

The Political Significance of the Liberal Media Coverage of District Six from 1949 to 1970

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The political significance of the media coverage of District Six is approached in the following way: the issue is approached theoretically by posing the question of the general political significance of news as a communicative form. This question is resolved by an examination of the complicated relationship between the tradition of political thought and the development of modern political forms, specifically the issue of the importance of communication in modern political forms. This is explored by considering the problem of the political outlined by Heller. Arendt reconceptualizes the problem in terms of political judgement, which is discussed in relation to postmodernism and Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, to establish a new conceptualization of political judgement based on Arendt's view of narrative and Benjamin's writing on history. This conceptualization is used to formulate a notion of the general political significance of news, which is a form of political judgement related to a specific political culture. On this basis the media material is analysed in terms of two processes: the representation of District Six in the liberal media, and the representation of the political process surrounding its racial zoning and demolition. It is concluded that the media coverage of District Six during this period is characterized by a political culture termed the politics of the ordinary based on a reification of 'Europe' as part of a 'colonial attitude', and the idealization of specific urban forms, with a special relationship to urban planning. Thus the political significance of the media coverage resides in the perpetuation of this political culture, representative of the politics of the white English-speaking middle class, in terms of which an authentic urban politics is not conceivable. Additional conclusions are also drawn concerning the relationship between this political culture and the politics of Apartheid.

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INTRODUCTION

As the title suggests, the main aim of this thesis is to determine the political significance of the coverage of District Six by the liberal media during the period 1949-1970. This is actually two aims. The first is properly the concern of political philosophy, namely the task of conceiving of the political significance of media coverage as such. The second is to employ this understanding to make some sense of the multiplicity of forms, styles and political positions represented by the material in question. Thus about half the thesis is devoted to issues of political philosophy, and about half to the analysis of the actual media material itself. When I use the word 'liberal' I mean merely to designate the two newspapers in question. The use of this word has a complex history in South African politics that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

In the first section, I have tried to develop a specifically philosophical approach to the question of the media rather than a more orthodox sociological one. There are several reasons for this. Most sociological approaches begin with premises about the structure of modern society. I wanted to begin with more basic philosophical categories that avoided the problems posed by postmodernism to such premises, especially in South Africa, where the question of social categories is complexified by our immediate and more distant colonial past. The methods of philosophy are older, and are more capable of dealing with phenomena on their own terms, than those of sociology, whose categories are limited by the limits of modernity. I have thus not employed the concept of ideology, preferring to reconceive the political in terms of Hannah Arendt's work. This is an approach which is contrary to most contemporary media studies; whether it will bear fruit or not is one of the questions that this thesis will hopefully demonstrate.

I have thus developed a political understanding of news in general, characterizing it as a specifically contemporary communicative form, the political significance of which is comprehensible in terms of the political characteristics of the modern age. This characterization is not rooted in a specific social structure or social form, but in Arendt's understanding of the conditions and problems of contemporary political life.

For the second section, the source material is derived from the two main English-medium daily newspapers of Cape Town, namely the Cape Times and the Argus, collected in the South African Library press cuttings collection under "District Six". A reference to District Six is all the articles have in common. In the text, I have referenced articles by quoting the title followed by the date of appearance with a prefix to indicate which of the two newspapers the article appeared in, CT in the case of the Cape Times and AR in the case of the Argus. For purposes of analysis, I have not distinguished between the two newspapers; it would require a more in-depth study with broader subject matter to distinguish them politically. I have assumed that on the issue of District Six there is little significant political difference between the two; whether this is a weakness or not I am not in a position to tell.

The period under consideration is significant in that it is during this period that District Six became a 'problem', first for the Cape Town municipal authorities and the 'public', and later for the Apartheid state. During the 60's it was declared 'White' and then demolished over a period of years. By the late 60's this process had not yet been completed, but the initial political battle was over, to be replaced by subsequent ones. Part of the reason for stopping at this point was a concern that the amount of material would be too great; my aim was to investigate the phenomenon of news rather than to produce a thorough study of the media and urban politics in Cape Town. With this in mind, the two decades under consideration provide all the necessary material for such an investigation.

The first decade provides a wealth of material that is not yet concerned with the direct issue of the racial zoning or demolition of the district, and thus one can gain some idea of how District Six was portrayed in the liberal media before it became widely known as a symbol of the brutal excesses of Apartheid. The second decade provides material that indicates how the political contestation of the future of District Six was represented by the liberal media. Together, if analyzed properly, these two aspects provide a thorough picture of the political significance of the media coverage in question.

The approach I have taken is somewhat unusual. Whether it is successful or not, remains to be seen. I have tried to think about the political phenomena involved without the help of pre-established theoretical models, hoping that in the process new light will be shed on old problems. There is thus a third dimension to this thesis; it is an experiment in political thought. Whether it is successful or not, I will attempt to evaluate in the Conclusion.

Chapter One

THE PROBLEM OF UNDERSTANDING NEWS IN POLITICAL TERMS

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to outline the problem of understanding news in political terms. I will begin with some insights of Carey (1989), who outlines two approaches to understanding the media, the 'transmission' approach and the 'ritual' approach. I will argue in favour of the latter, and then outline the problem of understanding the political significance of news as a problem of, first, understanding news as a specific cultural form, and second, understanding the problem of 'the political' in the modern age, informed by the implication of communicative forms in the transition from pre-modern to modern political forms.

CAREY'S CONCEPTION OF NEWS AS CULTURAL FORM

Carey draws a distinction between two views of communication, which he terms the "transmission" and "ritual" views. (Carey 1989:19-22). Commonly, the products of the media are viewed as carriers of meaning, as a means of communication which signify a social and political reality, based on the metaphor of the messenger, carrying meaning as a messenger carried a letter in a leather pouch. The "transmission" view is rooted in a spatial metaphor that evokes the spatial distribution of a coded message across space from one source to a number of recipients. Carey compares such a "transmission" with a "ritual" view of communication (Carey 1989:15). He correctly asserts that the "transmission" view is the most common in industrial societies (particularly in the American context in which he is writing), having its roots in the 19th century use of the word "communication":

"In the nineteenth century but to a lesser extent today, the movement of goods or people and the movement of information were seen as essentially identical processes and both were described by the common noun "communication".. ..Our basic orientation to communication remains grounded, at the deepest roots of our thinking, in the idea of transmission.." (Carey 1989:15)

He considers this a profoundly inadequate conception of communication, and, in order to create a different perspective, resurrects an older use, originating in the concept of "communion", from the same root as such words as community. He compares the two views in relation to a newspaper.

In the "transmission" approach, a newspaper will be understood as a means for transmitting information to large numbers of people, and perhaps as an institution for gathering relevant information. The sort of questions that will arise will relate to issues such as what effect this has, whether reality is faithfully or manipulatively conveyed, what effect the existence of the newspaper has on social integration / conflict and so forth. On the other hand, the "ritual" approach will

"..view reading a newspaper less as sending or gaining information and more as attending a mass, a situation in which nothing new is learned but in which a particular view of the world is portrayed and confirmed..

Under a ritual view.. ..news is not information but drama. It does not describe the world but portrays an arena of dramatic forces and action; it exists solely in historical time; and it invites

our participation on the basis of our assuming, often vicariously, social roles within it." (Carey 1989:20-1)

Within a particular social milieu, conceptions of the media that utilize the "transmission" view emphasize content and effect, and have a behavioural undertone, which is usually related to questions of efficiency, power and control. Thus the transmission view is useful for considering media effects synchronically, the effect of the media within a particular context at a particular moment in time. In the context of these considerations, the structure and form are given, as well as a reified conceptual language in which these structures and forms are expressed. However, as Carey points out,

"..news is a historic reality. It is a form of culture invented by a particular class at a particular point of history - in this case by the middle class largely in the eighteenth century. Like any invented cultural form, news both forms and reflects a particular "hunger for experience", a desire to do away with the epic, heroic, and traditional in favor of the unique, original, novel, new - news." (Carey 1989:21)

The newspaper, with which this thesis is mainly concerned, is, as well as an institution, a cultural form with a complex history.

The origins of the form can be firmly tied to the rise of the bourgeoisie in Europe, and in fact, as McQuail notes, the dominant notion of a "newspaper" is rooted in the journalistic culture of the late 19th century (McQuail 1983:21). He considers the late 19th century newspaper to have contributed "...most to our modern understanding of what a newspaper is or should be." (McQuail 1983:21). He cites a number of factors, including the dominance of the liberal-democratic nation-state, developments in communications technology, a progressive capitalist class, and the forging of a "business-professional establishment" (McQuail 1983:21). The features of this newspaper culture were

"..formal independence from the state and from open vested interests; an acceptance into the structure of society as a major institution of political and social life; a highly developed sense of social and ethical responsibility; the rise of a journalistic profession dedicated to the objective reporting of events; an adoption, at the same time, of the role of opinion-giver or -former; frequently a tendency to identify with the 'national interest'." (McQuail 1983:21)

He refers to the late 19th century newspaper as an "elite" newspaper, and contrasts this form with the dominant 20th century form, namely the mass press, with a large proportion of revenue from advertising, concentration on entertainment as well as or instead of "serious" news, mass appeal, and the "commercialization" of the press, with newspapers being owned and marketed primarily for profit, usually by large monopolies, but comments that,

"..while this may now appear to be the dominant newspaper form, it draws its status as a newspaper from the 'high bourgeois' form [late 19th century], and is otherwise defined by its deviation from the latter" (McQuail 1983:22)

What is evident is that there is a complex relationship between a concrete historical-cultural form and a normative notion of what 'news' ought to be, which is intricately related to a specific political context. Thus our criteria for news have a very specific cultural-political context; they are not eternal.

THE POLITICAL CONTENT OF FORM IN NEWS

It is thus apparent that the emergence of "news" as a cultural form is connected with the development of the modern nation-state and the subsequent diversification of modern political forms. In considering the political significance of news coverage of any sort, therefore, there are two approaches that are possible. The one approach involves an analysis of the actual information that is distributed, who it is distributed to and how, on condition that it can be shown that the actual possession or non-possession of certain information is of political importance. This approach has been emphasized in South Africa, both in the analysis of censorship as well as more complex arguments concerning practices of selection based on ideological criteria (see for instance Tomiselli et al 1987). However, the severe disadvantage of this approach is that it proceeds as if communication were the same everywhere and at all times. Politically, this view is unable to distinguish between different communicative forms and the diversity of language-games that these entail, and thus not able to capture the political essence of a specific communicative situation; in one context, it might be the supply of information, in another, the use of parody, in another, a manner of speech, and so forth; sometimes the very meaningless of the content of communication is politically significant.

A more satisfactory exploration from the point of view of political thought involves an examination of the news form *politically*, a consideration of the specific political circumstances of media as a historical-cultural form, using the word 'news' to describe a specific innovation in specific political contexts. While this approach involves more unexplored territory and is thus a risk, at the same time I believe it is an approach that deals more thoroughly and more critically with the less-noticed assumptions inherent in our way of thinking about the media.

While it would seem odd to concentrate more on 'form' than 'content' in media practice, I hope to demonstrate that firstly, the distinction is overrated, and secondly, that to problematize the occurrence of certain media 'forms' instead of regarding their existence as natural (as the 'transmission' view does), is the basic condition for a clear view of the relationship between 'the political' and communicative forms. I will attempt to argue that particular forms of communicative activity have particular significance in particular political milieux; these forms comprise 'perceptual criteria' (literally 'ways of seeing') for the distribution of content which are often not clearly visible within a particular milieu (on account of the everyday practices of 'reading' the media), but are of great significance in thinking politically about the media.

CONDITIONS FOR A POLITICAL CONSIDERATION OF FORM

The 'pure form' of the mass media has frequently provoked images of heaven or hell in the public imagination, usually overdetermined by a technological millenarianism. This is merely an example of the mysticism usually enshrouding the notion of 'form', which has provoked the messianic and deterministic writing of authors such as Marshall McLuhan, as well as more apocalyptic or eschatological attitudes.

Approaches to the media emphasizing forms have usually been incapable of accommodating any political insights (Marshall McLuhan's work, with his central credo, "the medium is the message", is an exemplary case), mainly due to the mystical notion that media forms constitute "the world" as a whole, thus eliminating any possibility of conceptualizing political processes in these terms, which always occur within the boundaries of the world. Any phenomenon which is constitutive of 'the world as a whole' is thus beyond the reach of political thought, and thus in the province of the 'unworldly'. The language of the 'unworldly' has always been of religious provenance, and thus lends to the writing of such theorists a distinctly messianic or eschatological tinge. On the contrary, one of my central goals below is to illustrate the importance of communicative forms in political thinking, and to employ these insights in thinking about the political significance of the media coverage of District Six.

COMMUNICATIVE FORMS IN POLITICAL THINKING

To outline the notion of a communicative form, I wish to use this phrase in a rather unusual way. It is not intended to be a basis for a complete analysis of communication in general, nor the basis for a list of 'forms' or 'types' for purposes of classification, but as a way of thinking about communication in political terms, or more particularly, specific ways of thinking about the relationship between communicative activity and political activity and understanding. The purpose of this expression is not to define a certain content, but as a means to the exploration of certain phenomena by drawing attention to what is similar in diverse historical-political situations.

I want to use the phrase in the manner of Wittgenstein's 'language-games' in his *Philosophical Investigations*, both in the sense of it being a 'family resemblance' term (Wittgenstein 1988:32), and in the sense of the following characterization of the limits of 'language-games':

"Our clear and simple language-games are not preparatory studies for a future regularisation of language - as it were first approximations, ignoring friction and air-resistance. The language-games are rather set up as *objects of comparison* which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities, but also of dissimilarities." (Wittgenstein 1988:50)

This is no more and no less than my aim in using the phrase 'communicative forms'; to allow me to write meaningfully about an aspect of political life and understanding which is otherwise not sufficiently defined. Thus what one might label a communicative form might include speech, letter writing, writing in general, the notion of "text" (both modern and postmodern), history, news, the novel, poetry, sculpture, or the Internet.

Obviously some of these are of more interest from the point of view of political processes than others; for instance, one would only be able to make the most general statements about the relevance of the communicative form of writing as such, whereas letter writing might provide a valuable perspective on the development of the bourgeois public sphere in Europe of the 18th century (see for instance Habermas 1989).

Communicative forms which have particular political significance usually exist historically, rather than analytically; thus a specific historical-cultural form of letter-writing had significance in the development of the bourgeois public sphere; 'letter writing' *in general* poses certain analytical problems which complicate political

understanding (for instance, the problem of criteria; what is and is not 'letter writing'? How culturally-bound is the concept, etc.). It would not be helpful to assert that, for instance, 18th century letter-writing was a 'particular instance' of a 'general form'; as I will attempt to make clear below, a certain political context contains the 'truth' of a *particular* communicative form. Thus there is 'photography', but there is a great age of documentary photography; there is the novel, but there are specific forms of the novel.

To erase the specificity of particular forms, in for example 'the novel' can erase the specifically political aspects of the form (e.g. the 'post-colonial' Latin American novel vs the 'bourgeois' novel of the 18th and 19th century). Subsequent experience of these forms cannot but be mimetic to specific historical constellations that construct and extend such forms, but never in the same context, and thus never in the same sense. Thus a 'general political theory of the novel' would simply be blind to the most important political insights that a political examination of 'the novel' form would normally reveal. Nevertheless, thinking in terms of the 'common structure' of novels can reveal a valuable framework for pursuing specific 'instances' (and indeed this is usually necessary), however the awareness must remain that the notion of the 'general form' is a *philosophical device* to create a specific perspective for understanding rather than an objectifying analytical concept. This is the case with the current inquiry into the political significance of news.

In the case of McQuail's reference to the 19th century newspaper as a paradigm case for the newspaper form, it is pertinent to note that a specific historical-political constellation, characterized by the modern political form of the nation-state, has been 'universalized' in normative notions of 'news', 'journalism' and so forth. What has moved into the collective memory is the *experience* of 'objectivity' or 'impartiality' and the attendant media forms, styles of writing and so forth, as well as the attendant conditions of readership, which together formed a 'newspaper reading public' in a specific political context. In that a lot of these normative notions of 'news' (what news *ought to be*) pattern our basic thinking about media and politics in such notions as 'bias', 'objectivity, and 'responsible journalism', it is necessary to consider the political content of these experiences in the context of a notion of political thinking that is appropriate to the context of this study.

In the case of the 19th century "elite" newspaper, one can say that it represents the realization of a specific communicative form, but only in retrospect, only after the event, when the notion of "newspaper" has moved from a concrete historical category via modernist/imperial discourse to an abstract reification of aspects of the 19th century European nation-state. Subsequent political experience, particularly the emergence of the Third World in the wake of the disintegration of European colonial empires, the Cold War, and now the 'New World Order', creates a different perspective on this history, which implies that it has a different *meaning*. Our access to 'communicative forms' in political thinking is *always* perspectival, always a project of redeeming historical images in the context of the quintessential political dynamic of the present.

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN POLITICAL FORMS

There is an historical period in the transition between pre-modern political forms and the emergence of the modern nation-state where one can glimpse the importance of specific communicative forms in the political development of modern states and the related impact on traditional political thought. In classical political thought, there was a tradition stretching back to Aristotle concerning the problem of the size of a 'governable' state. In Aristotle's *Politics*, there is an argument concerning the optimal characteristics of the *polis* that was an integral part of the tradition until the American revolution. Aristotle, in the following passage, considers the optimal size for a *polis*, and concludes that such a state cannot be larger than a medium-sized city, without degenerating into despotism:

"Experience shows us that it is difficult, if not indeed impossible, for a very populous state to secure a general habit of obedience to law..

..Order, however, is the one thing which is impossible for an excessive number..

..But we may also note that states, like all other things (animals, plants and inanimate instruments), have a definite measure of size. Any object will lose its power of performing its function if it is either excessively small or of an excessive size. Sometimes it will wholly forfeit its nature; sometimes, short of that, it will merely be defective. We may take the example of a ship. A ship which is only six inches in length, or is as much as 1200 feet long, will not be a ship at all; and even a ship of more moderate size may still cause difficulties of navigation, either because it is not large enough or because it is unwieldily large. The same is true of states. A state composed of too few members is a state without self-sufficiency (and the state, by its definition, is a self sufficient society). A state composed of too many will indeed be self-sufficient in the matter of material necessities (as an uncivilised people may equally be); but it will not be a true state, for the simple reason that it can hardly have a true constitution. Who can be the general of a mass so excessively large? And who can give it orders, unless he has Stentor's voice?" (Aristotle, trans.Barker 1948:341-2)

Barker elucidates the 'having of a constitution' in a footnote as "the attribute of a 'way of life' expressed in a constitution" (Aristotle 1948:342). Stentor, according to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, was a Greek warrior in the Trojan War, whose "voice was as powerful as fifty voices of other men".

The pre-modern use of the word 'political' is not straightforward. *Polis*, translated as 'political state', pertained to a constitutional city-state, and in early english usage this sense survives as a term distinguishing a 'political' state from other forms of government such as monarchy. In addition, one of the criteria for 'state' in Aristotle is a constitution, which distinguished what he terms "an uncivilized people" from a "true state". The latin root of "civilization" is the same as the root for "city"; roughly put, "civilization" in the pre-modern political sense, implies, "*polis*-ification". The key characteristic of a *polis*, in the ancient sense, as opposed to other forms of government, was that it did not constitute a "state", in that it functioned "without a division between rulers and ruled" (Arendt 1993:19), if, in the Greek sense, one considered only the citizens. The characteristic of a pre-modern state was just such a division, embodied in the traditional forms of government, namely democracy, oligarchy, or monarchy. (Aristotle defined "the state" in a *polis* as "the sum total of citizens" (see Heller 1991:525)). The modern nation-state, on the other hand, has no clear-cut distinction between rulers and ruled; this development created a range of problems in modern political thought.

The emergence of the American republic raised certain dilemmas for pre-modern political thinkers. Carey notes that

"Until the end of the eighteenth century there was a broad consensus in political philosophy stretching from Plato and Aristotle through Rousseau and Montesquieu that there were natural limits to democracy, limits of both geography and population." (Carey 1989:6)

Carey's use of the term 'democracy' is problematic here. The traditional notion of democracy rooted in Aristotle referred to direct democracy, literally 'rule by the people', and implied direct rule by majority in public assembly. Modern institutionalized representative democracy was not part of the tradition of political thought at this stage. The issue was more directly that of founding a state based on legitimacy and consensus; the problem was to create a political form outside the canon of traditional political thought that made a republic the size of the United States possible. What the Founding Fathers had in mind was a political form unprecedented in the tradition of political thought, namely a 'political state' the size of a continent, the implementation of the ideal of the *polis* without 'natural' limits of any sort.

In terms of the specific problems facing the founders of the American republic, innovations in forms of communications were directly understood by the writers of the Federalist Papers as providing the preconditions for the development of a democratic republican state as large as post-revolutionary America:

"The Federalist Papers, are, among other things, a running argument with Montesquieu and inherited political theory: an attempt to resolve the contradictions that the geography and population presented to received theory. In two of the most worked-over of the essays...Madison argued that improvements in communications would efface distance and facilitate continental democracy.." (Carey 1989:6)

This harnessing of technology was tantamount to the realization of the mythical Stentor in the modern media. A printing press, or latterly, and more precisely, a radio or television transmitter, created the possibility that individuals or institutions could overcome the age-old physical limitation of the human voice. The possibility of any individual having 'Stentor's voice' is significant as a transgression of natural limits in Aristotle; these limits had the function philosophically of providing a foundation for the notion of political form, which also comprised the basis of traditional political theory. Once the category of 'nature' (in the ancient Greek sense, the realm of necessity) had been superseded, the conditions of political life could no longer be comprehended in terms of 'inherent' limits. For political thought this was a crucial development, as it implied that the habit of traditional political thinkers of grounding their thinking in an unchanging natural realm which comprised a limit to human action, was no longer tenable. If there was no 'natural' limit to the size of a state or the capacity for an individual to communicate, there was no longer a point outside the political terrain from which to judge crucial aspects of the political life of a specific community. This development is the result of a complex dialectical relationship between technology and social and political forms, which I will consider next.

INNOVATION IN MEDIA TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIVE FORMS

The relationship between technical innovations and the development of new communicative forms is a complex and continually shifting one, and there is a straightforward causal nexus. The case of books and the development of printing is a good paradigm case. McQuail points out (McQuail 1983:20) that the development of printing led initially only to the limited production of existing books. Gradually, a transformation of content took place, whereby specific characteristics of the technology developed for the mechanical reproduction of books were utilized. Books were written more frequently and more topically, a wider audience was reached, the process of production and distribution of knowledge gradually passed from the religious to the secular sphere, and so forth, until some of the characteristically modern forms of the book began to emerge, such as the novel.

The development of printing was also responsible for the dominance of the vernacular over the more widespread scholastic latin of the time, and thus the dominance of specific European languages amongst the intelligentsia, over latin. This had the effect of weakening the power of the church, fragmenting what was then a trans-European intelligentsia, as well as a pan-European aristocracy (who by and large did not speak the vernacular), and thus establishing the communicative and political conditions for the development of the nation-state. On the one hand, the 'communicative potential' of the material technology of the printing press was 'realized' in forms such as the book and the newspaper. On the other, certain technological forms became dominant while others disappeared altogether, according to their social importance.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEWS

News, as a specific communicative form, has a history rooted in the development of modernity. Early forms of the newspaper were initially published as newsletters, mainly for the consumption of merchants, who had a need to know which way the wind blew, literally and politically, in locations removed geographically and socially from their immediate surroundings. "News" as a pure abstract form developed most clearly after the development of "news agencies" with the invention of the telegraph, where "news content" was separated from any notion of form or style. Carey explains how the telegraph and concomitantly the news agency, ushered in a new notion of "objective" news (Carey 1989:210). News on the telegraph had to be stripped of any colloquial content, any stylistic content, and had to conform to a notion of transparent objectivity, to be denotative in an unambiguous way, so that it could be utilized by a newspaper of any political complexion, in any location, and later, in any language (this development also precipitated a radical separation between 'form' and 'content', which actually enhanced the significance of the separation directly).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM OF THE POLITICAL

The developments in forms of communication that posed a challenge to the received tradition of political thought in the Federalist Papers, crystallized into several quintessentially modern forms, one of which is news, as outlined above. In order to understand the political significance of news as a communicative form, it is necessary to come to terms with what exactly the problems raised for political thought by the modern age are; doing this will throw

the conditions of political life in the modern age into relief, in such a way that the political significance of news will become apparent. As outlined earlier, one of the central problems in the transition from pre-modern to modern political forms is the designation of 'political'. Heller has outlined this problem as being essential to the conditions of modernity, and in the next chapter I will use her concise account as a way of structuring the problem.

Chapter Two

THE PROBLEM OF THE POLITICAL IN THE MODERN AGE

INTRODUCTION

Heller (1991a) has provided a detailed outline of the problem of the political, which I will outline below. There are several aspects to this problem, the main ones being the complexity of the designation of concepts such as 'political' and 'politics', not least their contestation in political struggles. Coupled with this condition of political life is the unprecedented occurrence of political events which are not comprehensible in terms of traditional political thought. Both these aspects make the problem of coming to terms with the conditions of political which characterize the modern age particularly difficult and particularly important. After outlining Heller's summary of the problem of the political, I will consider two other accounts of 'politics', before considering the political thought of Hannah Arendt in the next chapter.

HELLER'S DIAGNOSIS OF THE PROBLEM OF 'THE POLITICAL'

Agnes Heller (Heller 1991a:330-43) outlines some problems of the political in modern political philosophy. She begins her essay with some remarks on the work of post-World War One political philosophers (primarily Carl Schmitt, Heidegger, Lukacs and Arendt), who sought to delineate the political unambiguously so as to reinvigorate political philosophy in the face of the "failed" traditions of Marxism and liberalism of the time.

This interest in the problem of the concept of the political is not merely contingent. The designation of 'the political' is a philosophical problem generated specifically by the conditions of modern political life. She explains why the political became a 'philosophical device' in terms of the specific social and political conditions of modernity by contrasting modern and pre-modern political thought and isolating a crucial development in modernity that problematizes the notion of the political (Heller 1991a:337). In pre-modern thought,

"Even cultures with the strongest political awareness, for example the Greek and the Roman, shared the quasi-naturalistic and therefore unproblematic view that only acts which have been decided upon and performed by the members of the political class(es), can be termed political. When members of a political class, be this a caste, an estate or some other grouping, act in their capacity as members of this class, their acts are, by definition, political." (Heller 1991a:331)

All others, for example slaves, women and other non-citizens, could not engage in politics. With the development of modernity, the identity of the political with a political class began to disintegrate, and finally, "the birth of modern mass democracy finally rendered obsolete the equation of political class with political action" (Heller 1991a:331). Concomitantly, the notion of the state, from being a "transparent" political class consisting of a "who" became a question of "what".

Two possibilities emerge here; either the political can be conceived of as a realm or domain, in which case anything entering this domain can be said to be political, or the political can be seen as a 'quality' of certain

entities (issues, actions, persons) which are termed political (Heller 1991a:330). She considers next the attempts by Schmitt, Heidegger, Lukacs and Arendt to delineate a clear notion of "the political", and shows each of these attempts to have failed, for a number of common reasons, which go to the heart of the dilemma of "the concept of the political" (Arendt is an exception; later we will attempt to show that Heller's criticism is misguided here). Common to all the attempts to resolve the problem of the political are a number of both initial concerns and results; which, briefly, are as follows.

The first is a contempt for the spiritual state of the age; the lack of greatness, imagination and heroism, and the demise of free action in favour of *techne* and bureaucracy. The second (with the exception of Hannah Arendt) is an attachment to political radicalism, and finally, the third factor is the result of these attempts to formulate the concept of the political, namely that each attempt ended in exclusion, either of significant groups of people or significant issues from the political realm. At this point Heller raises the question as to whether political philosophy has any future, given the failure of any attempted resolution of this dilemma. The controversy about the political is

"of a more serious nature than yet another family quarrel among paradigms: it is about the relevance or irrelevance of political philosophy to our times." (Heller 1991a:336)

In an attempt to answer the question herself, she sets what she regards as conditions for a delineation of the political. First,

"The final and dialectical unity of normative claims and empirical awareness is the absolute precondition of the possibility of political philosophy." (Heller 1991a:336)

A concept of the political, must, in other words, generate a certain form of political insight that is both able to apprehend the phenomena of political life and evaluate these phenomena (provide an account of political judgement). As it happens, the "...very essence of the modern condition comprises the contradiction between Is and Ought.." (Heller 1991a:337).

This is also, in Heller's opinion, the essence of *philosophy*, which

"has never stopped insisting that what is regarded as truth is not really true, but that something else is true; or that what is regarded as just is not just, because something else would be more, or even perfectly just." (Heller 1991a:336)

Philosophy is "realized" in modernity, as people constantly evaluate the Is of their institutions and social lives in terms of universalized Oughts; in fact,

"What has hitherto happened only in philosophy, can and does now happen in political practice and life." (ibid, 336)

The political is thus to be derived from "the quintessence of the modern political dynamic" (Heller 1991a:337).

This is something Heller grants to her opponents; this has always been their starting-point too. The problem, however, is to avoid the problem of exclusion, everywhere apparent in attempts to define the political. The

problem of exclusion can be framed as follows: it is necessary to have a substantive definition of the political, otherwise, the concept "vanishes". As Heller adds,

"At least the political character of the very relation, value, network, choice, or anything else under discussion has to be defined in order to forge such a concept" (Heller 1991a:337)

If this substantive definition is "of political provenance", then one ends up with the problem of exclusion. Having outlined these conditions and problems, she draws the following conclusions, namely that

"To grasp the tension between Is and Ought is a general stipulation, but the concept of the political has an additional requirement. 'Is' and 'Ought' as they are contained and made manifest by the concept, must be of a kind which is central to the operation and dynamic of modern societies" (Heller 1991a:338)

She then isolates freedom as a basis for the "concept of the political", as freedom is the major "universalised value" in modern societies; no other major "Ought" can be concretized without their cause being "directly or indirectly connected with freedom". "Abstract" values such as freedom are "concretized" in a "series of conflicts, in contestations about their definitions" (Heller 1991a:338).

This conflict requires the existence of a public domain. Provided such a domain exists, which issues are contested is a matter of the "actors" choosing which issues to bring into the domain. Thus in modern societies with no public domain, it is not possible to distinguish between political and non-political contestations. With this in mind, Heller delineates the concept of the political as follows:

"The practical realization of the universal value of freedom in the public domain is the modern concept of the political." (Heller 1991a:340)

Thus, in this sense, "the political" is a domain, not a "quality" adhering to "things" which are "political". In this connection, she writes:

"The substantive aspect of 'the political' is not a concrete political 'thing' at all; rather, it is the main dynamism of modernity itself." (Heller 1991a:341)

In other words, no particular "thing" is "political" in essence, no particular process, choice, value, or action of an institution. Any particular issue might become "related to the cause of freedom" (Heller 1991a:342), or become unrelated; neither does the mere publicness of an issue cause it to enter the domain of the political, unless it forms part of the practical realization of freedom. This concept, theoretically, has no "ethical content", but practically it gains a "weak ethos" in that it "imposes taboos" on practices such as racism, unjust wars, "self-righteous paternalism", "the deliberate exclusion of certain groups from the public sphere" and so forth.

Finally, she ends with remarks to the effect that radical political philosophies such as the ones she considered earlier, "mythologized" politics, by opposing authentic political life to the "allegedly banal concerns of daily life". She ends with the comments that

"Modern political philosophy need not be a dithyramb about the Great Event writ large nor a choreography for exceptional political movements. Although politics can be pleasing or displeasing, modern political actors and thinkers should not give preference to aesthetic values,

such as elegance, sublimity or perfection over freedom in case of conflict. It is time to bid farewell to the legacy of our aristocratic ancestors." (Heller 1991a:343)

One of the purposes of my consideration of 'the political' will be to demonstrate that, contra Heller, greatness is the political virtue *par excellence*.

In conclusion, Heller claims that there is a problem delineating the political which is essential to the modern condition. Attempts to delineate the political based on a "substantive political" definition result in exclusion of either whole human groups or whole sets of issues from "the political". This raises the question of the viability of political philosophy in the 20th century. However there is another avenue open: if one understands philosophy and modernity in such a way that modernity is the "age where political philosophy comes to pass" (Heller 1991a:336), a path to defining the concept of "the political" can be found by beginning with the "quintessence of the modern political dynamic". This path leads to a definition of the political in terms of the practical realization of the universal value of freedom in the public domain. Substantively, this constitutes "the main dynamism of modernity itself" (Heller 1991a:341).

In order to evaluate some of the issues that emerge from this argument, I will look critically at two other attempts to think about the political, namely those of Leftwich and Crick. I have chosen these texts as their approaches together raise a wide range of issues and represent widely divergent views in the discussion of the political.

LEFTWICH'S 'REDEFINITION' OF POLITICS

Leftwich opens his first Chapter, "Redefining politics: the argument" with the sentiment that

"Most people feel that 'politics' has very little to do with them." (Leftwich 1983:11)

'Ordinary people', he feels, see 'politics' as something involving states and government and carried on by 'politicians' who constantly engage in underhand squabbles for power which are far removed from the world of daily life. This image, he feels, has been exacerbated by the press and the academic profession, who concentrate their journalism and their studies on the structures of government and state, i.e. focused on the life of national political institutions rather than the processes of political life that involve ordinary people.

There is a strong feeling in his book that common people are shut out of politics and political processes by a sense of alienation and uninterest, which is perpetuated and exacerbated by the behaviour of academics and the media. He sees his "redefinition" of politics as a way to generate a realization amongst ordinary people that 'politics' involves them too. There is a strong sense here that the "political" nature of "daily life" must be restored to "ordinary" people, who are no longer able to "participate" politically, on account of this sense of alienation:

"..when administrators and politicians, for instance, ask us to 'keep politics out' of things like sport (or vice versa), or not to 'mix' politics with religion or industrial relations or 'race' relations, what they are *actually* asking is that we do not *participate* in politics, that is in decisions about the use and distribution of resources in relation to affairs that are often very important to our lives." (Leftwich 1983:26)

With this democratic sentiment in mind, Leftwich "redefines" politics, as follows:

"Politics consists of all the activities of cooperation and conflict, within and between societies, whereby the human societies go about obtaining, using, producing and distributing resources in the course of the production and reproduction of its social and biological life. These activities are not isolated from other features of social life. They everywhere influence, and are influenced by, the distribution of power and decision-making, the systems of social organisation, culture and ideology in a society, as well as its relations with the natural environment and other societies. Politics is therefore a defining characteristic of *all* human groups, and always has been." (Leftwich 1983:11)

For Leftwich, there is no question about the "extent" of politics. Politics is everywhere; it is a characteristic of "all human groups", and always has been. It is possible to identify political activity by a set of objective external criteria; in fact, Leftwich's definition is entirely non-substantive. Leftwich's definition is "grounded" in a biological conception of humanity. Thus everything in the human condition springs from the place of the human animal in metabolism with nature:

"The starting point, therefore, for the analysis of politics in societies must be this conception of the human species as animals, engaged in these simultaneous natural and social activities of production and reproduction." (Leftwich 1983:13)

He sees "politics" as having "evolved" at the same time as the human species (Leftwich 1983:14).

The common human situation is thus contained in certain "common and underlying structural features" (Leftwich 1983:14) shared by all "societies". These structural features, common to "all human societies", are as follows:

- "system of production", or how societies produce resources through work
- "system of distribution and redistribution", or how people allocate resources
- "system of power and decision-making" - power here is equated with "decision-making", and so an analysis of power will centre on who decides, and what characteristics these people have.
- "system of social organisation", or how people organise marriage, families, social groups etc.
- "system of culture and ideology" - included in "culture" here is "a wide network of standardised customs and regular behaviours found in all societies.. ..customs of courtship and marriage, its basic styles of dress, its food habit and taboos, its typical leisure activities, its principle practices of hospitality..", and "ideology" includes "religious beliefs and practices, myths, values, moral codes, general endorsement of certain ways of behaving, and broad outlooks in terms of the way that people interpret the world around them"
- "history", which he defines prosaically as "a whole legacy of related technological capacities, social behaviours, institutions and ideological outlooks inherited from the past." (Leftwich 1983:14-16)

In his conclusion, he emphasises "the *primacy of politics* in the affairs of human societies" (Leftwich 1983:261), and outlines some ways in which this strangely neglected primacy could be more reflected in the academic pursuits of British universities, and in this regard he emphasizes that

"Part of the wider objective of the book is to argue that students in Departments of Politics should emerge from their studies with analytical and diagnostic skills, which have as their purpose and central point of reference the explanation of the *politics* of historical or modern societies, institutions and problems. The study of politics, I would argue, is an intensely

practical matter, as is the study of medicine, and is no less or more academic or theoretical. It is, in my view, much *less* important for students of politics - as defined here - to be able to give an account of what Plato, Rousseau, Mill, Marx or Weber *said*, for example, than to be able to *use* such theories, if appropriate, to help explain the politics, or resolve problems in their own and other societies. For the study of politics is not in the same category as the study of political philosophy or the history of ideas, just as it is not synonymous with the study of government..

..it is these ['practical matters'] which should form the starting point for students of politics, and not wider general theories which are usually taught and studied in abstract, and which many students experience as having little relevance for, or connection with, the politics of societies past or present." (Leftwich 1983:266)

His final point is that the thrust behind his book has been to promote "democratic politics" (Leftwich 1983:267), understood here as *equality* of distribution of power and resources.

There are two starting points to Leftwich's argument. The first is his intuitive notion of "political alienation", i.e. that in contemporary society (we assume here he has in mind the United Kingdom, or even his distant South African past), and the second, his solution, is his "grounding" of "the political" in a biological view of humanity. His definition is what Heller would term "non-substantive", as

"At least the political character of the very relation, value, network, choice, or anything else under discussion has to be defined in order to forge such a concept" (Heller 1991a:337)

Heller makes the massively simple point here that there is no clear reason given by Leftwich for the connection between "processes of resource distribution" and the political, so the concept is in real danger of "vanishing", as Heller succinctly expresses it. The same is true of most of the other concepts that Leftwich uses as a "framework" for the analysis of "politics" in diverse "societies". Where this "framework" is not 'visible', e.g. in a "different" cultural milieu, it is rendered visible by recourse to the skills of linguists, anthropologists, sociologists and so forth, and from this hermeneutical activity, "the political" can be easily rendered "visible". On page 21 he uses the words "analyze" and "understand" interchangeably. This is the key to Leftwich's approach; basically, studying "politics" involves rendering the unfamiliar familiar; this is the basis of his notion of "analysis". "Understanding", in any sophisticated sense, involves comprehending the *essence* of something. While there is some possibility that the use of images, similes and other rhetorical devices will indeed shed light on something that is "other", Leftwich's mode of analysis rules out any possibility of this before he begins.

Nevertheless, some of Leftwich's approach has a strong intuitive appeal, as it begins with a sentiment that has been central to some of the most interesting political thinking of the 20th century, namely the apparent distance between "daily life" and political processes in modern societies. Leftwich's "redefinition" however, is not concerned simply with modern societies, but with all of human history, with all occurrences of human "society". Because his definition of politics, and for that matter, culture, history, power, and so forth, is totally non-substantive, but instead is rooted in the timeless, ahistorical notion of humans as natural consuming beings, there is no specific content of his theory that deals with the specific dilemmas facing humankind, or even his own social

milieu, in the present. One might even suspect Leftwich of harbouring a notion of the human as consumer of resources; the "political" animal is thus the eternal consumer.

To use this example, it is fairly well-established now that the "consumer" is a socio-cultural feature of 20th century advanced capitalist socio-economic systems. It would make as little sense to speak without irony about "consumers" in Ancient Egypt of the 4th dynasty, as it would to speak of shopping malls of the 4th dynasty. In what sense does "politics" exist in all "societies"? Bernard Crick is adamant that it does not; his perspective is the opposite of Leftwich's in that he argues that politics is a phenomenon which is specifically not an automatic human activity.

BERNARD CRICK'S DEFENCE OF POLITICS

The aim of Crick's book is to "characterise and defend political activity" (Crick 1962:9), at a time in history where he sees a "fairly obvious growth of impatience" with "politics", especially in the "new nations" of the world (Crick 1962:9); he "simply seeks to help in the task of restoring confidence in the virtues of politics as a great and civilizing human activity." (Crick 1962:11).

Crick begins his book with a chapter called "The Nature of Political Rule", thereby both characterizing "political rule" as one specific type of rule amongst many, and indicating the need to "characterize" politics, or "political rule". Crick is opposed to the notion of a "definition" of the sort employed by Leftwich:

"Politics is too often regarded as a poor relation, inherently dependent and subsidiary; it is rarely praised as something with a life and character of its own. Politics is not religion, ethics, law, science, history or economics; it neither solves everything, nor is it present everywhere, and it is not any one political doctrine, such as conservatism, liberalism, socialism, communism or nationalism, though it can contain elements of most of these things. Politics is politics, to be valued as itself, not because it is 'like' or 'really is' something else more respectable or peculiar. Politics is politics." (Crick 1962:12)

He refers to politics as an "activity", in fact a "great and civilising human activity" (Crick 1962:11), a specific type of human activity that cannot be expressed in terms of other, more "basic" social activities. It is an activity that has a historical beginning as a cultural innovation, and thus is not present in every form of human community.

"Politics" is a form of life, a way of conducting affairs, not a development springing naturally from the universal determinants of human life. Crick links two concepts, namely politics and freedom, in the context of European history:

"[Politics] is a very much more precise thing than is commonly supposed; it is essential to genuine freedom; it is unknown in any but advanced and complex societies; and it has specific origins only found in European experience." (Crick 1962:13)

Political activity must then be understood in the context of specific histories, as a specific cultural response to the rise of complex societies.

Crick traces the origins to the Greek city-state, and identifies the first "political scientist" as Aristotle, who

"...characterises and distinguishes what still appears to be a unique invention or discovery of the Greek world." (Crick 1962:13)

The ancient Greeks, according to Crick, "invented" "politics" in order to solve the problem of plurality, i.e. the problem of a society of sufficient complexity to require some sort of mediation of interests. For Crick, behind the "invention" of politics by the Greeks and its introduction into human culture, there was or is a problem which needed to be solved, and that problem was how to govern in conditions of plurality, in conditions where there were divergent beliefs and interests.

Politics is thus one possible solution to the problem of government and order in complex societies, other than those consisting of "...a single tribe, religion, interest or tradition" (Crick 1962:14). Primarily, it is an approach to mediating different value-systems and demands:

"Politics, then, to Aristotle, was... simply the 'master science' among men. Politics was the master-science not in the sense that it includes or explains all other 'sciences' (all skills, social activities and groups interests), but in that it gives them some priority, some order in their rival claims on the always scarce resources of any given community. The way of establishing these priorities is by allowing the right institutions to develop by which the various 'sciences' can demonstrate their actual importance in the common task of survival. Politics are, as it were, the market place and the price mechanism of all social demands." (Crick 1962:18-19)

This is necessary because of the problems posed to stability by the size of human communities:

"[politics is] a sociological activity which has the anthropological function of preserving a community grown too complicated for either tradition alone or pure arbitrary rule to preserve it without the undue use of coercion." (Crick 1962:20)

Put in the form of a definition,

"Politics, then, can simply be defined as the activity by which differing interests within a given unit of rule are conciliated by giving them a share in power in proportion to their importance to the welfare and survival of the whole community." (Crick 1962:16-17)

Aristotle, in the *Politics*, used the metaphor of harmony in music to convey the concept of opinion and debate in the *polis*. A tyranny was conceived in this metaphor as one tune drowning out many others, whereas a polity was compared to many voices expressing different tunes in a harmony. Since the ancient Greeks, politics has been present as an instrument of government to a greater or lesser extent in states, but very seldom as a highly-valued and exalted activity. For instance, he distinguishes clearly between a "mere" power struggle, and a political struggle:

"In trying to understand the many forms of government that there are, of which political rule is only one, it is particularly easy to mistake rhetoric for theory. To say that all government involves politics is either rhetoric or muddle. Why call, for instance, a struggle for power 'politics' when it is simply a struggle for power?" (Crick 1962:15)

This is born out by Crick's observation that

"All over the world there are men aspiring to power and there are actual rulers who, however many different names they may go by, have in common a rejection of politics." (Crick 1962:12)

The other significant additional point of Crick's is that "political rule" depends on "some settled order", which he refers to as "Government". This in some form is a basis for political activity, as order is its precondition. Government is a "mechanism for survival". He in fact defines government as "the organisation of a group of men in a given community for survival." (Crick 1962:22). Thus, "politics" is built on the existence of order; indeed, "When government is impossible, politics is impossible" (Crick 1962:24). "Political rule" is however, the highest form of government. Of the many forms of government, "political rule" is the "most civilized". He compares "political rule" to other forms:

"The method of rule of the tyrant and the oligarch is quite simply to clobber, coerce or overawe all or most of these other groups in the interest of their own. The political method of rule is to listen to these other groups so as to conciliate them as far as possible, and to give them a legal position, a sense of security, some clear and reasonably safe means of articulation, by which these other groups can and will speak freely." (Crick 1962:14)

Plurality is only tolerated in non-political rule for purely instrumental reasons; indeed, "political rule" is not synonymous with "politics":

"Certainly, there is a sense in which, even in a tyranny or totalitarian regime, politics exists up to the moment when the ruler finds himself free to act alone. While he is not free to act alone, while he is forced to consult other people whom he regards as his enemies, he is in some kind of a political relationship. But it is essentially fragile and unwanted. ..Politics is then regarded as an obstacle.." (Crick 1962:15-16)

Implicit in his text (he calls the last chapter of his book "In Praise of Politics") is the advocacy of a culture of government that entrenches political activity to the maximum possible extent. The extent to which "politics" is entrenched and respected is the extent of "civilization". The reason for this is that freedom is concomitant with politics.

Freedom is defined as follows by Crick:

"Freedom is the privacy of men from public actions" (Crick 1962:14)

The achievement of freedom is thus the achievement of a society where people can pursue their own private activities and interests without interference from the public realm. The individual subject can act to increase freedom by the formulation of a "political doctrine" which

"..is thus just an attempt to strike a particular harmony in an actual political situation, one harmony out of many possible different (temporary) resolutions of the basic problem of unity and diversity in a society with complex and entrenched rival social interests. This problem is the germ of politics and freedom." (Crick 1962:28)

Crick deplores the broad contemporary usage of the term 'politics'. In his opinion, the term cannot be applied to the activities that happen in trade unions, schools, churches and so forth, except in that they are "pre-political", i.e. create conditions for political life proper:

"..common use may encourage us to talk about politics in the small group - in the trade union, in the office and even in the family; and anthropologists find that many tribal societies are more 'political' and less 'autocratic' than once supposed.. ..If all discussion, conflict, rivalry, struggle and even conciliation is called politics, then it is forgotten, once more, that politics

depends on some settled order. They may help to create politics, but their internal behaviour is not political simply because their individual function is quite different from the state itself." (Crick 1962:25)

He earlier comments that "...usage does not destroy real distinctions." (Crick 1962:15), and that "...political rule must be preceded by public order.." (Crick 1962:21).

He denies that there is any such thing as "international politics"; international relations consist only in "pseudo-politics". Such talk, in Crick's view, clouds the real issues surrounding political life. The reason for Crick's insistence on the state as the only valid basis for political activity proper, is the link between order, politics and freedom. Freedom is the end of politics, and its precondition, in that political life proper cannot really exist without freedom. "Political freedom" writes Crick,

"...is a response to a need of government - it is not, as so many sentimentally think, an external impetus that somehow forces, or persuades, governments to act tolerantly." (Crick 1962:26)

The two of these together, politics and freedom, are thus necessary products of a problem of order.

Thus freedom is here not a principle in the sense of a Universal, but a valued by-product of a solution to a problem of order in the state. At the same time, it is not a necessary solution, merely the best, the solution most conducive to "civilization".

Chapter Three

THE PROBLEM OF THE POLITICAL CONCEIVED AS THE PROBLEM OF POLITICAL JUDGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is mainly an exegesis of the political philosophy of Hannah Arendt. Arendt's approach to the problem of the political is to consider the conditions of political thought in the modern age, which she characterizes by the expression 'Dark Times'. The political problem of the modern age she describes as a 'loss of tradition', and, politically, the central problem which arises from this problem is the problem of political judgement; the problem of the political itself can be conceived of as a failure of the tradition of political thought to provide an account of political judgement that is operational under the conditions of the modern age. In response to this problem she formulated a conception of political judgement based on a reading of Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, which I outline below. In addition, I reevaluate Crick's and Leftwich's conceptions of politics in the light of Arendt's work.

'DARK TIMES': THE NATURE OF POLITICS IN THE MODERN AGE

Hannah Arendt's work is largely focused on the problem of totalitarianism, from two particular aspects; first, from her personal experience as a German Jew forced to go into exile in 1933, after having been detained by the Nazis for her work in Jewish organizations, and her involvement with Jewish refugees and "the Jewish Question" during and after the Second World War, and second, the experience of Stalinism in the context of the European Left.

For her, totalitarianism was an "unprecedented" political phenomenon, which posed particular problems of understanding:

"The most obvious escape... is the equation of totalitarian government with some well-known evil of the past - such as aggressiveness, tyranny, conspiracy, etc. Here, it seems, we are on solid ground: for together with its evils, we think we have inherited the wisdom of the past to guide us through them. But the trouble with the wisdom of the past is that it dies, so to speak, on our hands as soon as we try to apply it honestly to the central political experience of our time. Everything we know of totalitarianism demonstrates a horrible originality which no far-fetched historical parallels can alleviate. We can escape from its impact only if we decide not to focus our attention on its very nature, but to let it run away to the interminable connections and similarities which certain tenets of totalitarian doctrine necessarily show with familiar theories of occidental thought. Such similarities are inescapable. In the realm of pure theory and isolated concepts there can be nothing new under the sun; but such similarities disappear completely as soon as one neglects theoretical formulations and concentrates on their practical application. The originality of totalitarianism is horrible, not because some new "idea" came into the world, but because its very actions constitute a break with all our traditions; they have clearly exploded the categories of political thought and our standards for moral judgement." (Arendt, quoted in Vollrath 1977:175)

This passage contains the kernel of Arendt's political thought. Her comprehension of the political condition of the 20th century was captured for her in the title of a poem by Bertolt Brecht, "Dark Times". "Dark Times" are not simply synonymous with "monstrosities", the dominance of evil people and dark deeds, but with a condition of thought. In the words of David Luban,

"..for Brecht dark times are not merely times of horror but times of confusion in which theory no longer helps us to act.. ..In dark times traditional forms of explanation no longer explain anything.. ..Explanation.. ..can go on undaunted, but it is cut loose from any genuine role in human knowledge." (Luban 1983:218)

This notion of "dark times" Arendt linked with a phenomenon she termed "the loss of tradition" (Arendt 1993). In her view, the continuity "between past and future" had been broken; there is no sense of a continuity with the past, nor did inherited ideas and institutions possess authority (Canovan 1992:68). As a result, each generation has to 'make anew' the path between past and future.

POLITICAL THINKING AFTER THE LOSS OF TRADITION

Arendt saw the tradition of Western political thought as incapable of understanding totalitarianism, but only "explaining it away":

"For Arendt, the facts of the twentieth century do not need explaining, they need *confronting*." (Luban 1983:231)

Particularly given her German-Jewish background, as well as her pre-1933 background as a rather non-political student of Heidegger's, the need to understand the phenomenon of Nazism was something she considered an urgent task as an essential basis for a grasp of the political realities of the 20th century.

She attempted this in her book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, characterizing totalitarianism as a "uniquely modern" phenomenon. In writing the book, she faced a difficult dilemma. The dilemma had first appeared to her a few years before while she was reviewing *The Black Book*, a work that aimed to expose Nazi atrocities during the Second World War, and in which its authors had undertaken to "..resurrect truth and justice and attempt to do so by stating true facts to displace Nazi falsehoods." (Disch 1993: 671). Arendt, surprisingly, took exception to this book because she saw the project as a futile and nostalgic endeavour to deal with Nazism as if it were some tyrannical regime of the past. She believed that "The Nazis have called into question the belief that truth can vanquish power." (Disch 1993:671)

In the past, under certain conditions of oppression, merely telling the truth had constituted an effective act of opposition. The question of truth had become far more complex in a era characterized by the phenomenon of totalitarianism:

"The problem is that in the wake of a political regime that exercised power by means of fabrication of reality it must be acknowledged that "truth" can be a *construct* of power." (Disch 1993: 671)

In such circumstances truth loses its political authority. The assumptions concerning what we know to be true, and how we know this, had been overthrown by the Nazis. In such circumstances, the ability to tell truth from falsehood, to judge, would have to be built anew.

Thus Arendt chose a "third way" in the writing of her book, separate from the traditional forms of historiography and polemic. She saw her task as

"..to craft the story of totalitarianism in such a way that does not compel assent but, rather, stirs people to think about what they are doing." (Disch 1993: 671)

She rejected traditional historiography on account of what she perceived as "the inherent law of historiography", namely "preservation and justification and praise" (Disch 1993: 671). She had no desire to "preserve" or "praise" the Nazis. Polemic, on the other hand, she saw as necessitating a firm ground on which judgements can be formed, as a basis for a project of destruction. In her opinion, this groundedness could not be taken for granted; traditional concepts of political judgement had been superseded by the fact of total domination, an unprecedented occurrence in the tradition of political thought.

She adopted another alternative, which she termed "storytelling". She did this consciously in opposition to what she saw as typical totalitarian practices. Margaret Canovan, writing about Arendt's book, observed that

"The great charm of totalitarian propaganda, therefore, was that it allowed the masses to escape from incomprehensible reality into fiction. Totalitarian movements established 'a lying world of consistency which is more adequate to the needs of the human mind than reality itself'.." (Canovan 1992:55)

The traditional forms of explanation in political philosophy have these features; consistency, continuity, and a compelling logical consistency. Arendt saw these also as the central features of totalitarian ideology, specifically the quality of consistency; she saw the 20th century in opposite terms. Her technique of "storytelling" was aimed at understanding rather than explanation. Explanation applies to objects; objects are, grammatically, spatial; it is possible to completely analyze and describe objects according to objective criteria, whereas understanding in the political realm, applies to appearances, "phenomena", "seem-ingness", rather than "essence".

Arendt saw totalitarianism as a phenomenon, which implied that she regarded it as "inexplicable". However, in the words of Vollrath,

"..phenomena can be *understood* even though they are.. ..inexplicable. ..Explanation.. [implies] that something is determined by its causes.." (Vollrath 1977:167).

He goes on to explain that if causes are determinable, "..what follow in accordance with a general rule is therefore known - that is, it is *not* a phenomenon." (Vollrath 1977:168). She writes in the preface to her book;

"Comprehension.. ..does not mean.. ..deducing the unprecedented from precedents, or explaining phenomena by such analogies that the impact of reality and the shock of experience is no longer felt." (quoted in Vollrath 1977:168).

NARRATIVE AS A FORM OF POLITICAL THINKING

The Origins of Totalitarianism is thus a work which attempts to "understand" the phenomenon of totalitarianism. In order to do this, Arendt raises narrative to a category of political thought. Needless to say, this is unusual. As Disch points out, this is a view of narrative which runs counter to orthodox academic practice (Disch 1993:669). "Stories" have been regarded as vehicles of "prejudice", the receptacles of an essential subjectivity, requiring the implements of conceptual thought to penetrate and "analyze" them. Narrative is usually viewed as a carrier of "deep structure", "ideology" or "hidden discursive practices". In opposition to this emphasis on the "sameness" of narrative, Arendt emphasises the differences. In contrast to the factual content of the narrative, Arendt wished to emphasise the meaning-giving potential. David Luban comments:

"The unfavourable comparison of conceptualization with storytelling is one of Arendt's recurring themes, stated again and again in her books" (Luban 1983:239)

He then quotes a passage from *Men in Dark Times*:

"No philosophy, no analysis, no aphorism, be it ever so profound, can compare in intensity and richness of meaning with a properly narrated story." (Arendt, quoted in Luban 1983:239)

The identification of political thinking and storytelling was intricately related to Arendt's notion of the political importance of the phenomenal, the world of appearances, and the event. In her later work, Arendt expanded considerably on the nexus between political events, narrative and subjectivity. Fundamental to the notion of narrative are time and memory. Seyla Behhabib comments, in an essay titled "Hannah Arendt and the Redemptive Power of Narrative", that

"...narrativity is constitutive of identity. Actions, unlike things and natural objects, only live in the narrative of those who perform them and the narratives of those who understand, interpret and record them..

..The narrative structure of action and of human identity means that the continuing retelling of the past, its continued reintegration into the story of the present, its reevaluation, reassessment, and reconfiguration are ontological conditions of the kind of being that we are. If *Dasein* is in time, narrative is the modality through which time is experienced." (Behhabib 1990:187-188)

Narrative is significant as memory of human action, that is, the specific occurrence of events in the human world. Obviously events are not continuous through time in the way that material objects are, neither are they a property of a permanent category such as a species, but it is their specific subjectivity, their relation to a specific human subject, that narrative is capable of revealing. Arendt explores the notion of "who somebody is" in the following passage from *The Human Condition*:

"This unchangeable identity of the person, though disclosing itself intangibly in act and speech, becomes tangible only in the story of the actor's and speaker's life; but as such, it can be known, that is, grasped as a palpable entity only after it has come to its end. In other words, human essence - not human nature in general (which does not exist) nor the sum total of qualities and shortcomings in the individual, but the essence of who somebody is - can come into being only when life departs, leaving behind nothing but a story." (Arendt 1989:193)

Later,

"That every individual life can eventually be told as a story with beginning and end is the prepolitical and prehistorical condition of history, the great story without beginning and end." (Arendt 1989:184)

Arendt is referring to what she calls the "condition of plurality", which is "that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world." (Arendt 1989:7), and further, that

"Plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives or will live." (Arendt 1989:8)

According to her conception of storytelling, she also reverses the orthodox notion of meaning in narrative. "Those who were there", according to orthodox wisdom, know better than anyone else what "the real story is". Not so, claims Arendt. In another passage from *The Human Condition*, she claims that

"Action reveals itself fully only to the storyteller, that is, to the backward glance of the historian, who indeed always knows better what it was about than the participants.. ..What the storyteller narrates must necessarily be hidden from the actor himself.. ..Even though stories are the inevitable results of action, it is not the actor but the storyteller who perceived and "makes" the story." (Arendt 1989:192)

Her notion of storytelling was fundamentally linked also with her notion of new beginnings. The possibility that each person could act in a new way corresponded to the human condition of plurality; she coined the term 'natality' to express the condition of beginning inherent in each acting human being:

"..the fundamental *political* feature of man's existence is not mortality but 'natality'" (Canovan 1992:130).

'Natality' is the condition that corresponds to the fact that every birth heralds a potential beginning in the world. In comparison to the natural realm, where a species is immortal and every birth appears as an eternal cyclical manifestation of the same species, humankind is mortal, every life is different, and every life has a beginning and an end, and it is under these conditions that people make their appearance in the world.

The significance of her notion of political thinking as "storytelling" is the contention that we live in "Dark Times" where we have suffered a "loss of tradition". At the same time, she links narrative to the human conditions of plurality and the occurrence of action, but most of all, her notion of "political thinking" is linked to her notion of political judgement, whereby the process of reflecting on political activity is itself the basis for political activity.

Survivors of Auschwitz such as Primo Levi have written that it was only in the camps where there was a high proportion of political activists that any successful resistance was possible. Arendt was convinced that

"..only political action and political structures could provide a defence against the evil that had appeared in politics in the twentieth century, and which conventional morality, religion and philosophy and appeals to nature had been powerless to avert" (Canovan 1992:163)

Phenomena such as human rights had been demonstrated to be useless unless somehow contained in a strong political system. "Storytelling" was thus, for Arendt, a way of engendering political thinking as a basis for political judgement. Her notions of historical and political judgement were based on a reading of Kant's critique of aesthetic judgement, which she regarded as his "unwritten political philosophy", and also has an affinity with Walter Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*. Her critique of mainstream social science of the day was based not only on methodological criticisms, but also political ones:

"..the method of science was considered the inductive one of assembling ever more instances of the same law, in social science as well one searched for the generalizable and cross-culturally "similar", thereby ending more often than not in banal generalizations. For Arendt, the problem with this approach was not only just methodological, but also moral and political. This search for nomological generalizations dulled one's appreciation for what was new and unprecedented, and thus failed to confront one with the task of thinking morally anew in the face of the unprecedented. Politically, this method also stultified one's capacity for resistance by making it seem that nothing was new and that everything had always already been." (Benhabib 1990:184, my emphasis)

With this in mind, Arendt shared with Benjamin his sentiment that

"To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognise it 'the way it was' (Ranke)"

and his conclusion that

"Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins" (Benjamin 1989:256-7).

The 'loss of tradition' means that the past

"..is fragmented and can no longer be told as a unified narrative" (Benhabib 1991:187).

Tradition,

"..which selects and names, which hands down and preserves, which indicates where the treasures are and what their worth is.." (Arendt 1993:5).

What is missing with the 'loss of tradition' is the "stage-setting" for the process of memory, a 'map' to the past. Instead, each generation must find their own way, and perhaps discover new paths on the way. The 'loss of tradition' also makes us aware for the first time of its existence, and opens up a realm in which historical judgement in Arendt's sense is possible. The fragmentation of the past does not destroy it, but implies that the meaning of the past is no longer revealed by a tradition (Arendt 1993:5, see also Arendt 1993:94). However,

"With the loss of tradition we have lost the thread which safely guided us through the vast realms of the past, but this thread was also the chain fettering each successive generation to a predetermined aspect of the past. It could be that only now will the past open up to us with unexpected freshness and tell us things no-one has yet had ears to hear." (Arendt 1993:94)

The faculty of historical judgement, which creates the potential for selective reappropriation of the past in the face of the 'loss of tradition', in Arendt's view was related to the Kantian notion of *Einbildungskraft* (Benhabib 1991:182. She translates this term, "literally, the power of creating, producing images"). One has to engage with that past imaginatively:

"In each case, one had to recreate from the evidence available a new concept, a new narrative, a new perspective." (Benhabib 1991:182)

OBJECTIVITY, THE WORLD AND POLITICAL JUDGEMENT

Concomitantly, Arendt developed an alternative notion of objectivity, and a related anti-foundational approach to political judgement. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt discusses the notion of objectivity in relation to the concept of 'the world'.

Arendt makes what she terms an "unusual" distinction between labour and work. Labour, in Arendt's work, corresponds to the condition of life itself. Labour is the activity of human as *animal laborans*, within the realm of natural necessity. In addition, the products of labour are objects-for-consumption; they are destroyed in the process of use. Labour adds nothing to the world except the continued life of the labourers; in the opinion of Marx,

"..labor's productivity is measured and gauged against the requirements of the life process for its own reproduction" (Arendt 1989:93).

Labour is thus part of the eternal cycle of nature; insofar as labour comprises part of the "vita activa" it is both a necessary and endlessly repetitive activity.

By contrast, work;

"..fabricates the sheer unending variety of things that constitute the human artifice" (Arendt 1989:136).

Work corresponds to the "unnaturalness of human existence" (Arendt 1989:7). The products of work are objects, but objects that are not consumed in the process of use. These objects constitute a "human artifice", that is, a world of objects that is artificial and constant; in Arendt's words:

"..against the subjectivity of men stands the objectivity of the man-made world rather than the sublime indifference of an untouched nature, whose overwhelming elementary force, on the contrary, will compel them to swing relentlessly in the circle of their own biological movement.." (Arendt 1989:137)

On the same page, in a footnote, Arendt traces the root of "object" and "objective", which is the latin infinitive *obicere*, meaning "stand against". In this way, "things", which constitute the human artifice, "stand against" the "voracious needs and wants of their living makers and users" (Arendt 1989:137) This erection of a human world is the precondition of "objectivity":

"..the things of the world have the function of stabilizing human life, and their objectivity lies in the fact that.. ..men , their ever-changing nature notwithstanding, can retrieve their sameness, that is, their identity, by being related to the same chair and the same table..
..Only we who have erected the objectivity of a world of our own from what nature gives us, who have built it into the environment of nature so that we are protected from her, can look upon nature as something 'objective'." (Arendt 1989:137)

Thus the basic conditions of "objectivity" lie in the construction of a world, a human artifice, which corresponds to the human condition of "worldliness" (Arendt 1989:7). The 'objective' nature of the world of 'things' is thus a precondition for subjectivity and 'worldliness' but the modes of description for objects are different from those of human subjects and actions. The latter are never fully redeemable in description, and are thus not fully knowable.

The psychologist Erich Fromm makes the same point:

"Having refers to *things* and things are fixed and *describable*. Being refers to *experience*, and human experience is in principle not describable. What is fully describable is our *persona* - the mask that we wear, the ego that we present - for this persona is itself a thing. In contrast, the living human being is not a dead image and cannot be described like a thing." (Fromm 1979:91)

Objects gain their 'objectivity' by 'standing against' the life processes of humans, whereas subjectivity is manifest in action and interaction, and redeemed by relation to the world.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "objective" in the following terms: "belonging not to the consciousness of the perceiving or thinking subject" or "dealing with outward things, exhibiting actual facts uncoloured by exhibitor's feeling or opinion". The notion "objective" is important in relation to knowledge, specifically in the political realm, but for Arendt, there are always important conditions attached to these forms of knowledge. At the root of these conditions lies Arendt's belief that there is "a deep connection between politics and knowledge" (Luban 1983:219). This connection is expressed in Arendt's spatial notion of the public realm. The existence of the public realm opens up a 'space' between people in the realization of plurality, which gives rise to the realization of *perspective*. This public realm is termed by Arendt the space of appearance, and is brought into being by the realization of plurality through speech and action:

"..without a space of appearance and without trusting in action and speech as a mode of being together, neither the reality of one's self, of one's own identity, nor the reality of the surrounding world can be established beyond doubt. The human sense of reality demands that men actualize the sheer passive givenness of their being, not in order to change it but in order to make articulate and call into full existence what otherwise they would have to suffer passively anyhow." (Arendt 1989:208)

In her writing on totalitarianism, she refers frequently to the condition of "worldlessness" in Europe between the First and Second World Wars. This condition manifested itself in the effectiveness of totalitarian ideology - as Benhabib explains:

"Not having a particular social perspective from which to view the world, they are particularly open to ideological manipulation: they can believe anything and everything for they have no definite perspective which is tied to having a certain place in the world" (Benhabib 1991:177)

Arendt draws a distinction between "political understanding" and "objective knowledge" (Disch 1993:680). Only a certain kind of understanding is of any political use. She dismisses "objective" knowledge, not because it is not knowledge, but because it is apolitical; it is a mode of thinking that is politically irrelevant. The reason for this is that the detachment in "objective" thinking cannot engage with the phenomenological realities of political life. Benhabib outlines what she terms the "mode" of "narrativity":

"Narrativity, or the immersion of action in a web of human relationships, is the mode through which the self is individuated and acts are identified. Both the whatness of the act and the whoness of the self are disclosed to agents capable of communicative understanding. Actions are identified narratively. Someone has always done such-and-such at some point in time. To identify an action is to tell the story of its initiation, its unfolding, and of its immersion in a web of relations constituted through the actions and narratives of others." (Benhabib 1994:127)

Political judgement is only possible from within the world. The metaphor of the "Archimedean point" is used as a basis for a critique of "objective" modes of knowledge. Instead, Arendt expanded the Kantian critique of aesthetic judgement, and developed the notion of "enlarged mentality". This notion involved the "imagination" of the perspectives of others in a particular situation, and was modelled on Kant's conceptions of aesthetic judgement.

In her lectures on Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, she claims that

"..judgement is not the faculty of noumenal selves legislating for mankind as a whole, but the faculty of concrete subjects operating in a worldly space of appearances" (D'Entreves 1994:113)

She built on Kant's distinction between determinant and reflective judgements. For Kant, "judgement in general" is "the faculty of thinking the particular as it is subsumed under the universal" (D'Entreves 1994:113). A determinant judgement is one where the universal is given and the particular is subsumed under it, and a reflective one, where only the particular is given, and the universal has to be found. While determinant judgements were cognitive, reflective ones were non-cognitive (D'Entreves 1994:113). Kant categorised aesthetic judgement as reflective, and thus non-cognitive as

"..in the case of aesthetic judgement the particular object is estimated as beautiful by virtue of the feeling that it arouses in us" (D'Entreves 1994:113).

Thus the concept of beauty could only be applied "through experiencing a particular object that exemplifies it" (D'Entreves 1994:114). Arendt expanded this concept as a general notion of political judgement, emphasizing the notion of the exemplary. Arendt's position was that

"..by attending to these events [that possess "exemplary validity that make them of universal significance"] in their particularity the historian or judging spectator is able to illuminate their universal import and thereby preserve them as an "example" for posterity." (D'Entreves 1994:115)

In addition, Arendt also borrows Kant's specific notion of common sense, "a special sense that fits us into a human community" (D'Entreves 1994:118) as a criterion for the communicability of judgements, in turn a criterion for their validity. Linked to this is the notion of an "enlarged mentality", which Arendt uses to construct her notion of "impartiality"; the basis for an "enlarged mentality" in Kant is the ability to judge from the perspective of others, to "abstract from private conditions and circumstances". The notion of taste, which Kant employed in his *Critique*, is such that it is not amenable to "objective" judgement, but at the same time, has an essentially public existence.

RECONCEIVING THE PROBLEM OF THE POLITICAL

The "narrativity" of subjectivity, amongst other things, also made Arendt an anti-foundationalist in the matter of political philosophy. Her political philosophy can be categorized as an attempt to 'think about politics without having to say what we are'. Thus, instead of political concepts such as rights and forms of government being grounded in a theory of human subjectivity ('human nature'), such concepts and forms develop in actual political processes, in which the subjectivity of individuals is revealed. In other words, for Arendt, thinking about politics is a confrontation with the world, not a glance inside oneself in the manner of Descartes. Politically, one gets to know oneself through the world, not the world through oneself.

The loss of tradition implies a fragmentation of the political. For Arendt, the problem of the political is symptomatic of the loss of tradition, but this does not mean that it is possible or even necessary to resolve it. The political conditions of the modern age have made it possible to construe political activity itself as a normative goal

(as Crick does). Thus, while consideration of the political leads us into the centre of the problem of the conditions of political life which characterize the modern age, we cannot escape this problem in the old way.

Political thought can no longer proceed from a conceptualization of the political entrenched in a specific reading of European political experience. The notion of a tradition itself becomes political; as Arendt and Benjamin point out, the political complexity of the present can produce any number of traditions. *Arendt's solution to the problem of the political is to reconceptualize the faculty of political judgement*, in such a way that it does not require grounding outside the political realm. After reevaluating Crick and Leftwich in the light of Arendt's political thought, I will explore these ideas in more detail in Chapter Four.

PROBLEMS IN LEFTWICH'S AND CRICK'S VIEWS OF THE POLITICAL

I will begin with Leftwich. His notion of "studying politics" can, by definition, be applied anywhere, and will produce observations on the "politics" of certain societies, but these "results" will be of no help in understanding political events.

His conceptualization of politics is anti-phenomenal in the extreme. Every occurrence of "the political" occurs in a pre-determined framework, first of all, according to his definition, and second, within the analytical framework he has established.

The possibility of the new, of evaluating experience in 'the time of the now', so important in the work of writers such as Arendt, is excluded from the beginning. In addition, his theory is totally non-substantive, and this is where the main problem lies. Leftwich's main aim in writing his book was to extend popular participation in political processes (and thus "democracy") by abolishing misconceptions about what politics "is", but all that his brand of political thinking is able to uncover are iron "structures". The actual aims of political action somehow come from outside the political realm. There is not a single substantive issue that enters this process on its own terms. The idea that "politics" might be part of the intersubjective life-processes of a community is not entertainable in Leftwich's "system", neither is the political a possible source of contestation. The theory thus has no normative content; any normative aims in "political thinking" of this kind must, again, come from outside the process of political analysis. In addition, his "definition" of politics and the subsequent theory says nothing about the specific times that we inhabit; in fact it says nothing specific at all. Politically, this amounts to a kind of theoretical imperialism; a range of concepts such as "culture" are deployed in any circumstance where the human species occurs, to identify formations that have arguably only existed in certain specific societies for about 100 or less years.

The effect is that which Arendt alluded to; any specific features that comprise the political, are "explained away" rather than understood. In using a concept such as 'class', in the way that Leftwich does, one has two possible routes; one can either define the term non-substantively, as a purely analytical term, or one can use the term substantively, in which case a new set of difficulties arises. The central point is that Leftwich has no sense of the

world in political terms, which is so central to writers such as Arendt. Raymond Williams highlights some of the difficulties of this position.

Williams' book *Keywords* (Williams 1976) consists of a list of alphabetic entries comprising Williams' "social vocabulary", which he compiled after investigating the complexities of the shifting meaning of the word 'culture'. The "Keywords" have in common a problem of definition, not of the sort involved in distinguishing 'lunch' and 'supper', but an expression of "different immediate values or different kinds of valuation" (Williams 1976:9). He collected the most interesting and significant of these words, and wrote short essays on each, which he termed 'Keywords'. The book is, in Williams' words,

"..the record of an inquiry into a *vocabulary*: a shared body of words and meanings in our most general discussions, in English, of the practices and institutions which we group as *culture* and *society*." (Williams 1976:13)

He began to understand the words he had chosen as examples of a specific *kind of word*:

"Every word which I have included has at some time, in the course of some argument, virtually forced itself on my attention because the problems of its meanings seemed to me inextricably bound up with the problems it was being used to discuss." (Williams 1976:13)

It became apparent that problems and issues which these words signify

"..cannot even be focused on unless we are conscious of the words as elements of the problem" (Williams 1976:14).

For these words, definition of a dictionary sort is confusing and obscuring, and prevents one from comprehending at all the significance of a particular usage. He repudiates the notions that a certain kind of semantics could "clarify" the meaning of such words as "class", and thus help resolve "disputes conducted in their terms" (Williams 1976:21), because

"..to understand the complexities of the meanings of 'class' contributes virtually nothing to the resolution, for example, of actual class disputes and class struggles.. ..the variations and confusions of meaning are not just faults in a system, or errors of feedback, or deficiencies of education. They are in many cases, in my terms, historical and contemporary substance." (Williams 1976:21)

Terms such as class, culture, society, and democracy, as well as being 'descriptive', are ways in which people confront and understand complex practical situation. Connolly makes this specific point:

"The concepts of politics do not simply provide a lens through which to observe a process that is independent of them. As we have seen, they are themselves part of that political life - they help to constitute it, to make it what it is." (Connolly 1983:180)

Moreover, there are specific conditions in modernity that complicate the issue of definition, as demonstrated by Heller in her paper, "Sociology as the Defetishization of Modernity" (Heller 1991b).

Heller explores a central dilemma in modern social theory. She begins by differentiating sociology and philosophy as different modes of knowledge. Philosophy

"..has a tradition which goes back to ancient times, and the rules of the game have been set long before the dawn of modernity and cannot be undone unless the genre of philosophy itself is abandoned." (Heller 1991b:517)

Philosophers formulate truth "..sub species aeternatis, being in all times and with a message for all times" (Heller 1991b:517). Sociology, on the other hand, is concerned with "..the exigency of our historical age, modernity." (Heller 1991b:528). She distinguishes between modern and premodern societies by what she considers "the common element in all theories of modernity" (Heller 1991b:518), namely that premodern societies were structured by stratification, whereas modern ones are structured by "the division of functions". (That Apartheid does not in essence fit easily into either of these categories is a point that verifies Arendt's argument.)

In premodern (thus stratified) societies it was possible for philosophy to "formulate a true theory of society" (Heller 1991b:519), but it is not possible in a functionalist society. (It is important here that Heller speaks of social knowledge in particular.) This is because in the process of philosophy,

"..if a historically relevant social stratum, community or group shares a form of life and thus a total life experience, the single member of a group can still intuit, and thereby produce a body of knowledge or an art work expressing the shared life experience of this group to an extent which surpasses in clarity, radicality, and homogeneity, the actual ideas of the other members of the group." (Heller 1991b:520)

This is possible in a stratified society, but not in a functionalist one, as "intellectuals" form a functional group, and thus have no intuitive access to people performing other functions in society, and thus "social theorists cannot obtain a true insight into society by relying on their intuition alone". (Heller 1991b:521). Other means have to be found to ground social knowledge. In doing this, in empirical sociology other people are made objects of research and knowledge, and thus subject becomes object, and thus reified, and theoretical sociology / social theory "operates with generalized concepts of social structure or action," (Heller 1991b:523) into which individual subjects disappear. Human relationships appear as "relations among social functions" (Heller 1991b:524). This reification is necessary for any sort of true sociological knowledge. In the process, however, consciousness of implicated subjects is "imputed" to them from the standpoint of the functioning of institutions. Thus for example, within the Marxist tradition as regards "designating the class position of social actors" the category "class" is a reified or fetishized category. (Heller 1991b:524). Heller maintains that

"Labor as social function and capital as social function are not identical with the sum total of subjects of the cluster 'industrial workers' on the one hand, and the sum total of subjects of the cluster 'capitalists' on the other. The concept class, if it refers to modern, socioeconomic classes, and not to castes and estates, is a fetishistic [reified] category." (Heller 1991b:524)

She highlights a similar problem in modern theory of the state - the premodern state could be defined as a strata of persons (e.g. Aristotle - citizens), but under modernity, "what is the state?" "cannot be answered in a straightforward way" (Heller 1991b:525), as "the state" is a reified/fetishized category, as are "social class, civil society, economy, and the like" (Heller 1991b:525). Unless these categories have a clearly defined membership (which they don't under modernity), reification is inevitable and necessary. The problem arises in the interpretation and analysis of action, for

"If we speak of action, we must speak of actors, that is to say, subjects, moreover, individual subjects." (Heller 1991b:526)

This is the traditional and central concern of philosophy, indeed action "...was and has remained a philosophical construct" (Heller 1991b:526) (in the sense that if one wishes to speak of action, one must speak in the language of philosophy), and thus any concern with action must take place "...under the guidance of a philosophical paradigm (or metatheory)" (Heller 1991b:526). Thus the dilemma of social theory is that true knowledge cannot be gained about rationalized institutions without reification, but on the other hand true knowledge cannot be gained about rational action (which is one of the bases of modernity) if the possibility of action and thus unreified/unfetishized subjectivity is not admitted. In Heller's words,

"[social theories] have to operate with fetishized (reified) categories, and they must reify actors methodologically, but they will only become true theories if they proceed to perform this task under the guidance of a philosophical paradigm (or metatheory) which defetishizes (or dereifies) human subjects, action, speech, and consciousness." (Heller 1991b:528)

This, according to Heller, is a dilemma that cannot really be overcome in contemporary conditions, which both give rise to the field of knowledge (sociology) and the dilemma itself.

Theoretical sociology, as the mode of objective social knowledge about modernity, is thus unable to employ objective categories such as "class", even descriptively, without eliminating subjectivity and the "philosophical construct" of action. She points out that even "extreme structuralists" such as Althusser, must "impute consciousness to members of institutions" (Heller 1991b:523). Even in theoretical sociology, there is an awareness that its field of focus is modernity.

What both Heller and Williams emphasize, as does Arendt, is that there is a link between politics and knowledge. From Heller's observations on modern sociology, we can observe that there are certain problems with the use of terms such as 'class' which are not only present in the modern age, but are an essential part of it; an awareness of dilemmas related to this condition is a precondition for political thought, not least on account of the complexities of the designation of the political. Any understanding of the political that will be in the least helpful in the understanding of the general political significance of news must have as its starting point an awareness of the specific complications of the political in the modern age, a capability to perceive news and the political as specific socio-cultural phenomena. Leftwich's notion of the problem of the political contains no such awareness, and this is related directly to the fact that his definition is non-substantive. Following from this, Leftwich's form of political analysis is to select and isolate the 'significant' features of a situation, in order to 'analyze' the political aspects. The result is that what is truly and substantively 'political' simply disappears. In short, this approach simply 'explains away' real political differences and substantive issues, rather than producing any authentic political understanding.

Crick's work, on the other hand is vehement on the substantive nature of the political. This is the great merit of his work. He delineates politics culturally, in the sense that he identifies a particular history and a particular set of

practices as a tradition culminating in the European nation-state, which is then universalized. In the spirit of this tradition, there are frequent normative references to 'civilization' and 'civilized values'. This becomes clear if we examine the impulse that led Crick to write his book, namely the emergence of a number of "new" states; more specifically, the process of decolonization, or alternatively, the emergence of the Third World. This is a decisive moment in world histories, in the sense that it is the point at which it becomes possible to reconsider the universality of the nation-state as an inevitable political destiny of each human 'society', and thus the concomitant political assumptions, such as 'people', 'nation' and so forth. Crick's insistence on the state as the basis for true political activity can best be understood in terms of his reliance on this tradition. Political situations arising outside this context, however, cannot be accommodated in terms of this conception of the political.

There are two contexts in which this is the case, that illustrate the inadequacy of Crick's appeal to this tradition, namely feminism and post-colonialism. Feminists would take ill a suggestion that power relationships between men and women, particularly those in the private or intimate spheres, was a "merely social" issue. Crick defines freedom as "the privacy of men from public actions". The extent of "privacy from public actions" is not simply a measure of "freedom", but also traditionally the division between the private power of men over women and the political power of the state:

"Patriarchy's chief institution is the family. It is both a mirror of and a connection with the larger society; a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole. Mediating between the individual and the social structure, the family effects control and conformity where political and other authorities are insufficient." (Millet 1971: 33)

In the introduction to Habermas' book on the public sphere (Habermas 1992:xiii) Thomas McCarthy comments that feminists have

"identified institutional divisions between the public and the private as a thread running through the history of the subordination of women".

In this case the actual boundaries of the political are the subject of a political struggle. The coining of the term 'patriarchy' is the founding of a new form of politics, which contests the inheritance of the tradition on which Crick founds his notion of politics.

In a similar manner, Crick's insistence on order and the state is a problem in the political context of the Third World. Instrumental forms of order have tended to dominate in many colonized societies, either solely from economic imperatives (for example, many British imperial interventions which led to direct imperial rule were set in motion by direct pressure from big capital) or imperial-strategic imperatives (e.g. the official British view of Egypt was that the primary function of the colonial administration was to secure the Suez canal and thus access to India - see Said 1987), and thus cannot form a basis for an authentic political order. The dichotomy of order vs anarchy which characterizes Crick's work is itself politicized in colonial and post-colonial contexts; there is no longer order, but orders - whether a specific situation constitutes order or chaos depends on one's political outlook. The state as such, the culmination of the occidental political tradition, is called into question politically. Part of this situation is indirectly portrayed by Crick in the reasons that he gives for the current necessity for a defence of

politics, namely the emergence of new states after the Second World War. Read differently, this concern is with a sense of unease at the failing of the occidental tradition of political thought in the face of the unprecedented situation of decolonization. Crick's response is to consciously transform politics into a technique for maintaining peace and quiet.

Both Crick and Leftwich fail to solve the problem of the political. Their mere interest in the subject of the political is more confirmation of Heller's and Arendt's insights concerning the crises in political thought engendered by the modern age. Leftwich fails because his 'definition' is non-substantive; Crick because his conception of politics is too rooted in the tradition of political thought that has given rise to the problem of the political in the first place. Leftwich's 'definition' cannot provide a basis for political judgement; because of its non-substantive nature, he is unable to provide a conception of the political that demonstrates a unity of normative claims and empirical awareness. Crick, on the other hand, does provide a form of political judgement. Politics for Crick is both an empirical phenomenon that we ought to learn to distinguish, and a desirable activity, in other words, politics itself becomes a "politically effective Ought". The implication of this perspective is that the problem of the political expressed by Heller becomes a problem of political judgement; this is Arendt's outlook, but Crick's conception of politics is not able to accommodate it. The only productive response to the problem that Crick clearly perceives, is not to fall back on a traditional conception of the political, but to conceive of the problem of the political as part of a larger problem of political judgement. This I will explore in the following chapter.

Chapter Four

CONDITIONS FOR POLITICAL JUDGEMENT IN THE MODERN AGE

INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter, I will first distinguish between the relatively closed concept of modernity and the relatively open one of the modern age. I will also outline the political significance of a postmodernism conceived as a political standpoint from which to evaluate modernity politically. My aim in doing this is to demonstrate the complications of Heller's grounding her conception of political judgement in a formulation of the essence of modernity, and try, through a consideration of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, to reconceive political judgement in a way which avoids these complications.

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN MODERNITY AND THE MODERN AGE

Heller claims that 'the political' must imply a notion of judgement which "must be of a kind that is central to the operation and dynamic of modern societies". This is the basis of the substantive nature of Heller's 'concept of the political', and it is closely related to two other key elements in her argument, namely that 'the political' must be derived from "the quintessence of the modern political dynamic", and that

"The substantive aspect of 'the political' is not a concrete political 'thing' at all; rather, it is the main dynamism of modernity itself." (Heller 1991a:341)

The alternative to an appeal to a tradition of political experience, in Heller's view, is a substantive definition drawn from the quintessence of 'modernity'. First I want to distinguish between Heller's notion of 'modernity' and the modern age (I borrow this term from Arendt). When Heller writes of "the quintessence of the modern political dynamic" she refers to "modernity" or "the modern condition". "Modernity" is a complex term pertaining to particular institutions, social and cultural forms, and characteristic approaches to social reality. "The modern age" is on the other hand merely an expression for the 'time of the now', the contemporary milieu. Modernity is always part of a narrative; it is 'realized' in 'modern societies', and these emerge from 'pre-modern societies'; this story has been referred to as The Grand Narrative. It is not, strictly speaking a purely historical term, in that it has distinct essential content, and is not tied to a specific time.

The distinction between modernity and the modern age is what has given rise to the possibility of postmodernism. Postmodernism is politically relevant on at least two fronts. First, it is relevant to the Third World, or so-called 'developing' countries. The term deployed first in the 50's in relation to the 'development' of these countries, namely 'modernization', is indicative of what postmodern writers refer to as the Grand Narrative, the universal path of development from pre-modern to modern pioneered first by European societies, but followed by all. The notion of "modernization" provided a universalized normative critique of the social, political and economic destinies of 'developing' countries. Thus the discourse of modernity is also effectively an expression of a particular pattern of global power relationships. As a corollary, postmodernism is a critique of this pattern. Second,

postmodernism is a reflection on the actual development of the political culture of so-called modern societies; the failure of the Grand Narrative as both a way of making sense of contemporary social reality, and as a form of political judgement. The imaginative elements of modernity and postmodernity are nicely captured in the contrast between two films shot two decades apart, both demonstrating a specific urban imagination.

Guiliana Bruno discusses the film *Blade Runner* (1982) "as a metaphor of the postmodern condition." (Bruno 1993:238). The film is set in the future, the ideal imaginative realm of modernity, but

"The future does not realize an idealized, aseptic technological order.. ..The city of *Blade Runner* is not the ultramodern, but the postmodern city. It is not an ordinary layout of skyscrapers and ultra comfortable, hyper-mechanised interiors. Rather it creates an aesthetics of decay, exposing the dark side of technology, the process of disintegration." (Bruno 1993:239)

The streets of the *Blade Runner* city are filled with decaying buildings and a multitude of strange subcultures and languages. The film is shot to demonstrate the incomprehensibility of everyday life; there is no order, no scheme for interpretation. In comparison, Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville* (1961), pictures a society of ultimate Orwellian surveillance, controlled by a huge computer, dominated by antiseptic corridors. If one considers *Blade Runner* to be a metaphor for the postmodern condition, one can consider Godard's film to be a metaphor for the alienated modern condition, and so as a useful basis for comparison. The Godard film is shot in monotonous black and white, *Blade Runner*, a collage of weird colours, strange and varied architecture, anarchic night street markets and so forth. Whereas *Alphaville* depicts the totalised technological society culminating in its true material form, literally realizing the dream city as machine of Le Corbusier, the sanitized city, in *Blade Runner* the city is

"..a polyvalent, interchangeable structure, the product of geographical displacements and condensations.. ..the explosion of urbanization, melting the futuristic hi-tech look into an intercultural scenario, recreates the third world inside the first." (Bruno 1993:240-1).

There is a strong sub-text in both films detailing the struggle of the main characters in their attempts to make a human space for themselves. In *Alphaville*, every reality of the city, every challenge and every space is comprehensible in terms of the computer as an expression of the unifying principle lurking behind every aspect of the city. In *Blade Runner* the protagonist faces the problem of making any moral sense at all of his actions or the world in which he finds himself. These two films represent two positions on modernity. In the Godard film, a strongly theological element; the computer as an expression of the modern order, is all-pervasive; the struggle is one between good and evil. *Blade Runner*, on the other hand, represents a loss of faith, the realization of the postmodern city as a failed dream, a metaphysical ruin. The main problem for the protagonist in *Blade Runner* is to distinguish between good and evil, to find some basis on which to make judgements.

THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF POSTMODERNISM

Agnes Heller and Ferenc Feher in their book *The Postmodern Political Condition* (Heller 1988), conceptualize postmodernism specifically as a perspective on modernity:

"Postmodernity is neither a historical period nor a cultural or political trend with well-defined characteristics. Rather, postmodernity may be understood as the private-collective time and space, within the wider space of modernity, delineated by those who have problems with and

questions addressed to modernity, by those who want to take it to task, and by those who make an inventory of modernity's achievements as well as its unresolved dilemmas." (Heller 1988:1)

This "private-collective time and space" is thus a space from which the evaluation of modernity as a whole becomes possible. In inhabiting this space, "...those who have chosen to understand themselves as postmodern are in the first place after 'the grand narrative'" (Heller 1988:1). This narrative;

"recounts the story with an overtly causal, covertly teleological self-confidence. This position of superiority to the recounted story implies a philosophical and political transcendentalism, the presence of the omniscient narrator." (Heller 1988:2).

The Grand Narrative is the 'story' by which modernity is the teleological goal of human development, which in a disguised form, is the 'story' of what Heller and Feher call "the project of 'Europe'". The Grand Narrative is "world interpretation of a very peculiar kind"; in other words, a specific way of making sense of the world, characterized by its universal perspective.

They describe this "project of 'Europe'" as "the hermeneutical culture *par excellence*" (Heller 1988:2), a culture with an inherent tension. On the one hand, "European" culture has always regarded itself not only as superior to all other cultures, but also as demonstrating tendencies of development that were still latent in other cultures, thus embodying in the narrative of European history the path of development of the whole of humanity. These universalizing practices seek to situate truth and certainty outside of any specific cultural experience, but are mythologically based in the histories of Europe. On the other hand, Europeans have constantly engaged in a critique of these universalising practices, "...to expose them as just so many particularities having a false claim to universality" (Heller 1988:2). This is the basis of the development of the notion of 'ideology', but in this process, Marx

"...in exposing the particularity of all European universals, and in proceeding from here to the creation of the most universal universals... only proved himself to be the ultimate European." (Heller 1988:2)

The resolution of the complex interrelationship between modernity and "the project that is Europe" has meant, in political terms, that "...cultural and political campaign against ethnocentrism has in fact been a major campaign for postmodernism" (Heller 1988:2). Concepts such as universal history, universal humankind, culture and art as universal occurrences are central to the 'project of Europe':

"European identity, or the identity of the West, has been brought into focus by non-identity: the European genius or 'spirit' imagined, projected, and thus created humankind, as well as the other universal notions as 'art' or 'culture. If there is a humankind, then everyone lives in a (particular kind of) culture, everyone creates (a particular kind of) art. Yet, and this was at the heart of European self-identification, European culture is not simply one among many, but rather the highest, most supreme culture or art, indeed, the overarching one in the cornucopia of diverse cultures and arts..." (Heller 1988:148)

Thus the very notion of 'humanity' is implicated in a modernist account of the modern political dynamic. A global network of power centred on the First World is thus understood as a collection of autonomous societies on their own courses of development, which course (to paraphrase Marx) is shown by the more advanced society. Modernist social discourse experiences the global political effects of colonialism and imperialism as the social

unfolding of the common destiny of 'humanity'; the destiny of the margins is thus experienced as 'progress' along a linear path which has been trodden before by the centre. The general notion of 'humanity' is thus an obstacle to thinking politically about a post-colonial and neo-colonial reality.

As a result, I want to argue for a form of postmodernism that is a critique of modernism, specifically in the post-colonial context, but that is not simply a "private-collective time and space", but a political position arising specifically from the disjuncture between the political experience of modernity in specific historical contexts, and the power relationships that categorize the first-third world relationship. Not subscribing to the Grand Narrative does not imply, as Heller and Feher conclude, that "the very foundation of postmodernism consists in viewing the world as a plurality of heterogeneous spaces and temporalities" (Heller 1988:1), but, in a post-Apartheid context, is the only public alternative for the praxis of an authentic politics. This is not simply a question of what is appropriate in a post-colonial, post-Apartheid, Third World context, but is the point at which the geographical and historical situation of the modern age becomes *philosophically effective*. Thus when calling on an image from the 'pure world of ideas' (after Plato) to measure the world by, all that is forthcoming is the same world that we wish to measure, "historical and contemporary substance".

Under these conditions, deriving the political from 'the quintessence of the modern political dynamic' expressed as the essence of modernity amounts to deriving it from a specific historical-political situation which cannot be regarded as universal; more precisely, the Grand Narrative, no longer concealed under a philosophical cloak as *the* narrative of the modern age, becomes *a* narrative amongst other narratives. With the 'loss of faith', or defetishization of the Grand Narrative, narrative also becomes philosophically effective as the specific condition for historical and political meaning.

LANGUAGE AND MEANING

Once the "teleological self-confidence" of the Grand Narrative is laid waste, what of political judgement? Heller's formulation is not sustainable. I will preserve the notion of Oughts, which, as Kant pointed out (see above) are inherent in the very concept of judgement, but give a different account of them based in Wittgenstein's philosophy of language as well as the concepts of narrative referred to above in the writing of Arendt. I will first outline the concept of language-games put forward by Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations*.

A comparison between Wittgenstein's earlier and later views of language is necessary to properly explore the concept of language-game. His earlier view of language

"...may be seen as the culmination of an ancient and well-established tradition which conceives of language as reference, as our way of referring to things in the world." (Pitkin 1993:24)

The central problem for Wittgenstein in his earlier work is to deal with the problem of correspondence between language and the world. Hanfling points out that there are two forms of this correspondence: words with meanings, and sentences with states in the world (Hanfling 1989:5). These two correspondences are the bases of

Wittgenstein's "picture theory of meaning". According to this theory, ordinary sentences have meaning in virtue of the fact that they are, in some form, propositions. Thus the proposition "John is here", and the question "Is John here?" have the same basic meaning structure. Propositions form a picture of the world, in that the elements of the proposition refer to objects in the world, and these elements are related to each other logically in the proposition in the same way as the objects in the world are related to one another; thus a proposition forms a "picture" of reality.

In addition, most propositions are made up of "complex facts" which are analyzable into "atomic facts", which refer unambiguously to the world, and are combined in various logical structures in order to form pictures of reality. The logical structure itself cannot be pictured; this can be "shown but not said". This logical structure can be shown to derive in each case from a "general propositional form" (see Hanfling 1989:19), which is the logical "essence" of the proposition. The aim of philosophy is thus to clarify meaning, to analyze statements and problems to reveal this underlying form:

"..without philosophy thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and indistinct: its task is to make them clear and to give them sharp boundaries." (from the *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* - quoted in Pitkin 1993:28-9)

By contrast, his later work conceives of language and philosophy in a totally different way. He conceives of the relationship between language and the world in terms of language-games, emphasizing the interactive, activity-like nature of language, relegating its representative function to a specific form of language *activity*, amongst many others. He begins the *Philosophical Investigations* with a passage from St Augustine's *Confessions*, in which Augustine describes how as a child he had learned language through adults pointing out objects and saying their names:

"In this picture of language, we find the roots of the following idea: Every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands." (Wittgenstein 1988:2)

This is the commonsense view of language (with very deep philosophical roots, including Wittgenstein's earlier work) which he seeks to challenge. He does by establishing in various ways that the above picture of language represents only one *use* of language, and there are countless others.

He uses an example of a game in which a teacher points to an object, and a child says the name of the object, referring to "..the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which is it is woven, [as] the 'language-game'." (Wittgenstein 1988:5) Later, he gives some other examples of language-games:

"Giving orders and obeying them -
Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements -
Constructing an object from a description (a drawing) - Reporting an event -
Speculating about an event -
Forming and testing a hypothesis - ..
..Asking, thinking, greeting, cursing, praying.." (Wittgenstein 1988:11-12)

The use of the expression 'language-game' has several purposes. One of these is to demonstrate the diversity of uses that language has (besides naming) by emphasizing language as activity:

"..new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and other become obsolete and get forgotten.. ..Here the use of the term "language-game" is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life." (Wittgenstein 1988:11)

He uses the analogy of tools; a toolbox might have a number of different tools which all perform different functions; there is no common function that defines them all as tools. Another purpose of language-games is to introduce a central idea, that *meaning is use*, that the meaning of a word is what it is used for, which replaces the old notion that meaning is reference; reference is only one *use* that words can have. Words might have different meanings, mean in different ways according to their use, according to the language-games of which they form a part. Wittgenstein uses the example of 'games':

"Consider for example the proceedings that we call 'games'.. ..What is common to them all? Don't say "there *must* be something common, or they would not be called 'games' " - but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all. - For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that.. ..We see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes similarities of detail.

I can think of no better expression to characterise these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the various resemblances between members of a family overlap and criss-cross in the same way. - And I shall say: 'games' form a family." (Wittgenstein, 31-2)

Elsewhere, he uses the notion of a rope twisted from many fibres, none of which is very long or very strong, but the rope itself is long and strong enough to moor a ship in a storm (Hanfling 1989:p.65).

Each use of the word "game" has some definition, but no property is characteristic of all games. For example, some games have rules, some do not; some involve other people, some do not, some involve winning and losing, or even just a goal, some do not, and so forth. Another aspect of language that language-games illustrate is its nature as human activity; language-games are part of what Wittgenstein terms 'forms of life'. "It is through sharing in the playing of language-games that language is connected with our life." (Kenny 1993:163). Language is only meaningful inasmuch as it is a part of specific forms of life; Wittgenstein was fond of commenting that if a lion could talk, it would not be possible to understand him (see Monk 1990).

Another point of significance that arises from language-games is the notion of grammar. It seems that words 'signify' in quite a straightforward manner when one considers the names of physical objects, but at closer examination this is not so; there are conditions attached, which become clearer when more difficult words, such as those to describe "private" sensations such as pain are examined:

"But what does it mean to say that he has 'named his pain'? - How has he done this naming of pain?! And whatever he did, what was its purpose? - When one says "He gave a name to his sensation" one forgets that a great deal of stage-setting in the language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense. And when we speak of someone's having given a name to pain, what is presupposed is the existence of the grammar of the word "pain"; it shews the post where the new word is stationed." (Wittgenstein 1988:92)

"Stage-setting" and the "station" of a word are what Wittgenstein means by the grammar of a word or an expression. He distinguishes between "surface grammar" and "depth grammar". The former signifies the

conventional use, and the latter his notion of a word having a specific place in a language-game, an activity, a series of connections for which there are no general rules. What is wrong with Augustine's description, he claims, is that

"Someone coming into a strange country will sometimes learn the language of the inhabitants from ostensive definitions that they give him; and he will often have to guess the meaning of these definitions; and will guess sometimes right, sometimes wrong.

And now, I think, we can say: Augustine describes the learning of human language as if the child came into a strange country and did not understand the language of the country; that is, as if it already had a language, only not this one. Or again: as if the child could already think, only not yet speak. And "think" would here mean something like "talk to itself". (Wittgenstein 1988:16)

For instance, in the case of the word "red", Kenny explains that

"..when I learn my first language I have to master a whole complicated system of the identification, classification and naming of colours if I am to know the place into which 'red' fits." (Kenny 157-8)

Learning the French term for 'red' is simple, because we have already mastered the grammar of the term in English; we are familiar with the language-games in which 'red' occurs. This is not the same as learning the whole set of activities surrounding colour identification and description.

Ostensive definitions (defining a name by pointing at an object), writes Wittgenstein, "can be variously interpreted in *every* case" (PI 28). This is

"due in part to the irreducible complexity of things, the fact that anything we point to can be described in an indefinite number of ways" (Hanfling 1989:58)

In addition, the act of pointing must be understood as a significant act. All of these factors comprise the "stage-setting" necessary for naming to be effective.

It is important to note that Wittgenstein was not proposing a theory of meaning or a theory of language. Quite the opposite; his work can be best described as a sort of anti-theory, a set of assertions about why such theories are not possible. This outlook is centred on his view of language:

"Here we come up against the great question that lies behind all these considerations. - For someone might object against me: "You take the easy way out! You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have nowhere said what the essence of a language-game, and hence of language, is: what is common to all these activities, and what makes them into language or parts of language. So you let yourself off the very part of the investigation that once gave you yourself most headache, the part about the general form of propositions and of language"

And this is true. - Instead of something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, - but that they are related to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all "language".. (Wittgenstein 1988:31)

On the same page, in the section on the "family-resemblance" nature of the term "game", he admonishes his interlocutor

"What is common to them all? - Don't say: "There *must* be something common, or they would not be called 'games'" - but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all." (Wittgenstein 1988:31)

Language has no 'essence'; there is no Language, but only language and language-games, and even this term Wittgenstein uses with some qualification:

"Our clear and simple language-games are not preparatory studies for a future regularisation of language - as it were first approximations, ignoring friction and air-resistance. The language-games are rather set up as *objects of comparison* which are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities, but also of dissimilarities." (Wittgenstein 1988:50)

Wittgenstein's later philosophy of language can be contrasted to his earlier one by the metaphor of a room filled with objects. In the earlier view, his aim was to illuminate the room with bright light, to see every cranny, and note every detail. In this way the room could be said to be "analyzed", "known". In practice, however, this is not how we ordinarily experience rooms; his later philosophy, so-called "ordinary-language" philosophy might be understood in terms of this metaphor as attempts, with concepts such as "language-games", to, without moving the objects or even shifting one's perspective, change the lighting, or observe the room at different times of day, or the experience of different social occasions. In this way, such things as "moods", and such expressions as "the room is gloomy" might become meaningful. By shedding various lights from various angles in the room, we will learn that the room has certain moods, aspects, certain potential. All these constitute 'knowing' the room, not merely being able to detail its contents.

Hanfling characterizes the Tractatus view of logic that Wittgenstein rejected in his later writings as a "*theological* conception of logic" (Hanfling 1989:40). This conception rested on the notion of a basic logical form underlying all language, in terms of which all meaning can be analyzed. According to the later Wittgenstein, language is neither conventional (meanings decided by agreement) nor essential (corresponding to the world), but is structured by human activity; his interlocutor asks

" 'So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?' - It is what human beings *say* that is true and false, and they agree in the *language* that they use. This is not agreement in opinions but in form of life. ...If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreements not only in definitions but also (queer as this may seem) in judgements." (Wittgenstein 1988:88, my emphasis)

Hanfling gives the example of the flat earth movement. It is possible to disagree about the shape of the earth because two parties agree both on the definition of "flat" and "curved" as well as judgements (activities) of "shaped" and "curved" things. If they disagreed about whether a sphere was flat or curved (say a small ball) then the disagreement would be pointless; through the activity of using "flat" and "curved" in the same way in a language-game, agreement and disagreement are possible.

Concomitantly, Wittgenstein's later view of philosophy was that it is similar to psychoanalysis (Kenny makes this comparison in Kenny, 1984, 41) in that it is therapeutic. The aim of philosophy is not to search for an ultimate

truth or ultimate logical form, but to dispel 'conceptual confusion'. The aim of philosophy is "to leave everything as it is", one ought to

"..do away with *explanation*, and description alone must take its place.. ..The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known.." (Wittgenstein 1988:47)

The aim of philosophy is specifically not to provide a basis for reasoning. It is only philosophical problems that are dealt with by philosophy: "Philosophy isn't anything except philosophical problems" (quoted in Kenny 1984: 45). Philosophical problems "extend as far as the common element in different regions of our language" (Kenny 1984:45). With the demise of the "general concept of language", philosophy in the old sense is no longer possible, but

"If the general concept of language dissolves in this way, doesn't philosophy dissolve as well? No, for the task of philosophy is not to create a new, ideal language, but to clarify the use of our language.. ..its aim is to remove particular misunderstandings; not to produce a real understanding for the first time." (quoted in Kenny 1984:45)

If there is no unitary concept of philosophical problems, then there also cannot ever be Kant's "perpetual peace" in philosophy. Language, and thus reason, is not perfectible unless language as a whole has a specific use, which it does not. There are uses for language, but no determinate use. (Wittgenstein 1988:138).

LANGUAGE AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF POLITICAL JUDGEMENT

The shift in the image of language from the earlier to the later Wittgenstein is of great significance for political thought. Politically, the power of language derives not from its ability to speak unambiguously and clearly about the world, but from its openness and indeterminacy. Seigel writes of how Roussel had inspired the following insight into language in the work of Foucault. Roussel had

"..shown how language drew power from its very weakness, its inability to provide a separate and unambiguous description of each and all the objects encountered in the world. Because language used the same words to describe different things, there was 'no system common to existence and to language..' "

and on the next page,

"..language only speaks from a lack that is essential to it." (Seigel 1990:289-90)

Seigel explains how these insights concerning language informed and ignited Foucault's inquiries into discourse and social form that formed the basis of his earlier work. What in fact separates Foucault from other more traditional social thinkers is that he has "abandoned the attempt to legitimate social organization by means of philosophical grounding" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1986:115). Simons makes the same point concerning Foucault's work on the problem of sovereignty (Simons 1995:53); he defines foundationalism as follows:

"..all political theory that claims to legitimate political order has to portray itself as external to the system it judges. In this sense, all political philosophy is foundationalist in a weak sense. Foundationalism can be defined as a belief that 'any political justification worthy of the name must be grounded on principles that are (1) undeniable and immune to revision and (2) located outside society and politics'.." (Simons 1995:53)

The 'theological' conception of language espoused by the early Wittgenstein and other political philosophers such as Hobbes and Locke is foundationalist; concepts such as justice, truth, greatness and freedom are grounded in an extra-political, extra-societal realm. From this vantage-point, the political philosopher can measure the political world, judge it, according to these 'universals'. This is Heller's characterization of the basis of political judgement. To repeat Heller's characterization of philosophy:

"Philosophy has never stopped insisting that what is regarded as truth is not really true, but that something else is true; or that what is regarded as just is not just, because something else would be more, or even perfectly just." (Heller 1991a:336)

Further, the characterization of modernity as the "here and now that universal values become politically effective", and her notion of political judgement is constructed on this basis:

"Men and women constantly juxtapose Ought, that is, universalized values, to Is, to their political and social institutions which fail to live up to their Ought. Men and women interpret and re-interpret those values in their daily practices and they go about using them as vehicles of critique and refutation, of realizing philosophy, or philosophy's ultimate end." (ibid., 337)

The problem that the work of Wittgenstein highlights about Heller's portrayal of political judgement is that the "juxtaposition" requires a degree of 'stage-setting' taken for granted in traditional political thought. Arendt's objection to foundationalism is that the conditions necessary for an 'Archimedean point' are in the first place political.

In the political conditions of the modern age, this becomes apparent; the problem of political judgement is not solved by the application of universals from outside the political realm by a process of interpretation, but by the narrative redemption of values such as justice from a fragmented past as part of an engagement with an unprecedented present. The problem does not lie in the interpretation of Oughts, but their application, the creation of perspective and the active use of the political imagination. The problem of political judgement is a problem of seeing, of making sense of the world so that judgement is possible, which is why Arendt's reading of Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* is so important. In the next Chapter I will elaborate this problem through a reading of one of Brecht's plays.

Chapter Five

POLITICAL JUDGEMENT AS A WAY OF SEEING

INTRODUCTION

This chapter illustrates by a reading of a play by Brecht, some of the themes developed in the previous chapter. Political judgement is exercised in the play in the face of the unprecedented by the narrative redemption of the concept of justice. The implications of this process of thinking will be further explored in the next chapter.

BRECHT'S TELLING OF JUSTICE

In Brecht's play *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, there is a section entitled "The Story of the Judge" (Brecht 1982:61). During a civil war, when the state has fallen and the Grand Duke has fled, Azdak, a poacher and a poor peasant, is appointed judge almost by chance by the masterless soldiers, after the previous judge has been hanged in a popular insurrection. For two years he sits on the Judge's Seat, hearing cases and making judgements. The two years are an interregnum, an "era of disorder" (Brecht 1982:80), a time where the ruler, the Grand Duke, is in exile, and there is no 'order' in the land. Azdak is presented with a large Statute Book, which at the end of his time as a judge he says he "has always used" (as a cushion on the Judge's Seat). As a judge, Azdak is thoroughly unpredictable; he demands bribes from the rich and powerful, and judges in favour of the poor; he ignores the law, he makes judgements in the most outrageous way, he confiscates property at will and redistributes it at will (to himself as well as to others), and his judgements are enforced by the "ironshirts", the soldiers who have been left masterless for the two years of disorder. His every act is a parody of the traditional concept of justice. There is no consistency in his judgements; he offends every norm of decency, he has no impartiality, every judgement is not expressed in the direct language of a moral conviction or rational decision, but in the most confusing sequence of narrative twists, impulsive confusion of cases, and layers of misrepresentation. Nevertheless, there is an overridingly strong sense in the play that justice is indeed being done, and being done for the first time. The Narrator captures the situation in these verses:

"No more did the Lower Orders
Tremble in their shoes
At the bellows of their betters
At Come-Here's and Listen-You's
His balances were crooked
But they shouted in the streets: -
'Good, good, good is Azdak
And the measure that he metes!"

He took from Wealthy Peter
To give to Penniless Paul
Sealed his illegal judgements
With a waxen tear, and all
The rag-tag-and-bobtail
Ran crying up and down: -
'Cheer, cheer, cheer for Azdak
The darling of the town!"

To love your next door neighbour
Approach him with an axe
For prayers and saws and sermons
Are unconvincing facts
What miracle of preaching
A good sharp blade can do:
So, so, so, so Azdak
Makes miracles come true"
(Brecht 1982:77)

This particular section of the play is a narrative about a man who is revealed in the narrative to be just, whose actions do not meet any normal criteria for justice. His rule as judge is in a time when nothing is as expected; there are no laws of any sort, no norms, and no way of knowing what to expect. The twin elements of the justice system that Azdak takes over, namely Law, which renders judgement predicable, and bribery, which renders the application of the law amenable to the rich and powerful, have been abandoned by him. Nothing means what it 'normally' does. As a result, Azdak is very popular amongst the 'lower orders'. Justice is done by those who normally only experience injustice; their situations are cast in a new light.

The context of the story is that after the massive disruptions of the Second World War, there is a dispute amongst two groups of peasants who both want to start collective farms on the same land; they both have a justifiable claim to it. The story of which the "Judge's Story" forms a part is narrated by a travelling singer, partly as entertainment, and partly to shed light on their dilemma. The past is no help. One group of peasants have always lived on the land, but they have never owned it, as they and the land were part of a pre-war feudal order. The other group have defended the land during the war against the Nazis, with much heroism and sacrifice, in the course of which the old feudal order was swept away. Thus neither group has an unambiguous claim, and there is no principle founded in any political order that can help them decide the validity of the two claims, as all the old political orders have been swept away by the war.

The culmination of the play is the story of Azdak's final judgement. He must decide who the real mother of a child is. The child's biological mother is the wife of an aristocrat, and she abandons the child to save her own skin while fleeing the chaos that comes with the insurrection. A servant girl takes the child in and rears him as her own, for which she undergoes great hardship, material as well as social (she is ostracised as an illegitimate mother). Azdak cannot decide who should have the child, so he devises a test, whereby both claimants stand inside a chalk circle holding the child; whoever manages to drag the child from the circle first will be awarded custody.

The servant girl cannot do this, as she loves the child too much to tear him to pieces or cause him pain, and so she lets the child go. Azdak thus awards the child to her, as she is the one who has demonstrated the love of the true mother. The final moral of the story is

"That what there is shall belong to those who are good for it, thus
The children to the maternal, that they thrive;
The carriages to good drivers, that they are driven well;

And the valley to the waterers, that it shall bear fruit." (Brecht 1982:96)

This story, told by the storyteller at the gathering to decide the fate of the valley, served a singular function. In the beginning of the play, it had already been decided who should farm in the valley (the "waterers", the party of peasants who wished to start an irrigated fruit farm, who had defended the land during the war), and both parties had agreed amicably. There are two processes of understanding involved in the play, both concerning justice. The first is the process whereby the fate of the valley is decided. The considerations are practical; there are plans for a fruit and wine farm, which are more significant than the plans of the goatherds, who are willing to forfeit their claim on these grounds. Nevertheless, they have one outstanding unanswered claim; that of having grown up in the valley:

"Comrades, why does one love one's country? Because the bread tastes better there, the sky is higher, the air smells better, voices sound stronger, the ground is easier to walk on.." (Brecht 1982:5)

The solution to the dispute about the land is solved practically by consideration of what is going to be done there, but the feeling of belonging, the sense of injustice of losing one's birthright, is dealt with narratively in the story. The aim of the story, in other words, was to show whether the decision was just or not. There are several ways in which this is done. There is the setting of the story, namely in a time of upheaval and uncertainty. There is the character of Azdak, and his way of being a judge, and finally, there is the culmination of the story, that of the judgement of the Chalk Circle. The importance of this judgement is that in abstract there are criteria for justice in the case of the allocation of the child (contained in the Statute Book that Azdak uses as a cushion), but there is no guide to determine which of these principles should be applied or how; in this case, a truly just decision cannot be arrived at cognitively. There is in fact a sense that if times had been 'normal', justice would not have been possible.

This has obvious analogies with the land question being debated by the peasants; there are incommensurable claims on both sides, but only one decision can be taken. There is no legal system, no system of accepted procedures. More than this, there is no tradition in the context of which a just decision can be legitimated as such. Before the telling of the story, it was an open question as to whether the decision was just or not. At the end, the question has not been settled definitively, but it has been settled politically.

JUSTICE AS PART OF A LANGUAGE-GAME

'Justice' is a part of our language, and like any other part, the concept of justice must be learned; in other words, learning what justice is, involves learning when to apply the word. The condition for the public use of language, as Wittgenstein pointed out, is that

"..If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreements not only in definitions but also (queer as this may seem) in judgements." (Wittgenstein 1988:88)

The key philosophical problem is the extension of the concept of justice from the limited contexts in which it is learned, or in other words, the applicability of the concept to unprecedented situations. Wittgenstein points out in

the 'rule following' sections of the *Philosophical Investigations* that there is no necessary logical reason for a particular extension to follow from a given pattern and a given rule, as the interpretation of the rule is not given. He uses the example of a mathematical sequence, '2, 4, 6...' and so forth, to demonstrate that there is no reason, given the rule '+2', why someone should not continue the sequence, '..1000, 1004..'. (Wittgenstein 1988:74-75). Cavell remarks on Wittgenstein's conclusions, that

"We learn and teach words in certain contexts, and then we are expected, and expect others, to be able to project them into further contexts. Nothing ensures that this projection will take place (in particular, not the grasping of universals nor the grasping of books of rules), just as nothing ensures that we will make, and understand, the same projections. That on the whole we do is a matter of our sharing routes of interest and feeling, modes of response, senses of humour and of significance and of fulfilment, of what is outrageous, of what is similar to what else, what a rebuke, what forgiveness, of when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal, when an explanation - all the whirl of organism Wittgenstein calls 'forms of life'. Human speech, sanity and community, rests upon nothing more, but nothing less, than this." (quoted in Pitkin 1993:49)

The case of 'justice' in what Brecht and Arendt call 'Dark Times' is that this 'projection' has no precedent, no tradition handed down from the past; there are no rules from our use of 'justice' that imply a necessary extension, for, according to Wittgenstein, each rule implies the necessity of interpreting a rule, and each rule can be variously interpreted in every case (Wittgenstein 1988:81). Political thinking in these cases requires a special imaginative quality.

The point of the Brecht play is that he creates a sense of justice in the context of the story, in a particular situation that is relevant to the land dispute. The story appeals to the peasant's *sense* of justice; that is what is recognizable in the story. The story about the Caucasian Chalk Circle is not about an "interpretation" of a universal concept of justice that somehow existed outside of any language-game; it is about the rendering of the unfamiliar meaningful, and thus familiar (Arendt commented that the aim of political understanding was to make us feel at home in the world). Susan Sontag, in her essay "Against Interpretation":

"..the knowledge that we *gain* through art is an experience of the form or style of knowing something rather than a knowledge of something (like a fact or moral judgement) in itself." (Sontag 1994:22)

The story provides the peasants with a way of knowing about justice; 'justice' itself is given substantively as part of the language, and this givenness is a precondition for the meaning of the story. The concept is 'enlarged' in this process; Wittgenstein characterized the process as follows:

"..we extend our concept...as in spinning a thread we twist fibre on fibre. And the strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres" (Wittgenstein 1988:32)

Russel's insight is that this character of language, which is referred to as a weakness by philosophers such as John Stuart Mill (see Hanfling 1989:69), is in fact the source of its power. Wittgenstein also implies in this passage that the 'strength' of concepts is derived from their composition of overlapping 'fibres', or multiple meanings; if a single thread breaks, it does not threaten the whole rope in the way that it would if each thread ran the whole length. The polyvalence of language is actually the precondition for political thought in the modern age.

Chapter Six

THE GENERAL POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NEWS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will outline how political judgement can be conceived narratively, drawing on readings of Arendt and Benjamin, and how this conception of political judgement is characteristic of the conditions of political life which characterize the modern age. This conception of political judgement is the basis for understanding the political significance of news, which can best be conceived of as a form of political judgement. This is the basis for understanding the political significance of the media coverage of District Six.

NARRATIVE AND POLITICAL JUDGEMENT

One of the consequences of the loss of tradition is

"..the great chance to look upon the past with eyes undistracted by any tradition, with a directness which has disappeared from Occidental reading and hearing ever since Roman civilization submitted to the authority of Greek thought.." (Arendt 1993:28-9)

A formulation of the concept of political judgement in terms of the radical openness of the past in the wake of the loss of tradition, can be constructed on the basis of the narrative redemption of Heller's politically effective Oughts. This is most clearly perceived by Arendt and Benjamin, and is referred to in Benhabib's paper on Arendt's use of narrative. She identifies a number of "tensions" between different moments in Arendt's thought and experience, between

"Arendt, the modernist, the storyteller of revolutions, and the sad witness of totalitarianism; Arendt, the brilliant student of Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, the philosopher of the *polis* and its lost glory; Arendt, the German-Jew who did not cease defending the *Muttersprache* and the legacy of Goethe, Kant and Schiller to those Anglo-American liberals who saw in National Socialism the bankruptcy of classical German culture, these tensions remain." (Benhabib 1990:196)

Arendt's writing was primarily aimed at *making sense* of these tensions. In *The Human Condition*, she wrote that "What I propose, therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than to think what we are doing" (Arendt 1989:5). Her perception of 'the political' in the modern age was structured and limited by two opposite but connected phenomena; revolution and totalitarianism; total freedom and total domination.

In response to totalitarianism, she reformulated the notion of political understanding and political thinking, and in response to revolution, the most total Ought of modern political thought, she, following Benjamin, developed the notion of redeeming the "lost treasures", the Oughts of modern political experience, that represented the "failed hopes, untrodden paths, unfulfilled dreams" of what she perceived as an authentic political life. The Oughts were at the same time ideals, images and normative goals, defined by their imaginative engagement with the past. Benhabib continues:

"And it is these tensions which inspire the method of political theory as storytelling, a form of storytelling which, in Arendt's hands, is transformed into a redemptive narrative, redeeming the memory of the dead, the defeated and the vanquished by making presents to us once more their failed hopes, their untrodden paths, and unfulfilled dreams." (Benhabib 1990:196)

In her essay on Walter Benjamin, she comments on his insight into the 'loss of tradition' in connection with his notions of historical thinking:

"..he concluded that he had to discover new ways of dealing with the past. In this he became a master when he discovered that *the transmissibility of the past had been replaced by its citability..*",

and later,

"..history itself - that is the break in tradition which took place at the beginning of this century - had already relieved him of the task of destruction and he only needed to bend down, as it were, to select his precious fragments from the pile of debris.." (Arendt, from an essay, "Walter Benjamin", published in *Men in Dark Times*, quoted in Benhabib 1990:189 - my emphasis)

Arendt referred to Benjamin as a "pearl diver", quoting the verses from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (those that begin "Full fathom five thy father lies.."). The "pearl diver" recovers the "memory of the dead" from the past, converting them into something "rich and strange" (Benhabib 1990:188). In another book, she refers to the poet and French Resistance fighter René Char, who wrote that "our inheritance was left to us by no testament" (Arendt 1993:3). He speaks also of a "lost treasure", lost after the Liberation. The activity of the "pearl diver" recovering the "lost treasure" from the past, and in the process returning to the present with "something rich and strange" is the activity of the political thinker, and this is the key to deployment of the Oughts of the political dynamic of the modern age.

In the same volume, Arendt wrote two essays called "What is Authority?" and "What is Freedom?". She writes in the Preface that "such elementary and direct questions... can only arise if no answers, handed down by tradition, are available from the past" (Arendt 1993:15). The "quintessence" of the political condition of the modern age dictates that Heller's Oughts can only be redeemed narratively by a political-historical thinking unfettered by tradition. Benjamin comments in his "Theses", that

"Historicism contents itself with establishing a causal connection between various moments in history. But no fact that is a cause is for that very reason historical. It became historical posthumously, as it were, through events that may be separated from it by thousands of years. A historian who takes this as his point of departure stops telling sequences of events like beads on a rosary. Instead, he grasps the constellation which his own era has formed with a definite earlier one. Thus, he establishes a conception of the present as the 'time of the now' which is shot through with chips of messianic time." (Benjamin 1989:262)

It is possible to make a distinction between political thinking about the past and purely historical thinking. Purely historical thinking has nothing to do with the present; it is objective and removed; the past is considered as dead time. Political thinking about the past, however, following Benjamin, is not dead: it is concerned intimately with the present:

"History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous empty time, but time filled with the presence of the now" (Benjamin 1989:260)

Later he characterizes the "pure historical" thought as follows:

"To historians who wish to relive an era, Fustel de Coulanges recommends that they blot out everything they know about the later course of history. There is no better way of characterizing the method with which historical materialists have broken. It is a process of empathy whose origin is the indolence of the heart, *acedia*, which despairs of grasping and holding the genuine historical image as it flares up briefly." (Benjamin 1989:257)

There is nothing further from the idea of political thinking than to attempt to say "how things were" in the sense of reconstructing the past objectively. In these terms, a criterion for the political must be that it gains its substantive quality from a quintessential insight into the present; each act of political thinking must illuminate the present; political thinking must be obsessed with the *essence* of the present; not in objective law-like terms, but in specific political terms.

I adopt here Benjamin and Arendt's view of the past as fragmented. The implications of this view are that the past is never settled, history is never the final judge. Every new moment of the present gives birth to a new constellation of images from the past, as if the causality of the historicists has been reversed. Benjamin comments on the "spiritual" aspect of the class struggle:

"They have retroactive force and will constantly call into question every victory, past and present, of the rulers. As flowers turn towards the sun, by dint of a secret heliotropism the past strives to turn towards the sun which is rising in the sky of history." (Benjamin 1989:256)

Every political judgement about the past should throw the present into relief, by illuminating its specific properties. It is in fact, only in the context of memory, the recall of past images, that it is possible to describe the present in specific terms. Memory is the condition for language.

THE CONDITIONS OF POLITICAL LIFE OF THE MODERN AGE

The condition for political understanding is nothing else than the language-games whose grammar we intuitively absorb by our experience of political milieux. The political is neither an attribute of human society nor a specific tradition, but a form of life. The same is true for other 'universals' such as justice. This is the grammatical precondition for political thinking and political judgement, and its provenance is the forms of political life themselves. It is meaningful to speak of 'the conditions of the modern age' only because of the specific political situation in which we exist, i.e. a post-colonial global reality. The fact of this international political condition is what makes the expression 'modern age' politically meaningful. These conditions are well-represented by Arendt's notion of a 'loss of tradition'. Under such conditions, it is not possible to delineate the political extra-politically. This is because the substantive aspect of the political, the forms of life that comprise the grammar of the concepts which people deploy in political life, is open to constant revision in political processes themselves, which the phrase designates. Moreover, the political itself can be construed as a normative goal and can thus be deployed imaginatively in the creation and uncreation of political contexts.

Any substantive "non-political" definition of the political can thus become politically effective itself. Instead, the 'quintessence of the modern age' is the 'loss of tradition'. The 'loss of tradition', as well as agnosticism toward the Grand Narrative, implies that the central task of political judgement is political understanding, or in other words, familiarization of the unexpected and unprecedented, the new, in a way which makes political life sustainable, which implies the perpetuation of a specific *political culture*, a collection of capacities, ways of engaging meaningfully with the world. This political culture comprises both *ways of seeing*, as well as *a specific representation of a political context, a political terrain*. Both *events*, as well as *political positions*, are made sense of.

The new is the essential political reality of the modern age. There is no longer any philosophical authority that can impose an order on the contestations of universal values such as justice and greatness. This necessitates a type of political judgement that functions narratively, that has no inherent model of human subjectivity and thus no determinate view of action. This type of political judgement, unfettered by tradition, is aware that in place of a tradition of political thought that kept alive political ideals, these very ideals must be redeemed from history. In Benjamin's language, if the past is no longer transmissible, it is citable. It is in this way that light is shed on the unknown, the new. This is the precondition for the conception of the political significance of 'news' as a political communicative form of the modern age. Thus the political represents neither a domain nor a quality. As a domain, the political is constituted by an orientation towards the specific, the contingent, and it therefore constitutes itself as a set of instances which are designated political; as a quality the political adheres in a group of instances, and through becoming the subject of political judgement, constitutes itself as a domain. The "final and dialectical unity of normative claims and empirical awareness" in this conceptualization of the political is derived, as outlined above, from the notion of political judgement. Political judgement is the attempt to understand the dissonance of the new, the unprecedented, by the narrative redemption of a fragmented past in terms of the grammar of the present.

THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NEWS AS A COMMUNICATIVE FORM

News is the result of an institutional process of ascertaining what is significantly new in the world. News consists of events, defined by their visibility against the backdrop of 'ordinary' life. Every act of designation of news thus defines the boundary between the everyday and the unexpected, between the ordinary and the significant, happenings of no consequence and those of much consequence. The ordinary and the extraordinary thus have no fixed boundaries; what is ordinary can become extraordinary, and vice versa. Wittgenstein characterizes "reporting an event" as a language-game, which is useful as it highlights the active aspects of reporting events, the activity of distinguishing an event from everyday life. An event is not only an unexpected occurrence, but a significant unexpected occurrence, one that is meaningful.

Events are identified narratively, as part of a news "story". News items are fragmentary; in every major news medium there are discrete news "units". News coverage of a specific context thus consists of a set of fragmented

images. In contrast to the mode of history, a collection of news items on a specific theme does not form a history in the sense of a text in which events are given significance narratively, but a complex and fragmented set of glimpses of a specific phenomena or situation. The significant difference between the two forms lies in the teleological nature of historical narrative; every element contributes toward a specific interpretation of the past, which is constructed narratively. A collection of news reports, on the other hand, do not have this property. Every fragment of news is written without the hindsight of the historian; no news report contains the phrase, "...but little did they know what was in store for them..." Matters of the tiniest insignificance in the present, can be granted, in retrospect, great historical significance.

A collection of news reports does not represent a political position. Even though media have identifiable political inclinations, the proper political significance of news lies in the extent to which a specific media practice is characteristic of a particular political culture, a characteristic way of representing events and political positions. Specific media practices such as the media coverage of District Six only make sense politically on account of the institutional nature of news.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL NATURE OF NEWS

When one speaks of the institutional nature of the news media, what is implied is a systematic and regular approach to the unexpected. This regularity is institutional in that it is not situated in any specific subjectivity, but socially, in the form of a set of organizational principles. This institutional nature produces an apparent contradiction, alluded to by McQuail, namely that the setting of the boundaries between the event and everyday life is an institutionalized practice:

"The expression 'manufacture of news' has been coined to express the reality of news processing and the contradiction inherent within it, since news is supposed to be reports of uncontrolled events, while manufacture implies planning, prediction and routine production. In reality, the contradiction is not so total, since news processing may also be seen as efforts to deal systematically with the unexpected and in so doing impose an order on it." (McQuail 1983:116)

The phrase "dealing systematically with the unexpected" is a neat summary of the political significance of news in general. In fact there is no contradiction at all here. The institutional nature of news is the condition for the ability of the media to deal systematically with the unexpected. In political terms, news is not primarily the transmission of facts but the exploration of the meaning and significance of these facts in a systematic way. This exploration comprises a form of political judgement. There is a dialectic at work, between the familiarization of the new through telling an event in a specific way, and the evaluation and elaboration of universal values through the encounter with the unknown.

Each practice of reporting, each style of writing, forms a way of knowing. The grammar forming the basis of these forms or styles of seeing or of knowing comprises a resource of interpretation; each forms a specific language-game with a specific grammar, and a particular political significance. The "objectivity" of media is redeemed in a

stable pattern of selection and interpretation in a particular milieu which allows an audience to construct some sort of reading practice over a period of time, which is capable of evaluating news reports politically.

NEWS AS THE RITUAL OF A SPECIFIC POLITICAL CULTURE

I would like to return to Carey's conception of news as ritual. News is a constant negotiation between the given resources of interpretation of a specific political culture and the unknown. News suggests a style of knowing something. McQuail writes that

"..the direct product of the media is not knowledge itself but messages with the potential for knowledge-forming.." (McQuail 1983:51)

To paraphrase a remark of Wittgenstein's, knowledge in the political realm is not factual, but it is not non-factual either. Factual information contributes to the formation of political knowledge but is not identical with it. For this reason, alternative readings of the facts are always possible. If alternative readings are possible, then there can be no determinate political effect caused by the media, as there is then no causal link between political opinion and media activity, and as the media can only be said to act politically in the realm of speech and thought, if there is no determinate effect on the consciousness of the participants in political processes, then there is no determinate effect at all. This does not eliminate the use of the word 'effect' in relation to the media; it would be silly to deny that we can talk or write about the media having certain effects. It does, however, rule out the possibility that media analysis can reveal a specific necessary political effect in any specific context. In the way that Wittgenstein uses the notion of 'stage-setting' to critically reflect on the problem of the designation of the word 'pain' (see above), we can say the same for facts in newspaper reports. A fact does not 'designate' an event or a state of affairs in political terms (it might do so in other terms) in itself; a good deal of 'stage-setting' is necessary here, too. The political significance of news is not only that it conveys 'facts' of what has occurred, but it shows the meaning of these facts in the telling; an analogy to Wittgenstein's use of the conception of 'grammar' in this context is narrative, as well as the context of the institutional form of the media, which 'shows the post where the new fact is stationed' in political terms. News is a ritual in that, as an activity, it demonstrates the capacity of a specific political culture to make sense of the world. In addition, it perpetuates a specific practice of political judgement.

A COMPARISON OF NEWS TO SPEECH

In the context of the modern age, the political significance of news in general is that it comprises a form of political judgement of the unknown, both concerning politically effective values and phenomena. The conditions for the constitution of the political distinguishes the political communicative form of speech from that of news. Speech as a politically significant communicative form takes place within the public realm. The archetypal pre-modern image of the political significance of speech is the Greek polis with its *agora*, or public space of appearance, where people gather to speak in public. The *agora* exists before and after speech does.

On the contrary, in the modern age, in terms of political communicative forms, news is speech 'turned inside out'; its source is institutional rather than subjective. Rather than occurring within a pre-existing social-political site, it

constantly creates and recreates a political field or terrain and espouses a specific political culture inherent in specific news practices. In contrast to ancient political institutions, which were, as Heller observes, transparent, modern political institutions do not comprise the state in a fixed and essential way. The public realm, as the site of political life, does not reside in specific institutions, but the existence and articulation of the public sphere with institutions in the state (or, sometimes more importantly, outside it) is itself a constant outcome of political processes. In terms of political understanding, the non-subjective nature of media practices implies that, unlike speech, the products of the media cannot be understood in terms of a specific position within the political process. A specific media practice usually generates a fragmented and complex image of a specific political situation (possibly a contradictory one), which in itself creates a problem of political understanding not posed by the speech form. Again, an awareness of form and style rather than factual content is the precondition for the resolution of this problem.

The political significance of news lies in the capacity that news practices have to make sense of a constantly changing world in specific political contexts. To quote Carey again,

"[News is] a desire to do away with the epic, heroic, traditional in favour of the unique, novel, new.." (Carey 1989:21)

News is a cultural-political response to the loss of tradition in the modern age, a response to the "gap between past and future" (to use Arendt's expression). The 'loss of tradition' is the demise of traditional modes of interpretation and political judgement. The epic, the heroic, the traditional, that Carey refers to, are relics of pre-modern political thinking. These forms are characterized by repetition, limited content, in the Greek case, a finite set of myths. The political significance of the finite archetypes of the Greek gods are their immortality, their constant ability to cast light on human affairs. The shifting world of the political realm could be measured against the permanent immortality of the gods.

News, on the other hand, has necessarily changing content, new narratives, new instances of the heroic, the just, the ordinary, the great, the free, or the opposite of any of these. News expires. Unlike an epic told again and again, news dies and disappears after a very short time, and is replaced by something comparable only in its unprecedentedness. The dominant political question pertaining to the phenomenon of news is "How do we make sense of the unprecedented as a part of ordinary life?" or "How do we maintain the permanence of political institutions in the face of the unprecedented?" In terms of Wittgenstein's notion of 'stage-setting', traditional political communicative forms are characterized by a solidity that is lacking in modern political understanding. In the same way that there are preconditions for the use of names in ordinary language, there are preconditions for the understanding of political events. The epistemic conditions of the modern age are such that these preconditions are never given, but must be constantly re-established.

Chapter Seven

MAKING SENSE OF THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF DISTRICT SIX

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will outline the problems that need to be solved in order to make sense of the media coverage of District Six during the specified period. Following this, the political context will be outlined, as well as the two basic approaches to analysis, namely the analysis of the image and representation of District Six, and the analysis of the representation of the political terrain, which will be undertaken in the next three chapters.

SPECIFIC MEDIA PRACTICES AS PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL UNDERSTANDING

Over the period encompassed by this study, there is a range of different forms of journalism, ranging from editorials to letters to reports of crime to reports of the proceedings of government committees, etc. There are several problems in interpreting these texts. The first problem is alluded to by Umberto Eco in the Preface to his book, *Travels in Hyperreality* (a collection of articles by Eco published previously in a variety of newspapers, magazines, journals, etc.), when commenting on the distinction between his journalistic writing and his more considered, academic writing:

"Some of them may discuss, perhaps over a period of time, the same problems. Others are mutually contradictory (but, again, always over a period of time). I believe that an intellectual should use newspapers the way private diaries and personal letters were once used. At white heat, in the rush of an emotion, stimulated by an event, you write your reflections, hoping that someone will read them and then forget them." (Eco 1987:x)

Media texts (I generalize here) are produced in the instant, a momentary response to the world as it is, and an attempt to express what the world is at a particular moment. This momentary nature enhances the reflexive, the instinctive, over the considered, the contemplative, the predominance of ordinary language over careful analysis. To interpret such texts as if they were well-formulated and carefully meditated political positions, or even to attempt to deduce such positions from them, would be to misconstrue the phenomenon of news; even the trained academic is, as Eco points out, reacting to the unexpected. An awareness of the momentary nature of the newspaper article must form an integral part of any interpretation.

In order to capture the essence of this type of discourse, it is necessary to avoid what I will characterize as the orthodox approach to textual analysis. This form of analysis involves the image of a consistent structured argument in the academic form as the kernel of the sense of a text; this image is derived, obviously, from ordinary academic practice. The process of textual analysis is thus the process of uncovering what is said, by the techniques of informal logic, which involves the production of a new text, or in other words, the translation of a text into a specific form, so that its sense is clearly apparent. This is commonly regarded as the essence of the process of interpretation; however, one of the consequences of this form of interpretation is that the reflexive and momentary quality of news is erased. There are two aspects of form that are important. On the one hand, a turn of phrase, a

reaction, a form of expression (both more and less formal) betray a great deal about the ordinary language, the non-cognitive response of the reporter and thus about the institution which supports his or her work. On the other hand, "what is said" in a newspaper article can come in many different forms, ranging from direct opinion to 'pure' news. In this case, the *form* is of great importance. I characterize below briefly the range of material on District Six that occurs during the period of study.

DIVERSITY OF FORMS IN THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF DISTRICT SIX

In 1949 and 1950, there are two striking series of feature articles, one entitled "How They Live" and the other "District Six: The Facts". Both these series have the clear aims of increasing general knowledge "amongst Europeans" of the "unknown" District Six, and both discuss possible solutions to the "problem" of District Six. These can be contrasted to other articles of the same period, which exult "local colour", one emphasizing the "sentimental" side of the district, another celebrating the "uniqueness" of Hanover Street. During the 50's there are occasional articles on "local colour", a feature on a stalwart cinema manageress, a street boxing match, and so forth. In the 50's, there are a high percentage of reports about gang activity in District Six, mainly citing either police reports or court cases, and clearly related to these, reports about various social institutions whose aim was to deal with the "problems" of the district. There is an extended series of reports on the future of the Liberman Institute, on account of the possibility of the Cape Town City Council withdrawing its funding support. In addition, there are a couple of letters suggesting various "solutions" to the "problem" of District Six.

In the 60's the amount of coverage increases dramatically, with the coming declaration of District Six as a white area under the Group Areas Act. There is a lot of coverage of the proceedings of the Cape Town City Council's (CTCC) planned upgrading of the area, the deliberation of the Minister of Community Development (P.W. Botha) and his Department, an occasional report on conditions in the area, one or two features on interesting local personalities. However, after the declaration of District Six as a white area in a Government Gazette of 11 February 1966, the coverage becomes much more focused. Editorials devoted to the issue become quite common after this date. New forms of writing begin to appear; the views of ordinary residents are sometimes reported. The number of letters from all sides of the political spectrum increases dramatically. Local political activity is reported far more extensively than before. Feature articles expressing various viewpoints on the subject of the removal are frequent, ranging from (more unusually) the wife of a Nationalist Minister, to opinions of various city planners (quite frequently). News reports diversify after 1966, to include reports on planning committees, property deals, business interests and so forth. There are more series of feature articles, one in particular titled "The People of District Six" by the journalist George Manuel, which have a strikingly different tone from the 1949 and 1950 series, as well as a number of different reflections on different aspects of daily life in District Six, and finally, direct advocacy of alternative urban planning scenarios for District Six.

This brief and rather cursory overview of what the media coverage of District Six consists of, provides a clearer view of the problem of interpretation. What emerges from a close reading of the collected material is a complex

and sometimes contradictory collection of fragments, encompassing direct political opinion, reported opinion, mere reporting, and so on. The problem is to examine the significance of the media coverage as a whole, which necessitates that we find significance outside the actual content of the individual articles themselves; it is the shape of the actual *constellation* of opinions, reports, facts and images that constitutes the political significance of the media coverage of District Six. Even 'District Six', which is all the articles have in common, is not a constant; it can in some instances signify an issue, in others a geographical location, etc. The main problem of interpretation is thus *the problem of creating a narrative context in the light of which the material as a whole can be understood politically.*

A POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE MEDIA COVERAGE

The political context in the light of which I will interpret the media coverage of District Six from 1946 to 1970 is the series of events surrounding its declaration as a "white" area and consequent removal. There are several other contexts of relevance but the context of removal is the context that structures the articles in the most significant historical way. I must emphasize that placing the media coverage in this context *creates* meaning that is not inherently present; thus articles from the 50's become politically significant in terms of the removal, even though at that stage probably no-one conceived that District Six would be declared a "white" area.

What is of specific interest here is not the actual narrative of the removal and declaration under the Group Areas Act of the district as a "white" area but the connection between the way in which District Six was defined and viewed as a problem, and the racial zoning that guaranteed its destruction, or more directly, the political relationship between the practices of the liberal media and the ideologues of Apartheid. The self-understanding that emerges from the liberal press is that of unqualified opposition to the razing of District Six, but as I hope to demonstrate below, the question is considerably more complex than that. Specifically, the question does not revolve around how the liberal media reacted to the specific act of the destruction of District Six (such an approach would take too much at face value) but more broadly, the relationship between the political culture inherent in the media practice concerned, and the politics of apartheid. It is this broader context that the real significance of the liberal media coverage of District Six can be properly appreciated.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE REMOVAL OF DISTRICT SIX

The community that was once termed District Six is now largely a memory, leaving only a barren patch of land on the slopes of Devil's Peak in Cape Town next to the fraction that was not demolished, punctured by the monolithic bulk of the drab buildings of the Cape Technikon. It is also, however, a sign, internationally known, for the tragedy of Apartheid, and specifically the human tragedy of the Group Areas Act. However the sign 'District Six' actually signifies a complex and multi-layered history, which is intricately connected with its removal. In the years leading up to its destruction, both the community itself, as well as the citizens of 'European' Cape Town referred to a roughly-defined urban geographical area as District Six. The conditions of the identity of the district are as important as the way it was portrayed and represented in various public contexts. One of the feature articles in the

50's refers to District Six as 'Cape Town's Problem child' (Ar.9/7/55), which is a middle point in a complex and changing history of the identity and representation of the district. The phrase 'problem child' is a good encapsulation of the position of the liberal media on District Six during the 50's and 60's; there is a clear distance between District Six and 'Cape Town'. While Cape Town included District Six geographically, 'Cape Town' as a form of urban order did not. At the same time, District Six was perceived as being an essential part of 'Cape Town history'. This dialectic of belonging and not belonging is central to the development of the media representation of District Six, and is the basis for its political significance. In other words, District Six was defined by what it was as much as, if not more than, by where it was.

District Six was unusual in a number of respects. Firstly, it was an area that was not clearly defined in racial terms, which was unusual in the context of South African urban development at the time. Increasingly 'townships' or 'locations' housed so-called non-white people on the periphery of the 'white' city, and new urban developments from about the end of the 19th century were consistently planned with a specific 'race' in mind. This aberration is specifically bound up with the urban history of Cape Town, which stretches back long before the end of the nineteenth century when segregation began to be systematically and thoroughly applied in South African cities.

Secondly, it was an inner-city area, in the heart of Cape Town, with a distinctly cosmopolitan character. In this sense it was a historical anomaly, an urban space that had somehow developed its own autonomous character in the midst of the "white" city, and it is in this anomaly that its political significance lay. District Six comprised an alternative vision of the South African urban environment. This situation must be understood in the context of urbanization in South Africa in general; a distinctly South African urban form was only developed in a few centres before the late 19th century, which made Cape Town unique as a city which was older than any other in South Africa, having a complex development which had been shaped by a number of different social milieux. To a certain extent, the struggle over District Six was a reflection of the fact that Cape Town was not merely a product of late 19th century social formations (in which the ideas of race were already geographically expressed). Bickford-Smith writes of the area at the turn of the century that

"It was, arguably, one of the most cosmopolitan areas in the Cape, if not the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. Yet there were no examples of widespread racial or ethnic antagonisms. . . . Despite its poverty, District Six was a relatively peaceful place to live in compared to the creatures spawned by segregation and its scion, Apartheid. Thus the latter finally and symbolically devoured "Kanaladorp" [colloquial term for District Six] and the promise it had held as an alternative to a racially ordered and legislated society." (Bickford-Smith 1990:43)

It was precisely this aspect of District Six that firstly made it a target for total destruction in the political context of Apartheid, and secondly is the key to understanding the political significance of the press coverage under consideration here. District Six was, in the context of the emerging South African urban order, Difference incarnate, an urban form which particular qualities were incomprehensible to contemporary observers of the urban environment. At different times in its history, the district had accommodated not only 'Coloured' and 'Malay' people, but a wide range of different immigrants, a diversity of religions and social classes. It constituted

an open form of urban existence, in existential terms opposite to the homogeneous monocultural middle-class suburb. An ideal opposite is the 'Garden City' of Pinelands (a middle-class historically 'white' suburb on the edge of the Cape Flats). Planned and developed in one stroke, residents of Pinelands in the early phase of its existence were obliged contractually not to sell their houses to non-whites or Jews. (references to Pinelands are gleaned from interviews I conducted with older inhabitants of the suburb, as well as a local newsletter)

In common with other societies that were urbanizing rapidly in the wake of the economic transformation brought about by capital accumulation and industrialization, the notion of urban form became an intensely political issue in South Africa, developing from a merely local to an issue of prime national importance in the years from 1910 to 1950 and beyond. By 1950, the issue of political order was virtually synonymous with the issue of urban order. Concomitantly, with the politicization of a sector of human life, a language is necessary to express the political concerns with certain features of that sector. In Wittgenstein's terminology, certain language-games develop as part of a political process. There are two aspects of the media coverage of District Six that need to be considered, namely the identity and representation of District Six itself, and the representation of the political terrain by which political positions on the issue of District Six were made sense of. The former consisted in the processes of description or language-games whereby the identity and nature of District Six were able to enter the political realm. The language of identity and image, however, as well as being a condition for the political existence of the issue of District Six, also had political significance itself. The latter consisted in a portrayal of the main contesting positions, the conditions of debate and the margins between contestation and the sheer exercise of power. Together, these two aspects comprise a media practice which is characteristic of a specific political culture. I will deal with the former first, then formulate a number of concepts that will be useful in the description of this political culture, and then consider the representation of the political terrain in the light of these concepts.

IDENTITY AND IMAGE OF DISTRICT SIX

There is an article dated 27 May 1966 (Argus) dealing with the defeat of the Council at the hands of the government on the issue of District Six and Group Areas, which has a key paragraph:

".. The City Council has a role akin to that of a colonial power, for it is expected to invest in the future of a people who one day will no longer be its citizens.."

The context is a discussion of the merits of spending ratepayer's money on developing 'coloured' areas in the light of their possible imminent removal from the jurisdiction of the Council. The article itself is in favour of what is termed a "...policy of racial harmony over 100 years of full municipal government..", as opposed to removing the 'Coloured people' from the jurisdiction of the Council, but the rather imaginative reading of the history of Cape Town, coupled with the language of European imperialism in the above quote, highlights an important issue; that of the identity of District Six. The image of a colonial power is a politically charged one, whose function here is to establish the idea of a Cape Town of which District Six is not an integral part; not in geographical or economic terms, but in terms of identity. The relinquishing of a colony by an imperial power does not alter the nature of the mother country, although the mother country's identity is often defined in opposition to its colonies.

A basic condition for understanding this image, and all the images of this type employed in the exploration of the reality of District Six, is its double implication. It is a statement about the nature of the fate of District Six, but also a statement about the nature of Cape Town and the urban order in general. The media coverage of District Six can be understood, from the viewpoint of identity and image, as a complex matrix of different attempts to understand the problems posed by the rapidly expanding and changing face of the Cape Town urban order. It is in this shifting melee of conflicting political and racial discourses, the related notions of family values and urban planning, imperial and colonial discourses, class structures and the remnants of traditional urban order that the debate on District Six must be situated. Political allegiances and positions over the period 1940 to 1960 consisted of complex and often contradictory reorientations. The opposition of the Council, and indeed, open opposition of the liberal press, and thus of a large sector of the citizens of Cape Town, to the removal of District Six, must be understood in the context of the political development of Apartheid. There is enough evidence to suggest that the Council, and for that matter, the liberal media, had no doubt that something had to be 'done' about District Six (see for instance, Barnett 1993), which usually involved the resettling of large sectors of the population. Barnett and Pinnock have pointed out that the Cape Town City Council's own proposals for the demolishing of District Six were already far advanced in the 1940's (Barnett 1993, Pinnock 1989).

Even though these plans were never implemented, this point demonstrates the complexity of the issue of opposition. This is not only true of District Six; there were plans to demolish Sophiatown drawn up by a liberal United Party-controlled Johannesburg City Council at least a decade before the bulldozers of the Nationalist Party government moved in (Van Tonder 1993). Another common simplification of great significance is that opposition to Apartheid entailed opposition to racism itself, and that there had somehow developed in Cape Town a non-racial urban environment, which Apartheid destroyed. It is clear from the media coverage that if anything, average liberal media perception of the urban order in the 60's was more racially understood than earlier. (Bickford-Smith explores the complex issues surrounding race and the pre-Apartheid urban order in the Cape - see Bickford-Smith 1989)

In the following chapter, I will consider a number of feature articles written specifically on the subject of District Six, with the aim of exploring exactly how the image and identity of District Six was explored and expressed in the liberal media from 1949 to 1970. My approach, in terms of my analysis of the political significance of news, is to assume that there is no continuous, objective discourse that is inherent to the material concerning issues such as race, culture and urban space. Instead, these issues are explored, ways of meaning are found, and a complex hermeneutic network is established. The political crisis of urbanization of which Apartheid was partly the result, created an unprecedented situation where traditional political ideas about the urban order, race/colour and class were of no help. The media practices which produced the articles that I will explore below, I conceive of as a response to this situation; in historical terms (and only in historical terms) they can be viewed as an attempt to

establish a political terrain in terms of which issues of urban order could be contested and understood. I have focused specifically on articles that epitomize certain modes of seeing.

Chapter Eight

IMAGE AND REPRESENTATION OF DISTRICT SIX

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will outline three ways of seeing which occur in the representation of District Six in the liberal media between 1949 and 1970, namely the familiar-redemptive, the picturesque and in terms of the respectable. The first is characterized by an approach which defines District Six as a 'problem' and constructs a potential solution based on the identification of 'the familiar', a redemptive strategy whereby the otherness of the district can be exorcized. The second, through the notion of 'local colour', creates an alienated identity for the idea of Cape Town, at one remove from the hegemonic reality of the 'white city'. The third is a form of judgement that delineates and illustrates the hegemonic ideal of the urban environment. These forms of seeing define the garb in which District Six entered the political realm, and thus form a basis for the outline of a specific political culture comprised by the media coverage.

THE UNKNOWN PROBLEM: DISCOVERY OF DISTRICT SIX, 1949-50

In 1949 and 1950, there are series of articles in the *Argus* and the *Cape Times* respectively on the general topic of District Six. The purpose of both sets of articles is to 'demystify' District Six, to give 'European' readers a way of grasping the nature of the district, to outline the 'problems' of District Six, and point to ways of solving them.

The first series, from 1949, is entitled "How They Live". In the text frequent references to 'us', 'we', 'they' and 'them' occur (e.g. "...our own inability to help them.." (ar.23/3/49)). From the beginning of this series, the basis of the reporting is clear. The title of the first article is "Forgotten Thousands in Squalor of City Slums", and the last "Slum Clearance Held Up by Shortage of Houses"; the series develops from an outline of conditions in "Cape Town's slums [which] must be among the world's worst" (ibid.), to an exploration of possible solutions.

The reporter experiences District Six firsthand (with the mediation of the welfare services) for a few hours:

"With a Child Life Protection Society investigator, and Cape Town's Chief Welfare Officer, Mr J. Kuit, I toured the city's dismal slumland. What I saw appalled me." (ar.23/3/49)

The vision of the district is from the beginning in terms of a Problem, which the spectator strives to understand. In shocking and explicit detail the conditions under which a woman and her seven children live, as well as those of a few other households, are painstakingly described. The articles are continually filled with almost audible gasps of astonishment at the extremity of conditions under which the 'slum dwellers' live. Words such as 'miracle' are frequently used (e.g. "How they settle down for the night is a miracle of organization"), and comparisons are frequently drawn between the life of those who do not live in District Six and the perseverance of those who do, to draw attention to the extremity of the situation there. Altogether conditions in only two houses are described in the five articles, but these are taken as representative of District Six as a whole; sentences such as "they are all in the same boat in the area" (ar.1/4/49) and "these remarks you can apply to most people living under these conditions"

(ar.29/3/49) abound. The last article is titled "Slum Clearance Held Up by Shortage of Houses", and is begun by the questions,

"What is the answer to the housing problems of the Peninsula's sub-economic group? How long can the appalling conditions in District Six endure? Not only are the dirty hovels an insult to humanity, they are a miracle of survival." (ar.6/4/49)

Quite a lot of emotive language is used, of which the following is a particularly good example:

"Off Hanover-street there is a cobbled, sinister little alley that crawls like a filthy reptile towards the mountain. Flanking it, the drab buildings seem to lean towards each other in an effort to shut out the sun." (ar.4/4/49)

Earlier (ar.23/3/49), District Six is described as "this area, that sprawls like a grey shadow at the foot of Table Mountain". There is no redemptive quality about "How They Live"; even the buildings and the alleys have a horrible animation about them. The inhabitants are characterized as "cynical" (23/3/49), and at the same time the "slum dwellers" suffer from "apparent insensibility to circumstances" which is a "tragedy" (29/3/49). The whole feeling of the series is of the horror of a quick glance into Pandora's Box. A brief tour of a few houses, to which the reporter gained access by accompanying welfare officers, produced a snapshot of District Six. The following paragraph indicates more clearly the perspective of the reporter:

"Cape Town's slums must be amongst the world's worst, but here the tragedy is heightened by the non-European population. Circumstance has herded these unfortunates into a forgotten corner of civilization, and over them have grown the cobwebs of our own inability to help them" (ar.23/3/49)

The gaze of the reporter is the gaze of a respectable 'European' peeping under the cobwebs. One striking aspect about this series is that no substantial viewpoints of the actual residents of District Six are included. There are a few references to a comment here and there, but these comments are incidental to the main thrust of the series which is an emphasis on the "how", i.e. the "conditions" of life in District Six, by which is meant immediately visible, physical conditions.

What is most significant in this form of 'knowing' is not what we are told about District Six (which is actually not much), but what this momentary glance at the horrors of the 1949 District Six tells us about the perspective from which the glance is directed. The first thing of note is that "How They Live" could be told at a glance, at a few houses, to be exact. This leaves us with an image of an urban language that, in the words of Adam Small in a later article from the 60's, can deal only in

"..the houses that went bad and the streets that polluted through the years [sic]; the double- and treble-storied dilapidations which sordidly wear the semblance of what they used to be long ago.." (ar30/7/66)

This is not a comment on the limits of the ability of a reporter to describe, but a limit on what I will elaborate more fully below, an urban imagination. In addition, we get a sense of the *reification* of middle-class life, which is the object of comparison; it is inconceivable how the inhabitants cope under such conditions. This is meant by the reporter to be an expression of the extremity of the conditions under which the residents of District Six live, but it is actually an indication that "How They Live" is a question that the reporter cannot answer. What he or she does

not and cannot refer to is the well-known community spirit, or social existence of the district, the actual substance of the form of life that by most accounts characterized District Six and contributed so much to the survival and well-being of the inhabitants.

The next series is a little different in tone. Written just under a year later, it also consists of five articles, and is titled, "District Six: The Facts". The first article is titled, "City's Little-Known Home of 40,000". Again, 'to know' here is used in an interesting sense; a comparative use might be a "little-known" beach, cave or isolated village, but in ordinary parlance, writing that a place which is the home of 40,000 people is 'little-known' is a little odd, especially considering that the 40,000 people in question lived in the middle of Cape Town. Exactly what this means is manifest in the first few paragraphs; District Six is

"..the most talked-of part of Cape Town, but the least known.. .What is really strange is that European Cape Town itself knows little more of this intricate, highly organized community which lies in its midst, sealed off by barriers of ignorance and fear." (ct21/1/50)

Obviously 'little-known' is a quality of 'European' Cape Town. An emerging theme is that District Six is 'known' in part only by those 'Europeans' and foreigners who go there for less than respectable reasons; indeed, "..one may hear [District Six] discussed in any seaport where sailors foregather.." (ibid.). Immediately the basic conditions of the identity of District Six are laid out. There is a wall of myth barring 'respectable Europeans' from District Six; it is a place apart, an unconscious geography of prohibition.

The aim of these articles is to get to grips with the 'real' District Six, to 'demythologize' it. 'To know' is not to know as sailors or others who have gone to the district in search of vice of one sort or another, or to know as the residents 'know' District Six. In this context, 'to know' means something very specific; namely to understand in terms of the criteria of 'respectable European' Cape Town, or more precisely, the english-speaking Cape Town middle-class. It also means to reveal more than will be revealed by a cursory glance at the physical conditions 'revealed' in "How They Live". The aim of this series is to find ways to reveal the *meaning* of what confronts the ('respectable') stranger to District Six.

A short history follows; the name 'District Six', originally designating a municipal ward, outlasted the abolishing of the old ward system in the early part of the century, we are told, on account of the growing 'notoriety' attached to the district. It is lamented that in many seaports of the world, the name District Six is known for this reason; it has a fame of its own, which has set it apart from the rest of Cape Town. In addition, this reputation has also established District Six as the antithesis of 'respectable' Cape Town. The history of District Six, that is, of the development of its contemporary notorious state, is a history of decay:

"..District Six was not always notorious. Its beginnings, of which there is no precise record, were 'respectable' in the extreme.." (ct21/1/50)

The story of decay begins with the building of the district by "Cape Town's rapidly increasing European middle class", who soon left for the suburbs, leaving space for "Coloured and Malay workers". In a nutshell:

"Where one European went out, two, three and even four Coloured families came in, soon swamping the services which had been sufficient for the few Europeans and creating what has been the cause of most of the evil that has since arisen in District Six . . . overcrowding." (ct21/1/50)

This is one of the central contentions of the article, which is concerned to isolate (in a more sophisticated way than the first article) the causes of the ills of the present district, and their possible remedy. The story of the Fall is important for several reasons. The true authors of District Six in its essence as a functional (as opposed to malfunctioning) urban unit are the 'European middle class'. What is emphasized quite commonly in this and other articles is that, in the language of urban planning, District Six was not being used as it was planned. In other words, the original district's resources were being used contrary to design, which all implies that underneath the chaos and 'problems' of District Six lies a hidden skeleton of 'European' origin. In addition, the Fall is at the same time the formation of the identity of District Six. According to the reporter, "no-one quite knows why" the name was perpetuated,

"..but the most likely explanation is that, as the area had already become notorious for offering the shadier forms of night life to sailors and visitors, its reputation and its original name became so firmly linked that nothing could separate them." (ct21/1/50)

However, what interests the reporter is an exploration of "The Facts" of District Six which will differentiate the redeemable from the irredeemable elements.

The following articles proceed to describe the 'real' District Six. The first characteristic that is emphasized is that District Six is the '*natural* home' of the 'Coloured' people. Having established this, it is made clear that

"It is the overwhelming desire of almost every Coloured person to live "decently", to rear a happy and united family in conditions of cleanliness and modest comfort, to enjoy the simple necessities of life and a few of its luxuries, and to have some leisure to dance and sing. These are not extravagant ambitions, but only by the hardest struggle can even a part of these be realized in District Six today." (ct23/1/50)

What follows is a narrative of the frustration of these 'simple' desires by the brute realities of District Six. Again, there is the sense of astonishment that life is possible at all, in sentences like, "There is such an air of disintegration that one feels instinctively that here there can be no life save that of the vermin." (ibid.).

Here, again, the reporter uses a technique of an intimate description of a household to represent the private life of the average resident of District Six. In this case, a 'lodging house'; a tale of the heroism of the inhabitants is told. (One gets the feeling, as with a lot of this material, that the inhabitants of District Six were living extraordinary and unorthodox lives.) They, according to the article, scrub floors incessantly in a vain effort to maintain cleanliness but,

"..the dirt which has accumulated beneath them seeps up through the gaps between the boards and the scars of rot, and lays a film of mud before the surface has had time to dry." (ibid.)

This hyperbole is repeated continuously, to emphasize the 'virtues' of the inhabitants in pursuing decency in the face of such overwhelming futility. In comparison, the reporter writes about another part of District Six:

"District Six has rows and rows of neat houses, and if one would see how the Coloured people live when they have the chance of something better one has only to glance into these houses during the morning when the front doors are left open. ...Here are neat rooms. ...the perfection of cleanliness and order: though one may guess that these things are hard won by constant work and the careful budgeting of meagre wages." (ibid.)

The significance of this article is now apparent. The aim of the series is to 'demythologize' District Six, to remove the "barriers of ignorance and fear" that 'hide' the nature of the district from 'Europeans'. Traditionally, District Six had been seen as a 'notorious' place; the aim of this article is to reveal different ways in which it can be regarded, in particular a way in which it and its inhabitants can be understood as 'respectable', and, more importantly, be understood by 'respectable' people. This is a form of political judgement *par excellence*; what happens here at this point is nothing less than the redemption of the 'Coloured' people from the notoriety and degradation of District Six. The degradation normally associated with District Six can thus be understood in the context of a struggle against overwhelming odds for a 'decent' life. This is the hermeneutic key; the notion of 'decency' constructed on a firm base of family values, is the 'European' way into an understanding of District Six. This basic categorization of 'Coloured' people as 'respectable' also qualifies them as potentially useful citizens in a recognizable fashion.

The next article in the series is titled "Virtues Thrive in Squalor: Where Kindness is Typical", and concerns the 'remarkable' virtues of District Six. As the reporter points out,

"District Six is best known for its vices; its virtues are more numerous, and, flourishing as they do in squalor and poverty, they are remarkable" (ct24/1/50)

A number of virtues are detailed, but what is most interesting is the explanation for the origins of these, which have two sources. The first is poverty; "The virtues of District Six are the virtues of the very poor" (ct24/1/50), and the second, the virtue of 'Coloured people', for example, "...the Coloured people have a natural sympathy with distress and will go to the assistance of anyone in emergency.." (ibid.), and later,

"It is the high courage of the Coloured man which makes it possible for him to pluck happiness from the rhythm of a guitar or two pieces of stick, from the flashes of brilliance which is sunlight on a line of washing, from the long trudge to work which his nimble feet turn into a shuffling dance." (ibid. - this paragraph is indented in the original article to draw attention to it)

An interesting paragraph deals with the attitude to 'Europeans':

"With its kindness, District Six has also the virtue of gratitude. It is said, and with some truth, that it is unsafe for a European to walk through its streets at night, but no-one who has helped the district, no nurse or welfare worker or kindly official, is ever assaulted or abused." (ibid.)

However, those 'Europeans' who visit the district for its 'vices' (bars, prostitution, gambling, etc.) and those who exploit its people (included here are "landlords, tricksters and over-smart salesmen"), "are liable to be beaten and robbed, which is no more than they deserve". These 'Europeans' have "done much to spread [District Six's] vices". The next article in the series concerns the 'vices' of District Six. Night is the time when these emerge into the open. The headline is "When Day Becomes Our Colour: Vices Dominate the Evening Scene". To reveal the chief vices of District Six, a story is told:

"This history of an evening "spree", which lands a man in the gutter, sick and penniless, is tragically typical" (ct25/1/50)

The 'typical' story involves the progressive inebriation of "Johannes", who, through a series of unfortunate circumstances, such as lack of food, domestic disharmony, and drudgery, ends up drunk in the gutter. A particular relevant section is "Gangdom":

"Its most tragic feature is that the boys who join the gangs and come to be called "skollies" are usually from good homes" (ibid.)

"Gangdom" is ascribed chiefly to unemployment, in fact, all the vices of District Six are ascribed to "conditions":

".they are all of them [the vices, that is] the natural outcome of conditions over which the people of District Six have no control" (ibid.)

At this point, the structure of the first four topics ("City's Little-known Home of 40,000", "The Struggle to Live Decently - Modest Ambitions Hard To Realize", "Virtues Thrive in Squalor - Where Kindness is Typical", "When Day Becomes Our Colour - Vices Dominate the Evening Scene"), far from being limited to "The Facts" (whatever those are), suggest very strongly a theme of redemption. Far more incisively than the first series, the second suggests a way of regarding District Six which permits rational solution of its ills, but specifically solutions from outside; the characterization of the residents of the district "having no control" over conditions naturally implied that there would be no solutions forthcoming from *them*. Solving these problems is the focus of the last article in the series, entitled, "Something That Is Worth Keeping - A Place In Cape Town History" (ct26/1/50). A comparison is made between Adderley Street and District Six:

"Adderley Street could be duplicated in any of the world's big cities. District Six could only be where it is." (ibid.)

This is on account of ".the fusion of many races into a single community"; this uniqueness earns District Six a "place in the history of South Africa". Thus the essence of District Six, the fact that makes it unique and part of South African history, is the 'Coloured people' themselves. Both they and the district are a result of "the fusion of many races into a single community". The rest of the article is devoted to an exploration of the fate of District Six; why it is "decaying" and what can be done to redeem it. The main problem is identified, again, to be 'overcrowding' resulting in the misuse of resources, which is being exacerbated by the influx of "Natives" (This influx is also portrayed as the threat to the "Coloured" people). Various ideas are considered, including one from "the Coloured people themselves". The series concludes with the following paragraph:

"How much of this is practicable is for the lawmakers and town planners to decide. A just solution will leave the solid body of decent, hard-working citizens, who are the majority population of District Six, to stay where they are, in a township cleansed and thinned out but keeping for posterity those characteristics which give it its right to existence at the centre of the Tavern of the Seas." (ibid. - my emphasis)

At the beginning of the series we have a mythologized image of a 'notorious' District Six, frequented only by 'notorious' 'Europeans' (and of course the people actually living there), but by the end we have a clear analysis of the mechanisms of the district's salvation, what is worth saving and what is not, and how the aspirations of the citizens of District Six can be understood in 'European' middle-class terms.

There are several important links that emerge in an analysis of this series. The first is that between 'knowing' District Six in a way that is comprehensible to 'respectable Europeans' and the possible redemption of the district and its people. In a nutshell, *District Six is redeemable to the extent that it can be understood from a white middle-class perspective*; to put it another way, the elements of District Six that are revealed by the reporter which can form the basis of a 'respectable' urban life are the basis for 'respectable Europeans' to find District Six life comprehensible. The key to this link is in the distinction drawn in the articles between the knowledge 'respectable Europeans' had of District Six and that of those 'Europeans' who visited the district for the sake of its vices.

The white imagination required an exploration and numeration of the 'virtues' (this is, virtues in the white middle-class sense) of the district to understand the life of District Six. Thus, this particular form of 'knowing' is linked directly to the politics of District Six as a 'problem' (a redeemable problem). The type of vision that this link entails I will term the 'familiar-redemptive' form of urban vision. The other interesting link which emerges in the last section is between the perceived uniqueness of District Six and the general notion of Cape identity. To repeat a key passage, "Adderley Street could be duplicated in any of the world's big cities. District Six could only be where it is." This is in embryo the notion of 'local colour' deployed often in descriptions of District Six. The dichotomy is very significant, and is often repeated, between the cosmopolitanness of "Adderley Street" (read the White city) and the specific and unique qualities of District Six, which are synonymous with place in the way that landscape is synonymous with place; both specific and unique, and a specific form of language built around this uniqueness. From this image, some problems of Cape Town identity emerge; the dominant White order is a representative of 'Europe', a universal order, but the essence of Cape Town is to be found not in this order but in its margins, in District Six. This conceptualization, which I will term the 'colonial attitude' leads to a number of complex political problems and insights which I will explore in the next chapter. The contrast between these two series of articles highlights some interesting political conditions of urban imagination. The first series ends in the conclusion that only large-scale change is possible, and deals with District Six as a complete entity. There is little room for redemption, and, coupled with this, an overwhelming sense of alienation. Even the buildings of the district are personified in these articles. The second series, on the other hand, as mentioned above, provides a much more detailed programme for redemption, primarily by a heavy emphasis on ways of differentiating the vices of District Six from its virtues, which is done by providing 'anchors' for 'European' notions of 'decency'.

SENTIMENTALITY AND THE PICTURESQUE: LOCAL COLOUR AND ALIENATION

There is an article entitled "Cameos of District Six", from 1955, which has an altogether different approach from the above articles, which I will term 'the picturesque'. The essence of 'the picturesque' is a form of urban imagination that attempts to epitomise the expression of 'local colour', which proposes an aesthetics of the specific. Broadly speaking, this is a kind of vision that can appreciate the aesthetic charm of a bustling ghetto from the outside; a detached, alienated vision not engaging the political faculty at all. The aestheticization of the ghetto is a solution to the problem of the inscrutable Other. The article begins:

"Fred J. Hawkins roams around what he calls Cape Town's most boisterous locality. But District Six has its sentimental moments too, as he shows." (ar.9/7/55)

The quite lengthy article is literally a series of seven short cameos, snapshots of street scenes, involving newspaper sellers, jivers outside a local music shop, strains of a choir practising, and so forth. This time, the experience of the reporter is unmediated by any welfare or other official interpreter. The article is the reporter's 'impression' of a night in District Six, unadulterated by any concerns for 'urban problems'. The structure of representation functions in the following way.

There are a series of narratives, ostensibly related by the reporter, the witness, deemed together to give some impression of the 'life' of District Six, woven into a tapestry to 'represent' the district. The incidents are viewed, noted and selected according to how closely they represent what is 'unique' in the district, to the extent to which they represent its 'essence'. As well as the narrative of the seven 'Cameos', there are some other noteworthy qualities to the writing. No-one speaks; the language is that of a non-communicative, mute observer, detached and almost anthropological in tone. In addition to this, there is a background series of images which personify District Six in various ways. At the beginning of the article, the situation is described as a "...mournful Friday night. Overhead the sky is moody and overcast.." (ibid.), and later at the end of the article, the last paragraph proceeds in the following terms:

"Overhead, black rain clouds scud across the face of the heavens. The moon, showing its face briefly, withdraws again behind darkening clouds. And down below, District Six, problem child of Cape Town, drifts into an uneasy sleep." (ibid.)

These are instances of a general mode of seeing which has as its object the personified 'District Six', which is specifically relevant to our concerns because it suggests an approach to dealing with the notion of 'local colour'. This quality was referred to briefly at the end of the last series above, captured in the notion of District Six as a 'unique' urban environment, in comparison, say, with Adderley Street. In another article ("This Shabby Street Has Personality", ar14/4/51), Hanover Street, despite lacking "respectability", "still has personality". Following this is a description of picturesque disorder, unusual juxtapositions ("...garlic keeps company with hair-nets and egg-fruit with braces.."), exotic (alien) smells and merchandise. There is a sense of difference; shops are not shops, streets are not used as they 'usually' are. In fact, the way the notion of "personality" is deployed, it is clear that this sense of difference is what gives the street "personality"; the term would not be used to describe Adderley Street.

This is perhaps the essence of the picturesque mode. The vision, encompassing the whole ('District Six') is a vision from outside. The language is that of difference. There is another article ("Shouts and Blows - but all in sport", ar27/7/57), about an impromptu boxing match, held on a street corner between two "diminutive pugilists". The article, again, is a snapshot of District Six street life. In the narrative,

"A European postman, who stopped for a moment to have a look, shook his head and murmured something about the Marquess of Queensbury's rules. But the rest of the spectators were not perturbed. This was all-action fighting and good entertainment." (ibid.)

This is the epitome of 'local colour'. A boxing match one might see in any part of the world, but this is a boxing match in the 'style' of District Six. Picturesque is by definition applicable to the margins, not the centre. It is, in the case of District Six, a way of seeing which makes sense of the 'incongruities' which appear from the hegemonic 'European' viewpoint. It is thus a mode of valuation. This is expressed in the 'Cameos' article, in the notion of 'sentimental moments' (to recap, "...District Six has its sentimental moments too, as he shows."). "Sentimental moments" are a form of intimate experience that involve momentary identification in a strongly affected manner. By comparison, an article published in 1953 entitled "the Birth of a baby in District Six" (ar16/12/53) is unequivocally bleak:

"Always the same broken, stinking stairway to climb; the same cramped, airless room; the same stale smell of cooking and unhealthy humanity; the same questions to the same weary-looking women. As she made her way through the foetid streets, no-one molested her.."

The article is about the experiences of a nursing sister on her rounds of District Six. There is no "local colour" in this article, no hint of a vibrant community, just a portrait of despair and gloom in shades of grey. The entire attention of the reporter is focused, via the nursing sisters, on "conditions" in District Six, which amount to the relativity of "normal" physical modes of life.

When these two types of articles are juxtaposed, the question 'what was District Six like?' produces only contradictions. These contradictions are not different aspects of District Six or different opinions, but different ways of seeing, and ultimately, different forms of urban imagination characteristic of a specific media practice. It is important to realize that these different forms of urban imagination are neither part of a single framework nor representative of different political opinions, as both these positions would obscure the real significance of the media practices in question. Instead, it is necessary to imaginatively find links between these forms of urban imagination and the specific political context with which we are concerned. Below I will now consider a few articles which deal in more detail with the notion of 'respectability' in relation to District Six, another mode of seeing which comprises a more direct form of political judgement.

RESPECTABILITY AND NOTORIETY

A key article in the 50's is titled "Once Notorious District Respectable, says C.I.D. Chief" (ar11/7/59). the opening paragraph is as follows:

"The hooliganism which once made Cape Town's District Six a by-word for violence and vice and the stamping-ground for skollydom at its worst is flickering out. The district is becoming respectable. Police, church and social welfare officers in the once-famous district confirm this trend, which has been noticed over the last five years."

Other examples abound. In the above-mentioned article on Hanover Street, the following sentence appears; "The higher it climbs, the more respectable it becomes.." (ar14/4/51). The distinction is a subtle one; in the text of the first article the actual criteria which justify the use of 'respectable' are not supplied directly. What is suggested is that 'respectability' is linked to an absence of 'vices' such as violent crime, prostitution, public drunkenness and

social phenomena such as gangs. What is significant about the terms is that it captures the notion of the 'tone' of a neighbourhood, thus allowing the comparison of whole districts.

By contrast, the adjective 'decent' is applied to individuals (e.g. in the series articles and in the above article, "The vast proportion of people living in District Six are decent, law-abiding citizens"). The notion of 'tone', unlike that of 'local colour' or 'the picturesque', is normative in terms of hegemonic notions of 'respectability'. There is a strong sense that 'respectability' is an environment in which 'decent' people can thrive, realize their life-goals; in other words, 'respectable' is the term used to describe such an environment. Thus the notions of 'decent' and 'respectable' are inextricably linked). There is an editorial in the same paper two days later (ar13/7/59) on the same subject where the subject of reputation is linked to that of respectability. The editor applauds the changes in District Six detailed by the Police Chief. He then makes the suggestion that the name of the district be changed:

"In spite of its change of character, for the seaman and the stranger to Cape Town District Six still retains its old reputation. There may be some who will be heard to say that this is just as well, because it keeps the curious and the reckless from tempting fate; but that ignores the feelings of those who inhabit District Six. If they are coming up in the world, they should not be held back by the burden of a bad name.."

(Interestingly enough, a string of letters from "those who inhabit District Six" in the 60's vehemently rejected the idea of changing the name of the district.) The implication is that the public image of District Six is an important factor in its new-found 'respectability'; in fact, quite a considerable amount of political energy was expended in the 60's to improve the image of District Six in the public (read mainly white middle class) eye, as part of an attempt to mobilize resistance to its demolition (see for instance ar22/2/66). The editorial ties the name 'District Six' to notoriety so firmly that it is suggested that it would be considerably easier to adopt a new name than overcome the social stigma attached to the old. Towards the end of the 50's issues of 'respectability' became increasingly complex, and images of District Six more complex and better founded in fact, partly due to the writing of a journalist who actually grew up in District Six. There are certain important continuities which emerge again.

Respectability in this context, is of use in this analysis on account of its nature as a quintessentially public form of judgement, which establishes, more than any other form of judgement in the urban political context, a geographical expression (a clear boundary between 'respectable' and 'notorious' areas of the city) of the political order of the urban environment as a whole. To use the term in this way is to subscribe to a hegemonic notion of 'decency'. Beyond this, it has a normative function too, as pointed out by the editorial referred to above. 'Respectability' is a criteria for social inclusivity, and is thus a goal for social as well as political or material redemption. How then, does 'respectability' constitute a way of seeing, in the urban political context? It is primarily dependent on reputation, or in other words, a set of historical narratives which divide the urban environment. It does not therefore reside in the experience of an encounter with an urban environment, but with the public image of that environment only. A casual encounter with such an environment will provide only

fragmented images, whereas the reputation of a district is expressive of the district as a whole, as well as being a context in which it is possible to make sense of the images encountered in such an encounter. The media play the role of validating or invalidating these narratives, which on the one hand critically evaluate the 'respectability' of a specific district, and on the other, constitute the notion 'respectability' narratively in the process.

PORTRAIT OF THE DECENT PERSON

I will now outline some disconnected articles from the 1960's written by George Manuel, a journalist who grew up in District Six. In an article entitled "Their Heritage: Keeping Up With The Whites" (ar22/3/66), this can be more clearly seen. District Six here is portrayed as a site for the realization of 'Coloured' aspiration:

"The heritage of a large section of Coloured people in the Cape is an upward struggle to attain a status of equality with the White people by whose side they have lived for generations. Competition with the Whites, rather than among themselves, has formed the background of their efforts to rise. Part of this struggle has been to attain a status by acquiring their own homes.."

In the light of these general observations, the text continues as follows: acquiring this 'independence' is a long struggle which consists of scrimping and saving over a period of years, in order to purchase a piece of land, upon which, with more saving out of meagre incomes, a house can be build. However the Group Areas Act (from now on GAA) can remove all of this in a single stroke, thus setting back the family involved to square one, in their struggle for independence and dignity, which is precisely the fate of a large proportion of people in District Six:

"This is part of the record of the Group Areas Act - that people are degraded from economic status to one of dependence - is the tragedy of the thrifty, hard-working and self-respecting coloured citizen."

'Economic status' is a reference to the housing discourse of the time. 'Sub-economic' housing was housing subsidized by the CTCC or state, the implication being that the residents in such circumstances were not in a position to pay an 'economic' rent (one which covered the cost of the house's production and maintenance, etc.) This is, according to the reporter, the fate hanging over a number of Coloured homeowners in District Six.

By contrast, another is titled "The Gang Tamer of Hanover Street" (ar24/7/65), and is mainly a narrative profile of Mr Nordien Frizlar, the manager of Avalon cinema of 24 years standing. The article is devoted in part to explaining the oddities of the cinema (such as that it is equipped with an air-raid shelter due to having been built at the beginning of the Second World War, and the origin of its name and current site), but of central interest for current purposes is its portrayal of the way in which Mr Frizlar reconciled the running of the cinema with the daily realities of District Six. One of these realities was the presence of gangs and other 'trouble-makers', including 'dagga smokers', which required considerable decisiveness and ingenuity, and the evolution of a series of techniques to maintain order. One of the more amusing anecdotes related by Mr Frizlar is that of a "well-built ex-serviceman... a former sergeant-major" who was employed as a bouncer, who "confessed that he could make disciplined soldiers toe the line, but the unruly knifemen were more than he had bargained for"; in contrast, a woman appointed by Mr Frizlar was more effective in dealing with gangsters than anyone else. Another reality

with which Mr Frizlar had to deal was the large proportion of the audience who arrived with babies or very young children. In response to this problem, Mr Frizlar

"..has a staff of ushers who know just how to handle a squalling baby. When a mother comes along with a crying baby, an usher takes charge and mother goes back to the show. 'There have been times when our foyer resembles a crèche, but is all part of the service we try to offer.' says Mr Frizlar."

In addition, a woman once gave birth to a baby in the foyer of the cinema.

This narrative is of relevance in terms of the principle of order, whereby a central facet of the social life of District Six is used as a focus to differentiate elements in the concept 'District Six'. There are two opposing forces in the narrative, namely the forces of order epitomized by the cinema manager and his assistants, and the forces of disorder epitomized by the gangs and the ungovernable conditions of life. The conduct of the cinema manager is cast in an extraordinary light, rather like heroic behaviour during a war, which is why it is particularly interesting; the condition for its being good journalism is that the conduct of Mr Frizlar (in the context of the conditions of District Six) is not that of an 'ordinary' cinema manager.

Both these articles are more complex than the preceding ones, partly because Manuel writes with an authenticity and a feeling about District Six which is lacking in the previous journalism, but the articles still have certain formal features in common. As news, the first article has a double-edged import. There is a slightly laconic tone in the title's 'Keeping Up With The Whites' overlaying the analysis of a real predicament; the text is clearly an insight into the injustice and frustration caused by the GAA to 'Coloured' aspirations, but there is also a subtext which views this situation with irony. The same applies to the other article. Manuel worked at the cinema in question. The form of the article draws on forms in the previous articles (the picturesque, the familiar-redemptive), but underneath this there is also the beginning of an authentic urban imagination.

So far I have used the phrase 'urban imagination' in a general descriptive sense. I will now define it more precisely, and add a normative dimension to it. At this point, I would like to outline some key concepts and political contexts that will be useful in understanding further the political significance of the above texts. These are, the politics of the ordinary, urban imagination, and an exploration of the history and content of urban planning in South Africa.

Chapter Nine

THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF THE ORDINARY

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I outline a specific political culture which I have termed the politics of the ordinary, which is an expression of the political significance of the ways of seeing outlined in the previous chapter. The defining feature of this political culture is a conception of political judgement characterized by what I have termed the 'colonial attitude', the reification of 'Europe' into a universal notion of the Ordinary. In relation to District Six, the political significance of the modes of seeing outlined above can be perceived by evaluating them against a form of political judgement which values the quintessence of a specific urban environment, which I have termed urban imagination. Politically, the discourse of urban planning plays an opposite part in the media coverage of District Six, so I consider its specific history in South Africa, and the complex relationship between urban imagination, urban planning and the politics of the ordinary as a precursor to the next chapter, where I will explore the representation of the political terrain, the way in which the political process surrounding the razing of District Six was represented.

THE POLITICS OF THE ORDINARY AS A POLITICAL CULTURE

As has been outlined above, a specific media practice can be said to be characteristic of a specific political culture. The political culture of which the media coverage in the liberal press is characteristic, I have termed the politics of the ordinary.

To explain the idea of the politics of the ordinary: traditionally the sphere of human activity that is termed the political has been concerned with greatness, the political virtue *par excellence*. Even in modernity, the dream of the republic and the revolution involve the incarnation of the extraordinary. Existentially opposed to these notions is the notion of the everyday, the mundane. That which is great stands out, is contrasted by, outlined by, that which is merely ordinary. Recall, from the section on the political, Heller's characterization of modernity in terms of the essence of philosophical activity, whereby philosophy

"..has never stopped insisting that what is regarded as truth is not really true, but that something else is true; or that what is regarded as just is not just, because something else would be more, or even perfectly just." (Heller 1991a:336)

Philosophy is "realized" in modernity, as people constantly evaluate the Is of their institutions and social lives in terms of universalized Oughts; in fact,

"What has hitherto happened only in philosophy, can and does now happen in political practice and life." (Heller 1991a:336)

She then observes that this striving after universalized Oughts is in fact "the quintessence of the modern political dynamic" (*ibid.*, 337). This structure of the notion of greatness is imprinted into the notion of the political from

ancient times. Arendt, in her work, *The Human Condition*, goes so far as to suggest that the chief political function of the *polis* is to remember the great deeds of its citizens. For Arendt, greatness is connected with the expression of the essence (the 'who-ness') of the individual through speech and action in the public realm. In various traditions of public thought, the notion of essence has been associated with greatness, through the notion of realization. Greatness is a matter of contrast and context; what is great in one context is merely ordinary in another. Ordinarity, the flow of life, is the background against which greatness emerges. In this context, the 'politics of the ordinary' seems like a contradiction in terms. The 'politics of the ordinary' is merely the pursuit of the ordinary as a political goal. The obvious problem that arises with this conception is that in the case of the pursuit of greatness, the ordinary is given as the basis on which the notion of greatness rests. How is it possible to pursue the ordinary? How is it that the ordinary can become, in Heller's terms, a politically effective Ought?

THE POLITICS OF THE ORDINARY AND THE 'COLONIAL ATTITUDE'

The construing of 'the ordinary' as a politically effective Ought, is, in the context of the removal of District Six, linked inextricably to two notions, namely urban planning and what I will refer to as urban imagination. As a political image, the ordinary has its seed in the very nature of modernity in the shape of the Grand Narrative itself, that is, the concept of the 'normal development' of societies in the pattern of the history of the European nation-state. But this is not sufficient to imagine a politics of the ordinary, given the 'Grandness' of the narrative. From the European perspective, the Grand Narrative is the realization of the fate of the whole of humankind in the European nation-state. From the non-European 'European' perspective, the narrative of Europe is the displaced vision of the future. I will argue below that the political and social contexts of colonialism as they existed (and perhaps still live on) are necessary conditions for the Ordinary to become a politically effective Ought. These do not comprise objective social and political conditions, but comprise what I will term the 'colonial attitude', which is not necessarily coincident with the actual experience of colonialism, but comprise a specific political response to a colonial or post-colonial situation associated with a displaced 'European' consciousness.

In this context, ordinarity is projected into a mythical context situated in 'Europe'. Narratives about 'Europe' become myths; insofar as narratives are a foundation for the notion of culture, the mythologization of these narratives is coupled with the mythologization of the narratives of other cultures (those of 'the Others') also, and 'culture' becomes a reified category. Under these conditions, Ordinarity is something that is located 'outside', against which even 'ordinary life' can be measured, and judgements formed. Daily life from the perspective of the 'colonial attitude' is *extraordinary*; thus the Ordinary becomes a possible political goal. At the same time, the external Ordinary becomes reified. Under these conditions, the Ordinary can become a politically effective Ought, and thus a form of political judgement, effectively turning the traditional political virtue of greatness on its head. Thus, at the same time, greatness as a political virtue must disappear within the local political context. For people under the spell of the Ordinary, Cape Town cannot be a great city, but only a great 'European' city. Once this 'Europeanness' is realized and surpassed, the Ordinary becomes politically ineffective and so true greatness would require a totally transformed political terrain. In any case, a political culture under the spell of the 'Ordinary'

cannot realize its 'Europeanness', as 'Europe' itself is reified into a myth; the identity of those who subscribe to the 'colonial attitude' is partly their separateness from Europe. The phrase "more English than the English" is a typical indication of this phenomenon.

THE 'COLONIAL ATTITUDE' AND MODES OF SEEING DISTRICT SIX

The three main modes of seeing that I have outlined above are the familiar-redemptive, the picturesque and the respectable. The 'essence' of an urban locality is appropriated in the picturesque mode, and is thus located on the margins rather than the metropole (one of the features of the coverage of District Six are the frequent references to District Six containing what is 'unique' to Cape Town). The political and social order, however is located at the centre, which colonizes the margins through the familiar-redemptive mode, which, further evaluated through the notion of respectability, attempts to universalize the 'ordinariness' of the urban order present at the centre in the margin. This political impulse is not driven by an impulse to realize the essence of the centre universally, or an apprehension of such essence as 'universal' (modernity). There is in fact no 'essence' of the centre in the politics of the Ordinary; only a sense of the ordinary. Again, the 'uniqueness' of District Six is contrasted to the 'ordinariness' of Adderley Street repeatedly: the only 'essence' of the Cape Town urban order, its only 'uniqueness' is perceived in the mode of the picturesque. The political dilemma that arises from these contradictory modes of engaging with the urban environment is how to 'redeem' District Six, make it thoroughly 'respectable' without destroying its 'essence', its picturesqueness (and thus, of course, its separateness from the rest of Cape Town). In order to situate the politics of the Ordinary more clearly in the urban environment, I will below outline the concept of urban imagination.

THE CONCEPT OF AN URBAN IMAGINATION

To begin, urban imagination can be defined as the capacity to visualize and appreciate the specific phenomena of forms of urban life. As such it comprises a central place in the formation of images of the urban environment, not in the sense of literally seeing or experiencing a specific urban environment (the empirical/cognitive faculty), but the actual process of understanding and making sense of specific urban environments as a whole (faculty of the imagination). The urban imagination employs a specific range of concepts which express what is specific in a form of life of a specific urban environment, and more broadly, the urban forms of a specific culture. This vocabulary is imaginative in that its use is not a matter of empirical application; that is to say, a specific image of an urban environment is not inherent in the concrete nature of the environment. This is the condition for the urban imagination being a politically important faculty; it is only on account of the thus inherent contestability of the urban imagination that the image of the city can be politically contested. Nevertheless, urban imagination is not unsubstantive; it is embedded in concrete human experience, and is embedded inextricably in concrete forms of urban life.

The political significance of the notion of urban imagination is related to Arendt's notion of political judgement, after Kant, which emphasizes the faculty of the imagination, the Kantian notion of *Einbildungskraft* (the power of

creating and producing images - see section above on Arendt's conception of political judgement). This analogy requires that we conceive of urban imagination as a form of judgement as well, understood in the mode of aesthetic judgement, as a form of 'appreciation'. In common with Kant's notion of aesthetic judgement, the urban imagination is dependent on sensibility, and thus, in the language of Kant, a reflective form of judgement (i.e. non-cognitive). There are two other properties that ought to be emphasized, the first of which is the notion of the exemplary. To refer again to the above section on Arendt, her position on the exemplary was that

"..by attending to these events [that possess "exemplary validity that make them of universal significance"] in their particularity the historian or judging spectator is able to illuminate their universal import and thereby preserve them as an "example" for posterity." (D'Entrevres 1994:115)

It is in this way that the faculty of the urban imagination can become politically effective, but there is another condition, namely that of 'common sense' that Arendt again draws from Kant's critique of aesthetic judgement. This is the expression of a criterion that renders this form of judgement politically relevant. We have seen how political judgement according to Arendt is only possible from within the world. 'Common sense' is both a criterion for the communicability and validity of political judgements. In summary, the condition under which urban imagination is politically effective is when it is constituted as a form of judgement, when it is a publicly communicative and validatable. In addition, and this is most important, in order for a specific form of urban imagination to become politically effective on its own terms, its exercise must provide an account of the particularity (essence) of the urban forms under consideration that "is able to illuminate their universal import".

CRITERIA FOR AN AUTHENTIC URBAN IMAGINATION OF DISTRICT SIX

In practical terms, one of the characteristics of the recent history of District Six is the conflicting images, of which there are some examples above (we are interested particularly in those that originate from similar political/ideological positions). Richard Rive, the well-known author and native of District Six, expresses eloquently the problem of 'defining' District Six:

"Of course, we all knew that it was a slum. No-one who grew up there will deny that. It was a ripe, raw and rotten slum. It was drab, dingy, squalid and overcrowded. Years later, I was walking up Tennant Street with a group of friends. As we crossed over Caledon Street, one of them pointed out the mouldy, ramshackle tenement in which I had grown up. Someone asked, I felt almost reproachfully, "Did you come out of that?"

It is interesting to notice how attitudes towards District Six have changed over the years. Before we were forced to go, those who could moved out for reasons of upward social mobility. They left for the preferable social climates of Walmer Estate and Wynberg. The poorer ones in the community went to the City and Divisional Council matchboxes on the windy Cape Flats. Those who remained were by and large those who were unable to go. A few stayed because they just preferred to stay where they were. But a slum is never romantic especially for those forced to live in it.

Once we moved we left the past behind and seldom discussed our origins. We did not wish to be recognised as someone who had "come out of that". Today, time has sufficiently romanticised and mythologised the district's past. It is now a mark of social prestige to have "come out of that"." (Rive 1990:111)

After this slightly laconic reflection on the tendency of contemporary commentators to downplay the brute reality of the District Six of his childhood, and even shroud it in a romantic haze, Rive makes a crucial point about the media coverage of District Six. He comments on the experience of having seen "pictures of ourselves and our mean houses in the local newspapers under urgent and pious appeals for slum clearance" (Rive 1990:111) and then expresses incisively what, on the whole, failed to appear in the pictures and reports:

"But what many newspapers failed to say, either deliberately or by default, was that District Six had a mind and soul of its own. It had a homogeneity that created a sense of belonging. It became more than a geographically defined area. It developed a separate and unique attitude. It cultivated a sharp, urban inclusivity, the type which cockneys have in the East End of London and black Americans in Harlem. It was both urban and urbane. It developed a verbal dexterity of its own. It cultivated a macabre and biting sense of humour to laugh to keep from crying. The graffiti at the entrance to this slum proclaimed: "You are now entering fairyland". It viewed with suspicion and disdain the middle-class values of Walmer Estate and Wittebome. Within its boundaries, it practised no form of religious or colour discrimination. There was no observable Apartheid since the district was one, big Apartheid. It practised no class discrimination since almost everyone there was working class. It insulated itself against the outside world which was always threatening it. It was nervously aware of the white world which intruded in the form of slum landlords, pious social workers and arrogant policemen. It wore a blank mask in the presence of hostile officialdom but dropped all posturing and became itself again once the interlopers had left." (Rive 1990:112, my emphasis)

I have quoted these two passages as such length to indicate and emphasize the *style* of Rive's writing. The important point for Rive about the contestation of the image of District Six was that the debate ought not to revolve around the issue of its being a slum or not, of the dreadfulness of conditions, or its salvageability, but an appreciation of its uniqueness, encapsulated in the emphasized sentences. He deliberately uses the phrase "mind and soul of its own" to express this specific uniqueness, as metaphor for the unique human subject. *This is a quintessential exercise of the urban imagination.* Rive incisively describes the particularity of District Six, using the metaphor 'soul'. He does this, unlike the articles considered above, with the full realization of the (not unmitigated) awfulness of the place. The use of the metaphor is holistic, it reduces nothing (there is almost no language to say *what* a soul is), which makes it possible to understand the concept 'District Six' politically, as a place, a quality, an unanalyzable expression of a specific urban truth.

THE NATURE AND HISTORY OF URBAN PLANNING IN CAPE TOWN

Urban planning, on the other hand, as an abstract discourse, proceeds with an objectively expressible and evaluable notion of an 'acceptable' urban environment. The relationship between urban planning as a practical discourse, and aspects of South African urban history and geography such as the Group Areas Act, is a complex and problematic one. Authors such as Alan Mabin unequivocally establish that the genesis of the GAA, one of the cornerstones of Apartheid, was much more complex than has been supposed, and rested far more on the existing practices of racially-motivated urban planning by white-dominated local authorities than has been supposed by orthodox historiographies of Apartheid.

He makes a clear link between the devolution of urban planning powers to local authorities and the development of legally enforced segregation, and, more importantly, the point that there was a natural affinity between the notion of urban space usage and the racialist perceptions of the 'function' of (non-white) racial-defined populations in geographical-class terms in the South African urban environment. For instance, in two newspaper articles on the economic impact of the racial zoning of District Six from 1966 and 1969 respectively, such an outlook is evident; specifically that "normal" urban growth involves a ring of low-income residential areas around the central business district, and that this implies that this area should be zoned non-white (see "City will lose its inner ring labour force" (ar18/2/66) and "District Six: A Wind of Change" (ar22/1/69)).

This kind of race-class logic goes uncontested in the media of the 60's. As Mabin puts it, "In short, planners were readily seduced by group areas" (Mabin 1990:31), and earlier,

"The origins of 'the group' [colloquial expression for the GAA], then, had much to do with the creation of a method by which comprehensive planning could take place" (Mabin 1990:26).

In addition, authors such as Swanson (Swanson 1977), have established clear links between aspects of urban planning such as health (a crucial aspect of the definition of a 'slum'), and the ghetto-ization of urban black populations at the turn of the century and subsequently. Swanson's paper also indicates very clearly how socio-political issues concerning migrant labour, race, housing and the urban environment were 'medicalized' (to borrow a phrase from Foucault) and thus shifted from the political arena to the 'objective' and 'scientific' domain of medical discourse. Here, the question is not so much the inherently political nature of the discourse of medicine in modernity, but the particular constellation of political reality and discourses of subjectification (to borrow another). In the case of urban planning, our basic concern is with the function of urban planning as a specific form of urban vision within a specific political situation. Don Pinnock has made the stronger claim (Pinnock 1989) that urban planning and planners were the chief villains implicated in urban forms of oppression under Apartheid and its precursors. Pinnock conceives of "two histories" of communities such as District Six, and writes at the beginning of a paper on urban planning in Cape Town:

"What follows is a preliminary investigation into the history of only one discourse - that of the architects of 'urban renewal'. The other history belongs to those who lost the struggle for urban rights.." (Pinnock 1989:150)

In Pinnock's historical narrative, urban planning in its specific political form in Cape Town in the mid-20th century is pitted against what Pinnock terms "the struggle for urban rights". It is necessary to consider this claim historically, in order to avoid a general analysis of the general political implications of urban planning, which beyond the scope of this thesis. I will begin by considering the history of urban planning in this specific situation.

The widespread and automatic application of urban planning is a relatively new phenomenon, and in fact was only introduced into South Africa, primarily from the United Kingdom, in the early part of the 20th century. While the need for, for instance, centrally-planned (or at least centrally-coordinated) sewerage systems and water supply is not often contested (the question of who is to supply them is), the use of space is frequently contested, and the functional images of the city so common in urban planning are often called into question politically. As

Habermas and others have pointed out, discourses such as urban planning cannot provide grounds for their own application; in other words, perceiving the city in terms of use is a basis for urban planning which is not justifiable in terms of urban planning. If a specific space has a use, this use must be understood in terms of the larger functioning of the city, which must in turn depend on a reified image of urban order culled from the political realm. The discourse of urban planning can serve as a language for the mediation of conflicts over the use of urban space, but it performs this role only under conditions of political consensus concerning the urban order as a whole.

Both Pinnock and Barnett have emphasized the importance of the development of urban planning in the history of Cape Town. The specific significance of urban planning in Cape Town is that it is there that it was first formally introduced into South Africa (Barnett 1993:116), though as Mabin and others have pointed out, there was also great enthusiasm from other urban centres, particularly Johannesburg. Its early history is that of a number of amateur enthusiasts (most of which were qualified either as architects or in some cases, responsible for public health) eagerly proposing urban planning to wary publics and councils who only later, after the political conditions had arisen to accommodate urban planning into the activities of municipal government, invested in urban planning as a matter of course (and later as a matter of law). These early enthusiasts had utopian visions of what urban planning could accomplish (in common with British reformers of the latter part of the 19th century, such as Ebenezer Howard, creator of the 'Garden City' concept), and were even prepared to spend their own money building planned urban environments. (e.g. Stuttaford, see Pinnock 1989).

In 1915, a deputation of the Cape Institute of Architects approached the Improvement and Parks Committee of the Cape Town City Council with the proposal that a 'complete scheme of development' be drawn up for Cape Town and the Cape Flats. Ultimately this proposal was not implemented due to lack of political will, of legislative powers and of funding. (Barnett 1993:117). In 1927, a Town Planning Ordinance was passed. Barnett cites pressure from (overwhelmingly white middle-class) ratepayer's associations as an important factor in the introduction of such powers. This ordinance was followed by another in 1934 (partly to remedy legal inadequacies in the first Ordinance, and partly to extend to powers of local councils to implement and enforce planning schemes), as well as a Slums Act (empowering local councils to declare buildings or areas slums, and enforce their demolition and/or redevelopment). Under the 1934 Ordinance, major urban local authorities had to introduce planning, and were compelled to "submit town planning schemes within three years" (Barnett 1993:120). This mandatory emphasis on urban planning highlights the ambivalent history of the power of local authorities. On the one hand, the introduction of the necessary legal power to enforce planning created the scope for a vast extension of the powers of local councils, which had been far less politically significant before about 1910 (in this year the Cape Town City Council came into existence after the unification of the various suburbs, which had been independent and relatively powerless local authorities until then). On the other hand, however, urban planning was increasingly, as Mabin pointed out, a channel for central government interference and encroachment on local authorities, culminating in the GAA, whereby the state could, theoretically at least,

arbitrarily remove or add whole neighbourhoods to the jurisdiction of local councils via racial zoning. Politically speaking, urban problems arising from the modernization of the South African economy, development of manufacturing and mining sectors and so forth, were perceived in racial terms, according to Mabin on account of the collapse of 'traditional' or ad-hoc segregation as well as the failure of the United party to provide any plausible political alternative. Increasingly, the solution of urban problems through the means of urban planning was associated with racial zoning. As a result,

"As the LTAB [Land Tenure Advisory Board] initiated the process by which group areas would be created, planning and planners found themselves at the heart of the process. In some cases, group area planning was considered by municipal planners to form a subset of their general activities.." (Mabin 1990:26)

In the case of Cape Town, political pressure for urban planning powers originated primarily from white middle-class neighbourhoods seeking powers to legally prevent the establishment of either industrial areas or new non-white urban developments in their proximity (see e.g. Barnett 1993). Land use (in urban planning terms) was, from the beginning conceived by the white middle class in racial-economic terms, where working-class / non-white housing was deemed a 'use' as in Stallard's conception of the 'use' of non-white South Africans in South African cities.

There are several important points of significance concerning the provenance of the political pressure in Cape Town for the introduction of urban planning. The urban upper class in Cape Town were geographically isolated in most cases from any possibility of being subjected to either industry or non-white housing developments on their borders, as well as being more mobile (in terms of buying and selling houses), having access to more ready capital. The white middle class (I use the term 'middle class' to embrace the new lower middle class emerging from the 'solution' to the 'poor white' problem, at least politically if not actually ensconced geographically in the area of Greater Cape Town under the jurisdiction of the CTCC), on the other hand, first of all, existed in suburbs such as Pinelands, which were new developments with a pre-defined racial character (unlike the older, more cosmopolitan areas of Cape Town), and second, were rooted (usually with bonds to pay back) in areas surrounded by more open space, and thus almost certainly to be considered for the erection of industry or new housing developments designated for non-whites.

However this geographical and economic situation, which explains the keenness for use-zoning and later racial zoning, has one proviso, and that is that it is dependent on the development of a white-middle class ideology of the 'white city', which is epitomized in its most extreme form by Stallard's dictum. This notion of the 'white city' involved more than simply a racial typing linked with urban segregation, but entailed a complex vision of the urban order constructed around the white middle-class lifestyle; in other words, a reification of suburbia, with all the associated values of the social and intimate spheres. The link between urban planning and the 'white city' vision is the notion of function. In an ideal form, this notion amounts to a vision of the whole urban environment organized in terms of the function of perpetuating / reproducing the white middle-class lifestyle, which is both a reification and elaboration of the concept of 'whiteness'; urban planning is a technique for the realization of

increased or ultimate efficiency of this function. This 'white city' view of urban life was articulated on many different political levels, including by planners. It is worth considering some of the ideas of the 40's and 50's current amongst urban planners, as these are a quintessential expression of some of the less obvious attributes of the 'white city'.

URBAN PLANNING AND THE POLITICS OF THE ORDINARY

Pinnock makes some interesting connections between South African urban planners and the high priest of modernism, the architect Le Corbusier. The latter's influence on South African notions of urban planning is evident from 1938 onwards:

"Le Corbusian town planning emerged in South Africa with a flourish at the Town Planning Congress held In Johannesburg. Of the six exhibits on display, four were Le Corbusier's." (Pinnock 1989:155)

Le Corbusier's notions of urban design were utopian in the extreme, involving the virtual reconstruction of entire cities. Very few of his urban plans were actually implemented (see for instance, Mumford's *The City in History*), but he was intellectually the inspiration for a generation of planners and architects. His work is characterized by a functional extremism; for Le Corbusier, a house is 'a machine for living in'. The 'disorder' of European cities with histories stretching back to ancient times had to be replaced by a formal 'geometric' structure to meet the challenges of modern economies, to remedy 'dying' cities torn apart by "the ruthless violence of private interests" (quoted in Pinnock 1989:154). Le Corbusier's violent urban designs can be seen as a reaction to the effect of the uncontrolled individualist free enterprise of 19th century capitalism on the urban landscapes of Europe, as well as a progressive articulation of the utopian politics of the modernist movement (Pinnock characterizes the avant-garde of modernism as the aesthetic articulation of emerging monopoly capitalism. The question is more complex than this, which is partly testified to by the popularity of these ideas, far beyond their life in the West, behind the Iron Curtain). The Third World proved ideal ground for such discourse, given the space available coupled with rapid urbanization. The only city that Le Corbusier designed and actually built was the new capital of India, Chandigarh, which

"..came to be seen as 'a tragedy.. ..a city designed for automobiles in a country where many, as yet, still lack a bicycle.'" (Pinnock 1989:154).

Alphaville, Godard's modernist nightmare referred to above, is a good fictional incarnation of a totally implemented Le Corbusian city.

URBAN PLANNING AND THE IDEAL OF THE COLONIAL SUBURB

At the Town Planning Congress of 1938, with its strongly Le Corbusian emphasis on utopian mass destruction and reconstruction of the urban environment (Pinnock quotes Le Corbusier as saying, "Surgery must be applied to the city's centre. Physic must be used elsewhere. We must use the knife..", which he comments, must bring to mind the GAA), Pinnock comments that

"The spirit of the congress was unambiguously colonialist. Introducing the Cape Town plans, Norman Hanson [planner who enthusiastically promoted the doctrines of urban planning and architectural modernism in South Africa in the 30's] observed:

'National sentiment fixes Cape Town as the focal point of South African history and character. White civilization gained its first hazardous foothold on that southern peninsula and from there it has spread in successive waves into the great hinterland. The atmosphere and character that time alone can create can be sensed where man established himself along the sculpturesque lower slopes of Table Mountain.'

.. 'We must concentrate our first activities at the city's centre, so that freedom of movement, accessibility and breathing space can be restored where they are vital. It is possible to achieve this radical re-organization by drastic methods only, by a fresh start on cleared ground.

This ruthless eradication directed towards a re-vitalization process we have, following Le Corbusier's lead, named the Surgical Method.. ..through surgery we must create order, through organization we must make manifest the spirit of a new age.'" (Quoted in Pinnock 1989:156)

There is one more passage of note which Pinnock quotes from Le Corbusier concerning suburbia;

"The suburb.. ..is a kind of scum churning against the walls of the city, the abode of an unsettled population enmeshed in numerous afflictions.'" (Quoted in Pinnock 1989:154)

A noteworthy quality of Hanson's speech is the sense of claustrophobia in his plea for "breathing space" in the city centre, characteristic of the imperial impulse for *lebensraum*. The colonial tone that Pinnock comments on is central to modernity; the desire to be rid of the 'decaying past' so eloquently expressed by avant-garde movements such as the Futurists. However in a colonial context there was no rejection of the suburb in practice, but on the contrary, its *exultation*. The Garden City (Le Corbusier referred to his utopian high-rise cities as 'vertical Garden Cities') in the South African context (in its first and archetypal incarnation, Pinelands) becomes the White Suburb, free of non-whites and Jews. The belief in the universality of the suburban environment was so powerful (notwithstanding Le Corbusier's denunciation) that in a paper for the National Building Research Institute (set up by the CSIR to research 'low-cost' [i.e. non-white] housing in 1946), P.H. Connel wrote that

"There is a tendency of the Native to imitate the white man's form of dwelling when he comes into permanent proximity with European settlements. A general trend such as this would seem to indicate a distinct preference on the Native's part for the type of house characteristic of the more advanced culture.

Up to the present, the form of dwelling universally preferred by Europeans in this country has been the single-story detached house standing in a separate plot, each with a front garden, back garden or backyard and two narrow strips of ground on each side giving access from front and back. This is the picture which the native has in his mind when he thinks of 'progress' in terms of his dwelling. Second, there remains the old tradition of the separate hut which is the typical Native way of building.. ..the tradition of the isolated structure remains, and tends to reinforce rather than retard the observed preference of the typical European style of home.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the action of the local authorities in casting the location in the same mould as the European suburb is reasonably in accordance with the observed tendencies and preferences of the urban Native.." (Quoted in Pinnock 1989:167)

Besides the imperial claim to 'know' the 'urban Native', what is of chief interest here is the way that 'European culture' is portrayed. What is notable about European cities is the variety of social forms of housing, very few of which are suburban in the sense described above (The United Kingdom is an exception here, but even in London, detached houses are not all that common). What the author is referring to, both when he speaks of the preferred housing of 'Europeans' or 'the white man', and the 'preferences' of 'the Native', in cultural terms, is the colonial

white middle-class suburb, whose particularity has its roots specifically in its colonial nature, not in its European root (besides South Africa, the countries that spring to mind immediately as paragons of the suburban form are all colonial societies, namely Australia, the United States and Canada). The condition of suburbia is well summed up by Mollison in a discussion of land use in the Australian suburb:

"The condition is peculiar to the British landscaping ethic; what we are really looking at here is a miniature British country estate, designed for people who had servants. The tradition has moved right into the cities.." (Mollison 1991:105-6)

The colonial suburb is a parody of the English Country House, with all its aspirations of class and individual status.

Politically speaking, the most fruitful way to interpret Connel's passage is as an image of the ideal form of the South African city. The writer makes it very clear that the suburban form is not only that 'preferred by Europeans in this country' but also sought after by the 'Native'. Furthermore, the suburban form is historically rooted in "the typical Native way of building", "the old tradition of the separate hut". This set of syllogisms has two corollaries; first, the hegemony of 'Europeans', and secondly the continuity from ancient times into the future of a frozen form of 'Native culture', that precluded the development of, for instance, the kind of specifically urban vibrancy of Sophiatown, which was anything but suburban. One of the characteristics of this and later Apartheid thinking was the denial that 'the Native' could have an essentially urban existence. 'Natives' like the inhabitants of Sophiatown, who developed a uniquely urban culture, were regarded as having been 'corrupted'. The suburban form is thus portrayed as the South African urban form *par excellence*, the form most suited to all South Africans.

This belief in suburbia as an archetypal form of life is the dividing point between the utopian fantasies of the Le Corbusian planners and substantive urban political developments. Pinnock is slightly mistaken in his analysis at this point; his essay is ambiguous on the actual influence of the architects of the 40's which he explores in such detail, and the actual material development of the urban geography of Cape Town. He draws a strong comparison between the ruthless, undemocratic technicist visions of Le Corbusier, and the implementation of the GAA, and is on the verge of suggesting that the proponents of modernism and the political formations of the National Party were equal impetus to Apartheid; that understanding the urban environment in extreme-functional terms and dogmatic-racialist terms contributed to the same political result. There is no questioning of the fact that Apartheid is essentially a Modern social formation, but in terms of the immediate concerns of this thesis, I will suggest an alternative interpretation. The first problem lies with Pinnock's notion that modernist planning trends of the above type are just a reflection of trends in monopoly capital worldwide. This tells us nothing specific about the political culture(s) that specifically crystallised into Apartheid, and this is the central concern in this context. In addition, Pinnock does not explain the mechanism, political or otherwise, connecting Le Corbusian urban planning with the destruction of District Six, or the conditions under which it could have had an influence. I have chosen a different approach, whereby I propose that the specific political context of District Six can best be understood by reference to another comment of Pinnock's:

"In the 1930's Cape Town was (despite the urbane pretensions of its white elite) a Third World city at the foot of Africa.." (Pinnock 1989:150).

In other words, modernism in the South African context has to be understood in terms of the colonial nature of South African politics; as a parody.

THE ESSENCE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN URBAN FORM

Here there is a crucial distinction to be made between 'ideology' and politics. A specific content, in this case Le Corbusier, has a specific political and 'ideological' significance at its moment of birth, but this is not to imply that it is intrinsically imbued with it. Rather than understanding the popularity of Le Corbusier in South Africa as an attempt by white South Africans to build a modern European (or 'first world', a much later term) city, one must rather begin from the observation that the "pretensions of its white elite" *are precisely what was specifically South African*. The political culture that expressed itself in a fondness for Le Corbusier, in other words, must be understood not as a product of 'worldwide monopoly capital', but as a specific crystallization of certain trends in the narratives of South African, and specifically Cape history.

The South African urban geographer A. J. Christopher argues convincingly for the point of view that urban form in South Africa is best understood in terms of the development of what he refers to as the 'colonial city' (Christopher 1983). He draws on a wide range of comparisons between cities in colonial or neo-colonial contexts, specifically ex-British-colonial contexts beginning with the Welsh city, Flint. He notes that

"On the basis that colonization and imperialism involve the interaction of different cultural groups, English colonization has been consistent in its resistance to any degree of integration." (Christopher 1983:147)

He continues,

"The origins of urban segregation and allied urban structures appear to have been firmly rooted in the English experience as the dominant urban element and influence upon politics in South Africa between 1806 and 1948. Indeed little break in policy is apparent in 1948 when the present Afrikaner Nationalist government came to power .." (Christopher 1983:147)

He comments on the last page that,

"It may be argued that the colonial city, whether British, French or Russian, had features in common which create a distinctive urban type.. .A case may be argued for the Apartheid city, as it has evolved in South Africa, to be but one of the variants of the more widely distributed colonial city.. .The influence of the rural settlement frontier and the Afrikaner nation on the origins of this development is subordinate to the major input of English colonialism. The latter is a part of a shared heritage of northern and eastern European expansion as a whole, based upon an urban perspective of society.." (Christopher 1983:148)

Christopher's work is valuable in that he makes a convincing case for the development of a specific urban form under the social, cultural and political conditions of European, and specifically British/English colonialism, thus definitively differentiating the 'colonial city' from the European city.

DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS OF THE 'COLONIAL ATTITUDE'

It is important to distinguish between two different possible conceptions of the notion of a 'colonial attitude'. The first is to conceive of a 'colonial attitude' being a mindset of people who are 'really' Europeans, looking at the world through European eyes, attempting to 'reconstruct' parts of Europe in various parts of the colonial or neo-colonial world. Another conception is one which characterizes a specific discourse in South Africa (I will not reflect on the occurrence of the 'same' phenomenon elsewhere), in which the constellation of references to 'Europe' (mythologized, in Barthes' sense) forms an integral part of a *specific* political culture; not only this, but the 'colonial attitude', instead of being conceived as a 'European' (i.e. alien) phenomenon, is the quintessence of a local political culture; in other words, the 'colonial attitude' is a uniquely local product. This second conception is more useful and significant in a number of important ways. First, the idea of 'European' identity, which appears as some sort of 'internal essence' in the first conception, appears as a political fact in the second, which immediately transforms the whole question of identity from a mysterious internal quality into a political quality that is amenable to analysis, understanding and critique, and above all, it becomes possible to understand the problem of identity politically. Identity becomes part of the world, not the 'nature' of the 'individual'. Second, instead of, as in the first conception, the 'colonial attitude' being a phenomenon that is rooted in 'Europe', as it were, 'projected' onto Europe, it is conceived as an integral part of a specific political culture.

Once this is apparent, again, the category of 'Europe' does not 'refer' to a place, a 'culture' or a form of life, but to a complex historico-political situation, and above all to a political state of affairs. Thus, again, instead of mistaking the 'colonial attitude' for an alienated European sensibility, it appears as a specifically South African political attitude, part of a specifically South Africa political culture. By this I am not attempting to deny here that this phenomenon does not occur elsewhere (or deny that a comparative study might reveal valuable patterns), but wish to emphasize the advantages of conceiving it as a local phenomenon for the purposes of political understanding. Each act of political understanding is dependent on a specific context; the emphasis on the local is important if the results of such understanding are to make plain anything meaningful about South African political life. In the context of a politics of the ordinary, as outlined above, the Ordinary becomes effective in relation to a 'colonial attitude'. Under such conditions, politically, the scientific aspects of urban planning, the aspects that generate ideal images of the urban environment, undergo a specific transformation. From being the result of the culmination of a specific urban culture, the 'ideal conditions of urban life' cease to have a political context, namely the history of urban culture in a specific context, and are transformed into abstract 'objective' qualities which become the epitome of the 'ordinary'. Urban planning in this specific political context can be conceived of as the 'science of the ordinary'. By this several things are implied, namely that urban planning as a discourse is a language in which it is possible to speak of the ordinary as a universal goal, as it frames specific cultural assumptions (e.g. the conditions of life embodied in the middle-class suburb, coupled with a mythologization of 'Europe') in objective terms, terms unattached to any political context, but considered *sub species aeternatis*, as if from outside the world. Where urban planning discourses are referred to in the media coverage of District Six, 'facts' are often bandied about such as the 'optimum population density' of an 'ideal'

residential area; this is its 'scientific' component. It is also a technology of the ordinary, as it provides a mode of analysis of urban areas which establishes methods for the achievement of the 'ideal'.

This 'worldlessness' of urban planning in the context of the politics of the ordinary is ideally expressed in the anti-urban imagination of the followers of Le Corbusier, whose greatest ambition was to replace the 'accidental layout' (read historical-political expression of urban form) of the city with a 'formal' layout; an urban form that has no specific historical-political content. This highlights another aspect of the above choice of conceptions of the 'colonial attitude'. The seduction of the supposed lack of history of the colonial environment, coupled with the utter hostility toward history as a cultural form on the part of the South African ruling class (both on behalf of Apartheid and 'liberal' historiography), and the resultant favouring of the mythological, ultimately supports the second conception. What the effect of the appropriation of the discourse of urban planning to the politics of the ordinary is, is to effectively render the faculty of the urban imagination politically ineffective; in other words, to render an authentic urban politics impossible. In terms of urban imagination, when people look at, for instance, District Six, they, instead of bothering to invent or explore language-games that capture what is uniquely *valuable* (I use the word here in its original sense, namely render capable of valuation, to capture the 'soul'), they look for features that are recognizable in terms of the science of the ordinary as a basis for cognitive judgements, which by definition are non-political (see section on political judgement). In the next chapter, I will show how urban planning enters, and partly defines, the political terrain.

Chapter Ten

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE POLITICAL TERRAIN

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this section is to explore the way in which the issue of the removal of District Six was represented in the liberal media. I have used the phrase 'political terrain' to indicate the image of the political process so represented, the background against which specific political positions were situated. As specific political positions do not exist autonomously, such a representation is a means to make sense of individual positions, to situate them in the whole. The aim of doing this is to gain a clear idea of the structure of the politics of the ordinary, so as to situate it in the broader context of South African politics of the period.

THE PRIMARY DICHOTOMY

I will begin by considering two articles published in the Cape Times within four days of each other, which I have taken as indicative of the political terrain, representing the range of opinion and its portrayal. This representation of the political terrain is best expressed as a conflict between central government ideologues such as the Minister of Community Development, and the local Cape Town ruling establishment, including the CTCC, about what was 'to be done' about District Six. The media practice in question stretches the political terrain between them, mediating accusations and counter-accusations, investigating their content and testing claims and counter-claims. In addition to this representation forming a basis for debate via letters, feature articles and editorials, it also forms the political terrain against which mere reports of events surrounding the removal are rendered politically meaningful. The particular *structure* of this representation can best be described by the analogy, from psychoanalysis, of projection.

THE REPRESENTATION OF APARTHEID

The first article is written by a certain Joyce Waring, both a politician in her own right (a former councillor in Johannesburg, former United Party member, and at the time a member of the National Party), and the wife of a Nationalist Cabinet Minister (the Minister of Information at the time), and is titled "District Six compared with Sophiatown" (ct24/2/66). The article comes in the form of a very long letter, and its aim is to attack the opponents of the removal of District Six by using the removal of Sophiatown as an example of a 'successful' clearance of a 'slum', and a triumph of political will against the selfish sentimental spinelessness of the United Party, the press and 'liberals' in general. She portrays the National Party as a decisive political force which is prepared to take the political risks necessary for the redemption of South Africa's cities.

Her portrayal of the Sophiatown removal is of a strong central government grasping the nettle and overriding a weak local authority who both did not have the moral courage to demolish the 'slum', as well as having vested

interests in its continuation (via the representation of rack-renting landlords on the Johannesburg council). Her portrayal of the Sophiatown removal is astonishing to readers of today for its blatant fictional quality:

"Unfortunately for them [rack-renting landlords] in Johannesburg, in spite of the dramatic posturing of Father Huddleston and the liberals and the feeble cries of outraged United Party councillors and Rand MPs, a Nationalist Party government, with Dr. Verwoerd as Minister of Native Affairs, took action, razed Sophiatown, and moved an exulting - yes, I repeat exulting - African population to Meadowland, to decent homes with running water, sewerage, lights, gardens, schools, clinics and churches.

I attended some of these removals, as did an eager and bloodthirsty Press, local and overseas, who waited for "the blood to flow". What did they see? African women singing and dancing with joy at moving from this ghastly place - African women still not eligible for removal begging to be taken away to the "new place".

No-one would now seriously believe that the population of Sophiatown "rejoiced" in their removal, or wanted to be forcefully removed at all, for that matter. Shortly after this, she makes another series of startling claims:

"It is all very well for a well-fed well-housed Coloured leader or business man, who owns his own property, to hold forth on this "tragedy of the Coloured people", but what of the mothers who see their sons become skollies, their daughters prostitutes, their baby children thieves and hooligans, filthy and lousy because the street is the only playground, the water doesn't run, the privy is overflowing and derelict and children see and hear their parents drinking and fornicating, doing the only things left in a slum for the poor to enjoy. Are they not entitled to a new start, another chance? Or is sentiment going to keep them in a slum?"

She identifies her opponents (i.e. those who oppose the demolition of District Six and the removal of its non-white inhabitants) as "sentimentalists" (by which she means "do-gooders" who do superficial things like hand out blankets instead of tackling the heart of the problem), "vote-seekers" (people who oppose the removal merely to score political points against the government), and "fat and smug landlords" (who oppose the removal to salvage their extortionist income). She applauds the demolition of another "Coloured slum" in the Cape, Windermere, in quite chilling terms:

"Do you remember Windermere? Do you remember bishops, archbishops, parsons, liberals and well-meaning do-gooders wailing over the desecration of this "lovely fairyland" where "happy little Coloured children" played in dirt and filth and provided fabulous local colour for the overseas Press? Where has that fairyland gone? Disappeared, thank God, under the crushing weight of the bulldozer and those former unhappy slum dwellers now live in decent Council houses - houses the government forced the Council into building."

Here is a vision of strength, decisiveness in the face of decay and degradation. She attacks one of her political opponents who has objected to the zoning of District Six by accusing him of responsibility (during his time as a Cabinet Minister) for a number of slums, including District Six. She claims that

"Complacency, sentiment and the fear of the Progressive supporters in his party held him and his party back...I know - I was there, a member of a council too lazy, too frightened, and with too many vested interests to take action over Johannesburg's African slums."

She ends the letter with the sentiment that everyone involved in the debate on the future of District Six should

".stop being sentimental. Sentiment is cheap, easy and wasteful. A blanket is a stop gap. But a decent home is a bulwark against communism."

The key passages for the liberal press and the CTCC were, surprisingly, not those on the 'success' of the Sophiatown removal, but those attacking the United Party and the CTCC for 'spinelessness' and 'inaction'. This letter was published three days after a feature article on District Six written by an urban planner, and could well have been in response to it. I will outline the gist of the other article further below, first I will consider some of the responses to the Waring article.

RESPONSES TO WARING

There were several response from readers and the CTCC following the publication of Joyce Waring's article. There are three articles that are worthy of consideration.

Two of them deal with the response of the CTCC, who were so alarmed by the charges of irresponsibility, negligence and political cowardice levelled against them, that they "agreed by 25 votes to six to issue a reply to Mrs. Waring's letter" (ar25/2/66). On the 28/2/66, an article of considerable size appeared in which a detailed statement of rebuttal from the CTCC was printed (apparently in full) with a short introduction. The statement details the various efforts made by various councils, painstakingly spelling out the facts of the wrangle between the government and the CTCC about rehabilitation and low-cost housing in Cape Town. The other response is in the form of a letter with disproportionately large headlines, from Lady Joy Packer (author and prominent Cape personality), titled "Coloured in a world of constant insult". It is worth quoting from at length:

"We are all in favour of slum clearance, no matter what our politics may be, and if the government has decided to "clean up" District Six, I cannot imagine there would have been any agitation against the plan. The "completely unfounded agitation" is against the resettlement of Whites in what had been traditionally accepted as a Coloured area. The Coloured people, who should be regarded as our friends and our responsibility, live in a world of diminishing security. Even in their homes they are vulnerable.. Culturally, they have given us the pride of our city, the Eoan group, with its excellent musical productions and artistic achievements, and their reward is constant insult and steady whittling away of the rights to share White cultural offerings, even the ageless universal inspiration of Shakespeare in the sylvan setting of Maynardville.." (ct5/3/66)

One notable feature of this 'debate' (Mrs Waring does not reply, or her reply is not printed) is that no respondent takes up the comparison with Sophiatown introduced by Waring.

The fact that her argument rests on what must really be described as a fantastic vision of the Sophiatown removal and its consequences, is not raised at all. The central issues are the conduct of the liberal Cape establishment (including the CTCC and journalists) and that of the nationalist government. Again, in Packer's letter, the 'us' and 'them' terminology occurs strongly, especially in the sentiment that "the Coloured people" should "be regarded as our friends and our responsibility". In this text, Kipling's 'White Man's burden' is spelt out in the context of an appeal to tradition. Tradition is a strong theme in the discourse of the racial order in the Cape. In an article dated 10/1/69, the headline reads "District Six Coloureds are bitter but resigned - Move from traditional home closer" (ar10/1/69), and begins, "The grim reality for thousands of Coloured people from their traditional home in District Six has come inexorably closer.." There is a clear distinction drawn between the

unreasonableness and resultant inhumanity and injustice of Apartheid and the 'traditional', pragmatic and reasonable racial order that constituted the Cape Town social order. Apartheid in this light was not construed as the entrenchment of archaic racial attitudes, but on the contrary, a political ideology that was unwaveringly hostile towards the past (which of course it was).

The position is summed up in an editorial in the Cape Argus dated 10 January 1969 which is a panegyric against the razing of District Six. The last section reads

"District Six is a slum which must be cleared . . . Would have been cleared a long time ago if the City Council had been allowed to proceed logically instead of ideologically. The announcement last night that the hovels will be razed and an expertly planned renewal and redevelopment scheme implemented comes none too soon, therefore - and it is still not too late to plead for a change in Group Areas schedules for this area. Let there be 'flats, duplex residential units and single dwelling units'. Let it 'portray harmony with the cultural-historic climate of the Mother City' as the Minister suggests [quotes from a statement released the previous evening by the Minister of Community Development]. Let there be open piazzas, and courtyards, and playgrounds . . . And let the elite of the Coloured people live there. Let them build a community out of the bones of the existing District Six, create something new out of the old churches, mosques, narrow streets and established meeting places. Such a suburb would be as colourful as Madeira without its vice, as gay as Rio without its filth. ..To build an exclusive Coloured suburb in place of the slum would also provide Apartheid with a showcase to the world. Moreover, it is time the community thought of posterity, not its pocket." (my emphasis)

(This last statement is actually wrong - the rezoning and subsequent purchase of property, etc. cost both the government and the CTCC a vast sum of money in both land appropriation and lost rates.) These paragraphs, ending with their appeal for what one could term 'Apartheid with a human face', represent the culmination of the debate of the 50's on the future of District Six, the last paragraph in particular suggests a form of social engineering familiar to students of Apartheid. As most of the inhabitants of District Six could for all intents and purposes not be regarded as part of "the elite of the Coloured people" (these, if we are to understand the word in class terms, had, according to Rive and others, done their best to move out of District Six), and so the editorial, official point of view of one of the key institutions of Cape liberalism, effectively advocates the removal of most of the residents of District Six as a humane alternative to Apartheid.

The strong sense of indignation at the injustice of the zoning of District Six as a white area is not focused on the fate of individuals but on the fate of the "Coloureds" as a whole. The redemption (read 'demolition and mass removal of the majority of the population') of District Six is thus the redemption of three things; the 'Coloured' population via their 'elite' (in racial terms, the best that the 'Coloureds' could produce), the humanization and redemption of Apartheid, and the saving of the conscience of White South Africa. In another paragraph it is stated that

"This plea is made in the interests of fair play, in the interests of the Coloured people generally, and in the interests of White South Africa generally."

All this is merely to situate the 'opposition' in terms of the issues of race, urban rights and the fate of areas such as District Six. I will now consider the second above-mentioned article.

THE PRAGMATIC ALTERNATIVE

Another article printed three days before the Waring article, is entitled, "District Six Fits City Development" (ct21/2/66). The article is written by a

"..Cape Town-born urban designer, who has studied urban developments on three continents and has recently done research on District Six."

Her central argument is based on a specific urban planning discourse (broadly defined as the 'ecological' conception of urban geography - see McCarthy and Smit, 1984) which she outlines in the first two paragraphs:

"With the proclamation of District Six as a White area, a major change has been proposed in the use of an important part of Cape Town. As a city grows, the different aspects of its life such as residence, commerce or industry become associated with specific areas best suited to their needs. Therefore the gradual emergence of a characteristic pattern in the use of land is a natural urban process. As such, any artificial change in that pattern will inevitably affect the functioning of the entire city. Consequently a change in the use is only warranted when the reasons for its location have lost their validity."

The argument that follows is meticulous; District Six began as a "low-income residential area"; light industry grew up around it, upper and middle classes moved to the suburbs. District Six is functional as a low-income area as its residents do not have to pay costly transport costs. Furthermore, there is no pressure for expansion of the CBD being exerted on District Six, on account of the Foreshore development. In terms of residential space, high-density accommodation is developing in localities such as Sea Point, and in any case, "District Six has few of the attributes associated with a desirable residential environment", due to the fact that it is "adjacent to residentially obnoxious uses" such as warehousing and industry; "major roads surround it", including the Eastern Boulevard, which will cut right through the middle of the district. In addition, "wind conditions are very bad and vegetation is virtually non-existent", and the "stigma" attached to the area "for generations will take time to eliminate".

On the other hand, Naude argues, District Six serves its purpose of providing working-class housing admirably. Further:

"As the least desirable area, only the lowest income groups live there for lack of choice. In Cape Town the lowest wage earners are exclusively non-white. Development of District Six for White habitation will serve no purpose because areas of greater environmental potential already exist. High land values due to proximity to the city would necessitate high densities. It is doubtful that this number of low-income Whites could be made to move to the district where they would benefit neither from proximity to the industries employing primarily Coloureds, nor from improved environmental conditions."

She adds that dislocation of entire communities has been shown to lead to social disintegration, and, amongst other things, higher crime rates. In addition, "had the land been too valuable for occupation by a sub-economic group, pressure to replace this use would have been felt". She addresses the causes of the "slum-ness" of District Six, pointing out that population density does not in itself create slums (Seapoint having a higher density than District Six):

"What makes District Six a slum is the fact that high density is achieved within structures designed to accommodate less than one quarter of the population."

She expends some space outlining the reasons for the degeneration of District Six, such as "non-coloured ownership", neglect by landlords, poverty and so forth, and concludes with the sentiment that

"There is nothing wrong with District Six that comprehensive urban renewal cannot remedy. The reasons for its existence have not lost their validity; if anything, they have been strengthened by the expansion of light industry and central activities. Urban renewal, through good design, can raise the density to correspond to rising land values and can thereby provide an expanding economy with the labour it requires."

MAKING SENSE OF THE POLITICAL DEBATES

In an article from the Cape Times (10/1/69), a verbatim report of a statement from the Minister of Community Development, the Minister comments that

"With a view to its special situation on the slopes of Table Mountain, in close proximity to the central city, the beautiful view and the attractive scenery, as also its original utilization in the early years for the purposes of a good residential area for Whites, before its gradual deterioration into slums, the best contribution which can be demanded from the area in the interests of community development is the establishment of economic housing of a relatively high standard therein.."

The statement is an archetypal document of Apartheid; it sets out the logic of rezoning District Six, the government vision for the future of the area, and the projected process of transformation that it is due to undergo.

What is relevant about the above passage is that, besides the implication that District Six is to be reconstructed for white habitation, the reference to its historical origins ("its original utilization in the earlier years for the purposes of a good residential area for Whites..") is identical to common trends in the liberal media in the 50's. In addition to this similarity, it has already been pointed out that there were astonishing parallels between planning discourse (linked to 'liberal' Councils) and the GAA, between the political-perceptual mechanisms of the liberal media and those necessary for the conception and implementation of the GAA. These patterns are not coincidental, and the reasons for this can be found in a careful consideration of the above material.

Waring's article establishes some groundrules which are followed by the ensuing debate closely; there are two of note. The first of these is the array of forces: there are only two parties to the debate, namely the National Party on one side and everyone else on the other. 'Everyone else' has already been detailed above, ranging from the United Party to 'liberals' to 'landlords'. The second of these follows on the first and defines the nature of the debate as one concerning the political nature of the key political groupings. There is an echo in this typing of British political culture; a parody of the two-party system, of the Prime Minister in Question Time casting aspersions on the Opposition. Waring's strategy is to cast her opponents as, for whatever reason (misguided sentiment, political manipulation or cruel vested interests) without political integrity or will. This establishes most of the basic conditions for the representation of the political terrain in the liberal media. This is confirmed by the emphases of the responses to Waring's letter. From then until the late 60's, prominent members of the 'opposition' are at pains to refute these charges, until finally in 1969 an ex-mayor was reported at length somewhat lamely emphasizing

that "City's District Six plan was to aid Coloured" (ct7/2/69). Another notable series of reports around April 1965 details an exchange between P.W. Botha (then Minister of Community Development) and various members of the United Party and the CTCC along the same lines: one of the main stories is titled "City Council making a fool of itself, says Botha" (ar2/4/65). This exchange also had a slightly fantastic aura about it, as it involved Botha accusing the CTCC of 'inaction' after he had virtually cocooned them in a web of complex regulations which prevented any action on their part without a decisive political initiative (which did not seem within their repertoire at the time).

What then, in all this, is the significance of the Naude article? The first thing to note is that it is not self-consciously 'political'; that is, it does not place itself politically, which increases its political significance markedly. It is an example, of which there are many in the 60's, of the public use of urban planning. In political terms, its significance concerns the rational consideration of the problem of District Six, and specifically the government decision to zone it 'white'. It is interesting to note that the argument in the article does not operate outside the Apartheid vision; it merely suggests that it would be more useful to zone the area 'coloured' for reasons related to urban land use (based on the same race / class assumptions that characterize both planning discourse and media coverage of the time).

The bigger picture, of which this article is a part, is that following the pattern of the reasoning of the Waring article, another feature of the political terrain is the image of a stubborn National Party acting for 'ideological' reasons, opposed to practically everyone else, who are united by their 'logical' approach to the problem. There were two main areas in which the National Party was attacked over the zoning of District Six and its subsequent removal. The first was the above-mentioned action for 'purely ideological' reasons in the face of what was 'clearly the sensible alternative', and the second was the matter of justice, or as it was more often expressed, 'conscience'. Both these areas of contestation can be understood in terms of a single phenomenon, which I will term 'projection' in analogy to a phenomenon identified first by Freud in the discourse of psychoanalysis. Before considering the details of this, I will briefly review the issue of 'conscience'.

THE 'COLOURED PEOPLE' AND THE WHITE CONSCIENCE

To begin with, it must be noted that, in terms of the 'white city', Cape Town was the first South African city to isolate 'Africans' in 'locations' far removed from any white residential areas. Christopher comments that

"Cape Town at the end of the nineteenth century led the way in establishing the first formal location for Africans." (Christopher 1983:146)

This, coupled with a barrage of legislation during the Apartheid era directed against 'Africans' in the Western Cape, establishes that Cape Town was not a friendly city for 'Africans', and certainly not overly concerned with the injustices of racism as such. The horror of the Cape Town middle class of 'Africans' is nicely demonstrated by an incident in the first half of the 20th century, when trains started to run to Langa (a black township on the Cape Flats) on the same railway line as the Pinelands trains. The residents of Pinelands were horrified, and the resulting

outcry was only stilled by the assurance given by the railway authorities that any train bound to or from Langa would on no account stop at the Pinelands station (see above comment on sources of information on Pinelands).

There is no question that 'Coloureds' constituted a special case in the racial order of Cape Town. Repeatedly in the media coverage, District Six is referred to as the 'traditional home' of the 'Coloured people'. For instance, in an article titled "District Six: Big Shake-Up in Plans For City - Proclamation a shock" (ar11/2/66), the idea of a 'traditional home' is taken one step further:

"By proclaiming part of District Six for White ownership and occupation, the Government has ripped the heart out of the city's main traditional Coloured residential area. In doing so, it has created new prospects for White expansion on the fringe of the city's central business district and has forced the issue of the establishment of a new core of Coloured occupation - probably on the Cape Flats."

Besides the personification of races so typical of the discourse of Apartheid, the idea of a geographical base for 'Coloured' people is so strong that a new one has to be found with the destruction of the old, akin to the Apartheid notion of a 'homeland'. Another article from 1969 refers to the Cape Flats, in the context of the removal of District Six, as the new "Coloured Heartland" (see "District Six: A Wind of Change" (ar22/1/69)). In terms of the residents of District Six, in the liberal media they were almost without exception referred to as 'Coloured'; some earlier articles distinguish between 'Coloured' and 'Malay', and others, particularly reports dealing with crime, in the 60's begin to use the expression 'non-white'. By contemporary accounts (mainly writers and a very rare newspaper article) we know that the population of District Six was in fact 'mixed', but in the white consciousness it was 'Coloured' people who had a 'right' to the area. For instance, in one of the series articles referred to above, ("Something That Is Worth Keeping", ct26/1/50), one of the causes of the decay of District Six is attributed to the fact that "landlords of houses in District Six are letting their properties to natives". This is in fact one of the central debates around District Six - there are a number of letters (as well as the sentiments of the Minister of Community Development) with titles like "District Six was White when I was born there" (ar20/2/69), in which it is pointed out that:

"I was born in District Six at the turn of the century.. ..The area which is to be proclaimed White was occupied by whites long before Coloured people took possession.."

This is half-true; there were far more 'White' people living in District Six at the turn of the century (see for instance, Bickford-Smith). There is a sense, emphasized in the article from 1950 referred to above, that the uniqueness of District Six somehow lay in its 'Coloured' racial nature, genetically intrinsic rather than a specific urban form of life or a specific social milieu.

This racial discourse is fundamental to the notions of justice and conscience in the media coverage of District Six. There are various conceptualizations of 'injustice' in relation to the removals. Some conceive of an injustice to the 'Coloured people' collectively, for instance the letter from Lady Joy Packer referred to above (in response to Waring's article) and the editorial from 1969 also referred to above that suggests that a suburb to house the 'Coloured elite' be built on the ruins of District Six, as a just solution to the whole problem. There are other

references to what sociologists assert about the relocation of entire communities - another piece of 'objective expert knowledge'. See for instance "District Six: Big Shake-up in Plans for City" (ar11/2/66) in which it is stated that;

"Dr Wollheim said the dreadful effects of mass removals had been pointed out. Sociologists, social workers, economists and anthropologists had warned that the uprooting of an established group and an attempt to resettle it elsewhere in a strange environment was certain to result in social chaos and economic disruption."

Of course "the uprooting of an established group" probably does (and probably did) have these consequences, but what is significant is the objectification of the community of District Six; it is difficult to imagine Dr Wollheim speaking in this tone about, for instance, Constantia (an elite, at the time entirely white suburb in Cape Town). There are others which distinguish between 'hard-working, respectable' citizens of District Six and others; the injustice here is in the non-discrimination between the two. There is virtually no reference to the pure injustice inflicted on the individuals, regardless of race; in fact, the overwhelming sense is that the injustice consists in the treatment of the 'Coloured' people as a whole and upsetting the "policy of racial harmony over 100 years of full municipal government" referred to in another 1966 article ("Council 'Clayed' on District Six, must take stock", ar27/5/66). An interest in the fate of individuals would entail subscription to some notion of urban rights, which would involve a political stance which was inconceivable at the time in the current context.

Besides the letter from Lady Joy Packer, there is another letter from the day before which is more optimistic in tone. Joy Le Cordeur writes that

"There are many aspects to be considered in the government's decision to remove the slums of District Six but in time to come it will be for the best. From many years experience of life in the Cape, I can say the Coloured community have proved a resourceful and adaptable people showing a spirit of courage and humour under trying circumstances. Even they, as time goes by, will realize the wisdom of an action which at present time appears unjust. It is progress which advances with giant strides and wherever it has been necessary for other moves to be made, they have eventually settled down quite happily.." (ar4/3/66)

This passage is a neat corollary to the racial overtones of the other articles, taking the logic of a 'coloured personality' to its logical conclusion. Another passage of interest appears in an editorial in the Argus on the same day that District Six was declared a White Group Area under the GAA, which points out that

"By reason of its location the land in District Six is valuable, valuable enough for the ordinary processes of economic life to have taken their course if there had never been a Group Areas Act. If things had been left to themselves, it is likely that progress in development would have been made by now, for it is 16 years since the Group Areas Act was passed.. ..With the proclamation of District Six as a White area, its non-white inhabitants will have to be moved, though there will be at least a year's grace before this is done.. ..What is important, however, is that the movement will not be voluntary and gradual, as it would have been without formal legislation, but involuntary and compressed into a shorter period of time.." (ar11/2/66 - my emphasis)

This passage suggests that the same result would have been brought about by 'market forces' over a longer period, and thus the injustice (and inefficiency) lies in the suddenness of the move. There are various opinions in the 60's

about whether the land on which District Six was built was actually valuable or not, and thus whether it should be a low-income, 'sub-economic' area or a high-class business and residential area. In terms of the dominant view expressed on the issue of justice, this was irrelevant; what was important was not to disrupt the "harmony" between the races, the "traditional" racial order of Cape Town. Politically, Apartheid appears in this context as a force of arbitrary and uncontrolled chaos, wreaking havoc in the complex matrix of race and class relations that had supposedly been a recipe for urban tranquillity for "over a century". In this context, again, Apartheid is not an ideology that 'clarifies' relations between the races, but destroys them; race relations are increasingly uncertain and unknown, and with this fading of certainty, a growing uncertainty about the social order in general. Opposition to the 'injustice' of Apartheid in this context was, on the whole, not opposition to a racial political order, but support for such an order in the face of its disruption. This point is nicely (if a little bizarrely, in the context) summed up in the above-mentioned letter ("District Six was White when I was born there" (ar20/2/69)); the context is a reflection on the 'White' history of District Six, and the writer reflects on the 'inherent' racial order of the past:

"The different [racial] groups remained different. They required no laws to tell them what cinema to attend, where to attend church, and in what queue they had to stand."

THE GRAMMAR OF RACE AND CLASS IN THE LIBERAL MEDIA

I will look at two more articles in this section, which are so similar that one seems to be a paraphrase of the other. They were written three years apart, in 1966 when District Six was first declared white, and in 1969, when a comprehensive reconstruction programme was announced by the Minister of Community Development ("City will lose its inner ring labour force" (ar18/2/66) and "District Six: A Wind of Change" (ar22/1/69)). The key passages are as follows, in the earlier article:

"In almost every city of natural growth in the world, the central business district is surrounded by an inner ring of its lowest income workers living in the old properties of the town."

Or in the later article:

"The normal pattern of urban growth involves the establishment of a central business district in a position favourable to all sections of the community and with an inner ring of low-income residential areas close to the core."

In both articles, Birmingham is used as a comparative example. In the first article:

"One of the most typical examples of this is Birmingham, which I visited three years ago. There a great influx of West Indians, Indians and Pakistanis has formed a non-White ring around the commercial heart in an otherwise White city. Their position there is determined by the fact that the inner ring forms the oldest residential area of Birmingham, where the houses have begun to decline in value and have become unattractive to the higher income groups. That is a natural process of evolution of a city."

And in the second,

"Birmingham, in England, shows this pattern in an interesting way in that non-White immigrants from the West Indies, India and Pakistan have formed a non-White inner ring around the central area of what had been an all-White city. Cape Town has shown the same non-White inner band."

From these articles it is evident that the very grammar (in Wittgenstein's sense of "depth grammar") of "non-White" is identical with that of "lowest-income workers" or "low-income residential areas". The equation of District Six with the working-class, and the observation that the residents were almost all non-white is a fairly accurate reflection of how things were, but these articles are establishing that this was so *a priori*, as part of the "normal" or "natural" pattern of urban development. The comparison is interesting for several reasons; by this analogy the non-whites making up Cape Town's own 'inner ring' are portrayed as aliens (the words "what had been.." are not lost on us; in addition to which "non-White" immigrants in England are, for the writer, clearly aliens); the specific racial order of post-colonial Cape Town is shown to have universal echoes, and the coincidence between poverty (as opposed to structural racial-economic oppression in the context of the history of imperialism) and non-Whiteness is given an implicit universal tint. The idea of a "city of natural growth", or in the later article a "normal pattern of urban growth" is what is of interest. Here is, politically deployed, the objectification of urban form typical of urban planning-speak. What is being suggested is that Cape Town exhibits 'normal' or 'natural' urban form, if the Nationalist government would only let it alone; this includes a 'natural' , 'traditional' or 'normal' racial order, not expounded ideologically as in the case of Apartheid, but *inherently part of the language*, and thus invisible as a political attitude. Politically, of course, this mode of thought entirely depoliticizes the notion of urban form altogether - either the 'natural' form of the city is 'interfered with' for 'political' reasons, which leads to civil disruption, disharmony and injustice, or it is left to develop 'normally'. This 'normality' comprises a matrix of expectations, duties and conventions that comprises the basis for notions of justice and injustice in terms of a racial-class social-urban order. To illustrate this incisively, I quote a passage from a polemical article by Dr Oscar Wollheim, entitled "District Six: A Sorry Decision" (ar12/2/69), which indicates very clearly the distinction between moral outrage and authentic political thinking. The context is of some note; Dr Wollheim was one of the most outspoken ('outspoken' in the English sense) opponents of the rezoning of District Six, calling it "an act of piracy". He ends his attack on the Apartheid ideologues with the paragraph

"A group [by which he means 'Coloured people'] which we have bullied into acquiescence and upon which we are dependent for almost every privilege and comfort we enjoy, is broken up with all the terrible consequences of social disruption, and is expected to throw down new roots in inhospitable areas where we ourselves would never dream of living."

The construction of the notion of injustice is clear; "we" (presumably the white middle and upper classes) owe "them" more dignity and respect than to force "them" to live somewhere "where we ourselves would never dream of living". "We" owe it because "we are dependent [on "them"] for almost every privilege and comfort that we enjoy". This last phrase is the sentiment of a man of integrity toward those who are unfortunate enough to have been born not amongst his fellow-masters, but amongst his servants.

THE IDEA OF PROJECTION AS A POLITICAL DEVICE

I will attempt to clarify the problem of the complexity of the racial discourse surrounding the urban order of Cape Town, both traditionally and in terms of Apartheid, by analogy to the concept of projection, a concept borrowed from the discourse of psychoanalysis (though with a Hegelian history). Projection was first proposed by Freud, and

elaborated on by, amongst others, object-relations theorists such as Melanie Klein, and Jung and his followers. For Freud, projection is a primitive form of psychic defence against contradictory aspects of consciousness. Object relations theorists developed the concept in a more sophisticated way, particularly Melanie Klein, who employed the concept extensively to model the early stages of the psychological development of the child. Examples of projection would be that of an aggressive person, unable to consciously accept their own aggressiveness, who will tend to project aggression onto the world or close associates, and experience the world as an aggressive place; or in a sexual context, a possessive person unable to deal with the nature of their own possessiveness will project this possessiveness onto their sexual partner, and experience their partner's behaviour as possessive. Jung elaborated the notion of the shadow, whereby the self-understanding of a person is embodied in the persona, whereas the dark qualities which the person denies are part of themselves also, are expressed in the shadow, which is projected onto the world, which is then experienced as an evil place. A typical example of a shadow projection is that of a detective or policeman, who has a strong criminal tendency. The tendency cannot be controlled consciously, and is banished from the conscious mind.

The policeman then sees his own shadow, his antithesis, unconscious part of himself, in the criminals he pursues. He unconsciously keeps in check his own criminal tendency by projecting it into the world and pursuing it there in the shape of a real criminal, who is the recipient of the shadow projection (Jung was fond of commenting that psychological complexes that were not dealt with consciously will confront one as Fate in the world). For our purposes, the important aspects of the projection concept are as follows. Firstly, that it is a defence mechanism, a way of dealing with a contradictory situation. Secondly, that it involves the projection of internal qualities onto entities in the world, or onto the world itself, parts of the self and actions of the self are experienced as the deeds of others, the outcome of Nature or Fate. The condition of projection is a way of seeing, a way in which information is given meaning: particular meaning is attached to specific symbolic forms. Lastly, the result of the projection is an integrated persona, a consistent, non-contradictory notion of the self, the condition necessary for the subjectivity of action and belief. However, the objects of a projection are then not experienced as other beings, but as repressed parts of the self, and are thus not ever really known in their capacity of others.

I will use the concept of projection analogously to illuminate the structure of the representation of the political terrain of the contestation over District Six explored above, which will provide the missing dimensions to the characterization of the 'politics of the ordinary'. Having done so, the political significance of the media coverage of District Six will have been adequately established. To do this it is necessary to draw a precise analogy between the image of the psyche and that of a political culture, which I do in terms of *capacity*. In the same sense that a specific psyche has a certain capacity to deal with certain contingent situations, a political culture, by definition, is a collection of specific capacities to engage with the world in a political manner, to deal with certain contingencies

The two interrelated projections that are expressive of the representation of the political terrain discussed above involve the status and genealogy of the urban order, and the nature and political status of Apartheid. In the first,

the urban order is experienced as being 'natural', whereas it is in fact a complex political reality, an outcome of specific histories; if there are authors of the South African urban environment in the 1960's, these are the South African white middle and upper classes, but specifically the former, in addition to a complex history of colonial and imperial government and various forms of opposition and resistance. In short, what is culture is experienced as nature; the collective acts of a specific class are experienced by them as autonomous processes in the world. The second is more complex. Apartheid is experienced as racism, racial inequality, "ideological rather than logical", irrational; there is no doubt that it was all of these things, but the opponents of Apartheid, insofar as they are represented by the liberal media of the 60's, construct a particular image of Apartheid, the structure of which can be understood only in terms of the Jungian concept of the 'shadow'. Several authors, notably Barnett and Pinnock, have pointed to a paradoxical position of the CTCC, who, in favour of the demolishing of District Six in the 40's, by the 60's found itself outraged at the prospect. The same has been noted by other authors in connection with the razing of Sophiatown and the United Party-dominated Johannesburg City Council (Van Tonder 1993). Besides being the product of an enormously complex political history, this pattern in the removals of two 'slums' housing vibrant urban cultures is symbolic: all the mechanisms, the elements of political thinking, the modes of perceiving urban space, were put in place by these councils and newspapers and reacted to with horror when the political consequences begun to play themselves out. A clearer example is contained in the article referred to above by Dr Wollheim ("District Six: A Sorry Decision" (ar12/2/69)). He characterizes Apartheid, as many did in other articles of the time (not incorrectly) as follows:

"The Apartheid philosophers have for years been trying hard to sell the idea that separate development does not mean that any group is superior or inferior to any other group. Mr Coetzee has in one little sentence destroyed that argument and shown up the National Party in its true colours. Whites *are* superior to coloured people and must have the best areas for their use."

And yet at the end of his article, he characterizes the 'Coloureds' as follows:

"A group.. ..upon whom we are dependent for almost every privilege and comfort we enjoy.."

Thereby implying either that "we" *are* superior, or that some monstrous injustice has been perpetrated by all sides for years. By the tone of the rest of the article, and others, we can safely conclude the former. This is not a mere contradiction, and I am not attempting to cast aspersions on the sincerity of Dr Wollheim; it is indicative of a much more interesting phenomenon.

Expressed in the language of the projection analogy, it is evidence of a specific response to a social-political situation, on three levels. First, with regard to the situation of a swiftly transforming urbanizing society, Apartheid has at times been described by urban geographers as a political response to urbanization. For instance, David Smith states that

"Very simply, urbanization under Apartheid, no matter how carefully the state contrived to control it, has undermined Apartheid itself, bringing South African society and its cities to the brink of significant if still uncertain change. Since the doctrine of Apartheid as legislated racial separation was introduced following the National Party's assumption of power in 1948, it has been inextricably bound up with urbanization." (Smith 1992:1)

Smith emphasizes the centrality of the urban factor in Apartheid, as well as the role of urbanization in fomenting its ultimate collapse. Underneath the realm of ideology and political discourse comprising the 1940's to the 1980's flowed a stronger current, namely the unprecedented and continuous pressure exerted on the established urban order by mass urbanization. The transformation brought about by urbanization must be understood not as a limited change in the location of residential space, but a fundamental transformation of the social-political landscape of South African society, as can be testified by the diverse and unprecedented forms of life that developed in South African cities in the 20th century. Smith quotes a passage from a novel of Nadine Gordimer, describing a 'township' (probably Sophiatown, with which she was very familiar):

"These restless broken streets where definitions fail...The enormous backyard of the whole white city, where categories and functions lose their ordination and logic.." (quoted in Smith 1992:1)

The dominant features of the new urban environment were literally uncharacterizable; definitions had failed, categories and functions had "lost their ordination", and all of these factors contributed to a situation in which traditional political practices and culture were helpless. The questions surrounding the forms of urban life became the central political issues of the day, around which virtually all Apartheid policy was defined, from the bantustan policies to group areas. Mabin affirms that

"Despite the amount of deliberation that the Smuts (United Party) government gave to urban issues in a spirit of reconstruction at the end of the war, the state took few positive actions, while overcrowding and informal residence developed apace. In some respects Apartheid was a (racist) response to previous failure to develop coherent urbanization policy." (Mabin 1992:17)

In the face of what constituted a political crisis, the political bloc represented by the United Party crumbled, and its place was taken by the increasingly totalitarian and unworldly politics of Apartheid. In terms of urban form, Mabin, in the same essay, cautions that

"The tendency for urban scholars to dismiss South African urbanization as an aberration has a strong following. To most casual observers, Apartheid shaped the country's peculiar form of urbanism. Its uniqueness arises from the result of the mapping of white political power onto the country. This standard view contains considerable dangers. Politically, the result is to emphasize ideology and the state (at the expense of economics and daily life) as the primary spheres of struggle against the oppressive order. Intellectually, the consequences include an aversion to probing the real material conditions and social character of urbanization." (Mabin 1992:13)

What Mabin is able to see, as an urban geographer capable of a sensibility for the politics of space less common amongst political theorists, is the crucial point in the analysis of the media coverage of District Six; that it is a commonplace, particularly in liberal historiography, that Apartheid 'subverted' the 'normal' course of development of the South African urban environment. This has been clearly established as a dominant viewpoint in the media coverage of District Six in the 60's. What needs to be considered are the consequences of understanding Apartheid itself as a response to processes of socio-economic transformation manifest as urbanization and urban transformation.

One of the notable consequences is that the political culture represented by the media coverage of District Six ought to be perceived as a reaction to both the political crisis of the United Party and Apartheid, in the context of the more general (and ultimately stronger) current of social transformation transforming the South African urban order.

The representation of the political terrain in the context of the removal of District Six considered above displays a specific structure in terms of this political culture. The political contest that has District Six as its focus is deemed to be a struggle between the 'political' or 'ideological' manipulation of urban form, and letting the 'natural' forms of urban development (which are supposedly the same worldwide) take their course. The political choice in urban terms as represented by the liberal media was between 'normality' and 'Apartheid'. In fact, 'Apartheid' as represented by the liberal media, was a projection of all the latent racial tendencies in the political culture of the English middle class, and 'normality' was a mythologization of the racial urban order into a Cape 'tradition'. Apartheid was thus experienced as a force that threatened to destroy this 'normal' (racial-class) urban order. As I hope I have shown, during this period, and probably before, South African urban development was neither 'normal' nor 'abnormal'. The liberal media thus mapped out a political terrain that was suspended between the unreality of Apartheid politics and the unreality of a reified, mythologized urban order.

This representation was a reaction to an unprecedented political situation, and a reaction against the only political force of real significance in terms of power that emerged from this situation, namely the Nationalist government. Thus the political culture of which it was a part was in fact reactionary (in the original sense of the word). In terms of urban politics, both Apartheid and this political culture were in fact a form of anti-politics, which depoliticized the urban space; it is only really with the emergence of the UDF, with its civic associations and squatter movements in the 80's that an authentic urban politics became possible.

Another key feature which makes the notion of projection so powerful is the establishment of normality. In the first half of this thesis, the link between objectivity and politics was established, via the concept of 'world'. The sense of normality, which is so pervasive in the liberal media at this time, was created and sustained by the twin projections outlined above. The sense of 'objectivity' gained from the high profile of urban planning, was sustained politically by the projection of the basic irrationality and illogicality of the final aims of planning-type discourses (which are in other contexts resolved politically in a specific urban political order) onto Apartheid, thus creating a centre of apparent calm logical rationality from which to make political judgements. In fact, the politics of the ordinary was, in political terms, parasitical on the politics of the Nationalist government..

THE FINAL SOLUTION

In order to illustrate a few of these contentions, I refer to a full page spread published toward the end of the 60's titled "A New District Six - With Love" (18/1/69). The article is striking and bold; the title is 2 cm tall, in bold capitals; the introductory paragraphs in big type take up half the page, and the article is accompanied by a big

map. All the features that I have described as being typical of the politics of the ordinary are contained in to some extent in this article. I quote part of the opening paragraph:

"Someone once said that history has landed South Africa with two big debts which would have to be paid if this country was going to enjoy a prosperous and happy future. The first was a republic which english-speaking South Africans owed the Afrikaner. The second was a fair deal which the Whites owed the Coloureds. The first debt has been paid, if grudgingly. The second debt has not. The forced removal of 6000-odd Coloured families from District Six which has always been their home, will increase that debt immeasurably. It will also add to the load of guilt and disgrace which every White person in this country bears, whether he admits it or not. The removal of these 36,000 souls will be on Cape Town's conscience for a long time. The loss will be mutual. Cape Town will become an entirely different city, a duller, poorer city without its essential character, deprived of the zest and humour that the people of District Six have injected into its streets like oxygen into blood."

First, in the scale of 'debts', non-white non-coloured people are not mentioned; District Six has become the place which has always been the home of the Coloured people; the 'essential character' of Cape Town is to be found in District Six; 'Cape Town' personified implies White Cape Town. What the writer suggests after this paragraph, is that District Six be demolished as planned, but that half of it be developed for 'Coloureds' and half for white habitation. The rest of the article is devoted to the practicalities of such a scheme. The scheme as a whole is presented as an alternative to Apartheid, but it has all its features, except the one small detail of relocating the whole coloured population to the Cape Flats. This is the crucial distinction between a 'rational' and an 'irrational' Apartheid, which is essentially the difference between Apartheid and the politics of the ordinary. All the things that have come to be associated with Apartheid are present in the 'rational' version too, namely the entrenched racial definitions, utopian social engineering and the associated technicist approaches to "social problems".

What is at issue here is not whether Apartheid should be implemented or not, but the manner in which it should be implemented. The fact that in any case the Apartheid ideologues never had any intention of ever changing their minds (P.W. Botha even went so far as to label the mild protests of the liberal press as "hysterical screaming") is also important for two reasons. First, on account of the obvious uselessness of what the liberal press regarded as "opposition", and second, related, the repeated astonishment voiced by members of the liberal press and opposition politicians that the Nationalist government was not vulnerable to the use of reason. There was a good reason for this; the political terrain in which the reasoning took place was a complex self-generated mythology, reason was literally a ritual, a parody of some other politics. The difference between this type of politics and that which came afterwards can be seen in the development of forms of protest against zoning in District Six (see Soudien 1990), which only became effective when a UDF-like political culture began to emerge in the area surrounding what was District Six.

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

What has been concluded so far is that the media coverage of District Six can be understood, brought into relief, by the conceptualization of a specific political culture which I have called the politics of the ordinary. In the first section of the thesis, I began with a conception of communication, and news in particular, following Carey, as ritual, and ended with a conception of news as a communicative form constituting a form of political judgement, and as such, a news practice constituting a specific political culture. I want now to return at the end of this analysis to Carey's notion of communication, and news, as ritual.

THE PERPETUATION OF A POLITICAL CULTURE

Carey remarks that

"A ritual view of communication is directed not towards the extension of messages in space but towards the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs." (Carey 1989:18 - my emphasis)

The inner connection between the conception of news as ritual and news as a form of political judgement is this; the "maintenance of society in time". Thus through a continual process of interpretation and familiarization, a specific political culture and thus a specific means by which the world is understood, are sustained. In the same way that faith is sustained through ritual, a specific political culture is sustained through a specific media practice. The sustaining of a specific political culture is tantamount to the sustaining of the world, as it is through such a political culture that the continuity of the world (which rests on the process of making sense of it) is sustained.

The political significance of the media coverage of District Six is thus not to be found in a notion of causality, or a specific 'effect', but in this phenomenon of sustaining a specific political culture. It must be emphasized that the culture is not sustained by news practices alone; the newspapers are merely part of a complex web of relations, but a very important part, for it is there that the practice becomes visible; their public articulation is synonymous with their continuous affirmation by the "public". As such it must be understood in the context of the development of the complex politics of the South African ruling class during the 50's and the 60's. In this sense, a study of the media during this period reveals specific aspects of this complex relationship; the media practices are *symptomatic* of this complexity.

There are two points of significance that emerge from the symptoms of that complexity. First of all, as well as other forms of belief, the perpetuation of the mythologies of the politics of the ordinary has its source in the specific news practices of the liberal press. Politically, this is an important result; mythological conceptions of 'Europe' and 'culture' were not, as is commonly supposed in orthodox historiography of Apartheid, propagated and perpetuated contrary to the 'self-evident' truths of the world, but by the actual examination of the world itself in the form of news, in the cold and rational light of objective reporting. This in part explains the perpetuation of

the mythologies central to the politics of Apartheid. Secondly, a specific political position, specific political response to a situation does not follow cognitively from the situation in question, but constitutes an imaginative achievement. Resistance politics is not an automatic response to oppression, but an imaginative and sophisticated response; conceiving of a situation as oppressive is part of this response.

THE PECULIAR SILENCE ON DISTRICT SIX

One of the most peculiar features of the history of the razing of District Six is that there was not more political opposition from the community of Cape Town as a whole. The opposition that there was, was singularly ineffectual (Soudien 1990). There are two reasons for this. The first is, as far as liberal opposition went, the usual fallacy of liberal politics, namely a misplaced belief in the power of speech, linked to a misplaced belief in the fundamental rationality of political processes and political actors. The second, more significant reason, is to be found in the political culture of the ordinary. Although it is not possible to establish a direct causal link between the political culture characteristic of the liberal media, and the actual political life of the city, it seems plausible to assume such a link; this seems to be confirmed by the political behaviour of what I will term the political classes of Cape Town (which at the time comprised mainly the white middle-class English community).

Without an authentic urban imagination, an authentic urban politics is not possible. An authentic urban imagination, politically speaking, would have been a possible creative response to the socio-political conditions of the 1950's and 1960's; the development of such a form of political judgement was the precondition for a true valuation of the urban environment, and in the absence of such valuation, the significance of what was taking place in the 60's could not be properly established. The non-response to the razing of District Six can be partly attributed to one of the features of the politics of the ordinary, namely the redemption of a sense of normality by a complex mechanism which I have termed 'projection'. This was a parody of real politics; in the midst of this normality the Nationalist government was removing 'coloured' voters from the national and municipal voters' roles, torturing, jailing and executing political opponents, and using parliament to emasculate local authorities. The fact that the liberal media were still lamely offering bizarre planning schemes to the public, in the stated hope that such schemes would change the government's mind on the removal of District Six, is evidence of the unreality of this political culture. This unreality could only be sustained by institutions which constantly interpreted and reinterpreted the world in these terms, which points to the unique importance of media institutions in the history of Apartheid. What still has to be understood is the complex relationship between this political culture and Apartheid.

APARTHEID AND THE WHITE ENGLISH MIDDLE CLASS

I cannot make more than a few observations here, as this thesis does not deal adequately with the complexity of this issue to explore it in proper detail. Apartheid has most often been conceived as being primarily of Afrikaner provenance, having its source and inspiration in Afrikaner Nationalism; some authors have gone so far as to characterize Apartheid as an "Afrikaner civil religion" (see for instance Moodie 1975). This has a rather odd

effect in that it splits into two to what to all intents and purposes constituted the ruling class for at least the forty years or so during which Apartheid lasted, raising the question as to the political role of non-Afrikaner white people during this period. Politically of course, this is a paradox, which has always been explained, particularly by English liberal historians, in questionable terms such as the greater number of Afrikaners amongst the white electorate, or the weighting of rural constituencies. This is not an explanation; it explains nothing of why, if the so-called English-speaking South Africans were opposed to Apartheid, they were incapable of comprising a powerful political bloc, which they were not after the demise of the United Party, either in terms of their own identity (defined in class terms as well) or on the basis of some other identity.

Neo-Marxist explanations have done admirably in providing grounds to regard the ruling class as a unified political entity, and to have highlighted ways in which Apartheid has its roots and nourishment primarily in English mining and industrial capital (see for instance Bozzoli 1981), but the actual political relationship in terms of which the English middle class both comprised part of the ruling class, as well as both kept a moral distance and occupied a politically powerless position, has not been explored in detail. I have suggested here, that in the limited context of District Six, insofar as the politics of the ordinary was representative of the 'political classes' of Cape Town, this moral distance and political powerlessness were intimately related; that the condition on which the moral distance was established implied that a properly political response to Apartheid was not possible or even desired. What is sometimes forgotten is that Apartheid is a contested concept itself; the notion of Apartheid espoused by UDF activists in the 80's was quite different from that espoused by the liberal press in the 60's. This difference is not a matter of semantics or the subtle distinction in definitions indulged in by historians, but the basis for a radical difference in politics. Apartheid for the activists of the UDF was a concrete daily reality, a system of power that confronted them in the form of economic and racial oppression, detention, torture and often, death. In terms of the politics of the ordinary, 'Apartheid' was a projection, a chimera, an unreality, indicative of a specific aspect of the complex political reality of the South African ruling class during the 50's and 60's.

The actual content of the political culture characteristic of the media coverage suggests that the reality of white domination in the 1950's and 1960's is far more complex than supposed; the conflict between 'Apartheid' and opponents of the liberal media conception of 'Apartheid' can be conceived as a conflict between the proponents of a traditional racial urban order, and a political reaction to the perceived disintegration of this order in the urban environment. In a sense, the introduction of formal race legislation such as the Population Registration Act, was a forceful recognition that traditional racial categories sustaining the political order of the urban environment were under threat; it seems that the vibrant and cosmopolitan urban cultures of Sophiatown and District Six were evidence of this threat. In this light, the politics of the 'opponents' of Apartheid as represented by the liberal media, appear very conservative, very reactive, without vision or political insight. In retrospect, the liberal media contributed little to the fostering of a democratic political culture in South Africa, as far as the material of this study is concerned.

In conclusion, the method for the analysis of news that has been developed here has provided many insights such as the ones outlined above. However this study has a number of weaknesses, the chief one being that no clear connection has been established between the political culture characteristic of the media coverage in question, and specific political groupings in South African society during the specified period. Links have been postulated, but not clearly demonstrated. This is partly due to the actual questions under consideration, for, as I have outlined above, there are considerable difficulties with the notion that a newspaper espouses a specific political position. This is a contradiction which cannot be resolved without a far more detailed analysis of ruling-class politics during the period stated. What is however clear, is that the representation of the racial oppression that characterized South African life for the last 40 years or so, by the term *Apartheid*, is far more complex than traditionally supposed. A proper understanding of the politics of those years, and those preceding them, would require a detailed exploration of the actual use of the term *Apartheid* as part of a political understanding of political conditions of the time. In this light, the politics of the white ruling class during this period are a lot more opaque and complex than they have appeared up to now.

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