The Management of Purpose

Lewis Anthony Dexter

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2010 by Transaction Publishers

Published 2017 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 2009016357

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dexter, Lewis Anthony.
The management of purpose / Lewis Anthony Dexter ; Martin Sanchez-Jankowski and Alan J. Ware, editors.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-4128-1034-0 (alk. paper)
1. Social psychology. 2. Organization. 3. Dexter, Lewis Anthony.
I. Sanchez-Jankowski, Martmn, 1945- II. Ware, Alan J. III. Title.

HM1033.D49 2009
302.3'5--dc22

2009016357

ISBN 13: 978-1-4128-1034-0 (hbk)

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Preface

It was a warm autumn day and we were walking separately from the Dalhousie University campus in Halifax, Nova Scotia toward an area of the city called "the arm," named for its particular geographic location. The two of us meet at a corner where there is a stop light and exchange greetings. As we continue to walk in the same direction we ask each other a series of questions that leads to the conclusion that we are going to the same place—Professor Lewis Dexter's residence for a seminar on politics and public policy. The class is small, ten students, and Dexter serves cookies and tea in a room that overlooks a picturesque view of the Halifax shoreline. We both agree that the course will be interesting, that Dexter is demanding, and there will be little time to enjoy the picturesque scenery because he continues to randomly ask each student questions like a Supreme Court judge asks questions of the lawyers presenting their respective cases. Further, we both agree that what he chooses to have us read seems odd, and that he personally seems extremely eccentric. For three more months, we both trek down and back once a week to the Dexter seminar, and we continually complain there and back about Dexter and the course. When we are finished we are delighted that we no longer have to deal with either the material or Dexter, but we also agree that it is the best course we have taken and we have learned a great deal. It is safe to say that Dexter was a gifted teacher and researcher, but his impact was slow to mature because it was not easy to see the connections in the social world that he was engaged in making, not to mention trying to reproduce what he did. Many years later one of us would build a career that used history to understand political organizations and change in the United States, and one of us would carve out a career combining economics, political science, and sociology to understand various aspects of people living in poverty. The irony is that despite all our complaining we both would use the analytic tools that Dexter introduced to us in that course. Little did we realize during that first encounter on the way to the Dexter seminar how important the interactions with him and his work would be

for our own research careers. Thus, it is only appropriate that we have used the title to the seminar we took so many years ago to introduce in this book Dexter's thought, method, and work. It certainly captures the core of what he was about.

We would like to thank some people that have helped us gather information on Dexter and his family. First, we would like to thank Lewis Dexter's niece and nephew, Mary and Robert Pennington (Dexter). Mary Pennington was particularly helpful in providing information on the Dexter and Anthony familial backgrounds. Also, Dr. Holly Snyder, North American History Librarian at Brown University's John Hay Library, where she is responsible for the Library's "Robert Cloutman Dexter and Elisabeth Anthony Dexter Autograph Collection, 1757-1942" (Ms. 77.3) was very helpful in providing us needed information, and we certainly would like to thank her. Finally, we would like to thank Professor David Braybrooke who was a long-time friend and colleague of Lewis Dexter at Dalhousie University for giving us information about various writings that Dexter had published.

Last, but not least, a number of graduate student research assistants aided us in finding various articles that were published in some obscure and out-of-print journals. They were Maria Hollowell-Fuentes, Manata Hashemi, and Corey Abramson.

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Introduction

I

Lewis Anthony Dexter, who died in 1995 at the age of seventy-nine had a varied, productive, and successful career as a political scientist, sociologist, and consultant. He may well have been one of the better known and least appreciated political scientists of his time, and yet it is the power of his thought on practical issues that makes his work of continued relevance for the 21st century. Hence, within this introduction, we hope to provide the reader with answers to why Dexter remains important, some suggested reasons for him being underappreciated, the reasons for researching the topics he did, and a guide to his thought and analyses. In this way, we will highlight the reasons we have chosen the writings included in this volume and what "gems" the reader will discover as they engage them.

Nelson Polsby, one of the most prominent political scientists of U.S. Congressional politics and a great admirer of Dexter once remarked with sincere conviction: "Dexter is so smart and insightful, but he is a bit of a nut! Don't you think!?" Polsby's comment about an eminent political scientist that he so admired (he published a significant number of Dexter's articles in books he edited and was in continual correspondence with him) is not as peculiar as it might seem. He no doubt reflected the sentiments of a great many academics of the time that read and met Lewis Dexter. Part of the reasons for this view was that Dexter overstepped disciplinary boundaries in answering social questions, used evidence that was new or unorthodox to answer these questions, wrote in an antiquated idiomatic style, and exhibited an interpersonal style that was idiosyncratically uninhibited. Each of these can in some way be traced to biography, which we will briefly turn to next.

Lewis Anthony Dexter was born in Montreal, Quebec on November 9, 1915, and his sister Harriet Anthony in 1917, where their father had recently accepted the position of General Secretary of the Montreal Charity Organization Society. Lewis Dexter's career was influenced by

a number of events, but his mother and father, and their family histories, was certainly one of them. Dexter's father, Robert Cloutman Dexter, was both a Canadian and American citizen having been born in Shelburne, Nova Scotia to a father that was Canadian and a mother who was American. He was educated at Colby Academy in New London, New Hampshire, and graduated from Brown University with an A.B. in 1912 and an A.M. in 1917. He received his Ph.D. in sociology from Clark University in 1923. Robert C. Dexter taught sociology on the faculty of Skidmore College from 1923-27, but after being ordained as a Unitarian minister he pursued a career in administering agencies that provided direct services to people in need, particularly children. He was to become Director of the American Unitarian Association's Department of Social Relations that provided humanitarian programs for refugees; Executive Director of the Unitarian Service Committee, which worked to help Jews escape Nazi persecution in Europe; attaché in charge of refugees at the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon, Portugal; Representative of the Church Peace Union; and Director of Massachusetts Council of Churches, National Council for Prevention of War, Massachusetts Branch of the League of Nations Association, and the World Affairs Council of Rhode Island. Robert Cloutman Dexter wrote a number of books in the general area of social work, the most significant being *Social Adjustment*.[1] He also published scholarly articles in such journals as *American Journal of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, *Educational Review*, *Journal of Statistics* and *Journal of Social Psychology*; and lectured widely. He died in October, 1955 at the age of 68.

Lewis Dexter's mother, Elisabeth Williams Anthony came from a long line of New England clergy and mill owners. Her education was impressive, even more so given the time in which it occurred, with a B.A. from Bates College in Maine, an M.A. from Columbia, and a Ph.D. in History from Clark University in Massachusetts; and additional study at Brown, Oxford, and Radcliffe. Mrs. Dexter met and married Robert Cloutman Dexter in 1914. In 1915 she accompanied him to Montreal where he assumed the position as Director of the Montreal Charity Organization Society. After the First World War, Mr. Dexter accepted a social worker position in Worcester, Massachusetts, which allowed him and Mrs. Dexter to take graduate courses at Clark University. Both would receive their Ph.D. degrees from Clark, his in sociology and hers in History in 1923. Upon completion of their degrees, she accompanied her husband to Saratoga Springs, New York where she taught history at Skidmore College and Mr. Dexter became the head of the sociology department.

She would go on to teach history at Radcliffe College and publish two books: *Colonial Women of Affairs* in 1924 and *Career Women of America* in 1950.[2] Although teaching and scholarship were important throughout her life, most of her career consisted of working with her husband in providing social services to people in need and the maintenance of world peace. She died in 1971 at the age of 84.

Lewis, the first child of Robert and Elisabeth Dexter, would no doubt have been considered eccentric and a child prodigy. He learned to type before learning to write longhand, attended the University of Chicago and received his A.B. degree in 1935 after only fifteen months of study, roughly doing four years of work in little more than a year. Quite a remarkable accomplishment, though the renowned sociologist David Riesman, a fellow student at Chicago during this period, thought that it hampered Dexter's personal experiences during a particularly important developmental time and may well have contributed to his social awkwardness that his colleagues would often refer to. However, he proceeded on to Harvard where he finished his joint M.A. in Political Science, Anthropology, and Sociology in 1938, writing his thesis on "Anthropological Theories of Imperialism." He returned to the University of Chicago for a Ph.D. in Political Science, but never finished. He was a student of Morton Grodzins who was one of the leading political scientists in America, but he was never able to pass his general exams. In fact, he was very proud of the fact that he failed them seven times and would write that on the syllabi he handed out to his students. What made him most pleased was the reason for failing. He was constantly trying to integrate political science with sociology at a time when both disciplines were working to create separate academic subject matter for the purposes of disciplinary boundaries and credentialing. Morton Grodzins would plead with Dexter to simply drop the sociology part of his answers and he would pass with flying colors, but Dexter never would compromise. Dexter finally left Chicago frustrated that he was not allowed to integrate the two disciplines, though it is unclear who was the more frustrated, Dexter or Grodzins. After a few years of doing consulting, Dexter enrolled in the Ph.D. program at Columbia University and studied with Paul Lazersfeld, another icon, this time in sociology. Here again Dexter would insist on integrating sociology with political science, and yet again he would encounter resistance. As fortune would have it, Lazersfeld gave in and Dexter was allowed to write a dissertation entitled "Congressmen and the People They Listen To." His Ph.D. in sociology was awarded in 1960. This preoccupation with attempting to integrate sociology with political science was a direct

result of his father and mother's efforts to solve social problems. Through his family's vocation, he had learned that social problems, which often manifested themselves in conflict and war, required political solutions and thus both disciplines were required for societies to benefit.

Upon completing his dissertation he commenced a career that was productive, but unorthodox. There is no question that his career path was also the result of the confluence of his mother and father's family background and careers. His career can be divided into the categories of a practicing public intellectual, educator, and scholar; each of which was engaged in with a uniqueness worth commenting on.

Lewis Dexter's interest in being a practicing public intellectual was clearly influenced by his father's career as an administrator of a number of public aid programs throughout the world. As his father Robert had done, Lewis Dexter was determined to provide expertise to organizations engaged in the public good. He was a consultant to the President of the University of Puerto Rico on issues to improve educational opportunities to the citizens of that island. He actively advised a number of political campaigns, including the 1956 presidential campaign of Adlai Stevenson, and Foster Furcolo's (Democrat) 1956 and John Volpe's (Republican) 1960 runs for governor of Massachusetts. It was Dexter's belief that politics was one, if not the highest, calling to public service and as such was equivalent to the work that his father had done in administering to the social needs of people experiencing hardship. Dexter once remarked that his parents had to constantly interact with governments in their efforts to aid refugees and all those who need assistance, and from that he realized the importance of being active in providing information and analysis to politicians and government officials. He believed that government played a very important role in improving everyone's lives and addressing social prejudice and inequities was an important part of that effort. Thus, he advocated that intellectuals should be actively engaged in politics and public policy.

Along with education and governmental policy, Dexter was actively involved in both when consulting on issues related to mental retardation. His interest was stimulated by family. His mother's family, the Anthonys, had members that were politically active in social issues and problems. They had members who were active in the anti-slave abolitionist movement. Further, his mother's great aunt was the famous suffragette Susan B. Anthony, whose work, along with those of his other abolitionist relatives, Dexter once said made him aware that injustices and inequities must be addressed within for a democracy to evolve. This belief was instrumental in his work on mental retardation, which it might be added was supported

by his relative Kate Jackson Anthony and the Kate Jackson Anthony Trust that was devoted to the subject. In his lectures, he often mentioned that the social issues surrounding mental retardation reinforced in him the principle that governments must assist the most in need in society; and confronted by James Madison in the *Federalist Papers*, particularly paper number 10, when he insisted that governments must adjudicate the interests and needs of both the majority and minority if they were to build and maintain a healthy democracy. It should also be mentioned that he occasionally noted that his father being a minister in the Unitarian Church also influenced his ideas about providing assistance and protection to the most vulnerable in society.

Teaching was another important aspect of his career. Dexter considered education a fundamental part of democracy and something that was critically important to improving both the individual and society. He often referred to his teaching career as being that of an "itinerant visiting teacher." This is because he never accepted, for any significant period, a tenured professorship at a university. Many who knew of him thought this very odd indeed. His scholarship alone would have earned him a tenured position at one of the top universities in the United States, but he was not terribly interested in that and he was not the most congenial person that endears one to other faculty members of a department. By this I mean he was a principled person who was honest and willing to take unpopular and principled positions, at least to him, that would often stimulate strong reactions. The upshot would be the development of a committed opposition to his presence as a member of that department. This never bothered Dexter, because he was independently wealthy having been financially successful in the stock market where he engaged in the high risk, high return of "puts and calls." Thus, when he felt his presence was not productive to the students and faculty he would simply leave to assume a visiting professorship at another university.

His commitment to education can be seen in the places he chose to teach. As indicated, there is little doubt that he could have been on the faculty of a number of top universities, and he did teach at a number of them including Harvard, MIT, California-Berkeley, and Johns Hopkins to name a few; but he also chose to teach at places considered "lesser status" schools. Some of these schools were traditional African-American colleges like Howard and Talledega and others were simply campuses where the students were from predominantly working-class families like the University of South Florida, University of Massachusetts at Boston, and University of Maryland at Baltimore. Dexter considered

teaching very important and he invested a great deal of time and energy into it. He believed education was the key to supporting democracy because it enlightened people and provided them with skills to improve both theirs' and their fellow citizens' lives. Education, to him, was not for the rich and privileged, and it was necessary that students from all backgrounds be given the opportunity to be taught at the highest level. His uncompromising effort to provide the highest quality instruction regardless of prior background is what he brought to students no matter where he taught, though that was often interpreted by students as him being pompously difficult.

Research formed the basic foundation of his career. There was never a time that Dexter was not engaged in research. Information and understanding he thought composed the cornerstones for the creation and maintenance of a vibrant democratic society. Thus, it was the responsibility of scholars and institutions to provide this resource to a public that needed it even if it was rarely acknowledged and sometimes ignored, snubbed, and rejected. He understood the roots of American anti-intellectualism and saw the need to persevere despite it. He once commented to a number of his colleagues after a particularly hostile and misguided demonstration of anti-intellectualism, that he "had reconsidered the virtues of participatory democracy, but found no reasonable means for withdrawing it." By which he meant that he was more inclined to see the benefits of having a system much like that of the early American republic where an educated and propertied elite would be the principled citizens allowed to engage in governing the political system.

As has been consistently mentioned, the research that he would devote his life to was indeed influenced by his family, most notably his mother and father. From his father he would research sociology questions, particularly those having to do with social problems. His father, trained as a sociologist, focused on that part of sociology that dealt with social problems and organizational responses to them. Lewis Dexter would also focus on the very same issues through his research and this can easily be seen in his work on mental retardation, education, civil defense, and the policy management of the professional and non-professional activists. Yet from his mother, who was a professional historian, he would focus on history in both the analytic and decision-making process, and see the importance of morals in the social and political judgments of public life. It would be these two substantive and methodological concerns that would befuddle his professional colleagues in political science. They would see him as a compatriot sympathetic to the development of a

behavioral approach to politics, but clearly a deviant because he would include things that were inconsistent with the prescribed orthodoxy of behavioralism, which wanted to analytically separate empirical data from historical evidence. This befuddlement on the part of his professional colleagues provided Dexter with the evidence that he had indeed become the generalist he had always intended to make of himself.

II

It is more than a fair question to ask why one should invest in reading articles that were written so many years ago. What contemporary relevance might they have for the current scholar? The answer to this query is that Dexter was one of those scholars whose writings came from a career that afforded him a vantage point to provide insights of complex phenomena that have withstood the test of time. As such, the reader will be able to both better understand many of the issues and mechanisms that remain a part of the American political landscape, and the analytic tools to make their own contributions toward further understanding.

Lewis Dexter's contributions were many, and while they can be organized around the large categories that comprise the three headings in this volume, there are at least three constituted themes. The first of these was his integration of sociology and anthropology into political analysis. Of course his notions of what constituted sociology and anthropology were a mixture of antiquated understandings of each and practical concerns for using them to illuminate political matters. For sociology, he concentrated on social problems and the role of the individual in group relations; and for anthropology his focus was on the role of morals, beliefs, symbols and culture in the foundations of society, and how that impacted the means by which social issues and problems were addressed.[3]

The study of society's response, particularly government's, to social problems was an area that he made significant contributions. His use of multiple types of evidence, most notably history and logic, should be seen as a standard for increasing both causal explanations and more general understanding. This approach provided conclusions that contributed to behavioralism's quest (and its epistemological parent logical positivism) for generalized social laws, and phenomenology's design for understanding. Thus, from a methodological perspective, his admittedly "generalist approach" to the study of social and political problems would prove particularly effective in describing how and why various organizations and institutions worked the way they did.

From a sociological perspective, Dexter was important in the development of what would become known as "Labeling Theory." Labeling theory is generally associated with the sociologist Howard Becker, but Lewis Dexter was clearly working with the concept at the same time, or even a little before Becker. His paper "On the Politics and Sociology of Stupidity in Our Society" appeared in Becker's often cited book on deviance, *The Other Side* and is reprinted in the present volume.[4] His findings on both the mentally "retarded" and "gifted" was that there was a power with social labels which transcended and distorted reality for the interaction of the labeled and those doing the labeling. In essence, Dexter's work showed the difficulties that democratic societies have with groups of individuals that lie within the outer tails of a society's normal population distribution where the policies are designed to support the middle of this distribution while forcing the "deviants" to conform. In his book *The Tyranny of Schooling* this argument was more fully developed, showing that democracies like the United States try to establish a social equilibrium by making the majority of its citizens "average" because that maximizes regime governability.[5] This important book never had the impact that it might have had because it was published shortly after Paul Goodman's *Growing Up Absurd*, which covered some of the same issues (although treated quite differently) and became a perennial best seller, commercially pushing important books like Dexter's into public anonymity.[6]

Another sociological legacy was Dexter's work in the area of organizational behavior. It was here that his interests in sociology and political science met and meshed. Dexter argued that organizations tend to compartmentalize and specialize just as Weber had theorized and that within government this limited the ability of elected officials to represent the interests of their constituents and those of the larger society. This situation made for a tension in "the management of purpose" for both the individual politician and government bureaucrat. Within this predicament of trying to balance the interests of the individual's patrons (i.e., the politician's constituents and the bureaucrat's clients) and all of society's citizens, there was the dilemma between professional judgments commensurate with establishing equilibrium between the greatest good for the whole and meeting the specific needs of those who were their immediate responsibility. For Dexter, a democratic citizen, politician, and bureaucrat needed to utilize practical judgments in pursuit of their objectives and this "management of purpose" required the political vision exemplified by George Savile, the 1st Marquis de Halifax (1633-1995), and the "pru-

dence" advocated by Edmund Burke (1729-1797). It can safely be said that both of these statesmen had the greatest intellectual influence on him. He was committed to a Halifaxian and Burkean notion of governance because it was focused on the political virtues of inclusion, compromise, and prudence, which he believed had historically been shown to be most economical in effectively governing democratic societies.

Before concluding this introduction we would like mention that all but one of the readings in this volume were previously published. Those interested in the full citations for these papers should consult the Selected Bibliography in the back of this book which is arranged by the year they were published. The citation for the unpublished work, "Toward a Sociological Analysis of Policy," can be found in the note section at the end of that chapter.

Notes

1. See Robert Cloutman Dexter, *Social Adjustment* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927).
2. See Elisabeth Anthony Dexter, *Colonial Women of Affairs: A Study of Women in Business and the Professions in America before 1776* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1924); and *Career Women in America, 1776-1840* (Boston: C.M. Jones, Co., 1950).
3. In addition to some of the readings presented in this volume, for sociology see his, *The Sociology and Politics of Congress* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1970); and for anthropology see *Representation Versus Direct Democracy in a Fighting about Taxes: Conflicting Notions of Sovereignty and Civility* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Books, 1982).
4. Howard S. Becker, *The Other Side: Perspectives on Deviance* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).
5. See Lewis A. Dexter, *The Tyranny of Schooling: An Inquiry into the Concept of "Stupidity"* (New York: Basic Books: 1964).
6. See Paul Goodman, *Growing Up Absurd: Problems of Youth in the Organized Society* (New York: Random House, 1960).

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Part I

Sociology

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1

"Be Not the First"

What price unorthodoxy? "There is nothing more bothersome … than to alter entrenched habits. That is what the innovator wants done when he advocates a new ritual in the church, a new technique in the file department, a new labor saving device in the factory."[1]

Spoonfuls of salt should always be poured on one of the favorite beliefs of the folklorists of self-help. It is simply not true that ingenuity, inventiveness, and a perception of new needs and new devices smooth the way to promotion and pay. In fact, a readiness to recommend reforms is one of the greatest handicaps under which an ambitious apprentice can labor.

The sophist might maintain that the belief, though false, is socially beneficial. Taking the thesis that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church" as his text, he could point out that, although those who first introduce innovations usually succumb to the slings and arrows of outraged public opinion, sooner or later the more desirable new departures are adopted, precisely as a consequence of the sufferings of their early advocates; and, since no modern man deliberately chooses to be a martyr, it is fortunate indeed that the superstition about the rewards of originality exists, for it causes men to become martyrs in spite of themselves.

However, in fact, the most that one can say with accuracy is that the blood of some martyrs may have been the seed from which some churches have sprung. By the world's standards, at least, such martyrs as the Albigenses of Languedoc, who fell before the orthodox and covetous crusaders of Northern France, during the era of St. Louis, died in vain; and it is open to grave doubt whether the ultimate success of Quakerism is attributable to the willingness of early Quakers to suffer the stake. As Max Weber has suggested in his work on the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, perhaps Quakerism really grew in esteem because of the congruence of its doctrines with business-mindedness.

Pure logic, on the other hand, will demonstrate the fallacy, as a general counsel for everybody all of the time, of the old rhyme:

> Be not the first by whom the new is tried,
> Nor yet the last by whom the old is laid aside.

But, under what circumstances is it wise to try the new first? As things go, it is often the most intelligent young people who see something that needs to be done and try to do it. They find themselves thrown against stone walls; and, according to temperament and experience, become cynical or embittered.

Perhaps some instruction in the sociology of reform might lessen their sufferings and benefit society through making possible more ready acceptance of new contributions. On the principle, "Forewarned Is Forearmed," potential reformers would study the history of inventors and innovators. They would be told of Semmelweiss who valiantly tried to explain to fellow-physicians how elementary hygiene would reduce deaths at childbirth; and they would be shown how as a consequence, he was ostracized to the point where he sacrificed career, sanity, and life itself. They would study the case of Jonas Hanway, who first introduced the umbrella into England, and have it explained to them why he was mobbed. They would hear of eminent scientists who joined with the lay public in deriding the pioneers of aviation. They would see Servetus, the forerunner of Unitarianism, burned at the stake, and Priestley, scientist and religious thinker, in effect exiled two centuries later by public opposition. They would learn to understand why Roger Williams' "inconvenient questioning of land titles and his views on the Massachusetts charter" led to his banishment into the wilderness where he was "sorely tossed … in a bitter winter season, not knowing what bread or bed did mean."

Cost of Unorthodoxy

And, lest they gather the impression that these are matters of far away and long ago, there would be those to instruct them in the cost of unorthodoxy today. It would be explained that although in the western democracies resort to physical violence is infrequent, the pressures to conformity are intense. Case studies to document this generalization would be made, case studies, not chiefly from the lives of those now considered heroes, but from the experience of men who, whether rightly or wrongly, are trying to advance the cause of human decency and efficiency today. These case studies would permit them to answer such

questions as: What happens to the Negro dentist in some backward areas who tries to dissuade his patients from getting gold teeth if they do not need them? What is the fate of the worker who complains that his trade union's leadership is autocratic? What happens to the little street vendor who sells a magazine, which influences, close to the Commissioner of Licenses, distrust? What are the chances of promotion for a private who was formerly a publicist and lets ex-colleagues know of some scandalous situation which has developed in his camp?

Instruction could be carried well beyond the bounds of what we ordinarily think of as civil liberties. Tables might be prepared of the average number of articles accepted by the more reputable academic journals from persons using orthodox scientific methods and terminologies and of the average number accepted from those who utilize a new (and afterwards accepted) method or style; similar tables might be made of the salaries of the former group, as compared with the latter, at the same ages. Studies might be made of certain organizations to see who is promoted when and why; and these will demonstrate that those who accept the accustomed methods of doing business on the whole rise to the top. The careers of physicians who adopt *new and soundly-based* treatments might be examined to see whether they lag behind less progressive men in income; it will be shown that poets who write in a new idiom are retarded in winning recognition.

If these facts are accepted simply as facts, the curriculum just outlined might serve only to discourage potential innovators. But, wisely handled, the insistent question will be: Why did these new ideas meet with so much opposition? How could that opposition have been avoided?

In each case, presumably, the answer will be somewhat different; but certain general conclusions will probably emerge from a study, directed towards answering such questions.[2]

Innovators Are Nuisances

First, students will come to see that most innovators lack completely the ability to see themselves as others see them—which is to say as nuisances. There is nothing more bothersome in the entire world than to alter entrenched habits. That is what the innovator wants done when he advocates a new ritual in the church, a new technique in the file department, or a new labor saving device in the factory. There is nothing more insulting than to imply that the man who does the job does not do it as well as it could be done. This is what the bright employee does when he suggests that the manager employ a new technique of administrative

analysis or that statisticians scrap conventional methods of analyzing costs. There is nothing more dreadful than to run the risk of losing prestige. And any significant change in any organization means that some people are likely to be less influential and prominent than they were.[3] When two churches are merged, then there will be only one chairman of a standing committee instead of two; when the United States joins a League of Nations, perhaps individual United States Senators (and especially the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations) will feel less important.

The typical inventor appreciates none of these things. He is obsessed with the particular kind of improvement which he can offer; and he regards those who stand in his way as reactionaries or dunderheads.[4] For the most part, to be sure, his opponents disguise their opposition behind well-sounding arguments about the merits of the new proposal. Its sponsors will then waste time in attempting to destroy the rationalizations put forward instead of striking at the real issues. For instance, not one man in ten thousand who cites George Washington's words about "no entangling alliances," is in any sense convinced by them or cares what Washington really means. Some deeper motive of habitual patriotism, or dislike of foreigners, or suspicion of the British, or desire to see the Senate continue free to reject treaties, is almost surely at work when that immortal cliché is trotted forth. Nor will argument convince the real Jew-baiter that the Protocol of the Elders of Zion is a forgery. He believes in it because deep within him is a need to hate something, and the Jew is a convenient target for the hostilities of which he is especially aware.

Mere awareness of the factors creating opposition to a plan may at least make reformers more charitable towards their opponents, more able to meet them on grounds of genuine tolerance, more perceptive to answer what they mean, and less quick to ridicule what they say. And, in some cases, forethought may enable inventors to see who will lose what in the way of prestige, profit, and entrenched habit, if the proposed plan be adopted; and consequently to have ready some method of allaying fears and soothing injured feelings. A chairman of a standing committee who fears for the loss of his position may be assured that the two churches which merge will back him for a post in the state conference; suggestions for the introduction of labor saving devices, or the elimination of conductors on buses, may be accompanied by schemes for retaining ousted men.

There is another motive, frequently present in resistance to change, of which the typical innovator is unaware. Schiller has expressed it thus:

For, of the wholly common is man made
And custom is his nurse. Woe then to them
That lay irreverent hands upon his old
House furniture, the dear inheritance
From his forefathers, for time consecrates
And what is gray with age becomes the sacred.

The typical innovator has no sympathy with such sentiments. Accordingly, to those who have grown up in some old fashioned way of doing business, reform seems to be (and in fact sometimes is so handled that it really is) nothing but an excuse for more or less refined sadism. Anthony Trollope in *The Warden* presents an extremely touching picture of the sufferings, which a reform may impose upon those who have grown into the old order of things.

Few innovators see, either, that frequently they suffer not so much because of their good ideas as because of their total personalities. That is to say, the kind of man who develops something new is apt to be relatively insensitive to customary courtesies in many respects. For personalities tend to be more or less integrated; and unorthdoxy in one field is apt to be accompanied by unorthodoxies in others. It is characteristic that several potential donors to a project for reducing the chances of war were unwilling to give anything when they observed that the leading advocate to the idea had dirty fingernails. He himself was not aware of this; he does not care about appearance. But they could not judge his ideas; they could judge his cleanliness. And so they refused to support his plan. So, in larger matters too, the man with a new vision is apt to be unconventional. Priestley was born an original scientist and a deviant religious thinker; had he confined himself to one occupation or the other he might have been safer than in fact he was. Veblen was not only a scoffer at classical economics; he was personally sarcastic.

Innovations and Military Planning

It is imperative that embryo innovators realize that the chances are they are wrong in any original suggestion which they advance. This does not mean that original suggestions should not be advanced. It does mean, however, that men should make sure they know why things are done the way they are done before they propose different procedures.[5] Amateur strategists who ignore problems of supply and transport can always evolve paper-brilliant plans because they do not recognize that effective planning must be *organismic*. That is to say, a new proposal or innovation must fit both into the limitations imposed by the attitudes and values of those who have to adopt it. Military critics, like Winston Churchill

and Liddell Hart, have justly pointed out that the Allied commanders in the last war made a great mistake in not using the tank intelligently; but there *had* to be a change in the cautious, infantry-minded thinking of the high command, before they could use the tank properly. It is, in fact, almost axiomatic that no genuinely new weapon will be used effectively because it takes time for generals to readjust their conceptions of military propriety to its possibilities.

Similarly, it might be desirable in the United States to adopt many features of Russian or German military organization; but, in fact, such adoption would presuppose a change in the attitudes and values of American officers and men. Or, in every congregation, and in every university, one may notice many, many needed changes; but always, always, the man who first tries to introduce such changes "fails," because he tries to *impose* them upon persons whose attitudes and values are adjusted to the previous situation. Sometimes a leader who recognizes the necessity for a democratic educational process can, more or less slowly, get people to alter their attitudes and values. Corey, in a brilliant article on the nature of educational leadership,[6] which should be carefully considered by all would-be innovators, has shown how this may be done; but in other cases it is probably necessary to admit that, without a total reorganization of society, it is inconceivable in a measurable period of time, that one's proposals can be effectuated.

Finally, there should be emphasis upon the fact that no new approach can stand on its own merits. The use of influence and pressure are just as important in getting inventions and reforms accepted as in anything else. Kelvin started his academic career by trying to obtain publication for a paper which offended one of the leaders of his profession; but Kelvin's father, himself a well-known scholar, succeeded in smoothing the matter over. Mendel, on the other hand, undertook experiments which are basic to the whole science of genetics; but, published as they were, obscurely, they lay unnoticed until his methods were rediscovered about thirty years later.

This suggests that the apprentice innovator should learn not to come forth with proposals until he has undertaken an analysis of the situation and prepared a plan of campaign. An isolated article or act will either be ignored or considered scandalous, according to its nature, and will but rarely lead to any wider understanding. The innovator must know—after the first shot is fired—what is to be done next; who in relevant professions or organizations can expected or persuaded, for whatever motives, to support the new departure? Who can understand what is actually be-

ing attempted? What alternative means of winning a livelihood are open to those who take the risks? What friendships may they expect to lose, what temptations to unhappiness and bitterness must they be prepared to avoid?

Were such insight into the sociology of innovation widely provided, there might be fewer mute, inglorious Mendels, fewer potential Semmelweisses, hindered so completely by popular or professional disapproval, that they make no effective contribution to human progress at all.

Notes

1. The major theme of this article might be stated somewhat differently. It could read: Statesmen, ministers, scholars, and citizens, are continually faced with the problem of compromise. This does not mean that they must resolve a general abstract dilemma: To compromise or not to compromise? On the contrary, in any concrete instance the question which they must answer is: What is the optimum degree of compromise in this particular situation? (Note, please, that the possible range of compromise is from 0 percent to 100 percent.)

   When confronted with practical problems, political theorists, church social action leaders, scientific administrators, etc., tend to analyze them caustically; but when they discuss social action theoretically, they are apt to be dogmatic. Note, for example, the scholar who asserts that he will let *nothing* interfere with complete freedom of research, publication, and teaching. Among political theorists, in particular, there has been a continuing tradition of revolt against the futility of such absolutism.

   Among the outstanding critics of conventional political theory, one might name Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Lord Halifax, the author of the *Character of a Trimmer* (flourished 1690). An outstanding modern example is E. Pendleton Herring's *Politics of Democracy* (New York, 1940).

   As a student of Herring's, the writer found himself forced into a position where James. A. Farley became more admirable than Senator Norris, or Governor Bricker than Wendell Willkie.

   This means that one sacrifices moral considerations in evaluating political realities, or that one relies with Herring upon some unformulated limitation, which enables the honest man to distinguish between legitimate compromise and illegitimate opportunism. J. H. Hallowell, taking T. V. Smith, whose position is entirely analogous to Herring's, as his target, has given a largely antithetical criticism of the philosophy of compromise in *Ethics.* The present article attempts rather to synthesize the sense of reality, which is to be found in the works of Halifax and Herring, with the vivid awareness of such moralists as William Lloyd Garrison and John Haynes Holmes that compromise can all too often be used simply as an excuse to avoid trouble and to let evil flourish unchecked.

   This article arose too out of the writer's concern with a related problem, well illustrated in David Lindsay Watson's *Scientists Are Human.* Watson demonstrates that the original thinker—the scholar who looks for new methods or utilizes new techniques—is likely to handicap himself in terms of his own career as compared with his conventionally-minded brethren. But science taken as a whole will grow precisely because of unorthodox discoveries and to known truths. What then is the obligation of the young scientist if he finds himself interested in borderline topics or unfamiliar methods?

2. Such a work as William F. Ogburn's, *Social Change*, New York, 1922, might be used as a major text here. (The most explicit criticism of Ogburn is furnished by Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma,* New York, 1944, especially appendixes 1 and 2.)
3. The fact that administrative analysts and industrial engineers are not often aware of the sociological factors in change makes them (and such ecclesiastical equivalents as commissions of appraisal) extremity impotent, in many situations.
4. A prig has been defined as one who judges other people, not by their standards, but by his.
5. Students should of course learn that there is a danger of developing the academic attitude, which consists of delaying action until all the facts are in, knowing that all the facts never will be in. In other words, they must learn to set a time limit upon the period for reflection and analysis.
6. Stephen Corey, "Cooperative Staff Work," *School Review*, 52 (1944) 336-345. See also Marshall Dimock, "Bureaucracy Self-Examined," *Public Administration Review*, 4, 1944, 197-207, for an analysis of the way in which the executive is limited by his subordinates' preconceptions and preferences. A comprehensive discussion of the organic nature of society is to be found in Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture,* New York, 1934.

   It should not be concluded from the above statement that it is necessarily an error to try to impose a new arrangement upon a group or institution. It may be that this is sometimes the best way to educate them; but the innovator should undertake an advance analysis of the different possible ways of proceeding, and decide whether it is likely to be more effective to go so far as to have to retreat, or to proceed more slowly and comprehensively along the line suggested by Corey.