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Major League Baseball: time for a change

by Phillip W. Weiss

There is a direct correlation between economic instability and violent street crime. The more unstable the economy, the higher the rate of violent street crime. The top driver of economic instability is inflation. Inflation erodes buying power, which produces alarm, uncertainty, and social discontent.

While public officials offer lip service to the need to control inflation, their pronouncements are in direct variance to what is happening daily at the food market and the fuel pump. Nowhere is this more evident than major league baseball. Major league baseball is a multibillion-dollar business controlled by an oligarchy that is accountable to no one except itself. Its mode of operation which includes charging high prices for tickets and the payment of huge salaries to the baseball players make a mockery of public efforts to control inflation and call to question baseball's commitment to promoting economic stability.

Please understand that this is not a mere academic question. Major League Baseball is a huge industry whose actions have a direct impact on the entire economy of the United States. While the Federal Reserve keeps raising interest rates to reduce the rate of inflation, major league baseball keeps increasing the prices of its tickets, the prices of the items it sells at concession stands, and the incredible, unprecedented salaries they pay to the players, some of whom are now paid more than FORTY MILLION DOLLARS per year. In contrast, sixty years ago the salary of the highest paid players was $125,000 per year. Thus, through its actions, major league baseball is directly contributing to the inflation that is eroding buying power and threatening the stability of the national economy.

To remedy this problem, CUSNY proposes the US Congress do the following: 1. enact legislation mandating that all major league baseball franchises and their minor league subsidiaries be organized as public corporations subject to scrutiny and monitoring by all pertinent regulatory public agencies and subject to public scrutiny, 2. revoke major league baseball's exemption from antitrust laws, and 3. seriously consider nationalizing major league baseball. Nationalizing major league baseball would ensure more accountability to the public and lower prices for the public.

Major league baseball's current economic model, in which control of billions of dollars of assets is concentrated in a small group of private persons, simply no longer conforms with the current social and political climate that demands transparency and accountability, neither of which exists in major league baseball.

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Once upon a time, baseball was a game. It was considered the national past time, a form of entertainment, and a welcomed diversion from the trials and tribulations of daily life. Now, baseball is a Big Business, a multinational industry, and a major driver of the economy. The time is now for the public to take a more active role in ensuring that major league baseball acts in a manner that will help reduce prices, ease inflation, promote social stability and reduce violent street crime.

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PWW7/31/2023

Marxism and Human Nature

by Phillip W. Weiss

Dialectal materialism, based on the premise that changes in material conditions produce changes in human social development is formalistic and without foundation. Its most well-known derivative, Marxism, is equally groundless. It represents an a priori conclusion to a theory presumed to be true. There is no way that human personality development is a function of material conditions. Changes in technology do not produce changes in human personality. To believe otherwise is to deny facts. Gerhard Lenski proposed that there are several different kinds of societies, each one representing a certain level of technological development.[1] Yet Lenski was critical of the Marxist model of society.[1]

Technological development is not the basis for a dialectical process nor is it the prime shaper of social systems. Rather, technology is the means by which humans can increase their productive capacity – period. The essential way that people relate to each other remains unchanged. That is because the human condition is a function of human nature, which remains a fixed constant. Humans are no different today than they were in the past. Whether the source of energy is human, animal or fuel, the human being is still a human being with a human nature that shapes the structure of social relations.

Emotions are intrinsic, not extrinsic. Power relationships exist in all kinds of societies. Social classes have always existed and there has always been those who labor while others rule. Technology only changes the trappings of the relationship, not its essence, which is part of human nature. The Marxist wants us to believe that material conditions alter people and shape social and personal relationships. Taken to its logical conclusion the Marxist model of social development will produce humans who are products of material forces that render the human mindless. That is a fallacy. The human psyche is the source of all human development, including material. It is not the other way around. Scientific research has proven beyond all doubt that human personality development is a complex process that begins from birth and that socialization is something that is learned from other humans whose material circumstances may change but whose human nature remains a constant.

Changing a person's material circumstances does not alter that person's personality. All it does is provide different choices. Geography does matter. So does social class, but in no way does that produce a new person, only new circumstances. The hierarchal nature of society remains the core feature of social development. That has nothing to do with material conditions. Rulers use concepts such as divine right and popular legitimacy to rationalize their power, which also shapes technology. Technological change does not alter the fundamental pattern of social organizations. There is the ruler and the ruled. There is the elite and the commoners, the chief and the warriors, the general and

the privates, the boss and the workers, etc. Depending on material circumstances, the form of these relationships may change but the structure remains inviolate.

Injustice is not a product of class conflict. Throughout history, people have rebelled. Mistreatment produces discord, which has nothing to do with social class. Some people, regardless of their material circumstances, are abusive to others. A king could be kindly and his subjects vicious and cruel, and vice-versa. The utopian vision of a society without social classes is a dream, and defies the very essence of human nature. A baseball team has a manager; remove the manager and another will take his place. Russia removed their czar and another despot took his place, who wielded even more power. The United States ejected their British masters and replaced them with a system of government that allowed the Americans to become the rulers. No matter the ideology, the fundamental principle of ruler and ruled remains intact. The Egyptians had their pharaohs, Romans their Caesars, the Catholic Church their popes, the Nazis their Fuhrer, the Bolsheviks their commissars, the Fascists their Duce, democracies their presidents and prime ministers, all of which are products of human nature that creates social systems, the shape of that system determined by psychological factors inherent in the human brain.

This is not to suggest that changes in material circumstances do not alter social conditions. The United States of 1850 is not the same as the United States of today. New industries have brought dramatic changes to the composition of the work force. This change is a dynamic process which is to be expected in

something as organic as society. Societies change. Nations collapse; new nations emerge. Weak nations become strong and strong nations weak. Capital flows to where it can make the most profit. People migrate. Technological changes have social consequences. Yet the fundamental structure of social relations that underpins every society remains impervious to change. Everyone answers to authority. Even a king must answer to a higher power.

The distribution of power changes, but the nature of power remains fixed. The bourgeois may yield power to the workers, but that only changes the flow of power, not its application. The dialectical materialism produces new social hybrids. Society evolves. Yet concepts of power and authority do not become obsolete. Just the opposite. They remain entrenched. Technology has nothing to do with that process. Whether power is shared or restricted, technology becomes a tool through which power can be more widely and efficiently applied. It is easy to attribute injustice to material forces, that injustice is a functional quantity that disappears once social relations change. But injustice is not quantifiable. Nor is it extrinsic to humans. It comes from within the mind. Social conditions may shape our understanding of the principle but the principle itself is a constant.

Classes of society exist; their respective interests vary. Struggles for power happen. People get hurt. There are winners and losers. Some rise to dominance and others descend into subjugation. Crime becomes rampant. Laws are made and broken, re-written and then broken again. It is all part of the

struggle for power. People are abused. Real miscarriages of justice occur. Tempers flare and wars rage. Technology changes, and still the struggle for power continues unabated. Nothing stops it.

Social development is a riddle. There is no one pat explanation for how society evolves. There are too many variables, most important of all the human variable, the only independent variable. Technology is dependent on the human, not the other way around. Humans shape material change, not the other way around. Material is inorganic inanimate matter; its intrinsic value is zero. It acquires value only when humans decide that it is useful. An automobile is a hunk of metal until a human decides to drive it. Then it acquires value. The automobile does not transfer value to the human. The same principle applies to any means of production. Machinery is merely a tool to increase productivity, not alter human nature.

Workers who operate machines are part of a social system designed to manufacture and distribute a product. The workers get paid a wage; the owners reap the profits. Nothing new there. Two classes emerge, each with their own interests. Now, remove the machinery and technology and what remains are the people. They remain a constant. Their material conditions change but their personalities remain unaltered. New power relationships emerge based not on technology but on intrinsic psychological factors impervious to alteration. Factory or no factory, the hierarchal social structure remains intact.

Three fundamental tenets govern human conduct. They are brotherly love, relief, and truth. Four cardinal virtues make us better human beings. They are

fortitude, prudence, temperance and justice. These principles, the roots of which go back to the beginning of civilization, apply to all human beings and transcend all material conditions. Without them, civilization is not possible. When these principles are abandoned, social discourse ceases and societies fail. From the ruins, new societies emerge and the cycle repeats itself. Material conditions change but the human factor remains constant.

Karl Marx is a great historical figure. He experienced privations. He was a victim of injustice, forced to flee his home and settle in a foreign land. He outlived three of his children. He sacrificed everything to promote his theories. He believed he had found the answer to the most baffling questions regarding the human condition. He championed the oppressed and instilled hope for a better future. He meticulously revealed the inner workings of complex economic processes and their relation to social development. His brilliance is undeniable, but he was chasing a dream of a utopian society founded on falsehoods. That dream became a battle cry for clever and unscrupulous demagogues who used it to grab power and justify the most egregious excesses, all in the name of Marx. His name became synonymous with oppression, terror and death.

Marxism tantalizes but does not produce the desired result. It incites passions but offers no relief. It conceptualizes human development in terms that deny our essential humanity. It denies the principle of free will which is inherent in all human beings. It links morality with social class and supports a political philosophy that is undemocratic. It replaces the despotism of the king with the despotism of a social class. It promotes and incites conflict. It divides peoples.

It denies the legitimacy of the nation-state and wherever it takes root, it does so through force and subterfuge. Its premises shaky and its message bleak, Marxism can never succeed. It is a rejection of humanity itself.

Human beings make history, not the other way around. Humans create communities, not the other way around. Humans are agents of change, not the other way around. You can no more compare society to an organism than compare the human body to a motor. The individual is not a product of history; the individual makes history.

Labor is the source of wealth, but the market place determines price. Money is the measure of value and workers are paid what the market will bear. A worker is a human being; his or her labor is a commodity, like any other, and can be traded like any other commodity. The market place drives the economy, which includes capital formation. A worker is free to sell his or her labor to the highest bidder. Remove the market place and economic growth stops. The dichotomy of labor and capital is natural to the human species. Some work, others profit.

Every person has a right to invest. The market place is open to everyone, and so are the risks. Everyone has a right to be a boss. Economies are in a constant state of flux; however, the human being is a constant. The ability to invent is a human trait. The term "new human being" is a fiction. The human species evolves according to the laws of evolution, which are natural laws, not technological.[1]

Everyone wants more money. Value is measured through money. The more expensive a product the greater its value. More money means more buying power. More buying power means more advantage. More advantage means change in social status, which is a function of money. The drive to accrue money produces alienation from the means of production, not from the money. No one is alienated from money. Money inspires and destroys. Money heals and corrupts. Money drives humans to do the most fantastic and repulsive things.

The goal of production is to meet needs. Profit is the measure by which need is satisfied. If a product sells, then a need is being met and a profit made. If a product does not sell, then there is no need for that product and no profit. Profit is measured by money. Without money, all economic activity ceases. Without money, there is no social development. Without money, commerce ceases. In the natural world, the human being subsists. However, the human condition demands more than just subsistence. Hence, humans create things to produce more things, all of which have value as measured by money. All goods and services are subject to market forces. Need produces want which produces demand, which produces products, which meet the demand and satisfy the need. When demand is high and money sound economies flourish. When demand is low, and money unsound economies decline.

Labor is a commodity, the value of which is set by the marketplace. When demand for labor is high, wages are high; when demand for labor is low, wages are low. Marx writes:

> **A use value, or useful article, therefore, has value only because human labor in the abstract has been embodied or materialized in it. How, then, is the magnitude of this value to be measured? Plainly, by the quantity of the value-creating substance, the labor, contained in the article.[1]**

Marx is wrong. Value, as measured by price, is determined by the marketplace. Marx writes, "The utility of a thing makes it a use value."[1] This statement is a tautology which proves nothing. Marx writes: "Price is the money-name of the labor realized in a commodity."[1] Again Marx is wrong. Price is the amount of money given or set as consideration for the sale of a specified thing.[1] Labor produces a commodity, but its price is set by the marketplace. Marx writes:

> **It is not money that renders commodities commensurable. Just the contrary. It is because all commodities, as values, are realized human labor, and therefore commensurable, that their values can be measured by one and the same special commodity, and the latter be converted into the common measure of values, i.e., into money.[1]**

Marx could not be more wrong. In the marketplace, and even Marx concedes that economic activity occurs in the marketplace, money and money alone is the medium through which value is measured, and that the value of a commodity, be it use value or exchange value, is determined by

the marketplace. An expensive commodity has more value than a cheap commodity. In 2013, the T206 Honus Wagner baseball card sold for $2.1 million.[1] The card's intrinsic or use value is zero (it is just a small piece of thin cardboard with a picture of Wagner printed on one side of it.) However, its exchange value is immense, and that is due entirely to market forces that have nothing to do with labor. The United States built the Saturn 5B rocket to send men to the moon. Today it is a museum piece, its use value zero. But when it was in operation, it allowed the United States to launch twelve astronauts to the moon. It was critical to the success of the American space program. Its use value was beyond measure; its exchange value incalculable since there was no other rocket with which to compare it. To build the rocket required an immense amount of labor, but in no way did that account for the rocket's value to the American people, to science and to posterity.[1] To substantiate his theories, Marx made up his own laws of economics.

Except insofar as it is an expense, labor bears no relationship to profit. Profit is the difference between the cost of producing a product and the price it fetches on the market. Consider this equation:

$$P - C = Z$$

P = price C = costs Z= profit

Example: One light bulb cost ten cents to produce, C= 10 cents. The same light bulb is sold on the market for 11 cents, P = 11. The difference between C and P is 1 cent. Z equals 1 cent. Cost of production includes labor. The owner pays the

worker for a fixed number of hours of work, no more and no less. This work has a price, calculated per the following equation:

$$P = H \times R$$

P = price of labor H = hours of work R = rate of pay

A business owner hires a worker to provide labor eight hours per day at ten dollars per hour. The owner sets the hours of work and rate of pay and the worker accepts those terms. The value of the worker's labor is eighty dollars (8 hours x 10 dollars per hour). On the balance sheet the P is an expense. However, Marxism rejects that formulation. P is not an expense; it is a measure of value, and further that the P is equal to more than eighty dollars. The equation is not P = H x R but

$$P = H \times R + S$$

S represents surplus value, which is the difference between what the worker is paid and the actual worth of the labor. Yet, like a mysterious apparition, this S goes unnoticed by the owner and the worker. It appears nowhere on the ledger sheet or on the financial statement. Only the Marxist knows that it exists. In our example, the owner pays the worker for eight hours of labor, no more and no less. In return, the worker provides eight hours of labor. Period. There is no S. It does not exist.

Indeed, the Marxist formulas C-M-C and M-C-M confirm the primacy of the market place as the source of profit. The former shows how a commodity yields profit and the latter how money itself, as a commodity, yields profit. Marx wrote, "But money itself is a commodity, an external object, capable of becoming

private property of any individual."[1] Exchange occurs not in a vacuum but in the market place, in which there is a BUYER and a SELLER. That principle also applies to money. This economic operation is so fundamental and pervasive that its existence is self-evident.

Marx asserts that the value of a commodity is a function of the labor required to produce that product. He offers this example:

> **Coats and linen, however, are not merely values, but values of definite magnitude, and according to our assumption, the coat is worth twice as much as ten yards of linen. Whence the difference in their values? It is owing to the fact that the linen contains only half as much labor as the coat, and consequently, that in the production of the latter, labor power must have been expended during twice the time necessary for the production of the former.[1]**

The coat and the linen have value. The source of that value is labor. Marx calls this labor productive labor because it produces something useful. Marx then goes on to discuss the relationship between the quantity of labor needed to produce a commodity and the value of that commodity, and how the value of a commodity is relative to the value of other commodities. Marx calls this the equivalent form of value. This equivalent form of value accounts for the fluctuation in the values of commodities.

So far so good. Where Marx's theory goes awry is in his misconstruing of the term value. Marx asserts that value is a function of labor. While labor is an important component of the production process, it adds nothing to the value of a commodity. Instead, labor adds to the cost of production. Labor is an expense,

not an asset. It is a commodity that provides a service needed to produce a product. Like any other commodity, it is used, and once used it is gone. If possible, the owner of capital would dispense with the use of labor altogether.

The basis of value is not labor but worth. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary offers four definitions of the word value.

1. **the monetary worth of something.**
2. **a fair return or equivalent in goods, services, or money for something exchanged.**
3. **relative worth, utility, or importance.**
4. **something (such as a principle or quality) intrinsically valuable or desirable**[1]

These definitions contain no reference to labor. Other factors – monetary worth, fair return, utility and importance, desirability – determine value. This does not mean that labor is superfluous. Obviously it is needed to produce a commodity. Indeed, as Abraham Lincoln said, labor is the source for all capital.[1] **However, that does not make labor any less of an expense. Under the Marxist formula, labor's demand for compensation would be insatiable. If possible, a machine would replace every worker.**

Marxism is debunked.[1] **In *Karl Marx's Economics: Critical Assessments*, John Cunningham Woods writes,**

> **A. P. Lerner was one of the first to attack Samuelson's paper, claiming that Samuelson made unwarranted concessions to the "over-thoroughly" demolished labor theory of value.[1]**

Economist A. P. Lerner writes,

> **The labor theory of value, diluted or undiluted, while of interest for the history of economic thought, has no place in today's economic analysis.[1]**

Marxism is a continuation of the anti-capitalist romantic tradition that predated Marx by at least fifty years.[1] It is flighty; it appeals to emotion. It belongs alongside the other once popular but now discredited ideas, such as the theories of phlogiston[1], alchemy[1] and bloodletting[1].

There is a belief that genius is often tinged with a bit of madness. Inside the genius's mind, teeming with a myriad of complex thoughts and abstract concerns, intellectual preoccupations so overwhelmingly dominate the psyche that they distort and diminish the more mundane mental and social operations. On this subject, the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer wrote,

> **Moreover, since in general, the knowledge of persons of genius has to some extent freed itself from the service of the will, they will not in conversation think so much of the person they are addressing as of the thing they are speaking about, which is vividly present to them; and therefore they are likely to judge or narrate things too objectively for their own interests; they will not pass over in silence what would more prudently be concealed,**

> and so forth. Finally, they are given to soliloquizing, and in general may exhibit certain weaknesses which are actually akin to madness.[1]

Continuing on the same topic, Schopenhauer goes on to write,

> Especially instructive in this respect in Goethe's "Torquato Tasso," in which he shows us not only the suffering, the martyrdom of genius as such, but also how it constantly passes into madness. Finally, the fact of the direct connection of genius and madness is established by the biographies of great men of genius, such as Rousseau, Byron, and Alfieri, and by anecdotes from the lives of others.[1]

Was Marx insane? Without benefit of reliable clinical information upon which to formulate an opinion, there is no definitive answer to that question. But based on Schopenhauer's comments, the possibility cannot be ruled out.

Marxism claims to be progressive but supports oppression. It claims to offer a pathway to liberation but instead produces walls, barriers, gulags and poverty. Marxism lacks scientific legitimacy. It rejects the concept of the individual. It reduces humans to cogs.

Marxism is a sham. Its goal is to polarize people. Marxism is the progenitor of Fascism and its most lethal iteration, Nazism. Indeed, the Marxist and Nazi ideologies share many features. First, both believe in mass murder as a matter of political necessity. Second, both believe that society is a collective and the individual subordinate to the group. Third, both rely heavily on ideological rationalization to justify the most outrageous crimes. Fourth, both demand absolute conformity to the prevailing ideological line. Fifth, both reject and scorn democratic values. Sixth, both cultivate the cult of leadership. Nazism merely

replaces the dictatorship of the proletariat with the dictatorship of the leader who supposedly embodies the will of the nation. Stalin colluded with Hitler to crush Poland.

Marxist rhetoric is hysterical, incendiary and frightening. In many respects it is identical to that of the Nazis. From the September 1, 1918 edition of the Bolshevik newspaper *Krasnaya Gazeta*:

> **We will turn our hearts into steel, which we will temper in the fire of suffering and the blood of fighters for freedom. We will make our hearts cruel, hard, and immovable so that no mercy will enter them, and so that they will not quiver at the sight of a sea of enemy blood. We will let loose the floodgate of that sea. Without mercy, without sparing, we will kill our enemies in scores of hundreds, Let them be thousands; let them drown themselves in their own blood. For the blood of Lenin and Uritsky, Zinovief and Volodarski, let there be floods of the blood of the bourgeois – more blood, as much as possible.[1]**

In 1918 Vladimir Lenin wrote:

> **The kulaks are the most brutal, callous and savage exploiters …. These bloodsuckers have grown rich on the want suffered by the people in the war; they have raked in thousands and hundreds of thousands of rubles by screwing up the prices of grain and other products. These fighters have grown fat at the expense of the peasants who have been ruined by the war, at the expense of the hungry workers. These leeches suck the blood of the toilers and grew richer as the workers in the cities and factories starved. These vampires have been gathering and are gathering the landed estates into their hands; they keep on enslaving the poor peasants.**
>
> **Ruthless war must be waged on these kulaks! Death to them! Hatred and contempt for the parties which defend them – The Right Socialist Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks, and Left Socialist Revolutionaries! The workers must crush with an iron hand the revolts of the kulaks who are forming an alliance with the**

> foreign capitalists against the toilers of their own country.[1] [1]

The rhetoric is over the top, its purpose obvious: to incite. But that is not surprising. It is fueled by an ideology that extols violence.

Under Marxism violence is a positive good. British historian Giles Udy states,

> Marxism declares that it is the unquestioned right of the working class to rule over the other classes. Marx and his Leninist followers in Russia believed that class war was not only inevitable but that it was the duty of the proletariat to embrace and, even, to provoke it.[1]

Marxism understands the world only in terms of class struggle. Simon Tormey, the co-director of the Center for the Study of Social and Global Justice (CSSGJ) at Nottingham University, said

> Open and violent struggles are commonplace in much of the world; strikes, lockouts, and beatings of workers in places like China, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, and violent peasant conflicts in places like Nandigram, India. Look around: class struggle is everywhere and infects almost every human relation.[1]

The Marxist solution for violence is more violence.

The comments contained herein are not meant to personally impugn Marx. He acted in good faith. He sincerely and truly wanted to improve the human condition. He opposed the existing feudalistic system that suppressed human potential. He thought in broad sweeping terms. He imagined a world free from

injustice. He labored to raise political consciousness. He exposed the imperfections of an emerging capitalist system. He delved into the mysteries of economic forces and brought them, albeit imperfectly, to light. He called attention to the relationship between technological innovation and social change. He championed the rights of those who lacked political power.

He shaped popular thought. He became a rallying point for all Progressive-minded persons. Yet, ultimately, his work fails. Its message is bogus, based on an intellectual mirage, and its consequences disastrous. Marxism is not the answer.

Marx was not the first to register outrage against the exploitation of the vulnerable and disadvantaged. The Bible includes this admonition:

> **Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless. If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not treat it like a business deal; charge no interest. If you take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset.[1]**

While the reliability of the Bible as a historical document is open to question, the passage itself is not. It is a demand for justice. Marxism is a reiteration of what was already known long before Karl Marx lived. Marx merely repackaged the biblical message in terms that would make it more palpable to his audience which included those who were seeking an excuse to tear things down, grab political power and terrorize people, all in the name of justice. Whenever and

wherever they succeeded, that is exactly what they did. In *The Bolshevik Model of Development*, political historian Frederick Nicholson writes,

> **Because Lenin visualized the party as a revolutionary elite, its function was to impose a revolutionary consciousness from without and be the spearhead for the overthrow of the old order.[1]**

Lenin's vision put Russia on a track that led to crimes on a scale so vast that it rivaled, and may even have exceeded that perpetrated by the Nazis (if such a thing is possible).

The Communist Manifesto, written by Marx and Frederick Engels, concludes with these words:

> **The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.**
>
> **Working men of all countries unite![1]**

Marx's call for revolution continues to reverberate to this day.

Marx's labor value theory has serious political implications. If valid, it means that the entire economic system is one big sham that is defrauding the vast majority of the human race, and that the human race is stuck in a spiral of ever escalating violence that will end with the destruction of entire social classes. Now Marx would argue just the opposite: that the human race can actually look forward to a glorious future when all private property is gone and

humans are no longer alienated from their work. Yet this utopian vision rings hollow. It offers a promise of something better, but in practice falls far short of the mark. One can argue that social progress is a rocky road and that the final goal is worth the cost. That is easy to say if you are not the one asked or forced to pay the price.

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PWW 11/2017

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MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS: CLINICIANS OR CLERKS?

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Title

MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKERS: CLINICIANS OR CLERKS?

Abstract

Medical social workers have the training and clinical skills to treat patients with psychosocial problems. Yet in health care settings, medical social workers are not expected to perform as clinicians, but rather as functionaries who carry out a variety of tasks that have no relationship to clinical care. As a result, the clinical role of the medical social worker is eroded, leading to professional stagnation. Due to confusion over what social workers are expected to do, the subordinate role of social work within the health care delivery system, and the lack of treatment modalities specifically unique to the social work profession, upgrading the role of the medical social worker and preserving medical social work services as a viable and recognizable clinical specialty will be daunting and challenging task. Ultimately, the question is: does clinical social work have a credible role in the health care field?

Key words: clinicians; stagnation; subordinate; deskilled; functionaries.

Text

Medical social workers have much to offer as clinicians in the field of health care. Yet they routinely perform duties that are not commensurate with their education, training or skills. Why has this happened? Can social workers perform effectively under these circumstances? Do social workers even belong in the health care field?

Social work services in the health care field is mandated by Federal law (Mizrahi, 1992, page 89) and required by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Hospitals (Estes, 1984, page 24). As a result, most hospitals now employ social work staff. In 1997, 84.7 percent of the hospitals in the United States provided social work services (Hospital Statistics, 1999). In 1905 Massachusetts General Hospital became the first hospital to employ social workers (Bracht, 1978, page 11).

Medical social workers can provide a wide range of clinical services. These clinical services include discharge planning, counseling and support, assisting with decision-making, patient and family education, assisting with obtaining benefits, facilitating access to community resources, resolving behavioral problems which interfere with patient care, risk management, and consultation around behavioral and emotional issues (Berkman, 1996, page 544).

Given this impressive array of clinical services that medical social workers can, and do, provide, and the widespread employment of social workers throughout the health care industry (Bracht, 1978, page 5), the

clinical role of the medical social worker should be firmly established. Yet this is not the case. Instead of being allowed to perform as clinicians, medical social workers perform as clerks, resulting in professional stagnation which in turn erodes the credibility of the medical social worker as a member of the interdisciplinary treatment team and calls into question the status of social work as a bona fide profession.

This is not a new problem. Known in England as almoners, from the word "almoner," the title of the officials in 13th cenurty France who distributed alms to the poor (The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 1, 1997, page 289), medical social workers historically have been expected to perform a myriad of tasks that have nothing to do with clinical work. In 1937, the United Hospital Fund reported that

> **Some [medical social work] departments have been regarded as general utilities to which was assigned any job that did not seem to fit logically into the rest of the hospital's organization, irrespective of its bearing on social study and treatment (The United Hospital Fund, 1937, page 560).**

Some of the numerous tasks that medical social workers performed included: indiscriminant mass relief work (milk, food, clothes, ice, coal, etc.), obtaining blood donors, obtaining permissions for autopsies, providing information about the operation of the hospital, and "a vast number of other duties" that lacked "any logical relationship to medical social service" (The United Hospital Fund, 1937, page 560). The United Hospital Fund also reported that the "practice of [medical] social case work" was "exacting and exhausting" and that the social caseworkers

were "fatigued by overwork," "tired," and "harassed" (The United Hospital Fund, 1937, page 580).

The dichotomy between what medical social workers could offer and the duties that medical social workers were expected to perform was most apparent in the area of discharge planning. Although a clinical service, discharge planning was considered an activity that did not warrant full professional status (NASW, Encyclopedia, 1997, page 2286). Yet this was the one clinical function that health care organizations wanted medical social workers to perform. Carol Bailey Germaine writes:

> **In many health care settings, discharge planning came to be relegated to social workers with less than graduate education, on the assumption that it required less knowledge and skill than did the counseling function. In hospitals the redefinition of the social work function was rarely congruent with the expectations and perceptions of physicians, patients, and hospital administration, who placed greater value on the social worker's help in developing sound discharge plans than on psychologically oriented counseling (Germaine, 1984, pages 171-172).**

Since the 1930s, medical social work has undergone little, if any, Change. Germaine's words hold true today. Physicians, patients, and hospital administration still place greater value on the social worker's help in developing sound discharge plans than on psychologically oriented counseling (Cowles and Lefcowitz, 1992, pages 57, 58, 63). In accordance with this expectation, and consistent with the generalist social work theoretical practice model emphasizing case management, "the link between the client and the service delivery system" (NASW Case Management, 1992, page 22), medical social work departments

today distribute clothing, issue carfare, arrange transportation, provide community liaison service, order medical equipment, and request home care service (Bracht, 1978, page 138; Furstenburg, 1984, pages 48-52). Medical social workers even arrange for the delivery of reading material to Inpatients from the patient library, write letters at the request of patients and their families verifying the patient's hospitalization, and obtain television service for indigent patients free-of-charge. There are 29 possible resources that social workers can use to facilitate service delivery (Furstenburg, 1984, pages 45-47). To provide these services, the medical social worker, who, as a case manager, is "expected to be ready to perform whatever role it takes to ensure that their clients receive appropriate, coordinated, and continuous care" (Rubin, 1992, page 10), must be proficient in the use of a telephone and a fax machine, and in making sure that medical documents are properly completed and expeditiously processed. Although case management is an important service, and requires knowledge of community resources and bureaucratic organization and an ability to communicate effectively by telephone and fax, this task does not require any formal clinical training. NASW reported that "Within the past 10 years, policymakers have appropriated case management tasks and assigned them to nonprofessionals in the interest of cost containment" (NASW, Case Management, 1992, page 21).

Within the hospital setting, the primary function of the medical social

worker is to facilitate the discharge of the patients from the hospital. To perform this task, the medical social worker participates as a member of a multidisciplinary team, which is headed by the doctor who is ultimately responsible for all facets of the patient's discharge. The interdisciplinary collaboration associated with the multidisciplinary team approach reveals the unequal relationship between the physician and the medical social worker, and reinforces the medical social worker's subordinate role in the discharge planning process.

The medical social worker can diagnose the patient's social problems and offer certain clinical recommendations which a physician may, but is not obligated to, take into consideration or incorporate when developing a treatment plan. The reverse, however, is not the case. For instance, if a physician orders home care services for a patient, the medical social worker is duty-bound to implement that plan. But if the medical social worker makes the same recommendation, the physician has the discretionary authority to reject the recommendation. If the doctor rejects the medical social worker's recommendation, the medical social worker is left with little recourse except to either 1. dispute the physician's decision and thereby be accused of being argumentative, presumptuous, obstructionist, "making waves," and wanting to cause an unnecessary delay in the discharge for which the medical social worker will bear full blame or 2. acquiesce with the physician's decision, even if it places the patient at risk, thereby forfeiting professional integrity, ignoring ethical

considerations and foregoing independent action in favor of the more politically expedient and non-confrontational option of "buckling under," "going along with the program," and avoiding responsibility by rationalizing that "it's the doctor's decision, not mine." In either case, the physician, as the dominant member of the interdisciplinary treatment team (Abramson and Mizrahi, 1996, page 271), has the final say. Terry Mizrahi writes:

> **Medical and psychiatric settings are still controlled by physicians and heavily influenced by nurses and psychologists. Obtaining recognition of professional social work services as an integral and equal part of health and mental health teams remains a challenge (Mizrahi, 1992, page 87).**

For example, in one vignette, a medical doctor unilaterally decides to discharge a 62 year old female patient to home, completely ignoring the medical social worker's plan to place the patient, who was incontinent and in restraints, in a nursing home (Dziegielewski, 1998, pages 4-6).

For the medical staff, interdisciplinary collaboration is an intrusive challenge to the physician's competence and authority (Abramson and Mizrahi, 1996, page 279). Robert Dingwall writes:

> **The doctors we have encountered tend to be rather dismissive about the value of case conferences and to regard them as a waste of time…. Given the assumptions of professional dominance, then it is a waste of time discussing decisions which a doctor has already made. It is simply a matter for others to execute (Dingwall, page 89).**

Dr. Richard Cabot, the physician who in 1905 founded the first hospital

based social work department in the United States, said:

> Unless the doctor has already acquired the "social point of view" … he will think that the social worker is trying to teach him how to do his work whenever she does what he didn't and couldn't do before. Naturally, he will resent this indignantly (Bracht, 1978, page 10).

Differences between the medical and social work professions seem to be irreconcilable. The Seeholm Report in Britain noted

> the more fundamental sources of the difference between medicine and social work in the contrasting developments of the two professions. The social workers' emphasis is on the patients gaining understanding of their situation and on the acquisition of personal insight and empathy on the part of the social workers. Medicine on the other hand is concerned with refining its objectivity and technology …. These two approaches are as different as they are obviously complimentary (Bracht, 1978, page 10).

Considered as interlopers who could not relate to physicians, it is not surprising that some health care facilities did not want to employ social workers. During the 1930s, some hospital administrators were convinced that the introduction of social workers would lead to the expansion of charity care in their facilities. Others felt that attending to the social needs of the patients was a job for city agencies. And others believed that their institutions already had the resources, such as members of religious orders, auxiliary committees, and nursing personnel, who could attend to the social needs of the patients (The United Hospital Fund, 1937, page 542).

Although fallacious, these beliefs were reinforced by the nebulous nature of social work itself. Nobody knew what kind of services medical

social workers were actually qualified to provide. In 1915 Abraham Flexner said that social work was not a profession because it lacked "an educationally communicable technique (NASW, Encyclopedia, Vol. 3, page 2285). Nor did a medical social worker require any special training or credentials. During the winter of 1935-1936, about 66 percent of the hospital social workers in New York City were nurses (The United Hospital Fund, 1937, page 569). Out of 123 social workers employed by the New York City Department of Hospitals, one had graduated from a school of social work (The United Hospital Fund, 1937, page 570).

Starting in the 1990s, efforts to remove clinical social workers from health care settings have intensified. Social workers have been stigmatized for advocating on behalf of the poor, nonpaying patients who are considered financial burdens (Ross, 1993, pages 243-244). Illinois and Texas attempted, unsuccessfully, to eliminate mandates for the social work degree (Mizrahi, 1992, page 88). In New York State, NASW reported, the Governor's Office of Regulatory Reform (ORR) "refused to approve a proposal that would have required social work departments in urban hospitals to be headed by MSWs" (NASW News, July 1999). Referring to the ORR, Gerald Beallor, of the New York City Chapter of NASW, said: "It … removes jobs from social work" (NASW News, July 1999). Legal efforts to declare the ORR unconstitutional failed. That BSW and MSW social workers perform the same duties (Kadushin and Kulys, 1995; Levin and Herbert, 1997, page 27) have lent credence to these efforts to eliminate

social work positions.

One particularly vexing problem for the social work profession is that medical social work still lacks a well-defined clinical role. In the hospital, auxiliary committees provide charity to help indigent patients and physicians, psychologists, staff nurses, nurse clinicians, case managers and chaplains provide counseling, an important clinical service that other health care professionals in addition to social workers are able to provide. Sophie F. Dziegielewski writes: "Often the roles that social workers perform overlap with those of other disciplines. For example, today nurses are often asked to run therapeutic support groups in the health care setting" (Dziegielewski, 1998, page 9). In a survey of physicians and nurses,

> **Only 1.1 percent of physicians and 1.5 percent of nurses believed that assessing emotional problems of patients belongs to social work, and only 6.3 percent of physicians and 8.9 percent of nurses believed that helping find solutions to those problems belongs to social work (Cowles and Lefcowitz, 1992, page 60).**

Even discharge planning, that one clinical function most closely associated with social work, is not the exclusive responsibility of the social work department (Berger *et al*, 1996, page 172). If a patient has a mental health problem, a primary care physician will refer the case not to a social worker but to a psychiatrist or a psychologist (Steinberg, 1997, page 213). In several states action has been taken to deny social workers the right to use psychological tests (O'Neill, 1999). The NYC-NASW Think Tank reported

that "Efforts that once constituted social work services are being peeled away" (NASW, Currents, 1999). Lay persons can perform as helpers too (Whitaker and Tracy, 1989, page 13).

Lacking a specific clinical role, social workers are at risk of losing their professional identity. In a survey of medical social workers, concerns were expressed

> **about role changes, loss of control over decisions regarding the social work role, and lack of understanding of the social work role among program staff … in all interviews. Respondents expressed concern about the opportunity for other disciplines to participate in setting priorities for social workers and concern that the boundaries between social and other disciplines could be breached. They spoke about the fear that their roles would be watered down and that other disciplines would usurp their counseling role or expect them to perform tasks social workers associate with other disciplines (Globerman *et al*, 1996, page 182).**

These concerns reflect the social workers' deep awareness that they are in competition with other health care professionals for jobs (Gibelman, 1999, page 305).

Defending and justifying the clinical role of medical social work is made more difficult by the confusion, both within and outside of the social work profession, over the actual function of a social worker. E. R. Tolson writes: "There is considerable confusion in the minds of the public about what a social worker is" (Tolson, 1994, page 134.) Noel and Rita Timms write: "It is surprisingly difficult to define 'social work' or even to describe what social workers do" (Timms, 1977, page 33). Margaret Gibelman writes

> of the expansive and expanding boundaries of social work, and the difficulty in providing succinct, encapsulated descriptions of a complex and multifaceted profession (Gibelman, 1999, page 301).

Further complicating efforts to arrive at a precise description of social work's clinical role is the lack of consensus over what is meant by the term "professional social worker." Terry Mizrahi writes:

> The profession still struggles with it own definition of standards and requirements for who is or should be a "professional," "qualified," and "autonomous" social worker (Mizrahi, Health and Social Work, 1992, page 88).

Efforts to upgrade the clinical role of the medical social worker will not be easy. In addition to the need for the social work profession to develop a concise definition for the term "social worker" and a simple, straightforward description of what a social worker does, several other obstacles have to be overcome. First, as non-physicians, medical social workers do not practice medicine (NASW, letter, 1999), and therefore do not have primary responsibility for the medical management of cases in the health care setting. Second, as employees (Gibelman, 1999, page 303), medical social workers do not set the rules governing the conditions of their employment. Third, as health care facilities continue to cut costs by decreasing inpatient lengths of stay (Cjeka, 1999, pages 57-58), the focus on discharge planning is increasing (Ross, 1993, page 246), thereby placing further demands on medical social workers to provide even more "low skill" services (Kadushin and Kulys, 1995, page 174). Fourth, clinical

social workers are already being replaced by less qualified and lower-paid para-professional surrogates (NASW, Currents, 1999). This trend has already led to erosion in the level of service. The NYC-NASW Think Tank found that

> **Social Work is reduced to a pattern of expansion of paperwork, diminishment of direct service, and therefore a diminishment of skill and lower wages.**
>
> **The trend over the past 20 years has been to hire people with bachelors and associate degrees instead of MSWs (NASW, 1999).**

In the health care field, the role of the social worker has been reduced to clearing the beds and moving out bodies (Kadushin and Kulys, 1995, page 174).

The social work profession has a long and honorable tradition of service to the poor. Institutions such as Hull House and the Henry Street Settlement became world famous, and Jane Addams, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931, and Lillian Wald, who founded the Visiting Nurse Service, became icons synonymous with leadership, innovation and clarity of purpose. Unlike medical social workers, who as employees are constrained from defining and determining their role in the workplace, and as wage earners do not want to jeopardize their jobs, Jane Addams and Lillian Wald developed their own programs which allowed them wide latitude to affect far-reaching and meaningful social change (Addams, 1938; Feuerlicht, 1970; James, 1981; Siegel, 1983). Paul H. Stuart writes: "Settlement house residents were pioneers in research and social action (Stuart, 1999, page 336).

This outstanding tradition of excellent and meaningful service can be replicated in medical social work. To accomplish this, medical social workers must assert their professional status and expand their clinical role, with emphasis on those areas of clinical practice that are directly relevant to the needs of the patients and at the same time applicable to achieving organizational objectives. Further, medical social workers must initiate, facilitate and maintain an ongoing dialogue with other professional disciplines and with hospital administrators and managers in order to

1. instill and reinforce a greater awareness, understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of the role of the medical social worker as an important and valuable member of the clinical team; 2. promote and project a positive image of the medical social worker as dynamic and proactive clinical leader; and 3. actively refute and categorically reject the stereotypical impression of the medical social worker as a mere bureaucratic functionary with nothing to offer clinically or substantively except to process forms and thereby make the physician's job easier (Berkman, 1996, page 545).

Licensure of social workers in many states has further legitimized social work's rightful claim for full and unconditional inclusion in the community of clinical treatment providers, but more needs to be done to ensure that the legal recognition of clinical competence that licensure affords gets translated into practical action at the workplace. Such action, in the form of expanded clinical responsibilities, will result in higher quality service for the patients, greater job satisfaction for the social work staff,

enhanced feelings of pride in being a social worker, and preservation and expansion of the social work role in the health care field.

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PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR ACTORS ON WAYS TO PROMOTE ONE'S CAREER

by Phillip W. Weiss

1. Honor your commitments.

2. Show up to all rehearsals and performances on time.

3. Thoroughly familiarize yourself with your role.

4. Stay within your professional boundaries.

5. Carefully listen to the director.

6. Unless solicited, NEVER offer advice to the director; better to leave a production on good terms than to argue over creative differences.

7. Never show up at a rehearsal or performance hung-over or intoxicated.

8. Work cooperatively with your fellow cast members.

9. Fully commit yourself to the project.

10. Be of good cheer.

11. Present a neat, professional personal appearance.

12. When auditioning, be confident, be polite, and SMILE.

13. When answering an audition call, ALWAYS bring a headshot and resume.

14. After an audition, quickly exit.

15. Unless otherwise directed, ALWAYS speak your lines clearly enough and loudly enough to be easily understood in the last row.

16. Develop and practice singing and dancing skills.

17. Commit at least two 100+-word monologues to memory.

18. Be sincerely supportive of your fellow actors.

19. Never refuse a role without valid reason; respond to all offers quickly.

20. Never put yourself ahead of the show; no one is indispensable.

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21. Put forth your best effort; don't be afraid to fail.

22. Treat EVERY role, including general extra roles, as the most important role of your career.

23. If you are in show biz to earn money, stop wasting your time and the director's and go get a job.

Jews in the Military

October 2, 2008
Dear Mr. Moskow:

Thank you for your letter dated September 9, 2008. I have nothing more to add regarding your research on the late P/O Seymour M. Schatzberg.

According to your letter, you have been conducting research about the participation of Jewish servicemen in World War Two. Here are some statistics which may assist you in your research.

Statistics on American Jews in World War II

- **During the course of World War II, 550,000 men and women of Jewish faith served in every branch of the armed forces of the United States.**
- **Twenty-two Jews attained senior rank in the armed forces — 18 were generals, 6 were major generals, 12 were brigadier generals,1 was vice admiral, 2 were rear admirals, and 1 was a commodore.**
- **The total number of Jewish war casualties was 38,338, 11,000 Jews were killed, 7,000 in combat.**
- **Approximately 26,000 Jewish men and women in uniform received citations for valor and merit. The number of awards totaled 49,315, including 3 Congressional Medals of Honor (Ben Salomon, Isadore S. Jachman, and Raymond Zussman), 66 Distinguished Service Crosses, 28 Navy Crosses, 41 Distinguished Service Medals, 244 Legions of Merit, 1,434 Silver Stars, 2,047 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 191 Soldier's Medals, 28 Navy and Marine Corps Medals, 4,641 Bronze Star Medals, 13,212 Air Medals and 14,550 Purple Hearts.**

Source: http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/ww2/jewstats.html

Sincerely,
Phillip W. Weiss

Phil's List of Movies That

Dramatize Psychological Themes

by Phillip W. Weiss

Taxi Driver (1976), directed by Martin Scorsese, with Robert De Niro, Cybil Shepherd, Harvey Keitel, and Jodie Foster. A socially isolated army veteran is rejected by a woman and displaces his rage on others. This movie was nominated for four Academy Awards, including Best Actor and Best Actress in a supporting role.

Leaving Las Vegas (1995), directed by Mike Figgis, with Nicholas Cage, Elizabeth Shue and Julian Sands. A alcoholic screen writer decides to commit suicide in Las Vegas. This movie won the Academy Award for Best Actor.

Charly (1968), directed by Ralph Nelson, with Cliff Robertson, Claire Bloom and Leon Janney. A mentally retarded man is transformed into a genius then quickly regresses back to his baseline with tragic consequences.This movie won the Academy Award for Best Actor.

The Pawnbroker (1965), directed by Sidney Lumet, with Rod Steiger, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Brock Peters and Jaime Sanchez. A bitter Holocaust survivor has repeated flashbacks as the squalor of his surroundings remind him of the brutality he experienced in Europe.

As Good as It Gets (1997), directed by James L. Brooks, with Jack Nicholson, Laura Linney, Greg Kinnear and Cuba Gooding Jr. A writer with obsessive compulsive disorder comes out of his shell after he befriends a dog. This movie won Academy Awards for Best Actor and Best Actress.

First Blood (1982) directed by Ted Kotcheff, with Sylvester Stallone, Richard Crenna, Brian Dennehy and David Caruso. A Vietnam veteran and ex-prisoner of war experiences an intense flashback and reverts back to being a soldier, with dire consequences.

Three Faces of Eve (1957), directed by Nunnally Johnson, with Joanne Woodward, David Wayne and Lee J. Cobb. A woman is treated for multiple personality disorder. This movie won the Academy Award for Best Actress.

The Odd Couple (1968), directed by Gene Saks, with Walter Matthau, Jack Lemmon and Herb Edelman. Two middle aged divorced men, one slovenly and disorganized, the other fastidious and obsessively neat, share an apartment with humorous results.

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The Exorcist **(1973) directed Willaim Friedkin, with Ellen Burstyn, Lee J. Cobb, Max Von Sydow, Jason Miller and Linda Blair. A young, innocent girl undergoes a radical personality change which defies psychiatric intervention.**

Days of Wine and Roses (1962) directed by Blake Edwards, with Jack Lemmon, Lee Remick, Charles Bickford and Jack Klugman. A married couple struggle with the effects of alcoholism. This movie was nominated for five Academy Awards including Best Actor and Best Actress.

Now, Vogager (1942) directed by Irving Rapper, with Betty Davis, Paul Henreid, Claude Rains, Gladys Cooper and Bonita Granville. A shy, introverted spinster undergoes psychotherapy, asserts her independence and achieves emotional fulfillment. This movie was nominated for three Academy Awards, including Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress.

Dr. Jekyl1 and Mr. Hyde (1941), directed by Victor Fleming, with Spencer Tracy, Ingrid Bergman and Lana Turner. A mild-mannered educated man experiments with a mind-altering potion which transforms him into a brutal unrestrained fiend.

Safe (1995), directed by Todd Haynes, with Julianne Moore, Peter Friedman and Xander Berkeley. A woman with a phobia of chemicals in the environment takes increasingly radical measures to isolate herself in order to avoid exposure.

The Purple Rose of Cairo (1985), directed by Woody Allen, with Mia Farrow, Jeff Daniels, Danny Aiello and Irving Metzman. An actor is portrayed as having two personalities – his screen persona in which he is kind, selfless, witty and heroic, and his professional persona in which he is selfish and self-centered.

Rain Man (1988), directed by Barry Levinson, with Dustin Hoffman,Tom Cruise, Valeria Golino and Gerald R. Molen. A young man attempts to form a relationship with his older brother who is autistic and cannot tolerate being touched. This movie won four Academy Awards: Best Actor, Best Director, Best Picture and Best Writing, Original Screenplay.

The Onion Field (1979), directed by Harold Becker, with John Savage, James Woods, Franklyn Seales and Ted Danson. A police officer suffers from post traumatic stress syndrome. This movie was nominated for the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor.

A Woman Under the Influence (1980), directed by John Cassavetes, with Pete Falk, Gina Rowlands, Fred Draper and Matthew Cassel. A working class man struggles to cope with his wife's mental illness. This movie was nominated for two Academy Awards for Best Actress and Best Director.

The Picture of Dorian Gray (1945), directed by Albert Lewin, with Hurd Hatfield, George Sanders, Donna Reed, Angela Lansbury and Peter Lawford. An urbane, soft-spoken gentleman leads a double life. This movie won the Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actress.

Casablanca (1942), directed by Michael Curtiz, with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Paul Henreid, Claude Rains, Conrad Veidt and Peter Lorre. An American saloon owner is forced to deal with his feelings about a woman and the purpose of his life. This movie was nominated for eight Academy Awards, winning three: Best Director, Best Picture and Best Writing, Screenplay.

The Ten Commandments (1956), directed by Cecil B. DeMille, with Charlton Heston, Yul Brynner, Anne Baxter, Nina Foch and Edward G. Robinson. A prince of Egypt suddenly believes that he was born a Hebrew slave and undergoes a radical personality change. This movie was nominated for seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture.

Ben Hur (1959), directed by William Wyler, with Charlton Heston, Stephen Boyd, Jack Hawkins and Sam Jaffe. A Jewish prince in Palestine sublimates his rage in order to survive and wreak revenge on the Roman official who destroyed his family. This movie won eleven Academy Awards, including Best Actor, Best Director and Best Picture.

Psycho (1960), directed by Alfred Hitchcock, with Anthony Perkins, Janet Leigh, Vera Miles and Martin Balsam. A mild-mannered hotel manager vents his rage through an alter ego. This movie was nominated for four Academy Awards including Best Director and Best Supporting Actress.

Strangers on a Train (1951), directed by Alfred Hitchcock, with Robert Walker, Farley Granger, Ruth Roman and Leo G. Carroll. A psychotic man projects his homicidal tendencies onto a tennis player who he meets on a train.

Frances (1982), directed by Graeme Clifford, with Jessica Lange, Kim Stanley and Sam Shepherd. Biopic of Hollywood actress Frances Farmer who was confined in a state mental hospital. This movie was nominated for Academy Awards for Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress.

The Best Years of Our Lives (1946), directed by William Wyler, with Myrna Loy, Frederic March, Dana Andrews, Teresa Wright, Virginia Mayo and Harold Russell. Army veterans return home from the war and discover that they and their world have changed. This movie won seven Academy Awards including Best Actor, Best Director and Best Picture.

Play Misty for Me (1971), directed by Clint Eastwood, with Clint Eastwood, Jessica Walter, Donna Mills and John Larch. A radio disc jockey becomes the target of an emotionally disturbed woman.

Death Wish (1974), directed by Michael Winner, with Charles Bronson, Hope Lange, Vincent Gardenia and Steven Keats. A man displaces his rage on others by becoming a one-man vigilante.

Trading Places (1983), directed by John Landis, with Eddie Murphy, Dan Aykroyd, Ralph Bellamy, Don Ameche, Jaime Lee Curtis and Denhom Elliott. A cruel experiment goes awry with unexpected consequences. This movie was nominated for two Golden Globe Awards: Best Motion Picture – Comedy/Musical and Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture – Comedy/Musical.

Coming to America (1988), directed by John Landis, with Eddie Murphy, Arsenio Hall, James Earl Jones and John Amos. A young African prince travels to New York City to establish his own identity. This movie won the Image Awards for Outstanding Motion Picture and Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Motion Picture.

Pretty Woman (1990), directed by Garry Marshall, with Julia Roberts, Richard Gere, Jason Alexander, Ralph Bellamy and Elinor Donahue. An emotionally repressed businessman lets go of his anger and undergoes a dramatic personality change. This movie was nominated for four Golden Globe Awards including Best Motion Picture.

For Whom the Bells Toll (1943), directed by Sam Wood, with Ingrid Bergman, Gary Cooper, Akim Tamiroff and Katina Paxinou. An American, fighting in the Spanish Civil War, volunteers for a dangerous mission. This movie was nominated for nine Academy Awards winning one for Best Supporting Actress.

The Graduate (1967), directed by Mike Nichols, with Dustin Hoffman, Ann Bancroft, Katherine Ross, Murray Hamilton and William Daniels. A young man graduates from college and experiences an identity crisis which causes him to make poor decisions that hurt others. This movie was nominated for eight Academy Awards, winning for Best Director.

Moon Over Parador (1988), directed by Paul Mazursky, with Richard Dreyfuss, Raul Julia, Sonia Braga, Jonathan Winters and Sammy Davis Jr. While portraying a dictator, an actor experiences identity confusion placing his life at risk. This movie was nominated for two Golden Globe Awards: Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role and Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role.

The Hospital (1971), directed by Arthur Hiller, with George C. Scott, Diana Rigg, Barnard Hughes and Richard Dysart. A medical doctor contemplating suicide meets a woman who helps him restore his faith in life and renew his purpose for living. This movie was nominated for two Academy Awards including Best Actor.

The Jazz Singer (1927), directed by Alan Crosland, with Al Jolson, Mae McAvoy, Warner Oland and Eugenia Besserer. A young man suffers an acute identity crisis when he is forced to decide if he belongs with the in-group or theout-group. This movie won an honorary Academy Award for being the pioneer outstanding talking picture, which revolutionized the industry.

Der Untergang (2004) directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel, with Bruno Ganz, Alexandra Maria Lara, Ulrich Matthes and Juliane Kohler. In the final days of the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler lapses into despair and decides to commit suicide as he realizes his dreams are shattered. This movie was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975), directed by Milos Forman, with Jack Nicholson, Louise Fletcher, Danny DeVito and Will Sampson. A young man feigning mental illness is admitted to a psychiatric hospital and discovers that he fits in with the other patients. This movie won five Academy Awards including Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Director, Best Writing, Screenplay, Adapted From Other Material.

Double Indemnity (1944), directed by Billy Wilder, with Fred MacMurray, Barbara Stanwyck, Edward G. Robinson and Porter Hall. A life insurance salesman and a married woman conspire to murder the woman's husband and then defraud the insurance company. This movie was nominated for seven Academy Awards including Best Director, Best Picture and Best Actress.

Superman (1978), directed by Richard, with Christopher Reeve, Marlon Brando Gene Hackman, Ned Beatty and Margot Kidder. A human-like being from another planet struggles to maintain his identity while impersonating a human being. This movie was nominated for four Academy Awards.

Batman (1989), directed by Tim Burton, with Michael Keaton, Jack Nicholson, Kim Basinger and Robert Wuhl. After witnessing the violent deaths of his parents as a child, a man sublimates his rage by wreaking revenge on criminals in the persona of a bat. This movie was nominated for six BAFTA Awards

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly (1966), directed by Sergio Leone, with Clint Eastwood, Eli Wallach. Lee Van Cleef and Aldo Giuffre. During the Civil War, three sociopaths vie with each other to find a large sum ofmoney buried somewhere in a cemetery.

The Caine Mutiny (1954), directed by Edward Dmytryk, with Humphrey Bogart, Jose Ferrer, Fred MacMurray, and Van Johnson, An emotionally disturbed commander of a U. S. Navy ship issues increasingly irrational orders which triggers a mutiny. This movie was nominated for seven Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Actor.

Mutiny On the Bounty (1935), directed by Frank Lloyd, with Charles Laughton, Clark Gable, Franchot Tone and Eddie Quillan. A commander of a British navy vessel displaces his rage on the crew resulting in a mutiny. This movie was nominated for eight Academy Awards winning one for Best Picture.

Empire of the Sun (1987), directed by Steven Spielberg, with Christian Bale, John Malkovich, Miranda Richardson and Joe Pantoliano. A British youth, separated from his parents, is interned in a Japanese civilian internment camp during World War Two, putting his survival skills to the test. This movie was nominated for six Academy Awards.

The Longest Day (1962) directed Ken Annakin and Andrew Marton, with John Wayne, Eddie Albert, Rod Steiger and Robert Wagner. A coalition of nations led by the United States launch a massive, complex and highly risky military operation to liberate Europe from Nazi tyranny. This movie was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture – Drama.

Saving Private Ryan (1998), directed by Steven Spielberg, with Tom Hanks, Tom Sizemore, Edward Burns, Vin Diesel and Matt Damon. In the days immediately following the D-Day invasion of Europe, a traumatized American officer is ordered to find a missing soldier, further testing his coping skills. This movie won five Academy Awards including Best Director.

The Incredible Hulk (1978), t.v. series, with Bill Bixby, Lou Ferrigno and Jack Colvin. A scientist is exposed to radiation which changes the chemistry in his body and radically alters his personality. This show was nominated for three Emmy Awards, winning one.

The Godfather (1972), directed by Francis Ford Coppola, with Marlon Brando, Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, James Caan and Diane Keaton. A man operates a criminal empire through which he projects his contempt for society. This movie was nominated for eleven Academy Awards, winning three: Best Actor, Best Picture, Best Writing, Screenplay, Based on Material from Another Medium.

Grease (1978), directed by Randal Kleiser, with John Travolta, Olivia Newton-John, Stockard Channing and Jeff Conaway. A teenager falls in love which triggers an immediate identity crisis. This movie was nominated for five Golden Globe Awards, including Best Motion Picture – Musical/Comedy.

Scarface (1983), directed by Brian De Palma, with Al Pacino, Steven Bauer, Michelle Pfeiffer and Robert Loggia. A violent man projects his anger onto everyone, destroying everything and everybody around him. This movie was nominated for three Golden Globe Awards. This movie was a remake of a 1932 movie directed by Howard Hawks and Robert Rosson, and featuring Paul Muni, Ann Dvorak, Karen Morley and George Raft.

Saturday Night Fever (1977), directed by John Badham, with John Travolta, Karen Lynn Gorney, Donna Pescow and Barry Miller. A young man experiences an intense identity crisis causing him to reevaluate his priorities. This movie was nominated for four Golden Globe Awards including Best Motion Picture.

Three Came Home (1950), directed by Jean Negulesco, with Claudette Colbert, Sessue Hayakawa and Patric Knowles. During World War Two a woman detained in a Japanese internment camp is befriended by the camp commandant who protects her because she wrote a book he liked.

Gone With the Wind (1939), directed by Victor Fleming, with Clark Gable, Vivian Leigh, Olivia de Haviland, Leslie Howard and George Reeves. During the Civil War a woman is forced to adjust to rapidly changing conditions as the world she knew collapses around her. This movie won eight Academy Awards including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actress in a Leading Role.

Body and Soul (1947), directed by Robert Rossen, with John Garfield, Lili Palmer, Anne Revere, Joseph Pevney and Canada Lee. A professional boxer is obsessed with making money. This movie was nominated for three Academy Awards including Best Actor in a Leading Role.

Gods and Monsters (1998), directed by Bill Condon, with Ian McKellan, Brendan Fraser, Lynn Redgrave and Lolita Davidovich. A retired movie director and veteran of the First World War suffers flash backs from the war which drive him to despair. This movie was nominated for three Academy Awards including Best Actor in a Leading Role.

Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977), directed by Steven Spielberg, with Richard Dreyfuss, Francois Truffaut, Teri Garr and Melinda Dillon. A man is exposed to a mysterious beam of light and becomes obsessed with finding a mountain. This movie was nominated for eight Academy Awards.

Requiem for a Heavyweight (1962), directed by Ralph Nelson, with Anthony Quinn, Jackie Gleason, Mickey Rooney and Julie Harris. A prize fighter struggles to maintain his dignity and integrity against overwhelming pressure to sell out for money. This movie was nominated for a DGA Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement.

Frankenstein (1931), directed by James Whale, with Colin Clive, Mae Clarke, John Boles and Boris Karloff. A scientist investigating the source of life creates a grotesque monster but refuses to take responsibility for his creation with tragic results.

The Fly (1986), directed by David Cronenberg, with Jeff Goldblum, Geena Davis and John Getz. A scientist conducting dangerous research becomes a victim of his own carelessness. This movie was nominated for six Saturn Awards, winning three awards including Best Horror Film.

Z (1969), directed by Costa-Gavras, with Jean-Louis Trintignant, Irene Papas and Yves Montand. A police inspector investigates the assassination of a politician despite overwhelming pressure to end the investigation. This movie was nominated for five Academy Awards, winning two awards including Best Foreign Language Film.

My Fair Lady (1964), directed by George Cukor, with Rex Harrison, Audrey Hepburn, Stanley Holloway and Jeremy Brett. A prudish man denies his feelings for a woman. This movie won eight Academy Awards including Best Picture.

Fiddler on the Roof (1971), directed by Norman Jewison, with Topol, Norma Crane, Leonard Frey and Paul Mann. A Jewish man in Czarist Russia struggles to maintain his identity during a time of rapid social change. This movie was nominated for eight Academy Awards including Best Picture.

King Kong (1933), directed by Merrian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack, with Robert Armstrong, Fay Wray, Bruce Cabot and Frank Reicher. An opportunistic movie director captures a huge and powerful animal and then displays the animal in public, placing an entire city at risk.

Doctor Zhivago (1965), directed by David Lean, with Omar Sharif, Julie Christie, Geraldine Chaplin, Rod Steiger and Alec Guinness. During a time of sweeping social change, a medical doctor sublimates his intense anger and sexual urges by writing poetry. This movie was nominated for ten Academy Awards, winning five.

W (2008), directed by Oliver Stone, with Josh Brolin, Elizabeth Banks, Richard Dreyfuss and James Cromwell. An alcoholic man, considered a failure by his own family and alienated from his father, sublimates his anger through a career in politics, achieving unexpected success.

Get Low (2009), directed by Aaron Schneider, with Robert Duvall, Sissy Spacek, Bill Murray and Lucas Black. A man consumed by guilt isolates himself from society in order to avoid admitting responsibility for his hurtful behavior.

Jerry Maguire (1996), directed by Cameron Crowe, with Tom Cruise, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Renee Zellweger and Jonathan Lipnicki . A cynical sports agent gets in touch with his feelings and begins connecting with people. This movie was nominated for five Academy Awards, winning one.

My Darling Clementine (1946), directed by John Ford, with Henry Fonda, Linda Darnell, Victor Mature, Walter Brennan and Cathy Downs.: A quiet and upstanding frontier sheriff reveals his aggressive side when provoked.

Alexander (2004), directed by Oliver Stone, with Colin Farrell, Angelina Jolie, Val Kilmer and Anthony Hopkins. A man with grandiose dreams sets out to conquer the world.

Troy (2004), directed by Wolfgang Petersen, with Brad Pitt, Eric Bana, Peter O'Toole and Brendan Gleeson. A war breaks out ostensibly to settle a personal insult.

Stagecoach (1939), directed by John Ford, with John Wayne, Claire Trevor, Thomas Mitchell and Louise Platt. a group of riders on a stagecoach put aside their personal differences to respond to a common threat. This movie was nominated for seven Academy Awards, winning two: Best Actor in a Supporting Role and Best Musical Score.

The Prestige (2006), directed by Christopher Nolan, with Hugh Jackman, Christian Bale, Michael Caine and Rebecca Hall. Two magicians engage in a professional rivalry which becomes personal. This movie was nominated for two Academy Awards.

Poltergeist (1982), directed by Tobe Hooper, with Craig T. Nelson, JoBeth Williams, Zelda Rubenstein and Heather O'Rourke. A family believes that their house is haunted. This movie was nominated for three Academy Awards.

Crash (2004), directed by Paul Haggis, with Matt Dillon, Don Cheadle, Sandra Bullock and William Fichtner. As people's paths cross, stereotyping abounds generating conflict and violence. This movie was nominated for six Academy Awards, winning three including Best Picture,

The Searchers (1956), directed by John Ford, with John Wayne, Jeffrey Hunter, Vera Miles, Natalie Woods and Ward Bond. A bitter man has a reaction formation over his niece which almost results in tragedy.

10 (1979), directed by Blake Edwards, with Dudley Moore, Julie Andrews, Bo Derek, Robert Webber and Dee Wallace. A man in middle-age crisis alienates everyone who cares about him. This movie was nominated for five Golden Globe Awards.

The Third Man (1949), directed by Carol Reed, with Orson Welles, Joseph Cotton, Trevor Howard, Alida Valli and Bernard Lee. Despite overwhelming evidence, a writer refuses to accept that his best friend is a criminal. This movie was nominated for three Academy Awards including Best Director.

Avatar (2009), directed by James Cameron, with Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana, Sigourney Weaver and Stephen Lang. Motivated by greed, an entire civilization is deemed expendable. This movie was nominated for nine Academy Awards, winning three.

West Side Story (1961), directed by Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise, with Natalie Wood, Richard Beymer, Russ Tamblyn, George Chakiris and Rita Moreno. A young man and young woman from rival groups unexpectedly meet and fall in love. This movie won ten Academy Awards including Best Picture.

The Aviator (2004), directed by Martin Scorses, with Leonardo DiCaprio, Cate Blanchett, John C. Reilly, Kate Beckinsale, Alec Baldwin and Alan Alda.
A brilliant entrepreneur's life is severely hampered by obsessive compulsive disorder. This movie was nominated for eleven Academy Awards, winning five.

East of Eden (1955), directed by Elia Kazan, with James Dean, Julie Harris, Raymond Massie and Richard Davalos. Two brothers, estranged from their mother, vie for the affection of their father. This movie was nominated for four Academy Awards.

Treasure of the Sierra Madre (1948), directed by John Huston, with Humphrey Boart, Walter Huston, Tim Holt, Bruce Bennett and Alphonso Bedoya. Three men, motivated by greed, fight with nature and each other to find gold. This movie won three Academy Awards including Best Director.

There Will Be Blood (2007), directed by Paul Thomas Anderson, with Daniel Day-Lewis, Paul Dano, Sydney McAllister and Kellie Hill. A man displaces his aggressive urges onto the land and then projects his hostility on to others. This movie was nominated for eight Academy Awards.

Where's Poppa? (1970), directed by Carl Reiner, with George Segal, Ruth Gordon, Ron Leibman and Trish Van Devere. A single man is conflicted over what to do with his elderly senile mother who lives with him.

Mildred Pierce (1945), with Joan Crawford, Zachary Scott, Jack Carson, Eve Arden and Ann Blyth. A single mother spoils her daughter who grows up to be her mother's rival. This movie was nominated for six Academy Awards, winning one for Best Actress.

Mommy Dearest (1981), directed by Frank Perry, with Faye Dunaway, Diana Scarwid, Steve Forrest and Howard Da Silva. A famous actress displaces her aggression onto her adopted daughter.

Seven Beauties (1975), directed by Lina Wertmuller, with Giancarlo Giannini, Fernando Rey, Shirley Stoler and Mario Conti. A petty criminal incarcerated in a concentration camp suppresses his feelings and sublimates his energy to survive. This movie was nominated for four Academy Awards including Best Director and Best Foreign Language Film.

Guadalcanal Diary (1943), directed by Louis Seiler, with Preston Foster, Lloyd Nolan, William Bendix, Richard Conte and Anthony Quinn. In World War Two, courageous American soldiers invade a Japanese-held island thousands of miles from home.

The Purple Heart (1944), directed by Lewis Milestone, with Dana Andrews, Richard Conte, Farley Granger, Sam Levene and Kevin O'Shea. During World War Two, courageous American airmen held prisoner in Japan and accused of committing war crimes, steadfastly refuse to admit guilt.

Tora! Tora! Tora! (1970), directed by Richard Fleischer and Kinji Fukasaku, with Martin Balsam, Jason Robards, So Yamamura and Joseph Cotten. Denying the threat posed by Japan, the United States is caught off guard by a surprise attack by Japan that destroys much of the American Pacific fleet and triggers a huge and costly war. This movie was nominated for five Academy Awards.

Patton (1970), directed by Franklin J. Schaffner, with George C. Scott, Karl Malden, Bill Hickman and David Bauer. During World War Two a senior U. S. Army commander believes that he is the reincarnation of an ancient Roman general and is destined for greatness. This movie won seven Academy Awards including Best Actor, Best Director and Best Picture.

Hotel Rwanda (2004), directed by Terry George, with Don Cheadle, Sophie Okonedo, Nick Nolte, Desmond Dube and Neil McCarthy. A hotel clerk risks his life to protect hundred of refugees during ethnic fighting in Africa. This movie was nominated for three Academy Awards including Best Actor in a Leading Role.

Citizen Kane (1941), directed by Orson Welles, with Orson Welles, Joseph Cotten, Dorothy Comingore and Everett Sloane. A prominent and bombastic newspaperman, separated from his parents in childhood, suffers from anxiety disorder and fear of being alone which affects his personal relationships. This movie was nominated for nine Academy Awards.

King Rat (1965), directed by Bryan Forbes, with George Segal, Tom Courtney, James Fox and Patrick O'Neal. An American soldier imprisoned in a Japanese POW camp takes advantage of his mostly British fellow POWs to survive. This movie was nominated for two Academy Awards.

Joe (1970), directed by John G. Avildsen, with Peter Boyle, Dennis Patrick, Susan Sarandon and K Callan. An angry blue collar worker induces a troubled upper middle class businessman to commit murder. This movie was nominated for one Academy Award.

Titanic (1997), directed by James Cameron, with Leonardo DiCaprio, Kate Winslet, Billy Zane and Gloria Stuart. An angry, impetuous young woman on a doomed ship meets a man and undergoes a major personality change. This movie won eleven Academy Awards including Best Picture.

Pearl Harbor (2001), directed by Michael Bay, with Ben Affleck, Josh Hartnett, Kate Beckinsale and Tom Sizemore. A soldier marries his best friend's fiancé believing that his best friend has been killed in action; his belief is later proved to be erroneous. This movie was nominated for four Academy Awards.

The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962), directed by John Ford, with John Wayne, James Stewart, Lee Marvin, Vera Miles and Edmond O'Brien. The reputation of a well known and highly respected politician is founded a lie. This movie was nominated for three Laurel Awards, winning one.

September Affair (1950), directed by William Dieterle, with Joan Fontaine, Joseph Cotten, Jimmy Lydon and Fortunio Bonanova. A well to do businessman and a female pianist throw aside convention to have an affair. This movie won a Golden Globe Award for Best Music Score.

Starship Troopers (1997), directed by Paul Verhoeven, with Casper Van Dien, Dina Meyer, Denise Richards, Michael Ironside and Clancy Brown . To unite and mobilize the people of earth, the government demonizes and attacks a planet inhabited by insects.

A Song to Remember (1945), directed by Charles Vidor, with Cornel Wilde, Paul Muni, Merle Oberon and Nina Foch. A gifted musician sublimates his libidinal drives through music. This movie was nominated for six Academy Awards.

The Woman in the Window (1944), directed by Fritz Lang, with Edward G. Robinson, Joan Bennett, Raymond Massey and Dan Duryea. A man has a dream which reveals the repressed side of his personality.

The Stranger (1946), directed by Orson Welles, with Edward G. Robinson, Orson Welles, Loretta Young and Richard Long. A Nazi war criminal adopts an entirely new identity to elude capture. This movie was nominated for an Academy Award.

The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1939), directed by William Dieterle, with Charles Laughton, Cedric Hardwick, Maureen O'Hara, Thomas Mitchell and Edmund O'Brien A deformed man is willing to sacrifice his life to protect a young innocent woman. This movie was nominated for two Academy Awards.

Show Boat (1936), directed by James Whale, with Irene Dunne, Allan Jones, Paul Robeson, Hattie McDaniel, Charles Winninger and Helen Morgan. Defying the wishes of her mother, a young impressionable woman marries an alcoholic who later abandons her.

Sahara (1943), directed by Zoltan Korda, with Humphrey Bogart, Bruce Bennett, J. Carrol Nash, Lloyd Bridges and Rex Ingram. A tank crew is willing to sacrifice their lives for a greater cause. This movie was nominated for three Academy Awards.

The African Queen (1951), directed by John Huston, with Humphrey Bogart, Katherine Hepburn, Robert Morley and Theodore Bikel. An preacher woman with repressed libidinal urges abandons that defense mechanism revealing a different side of her personality. This movie was nominated for four Academy Awards, winning one.

The Man Who Would Be King (1975), directed by John Huston, with Michael Caine, Sean Connery, Christopher Plummer and Saaed Jaffrey. Two men perpetrate an elaborate scam to defraud an entire country. This movie was nominated for four Academy Awards.

MASH (1970), directed by Robert Altman, with Donald Sutherland, Elliott Gould, Tom Skerritt and Sally Kellerman. Soldiers assigned to a medical unit in Korea employ various coping strategies to deal with stress caused by war. This movie was nominated for five Academy Awards, winning one.

Heaven Can Wait (1978), directed by Warren Beatty and Buck Henry, with Warren Beatty, Julie Christie, Jack Warden, James Mason, Dyan Cannon and Charles Grodin. A young man dies and his spirit is assigned the body of another man who then exhibits a radical change in behavior with humorousresults. This movie was nominated for nine Academy Awards, winning one.

Rocky (1976), directed by John G. Avildsen, with Sylvester Stallone, Talia Shire, Burt Young, Carl Weathers and Burgess Meredith. A club fighter living on fringes of society is given an opportunity which radically changes his life yet manages to maintain ego integrity. This movie was nominated for ten Academy Awards, winning three.

Rocky III (1982), directed by Sylvester Stallone, with Sylvester Stallone, Mr. T, Carl Weathers, Talia Shire and Burt Young. A professional boxer learns that his reputation is based on a lie producing an identity crisis which affects his self-esteem and judgment. This movie was nominated for an Academy Award.

The Man In the Gray Flannel Suit (1956), directed by Nunnally Johnson, with Gregory Peck, Jennifer Jones, Frederic March, Lee J. Cobb and Keenan Wynn. A World War Two combat veteran is forced to cope with the consequences of his behavior during the war, and in the process gets in touch with emotions long suppressed. This movie was nominated for a DGA Award.

Golden Boy (1939), directed by Rouben Mamoulian, with William Holden, Barbara Stanwyck, Adolphe Menjou and Lee J. Cobb. A young man with musical talents suppresses his feelings to become a prize fighter. This movie was nominated for one Academy Award.

City Island (2009), directed by Raymond De Felitta, with Andy Garcia, Julianna Margulies, Steven Strait and Emily Mortimer. A corrections officer secretly pursues a career as an actor. This movie won the Tribeca Audience Award.

The Reader (2008), directed by Stephen Daldry, with Kate Winslet, Ralph Fiennes, David Kross and Bruno Ganz. Struggling with enormous guilt and repressed feelings, a former Nazi concentration camp guard establishes contact with people by asking them to read to her. This movie was nominated for five Academy Awards, winning one.

Julius Caesar (1953), directed by Joseph L. Mankewicz, with Marlon Brando, John Gielgud, Louis Calhern, James Mason, Greer Garson, Edmund O'Brien and Deborah Kerr. A powerful Roman general and politician deludes himself into believing that he is admired, causing him to let down his guard with tragic results. This movie was nominated for five Academy Awards, winning one.

Don Juan DeMarco (1994), directed by Jeremy Leven, with Johnny Depp, Marlon Brando, Faye Dunaway, Rachel Ticoton and Talisa Soto. A young man believes that he is Don Juan. This movie was nominated for two Golden Globe Awards.

Fort Apache, the Bronx (1981), directed by Daniel Petrie, with Paul Newman, Rachel Ticotin, Ken Wahl and Edward Asner. To maintain a relationship with a woman, a police officer violates the law and his own ethical standards with tragic consequences.

Across 110th Street (1972), directed by Barry Shear, with Anthony Quinn, Yaphet Kotto, Anthony Franciosa, Antonio Fargas, Paul Benjamin and Richard Ward. In a highly stressful work environment, a disgruntled police captain displaces his anger onto a police lieutenant in his unit, generating conflict and disharmony.

About Schmidt (2002), directed by Alexander Payne, with Jack Nicholson, Kathy Bates, Hope Davis and Dermot Mulroney. A man retires and experiences an identity crisis. This movie was nominated for two Academy Awards.

Sideways (2004), directed by Alexander Payne, with Paul Giamatti, Thomas Hayden Church, Sandra Oh and Virginia Madsen. Two men go on a vacation and start acting out as unresolved issues surface. This movie was nominated for five Academy Awards, winning one.

The Kids Are All Right (2010), directed by Lisa Cholodenko, with Annette Bening, Julianne Moore, Mark Ruffalo and Mia Wasikowska. A woman in a lesbian relationship has an affair with a man triggering an identity crisis as she copes with repressed sexual feelings that have now surfaced. This movie won the Teddy Award for Best Feature Film.

Splice (2009), directed by Vincenzo Natali, with Adrien Brody, Sarah Polley, Delphine Chaneac and Brandon MacGibbon. Violating ethical standards and motivated by greed, two scientists engage in dangerous biological research.

Father of the Bride II (1995), directed by Charles Shyer, with Steve Martin, Diane Keaton, Martin Short and B. D. Wong. A middle-aged man experiences an identity crisis triggered by his daughter getting married. This movie was nominated for a Golden Globe Award.

Standard Operating Procedure (2008), directed by Errol Morris. A documentary about United States soldiers who allegedly abused suspected terrorists at a detention facility in Iraq. This movie was nominated for six awards.

Demolition Man (1993), directed by Marco Brambilla, with Sylvester Stallone, Wesley Snipes, Sandra Bullock, Nigel Hawthorne and Glenn Shadix. The stability of an entire society is threatened as two men brought back from the past do battle. This movie won the ASCAP Award.

Just Friends (2005), directed by Roger Kumble, with Ryan Reynolds, Amy Smart, Ana Faris and Chris Klein. A youth is jilted by a girl in high school which affects his future relationships with women. This movie was nominated for three awards.

Yankee Doodle Dandy (1942), directed by Michael Curtiz, with James Cagney, Joan Leslie, Walter Huston, Jeanne Cagney, Irene Manning andRosemary DeCamp. An entertainer channels his energy into producing some of the greatest stage musicals in history. This movie was nominated for eight Academy Awards, winning three.

Falling Down (1993), directed by Joel Schumacher, with Michael Douglas, Robert Duvall, Barbara Hershey and Tuesday Weld. A disgruntled man loses his job and displaces his rage onto others. This movie won the Edgar Allan Poe Award for Best Motion Picture.

The War of the Roses (1989), directed by Danny DeVito, with Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, Danny DeVito and G. D. Spradlin. A man projects his anger onto his estranged wife by trying to drive her out of the house which she refuses to leave. This movie was nominated for six awards, winning two.

Wall Street (1987), directed by Oliver Stone, with Michael Douglas, Charlie Sheen, Martin Sheen, Hal Holbrook and Franklin Cover. A man projects his aggressive urges through unethical and illegal business practices. This movie was nominated for eight awards, winning two.

Cast Away (2000), directed by Robert Zemeckis, with Tom Hanks, Nan Martin, Helen Hunt and Wilson the Volleyball. A man marooned on a island projects his self onto a volleyball to maintain human contact. This movie was nominated for thirty-four awards, winning eleven.

Philadelphia (1993), directed by Jonathan Demme, with Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington, Jason Robards and Joanne Woodward. A lawyer is forced to deal with is own prejudices when he represents another lawyer who was unfairly fired for having a terminal illness. This movie was nominated for five Academy Awards, winning two.

Forrest Gump (1994), directed by Robert Zemeckis, with Tom Hanks, Gary Sinise, Robin Wright, Sally Field and Mykeli Williamson. A man maintains his ego integrity while experiencing many changes in his life. This movie was nominated for thirteen Academy Awards, winning six.

Apollo 13 (1995), directed by Ron Howard, with Tom Hanks, Gary Sinese, Bill Paxton, Kevin Bacon and Ed Harris. While traveling to the moon an explosion occurs placing the crew at risk and testing their coping skills. This movie was nominated for nine Academy Awards, winning two.

The Mortal Storm (1940), directed by Frank Borzage, with James Stewart, Robert Young, Margarat Sullivan, Robert Stack, Frank Morgan and Ward Bond. In Germany, the stability of a family is tested after Hitler gains power and the family divides along political lines.

Holocaust (1978), directed Marvin J. Chomsky, with Meryl Streep, James Woods, Michael Moriarity, Rosemary Harris and Joseph Bottoms. During World War Two a family struggles to survive against outside forces intent on its destruction. This series was nominated for fifteen Emmy Awards, winning eight.

Schindler's List (1993), directed by Steven Spielberg, with Liam Neeson, Ben Kingsley, Ralph Fiennes, Caroline Goodall and Shmuel Levy. During World War Two a Sudeten German Nazi risks his life to protect a group of Jews. This movie was nominated for twelve Academy Awards, winning seven.

Das Boot (1981), directed by Wolgang Petersen, with Jurgen Prochnow, Herbert Gronemeyer, Klaus Wenneman and Hubertus Bengsch. During World War Two the crew of a German U-boat risk their lives for a questionable cause. This movie was nominated for six Academy Awards.

Moby Dick (1956), directed by John Huston, with Gregory Peck, Richard Basehart, Leo Genn and Mervyn Johns. A captain of a whaling ship displaces his rage on a whale. This movie was nominated for five awards, winning three.

Paths of Glory (1957), directed by Stanley Kubrick, with Kirk Douglas, Ralph Meeker, Adolphe Menjou and George Macready. During World War One a French general erroneously blames his troops for a failed attack. This movie was nominated for five awards, winning two.

Lies My Father Told Me (1975), directed by Jan Kadar, with Yossi Yadin, Len Birman, Marilyn Lightstone and Jeff Lynas. An elderly junk dealer is disliked by everyone except his young grandson who recognizes and respects his grandfather's wisdom. This movie was nominated for five awards, winning two.

The Bad and the Beautiful (1952), directed by Vincente Minelli, with Kirk Douglas, Lana Turner, Walter Pidgeon, Dick Powell and Gloria Grahame. A movie producer uses others to promote his career. This movie was nominated for six Academy Awards, winning five.

Champion (1949), directed by Mark Robson, with Kirk Douglas, Marilyn Maxwell, Arthur Kennedy, Paul Stewart and Ruth Roman. An ambitious prize fighter will stop at nothing to achieve success. This movie was nominated for six Academy Awards, winning one.

Source: IMDb.com

Phil’s Jokes

by Phillip W. Weiss

What do you call a man who wears a dress?

A well-dressed man.

What do you call a cow with holes?

Holy cow!

Why did the turkey cross the road?

Because it's too dumb to fly.

How many men does it take to screw a light bulb?

Four: one to hold the bulb and three to stick it in.

What's wet and round and fuzzy all over?

A dog's nose.

What's long and hard and changes color when heated?

A well-cooked sausage.

Why did the man stop playing solitaire?

To stop beating himself.

Why did the farmer close his well?

To stop pulling on his rope.

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What do you call a person who wants romance?

Misinformed.

Why did the man have sex with his girlfriend?

Because he had nothing to say.

What do you call a man and a woman who speak different languages?

A perfect match.

What do you call a man who takes a woman out to dinner on their first date?

Horny.

What do you call a man who drinks?

A wet noodle.

Why did Columbus sail west?

Because his compass was upside down.

What's wet and steamy and dark?

The New York City subway.

What do you call a detective who's six feet six?

Big Dick.

What do you call a prostitute who likes to talk?

A mouthpiece.

What do you call a man with two heads?

Confused.

Why did the woman laugh during sex?

Because the man was tickling her insides.

Why did the man laugh during sex?

Because the woman was pulling his funny bone.

What do you call a man in a women's locker room?

Dead meat.

What do you call a woman in a men's locker room?

A welcomed guest.

What is salty, warm and soft to the touch?

A pastrami sandwich.

What's big and round and nurturing?

A sirloin steak.

What is long, hard and used to make a score?

A baseball bat.

When does a man like to have sex?

Whenever a woman says yes.

What's open, round, and often used?

A basketball hoop.

What's wet, warm and lubricated?

An automobile engine.

Idea for a play

by Phillip W. Weiss

I'm thinking about writing a play about how the use of cigarettes leads to a world war. In the future a world government emerges that bans the use of cigarettes, which by that time has become the center of a major social movement, the symbol of which is the cigarette butt. Now an object of reverence to be treasured, cigarette butts have now become a form of currency and are used to measure one's social standing. i.e., the more cigarette butts you have the greater your prestige in the community. Yet there are others who perceive this focus on the butt as a threat to world health and are determined to stamp it out completely. Two groups emerge: the pro-cigarette group or "Butties" and the anti-cigarette group, known as "Breathers." Each group embraces peoples of all races and cultures. For the Butties, the cigarette is a symbol of freedom and liberty; for the Breathers, cigarettes are a threat to public health and world financial stability. By this time tobacco corporations are long gone and have been replaced by cooperatives that grow the tobacco in plantations located on Mars (such cultivation having long since been banned on earth). The tobacco is smuggled back to earth in space ships that have to avoid the system of anti-ballistic satellites deployed to destroy such vehicles. The leader of the Butties is a living legend named Nicholas Tinowsky, aka, Nick O'Teen. He smokes four packs of cigarette per day and has accumulated over 850,000 cigarette butts, making him the wealthiest Buttie in the solar system. His arch-rival is Nolan Smoninski, aka No-Smoke or Nos. Nick and Nos are first cousins. As children they were close friends but grew apart after Nick became involved with the Butties. Feeling abandoned, Nos has vowed to destroy his recalcitrant cousin and destroy all of his butts. A lady is also involved. Her name is Samantha Smokovski, aka Smokie. She is in love with both Nick and Nos, Nick because he is handsome and the wealthiest Buttie in the solar system, and Nos because he is the most powerful politician on earth. Despite her name, Smokie does not smoke cigarettes but is being pressured by Nick to join his cause. Smokie considers joining the Butties but feels a deep loyalty to Nos who had saved her life from a gang of Butties who had tried to force her to smoke. That incident left her traumatized, and she has recurrent nightmares and a pathological fear of cigarettes which upon exposure to the cigarette fumes drive her into a frenzy. The war erupts over a trivial incident that occurred on the Brooklyn Bridge. A young male Buttie mistook a female Breather for a Buttie and asked her for a light. The Breather panicked, started screaming, which attracted a crowd, and soon a fight broke out on the bridge. Soon, the fighting spread across North America and

within days became a worldwide conflagration. Although far superior in numbers, the Butties lack the sophisticated weaponry necessary to prosecute the war, and so must resort to guerrilla tactics against the far superior military forces of the Breathers, whose arms include anti-Nicotine chemical bombs which cause cigarettes to disintegrate and an advanced butte detector, or ADBUD, an electronic device which is capable of locating a stash of cigarette butts within a fifty-mile radius. To counteract these weapons, the Butties develop a pill, called Flash, that is 99-percent Nicotine but is not yet perfected; when ingested it causes the skin to turn a bright green color and induces delusions of grandeur. Soon, Flash is flooding an illicit black market that finds its way into the Breathers' ranks. The Breathers take severe measures to suppress this drug and vow harsh measures against the Butties for contaminating the world with such a vile product. Accusations and cross accusations of criminality fly. Nos vows to bring Nick to trial for racketeering while Nick accuses Nos of a campaign of genocide against the Butties. Undecided over whom to support, Smokie appeals to the women of the world to stop fighting and to exercise tolerance. Millions of women respond to Smokie's appeal and soon huge peace rallies involving millions of women spring up throughout the world. Women demand that the fighting stop and blame the war on the male arrogance. Soon the war morphs into a male versus female struggle, with Smokie emerging as the leader of the women, aka The Ladies. In an effort to form a united front, Nick and Nos send out tentative feelers to each other, but these outreach efforts fail to produce a meeting due mostly to Nick's unwillingness to declare total war against Smokie, something which Nos favors as he feels that Smokie has betrayed him. Meanwhile, on Mars the cultivation of tobacco continues unabated under the command of Johan Deludier who is carefully monitoring the events on earth and is hedging his bet on who will win. Deludier, aka Tobacco Joe or To-Jo, decides to suspend shipments of tobacco, which produces a panic among the Butties who openly accuse To-Jo of being a traitor. Nick proposes a plan to invade Mars to take control of the supply of tobacco and ensure that the Buttie economy remains viable. Learning of this plan from his spies, Nos warns Nick to refrain from invading Mars or risk the consequences, which would be the Breathers launching their own invasion of Mars to destroy the tobacco plantations. Nick warns Nos that if he destroys the tobacco supply, he will flood the world with Flash and destroy human civilization.

Then, while fighting is raging on earth, a surprising event occurs. Earth is invaded by a race of aliens, known as the Duwapis, named after the sound of their voices that sound strangely similar to doo-wop music. The Duwapis live on a planet located in the Andromeda galaxy, one-million light years away from earth.

The Duwapis decide to invade earth after they detect that earth has nicotine, a substance that is critical for sustaining Duwapian life. The Duwapis breathe nicotine like humans breathe oxygen; without the nicotine the Duwapis cannot survive. Due to changes in the galaxy brought on by a massive intergalactic wind that encased the entire Andromeda galaxy in a poisonous haze, all the nicotine in the Duwapian atmosphere was converted into oxygen, which is poison to the Duwapis. The purpose of invading earth is to steal the nicotine and transport it back to their planet. Upon learning of their plans, Nos immediately tries to form an alliance with the Duwapis, but the Duwapis, led by Edgar Buchanan Techonadaquichenotagawatiyegolotakechianaqualadociusezala, aka Techie, refuse to negotiate and instead demand total unconditional surrender or face annihilation. (Part of Techie's name is Edgar Buchanan because while monitoring the earth, Techie watched thousands of Hollywood movies and television shows including the complete filmography of Edgar Buchanan, and in the process became a huge fan of the actor and adopted his name.) Enraged, Nos vows to destroy the invading Duwapis and soon is bombarding the Duwapi positions with canisters containing pure oxygen. Nick offers to help fight the Duwapis and Nos accepts the offer. Smokie, learning of this new alliance between Nick and Nos, proposes a tripartite alliance of the Butties, Breathers and The Ladies to rid the earth of the Duwapis. Unintimidated, Techie rallies his troops and soon the whole of the earth is engulfed in one huge battle as humans fight aliens for control of the planet. For the earthlings, their battle cry is "Cover your butts!" For the Duwapis, their battle cry is "Smell the nicotine!" Then, out of this chaos, nature intervenes. A male Buttie named Boris and a female Duwapi named Celexiagraphalongoprophilia, aka Celia, meet, fall in love, have sex (note: female Duwapis resemble beautiful female Hollywood movie stars), producing an offspring, half human, half Duwapi, who is to become the savior of the planet and the founder of a new cult. His name is Wengahopaling, which in Duwapi means child of hope; among the earthlings he is known simply as Weng. Part 2 of this story deals with the rise of Weng and of his plans to conquer the universe and corner the supply of nicotine.

List of principal characters:

Boris – father of Weng

Celia – mother of Weng

Nick – leader of the Butties

Nos – leader of the Breathers

Smokie – leader of The Ladies

Techie – leader of the Duwapis

To-Jo – leader of the tobacco growers

Weng – half human/half Duwapi cult figure

PWW 7/2013

Ideology as a derivative of social structure and social theory

Ideology is a product of social theory and social structure, with the corollary that without a social structure a social theory cannot transmute[1] into an ideology. This process is mathematically represented by the following equation: S + T → I (S is social structure, T is social theory and I is ideology). This equation, which I call the Fundamental Law of Social Dynamics, will serve as the basis for understanding of the meaning of certain terms which will be used throughout this paper.

Social structure – one or more persons organized to perform a particular social function.

Social theory – an idea centered on people.

Ideology – a system for social action accepted as valid.

Social theories are mental constructs or abstractions. They are as vapid as the air we breathe and just as visible too. It is only through their practical application, that is, to provide a way to get things done (Morris, 3), that they acquire weight. Social theories alone have no meaning. Even the most culturally deprived person can generate a social theory. It is part of the human thought process; it is part of human nature. Someone declares, "People are bad!" That is a social theory. Being products of the mind, social theories are fleeting, they come and go, just like the wind. The wind blows strongly and makes itself felt and then all is calm; the wind has passed. Social theories can be as brief as a single

word ("Plastics"[1]) or as lengthy as an encyclopedia (*Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*[1]), yet they have no force of their own. If they remain isolated, social theories will die, but without social theories there can be no breakthroughs.

How does a social theory survive and gain traction? Robert N. Bellah writes, "Eric Weil in his essay on breakthroughs cited above reminds us of another point: those responsible for the most radical innovations were seldom successful" (Bellah, 89). Yet breakthroughs do happen, indeed *must* happen for society to progress. For instance, consider E=mc^2[1], the mass-energy equation formulated by Albert Einstein. It is one of the most famous and profound formulations in history. Yet, at some point it was merely an idea floating around inside someone's head. It could have easily been lost and forgotten, like all transitory thoughts that come and go, a mere blip on someone's mental radar screen. Yet, it was THAT particular idea from THAT particular head that gained traction, and once proven to be true instantaneously became an ideology (either of destruction or salvation, depending on social context in which it emerged).[1] For that to have happened, a certain social structure needed to be in place, one that could absorb and transform a nebulous thought without substance into something tangible and real, such as an equation which revolutionized our

understanding of the nature of matter and provided the key to a new source of energy that could either save or destroy humanity.

Ideologies do not emerge from a vacuum. They are the product of a complex series of interactions. Consider Steven Pinker's theory on social violence. He argues that the level of violence has been declining over the centuries and that society today is a much safer place than in the past. He offers a massive amount of statistical data to support his position.[1] From this theoretical vantage point, it can be inferred that society is a violent place but that violence is neither an intractable problem nor one inexorably engrained in the social structure of society. Thus society can be free of violence. The question is: why has this not happened? According to the Fundamental Law of Social Dynamics, S+T→ I, a social structure receptive to Pinker's theory needs to be in place. Without the requisite social structure, the transmutation of the theory into an ideology cannot occur. This is the case not because the theory itself is flawed, but because the existing social structure is not yet ready to receive and utilize it. *The truthfulness of the theory itself is not the determining factor.* Rather, what would trigger the process is whether there is the *belief* that the theory is valid. In the case of Pinker's theory, within the current social structure of society that belief is lacking.

Something similar occurred in Germany after World War One. After the war Germany attempted to govern itself as a republic and failed. The German social structure simply did not believe in liberal democracy as a theory. Instead, the

German social structure underwent a radical metamorphosis, branded the theory of liberal democracy as a fraud, and enthusiastically embraced a far more radical (and violent) social theory that to the Germans epitomized the truth. In the words of Cecil Deaton, out of the ensuing social and economic environment emerged an ideology that was as "innovative" (in a manner of speaking) as it was repulsive and lethal (Deaton, 9).

In *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the Rise of the State in Early Modern Europe*, Philip S. Gorski devotes an entire section to discussing how the state as a social organization functions in a mediational capacity. He writes, "State power does not operate exclusively, or even primarily, through coercion. It also operates through co-optation" (Gorski, 166). This means that the state is more than merely a dispenser of power, it is the agent through which social forces are appropriated and assimilated to produce something new. He goes on to describe how state infrastructure, human resources, and organizational entwining function to allow "states to implement long-standing projects of moral regulation and social control" (Gorski, 167). It is through these processes that transmutation occurs.

Receptivity to new ideas is also influenced by psychosocial factors. Norbert Elias describes the relationship between social forces and perceptions. The human psyche is more than just a jumble of emotions; it is a complex mechanism that is highly sensitive to what is going on around it. Elias writes, "A strongly predictable compulsion or pressure mediated in a variety of ways is constantly *exerted* (italics added) on the individual" (Elias, 372). One source of

pressure is propaganda. It appeals to emotion and is routinely employed to shape public opinion. Depending on the skillfulness of the disseminator, this method of mass manipulation can generate support for even the most outrageous social theories. The consequences are often tragic.

Both Elias and Pinker agree that humans are capable of modulating and transcending their own impulsive natures. Yet that theory has failed to gain traction. Violence continues to be a major social problem and more significantly is *accepted* as a permanent feature of modern society. Regrettably, our current social structure is not yet fully or even partially ready to absorb and transmute such utopian-like theories into the kind of ideologies needed to actualize the theoretical constructs associated with the concept of a violent-free society.

Social structures decide which social theories they will adopt. But to perform that function, a social structure has to possess the capability to make a choice. For instance, Western society adopted the theory that every able person is expected to earn a living (Elias, 383) and that the family is the basic social unit of society (Elias, 394). The nature of the "particular structure of the society at large" made those selections possible (Elias, 394). A certain type of social structure at large was present that could accommodate those theories and trigger the transmutation process. Once such a process commenced, an ideological schemata rooted in work and family could evolve and emerge. Likewise, the Industrial Revolution could not have occurred without the presence of inventors and manufacturers who could receive and incorporate the theories of Adam Smith (Deaton, 9).

For any society to remain viable, its social structure must be capable of absorbing new ideas. Change is natural. William Sewell writes, "Every form of social organization is potentially subject to change" (Sewell, 9). If change does not occur, then the social structure will not be able to absorb new ideas and the society will stagnate and die. For thousands of years, social development in the East lagged behind the West. According to Ian Morris, this deficit was due not to inherent cultural differences but to geography which influenced respective rates of social progress, or to put it another way, their ability to change. Applying the Fundamental Law of Social Dynamics, the lag between East and West could be explained as follows: The East lacked the social structure capable of integrating those ideas that propelled the West forward. This was the case not because the people in the East were inherently inferior but because of geographical factors that conspired to produce social structures that could not absorb the kinds of social theories that acquired traction in the West.

Although in retrospective we may believe that a culture was doomed from the start, that culture itself, even while failing, may not even realize that its days are numbered. Lacking such understanding, the social structure is impervious to new ideas. Consider the example of the American Indians. To the Europeans the American Indians were little more than uncultured savages whose only value was as a commodity to be exploited and discarded. They were deemed to be primitive and soulless and therefore expendable. Their social organizations were trivialized and their customs mocked. By European standards, the American Indian culture was superfluous. But was that belief based on fact? Today the answer to that

question is no; they had a viable culture that deserved to survive, but to the Europeans at that time, the answer would have been an emphatic yes. Indeed, they would have been astonished and outraged at any suggestion to the contrary, and would have been prepared to go to war if necessary to defend their position. But why did the Europeans prevail? Partly the reason was military – the European states had superior weaponry; partly it was biological – the Europeans brought with them disease organisms against which the American Indians had no immunity. But the deciding factor was that the American Indians lacked the social structure necessary to absorb, incorporate and transmute the concept of predatory capitalism into an ideological program that could effectively combat the invaders. Yet the American Indians cannot be held culpable for their demise. It was an outcome that the American Indian could not have possibly anticipated. To borrow a term from Elias, it just "happened." There was no chance for the "civilizing process" that Elias discusses to occur. Like Elias says, it was part of a larger process that operates blindly (Elias, 367). For the Indians, the civilizing process meant pain and death. This process is not logical. It is haphazard (Elias, 367), without feeling, thus making it seem even more overwhelming.

Further proof of the role played by social structure in ideology formation is found in the historical relationship between social structure and the likelihood of peasant revolt. In societies that utilized sophisticated economic tools such as money, credit, markets and profit, the incidence of peasant revolts were lower (Moore, 459-469). A strong central government alone did not guarantee a pathway

to modernization. Rather, the determining factor was whether the social structure could absorb the social theories relating to the market driven economies. Both Russia and China, lacked the requisite social structure to fully accommodate such theories. Moore writes, “In both Russia and China, the chances of halting the process of decay at some point short of peasant revolution were very slim, mainly due to the lack of any strong basis for either liberal or reactionary capitalism in the trading and manufacturing classes” (Moore, 482). Not surprisingly both societies collapsed.

As another example of the interaction between social structure and social theory can be found in the emergence of money. Money of course is something tangible. But its use is rooted in certain theoretical principles relating to the concept of society as a marketplace. Whether this is good or bad is irrelevant. What is relevant is whether the existing social structure could absorb and utilize such theories. If yes, then transmutation into an ideology could occur. If no, then social development would stall. This formulation may seem overly simplistic, but it is not. There was a time when money did not exist, nor was its emergence inevitable. Technological capability alone would not have been enough to trigger the process. Robert N. Bellah points out that the replacing of bronze by iron did not of itself produce other changes (Bellah, 73). Only when the social structure was prepared to adopt a new concept of trade not based on barter could society then create money.

In Egypt, the incompatibility of social structure with social theory changed the course of history. According to ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, the depiction

of Aten together with Akhenaten and his wife, Nefertiti, did not raise the critical question between god and king (Bellah, 83). Bellah writes, "When Akhenaten died, there were neither priests, nor prophets nor a people to continue in the faith" (Bella, 83). But if the requisite priests, prophets or people had been present, then there would have been in place the social structure needed to raise the question between god and king, from which would have emerged an ideology that would have merged god and king into one, thus redefining the nature of government and changing the course of history. Perhaps Western civilization today would be tracing its monotheistic roots not to the Mosaic Law emanating from Mount Sinai but to the Egyptian Law of Aktenaten and his followers located on the Nile River. This, of course, is speculation.

For the transmutation process to occur, a society must also possess the capacity to critically assess new ideas. Bellah calls this process "thinking about thinking" (Bellah, 80). This process produces a "theoretical attitude" (Bellah, 80). Without a theoretical attitude, a society would not be open to new ideas or new theories, that is, it would be close-minded. But why would a society choose to be closed minded? Historian Arnando Momigliano suggests that the reason is political. He writes: "In all these civilizations there is profound tension between political powers and intellectual movements. Everywhere one notices attempts to introduce greater purity, greater justice, greater perfection and a more universal explanation of things" (Bellah, 72). Such tension is inevitable; in any society there exists vested interests that are resistant to change and wish to maintain the status quo.

Resistance to new ideas is nothing new. Throughout history social organizations have strong and compelling incentives to maintain the status-quo; change itself, even when it could bring tangible benefits, has been perceived as a threat to their survival. For example, in czarist Russia the peasantry were thoroughly ensconced in a conservatism that resisted outside efforts to change. Barrington Moore writes: "G.T. Robinson in his study if Russian peasant life before 1917 points out that the religious and other intellectual currents impinging on the peasants from the outside were wholly on the side of conservatism and strongly discounts the role of revolutionary ideas from the towns" (Moore, 456). Only when Russia's social structure underwent a dramatic change brought on by the war did the society acquire the capability to absorb new social theories necessary to trigger the transmutation process which produced Bolshevism and its offshoots Leninism and Stalinism.

Often the transmutation process can be activated by one person. Social theory need not be embraced by an entire population. Indeed, it need not even be embraced by a small elite. One person alone, optimally situated, can provide the impetus for change. Hence, in the equation S+T→ I, the S can be a single solitary person. For instance, the theory of flight was transmuted through the Wright Brothers into the airplane; the theory of a spherical globe was transmuted through Columbus into the Spanish Empire; theory of aerial warfare was transmuted through Air Marshall Sir Arthur Harris into Bomber Command. There are many other examples: Hitler, Stalin, Napoleon, Jesus, Mohammed, and Moses, men whose actions alone changed the course of history and from which emerged new ideologies that transformed society.

One might argue that by its very nature social development is driven by groups and not individuals. However, that is only partially correct. People can be divided into two distinct categories: those who follow and those who lead. As Talcott Parsons observed, "Even the earliest Mesopotamian codes contained legal delineations of statuses" (Parsons, 67). Those who lead control and manipulate those who follow. What links the two are loyalty (Parsons, 135). Lenin, Mao, Lincoln, and F. D. Roosevelt were leaders, just a name a few. They took a particular social theory and made it their own, from which emerged an ideology, their plan for society. For example: From dialectal materialism Marx produced the Communist Manifesto; from theory of spiritual salvation Jesus produced the Sermon on the Mount; from the theory of personal liberty Lincoln produced the Emancipation Proclamation; from the theory of democracy James Madison and others produced the US Constitution; from the theory of social Darwinism Adolf Hitler produced *Mein Kampf*; and from the theory of class struggle Stalin produced the Five Year Plan. Each ideology emerged according to the process described in the Fundamental Law of Social Dynamics.

The more developed the social structure of a country, the greater will be its capacity to absorb and transmute social theories into ideology. Thus, structural differences influence comparative rates of social development (Wallerstein, 21). Advanced countries, such as the United States, the EU nations, Canada, in short the Western bloc, all with strong social structures, have robust capitalist economies that place them at the core of world capitalism while other countries with less developed and fragmented social structures find themselves at the

periphery. This is especially true for the Arab nations. Massive influx of revenue from oil has done little to produce the changes in their social structure necessary to allow them to fully embrace the capitalist ideology, with its social and political connotations. As a result, despite the vast inflow of money, many of those countries are struggling. Today, capitalism as model for social action is being directly challenged by entities, both state and non-state, that, not unsurprisingly, are based in the part of the world where social structure development continues to lag (Elias, 432).

One argument against the Fundamental Law of Social Dynamics is that it does not offer anything new. Combining social theory with social structure to produce ideology seems to be a truism. Yet its accuracy is unassailable. Further, its simplicity obviates the need for complex explanations that can obscure and unduly complicate findings. Ian Morris writes, "Analysis has run into the classic problem of not being able to see the wood for the trees" (Morris, 27). For instance, consider the situation in the United States. Today the US political system is in the throes of gridlock. A myriad of reasons have been offered to account for this quagmire. The Fundamental Law of Social Dynamics cuts through the verbiage and offers a concise explanation: in the years since the United States was founded a new social structure has emerged for which the current political ideology, based on principles propounded decades and even centuries ago, is no longer relevant, rendering the political structure dysfunctional. According to Pierre Rosavallon, things began to change around 1980. He writes:

> **Indeed it was even earlier, in the mid-1970s, that California's famous "Proposition 13" marked an abrupt shift in attitudes toward taxation. Growing numbers of Americans began to link the fight against taxes, associated with bureaucratic growth, perverse forms of solidarity, and "legal expropriation," to the original spirit of democracy. In Europe, the shift on opinion was less dramatic, but the results were similar. To be sure, the movement had direct political consequences, symbolized by the names Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, and later George W. Bush (Rosavallon, 216).**

Belief in "the greater social good" has been supplanted by the belief that the individual comes first and that access to services should be based exclusively on ability to pay. Rosavallon writes, "The changing attitudes of the 1990s were accompanied by a considerable internal erosion of the institutions of solidarity" (Rosavallon, 211). Manifestation of this changing attitude can be found in the gentrification of entire communities, the growing concentration of wealth, the growing income disparities, the devaluation of work, the growing marginalization of workers, the erosion of the middle class, and the privatization of public services. Rosavallon writes, "Human beings may feel natural solidarity in the face of an unknown common fate, but they are less likely to feel solidarity if they perceive a link between individual choices and outcomes" (Rosavallon, 212). In other words, if a person is poor, that is not society's fault, it is the individual's. Thus, to alleviate poverty, the poor must act to help themselves and by doing so earn the right to partake of the benefits that are available to all, provided they can pay.

Paradoxically, money, the instrument that is the source for so much of the contentiousness in society today, is also the great equalizer. It opens doors for *everyone* regardless of race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation or country of

origin. Flash enough money and the results are like magic. One's personal life will change. One need only to possess a sufficient sum to make that happen, and of course have the desire to spend. Gone are the days when cultural and social prohibitions, such as those emanating from Jim Crowism, sexism, and other overt forms of discrimination, created obstacles that distorted and inhibited market activities. Those obstacles are now obsolete. They have been replaced by the one instrument of social control against which no one can mount a serious objection: the market place. The market place now determines the allocation of resources and services. Talcott Parsons writes:

> **A societal interest in economic productivity (with no presumption that every individual or collective unit that participates will be equally productive) implies special rewards for the economically more productive units. (212)**

Greater one's productivity, greater the rewards. The system operates like a machine and is just as impervious to human emotion. It creates a playing field that is absolutely level, and open to all as long as they can pay, and produce. Outcome is neither fixed nor guaranteed. No one has a special advantage. And most importantly, everyone has a right to compete. On that basis it can seriously be argued that modern society has achieved true equality.

Yet the common social denominator that binds people together has disappeared. There is no longer the sense of community, of solidarity, that Rosavallon so aptly discusses. That has been replaced by the market. Through market forces new social groups emerge, but they lack cohesion and are not communities. There is no commonality of purpose uniting their members.

Everything is in flux. Uncertainty is the rule. Instead of solidarity, stratification occurs which is driven exclusively by money. A meritocracy emerges that claims legitimacy by virtue of its wealth. Rosavallon asserts that such a claim is spurious, that capitalist economics cannot justify existing disparities of income and wealth (Rosavallon, 240). From an ethical vantage point, Rosavallon is correct. But disparities of income and wealth is precisely what the system is about. Parsons writes, "The market is historically the location of competitive individualism, institutionalized in the expectation that market participation would lead to differential success. (204)." There are winners and there are losers, and among the winners some of the winnings are astronomical. Claims of income inequality can be rejected as sour grapes from those who will not compete. They are told that the pathway to success is entrepreneurship that all are free to pursue. That is equality.

Now the term "restraint of trade" no longer just applies to the prohibition against monopolistic business practices; it now applies to any facet of our life that is perceived as being inimical to the free and open operation of the market. And that is to be expected in a society in which the "we" has been replaced by the "me." Our place in society, indeed our personal identities, are no longer determined by our birth but by the size of our financial portfolio. Whereas in the past a person of color would be barred from places of business, even if wealthy, now the doors are open as long as that person can pay (or at least borrow). This too is equality. Talcott Parsons writes, "The principle of equality is being applied more pervasively than ever before (211)."

Yet this equality is a sham. It has the trappings of civilization, business being a complex social activity, but the noise and excitement of the process conceals its fundamentally regressive nature. Elias talks about the civilizing process. What is happening today is a de-civilizing process. Social structures are devolving backwards to an earlier state of development. Principles considered obsolete are making a resurgence (Rosavallon, 209). Instead of relating to one another based on the principle of commonality of purpose, attitudes are hardening, cynicism is on the rise and people are now guided by another principle: self-interest. Hence, access to services and programs thought to be inviolable, such as public education, public health care, affordable housing and social insurance are under attack. Access to such servcies is no longer guaranteed. They are becoming commodified, their availability being determined not by social need but by market forces driven by a simple proposition: "If you want it, buy it (and if you can't afford it, charge it)." This embracing of commercialism as a framework for defining social relations has become a norm and has produced dramatic social changes that are structural in nature. It has reshaped everything: the structure of the family, of the economy, and of politics. Lacking the cohesion that once linked communties together, people are now in competition with one another. The public social safety net supported by all is quickly being transplanted by the private social safety net that is underwritten by the individual.

The US social structure now is so vastly different than it was in 1787 (or even 1977) that to compare the two is to compare two entirely different cultures.

It is unreasonable to presume that what worked for the society two hundred years ago is still going to work today. Change is not only necessary, it is inevitable. It is only a matter of time before new ideologies emerge that are reflective of these massive structural changes.

The relative influence of social structure and social theory on ideology formation can be mathematically calculated using the Fundamental Law of Social Dynamics. For instance, employing a strength scale ranging from zero to ten, with zero being the minimum strength and ten the maximum, let us say that social structure S has a strength of two and social theory T a strength of eight. Thus 2+8→10. The relative strength of social structure to theory is 1 to 4 or .25. The resulting ideology will be heavily influenced by the social theory. Now, let's say the numbers are reversed, social structure S has a strength of 8 and social theory T, a strength of 2. The equation now is 8+2→10. The results, of course, are reversed. The ideology is now heavily influenced by the social structure. Thus, ideological formation is a dynamic process that is sensitive to changes occurring in the social structure of a society and in the strength of the social theories prevailing in a society at a given time.

It can be argued that ideology should be treated as an independent variable and not the product of the other two variables. Of course, theoretically that is possible. But that would be like putting the cart in front of the horse, or the chicken before the egg. Ideological formation is a process that cannot operate in reverse or be divided into its component parts. This would be like trying to extract Marxism from Stalinism or trying to recover a caterpillar from a butterfly.

Theoretically such configurations are possible, but in reality they produce only a mess. The fact is that ideology is a product of the two other variables, without which the ideology cannot develop.

Now, a few comments about the efficacy and value of the quantitative approach as a method for understanding social processes. Today, everything in our culture is understood in terms of numbers. The practice of aggregate data collecting is now so ubiquitous and so embedded in our culture that it is scarcely even noticed anymore. A set of statistics can yield an immense amount of information about any given social process. Statistics on the Gross National Product of a nation, the profitability ratio of a business, the numerical size of an army, the demographics of a community, and the prevailing interest rates offered by a bank contain information that can enable the researcher to better understand the operations of these respective social structures. For instance, consider the use of batting averages. Baseball's preoccupation with batting averages is more than just academic. One glance at a player's batting average alone can yield significant information regarding his reliability and proficiency as a hitter, and which can be used as a basis for predicting whether the player will produce a base hit. This information is critical to putting together a line up. The number alone means nothing. *It is a question of being able to understand the meaning of the number in relation to the context in which it is used.* In the case of the baseball player's batting average, this means having a knowledge of baseball. The same caveat applies to data collected for social research. In fact, data collection is central to most approaches to social evolution (Morris, 23).

On the flip side, it can be argued that the quantitative approach ignores the human factor. That is, the psychosocial component is too important a facet of human behavior to be ignored. Of course, there is something to be said in favor of that position. People are not machines, they are driven by emotions that impel them to act. Yet, the fact is that the psychological factor is simply too subjective to be of value in analyzing social processes. In short, it is too imprecise. For example, Albert Einstein was a brilliant scientist. He made discoveries that changed the course of the world. Those are concrete facts. Why he accomplished that is speculation. Another example: one country has an annual GNP growth rate of five percent, another of three percent. The difference can be attributed demonstrably to certain geographical factors (per Ian Morris). It is also theorized that another factor in influencing economic performance is level of popular morale. Morale however cannot be reliably measured; it can only be inferred.

Social processes can be measured and mathematically represented. That is the case because social processes can be understood in terms of variables that can be quantified. True, social theories are mental constructs and as such are not immediately observable phenomena. Yet the same can be said for atomic theory. Atoms have never been directly observed, yet we know they exist. The same applies to social theories. They are impervious to the senses, yet their impact on social processes is beyond question. Therefore, social theories exist and can be treated as measurable entities. The same applies to social structure and ideology.

However, the use mathematical formulas as a means for understanding social processes has its limitations. First, they require an understanding of

mathematics. Second, the mathematical formulation could be flawed. Third, the equation may bear no relationship to whatever process is being analyzed. In the case of the Fundamental Law of Social Dynamics, none of these disclaimers apply. The equation S+T→ I is a simple arithmetic expression. One need only to know basic arithmetic operations to use this equation. Further, the equation is properly structured. There is no other way of formulating the relationship between the variables more concisely. Finally, the equation explicitly reflects the social process it represents (Morris, 12) and is comprehensible. Hence, the Fundamental Law of Social Dynamics is a valid tool for social research and a useful formula for acquiring a better understanding of the operations of social systems.

Movies set in New York City, mid-1960s to mid-1970s

compiled by Phillip W. Weiss

The Pawnbroker **(1964), dir. Sidney Lumet. Cast: Rod Steiger, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Brock Peters, Jaime Sanchez. Synopsis: A Holocaust survivor struggling to move on with his life has flashbacks revealing anger and rage.**

Rosemary's Baby **(1968), dir. Roman Polanski. Cast: Mia Farrow, John Cassavetes, Ruth Gordon, Sidney Blackmer. Synopsis: A pregnant woman believes that her neighbors have special plans for her child.**

Midnight Cowboy **(1969), dir. John Schlesinger. Cast: Dustin Hoffman, Jon Voight, Sylvia Miles. Synopsis: Two men on the fringes of society struggle to survive in a mean and cold city.**

Putney Swope **(1969), dir. Robert Downey Sr. Cast: Arnold Johnson, Allen Garfield, Mel Brooks, Antonio Fargas. Synopsis: A token black man in an advertising agency becomes president of the company and makes sweeping changes.**

Joe **(1970), dir. John G. Avildsen. Cast: Peter Boyle, Dennis Patrick, Susan Sarandon. Synopsis: A corporate businessman and an angry blue-collar factory worker act out their rage against the New York City counter culture.**

Carnal Knowledge **(1971), dir. Mike Nichols. Cast: Jack Nicholson, Art Garfunkel, Ann-Margret, Candace Bergen. Synopsis: Two men struggle to deal with their feelings about women.**

The French Connection **(1971), dir. William Friedkin. Cast: Gene Hackman, Roy Scheider, Fernando Rey. Synopsis: Two New York City police narcotics detectives bust an international drug-smuggling ring.**

The Hospital **(1971), dir. Arthur Hiller. Cast: George C. Scott, Diana Rigg, Richard Dysart. Synopsis: Turmoil in a city hospital drives a doctor to the brink of despair.**

Where's Poppa? **(1971), dir. Carl Reiner. Cast: George Segal, Ruth Gordon, Ron Leibman, Paul Sorvino. Synopsis: A single man meets a woman and then tries to get rid of his senile mother with whom he lives.**

Across 110th Street **(1972), dir. Barry Shear. Cast: Anthony Quinn, Yaphet Kotto, Anthony Franciosa, Antonio Fargas. Synopsis: Police in Harlem try to avert an interracial gang war by going after black criminals who ripped off the Mafia.**

***Serpico* (1973), dir. Sidney Lumet. Cast: Al Pacino, John Randolph, Jack Kehoe. Synopsis: A New York City police office refuses to be corrupt and becomes a whistleblower.**

***The Taking of Pelham One Two Three* (1974), dir. Joseph Sargent. Cast: Walter Matthau, Robert Shaw, Martin Balsam, Hector Elizondo. Synopsis: Four men hijack a New York City subway train.**

***King Kong* (1976), dir. John Guillermin. Cast: Jeff Bridges, Charles Grodin, Jessica Lange. Synopsis: A large gorilla, taken by force from his island home, is befriended by a woman, with tragic consequences.**

***Marathon Man* (1976), dir. John Schlesinger. Cast: Dustin Hoffman, Roy Scheider, Laurence Olivier. Synopsis: A college student confronts a Nazi war criminal.**

***Network* (1976), dir. Sidney Lumet. Cast: William Holden, Peter Finch, Faye Dunaway, Robert Duvall. Synopsis: A television network cynically panders for ratings.**

***Taxi Driver* (1976), dir. Martin Scorcese. Cast: Robert DeNiro, Jodie Foster, Harvey Keitel, Cybil Shepherd. Synopsis: An angry and alienated Marine veteran befriends a child prostitute and goes on a murder spree.**

***Annie Hall* (1977), dir. Woody Allen. Cast: Diane Keaton, Woody Allen, Tony Roberts, Carol Kane. Synopsis: A comedian gains personal insight as a result of a relationship with a woman named Annie Hall.**

***The Good Bye Girl* (1977), dir. Herbert Ross. Cast: Richard Dreyfuss, Marsha Mason, Paul Benedict. Synopsis: An actor from Chicago and a single mother share an apartment.**

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