

realities that underlie it. "The modern politician," write Stephen Rousseas and James Farganis, "is the man who understands how to manipulate and how to operate in a Machiavellian world which divorces ethics from politics. Modern democracy becomes, in this view, transformed into a system of techniques sans *telos*. And democratic politics is reduced to a constellation of self-seeking pressure groups peaceably engaged in a power struggle to determine the allocation of privilege and particular advantage" (1965: 270-71). On the international plane, this has meant recourse to a "new realism," most evident in the application of game theory to what the Germans so charmingly call the international "chickenspiel." This new realism emphasizes technique over purpose, the *how* of political relations over their *whys* and *wherewithals*. Where opponents of this approach argue that such a new emphasis sacrifices the hope of understanding the causes of such politics, its defenders argue, as true American pragmatists, that what matters is the world as given, and what counts is the most rational deployment of our resources to respond to present-day dilemmas. What counts in Vietnam is not how "we" got there, but that "we" are there. Two kinds of rationality thus oppose each other, a substantive rationality which aims at a critical understanding of the world, and perhaps even at critical action, and a formal or technical rationality which understands the world in terms of technical solutions.

In this argument social scientists find themselves heavily involved. Some feel, with Ithiel de Sola Pool, that

The only hope for humane government in the future is through the extensive use of the social sciences by government. . . . The McNamara revolution is essentially the bringing of social science analysis into the operation of the Department of Defense. It has remade American defense policy in accordance with a series of ideas that germinated in the late 1950s in the RAND Corporation among people like Schelling, Wohlstetter, Kahn, and Kaufmann. These were academic people playing their role as social scientists (whatever their early training may have been). They were trying to decide with care and seriousness what would lead to deterrence and what would undermine it. While one might argue with their conclusions at any given point, it seems to me that it is the process that has been important. The result has been the humanization of the Department of Defense. That is a terribly important contribution to the quality of American life. (1967: 268-69)

Others will echo C. Wright Mills when he describes the selfsame set of social scientists as: "crackpot realists, who, in the name of realism have constructed a paranoid reality all their own and in the name of practicality have projected a utopian image of capitalism. They have replaced

the responsible interpretation of events by the disguise of meaning in a maze of public relations, respect for public debate by unshrewd notions of psychological warfare, intellectual ability by the agility of the sound and mediocre judgment, and the capacity to elaborate alternatives and to gauge their consequences by the executive stance" (1962: 610-11).

Anthropologists, like other social scientists, cannot evade the dilemma posed by the return to Machiavellian politics. Yet our major response has been one of retreat. This retreat is all the more notable when we realize that wholly anthropological ideas have suddenly been taken over and overtaken by other disciplines. Political scientists have appropriated the anthropological concept of "tradition" and used it to build a largely fictitious polarity between traditional and modern societies; Marshall McLuhan has made use of largely anthropological insights to project the outlines of the communication revolution of the present and future. In contrast to the 1930s and 1940s, when anthropology furnished the cutting edge of innovation in social science, we face at the moment a descent into triviality and irrelevance. This descent into triviality seems to me, above all, marked by an increasing concern for pure technique; important as our technical heritage is for all of us, it cannot in and of itself quicken the body of our discipline without the accession of new ideas. Technique without ideas grows sterile; the application of improved techniques to inherited ideas is the mark of the epigone. This is true regardless of whether anthropologists put themselves at the service of the new realists or seek refuge in an uncertain ivory tower.

Someone who diagnoses an illness should also prescribe remedies. If I am correct in saying that anthropology has reached its present impasse because it has so systematically disregarded the problems of power, then we must find ways of educating ourselves in the realities of power. One way I can think of accomplishing this is to engage ourselves in the systematic writing of a history of the modern world in which we spell out the processes of power that created the present-day cultural systems and the linkages among them. I do not mean history in the sense of "one damned thing after another"; I mean a critical and comprehensive history of the modern world. It is not irrelevant to the present state of American anthropology that the main efforts to analyze the interplay of societies and cultures on a world scale in anthropological terms have come from Peter Worsley (1964), an Englishman, and from Darcy Ribeiro (1968), a Brazilian. Where, in our present-day anthropological literature, are the comprehensive studies of the slave trade, of the fur trade, of colonial expansion, of forced and voluntary acculturation, of