "The Immoral Rhetoric of Scientific Sociology", <u>The American Sociologist</u>, 5(May 70), p.111.

[30]Robert S. Lynd, <u>Knowledge For What?</u>, p.178.

[31]C. Wright Mills, <u>The Sociological Imagination</u>, pp.177-178. Also see, p.79.

[32]Alvin Gouldner, "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology" in <u>For Sociology</u>, written and edited by Alvin Gouldner, p.24. The "let's be honest" position also underlies Gouldner's call for a "Reflexive Sociology" in the conclusion of <u>The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology</u>. Also see, Alvin Gouldner, <u>The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology</u>, p.293. Among other clear expressions of this position are the following: "Under the circumstances, it does seem that frank, explicit avowal of value-standards to the full extent that is possible is essential and that it can do less damage in the long run than trying to maintain the fiction that, <u>as sociologists</u>, we are indifferent to all values, make no presuppositions, have no biases." Allan Eister, "Values, Sociology, and Sociologists", <u>Sociological Analysis</u>, 25(Summer 64), p.112; Irving Louis Horowitz, "Social Science Objectivity and Value Neutrality: Historical Problems and Projections" in <u>Professing Sociology</u>, written and edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, p.31; Reinhard Bendix, "Sociology and Ideology" in <u>The Phenomenon of Sociology</u>, edited by E.A. Tiryakian, pp.178-179; Charles H. Anderson and Jeffrey Royle Gibson, <u>Toward a New Sociology</u> (3rd ed.), p.400.

[33]Thomas Ford Hoult, "...Who Shall Prepare Himself to the Battle", <u>The American Sociologist</u>, 3(Feb. 68), p.6.

[34]Alvin Gouldner, <u>The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology</u>, p.494.

[35]Alvin Gouldner, "The Sociologist as Partisan: Sociology and the Welfare State" in <u>The Sociology of Sociology</u>, edited by Larry T. and Janice M. Reynolds, p.224. Moreover, it is precisely for his passion and courage that C. Wright Mills is universally praised by these critical sociologists. As Fred Blum comments: "All great social scientists have been

passionate men. C. Wright Mills was a man of passionate commitment to the values cherished most: truth, reason, and freedom. " "C. Wright Mills: Social Conscience and Social Values" in The New Sociology, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, p.162.

[36]Alvin Gouldner, "The Sociologist as Partisan: Sociology and the Welfare State" in The Sociology of Sociology, edited by Larry T. and Janice M. Reynolds, p.227.

[37]Ibid., pp.222-223.

[38]Alvin Gouldner, Enter Plato, p.383.

[39]T.R. Young, "Transforming Sociology: The Graduate Student", The American Sociologist, 9(Aug. 74), p.136.

[40]Alfred McClung Lee, Sociology For Whom?, p.207.

[41]Irving Louis Horowitz, "Scientific Criticism and the Sociology of Knowledge" in Professing Sociology, written and edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, p.28.

[42]Again, mainstream sociology is taken to task for its refusal to acknowledge the human element. Also, let us note in this context Horowitz's restatement of Mills' view that sociology should concern itself with the intersection of biography and history in society:"The forging of a valuable sociology depends in part on the creation of a social science of values. Here we come to the greatest impediment to an advance in sociological research -- the empiricist refusal to view the social sciences as essentially a human enterprise bound at one end by the biological-psychological individual constitution of men and at the other by the historical career of mankind." Irving Louis Horowitz, "Introduction" in The New Sociology, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, pp.11-12.

[43]C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, p.187.

[44]John H. Kultgen, "The Value of Value Judgments in Sociology", Sociological Quarterly, 11(Spring 70), p.189.

[45]And, of course, it is only the autonomous sociologist who possesses the courage to express his views openly and to accept the task of studying controversial issues. The link between this argument for increased autonomy and the "let's be honest" argument should be evident.

[46]Alfred McClung Lee, Sociology For Whom?, p.36.

[47]Ibid., p.36. Or, in Alvin Gouldner's more sweeping terms: "...A Reflexive Sociology his alternative to mainstream sociology has, as a central part of its historical mission, the task of helping men in their struggle to take possession

of what is theirs -- society and culture -- and of aiding them to know who they are and what they want." The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, p.509.

[48]Dennis Foss, The Value Controversy in Sociology, p.63.

[49]Gideon Sjoberg and Ted R. Vaughn, "The Sociology of Ethics" in The Phenomenon of Sociology, edited by E.A. Tiryakian, p.273.

[50]Alvin Gouldner, "The Sociologist as Partisan: Sociology and the Welfare State" in The Sociology of Sociology, edited by Larry T. and Janice M. Reynolds, p.226.

[51]Ibid., p225.

[52]J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach (eds.), Radical Sociology, p.18.

[53]This point is most explicitly made by Alfred McClung Lee in his laudatory comments concerning the relativistic maxim of the sophist, Protagoras: "Man is the measure of all things." Individual human expression and creativity take precedence over any attempt to connect values with objective circumstances. Sociology For Whom?, pp.42-45.

[54]C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, p.79. Moreover, I can find no significant difference between the critics' position on this point, as expressed here by Mills, and the following statement of Talcott Parsons: "These are all inherently complex problems [such as the problem of protecting the rights of research subjects] on which the sociological profession needs to reach clear and honest views. In order to do so it is essential that its members define their own values and their place in society as clearly as they can." "Editor's Column", The American Sociologist, 2(May 67), p.64.

[55]Kenneth Westhues, "Class and Organization as Paradigms in Social Science", The American Sociologist, 11(Feb. 76), p.47. Or, as Robert W. Friedrichs puts this same point: " 'Objectivity' has been held, over the last three or four decades, to be a derivative of -- and thus dependent upon -- a 'value-free' sociology. It is my contention that the latter term, though pointing to the empirical commitment that we all share, has muddied the waters of discourse much more than it has purified them; that it is not 'value-freedom' that we have in common but 'value commitment': a commitment to the harsh master that is empirical fact and to the common rationality we are capable of bringing to bear on it." "Choice and Commitment in Sociological Research", The American Sociologist, 3(Feb. 68), p.8.

[56]Dennis Foss is most explicit on this point: "Although I consider the proposed orientation to be the most reasonable and advantageous one open to sociology, it is only one alter-

native. I presume that the other competing orientations will be advanced with differing rationales. My primary hope is that the orientation and its underlying rationales are explicated with sufficient clarity to allow both its strengths and weaknesses to emerge readily in an ensuing debate." The Value Controversy in Sociology, p.xii.

[57]Ibid., p.58.

[58]Gideon Sjoberg and Ted R. Vaughn, "The Sociology of Ethics and the Ethics of Sociology" in The Phenomenon of Sociology, edited by E.A. Tiryakian, p.259.

[59]Indeed, Dennis Foss poses two similar questions: "On what basis can such a decision orientation [decision as to how to proceed in gathering knowledge of social phenomena] be chosen? Just what [goal] orientation should we as individuals and members of the profession adopt? The remainder of the book is an attempt to answer these crucial questions." The Value Controversy in Sociology, pp.xi-xii. By the end of the book, however, it becomes obvious that Foss provides no decisive answers to those questions, outside of the so-called "persuasive reasons" he presents in defense of his relativistic "optimization of alternatives" option.

[60]Alvin Gouldner, "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology" in For Sociology, written and edited by Alvin Gouldner, p.4.

[61]Theodor Adorno, "Sociology and Empirical Research" in Critical Sociology, edited by Paul Connerton, pp.249-250.

[62]Or, as Max Horkheimer notes, "The so-called facts ascertained by quantitative methods, which the positivists are inclined to regard as the only scientific ones, are often surface phenomena that obscure rather than disclose the underlying reality." Eclipse of Reason, p.82.

[63]Marcuse says in this regard, "...critical philosophical thought is necessarily transcendent and abstract. Philosophy shares this abstraction with all genuine thought, for nobody really thinks who does not abstract from that which is given,..." One-Dimensional Man, p.134.

[64]I use the term "utopian" here with some reservation, realizing that too often that term has been interpreted as meaning some fanciful, abstract, "pie-in-the-sky" notion which, however interesting, cannot be taken seriously. I use the term to indicate some conception of a true society which can be derived from a sound, factual base, as I believe these critical theorists would maintain.

[65]Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man, pp.xi-xii.

[66]Ibid., p.191. Or, as Max Horkheimer succinctly puts it: "The fully developed individual is the consumation of a fully developed society." _Eclipse of Reason_, p.135.

[67]Elijah Jordan, _The Good Life_, p.76. A fuller understanding of Jordan's view of the relation between fact and value requires a close reading of Chapter V in _The Good Life_, pp.75-85.

[68]Elijah Jordan, "The Role of Philosophy in Social Crisis", _Ethics_, LI(July 41), p.389.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL
IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIETY

(1) Origin and Nature of the Basic Value
    Commitment of Critical Sociologists

In the last two chapters, what has emerged from our
analysis of critical sociologists' view of the proper rela-
tionship between sociological research and its sources of
funding and their view of the proper place of values in soci-
ology is a commitment both to increased autonomy in the prac-
tice of sociology and to increased involvement in the struggle
to realize a more humane, democratic social order. The values
of freedom of inquiry, of openness to all methodological and
theoretical perspectives, of education of the public about
important social issues are universally acknowledged as
essential elements of a significant sociology. A significant
sociology, on this view, is one committed to furthering and
sustaining a truly democratic social order.

Critical sociologists maintain that mainstream Amer-
ican sociology not only contains an inherent conservative
political bias, but that it also places too much emphasis on
the Comtian notion that knowledge of society and the practical
application of such knowledge is to be left solely in the
hands of experts, an intellectual elite. Critical sociologists
see the predominant positivistic methodology and the function-
alist theoretical framework lending support to such an elitist
view of the practical implications of the study of sociology.

That is to say, critical sociologists are charging that the education of the masses (the electorate in a democratic society) has never been a principal concern of mainstream sociologists.

It is precisely in this area of general social education that critical sociologists believe sociology could have its greatest practical import. In terms reminiscent of C. Wright Mills' earlier statement of this position, Irving Louis Horowitz comments:

> The originating basis and ultimate purpose
> of sociology, as of any scientific discipline,
> is the formation of intelligent publics who
> are in a position to utilize that which they
> have learned and, as a matter of fact, who
> define the learning process precisely as the
> utilization and central sifting of information
> ...Hence, the purpose of learning sociology
> is the transformation of unformed and
> uninformed men into decision-making creative
> persons. [1]

So, rather than feed information to those in power in government, the military, and business, critical sociologists urge their colleagues to turn their attention to the underprivileged masses and help them come to understand their plight and of what can be done to rectify this unjust situation.[2]

In order for sociologists to carry out this task described above they must, in the view of critical sociologists, first put their own house in order; that is, the sociological profession must be made more democratic. One aspect of this call to bring greater democracy to the sociological profession has already been discussed at length. In discussing the relationship between sociological research and social policy

in Chapter II, it was noted that critical sociologists gener-
ally favor giving sociological researchers more autonomy in
order to check the undue influence of private and public
funding organizations over the conduct of social research.
More autonomous sociological researchers, it was further
maintained, would be more likely to engage in more signifi-
cant research; they would not be afraid to tackle research
topics which involved delving into controversial social issues.

Greater democracy in sociology also means accepting,
on a more or less equal footing, all of the various methodolo-
gical and theoretical approaches that sociology has to offer.
Whatever harsh words these critical sociologists express to-
wards quantitative methods, functionalism, or other popular
subjects for criticism, they almost invariably agree that
such methodological and theoretical approaches have a legiti-
mate place in sociology. What critical sociologists protest
is the attempt to present any particular approach as the only
legitimate one. As Alfred McClung Lee asserts: "...humanist
sociologists [i.e., critical sociologists] do not throw out
the triplet babies -- system, theory, and quantification --
with their intellectual bath water. To humanist sociologists,
system, theory, and quantification are useful tools, but they
are not a "holy trinity" that should be permitted to dominate
sociological research and thinking."[3]

According to the above view, the sociological profes-
sion is being urged to adopt a pluralistic approach toward the
practice of sociology -- sociologists should both accept and

utilize various methods and theories in investigating social

phenomena and reporting their findings: "...it is evident

that wisdom as well as common sense, dictates an awareness

that sociology is not a monolithic entity, but a history, a

style, and a series of options."[4]

That no one methodological or theoretical approach or

no one school of thought be allowed to dominate the work of

sociologists is a principle which has a direct counterpart in

the democratic society toward the realization of which this

democratic sociology aims. The domination of an intellectual

elite in society is viewed as being just as repugnant and un-

acceptable as the domination of any particular school of

thought in sociology. The implications of supporting or re-

jecting such elitism are clearly set forth by T.B. Bottomore

in the following passage:

> If the aim of sociology is taken to be the
> discovery of the hidden mechanism of social
> life, which is then communicated in the train-
> ing of a small elite of 'social engineers',
> this does entail the production and repro-
> duction of a form of domination. But if the
> aim is seen as the diffusion through society
> of an understanding of how social relation-
> ships are established, persist, or can be
> changed -- as a kind of public enlightenment --
> then its effects can well be seen as liberating.[5]

Likewise, Richard Flacks, in criticizing what he sees

as Alvin Gouldner's preoccupation with reforming sociology

rather than society, takes a definite anti-elitist stance.

With C. Wright Mills clearly in mind here, he states that:

"...the purpose of sociology is above all, to strive to

improve the capacity of ordinary people to understand social

reality, to locate themselves historically, and to comprehend

the consequences of existing or potential social patterns."[6]

It should come as no surprise to find these critical sociologists drawing upon major arguments presented in Mills' The Sociological Imagination in defending the democratic alternative to established sociology and society. As I have noted on several previous occasions, Mills' work has had a tremendous influence on this critical movement as a whole, and that influence is no more evident than with respect to this call for greater democracy in sociology and society.

Certainly a major aspect of The Sociological Imagination is Mills' effort to free sociology (i.e., free the "sociological imagination") from the dominant styles of work; namely, "abstracted empiricism" and "grand theory". In Mills' view, sociology needs to be freed from the dominance of these defective styles of work so that it can more effectively carry out its educational function, thereby enhancing the prospects of realizing a truly democratic social order. Logically enough, as Howard Press notes in his critical review of Mills' life and work, the ideal of Jeffersonian grass-roots democracy greatly appealed to Mills. Indeed, if one had to characterize his political position it would be that of a "radical democrat".[7]

The importance of America's democratic heritage for later critical sociologists is also clearly in evidence. Some of their proposals can be traced directly to principles laid down some 200 years ago in the founding of our system of representative democracy. Among the best examples of this is Dennis Foss's "new" orientation for the profession. At

one point, Foss describes this new orientation in the follow-
ing terms:

> Ultimately, then, what is proposed is: the
> optimization of alternatives open to every
> individual compatible with the equal opti-
> mization of alternatives open to all --
> each individual's freedom should be con-
> tinually increased up to the point that it
> begins to interfere with the optimization
> of freedom of others. 8

Here are presented two basic principles of American democracy:
that individuals be allowed to pursue whatever life-course
they desire and that this freedom be limited only to the ex-
tent that it harms or hinders others.[9]

Another "radical democrat", Alfred McClung Lee, also
draws heavily on this democratic heritage in arguing for his
"humanist-existential" value orientation. "The rough humanist-
existential paradigm calls for a man-centered sociology in
the service of human needs and goals as they are popularly
defined. Thus, it is democratically oriented by its very
nature."[10] Maximum individual autonomy and popular partici-
pation in the shaping of public policy are the key elements
of Lee's conception of the democratic alternative. It is
"people power", ultimately, that Lee presents as the panacea
for what ails both sociology and society.[11]

In addition to drawing upon Mills' work and the demo-
cratic tradition in America, critical sociologists also connect
with a major theme in the work of members of the Frankfurt
School. The critical theorists of the Frankfurt School main-
tain that the development of modern civilization as a whole,
including both capitalist and communist worlds, is in the

direction of increasing domination of the individual. There
is the economic and political domination of the ruling classes
over the underprivileged masses, and there is also the domi-
nation of certain modes of thought -- modes of thought which
contain no critical perspective and which often serve as
rationalizations for the status quo. In the face of this, the
proper job of the social critic is to oppose this trend, to
make criticism rather than rationalization of the status quo
central to one's work. Similarly, critical sociologists see
this as the proper function of sociology: "In summary terms,
a responsible sociology has the dual task of developing a
critique of all forms of social oppression and of all forms
of social science that serve to support such oppression."[12]
Put simply, this view holds that the only responsible soci-
ology is a critical sociology.

In opposing these various forms of domination, criti-
cal sociologists can be seen (and clearly want to be seen) as
coming to the rescue of the beleaguered, dominated individual.
They oppose mainstream sociology's "oversocialized conception
of man",[13] in which the individual is lost sight of in the
overriding concern with studying the larger social order. In
Alfred McClung Lee's terms, critical sociologists should try
"to identify and to grasp opportunities for the magnification
of the individual's potential in society."[14] Or, as Alvin
Gouldner states in presenting his view of the proper role of
the social critic: "The critic affirms the creative potenti-
alities of the individual, and he opposes these to the con-

formity demands of established institutions,..."[15]

Although critical sociologists' defense of the individual, their opposition to social, political, and economic domination, and their advocacy of the democratic alternative all connect with arguments put forth by members of the Frankfurt School, there are significant differences which, I believe, point to serious shortcomings in the position of critical sociologists. Most significantly, this individualistic-democratic orientation leads to a rejection of any holistic, objective conception of society as inherently conservative and inadequate. But it is precisely a holistic, objective conception of society that members of the Frankfurt School, and, indeed, Elijah Jordan maintain is more in line with the reality. On this fundamental point, among others, we shall see significant differences emerge as we proceed to discuss the various facets of these critical sociologists' individualistic-democratic orientation in light of the Frankfurt School and Jordan's critical observations on the validity of such an orientation.

(2) Domination of the Individual in Mainstream Sociological Thought

Among the most important premises Anderson and Gibson lay down in setting forth their conception of a new, more significant sociology in their text, appropriately entitled Toward a New Sociology, is the following: "Individuals as members of groups define the form and content of society and history. As architects of society and history, individuals

are capable of changing the structure of society and the course of history."[16] This could serve as a major premise of the sociological critique of American sociology as a whole.[17] Critical sociologists argue that a fundamental shortcoming in the work of mainstream sociologists is the neglect of the individual. From the work of Auguste Comte to that of Talcott Parsons, the emphasis has been on how social structure and social processes shape the individual rather than the other way around.

The social determinism of mainstream sociology runs contrary to the democratic alternative which critical sociologists advocate, for their call for increased democracy in the practice of sociology and in society presupposes that individuals, in the words of Robert Lynd, be seen as "the active carriers, perpetuators, and movers of culture..."[18] It is through a sound education (i.e., through changing the minds of these individuals) that radical social change can be effected, and this is a task for which the "new sociology" is especially designed. From Mills' "sociological imagination", to Gouldner's "reflexive sociology", to Lee's humanistic sociology, the focus is upon bringing to individuals a greater awareness of their plight and of what they can do to improve their situation.

Whereas critical sociologists maintain that their individualistic orientation is the core of radical, critical, humanistic sociology, the social deterministic orientation of mainstream sociology is characterized as conservative, con-

formist, and ultimately, anti-humanistic. Any sociologist
who deigns to investigate the nature of social order or who
goes as far as to adopt a holistic perspective is thereby
accused of committing himself, wittingly or unwittingly, to
a conservative political position. Alvin Gouldner's treat-
ment of the work of Plato and Parsons is a case in point. In
comparing their views of society, Gouldner notes, "In both
views,...men are viewed as lacking reality, or true human-
ness apart from their involvement in or dependence upon God
or Society."[19] This "God or Society", Gouldner argues, rep-
resents nothing more than the sanctification of the status
quo; hence the charge that there is a conservative bias built
into their theories. Finally, Gouldner maintains that the
overriding concern with order in the work of Plato and Parsons
precludes a concern for freedom, happiness, or equality.[20]

That all sociological theories which deal with the
question of social order and which adopt a social (as opposed
to an individualistic) theoretical perspective must be regard-
ed as inherently conservative is certainly open to question.
Indeed, the charge that Plato's "God" is actually a glorified
symbol of the status quo is an interpretation seriously
challenged by members of the Frankfurt School, among others.
In their discussion of the relation of the individual and
society, members of the Frankfurt School point out that Plato's
view of this relation -- that individuals achieve the best life
possible in the context of the larger social order -- is pre-
mised on the realization of a just, well-ordered society,

which is not to be equated with the status quo.[21]

In addition to being viewed as conservative, conformist, and anti-humanistic, social theories which place society above the individual are generally considered part and parcel of the economic and political domination of the individual in modern society. Domination of the individual in a theoretical sense is held to be just as serious as other forms of domination. In this regard, Robert Friedrichs notes that: "Manipulating symbols of man rather than man himself may indeed be a greater actual threat to the traditional image of the humanity of man than any steps that have been taken to date to "control" him physically."[22] In what sense mainstream sociology threatens the "humanity of man" is suggested by Alvin Gouldner: "...an objectivistic sociology that seeks to establish natural laws and which views men as objects in exactly the same way as a natural science does, already rests upon a thingified conception of man that is inherently antithetical to the goal of human emancipation."[23]

The significance of the above observations by two prominent critical sociologists lies in the fact that they relate directly to another main theme in the work of critical theorists of the Frankfurt School. These critical theorists are particularly concerned with the domination of certain modes of thought which preclude or "eclipse", in Max Horkheimer's words, critical modes of thought. The lack of critical thinking -- thinking which ultimately derives from some vision of a better society -- means the continued dominance of modes of

thought which are designed to do no more than clarify, categorize, and explain (i.e., rationalize) the existing social order, but never challenge it.

Clearly, a major target for such criticism is positivism, particularly as this mode of thought is manifested in the social sciences. "The entire Frankfurt School tradition (from Horkheimer to Habermas) has constituted a sustained attack on positivism because it implies a subordination and capitulation to the reality of existing social forms, namely, capitalism."[24] Moreover, as Gouldner likewise points out in drawing upon this tradition: "...positivism itself was grounded in a specific ideology and politics: the politics of "what is". It is the tacit affirmation that "what is", the status quo, is basically sound; that it only needs to be fine tuned through the use of new social science and of a "positive" appreciation of "what is", scientifically formulated by the new sociological priesthood."[25] Evidence of the inherent conservatism of the predominant methodological and theoretical approaches of mainstream sociology presented in the last two chapters could be cited in support of the above argument.

So, an important segment of the structure of domination in modern society is that of thought which stresses adaptation to the ways things are. On this view, freedom for the individual to achieve a better life is premised on the elimination of such modes of thought as positivism, which, at base, can do no more than reflect the established social order. On this much there is general agreement between critical sociologists

and critical theorists. Disagreement becomes manifest when one looks at their respective views of how the emancipatory potential of society can be realized.

It is important to note that in drawing upon the work of members of the Frankfurt School, critical sociologists have, by and large, favored the work of the most contemporary figure connected with this school, Jurgen Habermas, as opposed to the work of Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse who could reasonably be said to have constituted the core of the school. That critical sociologists would focus on Habermas gives us a fairly clear indication of their view as to how radical social change is to be effected. Commenting on the two principal views of social change among critical theorists, John Sewart says of Habermas's view:

> The model <u>critically</u> adopted by Habermas
> for the practical realization of critical
> theory is Freudian psychoanalysis. Habermas
> finds within psychoanalysis an emancipatory
> project of therapy....
>   The goal is to further self-reflection
> and self-knowledge in the patient and ulti-
> mately explain and remove unnecessary forms
> of domination. 26

Refering to this later as Habermas's "talking therapy", Sewart brings out the strong psychological overtones of this view of radical social change.

Habermas's "talking therapy" ties in directly with critical sociologists' persistent call for the development of greater self-awareness and self-reflection among sociologists generally. This theme is perhaps most clearly exemplified in Alvin Gouldner's call for a "reflexive sociology".[27]

Although both Habermas and Gouldner acknowledge the need for more concrete economic and political change, they view the lack of self-awareness among social scientists and people generally as the major obstacle to true human emancipation. As Trent Schroyer points out in his reconceptualization of critical theory along lines laid down by Habermas: "...the scientistic image of science is the fundamental false consciousness of our epoch. If the technocratic ideology is to lose its hold on our consciousness, a critical theory must lay bare the theoretical reifications of this scientistic image of science."[28]

On the other hand, John Sewart aptly characterizes the other prominent view of social change contained in critical theory as following along more traditional Marxian lines with its emphasis on changing material conditions. Although there can be no doubt that the critique of positivism is a focal point of discussion for the Frankfurt School as a whole, the vision of the free society which they are striving to realize points to the existence of a significant difference between Habermas and other principal members of the Frankfurt School.

Whereas Habermas sees the reform of language as the basic prerequisite to emancipation,[29] Marcuse, for example, sees change in the material organization of society as essential. With Marcuse's work in mind, John Sewart notes, "Critical theory must determine the "concrete roads" leading its agents of revolutionary praxis to the realization of a just society."[30] Among these "concrete roads", Marcuse

focuses particularly on automation and its potential for free-
ing people from necessary labor.[31] In addition, Marcuse argues
that the provision of basic life necessities to all people
must be considered a fundamental prerequisite to the reali-
zation of a just and humane social order.[32]

That critical sociologists would tend to favor
Habermas's views over those of someone such as Marcuse is
congruent with their commitment to cultivating greater self-
awareness among sociologists in particular and people in
general. Critical self-awareness -- the ability to overcome
dominating and uncritical modes of thought such as exempli-
fied in positivism -- is viewed as the key to human emancipa-
tion. Alvin Gouldner's program for an emancipatory sociology
is a prominent example of this line of reasoning:

> It is the function of the emancipatory social
> sciences to liberate man's reason from any
> force, in or out of himself, symbolic, or not,
> in the psyche and in society, that cripples
> and confuses reason. It is the special
> function of the social sciences continuously
> to dissolve man's opaqueness to himself; to
> help him understand those forces that act
> upon him that he ordinarily finds unintelligi-
> ble; and to help him transform these natural
> forces that use him as an object into
> humanly controllable forces under his control.[33]

Although there is some recognition here of the need for larger
changes in society, the thrust of Gouldner's program (indeed,
of this critical movement as a whole) is aimed at the psycho-
logical demand for greater self-awareness.

The view of true human emancipation which emerges
here is primarily a negative one, negative in the sense that
emancipation is seen entirely as that condition in which

individuals are freed from the bonds of all forms of domination. It is the self-reliant, self-determined individual, the anti- thesis of the "cheerful robot", that is the ideal outcome, the fruit of an emancipatory sociology. Because Marcuse is pessimistic about the possibility of realizing a society of completely self-determined individuals he is denounced as a doomsday theorist by Alfred McClung Lee.[34]

Significantly, this view of the individual and of emancipation clashes greatly with the basic position of the Frankfurt School, a position which is likewise committed to the emancipation of the individual. Rather than defend the separate and distinct, self-determined individual, these critical theorists defend the so-called "over-socialized conception of man". As they point out: "No matter how one-sidedly sociology, due to its posture within the division of labor of the sciences, may have overemphasized the primacy of society over the individual, still thereby it offers a necessary corrective for the illusion, that it is due to his natural disposition, his psychology, and out of himself alone that each single human being has become what he is."[35] In other words, "Human life is essentially and not merely accidentally social life."[36]

On the basis of this different view of the relation between the individual and society put forth by these critical theorists, the conception of how true human emancipation is achieved changes considerably from the conception offered by critical sociologists. Rather than emphasize negative

freedom (i.e., the individual's freedom from constraints

imposed by society), these critical theorists argue that the

truly free individual and a just social order go hand in

hand:

> The most important consequence to be drawn
> from insights into the interaction of the
> individual and society -- and to be sure,
> just that which positivistic sociology
> avoids -- is that the human being is capa-
> ble of realizing himself only within a
> just and humane society. This insight is
> already contained in the Platonic theme,
> that functional social coherence is the
> precondition for the actualization of the
> Idea implanted in every human being. Only
> the just society will permit the human
> being to realize his Idea. 37

Critical theorists are particularly skeptical of the

notion that a progressive, free society can be constructed on

the basis of the kind of individualism these critical sociolo-

gists espouse. The free individual, unrestrained by larger

social forces, in the view of members of the Frankfurt School,

is in fact not only a myth but also part and parcel of the

ideology of capitalism -- the "rugged individualism" of the

free market. As Max Horkheimer points out, however, these

so-called "rugged individuals", even those who rise to the

top, are subordinate to the demands of the larger economic

order: "In the era of free enterprise, the so-called era of

individualism, individuality was most completely subordinated

to self-preserving reason."[38] Moreover, as Horkheimer goes

on to note:

> The absolutely isolated individual has
> always been an illusion. The most esteemed
> personal qualities, such as independence,
> will to freedom, sympathy, and sense of

> justice, are social as well as individual
> virtues. The fully developed individual
> is the consumation of a fully developed
> society. The emancipation of the indi-
> vidual is not an emancipation from society
> but the deliverance of society from atom-
> ization, an atomization that may reach its
> peak in periods of collectivization and mass
> culture. 39

That is to say, no just, humane society is going to result

from the kind of program of increased self-awareness advocated

by critical sociologists. Without addressing the underlying

economic, political, and social injustice of the prevailing

social order, the emancipated individual they speak of will

remain, in the words of members of the Frankfurt School, the

"absolute cliche".[40]

Critical sociologists fail to see that the individual

is bound up with a larger institutional order, which means

that no program of social change that places the emphasis on

changing individuals, in the absence of basic institutional

change, can be effective. There are also considerable

grounds for challenging critical sociologists' abiding faith

in democracy as both the means to and the end of a truly just

society. From C. Wright Mills to Alfred McClung Lee, critical

sociologists have persistently advocated the dissemination of

sociological knowledge among the general populace so that

individuals may participate more fully in a democratic

decision-making process and thereby become self-determining,

free individuals living in a social order of their own making.

Yet aside from the questionable assumption that sociological

knowledge can indeed enlighten the public in a significant

way,[41] this optimistic assessment of democracy flounders on

its disregard for the necessity of institutional change.

Although democracy does address the evils of authoritarian rule and does bring the masses into the political process, democracy does not encompass, as Elijah Jordan perceptively notes: "...suggestions as to the nature or the structure of the state, no hint as to how the functioning of the institutions of life are to be organized into a corporately integrated whole, no picture at all of that order which is the ground of all meanings in political or public life."[42] Put otherwise, critical sociologists' promotion of the democratic ideal amounts to nothing more than a program to increase social and self-consciousness while leaving intact the institutional framework of modern society. In the end, the inadequacy of this position derives from their inability to see (and even disdain for the notion) that this larger institutional order is the fundamental reality. In contrast, it is this very insight into the larger order of things, along with a recognition of the inadequacy of individualism, that Jordan opens his Forms of Individuality:

> It seemed strange that the system of practical
> principles whose primary purpose is to exalt
> the individual should nevertheless produce a
> complete submergence of the individual in what
> appears to be sub-human or super-human mecha-
> nism; and this contradiction impressed me
> with the idea of the possible transference of
> the will-life from the human individual,
> considered as an instrument and ground of
> values, to the super-human corporate individual
> [i.e., the institution]... [43]

By and large, critical sociologists have been content

merely to advocate greater democracy, greater individual freedom in lieu of any real discussion of what constitutes a free and just society. That is to say, for all the effort devoted to glorifying the individual and emphasizing the power of the free individual to initiate beneficial social change, little of any substance is said about the institutions of such a society -- the kind of economy, government, or education that would make up a just society. These critical sociologists appear to be saying that the problem of organizing the complex institutional network of modern society in such a way as to provide a meaningful, decent existence for all people can be solved by merely granting individuals greater personal freedom.

Ultimately, in the view of critical sociologists, it is the free and open expression of opinion that emerges as both the mechanism and end of social change. "In the end, there is probably no more powerful mechanism of social change than people's talk."[44] And not just any kind of talk, but for Gouldner, it is manly, face-to-face talk. But just how this, or any other kind of talk for that matter, is to result in or be considered the end of a free and just society is never made clear.

(3) The "Endless Dialectic"

In light of critical sociologists' belief in the efficacy of the free and open expression of opinion, John Seeley in his article, "The Making and Taking of Problems: Toward an Ethical Stance", aptly characterizes the program of

social change advocated by critical sociologists generally:

> As we begin to bring these beginnings
> together we would initiate, I should
> think, an appropriate endless dialectic
> in which the claims and cogencies of long
> and short perspectives, undying general
> principle and proximate practical pro-
> posal, present locations, desired future
> states and transition possibilities (all
> in their actual interpenetration) and the
> respective claims of knowing, and doing,
> acting and reflecting, could be brought
> into never-ending collision and cohabi-
> tation. (my emphasis) 45

As stated in one way or another by nearly all of the major
figures of this critical movement, the hoped for result of
the sociological critique of American sociology is to initiate
an "endless dialectic".

Although only Seeley makes use of this specific term,
the essential meaning of his recommendation is conveyed by
slightly different terminology by other critical sociologists.
Robert Friedrichs, for example, prefers the term "dialogue"
to dialectic because of the Marxian overtones of the latter
term.[46] Among other expressions used are: "an ensuing debate",[47]
"continuing dialogue",[48] and "creative confusion".[49] To these,
Alvin Gouldner alone adds: "reflexive rational social inquiry",[50]
"energizing tension",[51] and a "contestful friction of minds".[52]

The use of such terminology indicates that the way
sociologists ought to assist in bringing about a new social
order and the kind of society this is to be involves a process
of conflict, of debate, of talk. And, significantly, this is
to be an endless process of dialogue and debate, for as Alvin
Gouldner recommends: "We want to understand our social world

and ourselves and others in it, so that we may change it in ways that enable us to understand it still better, to have fuller rational discourse in it, so that we may better be able to change it, and so on [and so on, and so on,...] ."[53]

That the statement of their program of social change emphasizes discussion and debate helps explain, in part, critical sociologists' preoccupation with changing sociology rather than changing society itself.[54] Moreover, the emphasis on discussion and debate is clearly revealed in the meaning they attach to the term "dialectic", which, although borrowed from Marx and Hegel, is used in a much different sense.

The "endless dialectic" that John Seeley talks about, and that other critical sociologists refer to in various guises, essentially entails nothing more than continuous discussion and debate. Contradictions arise and are resolved all on the level of communication, of talk. Alvin Gouldner uses such terms to characterize his purpose in writing The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology:

> The study here is part of an effort to lay
> a basis for developing a third form of
> discourse that eludes the pretentiousness,
> false consciousness, and limits of both
> social science and ideology, as we have
> lived them historically. It is a probe
> toward a more transcending form of discourse
> that we might call reflexive rational social
> inquiry, toward a critical theory that
> wonders about itself and about the world.[55]

In contrast, for both Hegel and Marx, the dialectic involved much more than discussion and debate -- it described a process of broad historical change.

For Marx, the dialectic is inextricably linked to his

materialism. Social change is engendered by contradictions arising in the economic system. Marx argues that in nineteenth-century Europe the contradictions inherent in the dominant capitalistic economic system (that, for example, the rich were getting richer and the poor poorer) had reached a point where revolution was inevitable and capitalism would be overturned and eventually supplanted by communism.[56] So, for Marx, dialectical social change entails a fundamental re-ordering of the economic structure and not merely a process of discussion and debate, as critical sociologists would have it. Certainly, capitalist ideology (to which conservative, mainstream sociology lends support, in the view of critical sociologists) will have to be overturned along with capitalist economic structure, but the priority clearly lies with economic structure, for as Marx asserts, "The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general."[57]

Logically enough, critical sociologists reject what they see as the economic determinism built into Marx's view of dialectical social change. Critical sociologists typically distinguish the young, philosophical Marx from the old, scientific-deterministic Marx. The latter is criticized for being anti-individual, for supporting the notion that the "social" takes precedence over the individual, albeit that the "social" would involve a fundamental re-ordering of economic relations. Alvin Gouldner and Robert Friedrichs, in particular, disavow the so-called later Marx. In the Intro-

duction to _The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology_ Gouldner
says that he prefers the label "Maoist" to "Marxist" because
he sees the spirit of the Chinese cultural revolution more
congruent with his own view of social change. Likewise,
Friedrichs shies away from the use of the term dialectical
because he does not want his position too closely associated
with that of Hegel and Marx.[58]

To argue as I have -- that critical sociologists'
notion of dialectical social change neglects the Marxian
emphasis on economic structure -- does not mean that we must
reject their view of social change merely because it runs con-
trary to that of Marx. Indeed, as twentieth-century Marxists,
particularly members of the Frankfurt School, have maintained,
Marx's theory of social change leaves something to be desired,
especially as regards the nullifying effects of an increasing
standard of living and the influence of mass culture in de-
laying the onset of the proletarian revolution which was to
sweep the capitalist world. Nonetheless, we should not lose
sight of the valuable and valid point that emerges from a
comparison of these two distinctive views of the dialectic;
namely, that critical sociologists fail to address the crucial
question of how the material structure, the relations among
institutions, are to be organized and ordered. When we re-
call, as Elijah Jordan points out, that the lives of indi-
viduals are bound up with these institutions, that it is
through these institutions that individuals achieve their
ends, then we must agree that this institutional system

cannot be ignored in any proposal that aims at bringing about
a just and free society.

As I have maintained throughout this chapter with res-
pect to critical sociologists' support for the individual and
for democracy, nothing concrete is ever proposed concerning
the make-up of a future, more humane social order. Everything
is left undetermined, a matter of endless debate and discussion.
Again, we can see evidence of that blind faith in the efficacy
of merely opening things up --- that somehow by incorporating
free and open discussion in sociology and in society as a
whole the conservative, anti-individual tendencies in main-
stream sociology and in the established social order will be
eliminated.

Such a program of social change as critical sociolo-
gists envision presupposes the soundness of sociology's method-
ological and theoretical base. The only obstacle to signifi-
cant social change on this view lies in sociologists' lack
of autonomy -- their inability or unwillingness to engage in
free and open discussion, to participate in the "endless
dialectic". As I have emphasized all along, however, this is
to overlook entirely the more basic and important question
of the adequacy of that methodological and theoretical base.
Elijah Jordan, in particular, calls into question some of
the predominant conceptions of society that sociologists have
adopted and finds them wanting for not having incorporated
the organized system of institutions which society manifestly
is.

There have been some attempts to spell out an alternative conception of society as a basis for a more significant sociology. This represents perhaps the most significant development within the context of the sociological critique of American sociology, and yet we will see that these alternative conceptions of society fail to go much beyond the conception of society upon which mainstream sociology rests.

NOTES

[1] Irving Louis Horowitz, "On Learning and Teaching Sociology" in Professing Sociology, written and edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, p.134.

[2] This point is nicely brought out in the concluding statement of one of the introductory sociology textbooks which derives its inspiration from this critical movement, Charles H. Anderson and Jeffrey Royle Gibson's Toward a New Sociology. The authos comment that: "The new sociologist will want to make a democratic effort to educate with concrete illustration in the ways of power; the means of manipulation and control; the roots of poverty; the basis of educational and income inequality; the uses of racism; the nature of materialism; and cultural intolerance -- in brief, to raise the level of general social awareness and common concern." p.400.

[3] Alfred McClung Lee, Sociology For Whom?, p.83. This is a position C. Wright Mills supports in directing his attack at the "intellectual duopoly" of "abstracted empiricism" and "grand theory". The Sociological Imagination, p.118.

[4] Irving Louis Horowitz, "Science and Revolution in Contemporary Sociology: Remarks to an International Gathering", The American Sociologist, 10(May 75), p.77.

[5] T.B. Bottomore, Sociology as Social Criticism, pp.15-16.

[6] Richard Flacks, "Notes on the 'Crisis in Sociology'", Social Policy, 2(May/Apr. 72), p.11.

[7] Howard Press, C. Wright Mills, pp.56-59. In a similar vein, Fred Blum states that: "...the ultimate value which permeated his work was the autonomy of the individual." "C. Wright Mills: Social Conscience and Social Values" in The New Sociology, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, p.173.

[8] Dennis Foss, The Value Controversy in Sociology, p.63.

[9] See Ernst B. Schulz's discussion of the relation between democracy and liberty. Democracy, pp.98-110.

[10] Alfred McClung Lee, Toward Humanist Sociology, p.128.

[11] In his characteristic style, Lee comments, "All social developments have this common basis: all social power derives from people as individuals, as groups, and as a whole..."
"Whatever optimism or pessimism we might have about the future of the human lot depends upon the relative speed with which broader popular participation may be achieved in the control and employment of social power. Will people learn how to participate in time to save themselves from the

short-sightedness and greed of entrepreneurs? Will people discover in time how to control themselves and their resources for humane ends? Or will they continue to serve mostly as pawns in the vast and hazardous game-plans of self-serving manipulators while the earth's resources are being exhausted and the human population continues to increase?" Sociology For Whom?, p.5.

[12]Charles H. Anderson and Jeffrey Royle Gibson, Toward a New Sociology, p.17.

[13]Dennis Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man", American Sociological Review, xxvi(1961), pp.183-192.

[14]Alfred McClung Lee, Toward Humanist Sociology, p.ix.

[15]Alvin Gouldner, Enter Plato, pp.169-170.

[16]Charles H. Anderson and Jeffrey Royle Gibson, Toward a New Sociology, p.7.

[17]For example, compare the above passage with the following assertion made by Alvin Gouldner: "The social system must be seen as a historical product, as a thing made and fashioned by men as active 'subjects', as continually remade and daily enacted by the ongoing doings of men, and hence as capable of being undone or redone by their future actions."
"The system, in short, depends upon men." , "Comments on History and Class Consciousness" in For Sociology, written and edited by Alvin Gouldner, p.417.

[18]Robert S. Lynd, Knowledge For What?, p.25.

[19]Alvin Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, p.419.

[20]Ibid., p.422.

[21]Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, Aspects of Sociology, translated by John Viertel, pp.46-47.

[22]Robert W. Friedrichs, A Sociology of Sociology, p.172.

[23]Alvin Gouldner, "The Politics of Mind" in For Sociology, written and edited by Alvin Gouldner, p.109.

[24]John Sewart, "Critical Theory and the Critique of Conservative Method", The American Sociologist, 13(Feb. 78), p.18.

[25]Alvin Gouldner, The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology, pp.37-38.

[26]John Sewart, "Critical Theory and the Critique of Conservative Method", The American Sociologist, 13(Feb. 78), p.20.

[27] "Emancipatory sociology" being a term consciously borrowed from Habermas. This term first comes into use in some of the essays contained in For Sociology, written and edited by Alvin Gouldner.

[28] Trent Schroyer, "A Reconceptualization of Critical Theory" in Radical Sociology, edited by J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach, p.135.

[29] Ibid., p.146.

[30] John Sewart, "Critical Theory and the Critique of Conservative Method", The American Sociologist, 13(Feb. 78), p.20.

[31] "Complete automation in the realm of necessity would open the dimension of free time as one in which man's private and societal existence would constitute itself. This would be the historical transcendence toward a new civilization." Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man, p.37.

[32] Ibid., p.5.

[33] Alvin Gouldner, "The Politics of Mind" in For Sociology, written and edited by Alvin Gouldner, p.102.

[34] Alfred McClung Lee, Sociology For Whom?, pp.160-166.

[35] Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, Aspects of Sociology, translated by John Viertel, p.45.

[36] Ibid., p.39.

[37] Ibid., pp.46-47.

[38] Max Horkheimer, The Eclipse of Reason, p.138. And as Elijah Jordan also points out, the individualistic emphasis in democracy "...explains why democracy has become so sacred a symbol to the businessman, and why oligarchy has constituted the modern state in the name of democracy." "The Role of Philosophy in Social Crisis", Ethics, LI(July 41), p.383.

[39] Ibid., p.135.

[40] Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, Aspects of Sociology, translated by John Viertel, p.48.

[41] Indeed, only Mills seriously questions the validity of the predominant modes of sociological work and proposes an alternative -- the sociological imagination. Later critical sociologists, as has been pointed out in other contexts, by and large do not question the basic theoretical and methodological underpinnings of contemporary American sociology and so readily accept all sociological knowledge as being significant.

[42]Elijah Jordan, "The Role of Philosophy in Social Crisis", _Ethics_, LI(July '41), p.383.

[43]Elijah Jordan, _The Forms of Individuality_, p.v.

[44]Alvin Gouldner, _The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology_, p.149.

[45]John Seeley, "The Making and Taking of Problems: Toward an Ethical Stance", in _The Relevance of Sociology_, edited by Jack Douglas, p.95.

[46]Robert W. Friedrichs, _A Sociology of Sociology_, p.322. Although, in at least one instance, he does use a phrase containing the term dialectic -- "a larger dialectic gestalt" -- to refer to this same notion. p.297.

[47]Dennis Foss, _The Value Controversy in Sociology_, p.xii.

[48]Alvin Gouldner, _The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology_, p.20.

[49]Frederick R. Lynch, "Is There a Behaviorist Bandwagon?", _The American Sociologist_, 10(May 75), p.90.

[50]Alvin Gouldner, _The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology_, p.19.

[51]Alvin Gouldner, _For Sociology_, p.361.

[52]_Ibid._, p.99.

[53]_Ibid._, p.101.

[54]Along with T.B. Bottomore, I believe Gouldner's effort to link the two is not convincing. Gouldner exaggerates the significance of sociology when he says, "They [sociologists] are not simply _studying_ a social world -- apart, but are contributing to the construction and destruction of social objects." Alvin Gouldner, _For Sociology_, p.105.

[55]Alvin Gouldner, _The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology_, p.19.

[56]A clear and concise presentation of Marx's dialectical materialism is to be found in _The Communist Manifesto_.

[57]Karl Marx, "Preface to the _Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy_" in _The Marx-Engels Reader_, edited by Robert Tucker, p.4.

[58]Robert W. Friedrichs, _A Sociology of Sociology_, p.322.

CHAPTER V

ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTIONS OF SOCIETY

(1) Introduction

Throughout my analysis of major themes in the soci-
ological critique of American sociology I have continually
noted the failure of these critical sociologists to address
basic methodological and theoretical issues. Instead, these
critics have chosen to focus their attack either upon indi-
vidual sociologists, their professional association, or a
particular theoretical orientation such as functionalism.
Critical sociologists have portrayed certain individual
sociologists as cowardly figures hiding behind the doctrine
of value-neutrality yet all the while implicitly supporting
the established social order. Sociologists' professional
association, the American Sociological Association, has, on
occasion, been singled out for its conservatism and its re-
luctance to take definite positions on some of the controversial
issues of our time. And, finally, sociologists espousing a
functionalist orientation (or any holistic orientation for
that matter) have frequently been denounced as arch-conserva-
tives supporting the increasing social domination of the
individual.

Yet, for all this criticism, some of which is ex-
pressed in harsh terms, seldom is there given any indication
that perhaps the problem with sociology, the reason for its
conservative bias, lies much deeper than individual sociolo-

gists, their professional association, or a particular theo-
retical orientation. In each of the preceding chapters it
has been suggested that the undesirable aspects of mainstream
American sociology do, in fact, derive from flaws in the
methodological and theoretical base of sociology.

In the last chapter we saw that some critical soci-
ologists have attempted to spell out a new direction for
sociology, one which is based upon the principles of democracy.
This attempt was shown to be neither new nor adequate. In
arguing for a more democratic sociology and a more democratic
society, emphasis was placed on "opening things up", on
making room for various methodological and theoretical per-
spectives, on defending the individual against social domi-
nation. This pluralistic, individualistic emphasis in the
sociological critique of American sociology not only does
not represent a significant advance over mainstream sociology
but it also has its basis in an inadequate view of the nature
of society.

In this chapter on alternative conceptions of society,
the analysis initiated in the previous chapter will be con-
tinued in that other prominent alternative conceptions of
society developed by critical sociologists will be discussed.
That some critical sociologists perceived the need to move
in this direction is based upon the recognition that a sig-
nificant sociology must derive from a sound understanding of
the nature of society.

Among the most prominent examples, in addition to

the democratic alternative discussed in the previous chapter, are the following. First, and most pervasive, is a negative example; namely, the criticism of functionalism as an inadequate theoretical framework. In rejecting functionalism, critical sociologists indicate the need for developing alternative, more adequate conceptions of society, conceptions which we will find implicit in their criticism. In addition, three others will be presented and critically analyzed: a phenomenological-existential view, a Marxist conception of society, and a synthesis of the views of Marx, Weber, and Mead.

All of these attempts to spell out an alternative conception of society ultimately fail to come up with a sound view of the nature of society. Indeed, as I intend to show, critical sociologists' efforts in this direction have not gone much beyond mainstream sociology. In contrast, some insights of an economist into our modern economic system will be presented and it will be suggested that critical sociologists adopt a similar view in developing an alternative conception of society as the basis for a more significant sociology. In line with this, a more thoroughgoing and valid alternative to the predominant view of society held by mainstream sociologists will be presented.

What this chapter will suggest, above all else, is that the key to a more significant sociology lies with a philosophical reassessment of the theoretical and methodological base of mainstream sociology, a philosophical reassess-

ment which I have contended is contained in the work of the Frankfurt School and in the philosophy of Elijah Jordan. To their credit, some critical sociologists did perceive the need to move in this direction, as we will see in this chapter; however, they generally failed to come up with any significant alternatives. This chapter, then, will set the stage for the concluding chapter in which we will review this failure of critical sociologists to address those basic philosophical issues which lie at the heart of the problems in mainstream sociology that they point to.

(2) The Alternative Conception of Society Implicit in the Criticism of Functionalism

If there is one sociologist and one theoretical perspective that has been the principal target for critical sociologists, it is Talcott Parsons and his structural-functionalism. In each of the previous chapters Parsons and his theoretical perspective have been singled out for criticism. Indeed, critical sociologists' rejection of so-called mainstream sociology can largely be read as a rejection of Parsons' functionalism. In this chapter criticism of Parsons work will also be discussed, but it will be discussed with a view to what clues this criticism gives into alternative conceptions of society which are implicit in it.

Among the first, and certainly most influential, critical analyses of Parsons' work is that given by C. Wright Mills in The Sociological Imagination. Calling Parsons a "grand theorist", Mills proceeds to argue that he has devel-

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oped a theoretical framework which is at a level of generality and abstractness far removed from the actual workings of society. Moreover, grand theory can give us no insight into the problems which confront the individual and society, for as Mills comments:

> In The Social System Parsons has not been
> able to get down to the work of social
> science because he is possessed by the
> idea that the one model of social order
> he has constructed is some kind of univer-
> sal model; because, in fact, he has fe-
> tishized his Concepts. What is 'system-
> atic' about this particular grand theory
> is the way it outruns any specific empiri-
> cal problem. It is not used to state more
> precisely or more adequately any new
> problem of recognizable significance. It
> has not been developed out of any need to
> fly high for a little while in order to
> see something in the social world more
> clearly, to solve some problem that can
> be stated in terms of the historical real-
> ity in which men and institutions have
> their concrete being. Its problem, its
> course, and its solutions are grandly
> theoretical. [1]

To get down to earth, for Mills, entails developing some understanding of the structural features of society, which essentially involve the basic institutions of society. Parsons, in contrast, limits his analysis to "the institutionalization of values."[2] This kind of criticism points in the direction of an entirely different view of society, one which sees society as constituted essentially of institutions within which individuals have their being.[3] This is to argue that the problem with Parsons' functionalism derives principally from its underlying conception of society as something held together by common values.

Although Alvin Gouldner directed his criticism more
at Talcott Parsons himself than at his theoretical framework,
he did, on occasion, suggest that an inadequate conception
of society is the key to the problems with Parsons' theoreti-
cal framework. In reference to Parsons' analysis of Mills'
The Power Elite, Gouldner notes that Parsons overlooks the
importance of property and wealth as a source of power in
our society.[4] Then, in what I believe has to be considered
one of Gouldner's most insightful criticisms, he argues,

> It is clear, ...that, from Parsons' formu-
> lation of the social system, elements in
> men's biological constitution and physio-
> logical functioning, as well as features of
> their physical and ecological environment,
> are excluded. So too are the historically
> evolving cultural complexes of material
> objects, including tools and machines, even
> though these are man's own unique and dis-
> tinctive creations, the very products and
> the mediating elements of his social inter-
> action and communication, and even though
> they also include those instruments of
> transportation which make possible the very
> interchanges among social parts that con-
> stitute their interdependence. 5

This would seem to indicate that Gouldner, along with Mills,
believes that a structural, materialist view of society is
more adequate.

Although the passage above certainly suggests that
Gouldner supports such an alternative conception of society,
the thrust of his work as a whole has been in an entirely
different direction. As was brought out in the last chapter,
Gouldner, along with other major figures in the sociological
critique of American sociology, have sought to restore the
individual to a central place in sociology and in society.

They have argued against any holistic perspective; that is, any perspective which views society as a system and which concerns itself with the problem of social order. Such a perspective, it is argued, is necessarily conservative, anti-individual, and in their view, false.

So, at the same time that Gouldner can make the above comments concerning the importance of the material structure of society, he also attacks Parsons for having conceived of the individual as "an entirely 'social' creature, as an empty, hollowed out container that depends entirely upon experience in the training by social systems,..."[6] Parsons fails to see, as Gouldner goes on to point out, that human beings are not mere social products -- that "Human beings are as much engaged in using social systems as in being used by them. Men are social-system using and social-system-building creatures."[7] Such criticism points in the direction of an alternative conception of society which places more stress on the individual and his ability to change society.

Part and parcel of the criticism that functionalism omits the individual is the criticism that functionalism cannot account for social change and social conflict. It is because the individual is downplayed and social order is emphasized that the crucial elements of conflict and change are left out of account. Hence, Parsons' functionalism is seen as the exemplar of conservative sociological theory -- that it is at base a rationalization for the status quo, that it is committed to the present society despite the dilemmas,

contradictions, and tensions within it.

This connection between Parsons' neglect of the individual and the conservative bias built into his theoretical framework is brought out in his concluding statement of an essay appropriately entitled, "The World View of Talcott Parsons". The author comments:

> In conclusion, I would say that Parsons
> exhibits a consistent tendency to gloss
> over the horrors of industrial society
> with bland phrases, tricks of definition,
> thinly disguised cliches and arrogance;
> and to abolish all individual values
> other than those which serve the "total
> system". The Parsonian world does not
> provide for any possibility of a discon-
> tinuity between the individual's day-to-
> day life inside the system and its effects
> upon the inner world of his own personality.[8]

Or, as Alfred McClung Lee charges, "Instead of being focused on the dynamic relations of individuals and groups to social process for the benefit of people, they [the majority of sociologists, meaning primarily sociologists with a function-alist orientation] are preoccupied with the maintenance of 'social equilibrium' in its ramifications -- in other words, with how to maintain the status quo."[9]

The crucial elements of the alternative conception of society which emerges from this criticism of Parsons' func-tionalism are the individual and conflict. That is to say, according to this view, sociologists stand more to gain by viewing society as consisting of individuals whose relations are often filled with tension and conflict. In characterizing George Herbert Mead's view of society, Alvin Gouldner captures the essence of this alternative conception of society: "Mead,

...rejects an image of the social world as a given, neatly arranged static order; both view it instead as a tensionful, changing, open-ended, loosely stranded, somewhat indeterminate and fluid process."[10]

Among critical sociologists generally this individualistic, conflict view of society is expressed in a couple of different forms. Some critical sociologists turned to a phenomenological-existential perspective, while others turned to the "early" Marx as an alternative to mainstream sociology. We will see that these two alternatives are largely congruent with the alternative conception of society that emerges from the criticism of Parsons' functionalism.

(3) The Phenomenological-Existential Alternative

In large part, the adoption of a phenomenological-existential perspective by some critical sociologists reflects a dissatisfaction with mainstream sociology's scientific methodology. It is argued that the widely-used survey research techniques, such as the questionnaire and the interview, are superficial; no real attempt is made to understand a person's social behavior from the perspective of that person. To understand social behavior truly, so the argument goes, requires the adoption of an empathetic or participant observation approach.

Jack Douglas, in his collection of critical sociological essays entitled The Relevance of Sociology, aptly characterizes the distinctive nature of this phenomenological-

existential perspective:

> Science as we have known it tends to be
> abstractionist and comparative, to seek
> the general in the particular. Yet man's
> everyday existence is concrete and par-
> ticular, this immediate existence full
> of uncertainty and contingency, which
> concerns us most about man. And it is
> this realm of experience which we can
> understand most fully through poetic
> and artistic forms of knowledge.[11]

Such an approach to studying social behavior is embodied in

a radically new methodology known as "ethnomethodology", which

came on scene in the 1960's. As two practitioners of this

new method describe it, ethnomethodologists study social

phenomena by focusing on "...embodied, sensuous, human activ-

ity, in talk and in actions."[12]

Rather than consider further the specifics of an

ethnomethodological or phenomenological approach to social

research, let us turn to the more relevant question of the

alternative conception of society embodied in the phenomeno-

logical-existential perspective. Of course, arguing that the

most valid approach to understanding social behavior involves

adopting the perspective of the individual or group you are

studying clearly implies an emphasis upon psychological fac-

tors. As Jack Douglas notes, in pointing out the need for

personal involvement and participation in social research,

"...social behavior is meaningful behavior and...any valid

and worthwhile explanation of social behavior will involve

social meanings as the fundamental causal variables."[13]

Underlying the phenomenological-existential perspec-

tive, then, is a view of society which emphasizes individual

self-determination and creativity as opposed to the view which stresses the structural aspects of society. Alvin Gouldner sees such a view of society expressed in the work of Erving Goffman. He calls Goffman's a "radically different and comprehensive theoretical model,..."[14], which presents a challenge to the functionalists' focus on the larger social order. More specifically, Gouldner notes, "...Goffman's image of social life is not of firm, well-bounded social structures, but rather of a loosely stranded, criss-crossing, swaying catwalk along which men dart precariously."[15]

This emphasis upon the individual and upon the pervasive feature of conflict is best displayed in the work of Alfred McClung Lee. Indeed, we should recall that Lee himself labeled his distinctive approach a humanist-existential perspective. In Sociology For Whom? Lee indicates his agreement with the sophist Protagoras's maxim: "man is the measure of all things". Along these lines, Lee points out that his humanist-existential perspective "...is concerned primarily with individuals, with human expression and creativity, with human society and socializing, and with people's ability to persist and to flourish."[16]

Although the charge that mainstream sociology, in particular Parsons' functionalism, has a built-in conservative bias has merit, turning to an individualistic, conflict perspective is no real remedy for this problem. To focus on individuals, to attempt to see life from their point of view, however accurate one may be, still leaves out of account

important aspects of society which any sound alternative to mainstream sociology must include. Insight into the nature of modern society, as we will see Elijah Jordan argue, begins with the manifest fact that society is an organized system of institutions. This, I believe, is the essential starting-point for the development of a more significant sociology, not the phenomenological-existential alternative which is based on an inadequate view of the nature of society.

Some critical sociologists turned to Marx for an alternative theoretical perspective, and in so doing they would appear to have been sensitive to the kind of shortcomings of the phenomenological-existential alternative brought out above. Yet, interestingly enough, the predominant position among those who turned to Marx was to focus on the so-called "early Marx" who is said to be concerned less with socio-economic structure and more with the individual and the problem of alienation.

(4) The Marxian Alternative to Mainstream Sociology

The promise of developing a radical alternative to mainstream sociology out of the Marxian tradition is aptly set forth by Richard Flacks. He notes that more fundamental than research into the nature of the power structure "...is the task of making a theory -- a theory that will comprehend the operation of society in its totality, links the present with the past organically, and reveals the necessary contradictions and unravelings of the established social order."[17]

Such a holistic approach to understanding modern society, I believe, represents one of the more significant attempts to develop an alternative to mainstream sociology. It certainly suggests a radically different approach from those discussed previously in this chapter in which the individual was emphasized over and above social structure.

A structural Marxist approach is predominant among the essays contained in J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach's (eds.) volume, Radical Sociology. For example, L. Paul Metzger argues for a larger, structural approach to analyzing the race problem in contrast to Gunnar Myrdal and others' inadequate approach which focuses on beliefs and attitudes. Racism is seen as an outgrowth of capitalism.[18] In general, as Colfax himself asserts: "...there is reason to believe that a Marxist class-analysis of contemporary society holds the greatest promise for the transformation of sociological and social consciousness over the next decade."[19]

Herman and Julia Schwendinger's major study of the rise of early American sociology, The Sociologists of the Chair, derives from a structural Marxist point of view. In the Introduction to their study they note that in the work of other "radical" sociologists the commitment to radical, structural change is usually confined to a last paragraph or sentence in an article and that this commitment is usually stated in extremely vague terms.[20] This, of course, is a charge that has been levelled at the sociological critique of American sociology throughout this dissertation.

What I have called a structural Marxist view, however, has really been overshadowed by another view of the significance of Marx. This is a view which accepts the early Marx and rejects the later, deterministic-scientific Marx expressed in Capital.[21] What is objectionable about the later Marx is, in Robert Friedrichs' analysis, "that Marx's overall position took,...a markedly 'systemic' tone."[22] This systemic tone is reflected most clearly in the famous dictum that men's social being determines their consciousness, which, as Friedrichs goes on to argue, is a position which ignores "spontaneity, creativity, and existential risk,..."[23]

It is the young Marx, the Marx of alienation, that is the alternative that Alvin Gouldner eventually turns to. He sees the later Marx as essentially no different from Parsons or Plato and their concern with social order. As I have pointed out previously, it seems that all holistic, systemic views of society are rejected as inherently conservative -- that it is only insofar as one connects with the individual that one can develop a radically new view of society based on social change rather than social order. This is why the young Marx who talked about alienation has more of an attraction for critical sociologists such as Gouldner.

In the Preface to The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology, Gouldner makes it very clear that he does not want to be associated with any Marxist school or Marxist community. He prefers the position of "Marxist outlaw": "My own standpoint is essentially that of ridge rider: half

sociologist and half Marxist, and rebel against them both."[24]
After all, as Gouldner notes, "...the first commandment of
the dialectic is contradiction, negation, critique."[25] Ulti-
mately, the alternative that critics such as Friedrichs and
Gouldner turn to never goes beyond the injunction to be con-
stantly negative and critical, especially towards any social
practice or sociological concept which demeans the individual.
This alternative is as vague and ill-defined as the position
of Marxist outlaw described above.

(5) The Marx-Weber-Mead Alternative

Rather than reject the structural perspective of the
"later" Marx, some critical sociologists have sought to com-
bine it with certain social psychological insights in an
attempt to develop an alternative conception of society which
could serve as the basis for a more significant sociology.
The clearest example of such a synthesis is to be found in
Irving Zeitlin's Rethinking Sociology. Zeitlin argues that
a synthesis of the work of Karl Marx, Max Weber, George
Herbert Mead, and Sigmund Freud will result in a more valid
conception of society.

The contributions of Marx and Weber to this synthesis
are clearly set forth in the following passage:

> The advantage of what I have called the
> Marx-Weber model is that it keeps at the
> center of our attention the three most
> strategic institutional spheres of the
> present epoch: the economic, the political,
> and the military. For there can be no
> doubt that today and in the foreseeable
> future the most fateful question facing

> mankind is: Who controls the means of
> production, the means of political ad-
> ministration, and the means of violence?[26]

In addition to the obvious relation of this passage to C.
Wright Mills' argument in The Power Elite, it clearly under-
lines the importance of the structural aspects of society.

But such a view, to Zeitlin's way of thinking, is
missing something: it is missing a theory to account for the
interpersonal interaction that goes on within that structure.
"Because the Marx-Weber model is predominantly structural,
...it does not answer our need for a social psychology."[27]
A social psychology is needed to balance off the social de-
terministic overtones of Marx's views in particular (again,
as exemplified in the dictum that social being determines
social consciousness).

In Zeitlin's view, a more adequate conception of
society must give the individual a larger part to play than
is the case in various structural views. This is precisely
what he finds attractive about Mead's symbolic interaction-
ism:

> The relation of the individual to his world
> is an active process. It is only within this
> processual relation that things become what
> they are. In man this dialectical relation
> gives rise to reflection, which is also a
> form of action in which the individual con-
> verses with others and himself and therefore
> evokes in himself the same response (meaning)
> he does in others.[28]

The argument that Marx's structural perspective must
be supplemented by or integrated with a social psychological
perspective also finds its expression in a couple of textbooks

written in the spirit of this critical movement. For example,
William Chambliss and Thomas Ryther note that: "Marx's ver-
sion of conflict theory remains largely at the level of insti-
tutional analysis. However, as far as we can see, it contains
no principles inconsistent with the idea that social struc-
ture is a special kind of reality constructed out of shared
meanings."[29]

Borrowing some terminology from Charles Horton Cooley,
Charles Anderson and Jeffrey Royle Gibson, in their text,
Toward a New Sociology, assert that: "Individuals and society
are essentially 'twin-born',...."[30] As does Zeitlin, they
discuss at length the relevance of Marx's work, yet they
argue in the end that Marx's analysis must be supplemented
by Mead's social psychological insights.

Above all else, I believe these critical sociologists
are concerned with not losing sight of the individual in their
alternative conception of society. This explains these attempts
to synthesize two markedly different views of the nature of
society.

(6) The Structuralist Alternative

In contrast to these attempts to integrate Mead's social
psychology with Marx's structural perspective, some critical
sociologists have chosen to adhere to a strictly structuralist
point of view. They have not perceived any need to alter
Marx's argument in any fundamental way. In their view, Marx's
structural perspective is the most valid alternative to

mainstream sociology, as David Horowitz, for example, brings

out in the following passage from his introduction to a col-

lection of essays in radical sociology:

> ...the basic orientation of academic
> sociologists is <u>micro-social</u> in character:
> academic sociologists are chiefly concerned
> with individuals, groups, and institutions
> as they are influenced by or integrated into
> the prevailing social order. A typical mod-
> ern 'dictionary' of sociology, for example,
> defines 'social system' as 'a social group
> or set of interacting persons conceived of
> as distinct from the particular persons who
> compose it...'
> In contrast, radical sociology begins
> with a perspective in which the social sys-
> tem is the distinctive pattern of economic,
> political, and cultural relationships ac-
> cording to which a group organizes the
> production and distribution of goods and
> services necessary to sustain itself, and
> by which it insures the maintenance of its
> basic structures.[31]

This structuralist view, of course, is by no means

only connected with Marx. C. Wright Mills' notion of "big

range" sociology, which Irving Louis Horowitz comments on in

his introduction to The New Sociology, involves a larger view

of society than the predominant group and interpersonal inter-

action focus of mainstream sociology. This larger view of

society is reflected in Mills' interest in comparative, cross-

national research -- an area on which he had begun working

just prior to his death.[32]

Morris Janowitz's analysis of sociological research

on arms control provides a good example of the kind of "big

range" sociology that Mills had in mind. As Janowitz points

out, the important task in arms control research "...is to

inject into sociology -- from the study of small groups to

the analysis of international organizations -- a theoretical reconceptualization that sees the world as a social unit and is concerned with the basic transformation of the role of force within and between nation states."[33]

I would maintain that those critical sociologists who saw the need for an alternative conception of society which emphasized social structure present the only significant alternative to mainstream sociology. We have seen that the other alternative conceptions discussed in this chapter, even those inspired by Marx, are all individualistic at base. They all derive from the belief in the power of an individual to determine the course of his own life and that of society as well.

There are grounds for arguing that insofar as critical sociologists focus on the individual they are not really offering anything substantially different from the mainstream sociology they are seeking to separate themselves from. Both views are equally subjective. It is in this context that the following observation by a Soviet sociologist concerning Parsons' theory of society is entirely appropriate:

> In his solution to the problem of social laws, Parsons proves, as a matter of fact, to be an even greater "individualist" than the upholders of traditional individualism. In his concept of "normative order", social law is wholly subjectivized: it is directly identified with individual positions and tendencies and is transformed into a projection of the personal will of one person upon the personal will of another. "The theory of social action" proves upon examination to be merely a reformulation of a traditional ideological doctrine (the theory of society as a "mechanical sum of atoms").[34]

Indeed, the contention that sociology, at base, presupposes a conception of society as a mechanical sum of individuals held together by subjective ties is a principal contention of Elijah Jordan, on which he elaborates in his critical analysis of sociology contained in the second chapter of his Forms of Individuality.

So, although critical sociologists stress the potential radical political implications of their brand of individualism, they essentially do not get beyond the subjective view of society contained in mainstream sociology. That they would draw upon social thinkers such as Mead and upon democratic and existential schools of thought in constructing their alternatives clearly indicates their commitment to a fundamentally subjective and individualistic view of society -- a view of society which I will argue, as does Jordan, is inadequate.

(7) An Alternative to the Conceptions of Society Held by Both Critical and Mainstream Sociologists

As has been previously noted, critical sociologists are, for the most part, reluctant to reject any aspect of mainstream sociology. They argue that all theoretical and methodological perspectives (even the most flawed, such as functionalism) have a legitimate place in sociology alongside the alternative conception of society these critical sociologists offer. Their alternative, in the last analysis, can only be considered one among several legitimate sociolo-

gical perspectives.

Contrary to this pluralistic attitude of critical sociologists, there are grounds for rejecting an individualistic and subjective view of society, whether such a view be held by a critical or mainstream sociologist. Critical sociologists' rejection of any larger, systemic conception of society as inherently conservative and anti-individual is mistaken; it derives from a lack of insight into the nature of modern society. I believe a true understanding of society, which can be the only basis for a more significant sociology, begins with the recognition that institutions are the basic elements of society and not bio-psychological individuals.

To understand the bases of social order as well as the potential for social change (something critical sociologists are particularly interested in), we must focus on institutions. In analyzing the economy, for example, some economists have become increasingly aware of how the growth of corporations on a national and a multinational level has fundamentally changed our economic system. In light of this fact, David Bazelon, in his insightful book, The Paper Economy, argues that all the old economic assumptions and arguments must be rejected in favor of ones congruent with this tremendous corporate development.[35] Conventional economic thinking has for too long ignored this corporate development.

In essence, Bazelon is arguing that the individual entrepreneur talked about in Adam Smith's time no longer exists as such. Corporations are the entrepreneurs of our

modern economic system -- they are the economic actors of modern society. Or, as Bazelon notes, "A 'new man' has entered unto the historical stage,..."[36]

Bazelon's analysis applies with equal force to the nature of modern society as a whole. Elijah Jordan argues throughout his major works that a basic problem with ethical, legal, political, and economic thought is that it is largely rooted in an individualistic and subjective perspective which is fundamentally out of line with the reality of modern society. A more significant philosophy and, indeed, a more significant sociology, must begin with the recognition that society is basically an organized system of institutions. The bases of social order as well as the key to social change are to be found in this institutional order.

These institutions (or corporations, as Jordan also refers to organized bodies of objects directed toward a human end) are the real actors in society. This is not to say that individuals in the abstract (relation-severing) sense in which critical and mainstream sociologists speak of them are of no significance, as long as we acknowledge that these individuals are bound up with a larger natural and cultural order of objects. By considering the individual apart from these relations to the natural and cultural world, critical sociologists take all that which is human away from the individual. It is only as the individual connects[37] with institutions that he can develop as a human being. It is by working through institutions that human ends are achieved --

from rearing a child, to building a better transportation system, to bringing about a better society.

In Jordan's terms: "Corporations or institutions have, therefore, a status in human relations that is unique and peculiar to themselves. They are personal agents objectified; that is, they are rationally ordered systems of purposes realized in physical objects and constituted as organic structures. They are, then, in the legal and political sense, persons."[38]

The "individual" (that separate and distinct bio-psychological entity) which critical sociologists go to such great lengths to defend is, in terms of Jordan's argument, a myth. A critical, radical, or more significant sociology cannot be based upon the defense of a myth. A sound critique of sociology must begin with an examination of the underlying conception of society which it presupposes. Although some critical sociologists, to their credit, did perceive the significance of criticizing this theoretical base, they largely failed to come up with a sound alternative. Such a sound alternative, I maintain, is contained in Jordan's view that society is fundamentally an organized system of institutions. And if these critical sociologists are serious about making their discipline relevant to the constant effort to improve the lives of people, they must focus on that institutional order, the true basis for human life.

NOTES

[1] C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination, p.48.

[2] Ibid., p.35. "Values" meaning here: common attitudes, expectations, beliefs, and the like.

[3] This is merely to reformulate the perspective of the "sociological imagination" -- that "The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society." Ibid., p.6.

[4] Alvin Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, p.313. This failure to probe the nature of property is also brought out on pp.141 & 304.

[5] Ibid., pp.212-213. Indeed, it is insight of this kind that I will argue is fundamental to the realization of a more significant sociology.

[6] Ibid., p.218.

[7] Ibid., p.220.

[8] Daniel Foss, "The World View of Talcott Parsons" in Sociology on Trial, edited by Maurice Stein and Arthur Vidich, p.125.

[9] Alfred McClung Lee, Toward Humanist Sociology, p.38.

[10] Alvin Gouldner, "Romanticism and Classicism: Deep Structures in Social Science" in For Sociology, written and edited by Alvin Gouldner, p.348.

[11] Jack Douglas, "The Relevance of Sociology" in The Relevance of Sociology, edited by Jack Douglas, p.187.

[12] Hugh Mehan and Houston Wood, "De-Secting Ethnomethodology", The American Sociologist, 11(Feb. 76), p.17.

[13] Jack Douglas, "The Relevance of Sociology" in The Relevance of Sociology, edited by Jack Douglas, p.116.

[14] Alvin Gouldner, The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology, p.378.

[15] Ibid., p.379.

[16] Alfred McClung Lee, Sociology For Whom?, p.45.

[17] Richard Flacks, "Notes on the Crisis in Sociology", Social Policy, 2(Mar/Apr. 72), pp.9-10.

[18] L. Paul Metzger, "Conventional Social Science and Racial Integration" in Radical Sociology, edited by J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach, p.73.

[19]J. David Colfax, "Varieties and Prospects of Radical Scholarship in Sociology" in Radical Sociology, edited by J. David Colfax and Jack L.Roach, p.34.

[20]Herman and Julia R. Schwendinger, The Sociologists of the Chair, p.xxi.

[21]Ernest Mandel, among other Marxist scholars, is one who challenges this simplistic characterization of Marx's work. He argues that there is a great deal more continuity in Marx's work than many commentators have been enlightened enough to see. See his analysis of the concept of alienation. The Formation of the Economic Thought of Karl Marx, pp.154-186.

[22]Robert W. Friedrichs, A Sociology of Sociology, p.262.

[23]Ibid., p.271.

[24]Alvin Gouldner, The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology, p.xiv.

[25]Ibid., p.xiii.

[26]Irving Zeitlin, Rethinking Sociology, p.136.

[27]Ibid., p.vii.

[28]Ibid., pp.238-239.

[29]William J. Chambliss and Thomas E. Ryther, Sociology: The Discipline and Its Direction, p.xvi.

[30]Charles H. Anderson and Jeffrey Royle Gibson, Toward a New Sociology, p.23.

[31]David Horowitz, "Introduction", Radical Sociology: An Introduction, edited by David Horowitz, pp.6-7.

[32]Irving Louis Horowitz, "Introduction", The New Sociology, edited by Irving Louis Horowitz, p.40.

[33]Morris Janowitz, "Sociological Research on Arms Control", The American Sociologist, 6(suppl. issue, June 71), p.26.

[34]N.V. Novikov, "Modern American Capitalism and Parsons' Theory of Social Action", The Sociology of Sociology, edited by Larry T. and Janice M. Reynolds, p.268.

[35]The essence of the modern corporation being, in Bazelon's terms: "...that it organizes and directs large masses of men and material in a more or less limited technological area. So I suggest that a corporation is a form of industrial or technological or financial government." The Paper Economy, p.173.

[36]Ibid., p.172.

[37]A connection or relation which is not accidental but constitutive of the individual.

[38]Elijah Jordan, Business Be Damned, p.243.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

As has been emphasized throughout this dissertation,
the most serious shortcoming of the sociological critique of
American sociology derives from the lack of attention paid to
basic philosophical issues which underlie the problems in
mainstream sociology to which critical sociologists point.
This failure to address basic philosophical issues has been
interpreted as a failure to address the question of the ade-
quacy of mainstream sociology's methodological and theoretical
base. Although critical sociologists, at times, called into
question some aspects of this base, the alternative methods
and theories for which they argued were found to be not all
that different from those contained in mainstream sociology.
In general, there persisted an overriding commitment to prevail-
ing modes of social research which focus primarily on gather-
ing information about individuals' beliefs and attitudes and
to a view of society as a sum of individuals held together
by subjective, psychological ties. Evidence was presented to
suggest that this is <u>not</u> a sound basis for sociology, but
such evidence largely came from sources outside this critical
movement in American sociology -- it came from the work of
members of the Frankfort School and from the philosophy of
Elijah Jordan.

Critical sociologists have not only failed to perceive
the connection between deficiencies in mainstream sociology
and an inadequate methodological and theoretical base, but

also, in developing some notion of a more significant soci-
ology they have largely overlooked the importance of re-
defining this base. Their recommendations for developing a
more significant sociology have generally revolved around the
notion of merely "opening things up"; that is, make room for
various methodological and theoretical perspectives. Although
such a recommendation does address the problem of having one
particular method or theory dominate the practice of sociolo-
gy, it does nothing to correct whatever inadequacies may lie
in these various methods and theories themselves.

In discussing the work of three principal forerunners
of this critical movement in Chapter I, we did get an initial
glimpse of what has been meant all along by the charge that
later critical sociologists failed to discuss the question
of the adequacy of sociology's methodological and theoretical
base. Although weaknesses in each of their arguments were
pointed out, the criticism of sociology contained in the work
of Robert Lynd, Pitirim Sorokin, and C. Wright Mills was
argued to be more profound than anything offered by later
critical sociologists.

Robert Lynd, for example, suggested that a major de-
ficiency of the social sciences was its inadequate theoretical
orientation which, he maintained, largely excluded important
psychological insights. Moreover, in addressing the value
question in sociology, Lynd did perceive the need to try to
spell out an objective base for making value judgments --
specifically, for determining what is and what is not worthy

of social scientists' attention. His answer, although certainly open to criticism for being vague, is a far cry from the predominant relativistic position of critical sociologists in the 60's and 70's -- a position which I argued on several occasions essentially amounts to no position.

Methodological deficiencies in contemporary American sociology were highlighted in Pitirim Sorokin's Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology. Sorokin attempted to expose the inappropriate use of concepts and formulas from the physical sciences and mathematics in sociology. He also raised questions about the use of survey methods in sociological research, pointing out that such methods represented artificial (and hence, inaccurate) ways of gathering information about social behavior. In his view, a more significant sociology could be realized by adopting a better means of learning about society and social behavior. This, I argued, was an important insight, even though I found fault with the alternative means of learning about society and social behavior that Sorokin presented.

Although C. Wright Mills can certainly be considered the "father" of the sociological critique of American sociology, I maintained that his criticism of sociology went beyond that of later critics. It went beyond this later criticism in that Mills clearly suggested that the realization of a more significant and more relevant sociology involved a revision of prevailing method and theory in American sociology. Mills rejected what he called "abstracted empiricism" not just because it was the predominant style of research but

because it had serious inherent flaws. For one, this style of research merely focused on the psychological reactions of individuals in a questionnaire or interview situation. As such, it could not uncover anything of significance about the larger social structure or its history. Such a style of research had to be rejected, Mills argued, in favor of the "sociological imagination". Thus, we see here the recognition that the path to a more significant sociology involves a revision of its methodological base.

Implicit in the "sociological imagination" is also the recognition that sociological theory likewise needed to be revised; it needed to be revised to take into account the crucial element of social structure -- that institutions (and ultimately, the nation-state) be the basic units of investigation. As we saw in Chapter V, some later critical sociologists also suggested that the theoretical orientation of mainstream sociology be revised; however, the alternatives they presented tended to stress the importance of the individual and not institutions. Indeed, these later critical sociologists by and large rejected any holistic, structural view of society as inherently conservative and inadequate. To the contrary, I have argued that in order to develop a more significant sociology we need to focus on social structure as Mills urged. It is precisely on this point that the work of Elijah Jordan, as I argued in the last three chapters, provides some insights from which sociologists can learn in attempting to develop a more significant sociology.

When we begin to discuss specific issues raised by
critical sociologists in the 60's and 70's in Chapter II, the
question of the adequacy of mainstream sociology's methodolo-
gical and theoretical base fades into the background. Criti-
cal sociologists raised the issue of what they saw as an in-
appropriate relationship which had developed between sociolo-
gical researchers and their sources of funding, as typified
most clearly by the debate over Project Camelot. The basic
position that critical sociologists adopted was to argue that
sociologists should strive to preserve their autonomy, that
is, not to let any outside influences dictate the conduct of
social research. Not to take away from the importance of
arguing such a position, it was pointed out that to focus on
autonomy leaves unattended the question of the adequacy of
prevailing research methods themselves. There appeared to
exist an abiding faith in even the most narrowly-conceived
sociological research, to the extent that some critics, such
as Martin Nicolaus, believed that the information obtained
through such research was of strategic importance to groups
seeking power or wanting to remain in control of things in
our society.

In criticism of this position put forth by critical
sociologists, I suggested that sociological research has
hardly contributed such significant knowledge. As we saw,
C. Wright Mills and Pitirim Sorokin questioned the very
possibility of getting other than relatively trivial infor-
mation from the prevailing modes of empirical research in

sociology, primarily having in mind survey techniques which focus on attitudes and opinions. Such knowledge was characterized by Sorokin as mere "hearsay stuff". Members of the Frankfurt School likewise found prevailing research techniques in sociology to be a very limited tool. Again with the focus on survey techniques, Theodor Adorno points out in his essay, "Sociology and Empirical Research", that empirical social research suffers from two defects: (1) it cannot uncover information relevant to the larger, structural aspects of society, and (2) it merely reflects prevailing attitudes and opinions. As Adorno comments:

> In general, the objectivity of empirical
> social research is one of method, not of
> subject-matter. Through statistical pro-
> cessing, information on a greater or lesser
> number of individuals is turned into state-
> ments which, following the laws of probability,
> are generalizable and independent of individual
> variations. But the resultant mean values,
> objectively valid though they be, nevertheless
> remain for the most part objective statements
> about individual subjects; in fact, about how
> these subjects see themselves in reality.
> Society in its objectivity, the aggregate of
> all the relationships, institutions and forces,
> within whose context men act, is something
> which the empirical methods of questionnaire
> and interview, with all their possible com-
> binations and variations, have ignored or at
> least regarded as purely accidental....
> [Moreover] By taking more or less standard-
> ized surveys of numbers of individuals and
> processing the results into statistics, they
> tend to enshrine already widespread -- and as
> such pre-formed -- attitudes as the founda-
> tion for their perspective on the subject of
> their investigations.[1]

In addition to pointing out some serious shortcomings in empirical social research, the above statement also provides the basis for the charge that the conservatism of mainstream

sociology is, in part, rooted in an approach to studying society which merely reflects (through the filter of individual attitudes and opinions) the established social order. So, the prevailing mode of empirical research in sociology cannot provide the basis for criticism of the existing social order, much less provide knowledge of significant aspects of society; and it cannot do this not because of who controls this research but because these empirical research techniques are themselves very limited tools by which to study society.

When some critical sociologists did question the adequacy of the predominant survey research techniques, they presented an alternative (usually some variant of participant observation) which, I argued, failed to overcome some of the problems in survey methods they highlighted. In short, I pointed out, as have other critics, that there is no real way to be sure that the findings of a participant observer are any more objective or accurate than those of a survey researcher. Moreover, the principal focus of such an approach is likewise on individual beliefs, attitudes, motives, and the like, the only difference being that individuals and groups are studied in their natural settings and not with artificial devices such as a questionnaire. There was still the neglect of larger historical and structural aspects of society. So, in their one attempt to address the crucial question of the adequacy of mainstream sociology's methodological base, critical sociologists failed to come up with anything significant. In contrast, I suggested that the criticism offered

by Mills and members of the Frankfurt School is more signi-
ficant.

In Chapter III critical sociologists' analysis of the
value question was discussed and here the disavowal of any
philosophical issues became even more explicit. On a couple
of occasions critical sociologists, such as Alvin Gouldner,
were cited as stating an express disinterest in logical or
ethical questions. Critical sociologists were almost univer-
sally content with what I called the "let's be honest" posi-
tion; that is, it is sufficient for sociologists merely to
declare their value position, whatever it may be. Some criti-
cal sociologists did perceive certain value positions as better
than others (such as working for the elimination of human suf-
fering or working for the greater freedom for the individual),
but because they viewed values as both subjective and relative
they really lacked any basis for defending any particular
value position.

In short, I argued that this "let's be honest" position
and its underlying subjective and relativistic view of value
was a bankrupt position. It failed to provide either a re-
solution of the value question or a basis for a new and more
significant sociology. In contrast, I presented the views of
a couple members of the Frankfurt School and Elijah Jordan,
which represented what I consider significant attempts to
define an objective view of value.

Among the members of the Frankfurt School, Max
Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse were perhaps the most insistent

about the deficiencies of relativism. They also suggested an objective base for determining what a just society is; that is they tried to spell out the conditions necessary for the realization of a just, humane social order. As was noted, among these conditions was the satisfaction of the needs of physical survival for all human beings and the elimination of necessary labor through automation as a step in the direction of freeing individuals to develop as total persons. Significantly, these critical theorists were under no illusion that by merely "opening things up" or by merely declaring one's values, as critical sociologists urged, anything positive toward the realization of a more significant sociology or a more just society was going to be achieved. Although I do not claim to have proved that the argument of Horkheimer and Marcuse is more valid, I do believe it is worthy of consideration by sociologists and it does seem to offer one possible resolution of the value question in sociology, whereas the predominant position among critical sociologists provides no basis for defining a more significant direction for sociology or society.

In light of the same reservation as that expressed above, I presented the views of Elijah Jordan on the question of value. As was noted, Jordan does not subscribe to the prevailing view that fact and value can be considered separately. Indeed, as Jordan points out, value is the meaning of fact in a larger system of relations. The value of the United States' decision to intervene in Vietnam, for example, is the meaning

of that fact in the context of a larger system of relations.
That fact can be analyzed in terms of its meaning for U.S.
foreign policy, its meaning for the people of the United
States or Vietnam, or, most significantly, its meaning for
the world as a whole. The ultimate determination of the value
of that fact, whether it was good or bad policy, rests upon
the question of how it fits in the world as a whole. Obviously,
the determination of value on this basis is a very complex
matter, but what Jordan proposes is, in a sense, no different
from the judgment an agricultural specialist makes with res-
pect to the value of a particular soil -- how that soil fits
in the larger agricultural system. We have no quarrel with
the agricultural specialist making an objective determination
of what is good soil and what is bad soil for various purposes;
and, significantly, I believe we would all agree that this is
not a judgment that can properly be based on mere subjective
opinion.

To define specifically what Jordan's objective base
for value is would take us far beyond the purposes of this
dissertation, but I believe enough of Jordan's position and
the position of Horkheimer and Marcuse have been presented
to warrant serious consideration by sociologists interested
in developing a more significant, relevant sociology. Critical
sociologists, by subscribing to the prevailing subjective
view of value, leave us with a plethora of value options and
no basis for determining which among these value options
should guide the work of sociologists in their capacity as

social scientists and social reformers. By shifting the focus

of the value question from individuals (and their subjective

beliefs and attitudes) to the world (and the objective rela-

tions which exist there) Jordan provides some basis for deter-

mining what a significant sociology is and toward what kind

of society should sociologists be working.

In Chapters IV and V more of Jordan's objective base

is revealed by way of presenting his conception of society:

that society is essentially an organized system of institutions.

Jordan argues that institutions (or "corporate persons") are

the basic units of society and, significantly, the real actors

in society. They are the real actors in the sense that it is

by way of them that we achieve human ends, from relatively

simple acts (such as making breakfast) to more complex acts

(such as designing a school system). All of these acts are

bound up with institutions, with the myriad of objects and

their organization and distribution which are necessary to

carry them out. Moreover, Jordan maintains that human relations

are mediated by these institutions: that a teacher enters the

lives of students by way of education, by way of the system

of objects which has been developed to carry out the act of

education -- the libraries, the books, the classrooms, etc..

A farmer enters all of our lives by way of an agricultural

and marketing system, even though we may never have face-to-

face contact with that farmer or with the people involved in

marketing what the farmer produces. This is not to deny the

existence or significance of human relations such as love,

friendship, and the like, but even these "psychological" re-
lations involve objects (eg., that a friendship is sustained
through the use of a telephone system, postal system, or by
having access to some means of transportation, or that a
mother's love for her child counts for little when lack of
access to adequate food supplies causes permanent brain
damage or death). Jordan is arguing that these objective re-
lations are fundamental, they are the backbone of society,
not the subjective, psychological relations among individuals
(which ignore the individual's relation to this natural and
cultural world of objects) that critical and mainstream soci-
ologists alike emphasize. Hence, on Jordan's view, any sound
value position, any program for the realization of a just
society, must be concerned with this world of objects, with
the proper organization and integration of these institutions,
and not merely with granting greater individual freedom, as
many critical sociologists maintained.

Critical sociologists' proposal to expand individual
freedom, particularly freedom of expression, in both society
and sociology, is taken up in Chapter IV. The position they
arrive at is aptly characterized by one critical sociologist
as an "endless dialectic": that a better society and a better
sociology would involve the constant clash of ideas, of dis-
cussion and dialogue. Not to deny the importance of having a
free exchange of ideas, I nonetheless argued that such a
position resolves little with respect to the nature of this
more just, humane society toward which critical sociologists

say they are working. It was in this context that I cited the following comment by Jordan on the nature of democracy: he argued that democracy does not encompass any "...suggestions as to the nature or structure of the state, no hint as to how the functioning of the institutions of life are to be organized into a corporately integrated whole, no picture at all of that order which is the ground of all meanings in political or public life."[2]

Members of the Frankfurt School, who were also concerned with "freeing" the individual from various forms of domination, likewise do not subscribe to the simplistic position of critical sociologists. These critical theorists, as does Jordan, bring to our attention the fact that the individual is bound up with a larger social order, and that any program of significant social change must begin with the recognition of this fact. Indeed, the Marxian notion of the dialectic itself is based upon changing material conditions, which is far removed from the kind of "endless dialectic" that critical sociologists see as the salvation of society.

Finally, in Chapter V we come to one of the more significant developments of this whole critical movement. In this chapter alternative conceptions of society developed by critical sociologists are discussed. What is significant here is that there is an implicit recognition that what is wrong with mainstream sociology lies in its theoretical base, that is, the conception of society with which it operates. Nonetheless, it was pointed out that the principal alternatives

offered by critical sociologists focused on the individual

and subjective relations among individuals, which I suggested

were not all that different from mainstream sociology. A more

significant alternative, I argued, lies along the lines of

the objective, institutional conception of society presented

by Jordan and, in somewhat different forms, by a few critical

sociologists and members of the Frankfurt School. Although no

proof of the greater validity of Jordan's position was offered

as such, I believe his views on the nature of modern society,

as they are described at the end of Chapter V, are significant

and appear to have a firmer basis in fact than do the views

of critical sociologists which largely ignore the existence

of an objective order of things.

In sum, I believe this dissertation has shown that

the sociological critique of American sociology has offered

little more than superficial criticism of mainstream sociology

and much less in terms of developing a more significant soci-

ology. On the other hand, I believe the promise of the soci-

ological critique of American sociology (i.e., if it is to

contribute to the realization of a more significant sociology

and a just society) lies in the direction of the criticism of

sociology given by members of the Frankfurt School and Elijah

Jordan.

NOTES

[1]Theodor Adorno, "Sociology and Empirical Research" in _Critical Sociology_, edited by Paul Connerton, pp. 240-241. New York, N. Y.: Penguin Books, 1976.

[2]See p. 163.

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