1 REINVENTING PARTISANSHIP

This is a book about dissident intellectuals and the breathing spaces that they carved out of the postwar American landscape. They reinvented partisanship at a time when most intellectuals were falling in line. In an age of conformity, these people took sides against what C. Wright Mills called the main drift, defending the right to dissent and struggling to keep open the critical process of public debate. In dark times, they provided some rays of enlightenment that helped inspire the emergence of new political energy. They planted seeds of the sixties.

In the quiescent days of the 1950s, when American power was at its height, these people created new concepts—and contexts—of social criticism. They reaffirmed the intellectual commitment that had helped define the 1930s in both Europe and the United States but that had gone out of fashion. In the margins of the postwar society, they kept alive something of the spirit of the thirties and prepared the way for a new wave of radicalism in the sixties: they unwittingly connected radical generations. For some, the connection was obvious and direct; Mills and Herbert Marcuse, for instance, became cult figures in the 1960s, as their ideas articulated the unconscious assumptions of the alienated young. For others, the connection was far less obvious, as the seeds they planted were largely indirect; Hannah Arendt's provocative affirmation of the life of the mind and Lewis Mumford's outspoken rejection of the suburbanization of America inspired no cult following but served rather as living examples of intellectual engagement and dissent. It was more in their style than in the substance of their op-

position that they helped stimulate the questioning of dominant values and institutional norms that was so much a part of 1960s social protest.

We do not claim that these critical intellectuals created the movements of the 1960s, but we do contend that those movements would not have happened—and certainly would not have changed America as they did—if the intellectual groundwork had not been laid. The social movements of the 1960s, the formative experience of our generation, were not primarily an outburst of emotional irrational behavior, reducible to media happenings or political mobilizations. Nor did they represent the total break with previous critical traditions that the people in this book—the older generation—often accused them of being. We see the 1960s, rather, as a creative period that carried new ideas into American society.

In the 1950s, a small number of critical American intellectuals reconstructed radicalism, by addressing new issues, remembering classical traditions, reforming organizations, and reinterpreting American society: they reinvented partisanship. Some struggled to keep established institutions honest, working on the inside to maintain a space for critical thought and research. Others moved out of the mainstream to find other Americas in the nonhuman natural landscape and the dehumanized urban ghettos. In their writings and activism, they gave voice to the deviant and the downtrodden as well as to the silent rhythms of the natural environment. And although their ideas and practices were important in inspiring a more widespread revolt and criticism in the 1960s, many of our critical intellectuals later came to break with the movements they helped inspire. Their work, essential though it was, has tended to be overlooked in the voluminous literature that has been produced on the 1960s; this book tries to set the record straight.

American Intellectual Traditions

American intellectuals are usually treated as separate beings, strong heroic individuals standing aside from (or above) the rest of society pontificating on the basis of an inner authority, or even an inner calling. Whether they are seen as public intellectuals, serving as a

society's conscience, or as alienated outsiders, escaping from society to absolutize personal expression, the standard accounts portray intellectuals as a breed apart, a social group floating freely in an autonomous realm of "critical discourse." Derived from puritanism and filtered through the transcendentalists of the nineteenth century, an Emersonian ideal of self-reliance and independence has been a central component of American intellectual life. Ralph Waldo Emerson was a minister and a scholar who cast his spell on later generations of intellectuals, not so much through his specific ideas as through his moral example. It was the strength of the personality and the importance of independence that were central to the Emersonian ideal of the scholar, who was also seen as representing—and articulating—a distinctive form of national character. As the Emersonian tradition developed into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there emerged an intellectual ethos that blended craftsmanship, hard work, and moral strength into a stance of spiritual self-reliance. From William James to Lewis Mumford, this personalist sensibility has been an important presence in twentieth-century intellectual life.

Another tradition depicts intellectuals as an "intelligentsia" of progressive reformers identifying with universal ideals of brotherhood and social service. From Jane Addams to Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King, Jr., the progressive American intellectual has been a kind of missionary striving to infuse his or her "common" fellows with a sense of justice, equality, and reason. If America has ever produced an intelligentsia, a group or a class of individuals who define their common relation to the world in the collective mission of bettering the human lot through political and cultural activity, then Greenwich Village in the first quarter of the twentieth century was its cradle. As in Chicago, where Addams's settlement house served as a meeting place for socially concerned academics and came to inspire progressive reformers throughout the social sciences, New York drew idealistic college students and socially engaged writers and artists to what were essentially poor immigrant neighborhoods. Greenwich Village progressives like Randolph Bourne, John Reed and Thorstein Veblen—and their more established counterparts among the academic followers of John Dewey—redefined the relations between high culture and everyday life and between professional intellectuals and common people. In

journals like *The Dial* and in institutions like the New School for Social Research, they helped diffuse a spirit of progressive reformism into American society. This tradition experienced something of a revival in the aftermath of the depression in the late 1930s, when the labor movement exercised a strong attraction for intellectuals.

With the rise of industrialism and the concomitant need for expert knowledge, a third tradition emerged, as a kind of hybrid outgrowth of the other two: scientific professionalism. Based on the ideals of science and strongly influenced by positivism, this tradition gained a strong foothold in American universities by the 1920s. The rise of the corporate foundations and industrial research laboratories provided scientific professionalism with an institutional base and a crucial social function in relation to American industry. In the 1930s, the New Deal and its various programs of social engineering further stimulated scientific professionalism, and by the end of the Second World War, the scientific-technical experts had come to dominate intellectual life in America. In the process, they had become strongly associated with the military as well as with the increasingly powerful private corporations.

In the 1950s, the tension between these traditions—the independent critic, the progressive reformer, and the expert—grew acute. With the expansion of the universities and the growth of "mass society" and "mass culture," intellect came to be pitted against intelligence. Meanwhile, the partisan intellectual role that had been imported from Europe added a new dimension to the indigenous critical and progressive traditions. The migration of anti-Fascist intellectuals gave new life to the few remaining adherents of American critical thought. In their time, the processes of recombination and reconceptualization were marginal to the main currents of American intellectual life. And yet, the ensuing revitalization of American criticism would prove to be crucially important for the social movements of the 1960s.

The Postwar Intellectual Context

After the Second World War, American intellectuals were confronted with a new set of social conditions in which to carry out their work. During the war, science and technology had become linked,

irrevocably it seemed, to the military arms of the state. The combination of scientific expertise and state power in the production of weaponry, most especially the atomic bomb, as well as in the planning and organization of military operations had given the United States a place of leadership among the "free" nations of the "Western" world. America—and its various types of intellectuals—came to be governed after the war by a new regime and a new image, or conception, of intellectual life. Science, technology, and even the arts became strategic resources to be mobilized in the nation's quest for world dominance. Intellectual activity, which had so often in the past been castigated to the social margins with the intellectual taking on the role of the alienated outsider, was brought in from the cold and given a prominent place in this new scientific-technological state. For the first time in American history, the state took on the task of supporting, rather generously at that, the production of knowledge primarily—but not exclusively—for military purposes. A number of private corporations were transformed into "knowledge industries" largely dependent on state funding for their high growth rates. At the same time, the very notion of knowledge changed; after the war, knowledge came to be seen as something that could be manufactured along industrial lines, and its production could be subjected to standardized methods. The results of this "industrialized science" could then be bought and sold on the commercial marketplace. Thus both intellectuals and the fruits of their activity had become fundamentally altered in the wake of the Second World War.

The war had all but eliminated the critical intellectual, drawing even the most disenchanted free floater into supporting the struggle against fascism. Those contexts that had sustained social criticism—the small magazines, the leftist parties and sects, the avant-garde cultural circles that had been so widespread in the 1930s—either disappeared or were transformed into organs of the war effort. The literary life, with its public intellectuals and open-ended cultural discourse, grew more specialized and commercial. New worlds of mass culture and "public relations" created lucrative new opportunities and new avenues for applying those literary skills that earlier had been directed to critical reflection and social commentary.

These developments had a major effect on the universities, bringing them into what came to be termed the military-industrial complex

and thus transforming much of academic research into an industrialized and bureaucratic kind of knowledge production—so-called Big Science. American universities had already before the war built up a system of department-based graduate education, and primarily through support from private foundations, discipline-oriented research had already begun to supplant broader cultural aims as the dominant preoccupation of academic life. It was the massive state-military involvement during and after the war, however, with its contract system and the infrastructure of research councils and advisory committees, that led to the triumph of the "research university." At least some intellectuals, that is, physical scientists and military engineers, were thereby given a vastly different status and social importance than they had had before the war.

Most American intellectuals saw their increased social status—and incomes—as cause for celebration. The atomic bomb and the heroic physicists who had built it had brought the United States a unilateral source of power and new global responsibility. There was a veritable cult of science in the postwar years, as an ideology of scientific omnipotence—scientism—spread among American intellectuals. There was relatively little critical analysis of the new situation and even less support for fundamental kinds of structural change. Almost from the outset, to be sure, there were critics who wanted the United States to give up its new weapon and/or subject its control and further development to some kind of world government. Many of the most outspoken critics were those like Leo Szilard who had worked on the atomic bomb project during the war, and their criticism was thus of a special kind. They were expert critics, whose main activity was not in building up a mass constituency but in affecting political influence, most especially in the political control and administration of atomic energy.

A different kind of criticism of the scientific-technological state came from the dispersed remnants of what had, in the 1930s, been a significant social movement. Working primarily through ad hoc organizations of the "popular front," the 1930s movement had sought, among other things, to develop a more popular approach to knowledge and art and critically assimilate modern technology into American ways of life. In the depression, when capitalism seemed to have

outlived its usefulness, many American intellectuals had been inspired by the Soviet Union's efforts to plan the economy and socialize the intellect and had tried to fashion an indigenous socialism out of populist political traditions and pragmatic approaches to knowledge. Marxism had been stirred into the American melting pot to help create a substantial literature of social criticism and a wide range of socialist parties and sects.

The collective dreams of the 1930s tended to fade amid the exigencies of war, however, giving way to reassertions of individualist and competitive, that is, capitalist, values. And the military enlisted the services of many types of intellectuals—writers, linguists, historians, anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, and economists as well as the famous physicists who built the atomic bomb—to help carry out the war effort. After the war, the American way of life was no longer seen primarily as an active, creative force in need of further development but as a source of patriotic rhetoric, embodying the virtues of free enterprise, scientific-technological power, and individual morality. Many of those who had been the critics of American society before the war became its apologists, transforming their Marxian-influenced social criticism of the 1930s into a specialized professional role as literary or cultural or academic critics. But a few tried to keep the critical spirit alive in the midst of the cold war. Let us briefly describe what it was they tried to keep alive.

The Rise and Fall of Populist Pragmatism

It was during the 1930s, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt sought to inspire a "new deal" in American society as a way to overcome the severe economic depression, that a new kind of intellectual emerged in the United States. Combining elements from American traditions of pragmatist philosophy and populist politics with imported European ideologies, these "movement intellectuals" of the 1930s articulated a new social criticism as part of the radical movements that were so dominant at the time. This intellectual activity filled some of the gaps that had historically existed between intellectuals and common people in the United States. At the time of the New Deal, there

was a strong interest on the part of many intellectuals to identify with a particular American way of life. As Warren Susman (1984: 179) has said, "In the 1930s, it might be argued, the self-conscious American intelligentsia set out to become 'an unlearned class,' to assimilate the culture of the 'people' into the inherited European tradition."

The pragmatic philosophy had been developed around the turn of the century: Charles Peirce, the idiosyncratic mathematician, had made the basic conceptual formulations of "pragmaticism," as he called it, in largely unpublished papers already in the nineteenth century. In the first decades of the twentieth century, William James had expanded on Peirce's ideas and applied pragmatism to various facets of human behavior, Charles Beard and others had applied them, after a fashion, to history, and George Herbert Mead and others of the "Chicago school" had developed a pragmatic approach to sociology—all affected, in various ways, by John Dewey, who applied pragmatism to education and just about everything else and served as a "symbol of liberation and integrity to a long generation of intellectuals" (Perry 1984: 368).

Until the 1930s, however, pragmatism was a largely academic philosophy. It had provided a common frame of reference, or world view, for many of the reformers in the progressive period in the early years of the century, which might be considered a precursor to the social movement of the 1930s. Although there were populistic tendencies in that earlier period, it was during the depression that the urge among academics and other intellectuals to reunite with the "people" took on significant societal proportions. In the process, pragmatism, or certain tenets of pragmatic philosophy, was combined with elements of populist political behavior to form a distinct cognitive praxis and a direct counterpoint to the technocratic and scientistic ideas that had been so dominant in the period after the First World War.

The 1920s had marked the coming to maturity of the "American system" of manufacturing, with its principles of mass production and rationalization. Henry Ford's conveyor belts and Frederick Winslow Taylor's time and motion studies, or scientific management, were the cornerstones of a distinct model of technological, economic, and even social development. With the engineer as the cultural hero and infinite progress as the guiding vision, the technocrat burst on the scene to do

the bidding of the Fords, Edisons, Carnegies, and Rockefellers and man their research laboratories and corporate foundations. In response, writers and artists fled in droves to the cafés of Europe, from where they looked in disdain at the intellectual "wasteland" that their country had become in their eyes. Some wandered even farther, seeking in India—or, like Margaret Mead, in the South Seas—a spiritual alternative to their decadent technocratic homeland. While the technocratic vision was dealt a severe blow by the stock market crash of 1929 and the ensuing economic depression, many of the intellectual exiles were forced back home by the rise of fascism and nazism—themselves an outgrowth of economic decline.

The economic crisis created the basis for reinterpreting older visions and traditions and recombining intellectual practices into new syntheses. The failure of the corporate model was there for all to see in the bread lines and soup kitchens. Even scientists and engineers were out of work in record numbers. As the government stepped in to fill the gap and provide jobs in its public works programs, many intellectuals returned to their roots, and even the alienated writers were set to work to seek out and document the culture that still remained alive in the midst of depression. But they brought new methods with them, the engineers translating scientific technology into electrification and electronic communication and the artists translating European ideology into popular literary experimentation. The American worker, who had all but been reduced to a cog in a machine in the 1920s, emerged as a new cultural hero, and the intellectual himself became a worker like any other in the service of radical, even revolutionary transformation.

There was also an interest on the part of various ethnic minorities to include their paths of cultural development in the mainstream of American public life. This latter interest was fostered, no doubt, by the new technologies of communication—radio, phonographs, movies, and so on—but it was also a result of social and demographic changes brought on by the depression: the movement of blacks to northern cities, the westward migration to California from the "dust bowl," and not least the rise of the industrial cities of the Midwest with their working-class populations. In any case, the fascination with the "people" and the subsequent commercialization and successful exportation

of a particular American mass, or popular, culture during and after the Second World War owes much to the combination of populism and pragmatism that characterized the New Deal era and the narrowing of the gap between intellectuals and the masses. By the 1950s, however, most intellectuals had returned to their traditional separation from popular culture, and the masses were left to the commercial forces of the marketplace for their entertainment.

In the second half of the 1930s, along with the well-known labor and community activism, writers became journalists, many scientists became politically active, the government supported programs of cultural and economic reconstruction and public works, and the appeal of socialist and Communist parties and organizations was at an all-time high. However, it would be a mistake to characterize the movement that crystallized in the late 1930s as something specifically leftist. For there were pragmatic populists, seeking cultural solutions to social problems, on both the Left and Right. Conservative southerners, the so-called southern agrarians, for example, developed a distinctive style of sociology, as well as regional planning, literature, and art. For a time, ideological differences—and the class distinctions that went with them—were less important than the active "re-cognition" of American cultural identity. The contribution of the movement would be, more than anything else, a reinterpretation of American society through new cultural concepts and approaches that would be diffused throughout the society in the ensuing years. As in Germany, but in rather different ways, a national culture was contrasted to a capitalist civilization that was seen to be in need of fundamental overhaul. For Susman, "a key structural element in a historical reconstruction of the 1930s [is] the effort to find, characterize and adapt to an American way of life as distinguished from the material achievements (and the failures) of an American industrial civilization" (1984: 156).

As with many, if not all, social movements, what was central to the movement of the 1930s was what we have elsewhere called "cognitive praxis," the active relations to science, to technology, to nature, and to society that were articulated and practiced, often in innovative organizational forms (Eyerman and Jamison 1991). The movement of the 1930s took the ideas of populism and pragmatism that had been developed by intellectuals and applied them to the various facets of

social life. The movement provided a new audience but also a new organizational context for the development and recombination of ideas that had been associated with progressive intellectuals. Influential books like Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932), Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* (1934), John Dewey's *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935), Lewis Mumford's *Technics and Civilization* (1934) and *Culture of Cities* (1938), and Robert S. Lynd's *Knowledge for What?* (1939) provided a terminology and a way of thinking that could serve to guide, among other things, the assimilation of machine technology into American life.

The idealization of the worker was particularly prominent in literature, among the so-called proletarian writers associated with the Socialist and Communist parties. The "masses" were discovered as a source of artistic inspiration as well as the main vehicles of progressive historical change. The novels of James T. Farrell, John Steinbeck, and perhaps especially John Dos Passos gave life to the working class while applying new techniques of literary creation. For them and countless others, the movements of the 1930s opened up a new range of opportunities for the intellectual as artist; the writer could refine his craft while contributing to the cause of radical social change. For a time, the cultural and the political reinforced one another, as the artist provided identity and self-confidence for the masses and the masses provided inspiration, even legitimation, for creative innovation. In the case of Dos Passos, the combination of journalism and literature and the pioneering use of the montage technique as well as the mixture of fact and fiction were lasting legacies of the 1930s movement to American culture.

Like all social movements, this was a temporary one; and yet its cognitive identity, its combination of populism and pragmatism, was, for a few years, a very important force in American culture. In considering its significance, Norman Birnbaum has recently reflected that "radical movements may be understood as schools—from which the students graduate not quite the same as when they entered. They also, of course, affect and influence far more persons than their members." For Birnbaum, the movements of the New Deal period "enlarged our conception of politics. . . . The New Deal at the very least encouraged another American public ethos" (1988: 140–143). Already with the

debates over entering the war at the end of the 1930s, however, the common assumptions, what Birnbaum calls the "uneasy amalgam" of "progressivism, Catholic social reform and Keynesianism," began to split apart. Largely as a result of the exigencies of war, the project that had tried to take "from both the liberal and socialist traditions those ideas that seemed most appropriate for a post-capitalist civilization" began to fragment.

The Postwar Cult of Science

The war was not a time for nuances. The active and constructive re-cognition of American culture that had occupied so many people during the 1930s could not survive Pearl Harbor. The simpler and more traditional values of individualism and self-interest reasserted themselves, and the ideas of the 1930s diffused into American society in fragmented and often simplistic ways. The concern with American culture gradually became an American superiority complex, as writers during and after the war celebrated a mythology of America rather than seeking to understand and redefine those myths. Populist pragmatism tended to lose its luster during and after World War II, as American intellectuals in ever-increasing numbers came to subscribe to new imported philosophies from Europe: logical positivism, neo-Thomist theology, existentialism, and so on. Many consciously sought to distance themselves from the mass culture that came to take form in the television-watching suburbs of postwar America. By the late 1940s, the cognitive praxis of the 1930s had largely been transformed into an anti-ideology of anticommunism, on the one hand, and patriotic celebration of American greatness, on the other. As with other social movements before and since, the synthesis of disparate ideas that provided a cognitive identity was differentiated into its component parts, leading to new dualisms and dichotomies of thought. Pragmatism was replaced as a unifying social cosmology, or world view, by logical philosophies of science, on the one hand, and new idealistic theologies, on the other. A critical cultural assessment of technology gave way to a technological culture of scientific expertise and economic abundance. And an innovative populism, seeking to bridge the gaps between in-

tellectuals and the common people, was replaced by a reaffirmation of academic professionalism and a commercialization of popular culture.

As Mills was to bring to the nation's attention in 1951, America had come to be dominated by an amorphous collection of "white-collar" workers—in the various layers of corporate management, in the media, in the public sector, and in the universities. The expansion of the state and the growth of the mass media provided employment opportunities for many previously unattached—and unemployed—intellectuals, but in the process, the very idea of the intellectual was transformed. A good many of those who had been the partisan intellectuals of the 1930s became the white-collar workers of the 1950s. At the same time the universities were restructured in the image of the modern corporate conglomerate. Upholding academic freedom gave way to a business mentality among a new generation of university presidents and administrators, who refashioned curricula and overhauled disciplines so as to compete more effectively for students and research funds. Higher education and academic research grew into substantial industries in an academic marketplace that was unimaginable before the war.

As such, public life in the United States was scarcely intellectual at all when it came time to confront the scientific-technological state; even many American intellectuals had come to be colored by that deep-seated anti-intellectualism and entrepreneurial spirit that has formed such a central part of American history. Just at the time when anti-intellectualism was at its height in the form of aggressive anti-communism, the status of professional expertise and of science had never been higher. Science was thus seen not primarily as an intellectual path to national and individual enlightenment but rather as a magical bag of tricks, a path to national and individual power. Science, we might say, was assimilated into American culture in an anti-intellectual way. By a kind of reductionist sleight of hand, the pragmatic "method" had been transformed into the blind faith of technocratic social engineering, or instrumental rationality, as Marcuse was to call it. Practice, in good American fashion, remained the criterion of scientific truth, but it was a limited, scientific-technological practice that determined value, not the practical experiences of ordinary men and women. As such, pragmatic populism got turned on its head into a cult of science. And science came to take on the character of a religion.

Postwar America has been called the "era of the expert." With the virtual elimination of social movements and their innovative barrier-breaking movement intellectuals, corporate America propelled the elitist expert to a position of power and influence. With so many people moving out to the suburbs and leaving behind both historical tradition and a sense of community, experts moved in to fill the gap with new kinds of professional advice. From Benjamin Spock to Norman Vincent Peale, the lonely crowd of postwar America was socialized into a new scientific age. Even sports entered a new professional era with the rise of mass communications and the further expansion of advertising. Indeed, sports provided a kind of surrogate community spirit to replace the traditions that had existed in the prewar small towns and ethnic urban villages. As Elaine Tyler May (1989: 155–156) has written, "The postwar years marked a heightening of the status of the professional. Armed with scientific techniques and presumably inhabiting a world above popular passions, the experts had brought us into the atomic age. Physicists developed the bomb, strategists created the cold war, and scientific managers built the military-industrial complex. Science and technology seemed to have invaded virtually every aspect of life, from the most public to the most private."

Science became, in the telling phrase of Vannevar Bush, the new "endless frontier" for postwar Americans to explore and glorify. Bush had been director of the wartime Office of Scientific Research and Development and, in 1944, had been asked by President Roosevelt to suggest how science could be supported after the war was over. His report, published in July 1945, set the tone for much of the immediate postwar discussion. "Advances in science," Bush wrote, "when put to practical use mean more jobs, higher wages, shorter hours, more abundant crops, more leisure for recreation, for study, for learning how to live without the deadening drudgery which has been the burden of the common man for ages past. . . . But to achieve these objectives—to secure a high level of employment, to maintain a position of world leadership—the flow of new scientific knowledge must be both continuous and substantial" (1945: 5).

The cult of science inspired a scientistic faith and a concomitant dismissal of the populist spirit that had characterized the culture of the 1930s. But it took time before its hegemony was established. What it

involved was a transformation of one ideal of knowledge into another. Rather than deriving their methods and approaches from an indigenous progressivism, sociologists and historians and psychologists and government officials increasingly came to model themselves on the natural sciences. Atomic physics became the ideal of knowledge that set the standard for the humanities and the social sciences, not to mention popular culture and private life. The scientistic spirit that had dominated the social sciences in the 1920s came to the fore again, but this time its self-confidence and sense of superiority over other ways of thinking were even stronger than before. The scientific spokesmen sought to replace the populist enthusiasms of the 1930s with a positivist belief in the future. Scientific progress was seen as the key to American greatness and the main source of economic and industrial expansion.

The transformation was often largely unconscious and was for many intellectuals more like following a new fashion or trend than making an explicitly political decision. The general assumption was that the world had changed: the programmatic statements stressed the irrelevance of the prewar enthusiasms to the postwar world. The prewar, populist concern with an American way of life came to be criticized for its national and inward-looking provincialism; with the end of the war, American intellectuals had a responsibility to uphold the broader values of Western civilization. The responsibility was no longer to help "create a great American nation," as the president of the American Historical Association put it in December 1945, but to provide moral leadership for what came to be called an Atlantic community. "Of such an Atlantic community and the European civilization basic to it, we Americans are co-heirs and co-developers, and probably in the future the leaders. If we are successfully to discharge our heavy and difficult postwar responsibilities, we shall not further weaken but rather strengthen the consciousness and bonds of this cultural community" (Hayes 1946: 208).

With the diffusion of scientism, those who would uphold the populist pragmatism of the 1930s tended to be marginalized and had difficulty in formulating a critique of the scientific-technological state. In the writings of the elderly John Dewey and the young C. Wright Mills as well as in those of the increasingly embittered middle-aged Lewis Mumford, the militarization of American culture was criticized,

and the incorporation of intellectuals into business and politics—what Mills called "Brains, Inc."—was castigated, but there was little space for such viewpoints in the general atmosphere of the cult of science. The three volumes by Mills that we will discuss in the next chapter—*New Men of Power* (1948), on the labor unions, *White Collar* (1951), on the middle classes, and *The Power Elite* (1956), on the new military-corporate rulers of American society—stand relatively alone as a comprehensive corpus of social criticism in the decade following the Second World War.

The critics themselves are at least partly to blame. Mumford's first published response to the atomic bomb was an article entitled, "Gentlemen: You are Mad!" And his tone grew ever more frustrated and extreme as the postwar era progressed. With the coming of McCarthyism and the cold war, the few progressive critics who had retained their critical values were all but silenced; and the younger generation of social scientists and writers were themselves a part of the American celebration. Later in the 1950s, pragmatic populism, emerging out of the southern black churches in combination with pacifists and moral reformers, helped fuel the civil rights movement, but even then it was considered "un-American" in a time when Americanism had come to stand for aggressive anticommunism rather than an open-ended egalitarianism. As we shall see, however, the radical ideas of the 1930s played an important role in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s moral crusade as well as in Saul Alinsky's community organizing.

The Return to Professionalism

During the war, the enthusiasms of the 1930s came to be seen by many intellectuals as dangerous departures from objectivity and transgressions of professional standards of behavior. The elitism and specialized professionalism of the natural scientist became the norm, and although criticism was tolerated, partisanship was not. The norms of science that the sociologist Robert Merton characterized in 1942 stressed the inner cohesion of the "scientific community" around the values of universalism, disinterestedness, organized skepticism, and commun[al]ism, and those values placed the partisan intellectual outside the doors of academe. As such, the kinds of social criticism that

were acceptable in the postwar years were much more limited than those that had characterized the 1930s. The days of the omniscient generalist were over; even a critical thinker as public and active as Mills prided himself on his sociological expertise (although he thought of it as craftsmanship) and his adherence to a sociological tradition epitomized by Max Weber. What many of our dissident intellectuals practiced was an alternative professionalism, reinventing the partisan engagement that had characterized intellectual life in the 1930s—and in the European resistance. The alternative professionalism often led, however, as we shall see, to academic marginalization; the battle to defend social criticism was, in most cases, won at the cost of scholarly respectability.

In the social sciences, the cult of science included the propagation of a specialized ideal of knowledge, dividing social reality into separate academic disciplines. In this respect, scientism transformed the pragmatic interest in the scientific investigation of society into an institutionalized social "role." Science was seen, in the framework that came to dominate sociological thinking, as part of a functionally differentiated social system. In the words of Talcott Parsons, who was to become the dominant social theorist of his time, "Social science, as a system of human activity, is an integral part of a larger social system. Because it is inevitably involved in a complex balance of forces, the maintenance and promotion of its standards and functions are inherently precarious. Stability cannot be taken for granted, but must be accomplished by continually vigilant adjustment to a changing situation." Parsons sought to inculcate a professional ethic into social science, distinguishing it from the more amateurish social studies that had flourished before the war. "In maintaining a balanced and steadfast orientation to technical standards, the social scientist must hold a model of purely scientific work continually before him. He must have a clear realization of the importance of genuinely technical work in making possible his own applied functions" (1948: 105). Parsons's structural-functionalism served as a theoretical legitimation for the new regime of scientific expertise. In his social system, everyone had his or her proper function and "social role." Stepping out of line, or transgressing disciplinary boundaries, was dysfunctional and thus inefficient in terms of the smooth operation of the social system as a whole.

One important implication of this theory of society was the differentiation in social science between what Mills called "grand theorists" and "abstracted empiricists" and the development of a technical ideal of research. Theory itself became a technical operation, generating formal concepts and thus reducing social process to logical relations. Such a theory fit well with the ongoing transformation of social science into an applied research activity. Many social scientists—even some of those who would later become critics—conducted opinion surveys and other forms of applied research during the war, and afterward, a statistically based and individually oriented empirical orientation came to take on increasing importance in many academic social science departments. In this regard the role of the large private foundations, such as the Rockefeller Foundation, was particularly important. The Carnegie Foundation support for "area studies," for "social relations" at Harvard, and for educational research, the Rockefeller Foundation's support for "international relations" and development economics, and the Ford Foundation's support for "behavioral studies" helped redefine the social sciences in significant ways. Besides serving ideological functions, these programs favored empirical research of a survey variety and thus encouraged particular methodologies and research approaches. The result of these as well as of more "internal" forces within the academy—such as Parsons's and Merton's theories in sociology, Milton Friedman's and Paul Samuelson's theories in economics, Robert Dahl's theories in political science—tended to marginalize critical thought.

Even those who would criticize in the guise of academic expertise were subject to the norms of disciplinarity. Criticism came to be fragmented according to the specialized competence of the critic. The atomic scientists could criticize the uses of atomic energy, economists like John Kenneth Galbraith and Robert Heilbroner could criticize the productive economic uses—and abuses—of scientific research, sociologists like Robert Merton could criticize the institutional aspects of scientific work, and cultural critics like Dwight Macdonald and Irving Howe could criticize the vulgarities of mass culture. But the kind of all-encompassing social concern that had been articulated in the 1930s was no longer respectable, for it was not considered sufficiently scientific. The almost total academic rejection of Mumford's *The Con-*

dition of Man (1944) and *The Conduct of Life* (1952), the third and fourth volumes in the Renewal of Life series that he had initiated in the 1930s, is one of several indications that a new scientistic climate was fast achieving a hegemonic status as the cold war intensified.

Intriguingly, the scientistic hegemony of intellectual life fostered, almost in spite of itself, a subjectivist mirror image of romantic anti-scientism that would, in the 1960s, inspire a counterculture that posited heightened subjectivity and personal liberation as a great refusal of the Great Society. The sources of the counterculture included both the studies of alienation and subjectivity, such as Arendt's *The Human Condition* (1958), Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (1955), and Erich Fromm's *The Sane Society* (1955), and the more mystical explorations of Eastern religion, especially Zen Buddhism, undertaken already in the 1950s by people like Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder.

Perhaps even more important was the discovery by writers and artists of what might be termed the underlife of American society: the deviants, criminals, drug addicts, and sexually promiscuous. William Burroughs, James Baldwin, Jack Kerouac, and Allen Ginsberg glorified another realm of existence beyond the antiseptic scientific official culture. In the margins of America—the jazz clubs of Harlem, the slums of Chicago, and on the roads between the idylls of suburbia—the hard life of direct experience formed the stuff of the Beat writers and the rhythms of the new electrified blues music.

With the scientification of academic life, several of the "activist" or movement intellectuals of the 1930s either accepted the new "technical standards" or distanced themselves from the academy altogether, finding, like Macdonald and Mary McCarthy, niches for themselves as professional (cultural) "critics" for popular magazines or, like Mills and Mumford, becoming professional outlaws, with their social criticism—and their criticism of fellow intellectuals—growing ever more alienated. Both Mills's and Mumford's criticism would be influential in the 1960s in inspiring the student revolt with its rejection of what Mumford called the megamachine and its eventual rediscovery of romantic passion.

On another level, however, the professionalization of criticism represented a kind of breakthrough into the commercial media. Watered down and accommodating as they might have been, the articles

by James Baldwin and Macdonald in *Esquire* and *Playboy* and the columns by Mumford and Howe in the *New Yorker* and *Time* gave birth to a new kind of journalism, directing critical, literary attention to popular themes. At the same time, the infusion of qualified critical voices into the popular media challenged the hegemony of the formal academic cultural experts, indeed, challenged the academic culture altogether. While many academic humanists distanced themselves from the reality around them by escaping into a world of abstract techniques and scholarly jargon, coteries of cultural critics writing in the popular media questioned the values and conventional wisdom of their time. The spaces that they managed to carve out within the established culture would provide some of the models for the alternative media that would develop in the 1960s.

The emphasis on science as the source of social and economic development was part of a more general transformation taking place in American society, which we can term the shaping of a technological culture. It corresponded to a period of rather unproblematic economic expansion and the coming to prominence of new technologies based on cheap oil: plastics, petrochemicals, synthetic textiles, and so on. The "long wave" of economic and technological development that was ushered in by the Second World War and that continued into the 1960s was based on a new technoeconomic paradigm. The paradigm was characterized by both "scientification," that is, the direct infusion of scientific research into the production process, and militarization, the domination of military priorities over technological development; and it came to be steered by new kinds of diversified multinational, or transnational, corporations, which in the postwar period developed their own systems of knowledge generation, production, and diffusion. As with the earlier long waves of capitalist development, this postwar wave also had a cultural component—the creation of an appropriate set of values and beliefs in the general public that were congenial to and acceptant of the new products and production processes.

The propagation of general education and popular science was a widespread strategy in the postwar years to infuse a scientific-technological value system into American culture. Unlike the writings of the 1930s that had often sought to show how science grew out of practical needs and practical problems, the postwar writings tended to

present the scientist as a man apart, a great man of thought and ideas, more a magician than a technician. This view was reproduced in the literature—and, not least, the films—of science fiction, which reacted to the challenge of the scientific-technological state by resurrecting Frankenstein images of the mad scientist or developing new alien images to contribute to the anti-Communist crusade. While science fiction gave vent to otherwise repressed fears, popular science writers glorified the new scientific-technological elite and their discoveries, and on television, children were introduced to the scientific method by a jovial and pedagogical "Mr. Wizard." Not only was science useful but it could also be fun.

But even here the hegemonic culture opened spaces within which critics could operate. As the 1950s progressed, the popularization of science took on a critical edge, and, in 1962, Rachel Carson, one of the most successful of the postwar science writers with two best-selling books on the oceans to her credit, was able to use her talents to help shape a new environmental opposition. Popular writing about science grew more critical, especially after the Soviets launched their space satellite in 1957, and there developed a widespread fear that the American scientific-technological state was falling behind. That soul-searching produced President Dwight D. Eisenhower's famous warning about the insidious power of the "military-industrial complex" in his farewell address in 1961 as well as the awakening of environmental concern.

The Remaking of Partisanship

While most intellectuals in the postwar period came to renounce their youthful enthusiasms, a vocal minority tried to keep the ideas of the 1930s alive. Some of these partisan intellectuals had been students in the 1920s and 1930s; others contributed actively to the intense debates about the future of America in a world on the road to war. The social movements of the times provided them with more than a supplement to formal education; for many, the experiences of social and political activism offered a much richer and more relevant education than any university course could hope to give. The war continued this

schooling in reality, by bringing almost all Americans together in a common struggle against fascism and widening the range of their horizons. The war both fostered an international outlook that was less ideological than had often been the case in the 1930s and mixed people from different backgrounds and regions together for a brief, intensive period. But unlike their contemporaries who willingly wandered after the war into the expanding wasteland of the American empire, these intellectuals struggled to maintain and redefine their partisanship within the new intellectual and personal contexts that emerged.

This book will move between biography and history in tracing the intellectual roots of the 1960s. The people we write about are not merely the symbols or abstractions or role models that they often seem to be for commentators on the 1940s and 1950s; we are concerned with them both as representatives of larger historical patterns and as distinct human beings existentially constructing their own lives. It is a particularly appropriate way to approach the American postwar era, an age that was so strongly colored by the conflict between individual freedom and totalitarianism and perhaps more than anything else witnessed the loss of Emersonian man into the lonely crowd of mass society.

Our method is that of collective biography, grouping apparently disparate individuals around a common thematic category—society, nature, knowledge, culture, politics—each of which formed the basis for the emergence of social movements in the 1960s and 1970s. Reconceptualizing these categories at a particular historical juncture is what our subjects have in common. They share contextual and generational commonalities, even though their life histories often went separate ways, marked, as they have been, by an often aggressive struggle for autonomy and individuality.

As individuals, these partisan critics of postwar America were all concerned with intellectual craftsmanship and with breaking down academic boundaries and distinctions. In this they differed from their mainstream contemporaries, who found congenial the new conditions of big science and corporate culture. While many, if not most, academics were becoming organization men, partisan intellectuals were reasserting their independence, or at least attempting to keep a distance from the new range of opportunities for intellectual labor. Their self-appointed task was to ask uncomfortable questions, identify fun-

damental problems, and try to put the pieces together into new patterns of understanding and meaning. They gave radical witness.

In the process they strayed across disciplinary borders and partook of intellectual comradery as compensation for the movements that were suddenly no longer available. Few of the critical intellectuals worked in isolation; they found sustenance in small groups and journals as well as in small, temporary spaces in and around the universities. In helping to lead a new generation out of the "wasteland," they were themselves marginalized by the established centers of cultural influence and success. But in combining homegrown radicalism with European ideas, they opened the door to new paths for achieving both fame and fortune.

Much of the criticism that will concern us in this book was embodied in refugees, like Hannah Arendt, Leo Szilard, Herbert Marcuse, and Erich Fromm, all of whom had come to America to escape fascism. Outsiders by necessity, they often found support and friendship in outsiders by choice, people like Allen Ginsberg and James Baldwin. Still others, like Lewis Mumford, Mary McCarthy, and C. Wright Mills, managed to stay inside the academy or the popular media while rejecting the values that came to dominate those institutions. And a few, like Fairfield Osborn, Dorothy Day, and Saul Alinsky, created new organizational spaces for their critical work.

From our perspective, the 1960s cannot be adequately explained or understood without examining the formative role played by these and other partisan intellectuals. The 1960s, we contend, were not merely significant as politics; indeed, the political battles have been overtaken by history. Today they seem anachronistic. But the ideas of the 1960s live on, as sources of inspiration in a variety of scientific fields, in popular culture, and as a paradigm for life at once autonomous, free, and committed: the "personal is political." The importance of the 1960s is largely symbolic, or, in our terms, intellectual. Like other social movements, it is the cognitive praxis—the new ideas and the new intellectual contexts—that gives the movements of the 1960s and after their main significance. The power of the ideas that emerged—and, indeed, the continuing power of the 1960s as an inspirational idea itself—cannot be comprehended unless those ideas are looked at in formation, as emergent processes of rediscovery and recognition.

In this book, we want to explore how the cognitive praxis of the 1960s first emerged out of the activities of critical intellectuals. It was, we claim, a small number of relatively isolated individuals who set the stage—and much of the conceptual framework—for 1960s social activism. In the 1950s, as so often before in American history, intellectuals were under attack by forces of anti-intellectualism or conformity, which gives many of their writings a special power and a renewed relevance for contemporary American society. With the purported closing of the American mind and the recent resurgence of American military might, it is important to remember the cold war critics of the 1950s.

The Structure of the Book

Five main intellectual areas or themes concern us in the pages that follow: Society, nature, knowledge, culture, and politics. These areas do not cover the entire range of ideas that were spawned by the movements of the 1960s, but they capture at least most of what has continued to be important and influential. We will approach them through the method of collective biography, presenting the activities of our critical intellectuals in a thematic way, mixing a portrayal of the person's life with analysis of the person's works.

We have chosen those intellectuals whose ideas and/or activities had a significant impact on the movements of the 1960s, although "impact," we admit, is a somewhat subjective term. In most cases, the impact is obvious; in others, the impact is both less obvious and less direct. In all cases, however, the impact that concerns us is personal as well as collective, for our subjects served both as bearers of traditions of intellectual partisanship and as formulators of ideas and issues. In addition to serving as examples of intellectual behavior, they provided many of the concepts and theories—and organizational forums—that lay behind the more public manifestations of social movement.

Impact and influence are double-edged, however. While some of the people who fill the following pages became heroes, even gurus for the movements that they spawned, others grew disappointed in what had been unleashed. Marcuse and Arendt offer contrasting patterns of

interaction with the movements of the 1960s. Where the one found a new historical agent and personal recognition in a foreign intellectual environment, the other primarily found a failed opportunity and a repetition of the extremism and anti-intellectualism that had afflicted previous periods of radicalism in America. Between these poles of attraction and repulsion fall the more mixed relations of Mead and McCarthy and Mumford and Baldwin, keeping their intellectual distance while being nudged toward more critical positions, and Fromm, Alinksy, Ginsberg, and especially King, identifying with the new movements while seeking to play an independent intellectual role. Mills and Carson, who served as models for many of the activists of the 1960s and whose writings perhaps more than any others inspired the movements of student and environmental activism, died (in 1962 and 1964, respectively) before they had to take a stand.

The first theme that concerns us deals with the reconceptualization of society. America had traditionally been seen as a kind of open-ended frontier, dominated by small towns, family businesses and farms, democratic institutions, and Protestant values. In the twentieth century, however, America was transformed from a loosely connected confederation of communities into an increasingly urban, industrialized nation. The Second World War brought about the rise of a military-industrial complex and the domination of society by a middle class of white-collar workers. These changes were assimilated, if not accepted, by most social scientists, who saw their role primarily as analysts of the social problems or strains that the transformations had brought about. But a few outlaw academics and disenfranchised Marxists were able to provide the terms and concepts that were needed to comprehend this new mass society; in particular, we will indicate how the social theorists C. Wright Mills, Hannah Arendt, and Erich Fromm, from different intellectual vantage points and at different levels of abstraction, challenged the new mass society in their writings and their very way of living as critical intellectuals. Postwar industrial society, our critical intellectuals claimed, had become both authoritarian and repressive and steered by what Mills called a new "power elite"; their writings and actions inspired the New Left in its collective call for liberation and participatory democratic action. Arendt's fierce intellectual independence kept her from taking active part in the move-

ments of the 1960s—indeed, she became an outspoken critic of most of them—but her uniquely philosophical journalism remained an important intellectual presence throughout the turbulent decade.

Our second theme deals with the reconceptualization of nature. The closing of the frontier and the spreading of industrialism transformed the American landscape from a largely untamed wilderness to an exploitable expanse of resources. With postwar suburbanization and the rise of the sunbelt industries, nature came ever closer to society; and the traditional interest in conservation gave way to a new world of nature re-creation. Postwar industrial development was based on science rather than on nature; plastics, synthetic textiles, and petrochemicals replaced natural processes with man-made techniques, but, as a result, their disposal created substantial new problems. The American consumer had become a "waste maker," and pollution was like a plague upon the land. It was in the 1940s and 1950s that a small number of nature lovers, writers, and scientists began to identify the new problems. We will focus on three individuals, as representatives for the range of ecological criticism that emerged. Fairfield Osborn, now largely forgotten, was one of the very first to warn of the new dangers in his book, *Our Plundered Planet* (1948), but he was also one of those who tried to put his critique into practice, through his work in conservation and zoological societies. Lewis Mumford transformed his human ecological philosophy into a more far-reaching and all-encompassing social criticism in the 1950s and 1960s, challenging the highway builders and the city planners and keeping the 1930s bioregional vision alive. Finally, we examine how the new conception of nature as a human environment came to be presented most dramatically and influentially by Rachel Carson in her book, *Silent Spring* (1962). These ecological intellectuals were among the handful of critics who planted the seeds for the new ecology movement. In the process, nature conservation was transformed into environmentalism, which continues to affect research agendas as well as American political life.

Our third theme deals with the reconceptualization of knowledge. It was the Second World War that would turn little science, a kind of artisanal activity, into the Big Science of corporate and military research. At the same time, a new breed of professional expert moved into government service and sought to give America a new position of

leadership in the world of knowledge, encouraged by the emigration of many scientists and other intellectuals from Europe. This organized knowledge production became the basis for a range of new industrial products, but even more important was how the creative process itself became incorporated into the marketplace as universities and other academic institutions competed for talent and for government research contracts. The critics here would emerge from within the new institutions themselves; first, among the atomic scientists just after the war who were the first to outline the significance of the new "atomic age," and later, among the peace researchers and other intellectuals who would inspire the mass protests against the bomb in the 1950s and the movement against the Vietnam War in the 1960s. In the writings of Leo Szilard and in the pages of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, the conception of knowledge was transformed from an autonomous small-scale activity into a form of societal practice; and the works of Margaret Mead and Herbert Marcuse introduced new approaches to understanding the consequences of this socialization of knowledge. Marcuse brought Marxism up to date, by reformulating its basic tenets in the light of the failed Soviet experiment and the victory of technocratic rationality in the West. His critique of "one-dimensional thought" was an important pillar of the New Left's theory of knowledge. Even more influential perhaps were the writings and personal example of Mead, drawing on the cultural anthropology of her friend, Ruth Benedict, and the experience of her own fieldwork to relativize the very idea of what knowledge consists of.

Our fourth theme concerns the reconceptualization of culture. During and after the Second World War, America was transformed into a mass consumption society of television-watching suburbanites, with serious effects on the common culture. On the one hand, television and mass media more generally produced an age of conformity and a degeneration of artistic standards. On the other hand, the hegemony of the new middle-class values tended to narrow the range of the common culture as a shared way of life and to exclude the various outsiders that not only did not disappear but actually increased in numbers after the war. Three types of responses were especially significant for what was to come in the 1960s and onward. On the one hand, there is the reaction of the successful novelist, typified for us by

Mary McCarthy, the established woman writer, who uses satire—a typical weapon of the oppressed—to poke fun at her masculine colleagues and provides a role model for other women to emulate. Her best-selling novels on the mores of middle-class women helped set the agenda for the feminists to come. On the other hand, James Baldwin, in his self-biographical novels and essays, presented what might be called the black counterpoint to middle-class culture and provided inspiration for the emerging civil rights movement; Baldwin, like McCarthy, relied on traditional literary forms to expand social consciousness. A third, more culturally radical response came from the Beats; William Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, and especially Allan Ginsberg, on whom we focus our attention, gave voice to the sexual, spiritual, and psychological repression intrinsic to the conformist culture. As fathers of the 1960s counterculture, the Beat writers reconceptualized in their very persons the meaning of culture in American society.

Finally, the idea of politics was reconceptualized; indeed, the new politics of direct action was what the 1960s came to stand for. With the debacle of the Wallace campaign in the presidential election of 1948, politics in America came to be frozen into mass parties, collections of interest groups rather than collectivities of active citizens. Community organizing, as practiced by Saul Alinsky in the streets of Chicago, became an important alternative in the art of doing politics. Alinsky's approach was to take on power directly over issues that affected the local community, and his "rules for radicals" would be a handbook for many activists in the new social movements. Dorothy Day, journalist and former cultural radical, brought to the antiwar movement a unique moral presence based on pacifist beliefs and missionary zeal. While her role has tended to be neglected in the many recountings of the 1960s, Day exemplified partisan intellectual practice through her catholic anarchism, living among the poor in New York and helping to shape the peace movement. A pacifist during the Second World War, Day kept alive a tradition of civil disobedience that was drawn on and revitalized in the 1960s and beyond. In her quiet devotion to serving the interests of peace and justice, she was one of the most important women who, often behind the scenes and out of the headlines, first served to make the political a matter of personal commitment. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s contribution was much more

direct and obvious, constructing in his speeches and his organizing a bridge between the Old Left "popular fronts" of the 1930s and the antiwar movement of the 1960s. The civil rights movement that he helped carve out of the wilderness provided a space where the two radical generations could meet. Drawing on the social gospel of the 1930s and the moral example of Gandhi, King helped bring spirituality back into American politics.

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In the 1950s, these different themes tended to be reconceptualized as separate discourses, and the reconceptualizers tended to live in separate intellectual universes: some wrote for popular consumption, while others worked within professional, more academic communities. Our partisan intellectuals, even those who had legitimate standing in the established political culture, were often isolated from their peers and their society. Small, marginal magazines and autonomous spaces could not replace what they most needed and craved—an audience to interact with and to act on their ideas, that is, a social movement.

The movements of the 1960s—civil rights, student activism, opposition to the war in Vietnam, and then environmentalism and feminism—provided that audience but, by so doing, took many of the reconceptualizers by surprise. In one sense, their very existence challenged some of the ideas that had been formulated; the movements disproved the contentions of conformity and one-dimensionality while bringing new social actors to the fore. Students, women, blacks, nature lovers became activists, but by becoming active, they also broke with some of the conceptual and organizational frameworks that had been constructed by our partisan intellectuals. Many felt neglected, even rejected. But some would eventually outlast the 1960s and help inspire a new generation of critics.