MODERNITY AND THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY*

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It is a great honour and privilege for me to give this Richard Turner Memorial Lecture. All those who knew Richard Turner will recall his many qualities: his brilliant mind, his intellectual passion and his political commitment. Turner was an outstanding philosopher — his was, perhaps, the most profound philosophical intelligence in post Second World War South Africa. The best and most substantial part of his work, which remains, alas, unpublished, encompasses a magisterial reconstruction and interrogation of the history of dialectical reason from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Jean-Paul Sartre. His accounts of Kant and Hegel, in particular are paradigms of philosophical writing: wonderfully lucid, economical and sharp.

Philosophical reflection, for Turner, was no mere exercise in contemplation or technical virtuosity. It was an exercise in social and political engagement, an exercise in cultivating the practices of open, public discourse, of discursive rationality. For him, philosophy was, as Agnes Heller has put it, an exercise in thinking together.[1] The wonderful limpidity of his prose served the purpose of stimulating public discourse; it was a limpidity that he constantly, and consciously, struggled to achieve. For Turner was, and clearly saw himself as, a thoroughly situated and engaged philosopher. The compass of his reading and his interests was remarkably universal — I remember well his detailed and highly informed reflections on topics as divergent as the thought of Paracelsus and the mechanisms of the French electoral process. Yet his actions and his commitments were local and situated. His political energies were expressed in attempts to address and challenge the irrationalities and injustices of South Africa in the 1970s. Turner was, in this, a man of great moral and intellectual courage and, in his assassination on the 8th January, 1978 he paid the ultimate penalty for this courage. The power of philosophy as an instrument of emancipation in his hands was amply demonstrated precisely by the desperate resort to the assassin's bullet.

Turner was also a situated thinker in another sense: his work involved a conscious, critical appropriation and extension of the philosophical and political projects of the European Enlightenment, projects which have as their purpose the construction of a free, rational and democratic society. And it is

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about the origin, nature and fate of these projects that I wish to speak today.

In my title I refer to modernity. Why do I use this term, and to precisely what does it refer? Modernity, as I shall be using it in this lecture, refers to a particular, complex set of ideas about the nature of the human being and of his (and later her) relationship to both the physical universe and the world of other human beings. It might, indeed, be used, with some caution, to refer to the predominant moral consciousness of the economically more advanced regions of the world from the seventeenth century through to the present. In particular, it refers to a set of ideas that embodies a particular range of values in terms of which the legitimacy of social, political and economic institutions in the modern world is both grounded and challenged. It refers to a kind of world view or Weltanschauung which, though it has many and often contradictory elements, comes to constitute the principal framework for moral and political discourse in modern times. It must be distinguished from the term "modernisation" which refers to the growth and development of the various instruments through which nature is controlled and harnessed, productivity increased and societies more efficiently administered. Indeed, I shall want to claim that modernity and the forces of modernisation stand in a relationship of tension with one another.

In what, then, does this set of ideas consist? To answer this question adequately we need to contrast the modern world with the mediaeval world which preceded it. In particular we need to contrast the principal politico-philosophical visions of the mediaeval world with those of the modern. With regard to the evolution of political thought perhaps the most important point is that — to risk a generalisation — the *homo credens* of the mediaeval world view replaced the *homo politicus* of the classical Greek world. The politically significant aspects of this mediaeval world view are that it emphasised the importance of divine ordination and the need properly to interpret the will of God. Secular affairs needed to be adjusted to conform with this will.[2]

The development of the modern world embodied a number of fundamental challenges to the principal mediaeval conceptions of how the world might be comprehended and how it ought, socially and politically, to be organised. In particular three major and highly complex sequences of events, which were to have a fundamental role in forging the intellectual and political framework of the modern world, unfolded. These were the Renaissance, the Reformation and, most importantly in my view, the great intellectual ferment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Renaissance, of course, entailed the re-appropriation and re-assessment of classical learning and marked a

significant step on the road to modernity. The Reformation also signalled important developments in that it posed a challenge to the authority of the Pope. This accelerated the breakdown of the old religious sodality of mediaeval Christendom. The view that authority in general could be monopolised was eroded through the establishment of a plurality of sources of religious authority.

The main rupture, however, occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These, after all, were the centuries of Descartes, Spinoza, Newton, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Kant, to mention just a few. And it was the seminal writers of these centuries who first really defined the terms of modern intellectual discourse.

In what, then, does the significance of this rupture consist?

First, the seventeenth century marked a profound secularisation of thought in which theological authority and Aristotelianism were challenged. This challenge had two prongs to it. The first was the challenge to established ways of thinking about, and the grounding of knowledge of, the physical world. The second was the challenge to established ways of justifying political authority and moral knowledge. It could be said — with perhaps some exaggeration — that the *homo credens* of the mediaeval world came to be replaced by the *homo dubitans* of the modern age. This transition had a number of key features to it. In particular, method came to replace revelation as the proper basis of knowledge and the seventeenth century could well be called the 'age of method'.[3] The implications of this were significant. Knowledge could only be secured through the application of the correct method. Knowledge came slowly to be conceived as a common or public good accessible to all; it was no longer, at least in principle, the privileged preserve of a fixed class or stratum of people such as religious functionaries. It could even be said that the elevation of method as the principle upon which knowledge is based had a decidedly democratic aspect to it, for the capacity to generate knowledge was put within the reach of anyone who cared to apply the right method. The testing of truth claims, therefore, was disconnected from the particular qualities or station of the person making them. The means for their testing — method — was external to, existed independently of, the claimants.

Second, and related to the prominence given to method, is the role of the categories of reason and rationality. Indeed, the very nature of human beings came to be fundamentally re-defined. They came to be seen as bearers of reason and, through their reason, as able to make choices, establish morality and transform the world. As I shall elaborate further on, the modern quest for political authenticity involves a quest for the expression of world-transforming rational will. The compass of reason came to be seen

as wide and reason came even to have an application in the grounding of morality. Thus Locke in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* insists that

> ... *morality* is capable of demonstration as well as mathematics ... and I doubt not but, if a right method were taken, a great part of morality might be made out with that clearness, that could leave, to a considering man, no more reason to doubt, than he could have to doubt of the truth of propositions in mathematics, which have been demonstrated to him.[4]

One could say that, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the modern, normatively axial conceptions of the person were constructed. In terms of these conceptions, the person came to be seen as essentially or inherently rational, free and equal. This threefold description of the person is pivotal to the principal moral discourses of the modern world. Of course, what it *means* for a person to be free, rational or equal was — and still is — a much contested matter. But that, in some way, people were free, rational and equal came to be a guiding assumption of most of the more important moral and political philosophers from the seventeenth century to the present.

The implications of this conception of the person as free, rational and equal need to be spelled out. First — and I must emphasise here that, owing to the pressure of time, I am employing generalisations in a manner that I would not normally do — such free, rational and equal persons would not normally accept as legitimate the arbitrary exercise of political power. Thus — and this becomes clear in the writings of the social contract theorists — only the consent of the governed can serve as the proper basis of government.

Second, the individual human being came to enjoy a specially privileged status. The individual came to be defined as a bearer of rights who has to be tolerated and treated with respect. Furthermore, it is these very human beings themselves who are identified as the proper source of values, of morality. One particular aspect of this modern account of the person that needs to be emphasised is that rights attach to his or her self regardless of any contingent qualities or characteristics that he or she might have. Such a person is, in this sense, 'abstacted' or 'desituated' from society; his or her socially constituted identity as worker, Frenchman, Black, musician or whatever — has no bearing on his or her formal status as a bearer of rights. This view of the 'universal' nature of the person came to be encoded in various documents central to the liberal tradition. It is, for example, given exemplary expression in the Declaration of the Rights of Men and

Citizens issued by the French National Assembly in August 1789. Article 2 of that Declaration states that 'The aim of every political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man; these rights are liberty, security and resistance to oppression' and article 12 declares that 'The guaranteeing of the rights of man and of the citizen necessitates a public force: this force is then established for the advantage of all and not for the special benefit of those to whom it is entrusted'. Thus the purpose of government was to protect the rights of man, and these rights included the rights both to freedom of thought and to property and were attached universally to all persons. This conception of persons as bearers of rights is distinctively modern; a strong case can be made that, although they may have had social practices that were consistent with the idea of rights, the Ancients did not define people in terms of what today we would call rights.[5]

This normative model of the person also stresses that people ought to be more or less empowered to control the circumstances of their lives. Persons on this view are active; they are agents able to shape their lives and societies in accordance with their wills. History came to be seen as an elective human project, as something that is constructed and constructable. People's lives were no longer seen as regulated by eternal, immutable cycles, by forces over which they had no command. Indeed, the philospher of history Reinhardt Kosselek has suggested that the modern conception of historical time as no longer cyclical but as a linear progression, the direction of which can be determined by human choice, has its origins as late as the period of the French Revolution.[6]

To summarise: the normative conception of the person central to modernity is that of a free and equal being who bears rights and is possessed of a potentially rational will through the expression of which he (and later she) can construct a rational society. Such an account of the person is necessarily democratic, for it disallows the arbitrary exercise of power. It is egalitarian since it forbids discrimination in terms of some putatively natural hierarchy. And it is discursive in that it suggests that the public good and common interest can be realised rationally through a process of discursive will formation — a point emphasised in widely different contexts by very different protagonists of this view such as John Stuart Mill, Rosa Luxemburg, Hannah Arendt and Jurgen Habermas. It is central to most serious liberal conceptions of the self and society as well as to most serious socialist thought. Indeed liberalism and socialism are both, in this respect, essentially phenomena of modernity.

The claim I now wish to advance is that a number of tensions exist between this normative account of the person and the various contexts in which it has been invoked. It is a tension, if I may so put

it, between the ethical content of the principal discourses of the modern world (ignoring here, of course, nihilistic and romantic anti-modernist discourses) and the social, political and economic frameworks spawned by the processes of industrial and economic growth. It is a tension between the values of modernity and many of the forces and consequences of modernisation. The democratic and emancipatory promise of modernity remains largely unredeemed on account of the anti-democratic and constraining nature of modern systems of power. The principal institutional forms of modern societies — the market as a system not only of exchange but of power, the state as a labyrinthine and often inscrutable apparatus of surveillance, administrative control and coercion — have all limited the extent to which democracy as an exercise in rational will-formation can be realised. The Rousseauesque or Kantian models of autonomy or freedom as obedience to a law that one has prescribed to oneself fit ill with a world in which the structures of power and systems of decision-making are not only limitedly responsive to the needs and wishes of ordinary people, but often prevent such people from knowing or freely defining these needs and wishes.

The conditions for autonomy exist only imperfectly. It might be said that the core normative vision of modernity and the processes of modernisation — those very processes necessary to the building of a world in which scarcity might be overcome and the circumstances for autonomy created — stand in a relationship of tension one with another. Some might even go so far as to say that the normative premisses of the Enlightenment, of modernity, are dead and that all we have are the consequences, mostly tragic, of an attempt to harness, control and direct the forces of nature; that the project of the Enlightenment with its commitment to the creation of a free and rational society has, and must of necessity have, failed; that the attempt to establish reason as a moral Archimedean point was doomed and that, insofar as modern societies are rational, they can only be rational in a crassly instrumental sense, not in the sense in which Kant or Marx would have wished. I don't, for reasons that will become clear, share this view. Rather, I see the promise of the Enlightenment to be as yet unfulfilled, its project incomplete.

The perception that this ethical vision of modernity stands in tension with the social, political and economic arrangements of modern society is not new. Rousseau himself in the eighteenth century perceived, acutely, in his *Discourse on the Arts and the Sciences*, that the modern civilisation he saw unfolding before him was not an unmixed blessing and, in his *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* identified the structural, historically created inequalities of modern Europe — in particular the institution of private

property — as the principal cause of human misery. 'Man', after all said Rousseau in the *Social Contract* 'is born free, but everywhere is in chains'. Rousseau saw direct or radical democracy as the theoretical solution to the human predicament but doubted that such a form of government was really possible for men. Although Rousseau might be regarded as the first radical critic of modern society, he remained, in the end quiescent.

In the nineteenth century in the writings of Karl Marx, the cause of human misery came to be seen not so much in the general structures of civil society as in the specific arrangements of the capitalist system of production. This was a system of alienation, wage labour and exploitation of the labouring classes by those who owned the means of production. Marx claimed that human beings in modern capitalist societies were unfree, but that this condition of unfreedom could be rectified. He provided a detailed analysis of the mechanisms through which he claimed this unfreedom was maintained, and identified the agency — the industrial working class — through which he believed it could be negated. It is necessary to emphasise that for Marx what was wrong with capitalism was that it was, by the very logic of its organisation, a system of unfreedom in which the inherent creative capacities of people could not be fully expressed. The worker was, in his view, alienated from the product of his labour, from his creative self and from his fellow human beings. For Marx, the capitalist, too, was alienated, though the circumstances of his life were more commodious. Thus, although he greatly admired the productive capacities that had been unleashed under capitalism, Marx condemned capitalism because it was a system in which people were disempowered, in which workers were reduced to the status of commodities, of things; because it was a system which denied them their status as free and rational persons with dignity who — in Kant's formulation — should be treated not as means, but rather as ends in themselves. For Marx, and for his followers, capitalism would be transcended through the revolutionary action of the working class, that class which was in civil society but not of civil society and which had nothing but its chains to lose. It was, for Marx, the first truly universal class able, in emancipating itself, to emancipate the whole of society. Its world-historical mission was to create, in the building of socialism, the first properly classless society.

The crucial point is that for Marx and socialists in general, the claim that freedom and human rights were realisable in a capitalist society was illusory. The distribution of wealth and power was — regardless of the constitutional guarantees within such a system — too unequal for this to be possible. Formal equality before the law did not entail substantive equality. 'One law for the lion and the

ox', said William Blake, 'is oppression'. Or, in the later famous observation of Anatole France 'The law in her majesty forbids the rich and poor alike from begging on the streets and sleeping under the bridges'. For Marx, the state and the law were not only not neutral as between the opposed interests of the ruling class and the ruled; they reflected and reinforced the interests of the former.

Thus, for Marx, democracy, as the institutional expression of human autonomy was not possible under capitalism. Capitalist democracy was, strictly speaking, a contradiction in terms. The creation of democracy required not simply the reform of the more iniquitous aspects of the system, but rather its complete transcendence. Others, such as John Stuart Mill, who were critical of the poverty and injustices associated with nineteenth century capitalism did not believe that these were the necessary consequences of the system; rather they were accidental or contingent features that had their origins in the particular history of the system. In terms of this view, all that was needed was the reform of the less happy aspects of the system.

There are, however, other phenomena of the distribution of power in modern societies that are not reducible to the arrangements specific to the capitalist mode of production. These phenomena have been expressed as much in systems that are not capitalist as in those that are. They inhere in all modern systems of production and social and political organisation. And they are, in their own way, as difficult to marry with the values of a properly democratic civilisation as are the inequalities of the capitalist system. These phenomena inhere in the complex division of labour, the multiple and hierarchical chains of command, the multiplicity of interdependent centres of production and consumption and the sheer demographic and territorial scale of modern societies. They are phenomena identified by terms such as technocracy, knowledge elite, bureaucracy and the surveillance state; they betoken unaccountability, inaccessibility and the potential for great irresponsibility in the exercise of power. In their extreme forms these phenomena have been expressed in the totalitarian systems of the twentieth century; and, as Anthony Giddens has suggested, totalitarianism is a tendential property of the modern nation state.[7] Indeed, the theory and practice of representative democracy can be seen as a compromise, as a means of checking and constraining these phenomena. John Stuart Mill, one of the great nineteenth century protagonists of representative democracy was quite explicit: he saw parliamentary democracy, among other things, as a means for limiting and directing the exercise of bureaucratic power.

The implications of these phenomena for the prospects of democracy are large. It would seem that only some kind of

indirect, highly mediated expression of popular will is possible under such circumstances. Democracy becomes, then, not so much a positive affirmation of popular will as a protective device through which the interests of ordinary people can, to an extent, be defended against the abuse of power. It would seem that the imperatives of scale, of organisational complexity and of expertise in both the economy and the political system make of direct democracy a utopian dream. What was feasible for the non-slave, non-metic male citizens of classicial Athens would seem not to be feasible for people in the twentieth century with its great concentrations of state and corporate power. It would seem that a Schumpeterian vision of democracy, where democracy is defined as a process in terms of which contending elites effectively set the political agenda and compete for popular support, is the only vision that is plausible in the modern world.

I should like to suggest, in a spirit of realism, that in the contemporary world the prospects are poor for a form of radical or direct democracy in which relations between people are transparent, popular will is formed through practices of open, unconstrained dialogue and the autonomy of the individual is fully reconciled with the authority of the state. I should also like to suggest, and this too in a spirit of realism, that the preceding vision of almost total disempowerment is also wrong. I should like, rather, to suggest, tentatively, that there exists what I have called a 'dialectic of modernity'.

This 'dialectic' inheres in the contradictory nature of modern systems of power. There are five elements to this 'dialectic' that I should like to adumbrate. First, the very instrumentalities in terms of which modern societies are regulated and rendered opaque and unfree also generate the conditions that enable the totalitarian potential of the modern state and the abuse of power by corporate systems to be checked; for modern systems of power are increasingly dependent for their survival on an ever better educated population that is increasingly likely to question the arbitrary exercise of power. The tendency in modern societies is towards the ever greater specialisation in and demand for ever more complex cognitive skills. Second, the consequences of modern decision-making have increasingly global ramifications; more and more people are affected by the consequences of modern production processes. Thus, environmental damage transcends local, class or sectarian interests to the extent that even the status of the modern nation state as a seemingly natural unit of territorial administration has come, at least in some respects, to be challenged. Third, as capitalism continues to expand globally, so ever larger segments of the world's population will be drawn, at ever more sophisticated levels of productive activity, into this

system of production; this is likely to result in the construction of a truly universal human identity in consequence of which people might well come to challenge the legitimacy of highly inegalitarian systems of political and economic power which are purportedly based on universalist and egalitarian principles of co-operation. Fourth, as the complexity of problems increases, so is it likely that solutions to collective problems will have to be addressed co-operatively rather than competitively; for, as some game theorists have argued, co-operative solutions to complex problems tend to be more efficient than competitive solutions.[8] Fifth, and perhaps most centrally, those who preside over modern decision-making systems will have — and indeed have had — to confront an ethic of responsibility articulated by those affected by the outcome of such systems.

The environmentalist lobbies, the peace movements and the various women's movements well illustrate the potential effectiveness of mobilisation around such an ethic of responsibility. In some important respects, too, these movements have shifted the locus of democratic activity away from the formal structures of the state and into the arena of civil society. As Raymond Aron wrote in *The Century of Total War* 'Frederick the Great left to his legal apologists the justification of his conquests after they had taken place. Public opinion played hardly any part in the limited warfare of the eighteenth century; the professional soldiers . . . felt no need to know why they were fighting. In the twentieth century, the soldier and citizen have become interchangeable; and the general public, believing itself peacefully disposed, demands an accounting from its leaders'.[9]

To shift briefly to a more abstract level of exposition: my central claim is that there is, if I may so put it, a dynamic or creative tension between the forces of modernisation, governed as they are by imperatives of technical reason — of profit and of the extension of administrative control — and the moral legacy of the Enlightenment defined as it is by an ethic of autonomy and responsibility. This latter necessarily places strains on modern systems of economic and social power, for it embodies the values in terms of which the very legitimacy of these systems must inevitably be questioned. It is an ethic which emphasises not only the basic equality of all people but also their right to forge their own life plans and control the circumstances in which these plans are to be expressed. It is an ethic which demands accountability and the empowerment of ordinary people. It is an ethic, too, which in my view transcends the old, somewhat wrongly formulated, antinomy of liberalism and socialism. For, in its stress on autonomy and tolerance it has a clearly liberal moment; and, in its stress on equality, it looks beyond the inegalitarianism of modern

capitalism. It is also, and very importantly, an ethic that demands a commitment to practices of discursive rationality. And, as I shall suggest, it is precisely through the cultivation and extension of such practices of discursive rationality that many of the most effective challenges to these systems are likely, in the future, to be articulated. For, as Charles Taylor has said, 'societies destroy themselves when they violate the conditions of legitimacy which they themselves tend to posit and inculcate'.[10]

It should be clear that I am suggesting that in the advanced industrial societies forms of democracy richer and stronger than the present systems of representative democracy are in the future likely increasingly to be secured through complex processes of communicative action and communicative rationality; such action will require both a liberal and an egalitarian or socialist content to it. Liberal, in that the conditions of a liberal political order — the freedoms of speech, of association and of assembly with the associated juridical and constitutional guarantees — are necessary to democracy; egalitarian in that the egalitarian distribution of the resources requisite for the effective pressing of rights claims is necessary in order not to render such freedoms illusory for many people. The achievements of social democratic parties and of welfare states in countries such as those of Western Europe mark, however limited, advances on this road. So too, one hopes, do the recent phenomena of Glasnost and Perestroika in the Soviet Union. Though one ought to be careful in expressing such opinions, it would appear that, as the twentieth century nears its end, the democratic project — after many set-backs, among which one need only mention Fascism and Stalinism — is, in the more economically advanced regions of the world, more or less back on course.[11]

I need now to address what is perhaps the main alternative account of how the promise of the enlightment might be redeemed: that of canonical Marxism. I believe that it is time to acknowledge that the canonical Marxist contention that emancipation will be secured through the revolutionary action of the industrial working class is seriously flawed. The reasons for this are many, but they include the fact that nowhere in the advanced capitalist world is the traditional industrial working class a majority of the population. Thus, parties representing working class interests in these countries have been forced into compromises with parties representing other, powerful, interests. The conventional Marxian visions have also tended to assume too readily that the problems of collective action on the part of diverse individuals and groups in societies with highly striated and complex systems of class structure are less difficult to resolve than they really are. Converting a class 'in itself' into a class 'for itself' has proven to be a more difficult

task than anticipated where classes are constantly in the process formation and reformation, of constitution and dissolution. Individual indentities and interests are too complex, too contradictory and too fragmented for this model to hold.[12]

This is not to deny the power of Marx's own vision. His accounts of alienation and of the circumstances of nineteenth century capitalism remain peerless. His view of the historical process as one in which people make history albeit under circumstances not entirely of their own choosing, and in which social structures are seen as both enabling and constraining, remains compelling. And, at a more abstract level, he was probably correct to say that capitalism will be transcended when the forces of production can no longer be accommodated within the relations of production by which is characterised. But the expectation that its abolition will be effected through the concerted and united action of the labouring classes in a coherent revolutionary struggle is, I suggest, implausible.

In what, then, does a more plausible vision consist? In the countries of advanced capitalism, development of the technologies of production will generate ever more free time. The traditional concerns with unemployment will be replaced by concerns with the quality of free time as people come more and more to think and reflect and machines, increasingly, do the work. Capitalism, I suspect — and here I think Marx was correct — will not be the last form in which material production will be organised and I suspect that an ethically higher form of production will follow it. However, the manner of its coming will, I think be neither through the work of an insurrectionary party nor through a working class seizure of parliamentary power. Rather it will be through a long, complex and highly dis-articulated set of processes through which the many individual irrationalities of contemporary systems of power will be challenged and transcended. There will be many individual struggles by many different interests, but there will be no single class agent, and no coherent and organised assault on these irrationalities as a whole. Rather more or less enlightened visions of individual, group or class interest will merge in complex, sometimes paradoxical and often unintended ways with collective, indeed global interests. The political and economic forms that historically have come to be regarded as 'natural' features of the modern world — the nation state as the principal object of mass loyalty, hierarchical and environmentally hazardous systems of production, etc. — will probably be slowly eroded.

The project of modernity is as yet incomplete and this project has, as its kernel, a rational and evolutionary thrust. In this long historical process both capitalism and state socialism are likely to

be transfigured into forms that bear little resemblance to them as presently they are constituted — into something that we may, perhaps, wish to call authentic socialism. Of course they may evolve into some nightmarish catastrophe, a ghastly terminus to that illusory prospect of emancipation that has its origins in the Enlightment. This latter dark outcome I believe is unlikely, though many battles lie ahead in which reactionary, anti-modernist forces such as those associated with various religious fundamentalisms and nationalisms that stress particularist as opposed to universalist identities, will need to be combatted. For in my view these reactionary, anti-modernist forces are, in the long run functionally incompatible with the processes of modernisation, with scientific, technological and economic development. These processes, with the complex challenges they pose, require that a plurality of values, of conceptions of the good, of discourses, be recognised; no one conception of the good can be forced with desirable outcomes upon an advanced industrial world. Rather, modernisation needs to be integrated with the values of modernity — the values of tolerance, of individualism, and of both formal and substantive procedural justice.

If I may venture a concluding prediction: the twentieth century has, among other things, been the century of science, of the systematic expansion of our knowledge and ability to control the physical world; the twenty-first century, to hazard a quess, will be the century of practical wisdom, increased communicative competence and rational will-formation; science and technology will continue to expand, but the emphasis will shift to the building of structures of discursive rationality through which science and technology can be better disciplined and directed and through which both their promise and that of democracy may be redeemed. Democracy will come, increasingly, to be a decentralised practice within civil society rather than simply a form of state organisation. And this will be because societies are complex, evolutionary learning systems, and much will be learnt — and has, I believe, already been learnt — from the disasters of our own century.[13]

I have spoken principally of the fate of the advanced industrial societies. I have not spoken of the special problems of those parts of the world that are economically backward. Their challenges are great, but need to be addressed in a different context. However, what I have said has a bearing on South Africa. For, as the economist Charles Simkins has said, South Africa is about one generation short of becoming an advanced industrial society.[14] Once apartheid has been abolished, as surely it will be, South Africans will have to address, along with the problems of urbanisation, poverty and economic growth, precisely the kinds of

issues I have raised. For the most advanced societies present to the less advanced images of their own futures.

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NOTES

1. Agnes Heller, *Radical Philosophy*, Oxford, 1984, pp. 9 and 10.
2. See the account, from which this characterisation is drawn, in David Held, *Models of Democracy*, Oxford, 1987, Ch. 2.
3. See the excellent discussion in J.W.N. Watkins, *Hobbes's System of Ideas*, London, 1965, Ch. 3.
4. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, London, 1964, p. 398.
5. See A.I. Melden, *Rights in Moral Lives*, Berkeley, 1988, Chs. 1 and 2 for brief but sensitive discussion of this issue.
6. Cf. Reinhardt Koselleck, *Futures Past*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1985, pp. 198–212.
7. Cf. Anthony Giddens, *The Nation State and Violence*, Cambridge and Oxford, 1985, Ch. 11.
8. See, inter alia, Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Co-operation*, New York, 1984; Michael Taylor, *Anarchy and Co-operation*, London 1976 and Michael Taylor, *The Possibility of Co-operation*, Cambridge, 1987, for discussions of this point.
9. Draus F. (ed) *History, Truth, Liberty: Selected Writings of Raymond Aron*, Chicago, 1985, p. 54.
10. Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Papers*, Vol 2, Cambridge, 1985, p. 248.
11. Cf. inter alia, Stein Ringen, *The Possibility of Politics*, Oxford, 1987, for a recent assessment of the achievements of the welfare state.
12. For a discussion of some of these problems see Adam Przeworski, *Capitalism and Social Democracy*, Cambridge, 1986.
13. For a comprehensive treatment of the questions of societal evolution and the nature of communicative action see the writings of Jurgen Habermas, especially his *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, Boston, 1979, and his *Theory of Communicative Action* (2 vols), Boston, 1987.
14. Cf. Charles Simkins, *The Prisoners of Tradition and the Politics of Nation Building*, Johannesburg, 1988.