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CONSERVATIVE COMMUNICATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS
OF THE RHETORICAL BEHAVIORS OF EDMUND BURKE,
CONSERVATIVE EXEMPLAR

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
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1973

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CHAPTER I

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the conservative communication of the eighteenth-century British statesman Edmund Burke. As James Prior, one of Burke's biographers, declared:

Few things interest the curiosity of mankind more, or prove so instructive in themselves, as to trace the progress of a powerful mind, by the honourable exertion of its native energies. . . . Such a person, as sprung not from the privileged few, but from among the mass of the people, we feel to be one of ourselves. Our sympathies go along with him in his career. The young imagine that it may possibly be their own case; the old, that with a little more of the favour of fortune it might have been theirs; and at any rate we are anxious to ascertain the causes of his superiority, to treasure up his experience, to profit by what he experienced to be useful, to avoid what he found to be disadvantageous.¹

Origin of the Study

In 1950 James McBurney isolated a contemporary rhetorical problem relevant to the purpose of this investigation. His consideration of "The Plight of the Conservative in Public Discussion" noted that "the conservatives in

America have become inarticulate to a point where their voice does not do credit to their ideas and often does their cause a positive disservice."² He further maintained that conservatives "are nervous and inarticulate. Especially is this true when their basic assumptions are challenged."³ But McBurney's program to solve the problem seemed inadequate. He advocated (1) a "broad understanding of social, political, and economic issues in American life and culture," (2) "clear insight into personal and social values as they affect these issues," and (3) "specific training in the philosophy and method of democratic participation."⁴ A specific problem had been justly considered, but instead of providing a specific set of guidelines to remedy the problem inherent in most communication by conservatives, McBurney offered maxims for good citizenry. My rumination for a better solution proved fruitless at the time. The very nature of the problem was difficult to approach. For the sake of scholarship, the approach had to be professional, not partisan; it had to deal with a practical problem without relinquishing academic rigor; and it had to be grounded in principles tried by time yet applicable to the present.

A plausible perspective on the problem developed through the writer's introduction to literature considering

³Ibid., 165.
⁴Ibid., 167.
Edmund Burke to be the founder of political conservatism. Beginning with Arthur Baumann's *Burke: The Founder of Conservatism* (1929), continuing through Alfred Cobban's *Edmund Burke and the Revolt Against the Eighteenth Century* (1929), and finding more contemporary consideration in Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind From Burke to Eliot* (1968), the relationship between Burke and conservatism was solidifying. Suggesting a swelling circle of adherents to this interpretation of Burke has been the publishing of four new editions of Burke's *Reflections*, three new anthologies of Burke's speeches and writings, and the growing popularity of the journal *Burke and His Times*, the first seven numbers of which were originally published in the *Modern Age*.

This relationship between Burke and conservatism then directed my attention to the speaking and works of Burke in hopes that a more satisfying solution could be found for the "rhetorical bankruptcy" of the conservative than had been suggested by McBurney. If Burke were the historical founder of conservatism, who could better prescribe some medicine for the rhetorical ills of conservatives than this model orator-statesman?

**Review of the Literature**

The initial phase of my investigation into the literature on Edmund Burke involved examining the basic

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indices of research in the area of speech-communication and other relevant areas such as political science, philosophy, history, and literature.6

This examination revealed that, within the area of speech-communication, at least six M.A. theses and four Ph.D. dissertations have focused on some aspect of Burke and/or his works: "Edmund Burke, the Rhetorician" by Robert Hannah, Cornell, 1922, M.A. thesis; "The Critics of Burke" by May Jenks, Cornell, 1927, M.A. thesis; "Burke's Leading Ideas, Excerpts from his Speeches and Writings" by Harold Friend Harding, Cornell, 1929, M.A. thesis; "Burke's Speech on American Taxation with an Introduction and Notes" by Geraldine Elizabeth Quinlan, Cornell, 1929, M.A. thesis; "Edmund Burke's Ideas on Literature and Oratory and his Critical Opinions of Authors and Books" by Donald Cross Bryant, Cornell, 1929, M.A. thesis; "Edmund Burke's Consistency in the Use of Comparative Figures of Speech" by Melba Hurd, University of Minnesota, 1931, M.A. thesis; "Burke's Reading" by Arthur Lensen Woehl, Cornell, 1928, Ph.D. dissertation; "Burke's Chief American Works: An


Except one, all of the studies were written from Cornell University and bore the distinctive literary, classical mark of that distinguished speech and drama department. For example, the classical or Aristotelian emphasis, characteristic of the late Cornell professor Herbert Wichelns' thought, was first manifested in H. Clay Harshbarger's study on Burke. As advocated by Wichelns, Harshbarger confined his analysis to the immediate effect of Burke's success with "success" being defined in terms of parliament's vote on major questions. Likewise, McNabb's "Rhetorical Study of the Principal Speeches of Burke" focused on speeches considered "as arising from particular occasions and as designed to work practical effects." Moreover, the pronounced literary focus was apparent in

7As stated by Raymond F. Howes in his edition of Historical Studies of Rhetoric and Rhetoricians (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), dedication page, "the Cornell movement [was] to revive classical rhetoric."


9Richtmyer, Abstracts of Theses Cornell University, p. 75.
Donald Bryant's dissertation as he centered on Burke's associations with men of letters generally excluding his association with men of politics. Making explicit his rhetorical perspective, Bryant later defended the literary aspect of the rhetorical tradition revealing his particular bias:

It should be hardly less than obvious that . . . eloquence . . . cannot be studied competently in its theory or its practice unless some scholars are as much at home with Swift as with George Campbell, with Matthew Arnold as with Whately.10

Researchers within the fields of philosophy, history, and political science have been helpful in illuminating areas not studied previously by rhetorical investigators, though of interest to their academic field. For example, Helen A. Johnson's doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, attempted to account for the apparent inconsistencies in Burke's political thought on reform and revolution by developing the relationship Burke perceived between circumstances and ultimate principles.11 This study could be particularly helpful from a communication standpoint in interpreting "perceived inconsistencies" among selected speeches by Burke as was John Lester's "Analysis


of the Conservative Thought of Edmund Burke" (Harvard University, Ph.D., 1943).

Among the published works, a large number of books and articles have considered Burke and his works. Since Burke's role as member of parliament necessitated frequent speaking, it is not surprising that many of his historians and biographers frequently referred to his speaking abilities. However, most of these references were of a cursory, anecdotal nature. For example, even though historian-biographer Carl B. Cone's general treatment of Burke was exemplary, Donald Bryant noted that Cone's analysis of Burke's speaking has been "impressionistic and documentary rather than basically rhetorical and interpretive. This characteristic, though disappointing, is hardly extraordinary among political biographies."\(^{12}\)

Within the area of speech-communication, Donald Bryant stands as the authoritative Burkean scholar. In addition to his M.A. thesis and Ph.D. dissertation, Bryant's studies of Burke have included the following: "Edmund Burke on Oratory" (QJS 1933), "Edmund Burke's Opinions of Some Orators of his Day" (QJS 1934), Edmund Burke and his Literary Friends (St. Louis 1939), "Edmund Burke's Conversation" in Studies in Speech and Drama in Honor of Alexander M. Drummond (University of Colorado 1945), "Edmund


Generally, Bryant's studies on Burke have been descriptive, historical, and classical. Undoubtedly, Edmund Burke and his Literary Friends was the most comprehensive of Bryant's work. To him, this specialized biographical study indicated that "a change must come about in the proportion of any future account of the life of Burke." Emphasizing the nonpolitical aspects of Burke's life, Bryant concluded that:

If there is still a place in our philosophy of intellectual history for the study of so nearly unified and universal a mind as his Burke's, the facts of Burke's

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13Donald C. Bryant, Edmund Burke and his Literary Friends, Washington University Studies, No. 9 (St. Louis: Washington University, 1939), p. 310.
extra-political life cannot rightly be relegated to brief chapters or short breathing spells in the unraveling of the intricate skeins of his political thought and activity, or disposed of hurriedly before he became immersed in politics in 1765. (Italics mine.)

Though Bryant's prime intention in this book was to provide a literary biography of Burke, his meticulous scholarship offers a ready source of implicit relationships and inferences which need only be abstracted, developed, and interpreted by students of Burke interested in some of his other dimensions. From that perspective, this writer found Bryant's chapters on "James Boswell" and "French Writers" to be particularly helpful in drawing tentative inferences regarding some of Burke's religious and political assumptions.

Abstracted from this more comprehensive study was Bryant's essay on "Edmund Burke's Conversation." Selecting the most pertinent examples of conversation with Burke's literary friends, Bryant related the positive and negative perceptions of Burke's conversation by those who composed his immediate conversational circle. Then accounting for those strengths and weaknesses, Bryant concluded that Burke's comprehensive knowledge was at once his prime strength and weakness. He had much of worth to say and was determined to say it—even at the expense of monopolizing the conversational time. In addition, the "other charges

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14 Bryant, Edmund Burke and his Literary Friends, pp. 309-10.
against Burke--lack of wit and lack of taste--derive from his great knowledge, his extreme sensitiveness to language, and the energy and nervousness with which he talked."\(^{15}\) As was also the case in Bryant's book, this essay was largely informative rather than interpretive.

Utilizing a similar descriptive method, Bryant considered Burke the rhetorician as well as the conversationalist in the essay "Edmund Burke on Oratory."

Describing his intent and method, Bryant stated:

I have made no attempt to account here for Burke's opinions, to trace the origin . . . of his ideas, to judge, to appraise, to supplement. The value of such a study as this lies, of course, far more in the collection of the utterances than in any gloss upon them. Consequently, neither is the classification here employed, though it seems to me useful, offered as final; nor is the interpolated exposition intended to be exhaustive or conclusive. The method is one of extraction, arrangement, and, to a limited extent, synthesis.\(^{16}\)

More specifically, Bryant's purpose was "to search out, to collect, and to arrange these \(\)Burke's\(\) fragments \(\)or opinions on oratory\(\) into more or less connected categories. . . ."\(^{17}\)

The categories which Bryant used in giving form to Burke's abstracted notions of oratory were apparently


\(^{16}\)Donald C. Bryant, "Edmund Burke on Oratory," QJS, XIX (1933), 1-2.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., 1.
influenced strongly by Herbert Wichelns, one of Bryant's distinguished Cornell professors. Influencing Bryant specifically as well as other speech critics generally, a traditional perspective for rhetorical criticism started forming during the early part of the twentieth century. According to Scott and Brock, Herbert Wichelns laid the foundation for traditional rhetorical criticism with his essay "The Literary Criticism of Oratory." Capsulizing his proposed method for rhetorical criticism, Wichelns maintained:

The scheme of a rhetorical study includes the element of the speaker's personality as a conditioning factor; it includes also the public character of the man—not what he was, but what he was thought to be. It requires a description of the speaker's audience, and of the leading ideas with which he plied his hearers—his topics, the motives to which he appealed, the nature of the proofs he offered. These will reveal his own judgment of human nature in his audiences, and also his judgment on the questions which he discussed. Attention must be paid, too, to the relation of the surviving texts to what was actually uttered: in case the nature of the changes is known, there may be occasion to consider adaptation to two audiences—that which heard and that which read. Nor can rhetorical criticism omit the speaker's mode of arrangement and his mode of expression, nor his habit of preparation and his manner of delivery from the platform; though the last two are perhaps less significant. "Style"—in the sense which corresponds to diction and sentence movement—must receive attention, but only as one among various means that secure for the speaker ready access to the minds of his auditors. Finally, the effect of the discourse on its immediate hearers is not to be ignored, neither in the testimony of witnesses, nor in the record of events. And throughout such a study one must conceive of the public

man as influencing the men of his own times by the power of his discourse.\textsuperscript{19}

Rigorously imitating Wichelns' posited categories, Bryant considered Burke's notions on the speaker, his audience, modes of proof, disposition, and style, allowing Burke's excerpts to "speak for themselves."

Bryant's next article considered "Edmund Burke's Opinions of some Orators of his Day." A similar descriptive method was employed as Bryant admitted that:

\begin{quote}
It is not my purpose to judge Burke's criticism. I shall merely present his opinions as they appear in his works and correspondence, with only so much explanation of persons and occasions as will connect the opinions with their qualifying circumstances.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

Adhering stringently to this purpose, Bryant collected and organized selected Burkean criticisms of the speaking of Lord Chatham, George Grenville, Robert Walpole, William Pitt, Charles Wolfram Cornwall, George Germain (Sackville), Charles James Fox, Philip Francis, William Dowdeswell, William Windham, the Duke of Portland, the Duke of Richmond, and Henry Grattan.

Bryant's critical essays on Burke's speaking were guided by the critical tool provided by Wichelns in that the articles on "The Contemporary Reception of Edmund Burke's


\textsuperscript{20}Donald C. Bryant, "Edmund Burke's Opinions of some Orators of his Day," QJS, XX (1934), 242.
Speaking" and "The Frustrated Opposition: Burke, Barré, and their Audiences" utilized the evaluative criterion of the speaker's immediate success with the historically confined audience. After consulting over two hundred observations and criticisms of Burke's speaking, Bryant concluded that "apparently the contemporary impressions of Burke's greatness as a speaker were current and immediate, in spite of moments of eclipse, throughout his life. . . ."  

Though carefully researched and adequately presented, Bryant's initial works on Burke suffer from a timidity and sterility which is perhaps the inevitable disadvantage of purely descriptive studies. However, a more courageous critic began to emerge in his essay on "Burke's Present Discontents: The Rhetorical Genesis of a Party Testament."

Rather than merely collecting and organizing excerpts, Bryant became more interpretive as he (1) traced "the rhetorical and operational problems which Burke encountered as he undertook to come to terms with the shifting political situation and with the opinions of his political colleagues in such a way as best to advance the inchoate purposes of his party" and (2) observed "the evidence of Burke's


creative processes at work, his habits and methods of composition. . . ." Though his approach was still descriptive primarily and his critical tool remained "Wichelnsean," Bryant was willing to "hazard" the drawing of inferences and the making explicit otherwise covert relationships. This essay escaped the previous problem of sterility primarily through Bryant's adept development of the interaction between the responses to Burke's rough drafts of the pamphlet and its subsequent development.

In general, all of Bryant's essays suggest that he was content to confine Burke to the eighteenth century where he was conceptualized as engineering eighteenth-century issues among eighteenth-century auditors, supported or controverted by eighteenth-century acquaintances. Bryant did this in spite of his recognition that Burke's writing and his speaking "transcended both the House of Commons and his time. Unlike . . . most of the rest, Burke found his audience often as much outside Parliament as inside, and as much in later years as in his own time." Attesting, in his own words, to a transhistorical standard of eloquence, Burke criticized one of North's speeches on the

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British-American controversy: "how could my honorable friend degrade his own talent as much as to think that there could be any real eloquence, any that could stand the test of time and command the admiration of ages, except in just sentiment and in sound reason." (Italics mine.) These remarks indicate that perhaps a transhistorical approach to the rhetorical behaviors of Burke would be most appropriate—perhaps even essential if students of Burke are to comprehend the more universal significance of his contributions to British-American thinking. Bryant alluded to, though did not develop, the kind of contemporary significance particularly relevant to this dissertation. Momentarily forging his interpretation beyond the immediate historical setting, he maintained that Burke's "enlargement of political view" combined with his "grasp of principle and the broad application of generalization . . . was to raise the Present Discontents from a party pamphlet into a credo for enlightened conservatives."^26

Where Bryant's analysis ends, this study begins. His historical diligence has animated Burke the literary figure, the conversationalist, the rhetorician, the rhetor, the critic, and, to a certain extent, the political leader, with each dimension interacting among eighteenth-century


contemporaries. But how has the rhetorical-political dimension interacted within the twentieth century? That is the question of this study. Whereas Bryant's investigations were largely descriptive, historical, and classical, the perspective of this dissertation is interpretive, trans-historical, and contemporary.

Isolating and Defining the Research Problem

In spite of the various investigations of Burke, Donald Bryant noted that "obviously the substantial work in the rhetorical criticism of Burke is yet to come."27 My review of the literature revealed that although Bryant and other speech scholars have studied Burke, their critical method has been limited largely to that which Edwin Black labeled "Neo-Aristotelian." According to Black:

The primary and identifying ideas of neo-Aristotelianism that we can find recurring in the critical essays of this school are the classification of rhetorical discourses into forensic, deliberative, and epideictic; the classification of "proofs" or "means of persuasion" into logical, pathetic, and ethical; the assessment of discourse in the categories of invention, arrangement, delivery, and style; and the evaluation of rhetorical discourse in terms of its effects on its immediate audience.28

The above critics have primarily applied to Burke's rhetorical behaviors canons derived from classical rhetoric, particularly the Rhetoric of Aristotle.


But the initial problem which sent me to the works of Burke could not find a solution via another classical analysis of his speeches. Searching for a solution to the contemporary demise of conservative rhetoric, I wanted to discover the nature of the substance inhering in conservative tendencies such as those exemplified by Edmund Burke in his endeavor to communicate his philosophy in a period of transition. Or to rephrase the question, if Burke were the father of modern conservatism, as writers such as Strauss, Kirk, Stanlis, and Bredvold contend, what was the implicit substance underlying Burke's explicit rhetorical behaviors?

Plan for the Discovery of Source Materials

The search for materials necessary in investigating the problem in question constituted three areas: (1) the general sources on Burke's life and philosophy, (2) the general sources on Burke's rhetorical situation, and (3) the specific sources of Burke's own works.

29Among the recent authors considering Burke a political conservative are John A. Lester, Russell Kirk, Bruce Mazlish, Charles Parkin, Peter J. Stanlis, Francis P. Canavan, S.J., Louis I. Bredvold, Rolf G. Ross, Morton Auerbach, Nigel Birch, Clinton Rossiter, F. J. C. Hearnshaw, Carl Cone, Alfred Cobban, R. R. Fennessy, Ray B. Browne, Robert A. Smith, and Leo Strauss.

30As used in this context, "age of transition" refers to a time when the forces for societal change begin to disrupt the delicate balance between expectation and fulfillment, function and status. The writer is indebted to Richard Weaver's Visions of Order (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), pp. 1-5, for the definition and for suggesting a transhistorical approach to the present study.

The General Sources on Burke's Life and Philosophy

Although this study is not meant to be biographical in nature, the critic recognizes that a communicator's background often significantly influences his philosophy and thus his messages. Though the Dictionary of National Biography considered Sir James Prior's Memoir of the Life and Character of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke as providing the most definitive account of Burke's life, other useful sources are available such as: Thomas MacKnight's
three-volume History of the Life and Times of Edmund Burke, Philip Magnus' Edmund Burke, A Life, John Morley's Burke, Robert Henry Murray's Edmund Burke: A Biography, and James Burton Robertson's Lectures in the Life, Writings and Times of Edmund Burke. And, of course, in addition to these more complete works, many biographical sketches are presented in a number of journals. Perhaps the best of these are presented or reviewed in the periodical Studies in Burke and His Time.

In addition to these biographies, interpretations of Burke's political philosophy have become increasingly numerous with Carl B. Cone's two volumes on Burke and the Nature of Politics being among the most comprehensive and articulate.31 Other noteworthy sources include Peter Stanlis' edition of The Relevance of Edmund Burke in which Stanlis compiled a series of lectures given within a symposium on Burke at Georgetown University. And mention should be made of other excellent sources such as Thomas W. Copeland's Our Eminent Friend, Edmund Burke: Six Essays, Alfred Cobban's Edmund Burke and Revolt Against the Eighteenth Century, Charles Parkin's The Moral Basis of Burke's Political Thought, Peter Stanlis' Edmund Burke and the Natural Law, Russell Kirk's The Conservative Mind from

31Cone also refers to his volumes as a biography of Burke in Burke and the Nature of Politics: The Age of the American Revolution, I (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1957), vi.
Burke to Eliot, and Francis P. Canavan's *The Political Reason of Edmund Burke*.

The General Sources on Burke's Rhetorical Situation

Just as this study is not primarily a biographical study, neither is it largely a historical study. But Burke's philosophy and rhetorical behavior grew, in part, from forces and counter-forces in the eighteenth century. Consequently, an understanding of those forces by the critic is imperative. According to John Roach, two of the best general surveys of eighteenth-century England are Basil Williams' *The Whig Supremacy, 1714-1760* and J. S. Watson's *The Reign of George III 1760-1815*, two editions from the *Oxford History of England*. Volumes III, IV, and V of William Lecky's *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century* provide one of the most comprehensive backgrounds with Leslie Stephen's *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* and R. R. Palmer's *The Age of the Democratic Revolution* complementing the historical scene. A historical account of eighteenth-century thinking is contributed by Carl Becker in his book *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* and Dorothy George's *England in Transition* captures a bit of the spirit and turmoil to which Burke was subject. Though the above sources are only suggestive of the works used for consultation, they are representative of those which are considered scholarly or helpful in answering this writer's questions.
The Specific Sources of Burke's Own Works

An event which has made a reconsideration of Burke even more profitable than before has been the release of Burke's papers that had been held in private custody until 1949. At that time, the Fitzwilliam family and Trustees of the Fitzwilliam Settled Estates loaned the papers previously kept at Wentworth Woodhouse to the Sheffield Central Library. A smaller collection housed at Milton was likewise loaned to the Northamptonshire Record Office at Lamport Hall. Though many other letters have been discovered since, these two collections comprise most of Burke's original material. 32

A third collection of newly available letters was published by Ross J. S. Hoffman in his book Edmund Burke, New York Agent. Over one hundred letters written by Burke and his family to Charles O'Hara constituted this collection.

With the Fitzwilliam and O'Hara collections available, Thomas Copeland and Milton Smith prepared a Checklist of the Correspondence of Edmund Burke, a well-arranged listing of known letters written by Burke and to him. In conjunction with this, Copeland, as general editor, is supervising the compiling of a set of Burke's Correspondence. Not all of the letters included in the Checklist are to be contained in the Correspondence, but all

of the known letters written by Burke will be included. Suggesting the significance of this new edition, only 305 letters were published in the previously authoritative Correspondence of 1844, whereas approximately 1,700 letters are to be included in the Copeland editions.

Presenting a sketch of Burke as a young man. Somerset has published A Notebook of Edmund Burke (1957) which contains essays, poems and character sketches written by Edmund and William (a possible kinsman). Indispensable as a source for the following study, this book is valuable in that it "throws new light on Burke's thought and the development of his ideas during some six years of his life (from 1750 to 1756) which had hitherto been mainly a blank."\(^{33}\)

In addition to these primary sources, the writer will use The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1865-71) due to its comprehensive, authoritative nature. And Hansard's Parliamentary Debates will be consulted for comparative purposes when specifically analyzing Burke's speeches given in parliament. However, since this study is not concerned with the immediate effect of Burke's speeches, the writer will use primarily Burke's speeches as printed rather than those as delivered. Bryant clarifies the reason for this decision:

It is impossible now, and indeed from the outset it has been impossible, to make anything approaching an extensive comparison between Burke's speeches as delivered and as printed, because no trustworthy report of the speeches as delivered exists or is known ever to have existed. The records in such compilations as the Parliamentary History and the Cavendish Debates contain fragmentary gleanings from periodicals, notes by persons present, or second-hand summaries. 34

In addition to this reservation, European Settlements in America and the Annual Register will not be consulted as primary source material to be used for possible textual analysis because of their dubious authorship.

The Divisions and Functions of the Study

In answering the major research question, the following areas will be considered: (1) the nature of the study, (2) an investigative paradigm for conservative communication, (3) an interpretive survey of the intellectual context, (4) the foreshadowing of Burke's philosophy in his Reflections on the Revolution in France, and the (5) summary and conclusions of the study.

Chapter I was designed to introduce the nature of the dissertation by establishing the origin of the study, a review of selected literature, an explanation of the research problem, the method for discovering source materials, and the subsequent divisions of the study.

Chapter II will develop a theoretical statement regarding the nature of "conservative rhetoric." The model

34Donald C. Bryant, "Some Notes on Burke's Speeches and Writings," QJS, XXV (1939), 406.
will be derived eclectically from the fields of sociology, history, psychology, philosophy, and political science and will be used heuristically to describe, analyze and evaluate the communication of Edmund Burke.

Revealing the spirit of an age, Chapter III will isolate important forces of "status" and "function," i.e. forces for and against change and reform. Particularly focusing on philosophical forces, Richard Weaver's notion of "Status and Function" as presented in Visions of Order will provide a framework for the interpretive analysis of Burke's intellectual and cultural context.

Chapter IV investigates the nature of Burke's emerging philosophy as revealed in his writings penned prior to his entering public life. Focusing on his core assumptions, this chapter inquires into Burke's beliefs regarding the nature of man, the nature of society, and the nature of the Ultimate Good.

In relation to his philosophy as interpreted in the previous chapter, Chapter V analyzes the elaboration and modification of this philosophy as manifested in his addresses composed during the zenith of his public political activity.

Chapter VI, then, investigates that document which is said to represent the culmination of Burke's socio-political philosophy. Taking the foreground, his Reflections on the Revolution in France is interpreted as Burke's most explicit
statement on conservatism. With his earlier works providing the background and his *Reflections* maintaining the foreground, the essential substance of Burke's conservative communication is derived.

Finally, Chapter VII summarizes the general conclusions of this study and suggests the implications of Burke's rhetorical substance to contemporary conservative philosophy and communication.
CHAPTER II

AN INVESTIGATIVE PARADIGM FOR CONSERVATIVE COMMUNICATION

Introduction

This chapter provides a preliminary approach for the investigation of political and social conservative communication. The label "conservative" was coined by Edmund Burke's French disciples and then applied by Croker, Canning, and Peel to a party that was no longer either Tory or Whig. Since that time, the form of conservatism has changed and much disagreement exists regarding its essential characteristics. Jay Sigler, a professing conservative from Rutgers University, asserted that few simple conservative political doctrines exist. "Conservative beliefs are not a pre-packaged, plastic, ready-to-assemble kit. Instead they involve a mood of suspicion, a doubt about all government, and a distrust of all Utopian schemes." Sigler's anthology of The Conservative Tradition in American Thought attempted to discern the pattern of the "conservative mood." Russell Kirk, one of the founders of the new conservative movement

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in America, agreed that "Conservatism is not a fixed and immutable body of dogma, and conservatives inherit from Burke a talent for re-expressing their convictions to fit the time." Though reluctant to address himself to doctrines of political conservatism, Kirk established a working premise for social conservatism by maintaining that "the essence of social conservatism is preservation of the ancient moral traditions of humanity." Both Hearnshaw and Weaver considered conservatism to be more of a spirit than a program—a spirit though nonetheless real. For Weaver, the true conservative was one

...who sees the universe as a paradigm of essences, of which the phenomenology of the world is a sort of continuing approximation. Or, to put it another way, he sees it as a set of definitions which are struggling to get themselves defined in the real world.

At times, this struggle may imbue the conservative spirit with dynamic, active tendencies. In Weaver's mind, the genuine conservative "is sometimes found fighting quite briskly for change." The mood of suspicion, doubt, and

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3 Kirk, The Conservative Mind, p. 17. This statement does not relate to the general effectiveness of conservative spokesmen; rather it suggests that conservatives have inherited Burke's concern for circumstances as well as principles.

4 Ibid.


7 Ibid., p. 113.
distrust characteristically gives way to a "trust in the methods of law." Law to the conservative is the "embodiment of abstract justice; it is not 'what the courts will decide tomorrow,' or a calculation of the forces at work in society." Accepting some principles as given, lasting, and good has been considered the mark of the conservative. And the goal of conservative rhetoric was to foster the internalization of these principles or values. But a "mood," a "style," a "spirit" can have substance as Marie H. Nichols, Kenneth Burke, and Karl Wallace maintained. And, further, this substance can be found inhereing in values or the "goods" or "oughts" professed. Thus, even though conservatism is not a body of doctrine or dogma, the substance of conservatism can be partially abstracted if one can inquire into the values professed.

In designing a paradigm appropriate for the investigation of conservative communication, the writer distilled, adapted, and revised ideas from such diverse areas as sociology, political philosophy, ethics, and rhetorical theory. The core of the paradigm was derived largely from the writings of Karl Wallace and Charles Morris, although the reader should be cautioned against

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8Weaver, The Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 113.
9Ibid.
10Ibid., pp. 18, 23, 24, 211.
expecting an authentic explication of their works as a whole. Rather, to provide a more sensitive, critical tool for this study, the writer has abstracted, integrated and, to some extent, reinterpreted selected ideas.

At this point, the investigative paradigm is intended to ask questions rather than answer them. It must provide an appropriate method for inquiring into (1) the nature of the substance of conservative discourse and (2) the nature of the rhetorical tasks of conservative spokesmen. By providing a method whereby the rhetorical substance and tasks may be ascertained, a general rhetorical strategy then may be subsequently deduced thereby answering the research question initially posited.

Inquiry into Substance

Rhetorical behaviors occur within a cultural setting. Whether a communicator acts as critic or advocate of a part or whole of the culture, still his messages are shaped and the responses to his messages are affected by the nature of the cultural milieu.

Richard Weaver, late conservative professor of rhetoric at the University of Chicago, defined a culture as "a complex of values polarized by an image or idea" of its excellence. 11 This image acts with a magnetic pull drawing

a culture's members toward identification, assimilation, and homogeneity. It is a "focus of value, a law of relationships, an inspirstring vision."\textsuperscript{12} In a sense, a culture is a "self-defining creation which satisfies needs arising from man's feeling and imagination."\textsuperscript{13}

If a society's culture is "a complex of values polarized by an image or idea" of its excellence, then on a lower level of analysis, Karl Wallace's concept of the substance of communication becomes especially salient. According to Wallace, the essential materials of discourse are ethical and moral values. Discourse then is best understood as a series of judgments and appraisals that "reflect human interests and values. . . ."\textsuperscript{14} The nature of the value judgments and the ways by which they are justified become illuminating indicators of internalized value constructs. The interaction between a culture and its constituents is an interaction among values resulting in identification with or alienation from a part or whole of the culture's value system. The difference between the substance of conservative communication and liberal communication then becomes a matter of value-differences.

\textsuperscript{12}Weaver, Visions of Order, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 18.

Concepts regarding the nature, source, and importance of values act as crucial discriminating factors.

Wallace noted that one's value judgments involve three types of behavior: deliberation, explanation, and justification.

Deliberation uses reason prior to the act. Justification and explanation use reason after the act. When we justify, we praise or blame; we use terms like right and wrong, good and bad; in general, we appraise. When we explain, we show what moved the agent and use terms untinctured by praise or censure.15

A fourth type of statement, i.e. obligation, could be added to those suggested by Wallace. Paul Edwards recognized the role of obligation as constituting a class of judgments. Just as appraisals or justifying statements are indicated by words such as "good," "desirable," "worthwhile," etc., so prescriptive or obligatory statements are indicated by signs such as "ought," "duty," "oblige," etc.16 From the previous statements, a system for the linguistic analysis of values begins to emerge. If man's value judgments are manifested via statements reflecting deliberation, explanation, justification, and obligation, then analysis of such statements in relation to one another should penetrate the value system wherein core meanings rest. As applied to conservative communication, the "good reasons" constituting the


conservatives' social and political stances emerge explicitly. For many political theorists such as Ivor Brown, "politics is but ethics writ large." Whereas ethical theory deals with the "goods" and "oughts" of man individually, social or political theory extends the unit to "man in association with man." Politics and ethics are united in that the political theorist must discover the best methods for extending the ideals or values from man to society, making them realizable in the organization of the community.18

But the system for analysis of discourse rests on the construct "value" which needs clarification. Values can be said to involve properties of objects which elicit preferential behavior. By "objects" the writer does not refer merely to tangible objects. Rather, as George Herbert Mead has expressed, objects may be physical (as in the form of clothing), social (as in the form of a relationship), or abstract (as in the form of a doctrine).19 Thus, the properties or characteristics of such objects may elicit positive or negative behavior, depending on the relationship between that property and the value system under which the


18Ibid., p. 15.

property is subsumed. Considering the concept of value from this perspective makes meaningless the distinctions between the "real" and the "imaginary," the "objective" and the "subjective." More pertinent to the communication of Edmund Burke and conservatives generally, it obliterates the neat distinctions which have been made between arguments or behavior from circumstance and arguments or behavior from principle. It becomes apparent that values may relate to the properties of a "circumstance" as well as to the nature of a principle. But by using the term "behavior," the writer does not mean to imply a definition suggesting explicit action exclusively. Rather, preferential behavior may be implicit or cognitive as well as physical.

On a deeper level, values can be said to be the embodiment of substance which stands outside complete discovery and/or accommodation by the discursive reasoning processes of induction and deduction. Values are an inextricable combination of the objective and subjective. Because of this, those values at the bottom of one's belief system are best understood as premises for which no further proof can be given. The substance of values is more than time, space, and matter; it is ordered immediately by a process which is neither totally inductive or deductive; and it must be believed not conclusively proven because of the content of relationships perceived. In Susanne Langer's terms, values can be conceptualized as serving a "symbolific
function"--a function which is neither irrational nor animalian but rather illustrative of a rational need for understanding and envisagement.20

By now it is clear that the search paradigm posits a nucleus of values inherently involved in the processes of deliberation, explanation, justification, and obligation. A system emerges which, in the words of T. S. Eliot, "is in the nature of the human soul and embodies its need and craving for perfection and unity."21 That which Eliot further related to taste could be applied, with little injustice, to one's value system:

We do tend, I think, to organize our tastes . . . into a whole; we aim in the end at a theory of life, or a view of life, and so far as we are conscious, to terminate our enjoyment of the arts in a philosophy, and our philosophy in a religion--in such a way that the personal to oneself is fused and completed in the impersonal and general, not extinguished, but enriched, expanded, developed, and more itself by becoming more something not itself.22

The foundation of one's judgments is found in the substance of the deliberation process, that process which "precedes the act." The substance of this process can be called "primary" values. These values are so basic that they are derived from no other beliefs or values. As


22Ibid., pp. 102-103.
educational theorist Thomas Green wrote, it is reasonable "to think that if we press a person far enough, we may come to some belief of his for which he can give no further reason, a belief which he uses nonetheless as a reason for other beliefs." Not differentiating between beliefs and values, Green continued:

In short, if we observe how the structure of a belief system is revealed in giving reasons, it becomes evident that belief or value systems have a quasi-logical structure. Some beliefs are derivative and some are primary.

A "question-asking-reason-giving" process such as that described by Green must inevitably lead to three areas of primary values—those relating to one's conception of the nature of man, the nature of society, and the nature of the Ultimate Good. These become premises composed of value-clusters for which no further proof can be given. Derived values, or those which are manifested in statements of explanation, justification, and obligation take their inspiration from the previous three classifications of primary values or first principles. The relationship between deliberation and the derived value statements of explanation, justification, and obligation is established by Morris as he stated that, for example, many religions "in prescribing how one should act [obligation], rest their case


24Ibid.
upon appraisals / justifications / as to what is good, and these in turn are made in the light of statements as to the nature of man and the world."\textsuperscript{25} Thus, in an analysis of conservative communication, it becomes apparent that an attempt to abstract the substance from statements of derived values without regard to those primary values becomes a "substantially" limited endeavor. Making explicit a value system which may be implicit or even unconscious becomes the goal of the search paradigm. As Ivor Brown stated, it is the "very basis of right conduct that men should have their moral terms defined and analysed. . . ."\textsuperscript{26}

Using the model, the critic inquires: Does the communicator/communicators perceive a "nature," i.e. an established essence or being which could be considered an "Ultimate Good." If so, what are the characteristics of this nature and how do they affect and interrelate with his other primary value constructs? The same questions would be asked regarding his concepts of the nature of man and society. In addition, knowing the number of a communicator's primary value constructs would be important. After attaining a "primary" status, these values can be said to be no longer open to serious examination by the holder. Primary values are characterized by mental closure and are


\textsuperscript{26}Brown, English Political Theory, p. 4.
those which define the most basic aspects of a person's being. Consequently, changing these values becomes extremely difficult in that such an alteration would be changing one's self-definition. Agreeing with Green, the writer contends that tenaciously-held convictions are good:

\[\ldots\] he who is at every point open-minded must be without any passionate convictions. He is that completely flexible man whose placid and weak mentality marks him off as dangerous because he thinks nothing is really very important.\footnote{Green, The Activities of Teaching, p. 53.}

Green continued by maintaining that it "would be as dangerous to avoid closure of belief \footnote{Ibid.} at every point as it would be to seek it at every point."\footnote{Ibid.} But the writer also holds that the number of these values should be kept to a minimum since to the extent that one holds more and more of these core values, then fewer areas will be open to him for inquiry forming an "unteachable" frame of reference for most incoming data. In summary, the critic must inquire into (1) the substantial nature and number of the core values regarding the nature of the Ultimate Good, man, and society and (2) the substantial nature and number of the relationships existent among them.

Wallace asserted that the deliberation process (that which houses core values) comes before the act. But the critic has only the rhetorical act with which to deal so he
must assume that a communicator's statements of explanation, justification, and obligation are manifestations (though fragmented and incomplete perhaps) of the core value constructs. Consequently, his materials for analysis become these statements.

The critic must investigate statements of explanation. "When we explain," stated Wallace, "we show what moved the agent and use terms untinctured by praise or censure." In Morris' terms, such statements involve "designative" signs which refer generally to observable properties of the actor or object. A rhetor's designative statements are those which reflect his perceptions of the "isness" of a thing. His selection of designative signs or explanatory statements reveals his understanding of the choices provided him by his particular context, etc. His use of designative terms are not purely objective as the label seems to imply because a selective, interpretive process is operative even in the explanation of "observables." This being the case, Wallace's suggestion that one's motives are reflected in statements of explanation crystallizes. One's selection and interpretation of observables reveals that which he perceived as desirable. Therefore, at this point, the critic is less interested in what ultimate

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30 Morris, Signification and Significance, p. 38.
choice is made by the communicator than in what choices or options he perceives as being available to him. Analysis and interpretation of designative signs or explanatory statements should reveal patterns of explanations from which clusters of reasons may be deduced. Inherent in statements of explanation then are designative signs which reflect the communicator's selection and perception of available alternatives from which he must choose. Analysis of collections of these statements should reveal patterns pointing to "good reasons" inherent in a conservative universe of discourse.

Closely related to statements of explanation are statements of justification. Agreeing with Morris, Wallace asserted that when we "justify, we praise or blame; we use terms like right and wrong, good and bad; in general, we appraise." Further, "these value-terms are meant to refer to character traits, to behavior classes that have become stable, to what in the older literature of ethics were called virtues." William K. Frankena provided some examples of particularized and generalized statements of justification:

1. Particular, e.g.,
   a. My grandfather was a good man.
   b. Xavier was a saint.
   c. He is responsible for what he did.

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32 Ibid., p. 365.
d. You deserve to be punished.
e. Her character is admirable.
f. His motive was good.

2. General, e.g.,
a. Benevolence is a virtue.
b. Jealousy is an ignoble motive.
c. Only a saint could forgive such carelessness.
d. The ideally good man does not drink or smoke.  

Such examples illuminate problems the rhetorical critic must encounter in his analysis of statements of justification. By definition, statements of justification appraise, i.e. they contain or imply appraisive terms which, according to Morris, signify "the consummatory properties of some object or situation. . . ." Thus "good" is an example of an appraisive term, and the sentence "My father is a good man" provides an example of an appraisive term used within a statement of justification. But appraisive signification of terms is not always uni-dimensional. The second example, i.e. "Xavier was a saint," is illustrative of a statement of justification because of the appraisive connotations in the term "saint." But this statement need not function to appraise exclusively, for the statement may explain as well as justify; it may designate as well as appraise. The critic must be alert to the appraisive implications inherent in the use of a term as well as to the dualistic or multiple functions of a single term or statement.

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34 Morris, Signification and Significance, p. 4.
In addition, the critic must be sensitive to the interaction of terms within a statement. For example, in isolation, the term "deserve" tends to carry positive connotations as it is associated with terms such as "earned," etc. But note the friction which arises from the juxtapositioning of oppositely appraised terms: "You deserve to be punished" or "He's a good man--for doing nothing." The clashing of appraiseive symbolism can communicate, and the critic must be alert to its message.

But to analyze statements of justification most productively, the critic must search for general premises implicit in particularized statements and/or clusters of particularized statements inhering in generalized statements. It is in such a search that insight into substance can be gained.

Thus the critic of conservative communication would be interested in using his analysis of justificatory statements to infer those value terms suggesting that which is perceived as virtuous by the conservative rhetor. In addition, the critic concerns himself with the various objects to which appraisals are attached and he attempts to discern the nature and number of relationships between the derived appraisals and particular primary core values. Just as insight into rhetorical substance accrues from analysis of appraiseive value terms, so substance can be the product of the analysis of the number and interrelationships among
primary and derived values. Consequently the discovered linkages can be said to communicate.

Related to statements of justification are statements of obligation. Such statements suggest the existence of certain duties and contain prescriptive signs which are said to signify "how the object or situation is to be reacted to. . . ."\(^35\) As Wallace elaborated, "an ought proposition carries a meaning of obligation about it, such that if one accepts the proposition one feels bound to do what is specified or implied."\(^36\) Because of the nature of this relationship, the critic can ask salient questions regarding individuals or institutions. He can inquire:

Are obligations to be found in the context of the problem? Who is obligated to whom? What is the nature of the obligation? Furthermore; an ought seems to imply that the decision is the best thing to do; it suggests that the speaker has compared all relevant alternatives.\(^37\)

It could be said that statements of obligation activate appraisals. One is generally obliged to actualize that which is appraised as good, praiseworthy, etc. Therefore, statements of prescription become the most dynamic and concrete of the derived value-judgments.

Examples of particular and general statements of obligation are provided by Frankena:

\(^35\)Morris, \textit{Signification and Significance}, p. 4.


\(^37\)Ibid.
1. Particular, e.g. (assuming terms are used in their moral senses),
   a. I ought not to escape from prison now.
   b. You should become a missionary.
   c. What he did was wrong.

2. General, e.g.,
   a. We ought to keep our agreements.
   b. Love is the fulfillment of the moral law.
   c. All men have a right to freedom.38

The interaction between appraisive and prescriptive terms is apparent in several of these examples. For instance, the statement "What he did was wrong" illustrates the intimate relationship between appraising and then prescribing action on the basis of the appraisal. Implicit in the statement is the reasoning that since what he did was wrong, he ought not do it. Similar reasoning is implied in the generalized statement, "All men have a right to freedom," i.e. since all men have a right to freedom, they ought to be free.

But more importantly, this latter example suggests the relationship of this derived value of freedom to primary values regarding one's notions concerning the nature of man, society, and the Ultimate Good. Analysis of the derived statement of obligation necessitates a discovery and subsequent analysis of such relationships. This is particularly so if it is assumed that prescriptions are the actualizations of internalized values whereby one has been able to find congruency between ends-means relationships.

38Frankena, Ethics, p. 9.
The preceding section posits a paradigm for inquiring into the substance of conservative communication. The paradigm assumes that a culture and individuals within a culture can be said to possess value systems consisting of primary or self-defining values which are housed, ordered, and refined in the process of deliberation and derived values which are manifested via statements of explanation, justification, and obligation. To discover the substance, or rhetorical material inhering in conservatives' universe of discourse, the critic must analyze the statements of derived values in order to ascertain (1) the nature and number of core values regarding the nature of the Ultimate Good, the nature of man, and the nature of society in addition to (2) the nature and number of relationships existent among them.

But thus far the paradigm seems to assume that a communicator's statements fulfill an expressive function, i.e. the desire to express his values or convictions. Such an assumption would be largely untenable since an attempt to persuade usually tempers the language of one's value expressive statements. Therefore the critic must attempt to discern the rhetorical tasks as perceived by a conservative communicator specifically or a conservative group collectively.

**Inquiry into Rhetorical Tasks**

Richard Weaver maintained that the primary task of conservatives is to work for the delicate balancing of
"status and function." His use of "status" refers to the quality of permanence within a system whereas "function" refers to that of change. It is in the nature of things to maintain one's identity even while changing. "Things both are and are becoming," he explained. Contrary to popular opinion, conservatism is not a program designed to preserve the status quo—that is not the grand rhetorical task. Rather the conservative recognizes that

Our existence is such that we alternate between expectation and fulfillment, and without fulfillment, expectation would cease [and frustration would ensue]. Therefore status, or the achieved state of things, is ontologically a necessary ground for our activity. It is one half of this lawful dichotomy of existence. An excess of status can result in stagnation. A system must meet changes in conditions while maintaining its identity. On the other hand, an excess of function (a condition which characterizes the twentieth century, Weaver claimed) can end in fragmentation and loss of identity. Alienation rather than assimilation transpires. Thus if an imbalance between status and function is perceived, then advocating change rather than status quo becomes the rhetorical task of a conservative if he is to re-establish the delicate balance of forces. His statements of derived values, then, may be

39 Weaver, Visions of Order, p. 22.
40 Ibid., p. 23.
41 Ibid., p. 24.
tempered by his desire to effect this rhetorical task of balance.

An age of transition can be said to be characterized by an imbalance between status and function, with the latter superseding the former. Since the eighteenth century, the balancing of opposites has involved issues regarding (1) freedom and responsibility, (2) reason and imagination, (3) the supernatural and the natural, (4) the past and the future, (5) natural rights and civil rights, (6) realism and idealism, (7) equality and inequality, and (8) tradition and progress. How to deal with these forces specifically in relation to one's value system and that of the culture introduces rhetorical problems. For example, in attempting to rectify imbalance of forces, the conservative communicator must determine how he can borrow from opposite forces without seeming inconsistent, expedient, or ambiguous. Also, this re-establishment of symmetry involves contributing and presenting values that have magnetic strength—the values as presented should result in assimilation not alienation. Thus, the communicator must determine the best way to substitute one value for another, or temper one value with qualities of another without destroying the magnetic cohesion so necessary in a culture.

In addition to the rhetorical problems associated with the balancing of forces, the conservative rhetor must decide how he can deal with those problems arising from the
relationship between values and reality. The term "value" has been plagued with connotations suggesting "unreality," i.e. if one cannot see it, hear it, or touch it, then it is not applicable to the "real" world. The utilitarians and pragmatists have been able to cope with this problem by establishing their ultimate standard in experience. Their values were derived from their primary value of Ultimate Good which asserted the greatest pleasure for the greatest number was that to which every other value or belief was subordinate. 42 Convincing people to accept this kind of standard minimized considerably the rhetorical task of those building on the utilitarian ethic. Since the value inhered in experience, and experience was more "actual" to people, then making the value seem applicable was not difficult. This experience-oriented standard allowed the utilitarian rhetor to stay within the confines of rationalism dealing with the very natural materials of time, space, and matter. Beyond these neat limits, nothing else was said to exist.

But conservatives, for the most part, have not adhered to the utilitarian standard nor the complementary system of rationalism. Though they have lauded practicality and common sense, their standard for the Ultimate Good and some related values has transcended natural experience. The

transcendent nature of such values has necessitated going outside the materials of time, space, and matter—those materials so appropriate to the construct termed logic. In addition to logic, apprehension compels use of the imagination, intuition or "intellection," as Weaver has called it. This has presented no small rhetorical task. From a strictly natural perspective, "pleasure" rather than "Providential Will" would present a much more attractive standard due to proximity, familiarity, and immediate relevancy alone. Giving evidence to this is Ernest Wrage's comment regarding the conservative writings of Russell Kirk, Richard Weaver, Peter Viereck, Clinton Rossiter, etc.:

They draw heavily on 18th Century archetypal conservatives such as Edmund Burke and John Adams and their doctrine, borrowing Burke's belief in the Divine Tactic or Providential Hand in History, ultimately turns into a mystique, largely unintelligible to a modern mind that is essentially secular and pragmatic.43

The conservative rhetor must then decide how to make intelligible those non-secular, non-pragmatic values so as to foster serious consideration and application. Furthermore, when such a "nebulous" standard outside one's self advocates somewhat austere prescriptions, then the rhetorical problems multiply. Self-sacrifice, for example, is rarely pleasurable, yet, as will be developed

subsequently, this has been a derived value of political
and social conservatism.

In spite of the nature of these transcendent values, they must be applied to natural situations. Thus the
conservative communicator is confronted with the task of making the intangible tangible without destroying the
essence of the transcendent quality. He cannot conveniently dispose of values because some of them may be difficult to communicate. Nor can he "abandon deep-set convictions, values" supplanting them with "improvisation as a mode of life" as Wrage has suggested that the conservative do. The conservative believes that some principles are true regardless of the time, thus, different strategy, not different substance, may be necessitated.

Summary

To Ernest Wrage, the world of conservatism, as exemplified in the speeches of Barry Goldwater, "is Utopia fashioned out of nostalgia." The critic interested in conservative communication is prompted to question if the body of conservative substance must inherently elicit such a response. And if the substance of conservatism is responsible, then what is the nature of the prime contributing qualities?

44 Wrage, "The Little World of Barry Goldwater," in Methods of Rhetorical Criticism, p. 114.

45 Ibid., p. 112.
Since conservatism is largely non-secular and non-pragmatic, as Wrage noted, use of a secular, pragmatic tool for analysis is inappropriate. For this reason, the preceding chapter developed a paradigm designed to accommodate both the secular and non-secular, the pragmatic and non-pragmatic aspects of conservative values. The paradigm defined a set of values as the embodiment of rhetorical substance which remains outside total discovery or accommodation by the discursive reasoning processes of induction and deduction. Since values are an inextricable combination of both objective and subjective content, core values are best understood as premises for which no further proof can be given—premises mulled and established via the deliberation process.

Inquiry into the deliberative process housing primary values necessitates notice of derived values. Derived values offered in the form of explanatory, justificatory, and obligatory statements stand supportively authorizing implicit primary values. To these explicit "authorizing statements," the rhetorical critic must turn.

Just as the critic must turn to the authorizing statements of a person's or group's core values, so this study must turn to a man who has authorized statements of conservatism. As was previously mentioned, Edmund Burke, the eighteenth-century British statesman-philosopher, has become recognized as the founder of conservatism. The
intellectual context within which his value system emerged provides the focus for the following chapter.
CHAPTER III

AN INTERPRETIVE SURVEY OF THE INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

Introduction

A study of eighteenth-century ideas is to a large extent a study of the twentieth century. As Crane Brinton asserted, "We are in the West still children of the Enlightenment."\(^1\) From this transhistorical perspective, some of the controversies of the twentieth century are at bottom highly similar to those of the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, caution in drawing such parallels is in order since:

Ideas are very slippery; they sometimes change their nature even as we handle them. A little overemphasis here, a little concession there, something new is added, and before we are aware of it our whole thinking is turned in a new direction.\(^2\)

Such is one of the problems confronting the historian of ideas whether or not his approach is transhistorical. Another problem arises when the writer must necessarily edit, simplify, and structure dynamic interrelated ideas


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which were actually an inextricable part of the historical context. Yet since values inhere in ideas, the delicate risk must be made for as Ernest Wrage aptly stated:

Whether we seek explanations for an overt act of human behavior in the genesis and moral compulsion of an idea, or whether we accept the view that men seek out ideas which promote their interests and justify their activities, the illuminating fact is that in either case the study of ideas provides an index to the history of man's values and goals, his hopes and fears, his aspirations and negations, to what he considers expedient or inapplicable.3

Since some ideas are characterized by "moral compulsion" and since they provide an "index to the history of man's values," this chapter proposes to investigate the most salient ideas of the eighteenth century. The writer is not concerned with the century's production of "things" but rather with the value-ideas underlying such productions. It is true, for example, that the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution were two paramount products of this time. But industrialism was not made by machines nor was the French Revolution made by guillotines. Rather these two powerful forces were created by the ideas and values of men. Abstracting and developing such ideas is the purpose of this chapter since they provided the intellectual milieu to which Edmund Burke was subject and from which conservatism grew.

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Reason and Faith

"In a word," wrote Bredvold, "the Enlightenment was the period when Europe really emerged from the Middle Ages and the Modern Mind was born." The transition into this modern mentality was characterized by the clashing of opposite ideas or forces; tradition clashed with speculation and from this collision new developments were to grow. A distillation of ideas from sources such as Becker, Willey, Strauss, Bredvold, Stanlis, and Brinton suggests that opposing clusters of ideas were largely derivative of contradictory beliefs regarding the Supernatural and the natural. Previous centuries of theology, philosophy, history, and science had prepared the way for the antagonism which was to culminate in the "Enlightenment." Extreme adherence to supernaturalism or mysticism previously had balanced one end of the continuum. This position denied the reality of the natural, affirming only the reality of the supernatural. Moving from this extreme position, Christianity, one of the struggling forces which remained a tenacious part of the eighteenth-century tradition, united the supernatural and the natural. Natural experience was considered a partial manifestation of that which was above nature with unity of design and purpose uniting them. Becker described this Christian position which was to be one

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of the vying forces inherent in the eighteenth-century climate of opinion. For traditional Christianity,

it was an unquestioned fact that the world and man in it had been created in six days by God the Father, an omniscient and benevolent intelligence, for an ultimate if inscrutable purpose. Although created perfect, man had through disobedience fallen from grace into sin and error, thereby incurring the penalty of eternal damnation. Yet happily a way of atonement and salvation had been provided through the propitiatory sacrifice of God's only begotten Son. Helpless in themselves to avert the just wrath of God, men were yet to be permitted, through his mercy, and by humility and obedience to his will, to obtain pardon for sin and error. Life on earth was but a means to this desired end, a temporary probation for the testing of God's children. In God's appointed time, the Earthly City would come to an end, the earth itself be swallowed up in flames. On that last day good and evil men would be finally separated. For the recalcitrant there was reserved a place of everlasting punishment; but the faithful would be gathered with God in the Heavenly City, there in perfection and felicity to dwell forever. 5

Opposing this position were the "Naturalists" or "Rationalists" as they were called. According to Becker, "Since eighteenth-century writers employed reason to discredit Christian dogma, a 'rationalist' in common parlance came to mean an 'unbeliever,' one who denied the truth of Christianity." 6 From these two positions then, dichotomous ideas spiraled—reason versus faith, theistic Natural Law versus abstract natural law, theistic natural rights versus abstract natural rights, and equality versus


6Ibid., p. 8.
hierarchy. Ideas and values inhering in one position became much a part of the other stances so that accruing from these positions were generally two schools of thought: the "traditional" and the "progressive." Though forward movement was implicit in both the supernatural and natural conceptions of man and the universe, traditonalists conceptualized this movement in terms of Providence, whereas modernists conceived of this movement as Progress. This difference in terminology suggests the differences in values which were to grow since at "the heart of every theory of progress lies a conception of the ultimate good, and progress is thought to occur in proportion as the ultimate good triumphs in history." 7

Basically the eighteenth-century climate of opinion tended to relegate Christianity with its belief in the supernatural to the bygone "Age of Faith." The "Age of Reason" was to be its substitute. This convenient separation of faith and reason was unfortunate, however, in that reason was as much a part of faith as was faith much a part of reason. For example, the rationalist had to believe devoutly that

the universe works the way a man's mind works when he thinks logically and objectively; that therefore man can ultimately understand everything in his experience

as he understands, for instance, a simple arithmetical or mechanical problem. The same wits that showed him how to make, use, and keep in repair, any household contrivance will ultimately, the rationalist hopes, show him all about everything.8

Faith in Reason, Science, and the Future replaced faith in revealed religion. With this, the modern idea of progress was born.9

As formulated by the philosophies the doctrine of progress was but a modification, however important, of the Christian doctrine of redemption; what was new in it was faith in the goodness of man and the efficacy of conscious reason to create an earthly utopia. The French Revolution was the outward expression of this faith.10

Rationalism eliminated God and the supernatural, substituting it with the natural. Rather than putting his faith in God's revelation, the rationalist put his faith in the methods of scientific investigation. As Mathieson interpreted Thomas Paine, Paine represented clearly this position by insisting that theology suggests a conception of the universe manifestly at odds with that disclosed by science. Hence came Paine's belief that one could not adhere both to theology and science. To adhere to both was to understand neither.11 Revealing this position and his

8Brinton, Ideas and Men, p. 262.
10Ibid.
faith in the reason of science, he wrote: "The Christian theory is little else than the idolatry of ancient Mythologists, accommodated to the purposes of power and revenue; and it yet remains to reason and philosophy to abolish the amphibious fraud." With this interest in science and the scientific method, the "Big Questions," as Brinton called them, of man's destiny, the ways of God to man, Right and Wrong, Good and Bad were less frequently asked. Questions more amenable to answering via abstract calculation and mathematical methods were asked instead. In this way rationalism became a complete metaphysical system in itself, acting as a surrogate religion made of the correlative doctrines of materialism, positivism, atheism, utilitarianism, and even deism. Though dissimilar in specific characteristics, the sects found isomorphism in their roots.

The "Enlightenment" brought a much needed air of optimism to the strains of rationalism. The negative spirit of skepticism had to be tempered with the Enlightenment's hope for the perfectibility of man. That which the methods of Christianity had failed to do, the methods of science proposed to accomplish. But this necessitated a view of man more amenable to the methods which would be used to

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investigate him. Man somehow had to possess within himself the means and potential for his own salvation or perfectibility. Nature and Reason were to the "Enlightened" what God and Grace were to traditional Christianity. As God's revelation was to lead to an understanding of God, so Reason was to provide an understanding of Nature. Thus, Reason became "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." As Brinton explained:

Reason is at its clearest, and indeed first showed itself among men, as mathematics. Reason, argued the agents of Enlightenment, enables us to penetrate from appearances to reality. Without Reason, or even with the faulty kind of Reason that, as common sense, men got along with for so many centuries, we should believe that the sun actually "rises" and "sets"; with Reason, we know the true relation of earth and sun. Similarly, Reason applied to human relations will show us that kings are not fathers of their people, that if meat is good to eat on Thursdays it is good to eat on Fridays, that if pork is nourishing to a Gentile it is nourishing to a Jew. Reason will enable us to find human institutions, human relations that are "natural"; once we find such institutions, we shall conform to them and be happy. Reason will clear up the mess that superstition, revelation, faith (the devils of the rationalists) have piled up here on earth.14

Through Reason, the somewhat "unreasonable" leap was made from "the law of gravity to human relations."15 Newton and Locke were reinterpreted. Rationalistically enlightened principles were espoused with moderation prior to 1750, but the second half of the century was marked by their radical propagation. Mild Deism developed into materialism and

14Brinton, Ideas and Men, p. 290.
15Ibid.
atheism. Of course, a personal God belonged to the "Age of Faith, but Deism preferred to claim, at least, a Prime Mover of the mechanized universe that Reason had discovered. In applying the methods of discursive reason to his belief system, Paine rejected the God of the Bible: "Search not the book called the Scripture, which any human hand might make, but the Scripture called the creation."16 Rather than Biblical "hearsay," observation of the universe via the senses provided the only reliable data for the reasoning process since it was "only in the CREATION that our ideas and conceptions of a word of God can unite."17 Thus Paine concluded that the "only idea man can affix to the name of God, is that of a first cause, the cause of all things."18

Consequently Paine's God was the First Cause, the Prime Mover who had ordered the universe into being. The universe was that which was to be studied since it was the manifestation of God. But this position provided ground for a most logical move from Deism to atheism--a logical product which eventually manifested itself in the French Revolution. To produce a more elegant theory, followers of Paine simply carried the moderately espoused assumptions to their logical conclusions, recognizing that if the universal machine were

16Paine, The Theological Works, p. 31.
17Ibid., p. 30.
18Ibid., p. 31.
in process, a Prime Mover construct was no longer needed. Whereas the Deists' Prime Mover was considered benign, the Christians' personal God became an object of enmity for it was under traditional Christianity that Nature was believed to have been suppressed and Reason had atrophied. Lingering remnants of old prejudices, beliefs, and customs were dealt with forthrightly. In the spirit of Paine, the radicals had "nothing but contempt for the 'strange chaos' of customs and traditions. . . ." In such an opinion, England was but a "shapeless and corrupt republic which would need to be rebuilt on a regular plan." Thus customs and traditions whether religious, political, or social were to be banished. A new system was to be built through the vehicle of Reason.

Abstract Natural Law and Theistic Natural Law

From the natural as opposed to the Supernatural, to Reason as opposed to Faith came the ideas of abstract natural law as opposed to theistic Natural Law. Abstract Reason (rather than "Right Reason") was to illuminate those natural laws which had been considered ignorantly controverted by superstitions, traditions, and institutions. But the traditionalists had their own theistic conception of the natural against which the abstract conception was directed. This traditional conception embodied largely the classical,

20Ibid.
scho
clastic conception of Natural Law which wedded the
supernatural and natural, divine guidance and reason.

Giving the most articulate initial expression to Natural
Law, Thomas Aquinas wrote:

Since all things subject to divine providence are ruled
and measured by the eternal law . . . , it is evident
that all things partake somewhat of the eternal law, in
so far as, namely, from its being imprinted on them,
they derive their respective inclinations to their
proper acts and ends. Now among all others, the
rational creature is subject to divine providence in
the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of
a share of providence, by being provident both for
itself and for others. Wherefore it has a share of
the eternal reason, whereby it has a natural inclination
to its proper act and end: and this participation of
the eternal law in the rational creature is called the
natural law. 21

This scholastic conception of Natural Law, though differing
in some respects, was highly similar to the classical con-
ception as developed by Cicero. Until the time of Hobbes,
mid-seventeenth century, general agreement existed regarding
the content and function of Natural Law. It was considered
clearly subordinate to the ethics of Revelation; the law
was to supplement, but not to contradict the Scriptures.

Regarded as the span between God and man, Natural Law func-
tioned to link "the divine laws of revelation" and "man's
natural reason with human positive laws and customs." 22

21Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, in Basic Writings
of Saint Thomas Aquinas, ed. by Anton C. Pegis, II (New

22Peter J. Stanlis, Edmund Burke and the Natural Law
Stanlis described more fully the principles of Natural Law on which traditional agreement rested:

Natural Law was an emanation of God's reason and will, revealed to all mankind. Since fundamental moral laws were self-evident, all normal men were capable through unaided "right reason" of perceiving the difference between moral right and wrong. The Natural Law was an eternal, unchangeable, and universal ethical norm or standard, whose validity was independent of man's will; therefore, at all times, in all circumstances and everywhere it bound all individuals, races, nations, and governments. True happiness for man consisted in living according to the Natural Law. Whereas Natural Law came from God and bound all men, various positive laws and customs were the product of man's reason and will and applied only to members of particular political communities. This was the distinction between Natural Law and civil laws.23

In common usage, Natural Law has been associated with the idea of Justice, the conscience of mankind, the sense of decency, the intuitive discernment of right and wrong, etc. But, above all, Natural Law was believed to inhere in human nature. As Bredvold asserted, "We cannot escape it without reducing human beings to mere things."24

Under the hand of Hobbes, however, Natural Law took a different turn, marking the difference which grew between traditional or theistic Natural Law and modern or abstract natural law. Leo Strauss explained the difference in perspectives accruing from the eighteenth century:

Traditional natural law is primarily and mainly an objective "rule and measure," a binding order prior to, and independent of, the human will, while modern

23Stanlis, Edmund Burke and the Natural Law, p. 7.
natural law is, or tends to be, primarily and mainly a series of "rights," of subjective claims, originating in the human will.25

Hobbes' reinterpretations of Natural Law substituted "will" for law and this substitution was to find ground in Rousseau's "general will" and Thomas Paine's cry for rights. But more importantly, this reinterpretation was imbued with Hobbes' doctrine of human nature and socio-political order—a doctrine which was built on a base of strict materialism. Though he did not deny the existence of God, his reinterpretation of Natural Law within his mechanistic cosmology did not require God or the supernatural. To Hobbes,

life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within; why may we not say, that all "automata" (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the "heart" but a "spring"; and the "nerves" but so many "strings"; and the "joints" but so many "wheels," giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the artificer?26

Thus man was a mechanism in motion. Apart from any "God figure," the Natural Law was inherent in the will of individual man since the first law of nature was said to be that of self-preservation.27 The notion of absolutes existing outside of man was considered "unscientific" and


27Ibid., p. 329.
thus obsolete. Selfishness was the rule of man; competition was the rule of life. Developing how man's total range of passions and emotions were encompassed in the competitive race of life, Hobbes wrote:

In this human race to endeavour, is appetite. To be remiss, is sensuality. To consider them behind, is glory. To consider them before, is humility. To lose ground with looking back, vain glory. To be holden, hatred. To turn back, repentance. To be in breath, hope. To be weary, despair. To endeavour to overtake the next, emulation. To supplant or overthrow, envy. To resolve to break through a stop foreseen, courage. To break through a sudden stop, anger. To break through with ease, magnanimity. To lose ground by little hindrances, pusillanimity. To fall on the sudden, is disposition to weep. To see another fall, is disposition to laugh. To see one out-gone whom we would not, is pity. To see one out-go whom we would not, is indignation. To hold fast by another, is to love. To carry him on that so holdeth, is charity. To hurt one's self for haste, is shame. Continually to be out-gone, is misery. Continually to out-go the next before, is felicity. And to forsake the course, is to die.28

For Hobbes, nature was a contentious, anarchic set of powers which recognized no scruples. Hence, "will" and "power" became key terms in his reinterpretation of Natural Law. The ruthlessness of life was so great that Hobbes was compelled to embrace political absolutism as the only means of forcing the various elements of selfishness into submission. As Bredvold interpreted it, law became nothing but command by one with sufficient coercive power

making law "the measure of justice and injustice, not justice the measure of the law." 29

It was believed that solutions to moral problems were to be found not in theistic Natural Law, but in the social sciences if only they were made as scientific as were physics and mathematics. 30 Meanwhile Descartes was working on this very contention via his "universal mathematical science" from which a comprehensive philosophy of the world and man was to be deduced. Concerning Descartes' work, Voltaire wrote:

He [Descartes] destroyed all the absurd chimeras with which youth had been infatuated for two thousand years. He taught his contemporaries how to reason, and enabled them to employ his own weapons against himself. If Descartes did not pay in good money, he however did great service in crying down that of a base alloy. 31

But of most importance to Voltaire, he believed that "Descartes gave sight to the blind. These saw the errors of antiquity and of the sciences." 32 Gradually, through men such as Hobbes and Descartes, morality and ethics were being separated from Natural Law thereby being subsumed under mechanics and physics. Thus, theistic Natural Law became

29Bredvold, The Brave New World, p. 20.

30Ibid., p. 33.


32Ibid.
Abstract natural law. A new mathematical mental set with concomitant conceptions of man and the universe was to bring new approaches to human problems.

There had been a traditional doctrine of Natural Law, but the revolutionary Hobbist theory of "natural rights" was centered in the private will or ego of each individual, and was not limited by the social duties and ethical norms of Natural Law. It remained for Locke and his eighteenth-century disciples to complete the destruction of classical and Scholastic Natural Law by converting it from a bulwark for liberty and justice as an inheritance of constitutional law, to a revolutionary doctrine of liberty and equality as an abstract, inherent, individual "natural right." 33

Whereas most scholars have emphasized the differences between Hobbes and Locke, Leo Strauss revealed that, in the process, many of their important similarities have passed unnoticed. For example, both Locke and Hobbes were similar in their mechanistic conceptions of human nature and their empirical notions of epistemology. It is true that Locke did not allow himself to think specifically of man as a machine; "but his followers did not allow themselves to believe anything else." 34 And if Bredvold's interpretation were correct, this "mechanistic conception of human nature was the favorite starting point for the revolutionary moral and social speculation of the eighteenth century." 35

Abstract Natural Law rather than traditional Natural Law supplied directives.

33 Stanlis, Edmund Burke and the Natural Law, p. 19.
34 Bredvold, The Brave New World, p. 45.
35 Ibid.
Perhaps David Hume represented the clearest departure from a theistic to a naturalistic conception of natural law. The basic premise for his consideration of the origin of ideas reduced reality to personal sensation: "The most lively thought is still inferior to the dullest sensation."36 Reasoning from this premise, reality became a matter of personal or subjective will. As Hume wrote:

First, when we analyze our thoughts or ideas, however compounded or sublime, we always find that they resolve themselves into such simple ideas as were copied from a precedent feeling or sentiment. Even those ideas, which, at first view, seem the most wide of this origin, are found, upon a nearer scrutiny, to be derived from it. The idea of God, as meaning an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being, arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom. We may prosecute this enquiry to what length we please; where we shall always find, that every idea which we examine is copied from a similar impression. Those who would assert that this position is not universally true nor without exception, have only one, and that an easy method of refuting it; by producing that idea, which, in their opinion, is not derived from this source. It will then be incumbent on us, if we would maintain our doctrine, to produce the impression, or lively perception, which corresponds to it.37

Under Hume's influence, reality was limited to perception by the human senses thereby elevating sensory data to the highest form of evidence. Armed with these


37Ibid., p. 318.
discretely **naturalistic** methods of analysis, Hume applied them to **supernatural** entities. Probing the case of Christianity, he wrote:

> Our evidence, then, for, the truth of the Christian religion is less than the evidence for the truth of our senses; because, even in the first authors of our religion, it was no greater; and it is evident it must diminish in passing from them to their disciples; nor can any one rest such confidence in their testimony, as in the immediate object of his senses. But a weaker evidence can never destroy a stronger; and therefore, were the doctrine of the real presence ever so clearly revealed in the scripture, it were directly contrary to the rules of just reasoning to give our assent to it. It contradicts sense, though both the scripture and tradition, on which it is supposed to be built, carry not such evidence with them as sense; when they are considered merely as external evidences, and are not brought home to every one's breast, by the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit.\(^{38}\)

Therefore in Hume's system of thought, **personal** sensory data provided the highest form of evidence— that which was to take precedence over all other. Reality was supremely subject to the individual will. In testing reality, evidence had to be drawn from events within the realm of human experience and had to be conformable to it.\(^{39}\) By its very definition then, the supernatural could not qualify as a viable form of reality. Hume finalized the new interpretation of natural law. Natural law was materialistic, not theistic: "It is experience only, which gives authority to human testimony; and it is the same experience, which assures us of the laws of nature."\(^{40}\)

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\(^{39}\)*Ibid.*., p. 400.

\(^{40}\)*Ibid.*., p. 411.
Civil Rights and Natural Rights

The rationalistic departure from traditional concepts regarding the nature and function of Natural Law enabled a reinterpretation of natural rights and civil rights. But a new conception of human nature was needed to lend credence to a more radical theory of natural rights.

Previously, man's image had not fared well under the reconceptualization of Natural Law. Abstract Natural Law was conceived as the embodiment of the coercive command of absolutism which was to stifle the brawlings of selfish man. Against such human defectiveness, men such as Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury directed themselves. Capturing the eighteenth-century mind, Cooper, a free-thinking Deist, posited his view of the natural goodness of man. To him, man was not innately selfish (as Hobbes had claimed) or sinful (as traditional Christianity had maintained). On the contrary, man had an inherent disposition to virtue which could be corrupted only via the evils of civil customs, institutions, etc. Cooper argued that man in isolation was:

a good Creature; if he cou'd be understood to be absolute and compleat in himself; without any real relation to any thing in the Univerfe befides. For shou'd there be any where in Nature a Syftem, of which this living Creature was to be confider'd as a Part; then cou'd he no-wife be allow'd good; whilst he plainly appear'd to be fuch a Part, as made rather the harm than good of that Syftem or Whole in which he was included.41

41Anthony Ashley Cooper, Characteristicks, II (London: James Purser, 1737), p. 17.
This belief in the corrupting influence of civil institutions was highly compatible with Locke's theory of the tabula rasa. If civil society were corrupt, by its very nature, the mind through the senses had but little choice other than to record such corruption. Cooper posited a kind of sixth sense called the "moral sense" which was considered to operate much like the other senses. This "moral sense" or "taste for the good" was meant to be a substitute not a synonym for the traditional concept of conscience or the Ciceronian notion of "right reason." Through this contribution Cooper provided sanctions for an enthusiastic movement which would be directed against society for the sake of man's rights. Popular momentum necessitated Cooper's "perfectible man" in lieu of Hobbes' "selfish man."

But a consistent system as well as a sanctioning human image was needed. Progressive thinkers of the century, having segregated themselves from a theistic conception of Natural Law with its various ramifications, attempted to discover a way whereby they could integrate and coordinate disparate ideas into a coherent system of thought. Men developing this new school of thought agreed about the materialistic universe presented by the science of Newton, and they accepted as basic truth the psychology of Locke. And somehow they had to manage to reconcile this science with their enthusiasm over the natural goodness of man. The solution to this problem they believed had been found in the

42Cooper, Characteristicks, p. 442.
distinction between Nature and art, between Nature and civilization. The salvation of man lay in following Nature.\(^\text{43}\)

With this division between Nature and civilization, Cooper's ideal man appeared too well groomed, too interested in the arts, too compromising. Thus, it remained Rousseau's task to underline the contrast between the effects of society on man as opposed to those of Nature. All of Nature's goodness was personified in Rousseau's primitive man.

\[\text{Primitive men}\] of the uncut forests and unfenced plains lived close to nature. They had unequal strengths and varied powers, but no one was master and none slaves. In untamed freedom and vigor, they supplied their natural wants and realized their simple felicity.\(^\text{44}\)

But the man Rousseau observed in his own day fell short of this ideal:

\[\text{Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. Many a one believes himself the master of others, and yet he is a greater slave than they. How has this change come about? I do not know. What can render it legitimate? I believe that I can settle this question.}\] \(^\text{45}\)

Rousseau's \textit{Social Contract}, his attempt to settle the question, was based on four premises: the basic goodness of man, his original liberty and equality, his possession

\[^{43}\text{Bredvold, }\textit{The Brave New World, }\text{p.}\ 73.\]

\[^{44}\text{Radoslav A. Tsanoff, }\textit{The Great Philosopher}\ (2\text{nd}\ \text{ed.}; \text{Harper}\ &\ \text{Row, 1964}),\ \text{pp.}\ 399-400.\]

\[^{45}\text{Jean Jacques Rousseau, }\textit{The Social Contract,}\ \text{in }\textit{Ideal Empires and Republics, Vol. XIII of Library of World's Classics}\ (20\ \text{vols.;}\ \text{New York:}\ \text{The Werner Company, 1901),}\ \text{p.}\ 4.\]
of inherent political rights, and his compact with other individuals as the basis for the state. These premises established the foundation for most of Rousseau's a priori reasoning and provided ground for that which became logically irreconcilable contradictions. Illustrative of such contradictions, Rousseau believed that:

In short, each giving himself to all, gives himself to nobody; and as there is not one associate over whom we do not acquire the same rights which we concede to him over ourselves, we gain the equivalent of all that we lose, and more power to preserve what we have.46

Rousseau and his followers believed that the first corrupting influence on this primitive man was his enclosing a piece of ground and claiming possession of it:

Nothing is more dangerous than the influence of private interests on public affairs; and the abuse of the laws by the government is a less evil than the corruption of the legislator, which is the infallible result of the pursuit of private interests.47

Lending impetus to spiraling, evil artifices, luxuries and resultant inequality, private property was postulated as the actual beginning of civil society.48 Nature cohered with man's perfectibility and society cohered with his contamination. Evil was not in man but rather in the artificial environment that "someone" had created. With these distinctions and their attributed moral assessments, the

48Ibid.
plan for humanity's ethical, political, and social rehabilitation crystallized. Only by perfecting the environment could one reach his innate potential perfectibility. Through an elected aristocracy, the "will" of the people, which was naturally good, was to be actuated.49

The establishment of the "human perfectibility" premise as it related to Nature and society contributed a new dimension to the function of abstract natural law—a dimension which converted the meaning of "law" into "rights." According to Rousseau, "Every man has by nature a right to all that is necessary to him. . . ."50 Dominating traditional thought was the notion of a controlling Law of Nature rather than that of the liberating Rights of Nature; however, inspired by the progressive tenet of innate human goodness, Nature ceased to be primarily a "regulating principle" and became largely a "liberating principle."51

As Basil Willey explained:

Indeed the history of the idea of Nature in the eighteenth century can be described in the most general terms as its development from a rational into an emotional principle. Nature and Reason are normally associated in the earlier part of the century, Nature and Feeling in the later.52


50Ibid., p. 18.


52Ibid., p. 207.
The energizing quality of feeling was much more compatible with the vitality of rights than with the control of Law. Concurrently, the value which had been attached previously to reason eventually adhered to spontaneity and impulse. Reasoned, regulating Law was transformed into emotionalized, liberating Rights, and with this transformation, Natural Law and Natural Rights were estranged. Consequently, this disassociation aided by men such as Cooper and Rousseau "converted the blank practice of the political philosophies into a deadly affair of ball and shell."\(^3\)

But in a sense, these men were merely animating many ideas of their seventeenth-century predecessors such as Hobbes. For example, embracing Hobbes' doctrine of self-preservation, Rousseau contended that man's

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\text{first law is to attend to his own preservation, his first cares are those which he owes to himself; and as soon as he comes to years of discretion, being sole judge of the means adopted for his own preservation, he becomes his own master.}\]^{54}

Rousseau and Hobbes concurred that self-preservation was natural; they disagreed in the value judgment attached to this human quality. In Rousseau's thinking, since man was essentially good and this attribute of self-preservation was natural not civil, then self-preservation was necessarily positively valued. Conversely, since Hobbes conceptualized man as essentially evil, this trait of self-preservation was

\(^{3}\text{Willey, The Eighteenth-Century Background, p. 208.}\)

\(^{54}\text{Rousseau, The Social Contract, p. 5.}\)
a natural evil producing consequences which necessitated regulation not liberation. Rousseau recognized this point of departure as he compared Grotius and Hobbes:

It is doubtful, then, according to Grotius, whether the human race belongs to a hundred men, or whether these hundred men belong to the human race; and he appears throughout his book to incline to the former opinion, which is also that of Hobbes. In this way we have mankind divided like herds of cattle, each of which has a master, who looks after it in order to devour it.\(^5^5\)

In spite of their differences regarding the perfectibility of human nature, Hobbes was one of the first to reverse the traditional assumption that abilities and desires were the effects of God's will or theistic Natural Law. Instead of locating rights and obligations in some external agent, Hobbes assumed that:

they were entailed in the need of each human mechanism to maintain its motion. And since each human mechanism, to do so, must assess its own requirements, there could be no question of imposing a system of values from outside or from above.\(^5^6\)

Thus, no longer bound by traditional Natural Law, everyone's Rights were assumed to be self-contained and equal. In this regard, the "sentimentalists" such as Rousseau and Cooper were elaborators rather than innovators.

Conceptualizing similarly, Thomas Paine defined natural rights as being:


those which appertain to man in right of his existence. Of this kind are all the intellectual rights, or rights of mind, and also all those rights of acting as an individual for his own comfort and happiness, which are not injurious to the natural rights of others.57

Since Paine assumed that "men are all of one degree," he could further reason that "all men are born equal, and with equal natural rights, in the same manner as if posterity had been continued by creation instead of generation. . . ."58

From this theory of natural rights grew Paine's influential theory of government as related to society. He noted that some individual natural rights cannot be retained:

. . . though the right is perfect in the individual, the power to execute them is defective. They answer not his purpose. A man, by natural right, has a right to judge in his own cause; and so far as the right of the mind is concerned, he never surrenders it: but what availeth it him to judge, if he has not power to redress? He therefore deposits his right in the common stock of society, and takes the arm of society, of which he is a part, in preference and in addition to his own. Society grants him nothing. Every man is proprietor in society, and draws on the capital as a matter of right.59

Thus, a civil government was said to arise when individuals converge each in his own sovereign right to form a compact. In this way defective rights, or rights without corresponding power to activate them, were exchanged for civil


58 Ibid., p. 64.

59 Ibid., p. 66.
rights. The civil power inhering in civil rights was considered as:

... the aggregate of that class of the natural rights of man, which becomes defective in the individual in point of power, and answers not his purpose, but when collected to a focus, becomes competent to the purpose of every one.  

Inadvertently Paine indicated a limitation in natural rights. His natural rights operationalized were nothing more than one's "power of acting for his own benefit"—a power considered his right because he held it independently of other men. But such a concept was not logically applicable to civil society where interactions with others necessarily limit rather than enlarge individual action. Thus, the concept that "every civil right grows out of a natural right" said little about the nature of civil society and the concomitant civil rights accruing from it. Nonetheless, due to the efforts of Paine as well as those of Rousseau, Hobbes, and others, connotative images of natural rights as opposed to civil rights developed. The value of civil rights was relegated to a strictly subordinate position with its associated ideas of diversity and order, whereas natural rights grew into the ultimate value term around which the ideas of liberty and equality clustered.

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60Paine, The Rights of Man, p. 66.

Equality and Inequality

From Rousseau's concern with the relationship between natural law and civil law grew his philosophy of equality and inequality. His Discourse on Inequality intended to point out, in the progress of things, that moment, when, right taking place of violence, nature became subject to law: to display that chain of surprising events, in consequence of which the strong submitted to serve the weak, and the people to purchase imaginary ease, at the expense of real happiness. 62

But lest one wonder about the origin of evil implicit in this statement, Rousseau cautioned that "above all things let us beware concluding with Hobbes, that man, as having no idea of goodness, must be naturally bad. . . ." 63 On the contrary, "original sin" was to be attributed to "the satisfaction of numberless passions which are the work of society, and have rendered laws necessary." 64

The most debasing consequence of civil society was the creation of extreme inequalities:

The extreme inequalities in the manner of living of the several classes of mankind, the excess of idleness in some, and of labour in others, the facility of irritating and satisfying our sensuality and our appetites, the too exquisite and out of the way aliments of the rich, which fill them with fiery juices, and bring on indigestions, the unwholesome food of the poor, of which even, bad as it is, they very often fall short, and the want of which tempts


63Ibid., p. 191.

64Ibid.
them, every opportunity that offers, to eat greedily and overload their stomachs; watchings, excesses of every kind, immoderate transports of all the passions, fatigues, waste of spirits, in a word, the numberless pains and anxieties annexed to every condition, and which the mind of man is constantly a prey to; these are the fatal proofs that most of our ills are of our own making, and that we might have avoided them all by adhering to the simple, uniform and solitary way of life prescribed to us by nature.65

But all inequalities were not the result of civil society:

I conceive two species of inequality among men; one which I call natural, or physical inequality, because it is established by nature, and consists in the difference of age, health, bodily strength, and the qualities of the mind, or of the soul; the other which may be termed moral, or political inequality, because it depends on a kind of convention, and is established, or at least authorized, by the common consent of mankind. This species of inequality consists in the different privileges, which some men enjoy, to the prejudice of others, such as that of being richer, more honoured, more powerful, and even that of exacting obedience from them.66

Rousseau recognized problems in these categories, but he dismissed them cursorily.

It were absurd to ask, what is the cause of natural inequality, seeing the bare definition of natural inequality answers the question: it would be more absurd still to enquire, if there might not be some essential connection between the two species of inequality, as it would be asking, in other words, if those who command are necessarily better men than those who obey. . . .67

However, such questions were not "absurd." Not only did his categories admittedly lack discreteness, but their implied cause-effect relationships proved untenable. For

65Rousseau, On the Inequality Among Mankind, p. 175.
66Ibid., p. 167.
67Ibid.
example, rather than the artifices of society producing the effect of esteem or power, "natural qualities of mind or soul" conceivably could be the causal agent. Outside of Rousseau's system, this problem would have been negligible, but within the system, his distinctions provided an important point of departure for value judgments (i.e. natural inequalities as acceptable and civil inequalities as unacceptable) and for methods of implementation (i.e. maintaining the natural and destroying the civil). Consequently, problems in the distinctions had to reveal themselves in the appendages of value judgments and methods. In spite of this, however, Rousseau's categories functioned to clarify a salient area of inquiry, making it more congruent with current theories of political philosophy. At least his categories attempted to establish a much needed standard for discriminating between right and wrong inequalities.

Generally, natural inequalities were considered unalterable whereas artificial or civil inequalities were said to be alterable. Tolerating alterable inequalities was morally wrong within this system. Perceiving such a toleration in its foundations, Rousseau criticized Christianity.

Christianity is an entirely spiritual religion, concerned solely with heavenly things; the Christian's country is not of this world. He does his duty, it is true; but he does it with a profound indifference as to the good or ill success of his endeavors. Provided that he has nothing to reproach himself with, it matters little to him whether all goes well or ill here below.68

Because of this, Rousseau contended that a Christian society "would be neither the strongest nor the most durable. . . ."\textsuperscript{69} And accordingly, whatever fails to promote social unity "is good for nothing; all institutions which put a man in contradiction with himself are worthless."\textsuperscript{70} Since these alterable inequalities were induced via the artifices of society, such artifices as prejudices, customs and institutions had to be ameliorated or destroyed.

A vigorous interest in equality was not a creation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For generations traditionalists had adhered largely to Aristotle's conception of this idea or value. In his \textit{Politics}, Aristotle recognized that "inequality is generally at the bottom of internal warfare in states, for it is in their striving for what is fair and equal that men become divided."\textsuperscript{71} He further distinguished between two types of equality--not natural and conventional but numerical and proportional. Numerical equality referred to the treating of people in exactly the same way whereas proportional equality referred to the relative merits of individuals. This distinction grew from Aristotle's theory of distributive justice which involved the proportionate distribution of goods or honors.

\textsuperscript{69}Rousseau, \textit{The Social Contract}, p. 217.

\textsuperscript{70}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 120.

among those having a share in the constitution. Within this system, equality as a concept was subordinate to the regulating power of the ultimate value Justice. Justice required that two persons of equal merit were entitled to equal shares, but, of course, in proportion to their inequality.\(^2\) Thus within this framework, awarding unequals with equal shares would be as unjust as awarding equals with unequal shares. To serve Justice was to recognize the standard of merit; to serve injustice was to ignore merit. From this, discrimination among "unequals" could be considered Just, but only if justifiable, i.e. if sufficient reason could provide good ground for differential treatment.

But to apply the standard of merit, or offer sufficient reason for discrimination, one had to determine the nature of the equality or inequality under consideration. Aristotle attempted to deal with this problem by introducing "relevance" as the key factor in differential treatment or "distributive justice." Illustrating his notion of relevance, he wrote:

If one man is outstandingly superior in flute-playing, but far inferior in birth or good looks (even supposing that birth and good looks are a greater good than flute-playing, and greater in proportion than the superiority of this player over the rest), even then, I say, the good player should get the best instrument. For superiority is only relevant when it contributes to the

quality of the performance, which wealth and good birth do not do at all.\(^73\)

As is apparent in this illustration, Aristotle presupposed a natural state of inequality. Even in his description of a "pure" democracy as based on the principle of equality, Aristotle presupposed the existence of the rich and the poor. As he stated, in the purest form of democracy, "the law lays down that the poor shall not enjoy any advantage over the rich, that neither class shall dominate the other. . . ."\(^74\)

Traditionalists of the eighteenth century adhered primarily to this classical conception of equality. Generally, they presupposed inequality as a natural state; the progressives presupposed equality. The traditionalists measured equality by their ultimate value of Justice; the progressives measured justice by their ultimate value of Equality. By reversing the basic assumptions of traditionalists, the progressives established an antithetical set of political antecedents which proved to engender the most personal of consequences.

**Summary**

The eighteenth century was an era in which multiform fragments of thought and theory crystallized. This crystallization was paradoxically the impetus for and the

\(^73\)Aristotle, *Politics*, pp. 128-29.

\(^74\)Ibid., p. 159.
product of diverse interpretations and beliefs regarding: the Supernatural and Natural, Faith and Reason, traditional Natural Law and abstract natural law, civil rights and natural rights, inequality and equality.

If politics is but morality enlarged, these forces and counter-forces were important in shaping the political rhetoric of the day. As statesmen and opinion leaders were compelled to address themselves to these intellectual and moral developments, lines were drawn, refinements were made, and systems of belief emerged. In the twentieth century, adherents to either of the systems are ambiguously known as "conservatives" or "liberals." Due to the articulate expression of John Stuart Mill, generally known as the founder or systematizer of liberalism, and his legion of followers, the liberal ideology is generally well known. Such has not been the case with conservatism. But at long last, the mentor of this system has been well established as Edmund Burke. Fortunately for the student of communication, he was as much a speaker as a writer, as much an activist as a philosopher, as much a twentieth-century figure as an eighteenth-century prophet. Because of this, the writer can turn to his spoken and written words as they were addressed to and within the struggling forces previously developed in this chapter.
CHAPTER IV

EDMUND BURKE'S EARLY COMMUNICATIVE BEHAVIOR

Introduction

As a young man moving through his early adult years, Edmund Burke found himself in the middle of the eighteenth-century's prime intellectual and moral forces. Fortunately for this study, he was compelled to make important choices--choices which revealed the man.

A contradiction placed directly in front of a man--if only one can get him to look upon it--is a mirror; while he is judging, what dwells within him must be revealed. It is a riddle, but while he is guessing, what dwells within him is revealed by how he guesses. The contradiction puts before him a choice, and while he is choosing, he himself is revealed.¹

While the century's ideological current swelled, Burke revealed himself in relation to it by jotting ideas in a notebook. According to Carl Cone, these notes anticipated "the conservatism of the mature Burke and . . . [revealed] the unity and consistency of his thought."²


They marked the beginning of Burke's lifelong struggle against the rationalism of his century. He feared the rationalistic attack upon revealed religion and civil society that was under way. In 1754, Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality* came forth, along with the collected works of Bolingbroke. Burke felt impelled to counterattack. The jottings in his private notebook indicate the tendency of his thinking; now he organized his thought and published them in May, 1756, as *A Vindication of Natural Society*.

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the thrust of Burke's thought as manifested in his private notebook and his first publication. *A Vindication of Natural Society*, the book that introduced Burke to the public, has been generally well known. However, his private notes have not been widely read or interpreted. Because these notes have not been widely read, because they clearly foreshadow the consistent thread of his thought, and because they were "private" and thus not complicated with conscious intent to persuade, they require more than a cursory consideration.

**Burke's Private Notebook**

Burke's private notes were generally unavailable until 1957 when H. V. F. Somerset published *A Note-Book of Edmund Burke*. Amplifying Cone's observation, Ernest Baker wrote in the foreword to Somerset's edition:

> The young Burke, in his views of religion and his ideas of men and their characters, already anticipates and foreshadows the mature Burke of later years—the Burke of 1770 and the *Thoughts on the Cause of the

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Present Discontents, and the Burke of the Reflections on the Revolution in France of 1790. When he writes, in the piece entitled Religion of No Efficacy considered as a State Engine (no. 10), about 'enthusiasm' and its operation (how it supplies the want of reason, and 'comes nearer the great and comprehensive Reason in its effects'), he is already feeling what he felt and expressed long afterwards in the French Revolution. When, again, he sketches and analyses 'characters,' as he does in many of the items of the Note-Book, he is already giving evidence of that psychological insight, and that subtle understanding of human motives, which inspired his later and greater works.4

Generally considered, in terms of the search paradigm as presented in chapter two of this study, Burke's early notes provide insight into the foundation for his determining the "is," "good," and "ought" of propositions, policies, and methods. This foundation was apparently the outgrowth of Burke's deliberation of notions regarding the supernatural as opposed to the natural, and the ramifications of this dualism as exercised via faith or reason, as manifested in natural society or civil society, and as of consequence to natural rights or civil rights.

In addition, two of his essays in the notebook especially foreshadow Burke's system and method of thought which the writer has labeled "presumptive induction." As will be manifest subsequently, his quasi-logical system of "presumptive induction" accounts for the many contradictory interpretations of his works. For example, Harold Laski's interpretation of Burke seems to have been based largely on that of John Morley and Leslie Stephen. To Morley, Burke

4Burke, A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, x.
was obviously a utilitarian whose criterion for morality was "the standard of convenience, of the interest of the greatest number, of utility and expediency."^5 Stephen perceived Burke's supposed utilitarian principles as being derived completely from experience.6 And Laski conceptualized Burke's philosophy as nothing more than a set of generalizations derived deductively from experience.7 But these interpretations did not account for some basic tenets in Burke's system of thought. Salient questions remained unanswered such as: How could Burke be considered an enemy of a priori reasoning or "metaphysical speculation" if he believed in Providential creation and direction of man and society? Or how could he be called a "utilitarian" if he clearly subordinated the pleasure-pain principle to Providential will? Burke announced the resolution of these contradictions in "Religion of no Efficacy considered as a State Engine" and "Religion"—two essays from Burke's notebook which were probably unavailable to Morley, Stephen, or Laski.


The first of these essays established that which Burke perceived as the "is" of religion as related to politics and society. Several important presumptions were established in this essay. Five of these presumptions were stated as analytic claims in the first five sentences of the first paragraph:

Nothing can operate but from its own principles. The Principle of Religion is that God attends to our actions to reward and punish them. This Principle has an independent Operation, and Influences our Actions much to the Benefit of civil Society. But then the Influence on civil Society is only an oblique Influence. The Direct Influence is the civil Law itself, its own Principles and its own Sanctions.®

This one pregnant paragraph stated a set of assumptions which had been either unavailable to or overlooked by several interpreters of Burke. Here he presented early remnants of philosophical deliberation establishing and relating assumptions regarding God, man, and society. He assumed implicitly that: (1) God is and (2) God established operating principles. And he assumed explicitly that: (1) everything operates from its own principles and (2) a principle of religion is that God rewards and punishes man's actions. This principle influences nature which influences man, which influences civil society. These explicit and implicit assumptions provided the criteria by which Burke later interpreted and judged the "is," "good," and "ought" dimensions of most questions. It is especially noteworthy

®Burke, "Religion of no Efficacy considered as a State Engine," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 67.
that he presented these criteria in opposition to the standard of utility—a standard to which several interpreters such as Morley and Laski claimed Burke subscribed. But Burke early asserted that utility was subject to religion and not vice-versa:

If you attempt to make the end of Religion to be its Utility to human Society, to make it only a sort of supplement to the Law, and insist principally upon this Topic, as is very common to do, you then change its principle of Operation, which consists on Views beyond this Life, to a consideration of another kind, and of an inferior kind; and thus, by forcing it against its Nature to become a Political Engine, You make it an Engine of no efficacy at all. 9

Burke did not denigrate utility or practicality as a practice, but he disparaged the transforming of a means into an end. This transformation elevated the vehicle of utility to the position of an ultimate standard while subordinating the role of religion to one of subservience to utility. He believed it inconceivable that "all Eternity should be subservient to purposes of a moment." 10 Against this involution of hierarchy, Burke addressed himself while articulating that which was to remain one of his foundational sanctions.

Burke recognized that when utility rather than Providence supplied the ultimate standard, abstract reason then provided the means whereby the new standard was to be

9Burke, "Religion of no Efficacy considered as a State Engine," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 67.

10Ibid., p. 68.
reached. But in spite of fashionable opinion to the contrary, young Burke was prompt in signaling the deficiencies of singularly employed reason because "God has been pleased to give Mankind an Enthusiasm to supply the want of Reason. . . ."\textsuperscript{11} Whereas abstract reason was admittedly appropriate for "confined, narrow, common, and therefore plausible, Topics,"\textsuperscript{12} Enthusiasm was a kind of instinct designed to accommodate the "Big Questions." Reason in isolation was common and "fit enough for common affairs--to buy and sell, to teach Grammar and the like; but is utterly unfit to meddle with Politics, Divinity and Philosophy."\textsuperscript{13}

In dealing with the problem of reason, Burke revealed his tendency to counterpoise contrary forces by reconciling one with the other. He noted that:

\begin{quote}
It is true indeed that enthusiasm often misleads us. So does reason too. Such is the Condition of our Nature; and we can't help it. But I believe that we act most when we act with all the Powers of the Soul; when we use Enthusiasm to elevate and expand our Reasoning; and our Reason to check the Roving of our Enthusiasm.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

Moreover, he isolated the two opposite attitudes that tended to cohere with isolated reason: "doubt and Scepticism were

\textsuperscript{11}Burke, "Religion of no Efficacy considered as a State Engine," \textit{A Note-Book of Edmund Burke}, p. 68.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., pp. 68-69.
no more made for Man than Pride and Positiveness. . . ."15
Instead, he considered the means of these two positions as being "strong and confirmed Opinion"--a mental set which would "lead to resolute Action" thereby overcoming the difficulties which frequently accompany duties.16 Sounding much like today's attitude theorists, Burke believed that "action is influenced by Opinion--and our Notion of things. . . ."17 Since "no Action . . . can arise from dubious Notions and fluctuating Principles," the inactivating attitudes of Skepticism on one hand and Pride on the other were to be replaced by "strong and confirmed Opinion."18

It is interesting to note at this point that Burke justified his condemnation of doubt or skepticism and pride or positiveness on the grounds of Providential intent plus the principle of activity. The moods he disparaged (those which characterized the progressives of his day) were believed to result in inactivity. Conversely, confirmed opinion lent direction and impetus. Thus, Burke justified strong, confirmed opinion because he thought it activated, and he justified enthusiasm because he thought it elevated. Activity and elevation were "goods" in Burke's thinking.

15Burke, "Religion of no Efficacy considered as a State Engine," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 69.
16Ibid.
17Ibid.
18Ibid.
But consider these two goods in terms of one of the weaknesses that constructive liberals have perceived as being inherent in conservatism. Rossiter aptly summarized the criticism:

Conservatism is mean in spirit. The great tree of this ancient faith, however lush its foliage, stands eternally upon the dank ground of temperamental conservatism. No matter how noble the sentiments and unselfish the impulses that apparently lead men to embrace Conservatism, the psychology of fear and habit remains the most important single influence. There must always be something a little mean and morally stingy about a faith grounded in fear rather than courage, habit rather than imagination, inertia rather than activity.¹⁹

The emphasis of this criticism centers on the spirit of conservatism, not necessarily the objects to which this spirit is attached. Yet a meanness of spirit was that which Burke criticized in the progressives. He perceived the substitution of Providence with Utility to be debasing, the singular use of reason to be limiting, the attitudes of skepticism or positivism to be inactivating. Thus he saw the disagreement as centering on the objects to which a spirit was attached. For example, Burke observed how fear could result in a concurrence with the progressive climate of opinion: "I know the Clergy, shamed and frightened at the Imputation of Enthusiasm, endeavor to cover Religion under the Shield of Reason, which will have some force with

their Adversaries." Though Burke advocated fearing the judgment of God, he also advocated courage in the face of popular opinion. This essay, as well as Burke's subsequent political career, which found him advocating the minority position in all but one instance, suggests that he perceived the quality of courage as being indispensable in the maintenance of a minority opinion, be it conservative or liberal. To Burke, reducing Providence to Utility revealed as "mean" a spirit as reducing "perfect man" to "fallible man." Priorities differed. That man could be "mean" in spirit or more particularly that "conservatives" could be mean in spirit, Burke could hardly disavow. But it is doubtful that he believed it to be an inescapable part of the conservative system he was to develop.

Thus Burke's essay "Religion of no Efficacy considered as a State Engine" was a counterattack on the forces of his day. But the essay was more than this. It was a statement about his own internal constructs which were to be held consistently and tenaciously throughout his career. These primary values, by their very nature, were to be activated or applied through the elevating influence of enthusiasm and the controlling influence of reason. His energizing of these premises became more clearly manifest

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20Burke, "Religion of no Efficacy considered as a State Engine," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 68.

21This was implicit in Burke's belief in the innate nature of good and evil in man.
later in public life as Burke had to make his manly defense against the "flash of the day," as he called it.

Rossiter noted that "No Conservative can afford to be casual about religion," and this was precisely the message of Burke's next essay on "Religion." Evidently he recognized a kind of "casualness" in treatment or lack of logical continuity and development in his previous essay. Too much remained unsaid. He needed to articulate and develop his (1) first two implicit assumptions, (2) assumed inherent relationships, and (3) presumed priorities. Thus after drawing a line following his first essay, more deliberation ensued, more of his value system was revealed.

In the first essay, Burke had tacitly assumed that (1) God is and that (2) He established operating principles. A cursory look at Burke's essay on "Religion" suggests that he is going to justify and develop the first of these assumptions. The language is that of logic, but evidently he found it to be inadequate. He began: "If there be a God such as we conceive, He must be our Maker." From this point his argument logically grew: "If he is our Maker, there is a Relation between us." But the first sentence is merely an equivocation. The reader who is anticipating

22Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 42.
23Burke, "Religion of no Efficacy considered as a State Engine," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 69.
24Ibid.
a logical consideration of the premise as consonant with the logical style is disarmed by the empty phrase—"If there be a God such as we conceive." But this was from Burke's private notebook. His thought seems to have been stopped short. He again had to presume that God exists and that He created man as well as life's operating principles. This is the point at which Burke's "presumptive inductive" system is manifest. Throughout his subsequent writings, he consistently made the two presumptions previously articulated. It is these presumptions which disqualified Burke from being a utilitarian or pragmatist governed by the principles of expediency. Yet it was also his characteristic mode of observation and induction which disqualified him from being an a priori idealist. Reason or induction could not prove the existence of God, and because of this it was inadequate to Burke. But those providentially ordained principles as manifested in nature were reasonable and thus were generally amenable to the constructs of logic. Consequently, to those who have insisted on the discreteness of induction and deduction, Burke has appeared to be inconsistent. To those who could conceive of Burke only as a utilitarian, Burke's presumptions, when made explicit, were dismissed or interpreted as mere convenient ploys used to induce persuasion. But even in method, Burke was the counter-balancer, drawing from both inductive and deductive systems of development, establishing that which the writer has termed a
system of presumptive induction. The presumptions that (1) "God is" and (2) that "God created" established the only a priori principles which Burke would accept or with which he would argue. He did not necessarily argue from these principles; they more characteristically cohered with his observations and influenced his inferences or conclusions. Of course, to a certain extent any inductive system employs presumptions. For example, just as Burke presumed that God is and God created, most of his more radical contemporaries presumed that (1) God is not and did not or (2) that God's existence and works were irrelevant. Obviously, there is substance and thus presumption in denials as well as in affirmations. As Becker so persuasively argued, even the rationalists had to build on a foundation of faith. The objects of faith were different; the method of faith was similar.

Even though the first presumption, which was tacitly assumed in the first essay, was not developed in the next essay, the second presumption was developed. Previously, Burke had assumed that God established operating principles ("operating principles" as conceptualized in the generic sense). This essay developed the premise in substance and illustrated it in method. Through this, Burke presented

25For other examples of such principles cohering with his inductive process, see Works, I, pp. 119, 121, 126-27.

God as the foundation of religion, religion as the foundation of morality, and morality as the foundation of duty or obligation.

If there be a God such as we conceive, He must be our Maker. If he is our Maker, there is a Relation between us. If there be a Relation between us, some Duty must arise from that Relation, since we cannot conceive that a reasonable Creature can be placed in any Relation that does not give rise to some Duty. This Relation betwixt God and Man, is that Man has received several Benefits but can return none. That he may suffer all Manner of Mischief, but can return none, or by himself avert none. Therefore by no act can he perform this Duty; but he can by the Sentiments of his Mind. Where we have received good, 'tis natural to Praise. Where we hope good, it is natural to pray. Where we fear Evil, 'tis natural to deprecate it. This is the foundation of Religion.

We have a Relation to other Men. We want many things compassable only by the help of other beings like ourselves. They want things compassable within our Help. We love these beings and have a Sympathy with them. If we require help, 'tis reasonable we should give help. If we love, 'tis natural to do good to those whom we love. Hence one Branch of our Duties to our fellow Creatures is active--Hence Benevolence. This is the foundation of Morality.

Morality does not necessarily include Religion, since it concerns only our Relation with Men. But Religion necessarily includes Morality, because the Relation of God as a Creator is the same to other Men as to us. If God has placed us in a Relation attended with Duties, it must be agreeable to him that we perform those duties. Hence Moral Duties are included in Religion, and enforced by it.27

27 Burke, "Religion," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, pp. 69-70.
God's principles of operation were presented as manifested in the interactions or relations between God to man (religion), man with man (morality), and man with society (civilization). From these relations certain duties or obligations became operative. Because of the relationship between God and man, man's duty to God was to love good, hate evil, and pray for divine guidance. These could not be "acts" or works because of the nature of the relationship but were "sentiments of the mind." Interpreted in conjunction with his essay on "Religion of no Efficacy considered as a State Engine," Burke did not imply a state of inertia as the differentiating factor between sentiments and acts. On the contrary, "strong and confirmed Opinion can lead to resolute Action." Instead his differentiation related to the nature of motives and priorities. Providentially inspired sentiments developing from relations between God and man motivate action. Only proper sentiments could motivate proper action, and these proper sentiments could originate only from the relationship between God and man, not from the relationship between man and man. "We know therefore that our Duty to God is of more moment than our Attention to ourselves or others." Proper motives were derived from God and proper priorities elevated duty to

28Burke, "Religion," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 69.

29Ibid., p. 72.
God over duty to man. Of course, the relations between people would be enhanced by the activation of providentially inspired sentiments.

The next principle of operation, that of morality, was to be found in the proper relation of man with man. Because of this relationship, each person was obligated to be benevolent and unselfish. Regarding the first duty, Burke wrote "If we love, 'tis natural to do good to those whom we love. Hence one Branch of our Duties to our fellow Creatures is active—Hence Benevolence."30 Regarding the second duty, that of self-denial, Burke explained:

We may have observed that the Passions which arise from self love frequently clash with those Duties which arise from our Relation to other Men. But less mischief arises from a restraint on our desires, than from indulging them to the prejudice of others. Thus self-Denial becomes the second of the Pillars of Morality. This is the more austere part of our Duty, and the most difficult.\(^{31}\)

Perhaps the most illuminating aspect of this development of social relationships is that Burke perceived duties not rights as growing from social interaction. This undoubtedly was not to deny the existence of rights but rather to subordinate them to the controlling function of duties. The rights of others would have to be respected before they could be exercised without conflicts. And

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31Ibid., p. 73.
respect for others involved the "oughts" or obligations of benevolence and self-denial. One accommodating another was the rule of duty which could make possible the energizing of rights. Though to his contemporary progressives, the term "duty" had been perceived as stifling and "rights" as liberating, Burke seemed to believe that duty was prerequisite to rights. Thus he explicitly established the duties of benevolence and self-denial as the two pillars of morality.

Yet, in spite of this, Rossiter observed that two of the leading criticisms of Burkean conservatism have indicted the system's inherent anti-humanism and selfishness. Rossiter explained that this "critique takes Conservatism at face value and finds weaknesses and faults that seem inherent in its teachings." 32 Accordingly,

Conservatism is selfish. The Conservative, hardly coincidentally, is well served by this way of life. While claiming to defend an entire society, he really defends his own position in it. Conservatism is inherently an attitude of possession—whether possession of property, status, reputation, or power—and it fears change primarily because this means dispossession. All philosophies, it may be argued, are rationalizations of self-interest, but the interests of Conservatism are especially self-centered, for they are vested rather than pursued.33

In addition to this charge of selfishness, conservatism has been criticized as being "anti-humanistic."

32Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 59.
33Ibid., pp. 59-60.
It speaks of compassion, reverence, and kindness, yet it is grounded in a view of human nature that is essentially defamatory. Conservatism claims to be no more than distrustful of human nature, but distrust moves easily into disdain, disdain into contempt, and contempt into hatred. The Conservative proclaims the dignity of man to be the most wonderful of modern spiritual forces; at the same time, his assumption of an immutably wicked human nature as a standing insult to all men everywhere.34

Whether Burke anticipated such criticisms or feared them to be a possible consequence of his emerging system is debatable. However, it is doubtful that he perceived them to be inherent in the principles of his value system.

Regarding the criticism of selfishness, Burke provided two basic restraints against this. He maintained that
(1) "The Principle of Religion is that God attends to our actions to reward and punish them"35 because (2) "this Life is a Preparation for the next."36 From these two restraints he reasoned:

Hence it is that we ought not to emmerse [sic] ourselves too much in the things which make us consider this Life as our all.

Hence it is that for this Purpose we ought to deny ourselves; since an Indulgence in Pleasures here removes our Attention from further Objects, and weakens our Desire for them.

We may have observed that the Passions which arise from self love frequently clash with those Duties which arise from our Relation to other Men.37

34Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 61.

35Burke, "Religion of no Efficacy considered as a State Engine," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 67.

36Burke, "Religion," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 73.

37Ibid.
Undoubtedly the abuse of materialism has prompted the criticism of selfishness, and rightly so. But it should be remembered that "materialism" was not a conservative innovation. Materialism was a development concurrent with naturalism, atheism, and utilitarianism.\textsuperscript{38} The progressives became interested in the "material world" and material progress rather than the "supernatural world" and spiritual progress. To reduce materialism to private property and then associate materialism with the advocates of private property, i.e. conservatives, is to misrepresent the principal issue in question. Burke believed the supernatural to take precedence over the natural, the spiritual to be more important than the material. An inversion of this hierarchy could provide a rationale for unbalanced materialistic concern. Against such an involution, Burke directed his efforts. Duty to God and then man was to supersede duty to self.

Ironically, however, self-denial or the prevention of selfishness was based on a foundation which was considered to be "anti-humanistic." It is true that Burke's value system and his eventual system of conservatism has rested on a belief in Original Sin or the imperfection of people. For this reason, Burke stressed self-denial as a means of preventing selfishness and benevolence as a means of self-expression. Each person was to restrain the evil in himself

\textsuperscript{38}Brinton, Ideas and Men, p. 264.
(so as not to inflict it on others) while concomitantly expressing the good (to the benefit of others). This could appear to be an inconsistent or untenable position as the criticism suggests:

The Conservative proclaims the dignity of man to be the most wonderful of modern spiritual forces; at the same time, his assumption of an immutably wicked human nature is a standing insult to all men everywhere.39

But Burke found no difficulty in claiming man to be both good and bad. In his essay on "Philosophy and Learning" he explained:

In reasoning about abstruse matters and the assent we give to Propositions concerning them, we don't sufficiently distinguish between a Contrariety and a Contradiction. No man in his Senses can agree to a Contradiction; but an apparent, nay a real, Contrariety in things, may not only be proposed and believed, but proved beyond any reasonable doubt. Most of our Enquiries, when carried beyond the Superficies of things, lead us into the greatest difficulties and we find qualities repugnant to each other whenever we attempt to dive into the Manner of Existence.40

Thus for Burke, assuming that man's nature was both bad and good was a "contrariety" but not a contradiction. And finding contrarieties was inevitable when penetrating the superficial to analyze the "Manner of Existence" or nature of things. Progressive thinkers have had an exceedingly difficult time in accounting for the origin of manifest evil; Burke and conservatives have largely accepted the

39Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 61.
Biblical account of the origin of evil and the nature of man. Thus the criticism against the anti-humanist assumption of imperfect man is more directly a specific critique of the Bible. Had the criticism been directed against the anti-humanist practices of conservatism instead of its teachings or assumptions, the criticism would have been difficult to deny since many conservatives have frequently been more inclined to deny others and liberate themselves. But this has been inherent in the prostitution of principles, not the principles themselves.

Thus Burke provided a basis of morality for human interaction which was neither selfish nor anti-humanist (unless it is assumed that the imperfect cannot be loved). His two pillars of morality were "Benevolence" and "Self-Denial." Not only did he logically develop the reasons for these particular pillars, but he also developed the process whereby they were to be activated. Burke merely alluded to this process in his essay on "Religion": "We love these things [other people] and have a Sympathy with them." He reserved the further development of this process for The Sublime and the Beautiful.

It is by [sympathy] . . . that we enter into the concerns of others; that we are moved as they are moved, and are never suffered to be indifferent spectators of almost anything which men can do or suffer. For sympathy must be considered as a sort

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41Burke, "Religion," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 70.
of substitution, by which we are put into the place of another man, and affected in many respects as he is affected. . . .42

This process, which anticipated George Herbert Mead and the symbolic interactionists' theory of empathy, suggests that Burke believed in a dynamic morality, operationalized virtues. To Aristotle, man was a political animal; to Burke, he was also a social and religious animal. Social relations through sympathy encouraged the civilization of humanity and society because such was Providentially directed:

As our Creator has designed that we should be united by the bond of sympathy, he has strengthened that bond by a proportionable delight; and there most where our sympathy is most wanted--in the distress of others.43

This process or sentiment of sympathy was to complement reason. Noting again the limitations of reason, Burke wrote:

I am afraid it is a practice much too common in inquiries of this nature, to attribute the cause of feelings which merely arise from . . . the natural frame and constitution of our minds, to certain conclusions of the reasoning faculty on the objects presented to us; for I should imagine, that the influence of reason in producing our passions is nothing near so extensive as it is commonly believed.44

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43Ibid., p. 119.

44Ibid., pp. 117-18.
Burke's A Vindication of Natural Society

The scattered thoughts as represented in Burke's notebook were later organized and published in the form of A Vindication of Natural Society. The same three themes of religion, society, and reason which were developed in Burke's notes again reappeared. As his notebook indicated, the ideas regarding these themes had been growing and solidifying. The manifestation of his beliefs regarding religion, society, and reason marked the first public announcement of that which became his lifelong "confirmed opinion" regarding "the really great business" of his age.45

Here in 1756 he condemned the rationalists who thought every institution and tradition could be reduced to its ultimate denominator in natural law; in 1773 Burke would castigate atheists and opponents of revealed religion; during the American Revolution he would excoriate political metaphysicians and blame them for raising incendiary questions; with the French Revolution, Burke would call the godless Jacobins--disciples of the natural rights philosophers with their abstract dogmas of social contract, right of revolution, and political democracy--the enemies of Christian, European society. Viewed in the light of Burke's life and thought, the Vindication acquires added importance as the opening blast in his long campaign against the enemies of the traditional order of things in western Europe.46

This first publication used the method of irony to carry its message. By imitating the style of Bolingbroke and by extending his arguments to their ultimate conclusions, Burke attempted to show that:


46 Cone, Burke and the Nature of Politics, I, p. 24.
without the exertion of any considerable forces, the same engines which were employed for the destruction of religion, might be employed with equal success for the subversion of government; and that specious arguments might be used against those things which they, who doubt of everything else, will never permit to be questioned.47

But Burke's method of imitation was perhaps too good in that "his message almost miscarried. So effectively had he emulated Bolingbroke's style that many readers failed to perceive his intent."48 For these readers, Burke wrote a preface to the 1757 edition of the same work.

Though frequently overlooked, this preface provides considerable insight into Burke's primary and derived values. He described his perception of the intellectual and moral climate of his day:

It is an observation which I think Isocrates makes in one of his orations against the sophists, that it is far more easy to maintain a wrong cause, and to support paradoxical opinions to the satisfaction of a common auditory, than to establish a doubtful truth by solid and conclusive arguments. When men find that something can be said in favor of what, on the very proposal, they have thought utterly indefensible, they grow doubtful of their own reason; they are thrown into a sort of pleasing surprise; they run along with the speaker, charmed and captivated to find such a plentiful harvest of reasoning, where all seemed barren and unpromising. This is the fairy land of philosophy. And it very frequently happens, that those pleasing impressions on the imagination subsist and produce their effect, even after the understanding has been satisfied of their unsubstantial nature. There is a sort of gloss upon ingenious falsehoods that dazzles


48Cone, Burke and the Nature of Politics, I, p. 22.
the imagination, but which neither belongs to, nor becomes the sober aspect of truth.49

In this passage, Burke suggested two type of reason. In one instance, he implied a legitimate kind of reason which was being prostituted: "they grow doubtful of their own reason," i.e. their "confirmed opinions."50 Burke later termed this "right reason" meaning the use of the reasoning processes as directed by the God-given "sentiments of mind." Conversely, the kind of reason against which Burke directed his efforts was the kind of reason which "charmed" and "captivated" auditors out of their "confirmed opinion" regarding especially the nature of religion, society, and reason itself. This kind of reason was largely destructive not constructive; it thrived on finding and exaggerating faults, capitalizing on man's unfortunate propensity.51 To Burke this was "speculative reason" not "right reason"; speculative reason was considered wrong primarily because it encouraged skepticism of Providence and Providential rules of operation, yet concomitantly encouraged positiveness in man's ability to do the work previously relegated to God and His ultimate plan. Regarding the nature and consequences of "speculative reason," Burke wrote:


50Burke, "Religion of no Efficacy considered as a State Engine," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 69.

The editor is satisfied that a mind which has no restraint from a sense of its own weakness, of its subordinate rank in the creation, and of the extreme danger of letting the imagination loose upon some subjects, may very plausibly attack everything the most excellent and venerable; that it would not be difficult to criticise the creation itself; and that if we were to examine the divine fabrics by our ideas of reason and fitness, and to use the same method of attack by which some men have assaulted revealed religion, we might with as good color, and with the same success, make the wisdom and power of God in his creation appear to many no better than foolishness.52

It is exactly this condemnation of "speculative reason" which became a part of conservatism and has prompted subsequent criticisms of conservatism as being "anti-intellectual." As Rossiter wrote:

Not only our current crop of obscurantists, whom some writers insist on labeling conservatives, but the very noblest and most enlightened Conservatives betray a fundamental distrust of reason, intelligence, and learning. The nature of its mission forces Conservatism to harp on the limits of reason, condemn bold flights of fancy, prefer character to intellect, and single out the intellectual as the real threat to ordered liberty.53

Though the criticism is too expansive, it is basically accurate regarding conservatism's ardent belief in the limitation of reason. As his private notebook and first substantial publication revealed, Burke, even as a young man, became concerned about the consequences of speculative use of the mind. Interpretation of Burke's works against reason have been perhaps too overly concerned with whether

53Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 61.
or not Burke was for or against inductive or deductive reason. Interpreters such as Morley, Lecky, and Cone thought Burke's attack in *The Vindication* was primarily an attack against deductive reasoning. But this oversimplifies Burke's objection and makes way for indictments of Burke's inconsistency. It could be argued that after all, he did build on presumptions in his system of induction, and presumptions are nothing more than the result of deduction—a method which Burke supposedly deplored. More important to note, however, is that Burke recognized the limitations of both inductive and deductive reasoning. Both types were merely "speculative" if not accompanied by a recognition that "we examine the result of a reason which is not our own." The recognition of this limitation turned "speculative reason" into "right reason." And "right reason" was the process whereby truth could be discovered and applied. There was something more than reason or the ordering processes of the mind, Burke claimed. Among other things, this "something more" was that which had enabled people to respond to their world subconsciously, "without having their reasons made clear and demonstrative to every individual." To reduce the human mind to this voluntary, conscious ordering process was to "pretend to exalt the mind of man,

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55Ibid., p. 7.
by proving him no better than a beast." 56 And then by assuming that the whole of reason or the mind was actually only that reduced faculty, then the standards of morality and religion could be reduced to only that which could be apprehended and ordered by this one singular mental faculty. Burke was concerned that this kind of reduction could result in the perversion of "oughts" which would lead to the destruction of "goods."

With this, Burke was not saying, reason or the ordering processes of the mind was bad and therefore ought not to be used. Instead, he was saying that reason was a highly valuable faculty, but because it was limited, it ought to be used cautiously or carefully. Even today, David Smith stated that "carefulness" should be the criterion for applying the scientific method since such a standard allows for creativity yet avoids haphazard claims. 57 By this, Smith recognized "limits" which should be respected. He was not suggesting an "anti-intellectual" attitude. But, of course, he would not be accused of doing so.

Perhaps it has been the repetition of the "limited reason" claim or the misinterpretation of it that has led


to the criticism cited by Rossiter. Nonetheless, Burke differentiated between carefulness and condemnation. Certainly he believed that intellectual inquiry should be heartily pursued. For example,

By looking into physical causes our minds are opened and enlarged; and in this pursuit, whether we take or whether we lose our game, the chase is certainly of service. Cicero, true as he was to the academic philosophy, and consequently led to reject the certainty of physical, as of every other kind of knowledge, yet freely confesses its great importance to the human understanding: "Est animorum ingeniorumque nostrorum naturale quoddam quasi pabulum consideratio contemplatioque naturae."58

But, at the same time, it should be recognized that "when we must go out of the sphere of our ordinary ideas, . . . we can never walk surely, but by being sensible of our own blindness."59

Conclusion

The Substance of Burke's Early Thought

As Burke wrote,

My principles enable me to form my judgment upon men and actions in history, just as they do in common life, and are not formed out of events and characters, either present or past. History is a preceptor of prudence, not of principles. The principles of true politics are those of morality enlarged, and I neither now do, nor ever will, admit of any other.60

59Ibid., p. 6.
As the search model in chapter two posited, an understanding of Burke's political and cultural philosophy necessitates an understanding of the normative assumptions inhering in his value system and underlying his judgments of events. Though changing events impelled flexibility of opinions, interpreters of Burke since 1949 have noted a solid consistency in his primary value constructs. Analysis of Burke's early works has revealed a deliberation process prompted by the disparate intellectual and moral forces of his day. Burke apparently saw the current of his era as confronting him with choices about which he would have to decide. Three themes of his early works indicate that which he perceived as choices—that which constituted the "is" constructs within his system. Recurrent themes in his early works were (1) religion, (2) reason, and (3) society. Available choices were those between (1) the supernatural or natural, (2) civil society or natural society, and (3) "right reason" or "speculative reason." Burke's choice was not to select one and eliminate the other. Rather he established a hierarchy out of the available choices so that the supernatural was to subsume the natural, civil society was to subsume natural society, and "right reason" was to subsume "abstract reason." The counterbalancer was at work in his perception, interpretation, modification, and selection of choices. As the search model posited, the "is"

61 Cone, Burke and the Nature of Politics, II, p. 315.
constructs of a value system are indicative of motives and, thus, such "is" constructs become important in interpreting Burke's perception of and responses to subsequent events.

His "good" and "ought" constructs were presented as an inextricable unit. He seemed to reason that what one ought to do is good, and what is good, one ought to do. Virtues and duties were consubstantial. The following list summarizes that which the young Burke considered to be the "oughts" and "goods" of man and society. These took the form of attitudes, virtues, and priorities. He believed that: (1) attitudes should be strong, "confirmed opinions," neither skeptical regarding Providence nor positive regarding self; (2) virtues were commitment to God, consistency in principles, benevolence toward others, and denial of self; and (3) priorities involved a hierarchy descending from God to one another to self.

Burke's "is," "good," and "ought" constructs were derived from his primary value system. Before he entered Parliament, he had already generally solidified foundational beliefs concerning the nature of the Ultimate Good, man, and society. The Ultimate Good was God, not Utility since to Burke, God was the creator and director of man, society, law, and principles of operation. Though Burke realized that God could not be proven conclusively by man's abstract reason, man knew that God existed because of the providentially endowed "sentiments of the mind."
Burke believed man to be a religious, political, and social being who was created by God and ultimately responsible to Him. Because of original sin, man's nature was both good and bad; thus civil laws were necessary to restrain the detrimental whereas freedom was necessary to foster the beneficial. But at his best, man was making operative the above attitudes, virtues and priorities via "right reason."

Though in his early works, Burke did not define "confirmed opinion," he considered it to be the foundation and bond of society which became activated through the process of "sympathy" or "empathy" in today's vernacular. In addition to confirmed opinion, he believed the foundation of society to consist of humanity, morality, and religion. (His later works added "manners" to this list). And these pillars provided the foundation of both civil and natural society, for both were one and the same.

The Method of Burke's Early Thought

Burke's method of reasoning and development was that of "presumptive induction." Co-varying with his inductive process were the two assumptions that (1) God is and (2) God created. Since these two assumptions could be considered the conclusions of deduction, his method was not strictly

inductive. Burke could justify this method in his own mind because of the nature of the materials he was ordering. Strict inductive logic calls for the manipulation of time, space, and matter only. But Burke believed in the existence of "something more" than this. "Speculative" or "abstract" reason ordered time, space, and matter only, whereas, "right reason" recognized those additional constituents in that inarticulate "something more." This was the aspect which, providing stability, continuity, or the inner "isness" of a thing, could establish ground for absolutes. In Weaver's terms, this quality could be called "status." Conversely, time, space, and matter were changing entities or "function." Ideas and the material for ideas were characterized by both status and function. And since Burke perceived abstract reasoning as ignoring status, he believed such reasoning to be inadequate. Right reason, which recognized both status and function, was to provide the material and method for his presumptive-inductive system of thought. His system allowed him to elevate the mind by bringing men to ideas and not ideas to men.

But both the method and substance of his system were to be crystallized and amplified with maturity. The next chapter investigates that process and its results.

CHAPTER V

EDMUND BURKE'S MATURE COMMUNICATIVE BEHAVIOR

Introduction

The basic values of young Burke were much the same as those of the maturing Burke. In his early writings, he was found wrestling with some of the most crucial and far-reaching problems of the day. He wrestled, but he had not completely won. Though the broad strokes of his values were supplied by his early deliberation process, details were missing. It was his confrontation with subsequent events as he entered public life that impelled the addition of dimension and depth to his thinking. To those events and to that elaboration, this chapter turns.

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the interaction between Burke's value system and modern issues. This study has posited that Burke's mind was not made by the events of his political career, for the previous chapter discovered at least a coarse value system which provided a frame of reference for his political encounters. From the broad lines of this value system in conjunction with an understanding of the issues confronted, his prime political objectives evolved. These objectives provide an index to
that which Burke perceived as his set of political "oughts."

But probing into the substance of these oughts necessitates discovering Burke's "good reasons" for his political objectives. At this point, the permanent and the transient, the principles and the circumstances, the status and the function can be said to unite and, thus, clarify salient primary and derived values.

Providing a framework for understanding the bulk of Burke's more than twenty-nine year political life is fraught with difficulties. Burke's background did not recommend him to the ruling class of England. The son of a simple Irish barrister seemed to sit rather incongruously among his contemporary aristocratic heirs such as Charles James Fox. And just as today, being an Irishman in England prompted no special esteem. On the surface, Burke was simply the son of a Protestant dissenter and an Irish Catholic mother— a lad tutored by a Quaker disciplinarian, educated at Trinity College (Dublin) and polished at Middle Temple. The bare facts of his career "would not have occupied much space in a contemporary Who's Who, that invaluable publication in which the offices and attainments of the eminent are listed."¹

Burke was a Member of Parliament from 1759 to 1794, most of the time representing Rotten Boroughs, but also, for six memorable years, the freeholders of Bristol. In Lord Rockingham's brief administration in 1782 he occupied the post of Paymaster General, and he returned

to that office in the ill-fated Fox-North Coalition of 1783, after the death of Rockingham had deprived him of his only loyal patron. He never held office again. Thus, he was never more than a junior minister, and even that modest distinction never remained with him more than a few months on end. The commoner prizes of political service in his day, sinecures, pensions on the civil list and so on, eluded him until three years before his death, when William Pitt, in the face of considerable hostility, made a reasonable provision for him.\(^2\)

Obviously neither his station in life nor his offices in government commended Burke to the minds and memories of posterity. Rather the content with which he imbued these stations assumes credit for his longevity.

To get at the content or substance of his activities, most scholars have approached Burke from the perspective of the great issues with which he had to deal. For example, Chauncey Goodrich divided Burke's career into three periods--his involvement in the American Revolution, the Hastings indictments, and the French Revolution.\(^3\) According to Goodrich, the period marking Burke's activities in the American Revolution constituted the zenith of his career as represented by his most outstanding address, "Conciliation with America."\(^4\) This period aroused the practical statesman. Conversely, other scholars such as Carl Cone,\(^5\) Ross Hoffman

\(^2\)Utley, Edmund Burke, pp. 9-10.


\(^4\)Ibid., p. 213.

and Paul Levack⁶ thought Burke's greatest achievement was one of his last--his publishing of \textit{Reflections on the Revolution in France} which established Burke as one of the great political philosophers of perennial appeal. Add to the American, Indian, and French questions, Burke's involvement with Ireland and Catholic emancipation, reform of the penal code, and economic and domestic policies, and the student of Burke is confronted with a myriad of complexities. But at this point, such complexities can be reduced to manageable form by first considering Burke's political objectives as they cut across the issues with which he dealt. The most crucial of those objectives were:

(1) To maintain the traditional structure of the British state, centered in divided and balanced powers.
(2) To define the constitutional limits of the royal prerogative and royal influence.
(3) To extend the legislative authority of the House of Commons, and maintain the independence of its members.
(4) To defend the organization and use of political parties as a legitimate and publicly accepted part of the political process.
(5) To extend the civil rights and economic privileges of the British constitution to all British subjects, so far as these are necessary to fulfill the great ends of society--distributive and commutative justice, good order and liberty.
(6) To set forth the principles of sovereignty and civil liberty for the British Empire, by establishing equitable rule between the mother country and all her colonies.
(7) To defend the historical civil order of Europe as a Christian commonwealth, against the scientific materialism and romantic sensibility of the

philosophers of the Enlightenment who wished to establish a new social order based upon abstract metaphysical theories of man and society. (8) To combine in all practical political problems a complete consideration of historical circumstances, of "prudence" or expediency on the one hand, with ethical or legal norms on the other.7

The Preservation of a Christian Commonwealth

The above objectives can be further reduced to two major goals which tended to subsume the others. First, Burke wanted to preserve a Christian Commonwealth. As Cone wrote, a central question in Burke's political deliberations was: in which kind of order was justice most likely to prevail in the Empire and at home?8 Preserving the Christian Commonwealth was preserving a base for such justice. To Burke, "Individuals pass like shadows; but the Commonwealth is fixed and stable. The difference, therefore, of to-day and to-morrow, which to private people is immense, to the state is nothing."9 Preserving the essence of a stable, continuous British commonwealth was at the heart of much of Burke's communication. But this goal of preservation did not imply his belief in preserving the bad as well as the good, as some interpreters have suggested. For example, being misinformed on this point, Ivor Brown thought that "a predominance of 'ares' had driven 'oughts' out of his

7Stanlis, The Relevance of Edmund Burke, pp. 24-25.
8Cone, Burke and French Revolution, II, p. 6.
Burke's social theory: legality had been enthroned and passed a decree of serfdom on morality."\(^{10}\) Moreover, Rossiter, who considered Burke to be the founder of British conservatism, noted that the teachings of conservatism had inherently "displayed a fine faculty for ignoring suffering and injustice."\(^{11}\) But it is exactly this indifference to "old abuses" that Burke criticized. Regarding those in Parliament who were against economical reform, Burke asserted:

> It is enough for them to justify their adherence to a pernicious system, that it is not of their contrivance,—that it is an inheritance of absurdity, derived to them from their ancestors,—that they can make out a long and unbroken pedigree of mismanagers that have gone before them. They are proud of the antiquity of their house; and they defend their errors as if they were defending their inheritance, afraid of derogating from their nobility, and carefully avoiding a sort of blot in their scutcheon, which they think would degrade them forever.\(^{12}\)

For Burke, correcting old abuse was not only good in and of itself, but was a means of preserving the commonwealth. Accordingly, "People will bear an old establishment when its excess is corrected, who will revolt at a new one."\(^{13}\)

Certainly Burke emphasized the virtue of moderation and caution in this correction process, but "toleration" was

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\(^{10}\)Brown, English Political Theory, p. 83.

\(^{11}\)Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 60.


\(^{13}\)Ibid., p. 333.
not a central "good" for him. It will be remembered that because of the relationship Burke perceived between man and God, he considered two of man's duties to be the loving of good and the hating of evil. Relating these dualistic duties to both God and man, Burke later dealt with the problem of toleration. A conflict seemed to exist. How was one to fulfill his duty to God of hating evil and yet fulfill his moral duty to man of beneficence? In reconciling this problem, Burke maintained that beneficence could be misdirected. It could be distorted into a kind of sanction or indifference to evil which would result in ignoring man's primary duty to God of loving good and hating evil. Burke had previously established his hierarchy--obligations to God subsumed obligations to man. Inversion of this hierarchy could divorce virtue from power. Using this as his frame of reference, he stated:

If we repent of our good actions, what, I pray you, is left for our faults and follies? It is not the beneficence of the laws, it is the unnatural temper which beneficence can fret and sour, that is to be lamented. It is this temper which, by all rational means, ought to be sweetened and corrected. If froward men should refuse this cure, can they vitiate anything but themselves? Does evil so react upon good, as not only to retard its motion, but to change its nature? If it can so operate, then good men will always be in the power of bad,—and virtue, by a dreadful reverse of order, must lie under perpetual subjection and bondage to vice.  


15\textit{Ibid.}, p. 420.
Not only was the correction of evil necessary to preserve the commonwealth, it was the government's duty to do so: the people do "us the honor to hope everything from our virtue," he reminded Parliament.  

If all the nation are not equally forward to press this duty upon us, yet be assured that they all equally expect we should perform it. The respectful silence of those who wait upon your pleasure ought to be as powerful with you as the call of those who require your service as their right. Some, without doors, affect to feel hurt for your dignity, because they suppose that menaces are held out to you. Justify their good opinion by showing that no menaces are necessary to stimulate you to your duty.

Thus something was not good simply because it was old, or traditional, or status-quo, or aristocratic, or British. No such correlation existed. "I am no lover of names; I contend for the substance of good and protecting government, let it come from what quarter it will." To be sure, because of his doctrine of Providence, among other things, Burke believed that the old carried a recommendation which the new or untried did not possess in that the former had survived time and was a part of human consciousness. But this position of "ground" was only protected by the change agent's responsibility to assume the burden of proof. In accepting this burden, the change agent was compelled to be


17Ibid.

discriminating, recognizing that the whole was not necessarily evil because one of its parts was corrupt. Preservation of the commonwealth necessitated that reform be selective; destroying the good along with the evil was as bad as winking at the latter.

We have stations which are made for the public decorum, made for preserving the grace and majesty of a great people: we have likewise expensive formalities, which tend rather to the disgrace than the ornament of the state and the court. This, Sir, is the real condition of our establishments. To fall with the same severity on objects so perfectly dissimilar is the very reverse of a reformation,—I mean a reformation framed, as all serious things ought to be, in number, weight, and measure.19

If tradition or precedent did not provide the ultimate criterion for judging virtue in a Christian commonwealth, what did? His standard for virtue came from that which undergirded his political philosophy. And the previous chapter established religion as that foundation. Concurring with this interpretation, Hoffman and Levack wrote:

He [Burke] was sure that the first duty of all men was to obey the law ordained by their Creator for their good; that is, for their temporal welfare and the attainment of the end for which they were made; whence it followed that the primary business of the legislator or statesman was to ascertain, obey, and promote obedience to the precepts of the Creator as these could be discerned in the natural order.20

20Hoffman and Levack, Burke's Politics, xv.
Moreover, Carl Cone agreed that "Burke's faith formed his doctrine of providence and the natural law, and his beliefs about man and society."21 "With few exceptions," Cone continued, "scholars have not questioned the sincerity of his faith."22

Since Burke examined the world within a religious framework, he denigrated the secularization of morality and politics. For this reason, he was prompt in distinguishing between means and ends. In pursuing his goal of conserving a Christian commonwealth, he had to consider a standard whereby he was to determine that which was to be preserved and a means whereby preservation could transpire. Though realizing that means and ends had to be compatible, these were conceptualized as two very different kinds of considerations. For example, one response he condemned in England's reaction to the American conflict was that the English "lost all measure between means and ends; and our headlong desires became our politics and our morals."23 Burke believed that preservation of Britain as a Christian Commonwealth necessitated differentiating between desires and morality. In other words, hedonism or the pleasure-pain principle was not to be the ultimate determiner of that which

21 Cone, Burke and French Revolution, II, p. 325.
22 Ibid.
was to be preserved, ameliorated, or banished. Pointing
to the relationship inhering in secularized morality which
Burke detested, Leo Strauss wrote:

> If we do not permit ourselves to be deceived by ephemeral phenomena, we realize that political atheism and political hedonism belong together. They arose together in the same moment and in the same mind.\(^{24}\)

Of course, this was not to say that Burke thought a people's desires should be ignored. On the contrary, they were to be respected and accommodated if possible. For instance, as Burke developed his plan for economical reform, the people's desires prompted his "conviction of the absolute, urgent necessity there is that something of the kind should be done."\(^{25}\) His frequent emphasis on necessity has contributed to the "utilitarian" label by earlier scholars—a label suggesting that expediency could militate against ultimate goods. But Burke's qualification of necessity (as prompted by desires) indicated the hierarchy in his priorities. For example, he asserted that economical reform

> is necessary from the demands of the people, whose desires, when they do not militate with the stable and eternal rules of justice and reason, (rules which are above us and above them,) ought to be as a law to a House of Commons.\(^{26}\)

\(^{24}\)Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, p. 169.


\(^{26}\)Ibid.
Thus Burke believed that conserving a Christian commonwealth required differentiating between means and ends and deferring to Christianity as the provider of the ultimate criterion for good and evil.

From Burke's Christian faith grew his doctrine of Providence and Natural Law. Providence was at the center of his concept of religion. As he deliberated in his notebook, "To take away Providence would therefore be to take away religion." This statement seems to have been directed against the Deism of his day and its tenets regarding the inactive, impersonal attributes of Deity. Burke was not willing to give mere assent to a disinterested, detached supernatural being. Rather, to him God was a providential being characterized by intervention in and guidance of world affairs. Burke was not merely reiterating platitudes as he questioned Parliament regarding the destiny of Ireland:

Is Ireland united to the crown of Great Britain for no other purpose than that we should counteract the bounty of Providence in her favor? and in proportion as that bounty has been liberal, that we are to regard it as an evil, which is to be met within every sort of corrective? To say that Ireland interferes with us, and therefore must be checked, is, in my opinion, a very mistaken and a very dangerous principle.28

Similarly, Burke perceived the hand of Providence forcing a reconsideration of the American question in Parliament:

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I do confess, I could not help looking on this event as a fortunate omen. I look upon it as a sort of Providential favor, by which we are put once more in possession of our deliberative capacity, upon a business so very questionable in its nature, so very uncertain in its issue.29

Continuing his emphasis on the work of Providence, he cautioned: "We are therefore called upon, as it were by a superior warning voice, again to attend to America. . . ."30

In relation to this statement, it is curious that Chauncey Goodrich complained:

There is too much that is fanciful in some parts of this exordium. A man who was wholly absorbed in his subject would not talk thus about . . . "indulgence toward human frailty," being "inclined to superstition," "a fortunate omen," "a superior warning voice," etc.31

But, on the contrary, such acknowledgments were not mere "fancy," since Burke believed that God had not withdrawn from the affairs of men. As Fennessy asserted, "This belief in Providence and its continued operation in the world was to be a marked feature of Burke's thought. It inclined him towards conservatism. . . ."32

However, interpreted in isolation, Burke's religious references can strike one as superficial. Cone accounted for this problem by noting that Burke preferred to accept

30Ibid., p. 102.
31Goodrich, Select British Eloquence, p. 266.
32Fennessy, Burke, Paine and the Rights of Man, p. 55.
his belief in divine Providence by faith without attempting explanation.33 Part of the mystery said to inhere in conservativism can be attributed to Burke's belief in Providence. As will be subsequently considered in Burke's conceptualization of reason, he never claimed that man was capable of understanding completely God's works. In fact, it was better that man did not have such an enlarged understanding as it would nullify the need to rely on God. He early established this for himself as he wrote in his notebook:

If we have Reason to suppose that he has proposed any thing, we ought to believe it firmly, though we should not thoroughly comprehend the Nature of the things proposed; otherwise we break off our Dependence as much as we should our Connexion with Men if we refused them all Credit.34

From Burke's doctrine of Providence grew his concept of the Natural Law.35 In the eighteenth century, notions regarding Natural Law were highly popular and just as ambiguous.36 He witnessed another inversion of hierarchy as the theistic conception of Natural Law was reinterpreted. Rather than understanding the laws of nature in terms of God's attributes, His attributes were understood in terms of

33Cone, Burke and French Revolution, II, p. 324.
34Burke, "Religion," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 73.
35For relevant courses regarding Burke's study of Natural Law, see Canavan, The Political Reason of Edmund Burke, pp. 197-211.
36Becker, The Heavenly City, pp. 33-70. See also Snyder, The Age of Reason, pp. 45-68.
the laws of nature as observed by man. Thus through this reversal process, Natural Law became synonymous with the actual behavior of nature. It would follow, then, that if man could control the behavior of nature, he could consider himself the controller of Natural Law and, thus, the ultimate master of his own fate. Again, Burke saw the supernatural being made captive of the natural and the spiritual captive of the material. This development with its manifold ramifications involved two simple elements—reversing the logical process and accepting the premise that nature is a machine.

Once again Burke found himself in opposition to the intellectual trend of his day and its complementary moral implications. He refused to accept another inverted hierarchy. From his doctrine of Providence, he could not conceive of a "Supreme Engineer" who made the cosmic machine only to wisk himself away into the shadows of time. This deistic belief made atheism and materialism too plausible—incongruously too plausible when one had to accept the questionable premise of a mechanistic cosmos. As was evident in A Vindication of Natural Society, Burke's belief in Providence militated against Bolingbroke's "natural religion" or Deism.

Burke conceived of the laws of nature as being under the explicit direction of God. In his opening speech on the
impeachment of Warren Hastings, Burke suggested this relationship. He sympathized with the

exiled and undone princes, extensive tribes, suffering nations, infinite descriptions of men, different in language, in manners, and in rites, men separated by every barrier of Nature from you, by the Providence of God are blended in one common cause, and are now become suppliants at your bar. For the honor of this nation, in vindication of this mysterious Providence, let it be known that no rule formed upon municipal maxims (if any such rule exists) will prevent the course of that imperial justice. . . . (emphasis added).37

The laws of nature as controlled by God provided "the course of imperial justice." The laws of justice were those laws of nature directed by God. And such "eternal laws of justice which are our rule and our birthright"38 penetrated the center of politics, humanity, and society.

Burke's most explicit explanation and justification of his concept of Natural Law was developed on the second day of his opening speech regarding the impeachment of Hastings. Arbitrary power or law by human will was pitted against Natural Law and from that antagonism, Burke's concept grew. He maintained:

We have no arbitrary power to give, because arbitrary power is a thing which neither any man can hold nor any man can give. No man can lawfully govern himself according to his own will; much less can one person be governed by the will of another. We are all born in subjection,—all born equally, high and low, governors and governed, in subjection to one great, immutable, pre-existent law, prior to all our devices and prior


38Ibid., p. 338.
to all our contrivances, paramount to all our ideas and all our sensations, antecedent to our very existence, by which we are knit and connected in the eternal frame of the universe, out of which we cannot stir.

This great law does not arise from our conventions or compacts; on the contrary, it gives to our conventions and compacts all the force and sanction they can have. It does not arise from our vain institutions. Every good gift is of God; all power is of God; and He who has given the power, and from whom alone it originates, will never suffer the exercise of it to be practised upon any less solid foundation than the power itself. If, then, all dominion of man over man is the effect of the Divine disposition, it is bound by the eternal laws of Him that gave it, with which no human authority can dispense,—neither he that exercises it, nor even those who are subject to it; and if they were mad enough to make an express compact that should release their magistrate from his duty, and should declare their lives, liberties, and properties dependent upon, not rules and laws, but his mere capricious will, that covenant would be void.  

Throughout the proceedings, Hastings had, at bottom, rested his defense on the claim that Parliament had given him unlimited power in ruling India via the East India Company. Burke argued that the only protection against such arbitrary or unlimited power was in Natural Law. This was normative and directive and, thus, was to be reflected in the civil laws and institutions of society. Consequently, through the "eternal laws of justice" civil laws were just. Civil laws were not made just by fiat, but rather by the guidance of Providence. As Peter Stanlis wrote, "Burke regarded the Natural Law as a divinely ordained imperative ethical norm which, without consulting man, fixed forever his

moral duties in civil society."\(^{40}\) And it was this norm, informed by Burke's faith and doctrine of providence, which became a settled "Ultimate Good."

At this point, it is enlightening to note that "preservation" or "conservation" per se was not an Ultimate Good or a supreme end. Rather Burke perceived a Christian Commonwealth as being obligated to the preservation of good—that which as closely as possible conformed to Natural Law. When Burke believed a good was being indiscriminately attacked, he became the ardent conservative defending its value. When he believed an evil should be attacked, he became the ardent conservative denigrating its value. In the former, he was not acting as a conservative and in the latter as a liberal. Rather from both positions, he was a conservative contending for the preservation of a Christian Commonwealth. Defensively or offensively, preservation or conservation necessitates improvement. Burke, as founder of conservatism, knew this well.

In addition to clarifying and elucidating his Ultimate Good, the reasons underlying Burke's first goal illuminate the presumptive aspect of his presumptive-inductive system of thought. His faith, his belief in Providence, and his adherence to the scholastic conception of Natural Law (1) comprised the center of his primary value system from

\(^{40}\)Stanlis, Edmund Burke and the Natural Law, p. 73.
which his derived values grew and (2) established a set of presumptions with which his inductions covaried. Inquiring into the reasons undergirding his second goal reveals insight into the inductive aspect of his thinking.

The Fostering of a Political Method of Inquiry

Though Burke disparaged the modern trend of converting means into ends, he was not suggesting that means were irrelevant. On the contrary, one of his prime objectives was the fostering of a method of inquiry especially suitable for investigating and solving political problems. Regarding such efforts Strauss wrote, "One may even say that, from the point of view of political philosophy, Burke's remarks on the problem of theory and practice are the most important part of his work."^41 His method of inquiry was directed by his belief that "There is nothing that God has judged good for us that He has not given us the means to accomplish, both in the natural and the moral world."^42 Thus God provided the ends of government and a variety of means whereby the ends could be met. The ends inhered in Burke's presumptions. But as Strauss explained, "Knowing the proper ends of government, one does not know anything of how and to what extent those ends can be realized here and now, under these particular

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^41 Strauss, Natural Right and History, p. 303.

circumstances both fixed and transitory." And such circumstances were considered to give every political principle its distinguishing colour and discriminating effect.

The method of inquiry which Burke intended to foster was built on (1) a critique of reason rather than a blanket indictment of it, (2) the conviction that Nature and circumstances were not antagonistic, and (3) the belief that political methods must center in human nature.

As the previous chapter stated, Burke's early writing strongly asserted the limits of reason. But this was not to suggest that reason was bad and, therefore, ought not to be used. On the contrary, Fennessey explained that

Burke's anti-rationalism (if it may be so called) is not a rejection of reason, nor even a temperamental distrust of reason, but a reasoned critique of reason; a critique, rather, of the abstract individual reason as applied to political problems.

Burke thought that it was not "fit for anyone to rely too much on his own understanding, or to be filled with a presumption not becoming a Christian man in his own personal stability and rectitude." This was a continuation of Burke's early remarks in his notebook. An honest

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43 Strauss, Natural Right and History, p. 305.
45 Fennessey, Burke, Paine and the Rights of Man, p. 61.
consideration of one's own reason "might tend to humble the understanding and make it cautious and diffident." 47

For a more specific explication of Burke's critique of reason, one can turn to the writings of George Campbell. To this writer's knowledge, no evidence exists indicating that Campbell and Burke knew each other, even though they were contemporaries. Though they did not influence one another, they were similarly influenced by their common rationalistic milieu. As James Golden and Edward Corbett wrote, "Campbell came into prominence in 1761 following the publication of his Dissertation on Miracles, a treatise designed to answer the skepticism of David Hume." 48 This was largely prompted by Campbell's concern regarding the "liberal doctrines of the rationalistic theologians and philosophers who doubted the authenticity of the Scriptures." 49 As Golden and Corbett continued,

In defending the biblical /Sic/ account of the miracles first in the celebrated treatise and later in numerous sermons before the Presbyterian Synod at Aberdeen, Campbell used closely reasoned discourse and a wide variety of evidence. These principles of argumentation became a trademark of his pulpit oratory. 50

47Burke, "Philosophy and Learning," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 89.


49Ibid.

50Ibid.
Prompted by a similar concern, Burke was introduced to the public six years before Campbell with his publication A Vindication of Natural Society—a work penned in response to the arsenal of skepticism supplied by Bolingbroke specifically and Hume generally. John Morley wrote:

What is remarkable in Burke's first performance is his discernment of the important fact, that behind the intellectual disturbances in the sphere of philosophy, and the noisier agitations in the sphere of theology, there silently stalked a force that might shake the whole fabric of civil society itself.51

Moreover, Morley remarked that Burke's friends considered him to be the "triumphant champion of faith and sound philosophy against deism, atheism, and David Hume."52 Thus Campbell and Burke were moved by similar concerns.

Campbell began his study of rhetoric in 1750 although his book Philosophy of Rhetoric was not published until 1776.53 Concurrently, Burke's notebook was begun in 1750 and discontinued in 1756 with the publishing of his A Vindication of Natural Society.

Campbell and Burke shared two concerns: the value of testimony as a form of evidence and the nature of speculative reason and moral reason. Sometime between 1750 and 1756, Burke penned his deliberation regarding the value of testimony.

51Morley, Burke, p. 25.
52Ibid., p. 153.
53Golden and Corbett, Rhetoric of Blair, p. 139.
If he intends to communicate such knowledge about himself, the best Proofs of such a Design are such acts of Power as can leave us no Doubt of their coming from God; for thus it is we know that he exist and that he is all powerful and all-wise. God has for the most Parts made Men the Instruments of all the Good he does to Men.

Most of their strength is from mutual Assistance.

Most of their knowledge from mutual Instruction.

There is a principal of Credit, or faith, in Man to Man without which this Assistance and Instruction would be impracticable.

Therefore Human Testimony is the strongest Proof we can have of anything; and leaves no doubt when it is very strong.

That there is such a City as Rome, is a Proposition of which we can doubt less than that the Square of the Hypotenuse is equal to the Squares of the two Sides, even when the latter is demonstrated.

The highest Degree of testimony leaves less doubt than Demonstration.

Besides the force of it is more easily and generally comprehended.

If God has revealed anything by evident Proofs from his Power, and that these Proofs of Power are conveyed to us by as high a Degree of Testimony as the thing can bear, we ought to believe it.

If the thing conveyed be intended to last in the world, there must be means taken to make them last; there must be Men appointed to teach them,--and Books written to record.

There should be some evident marks of the Designation of such Men; that all may know, who they are that teach this Doctrine.

These Men should be compellable to teach it; lest the knowledge of these truths might depend upon Caprice. There must therefore be a Society for this Purpose.54

Campbell and Burke concurred on the value of testimony. Whereas Burke believed that "Human Testimony is the strongest Proof we can have of anything; and leaves no doubt when it is very strong," Campbell thought that

54Burke, "Religion," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, pp. 74-75.

55Ibid., p. 74.
"Testimony is capable of giving us absolute certainty . . .
even of the most miraculous fact, or of what is contrary
to uniform experience."\(^{56}\) Campbell also agreed that "on
testimony in concurrence with memory is founded the much
more extensive experience which is not originally our own,
but derived from others."\(^{57}\)

Though Burke criticized abstract, or speculative
reason, he did not take the time to clarify his position
and method as did Campbell. Campbell believed the proper
province of rhetoric was "moral evidence" or moral reason.
Though Burke used the term "right reason" rather than "moral
reason," the meanings were isomorphic. Campbell can be used
to clarify Burke's position. Campbell stated four differ-
ences between abstract or demonstrative reason and moral or
right reason--differences which were implicit in Burke's
scattered objections to the rationalism of his day:

(1) Abstract reason deals with the unchangeable,
moral reason deals with the changeable.\(^{58}\)

(2) Abstract reason does not admit degrees,
gradients, or opinion whereas moral reason does.\(^{59}\)

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\(^{56}\)George Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric in The
Rhetoric of Blair, Campbell, and Whately, ed. by James L.
Golden and Edward F. J. Corbett (New York: Holt, Rinehart

\(^{57}\)Ibid.

\(^{58}\)Ibid., p. 182.

\(^{59}\)Ibid.
(3) Abstract reason does not allow contrarieties whereas moral reason recognizes that such is inevitable.

(4) Abstract reason is simple and parsimonious. Its evidence consists of "only one coherent series, every part of which depends on the preceding, and, as it were, suspends the following." Conversely, "moral evidence is generally complicated, being in reality a bundle of independent proofs."

Because Burke recognized these limitations of scientific reason, he wrote to the sheriffs at Bristol:

"It might be some consolation for the loss of our old regards, if our reason were enlightened in proportion as our honest prejudices are removed. Wanting feelings for the honor of our country, we might then in cold blood be brought to think a little of our interests as individual citizens and our private conscience as moral agents."

Thus moral reason recognized the complementary aspects of "honest prejudices," "feelings," "interests," and "conscience." Without this recognition, reason operated only in the abstract, theoretical, metaphysical, or speculative. It was then a deficient "freak of nature."

Since Burke believed reason to be wrong only if divorced from Nature, he contended that a method of political inquiry should be centered in Nature.

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60 Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric in The Rhetoric of Blair, Campbell, and Whately, p. 183.

61 Ibid.

I do not vilify theory and speculation: no, because that would be to vilify reason itself. Neque decipitur ratio, neque dicpit unquam. No,--whenever I speak against theory, I mean always a weak, erroneous, fallacious, unfounded, or imperfect theory; and one of the ways of discovering that it is a false theory is by comparing it with practice. This is the true touchstone of all theories which regard man and the affairs of men,--Does it suit his nature in general?--does it suit his nature as modified by his habits?  

In this statement, Burke united status and function, the "is" and the "is becoming," presumption and induction. "Practice and hence practical wisdom or prudence were distinguished from theory," explained Strauss, "by the fact that they are concerned with the particular and changeable, whereas theory is concerned with the universal and unchangeable." If practice and theory were guided by nature, they were contrarieties not contradictions. This is the whole of a political-moral problem. To calculate without thought of applying was to distort and lead to fallacious and unfounded theory. As he stated sixteen years earlier, this kind of theory was "very irrational in the enlarged sense of the term," and extremely dangerous. Taking "private speculation into national measures, cannot

64 Strauss, Natural Right and History, p. 304.
fail of hastening and completing our ruin."⁶⁷ This was the result of choosing "to Chicane with their situation rather than \(\text{to}\) be instructed by it."⁶⁸ The most active part of Burke's career was marked by this desire to be instructed by circumstances. For example, by attending to circumstances, Burke concluded that America was capable of handling liberty, but the East India Company was not. By this, principles were not to be subordinated to circumstances; rather circumstances indicated the most prudent method whereby principles could be realized.

This meant that Nature and circumstances were not inherently antagonistic one with another, just as Burke's presumptions were not considered incompatible with his inductions. He illustrated this conviction in his discourse on the Irish question. Regarding Ireland's responsibilities to render taxes to Britain, he stated:

To bear more, she \(\text{Ireland}\) must have more ability; and, in the order of Nature, the advantage must precede the charge. This disposition of things being the law of God, neither you nor I \(\text{can}\) alter it.⁶⁹

When the positiveness of men attempted to "force Nature" or alter the law of God, circumstances could then appear "more

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like shocking prodigies than natural changes in human affairs." 70

For this reason, liberty was a highly salient value for Burke. Liberty allowed the complementary interaction of circumstances under the direction of Natural Law.

I believe it will be found, that, if men are suffered freely to cultivate their natural advantages, a virtual equality of contribution will come in its own time, and will flow by any easy descent through its own proper and natural channels. An attempt to disturb that course, and to force Nature, will only bring on universal discontent, distress, and confusion. 71

Equality could not be coerced by forcing Nature; rather a state of liberty was necessary to allow the gradual cultivation of "natural advantages." Since Burke believed that the operation of the laws of nature could not be forced and, thus, required freedom, he could not comply with the progressive opinion that equality superseded liberty. For example, to force Ireland to pay the same amount of taxes as did England was unjust. Ireland had not yet developed her advantages and ought not to be forced to accept a responsibility not commensurate with her abilities. Such a principle applied to individuals as well as to countries. Burke brought forward this same principle as he praised Lord Beauchamp's bill to correct an old law regarding civil debts that had presumed every man to be solvent--

70 Burke, "Letters to Gentlemen in Bristol," Works, II, p. 204.

71 Ibid., p. 253.
a presumption, in innumerable cases, directly against truth. Therefore the debtor is ordered, on a supposition of ability and fraud, to be coerced his liberty until he makes payment.\(^7\)

The old law presumed an equality that did not exist—all men were not solvent. Moreover, the law tried to force a kind of solvency by taking away a debtor's liberty—the only means by which he could become solvent and pay his debt. Burke recognized that credit must be preserved: but "equity must be preserved, too; and it is impossible that anything should be necessary to commerce which is inconsistent with justice."\(^7\)

Thus the proper method for statesmen recognized that (1) reason was limited though useful, (2) policies required a foundation in human nature, and (3) Nature and circumstances were complementary, interacting forces. Because of these three designative constructs, Burke believed the true end of legislature was

to follow, not to force, the public inclination,—to give a direction, a form, a technical dress, and a specific sanction, to the general sense of the community. . . .\(^7\)

**Conclusion**

In developing his goal of preserving a Christian Commonwealth, Burke more fully revealed the presumptive


\(^7\)Ibid., p. 385.

aspect of his thinking and the constructs of his primary value system. Moreover, in furthering his goal of developing a system of inquiry appropriate for politics, he indicated the special nature of his inductions.

The nature of man was conceived as both rational and nonrational. Man was to exercise his reason complemented by honest prejudices, passions, and conscience. Though Burke still considered man's moral duties to be self-denial and benevolence, he observed that benevolence could be mis-directed into a tolerance of evil. The nature of man subjected him to natural inequalities; those with more advantage had to accept additional responsibility. Though natural inequalities existed, man was considered equal before the law.

Investigating the reasons used in furthering these goals revealed more fully developed primary values. For Burke, the Ultimate Good was Providence which he developed in terms of the scholastic conception of Natural Law. Natural Law in conjunction with providentially directed circumstances provided the criterion for assessing right and wrong. Because of his doctrine of Providence, Burke considered the inclinations of a population over time plus historical tendencies as being plausible adjuncts to his major criterion.

Since no one has the right to give or accept arbitrary power, civil law and Natural Law were one and the
same. Both worked toward maintaining a stable, continuous, unfolding society. Maintaining a stable society necessitated correcting problems if possible--though it was understood that not all problems have solutions. To avoid forcing laws of nature, the correction process was to be gradual, selective, and specific.
CHAPTER VI

EDMUND BURKE'S REFLECTIONS

Introduction

Throughout this study, Burke's messages have been conceptualized as collections of value statements. Whether jotting notes in his private notebook, or addressing himself to specific exigencies, or moving toward the accomplishment of more pervasive goals, Burke was uncovering his primary value system and was contributing to that which would become the substance of conservative thought. As Charles Parkin noted, Burke's ideas carried "all the marks and associations of their origin, but they converge on a core of moral certainty freed from the relative and the contingent." It is to that corpus of thought, as culminated in his last works, that this chapter turns.

One aspect of the search paradigm, as posited in chapter two of this study, claimed that "if we press a person far enough, we may come to some belief of his for which he can give no further reason, a belief which he uses

nonetheless as a reason for other beliefs."² This superstructure of beliefs has been called "primary values" or the "substance" of one's thought processes. Having searched for reasons underlying Burke's thought through the early and middle years of his life, investigating his final messages culminates in a wholeness and consistency of thought.

According to Cone, Burke's "writings on the French Revolution . . . contain his complete political thought."³ More specifically, his Reflections on the Revolution in France "crystallizes all of value that Burke had said and thought about the nature of man and society."⁴ Because of its universal significance⁵ and its explicit and implicit statements regarding the nature of man, society, and the Ultimate Good, this chapter will focus on Burke's Reflections.

Burke's Perspective on the French Revolution

Burke perceived the French Revolution as being the necessary culmination of the progressive forces against which he had contended for years. The French Revolution was the child of the Enlightenment:

and if the word "enlightened" be understood according to the new dictionary, as it always is in your new

²Green, The Activities of Teaching, p. 44.
³Cone, Burke and the Nature of Politics, II, p. 6.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Ibid.
schools, I cannot conceive how a man's not believing in God can teach him to cultivate the earth with the least of any additional skill or encouragement.⁶

This child of the Enlightenment was conceived in the Enlightenment's act of prostituting the supernatural to the natural, faith to reason, traditional Natural Law to abstract natural law, and hierarchy to leveling. Through this act men were "shrunken from their natural dimensions by a degrading and sordid philosophy, and fitted for low and vulgar deceptions."⁷ For Burke, such were the antecedents and consequences of that which he called "the sordid darkness of this enlightened age."⁸

Burke's Reflections was first published in November of 1790.⁹ The work originated in correspondence between the author and a young man in Paris. After mailing his first letter, Burke realized that his thoughts on the matter had far exceeded the purposes of a letter. Since his initial words on the subject were penned in the form of correspondence, Burke decided to continue the letter format even though his subsequent thoughts outgrew their original intent.¹⁰

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⁷Ibid., p. 554.
⁸Ibid.
⁹For a concise summary of the main principles in Burke's Reflections, see Utley, Edmund Burke, pp. 24-25.
One of the prime factors contributing to his Reflections was a sermon delivered by the unitarian minister Dr. Richard Price. A Society for Commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain had been established in honor of the memory of the Revolution of 1688. To this society, on November 4, 1789, Dr. Price delivered his famous sermon "A Discourse on the Love of Our Country." "It was with this sermon," Ray Browne wrote, "that the French Revolution in England began." Functioning as a legitimizer of the French Revolution, Price sanctioned its activities by drawing parallels between the French Revolution and the English Revolution of 1688. To Burke, such was an untenable, destructive comparison:

Those who cultivate the memory of our Revolution, and those who are attached to the Constitution of this kingdom, will take good care how they are involved with persons who, under the pretext of zeal towards the [English] Revolution [of 1688] and the [English] Constitution, too frequently wander from their true principles, and are ready on every occasion to depart from the firm, but cautious and deliberate, spirit which produced the one and presides in the other.

Believing that the French Revolution could find no legitimate justification in English history while concomitantly believing that such efforts of justification could


13Ibid., p. 236.
serve destructive purposes only, Burke wrote "chiefly for the peace of [his] own country, but by no means unconcerned for" France. However, since he was forced to examine that which had previously held the status of maxims, his work transcended the realm of historical statement to that of enduring philosophy.

If one considers Burke's other works as a background, Reflections becomes a "reason-giving" treatise. Scrutinizing his reasons for the surface structure of his message and in answering some of the devastating criticisms that have plagued Burke and his conservative followers, Ivor Brown has incorporated most of these objections in his consideration of Burke's political theory. These objections can be summarized as follows:

(1) Burke was inconsistent in his support of the English and American Revolutions but not the French Revolution.

As Brown wrote,

During the contest between George III and the American colonies, Burke had voiced what we may call the liberal view; he had protested sharply against the confusion of legality with convenience, and had claimed that no mountain of legal rights could justify the tyrannous colonial policy. But when the French Revolution broke out . . . all Burke's conservatism was roused and his powers of denunciation stung to action. In his Reflections on the Revolution in France and in his Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, he not only pleads the cause of the French Aristocrats and invokes British hatred of the French incendiaries: he lays

down, fitfully and in a fine frenzy, the philosophic foundation of a conservative faith. 15

(2) Burke had no use for the common people. He "approved heartily the rule of a corrupt and vicious oligarchy." 16 And in doing so he could "blind his eyes to all the social evils of the day, to the villainies of the governing rich as well as to the miseries of the poor." 17

(3) Burke was near madness.

As a conservative pamphleteer Burke's eminence cannot be disputed; if his outlook on contemporary events was the distorted stare of a man near to madness he had at least the virtue of his vices. 18

In another section, Brown referred to Burke's "demented fury against France," 19 and his "pathetically obsessed . . . will to believe." 20 In this state of mind, "His eye in a fine frenzy rolls, and the English rhetoric is richer for his onslaught against Rousseau." 21

Lest such interpretations arise and thrive, Burke spoke in his own defense revealing how he perceived his stance on France as sitting harmoniously with his earlier political career.

15Brown, English Political Theory, p. 70.
16Ibid., p. 72.
17Ibid., pp. 72-73.
18Ibid., p. 74.
19Ibid., p. 72.
20Ibid.
21Ibid., p. 74.
I have little to recommend my opinions but long observation and much impartiality. They come from one who has been no tool of power, no flatter of greatness, and who in his last acts does not wish to belie the tenor of his life. They come from one almost the whole of whose public exertion has been a struggle for the liberty of others,—from one in whose breast no anger durable or vehement has ever been kindled but by what he considered as tyranny, and who snatches from his share in the endeavors which are used by good men to discredit opulent oppression the hours he has employed on your affairs, and who in so doing persuades himself he has not departed from his usual office. They come from one who desires honors, distinctions, and emoluments but little, and who expects them not at all,—who has no contempt for fame, and no fear of obloquy,—who shuns contention, though he will hazard an opinion; from one who wishes to preserve consistency, but who would preserve consistency by varying his means to secure the unity of his end,—and, when the equipoise of the vessel in which he sails may be endangered by overloading it upon one side, is desirous of carrying the small weight of his reasons to that which may preserve its equipoise.22

But the most substantive replies to such criticisms as those represented by Brown must come from Burke's primary value system as crystallized and solidified in the last years of his life.

Burke's Conception of the Ultimate Good

Burke once again revealed the basic presumptions in his presumptive-inductive system of thought. But his Reflections developed inherent relationships more fully. The doctrine of Providence was a constant as was his belief in the scholastic conception of Natural Law.23 But at this


23For an exposition of Burke's study of Natural Law, see Canavan, The Political Reason of Edmund Burke, pp. 197-211.
point Burke clearly used his interpretation of Natural Law as a bridge uniting his presumptions and inductions. He reasoned that God created and guided man and the universe as well as relevant rules of operation. Natural Law was basically the embodiment of these rules of operation which man could understand in spite of the limitations of his reason. Moreover, this Law was that which connected the supernatural and the natural, God and man, the changing and the changeless, the past, present, and future. Thus Natural Law provided the warrant connecting Burke's presumptions and inductions as well as the supernaturally provided natural standard by which conduct was assessed. One arm of Natural Law was a presumption (i.e., it was the emanation of God's reason and will); the other arm was an induction (i.e., it was revealed in specific circumstances). This relationship indicates that when Burke used the word "Nature," as did many of his progressive contemporaries, he did not mean to strip the term of its spiritual associations. The term Nature referred not only to the laws of natural science, but to the presumed Author of those laws. To divorce the Author from the referent was to divorce wisdom from knowledge. As Burke perceived it, by the radicals' "defiance of the process of Nature, they are delivered over blindly to every projector and adventurer, to every alchemist and empiric."

The relationship between his presumption and inductions in his use of the term "Nature" and macroscopically in his conception of Natural Law. Clarifying this point he wrote,

The body of all true religion consists, to be sure, in obedience to the will of the Sovereign of the world, in a confidence in His declarations, and in imitation of His perfections. The rest is our own. It may be prejudicial to the great end,--it may be auxiliary.25

By establishing this relationship, Burke revealed that his doctrine of Providence was not fatalistic nor his moral standard merely compliance with that which "is." Though Providence guided the affairs of men, He left man the choice of obeying or thwarting His will, imitating or ignoring His manifestations, trusting or doubting His declarations. Through his choices, man either helped or hindered the "great end." For example, God could attempt to instruct through circumstances, but man could ignore or pervert his lessons.

From this set of presumptions regarding the Ultimate Good grew Burke's derived values regarding continuity, inheritance, and history. Many interpreters of Burke have started and stopped with his derived values.26 However, to refuse to pursue reasons underlying derived values is to

26Among such interpretations are John Morley, Burke and Harold Laski, Political Thought in England from Locke to Bentham.
misconstrue the substance of one's thought and, thus, his communicative behavior.

In the Reflections, Burke's statements regarding history can be understood only in reference to his religious presumptions. His initial indictment against the French radicals was not that they had refused to follow history, but that they refused to learn the lessons from history. A difference, not simply a distinction, rests in this statement—a difference unnoticed by Ivor Brown as he wrote:

Burke is thus looking always behind him, just as Demosthenes in his own stormy days was always looking back to Marathon and exhorting the Athenians to be worthy of their past. In a similar way Burke hardly ever mentions "the glorious future" which is the stock-in-trade of the professional politician, but harps eternally on "the glorious past" which is the stock-in-trade of a conservative and often of an ignorant sentimentalist.27

It is doubtful that Burke would have accepted this interpretation of his concept of the role of history (or the past) in political inquiry and policy-making. Politics involved the past, present, and future. And just as hypothesizing man can only predict future events in terms of the past and present, so political man follows this course also. The past and present are components of the future, making the future comprehensible. The only materials with which man can plan (i.e., conceptualize the future) are those made available to him in the past and present. Thus to interpret

27Brown, English Political Theory, p. 72.
Burke's concept of history as an indiscriminate belief in following "what was" is to oversimplify grossly.

A popular method of differentiating between conservatives and liberals has been to associate conservatives with the past and liberals with the future. The former has been perceived as being preoccupied with the old while the latter looks forward to the new. But Burke's conception of history would not permit such a distinction. He insisted that one learn from the past, not live in the past. Regarding the French radicals, he wrote:

They proceed exactly as their ancestors of ambition have done before them. Trace them through all their artifices, frauds, and violences, you can find nothing at all that is new. They follow precedents and examples with the punctilious exactness of a pleader. 28

Thus Burke saw himself and the French radicals as observing the materials of history. Curiously enough, just as conservatives have been criticized for contributing little that is new, 29 Burke saw nothing new in the radicals' methods. Since he recognized that the radicals had been attuned to history, he could not criticize that. What he did criticize was their having not learned the lessons of history: "They never depart an iota from the authentic formulas of tyranny and usurpation. But in all the regulations relative to the public good the spirit has been

29Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 60.
the very reverse of this."\(^{30}\) The radicals were adept at emulating examples of power and ignoring regulations of public good:

They make this difference, because in their desire of obtaining and securing power they are thoroughly in earnest; there they travel in the beaten road. The public interests, because about them they have no real solicitude, they abandon wholly to chance. . . .\(^{31}\)

Through this, it is evident that Burke's conception of history did not commit him to a morality insisting that "what is or was" is right. History provided a stage for both evil and noble actors. But Burke noted that the radicals had decided to play the wrong parts. They were imitators of a spirit over a generation old--a spirit which "preferred atheism to a form of religion not agreeable to their ideas. They succeeded in destroying that form, and atheism has succeeded in destroying them."\(^{32}\) Learning from this historical lesson,

We cannot be ignorant of the spirit of atheistical fanaticism, that is inspired by a multitude of writings dispersed with incredible assiduity and expense, and by sermons delivered in all the streets and places of public resort in Paris. These writings and sermons have filled the populace with a black and savage atrocity of mind, which supersedes in them the common feelings of Nature, as well as all sentiments of morality and religion. . . .\(^{33}\)

\(^{30}\)Burke, "Reflections," Works, III, p. 452.

\(^{31}\)Ibid.

\(^{32}\)Ibid., p. 430.

\(^{33}\)Ibid., p. 435.
Interpreted in light of his early works, these "sentiments of mind" or "common feelings of Nature" were to love good, hate evil, pray for guidance, deny self, and love others.  

By energizing the wrong historical examples, the sentiments of people were being distorted into loving evil, hating good, denying others, and trusting supremely in self. Describing such an instance, Burke wrote:

Your citizens of Paris formerly had lent themselves as the ready instruments to slaughter the followers of Calvin, at the infamous massacre of St. Bartholomew. Still, however, they find it their interest to keep the same savage dispositions alive. It was but the other day that they caused this very massacre to be acted on the stage for the diversion of the descendants of those who committed it. In this tragic farce they produced the Cardinal of Lorraine in his robes of function, ordering general slaughter. Was this spectacle intended to make the Parisians abhor persecution and loathe the effusion of blood? No: it was to teach them to persecute their own pastors; it was to excite them, by raising a disgust and horror of their clergy, to an alacrity in hunting down to destruction an order which, if it ought to exist at all, ought to exist not only in safety, but in reverence. It was to stimulate their cannibal appetites (which one would think had been gorged sufficiently) by variety and seasoning,—and to quicken them to an alertness in new murders and massacres, if it should suit—the purpose of the Guises of the day.  

Thus Burke did not claim that history provided the criterion for right and wrong; rather, through Providence, history acted as an instructor. Burke realized, however, that "We do not draw the moral lessons we might from history. On the

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34 Edmund Burke, "Religion," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 70.

contrary, without care it may be used to vitiate our minds and destroy our happiness."

Burke's Conception of the Nature of Society

Burke's primary values regarding Providence and Natural Law as well as his derived value concerning history interacted harmoniously with his conception of the nature of society. Society had to be conceptualized in relation to the universe that Providence had ordered, his rules of operation made known through Natural Law, and the lessons of history by which men were instructed. From this perspective, he continued to believe as he did in his youth that the foundation of society was provided by religion, morality, and manners. One lesson that France should have learned from history was that

All other nations have begun the fabric of a new government, or the reformation of an old, by establishing originally, or by enforcing with greater exactness, some rites or other of religion. All other people have laid the foundations of civil freedom in severer manners, and a system of a more austere and masculine morality.37

In Burke's scheme of things, society was continuous and inherited. Religion, morality, and manners were both causes and effects of continuity and inheritance. They worked one with another, bringing the past into the present and future:

37Ibid., p. 280.
People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors. Besides, the people of England well know that the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation, and a sure principle of transmission, without at all excluding a principle of improvement.38

Burke perceived a kind of natural symmetry or balance underlying continuity and inheritance. The past was counterbalanced with the future, conservation with transmission, freedom with security. His respect for balance as a principle of nature influenced his preference for England's system of government. For example, he believed that parliaments could act as a "considerable corrective to the excesses and vices of monarchy,"39 as well as "one of the balances and correctives to the evils of a light and unjust democracy."40 However, his love of symmetry and the English government did not lead him to embrace the "divine right of kings," theory. Fearing this distortion of his principle of inheritance, he countered:

These sophists substitute a fictitious cause, and feigned personages, in whose favor they suppose you engaged, whenever you defend the inheritable nature of the crown. It is common with them to dispute as if they were in a conflict with some of those exploded fanatics of slavery who formerly maintained, what I believe no creature now maintains, "that the crown is held by divine, hereditary, and indefeasible right." These old fanatics of single arbitrary power dogmatized as if hereditary royalty was the only lawful government in the world,—just as our new fanatics of popular

39Ibid., pp. 506-507.
40Ibid., p. 507.
arbitrary power maintain that a popular election is the sole lawful source of authority.\footnote{41}{Burke, "Reflections," Works, III, p. 265.}

Thus implicit in Burke's derived values of continuity and heredity was not a dogmatic adherence to "divine right" nor a dogmatic claim that a monarchy was the only viable form of government. Such a claim would be binding Burke to a criterion of "what was or is." On the contrary, he criticized the "old prerogative enthusiasts" who speculated "foolishly and perhaps impiously too, as if monarchy had more of a divine sanction than any other mode of government. . . ."\footnote{42}{Ibid.} Regardless of the form of government, it had to respect Nature's law of balance. In fact, "the fundamental part of the skill of a true politician" was to "keep a balance between the power of acquisition on the part of the subject and the demands he is to answer on the part of the state. . . ."\footnote{43}{Ibid., p. 557.}

Since continuity, inheritance, and symmetry were perceived as principles inherent in nature he maintained that "We compensate, we reconcile, we balance"\footnote{44}{Ibid., p. 457.} lest Nature be forced against itself.\footnote{45}{Ibid., p. 502.} Burke believed that the principle of inheritance as rooted in Nature served a highly practicable function in that:
The strong struggle in every individual to preserve possession of what he has found to belong to him, and to distinguish him, is one of the securities against injustice and despotism implanted in our nature. It operates as an instinct to secure property, and to preserve communities in a settled state.46

Thus inheritance effected continuity which, in turn, effected stability. A society without stability resulted in a people without security, thus culminating in individuals without happiness. Abolishing inheritance, continuity, balance, stability, and security under any pretext was no way to attempt to satisfy the people of a nation. Happiness could only be found by following Nature, not by controverting it.47

However, Burke recognized that just as the use of history could be perverted, so could the principle of inheritance. He noted that the radicals were quick to acknowledge inheritance when it suited their purposes and ignore it when their purposes could not thereby be served.

After destroying all other genealogies and family distinctions, they invent a sort of pedigree of crimes. It is not very just to chastise men for the offences of their natural ancestors; but to take . . . ancestry . . . as a ground for punishing men who have no relation to guilty acts, except in names and general descriptions, is a sort of refinement in injustice belonging to the philosophy of this enlightened age.48

47Ibid., p. 541.
48Ibid., p. 417.
The injustice of this was apparent, particularly in that many of those who were persecuted detested the wrong conduct of their ancestors as much as did the radicals: "The Assembly punishes men, many, if not most, of whom abhor the violent conduct . . . in former times as much as their present persecutors. . . ." These men being persecuted would be as strong in their denunciations as the radicals "if they were not well aware of the purposes for which all this declamation is employed."  

Through this Burke emphasized the inconsistency of the radicals who wanted to destroy the principle of inheritance and yet unwittingly paid tribute to its potency by having to make use of it in order to discredit it. Furthermore, he clarified his own position in relation to inheritance or tradition. Just as society and man were imperfect, so was that which was inherited. Regarding the clergy who were being persecuted because of the oppressive acts of their forefathers, Burke recognized that "Vices and abuses there were undoubtedly in that order, and must be." Burke did not object to the fact that these evils were being recognized and dealt with as evils. But he did object to the means used. He saw no reason why "confiscation of their clergy's substance, nor those cruel insults and


50Ibid.

51Ibid., p. 416.
degradations, and that unnatural persecution" should replace "meliorating regulation." Burke saw no reason, humanity, or justice in such indiscriminate attacks. To punish continually a society for its past oppressions would be like attacking "all Englishmen on account of the unparalleled calamities brought upon the people of France by the unjust invasions of our Henrys and our Edwards." In following this principle,

we should be mutually justified in this exterminating war upon each other, full as much as you are in the unprovoked persecution of your present countrymen, on account of the conduct of men of the same name in other times.

That injustice and evil should be fought and corrected was axiomatic with Burke. But he insisted that "Wise men will apply their remedies to vices, not to names,--to the causes of evil, which are permanent, not to the occasional organs by which they act, and the transitory modes in which they appear."

Burke's Reflections was not directed by the question of whether the evils in France should be attacked, but rather by the question of how should the evils be attacked. The writer has belabored this point for two reasons:

(1) Burke's philosophy has been criticized for supposedly


Ibid., p. 418.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 419.
sanctioning evils and (2) conservatives, as followers of Burke, have been criticized similarly. Ivor Brown based his criticism of Burke on the premise that "Burke, infuriated by the French Revolution, . . . argued that the fault was caused by the interference with spontaneous forces." From this premise, Brown continued:

But if the external prompting of ideas could work so powerfully for harm, could it not equally work for good? As Mr. Graham points out, Burke would logically have had to support the persecuting Emperors at the rise of Christianity. In other words, Burke, revering the Church Successful, would have fought with all his eloquence the same Church Insurgent. To such a paradox does his colossal conservatism inevitably carry him. Implicit in this criticism is the misconception which the writer has attempted to correct. Burke's morality was not blind adherence to status-quo regardless of its corruption. He realized that for too long, France had been misled by worshipping the King instead of the country. His prime objection was that "You might have repaired those walls; you might have built on those old foundations." He argued ardently that the walls should be repaired. His continual thesis throughout was "You began ill, because you began by despising everything that belonged to you." Thus his

56Brown, English Political Theory, p. 76.
57Ibid., pp. 76-77.
58Burke, "Reflections," Works, III, p. 278.
59Ibid., p. 277.
60Ibid., p. 278.
objection was not that the radicals were interfering with spontaneous forces; he objected to the method whereby such interference had transpired. In addition, the clarification of Burke's derived values of history and inheritance indicates the fallacy of Brown's indictment that "Burke, revering the Church Successful, would have fought with all his eloquence the same Church Insurgent." No such contradiction existed in his "colossal conservatism."

Brown's criticism of Burke encompasses several of the primary criticisms cited against conservatism generally. In fact, five of the seven objections to conservatism noted by Rossiter were based on the kind of interpretation made by Brown. Note the following five objections:

(1) "Conservatism is inherently self-contradictory."

(2) "Conservatism is smug. The Conservative defense of the established order implies thorough satisfaction with things as they are." But Burke's entire Reflections was addressed to this point: "There is something else than the mere alternative of absolute destruction or unreformed existence." To preserve one had to reform. Summarizing the course of his own statesmanship Burke wrote:

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61Brown, English Political Theory, p. 76.
62Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 60.
63Ibid.
A disposition to preserve, and an ability to improve, taken together, would be my standard of a statesman. Everything else is vulgar in the conception, perilous in the execution.65

(3) "Conservatism is callous." "Even in its noblest moments, Conservatism has displayed a fine faculty for ignoring suffering and injustice."66 The preceding analysis suggests that Burke would respond to this by maintaining his belief that suffering and injustice for one class of people was as abhorrent as the suffering and injustice of another class. This being so, a statesman's policy would have to correct injustice in one area without inflicting a similar injustice in another.

(4) Conservatism is negative. "The only new ideas it has come up with are a thousand new ways of saying no."67 Burke had already responded to this by claiming that reform and improvement was not a question of yes or no, but of how. And in addressing himself to the question of how, Alfred Cobban maintained that Burke made a most simple yet profound discovery. Politics was to be not the study of logic, but the grand study of human nature.68 In contrast to this, those "enlightened" opponents of Burke's who were attempting

66Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 59.
67Ibid., p. 60.
to give "rise to new and unlooked for strokes in politics and morals" became "servile imitators" of their own heroes. 69

(5) "Conservatism is anti-humanistic" in that it "claims to be no more than distrustful of human nature, but distrust moves easily into disdain, disdain into contempt, and contempt into hatred." 70 But this is the exact criticism which Burke leveled against the French radicals: France had "sanctified the dark, suspicious maxims of tyrannous distrust. . . ." 71 And this sense of suspicion and distrust resulted in "authorizing treasons, robberies, rapes, assassinations, slaughters, and burnings, throughout their harassed land." 72 This being the case, Burke believed that those who were "habitually employed in finding and displaying faults are unqualified for the work of reformation. . . ." 73 As he stated earlier in his career, "By hating vices too much, they come to love men too little." 74

From the previous replies, it becomes more apparent that Burke's conservatism was not motivated by an indifference toward evil. Among other reasons, he was concerned

70 Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 61.
72 Ibid., p. 283.
73 Ibid., p. 458.
74 Ibid.
about the French Revolution because the radical "politicians do not understand their trade; and therefore they sell their tools." As the previous chapter indicated, throughout Burke's political career, he was concerned about developing a method for dealing with political questions. The method on which he had settled was demonstrated in the Reflections. He was not arguing the question of injustice, but rather how such injustice could be ameliorated without recourse to further injustice. He objected to the National Assembly's methods because he saw "a course of policy pursued, which sets justice, the common concern of mankind, at defiance."

To avoid this problem, Burke considered society's political good as being: (1) concrete, (2) complex, and (3) practicable.

Building on his previous positions, Burke believed that the political good had to be considered in concrete terms; it had to be conceptualized in relation to circumstances. Attention to circumstances had been Burke's plea in the Irish, American, and Indian crises as well as in his remonstrances for economic and penal reform. Thus Burke was not allowing the French Revolution to force him into a

75Burke, "Reflections," Works, III, p. 442.
76For examples of his application of this method, see Works, II, pp. 251, 316, 355.
78Canavan, The Political Reason of Edmund Burke, pp. 7-10.
position of compromise from or inconsistency with his previous stances. Regarding many of the French avante-garde policies, Burke observed that it "seemed as if those who adopted such projects were wholly ignorant of their circumstances, or wholly unequal to their necessities."\(^7^9\) This was foolish politics since

Circumstances (which with some gentlemen pass for nothing) give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing color and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind.\(^8^0\)

Principles were not to be subordinated to circumstances; rather circumstances indicated the best means whereby principles could be realized. But in differentiating between principles and circumstances, the wise politician was careful not to confuse means and ends. For example, it may be better to consider liberty a means to the end of good government rather than as an end in itself. If liberty were a universal goal or end, would one then be bound to "congratulate a highwayman and murderer who has broke prison upon the recovery of his natural rights?"\(^8^1\) In reconciling this, Burke believed that:

The effect of liberty to individuals is, that they may do what they please: we ought to see what it will please them to do, before we risk congratulations, which may be soon turned into complaints.\(^8^2\)

\(^7^9\)Burke, "Reflections," Works, III, p. 540.  
\(^8^0\)Ibid., p. 240.  
\(^8^1\)Ibid., p. 241.  
\(^8^2\)Ibid., p. 242.
By attending to the circumstances earlier in his career, Burke concluded that America was capable of handling liberty, but the East India Company was not. Likewise, by attending to the circumstances of France, such as her population, wealth, and cultural achievement, Burke saw much that deserved to be preserved. Yet this same process revealed injustices that required amelioration. By ignoring such a concrete process, France was in "a state of unbounded power, for undefined and undefinable purposes" thus allowing evil to follow its own course.

The political good of society was complex as well as concrete. Burke believed that complexity and diversity were qualities of Nature that had to be respected. The statesman had to follow the lines of Nature rather than trying to make it over in terms of some speculative plan. Every person had both an individual nature and a civil nature. Wise statesmen had to recognize that

the operation of this second nature on the first produced a new combination,--and there arose many diversities amongst men, according to their birth, their education, their professions, the periods of their lives, their residence in towns or in the country, their several ways of acquiring and of fixing property, and according to the quality of the property itself, all which rendered them . . . so many different species of animals.

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84Ibid., p. 291.
85Ibid., p. 477.
Thus society was characterized by diversity and complexity. But Burke saw the lack of wisdom in the French radical in that he was one who was willing to ignore the manifestations of nature by "subliming himself into an airy metaphysician . . . , resolved to know nothing of his flocks but as men in general." 86 By attempting to homogenize men only to divide them again in terms of geometry rather than customs, manners, etc., the radicals through their speculations were breaking the natural, cohesive bonds of society. Substance and quantity were only two of the factors necessary to consider in complex deliberation. The speculators "might learn from the catechism of metaphysics that there were eight more heads" 87—qualitas, relatio, actio, passio, ubi, quando, situs, habitus. To establish policies on such an over-simplification as "number" was to destroy many inherent characteristics of the natural and civil aspects of a society's nature.

It was Burke's belief in this complex nature of man as well as his belief that man's natural and civil or artificial natures were indivisible that informed his nation of equality. The result of this interaction formed a new product which was neither totally natural or totally civil—

87Ibid., p. 478.
a product which Burke called corporate man. Because of the non-discrete nature of this interaction, Burke could not embrace Rousseau's convenient division between natural and artificial inequalities. Each incorporated the other. Thus Burke could not accept his progressive contemporaries' claim that natural inequalities could be retained, but civil inequalities, because they were unnatural, could not be retained. The nature of the interact made corporate man as natural as any of his other qualities. In fact, nature found its highest expression in civil life or civilization.

Just as he objected to homogenizing diverse man, he also objected to the leveling in government that "crushed together all the orders which they found. . . ." Diversity in government could act as a necessary check on arbitrary power. Just as Burke fought against George III's threatening of the House of Commons' authority, he fought similarly in France when the balance of power was being skewed in the other direction. For Burke, the leveling of hierarchy, the homogenizing of diversity was an act against Nature. It was an attempt to force Nature to accommodate itself to the simplistic, speculative methods of the theorists--methods not flexible enough to deal with a

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88 For a more comprehensive consideration of Burke's concept of man as a corporate being, see Stanlis, Edmund Burke and the Natural Law.

political object in its relations to all the other diverse ends of political action.

Even though the political good was complex, it had to be practicable or capable of being realized in the situation in which the statesman had to act. The limiting factors within any situation involve the men with whom a statesman must work and the materials available to him. For Burke, any important question of state which was outside the law was a question "of dispositions, and of means, and of probable consequences, rather than of positive rights." To maintain that political good had to be practicable was not a ploy conveniently created by Burke to justify not dealing with aristocratic injustice in France. Ten years earlier in his speech on economical reform, Burke asserted:

I know it is common for men to say, that such and such things are perfectly right, very desirable,—but that, unfortunately, they are not practicable. Oh, no, Sir! no! Those things which are not practicable are not desirable. There is nothing in the world really beneficial that does not lie within the reach of an informed understanding and a well-directed pursuit. There is nothing that God has judged good for us that he has not given us the means to accomplish, both in the natural and the moral world. If we cry, like children, for the moon, like children we must cry on.

The statesman had to deal with the realizable, imperfect, actual world. As a reformer and a preserver, Burke knew

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this. Recognizing the limits of reality, and winking at suffering and injustice would seem to be two different behaviors entirely. The statesman could not deal in the world of wishes even if he wanted to. Speaking earlier to his Bristol constituents, Burke remarked:

I could wish, undoubtedly, (if idle wishes were not the most idle of all things,) to make every part of my conduct agreeable to every one of my constituents; but in so great a city, and so greatly divided as this, it is weak to expect it.93

His recognition that he could not please everyone did not bind him to the conclusion that therefore, he should not try to please as many people as possible. Likewise, in the French situation, recognizing that the political good had to be practicable and imperfect did not commit him to a callous indifference toward that which could be corrected. Burke feared that in an effort to pursue idle wishes, the more important substance of life could be lost. This he saw happening in France. In pursuing abstract rights, "France has not sacrificed her virtue to her interest; but she has abandoned her interests, that she might prostitute her virtue."94 And by doing this, the common people would be the ones to pay the price.

The prattling about the rights of men will not be accepted in payment of a biscuit or a pound of gunpowder. Here, then, the metaphysicians descend from their airy speculations, and faithfully follow


examples. What examples? The examples of bankrupts. But defeated, baffled, disgraced, when their breath, their strength, their inventions, their fancies desert them, their confidence still maintains its ground. In the manifest failure of their abilities, they take credit for their benevolence. 95

Considered in the whole context of his thought, again Burke was not subordinating principle to circumstance. 96 He had always held that there were several means to one end; the statesman's duty was to select the best of those means available so as to avoid sacrificing the people's interest. 97 Nature taught through circumstances and the statesman was to be attentive to those lessons. Those with experience, wisdom, and virtue listened best, 98 and, therefore, were more qualified for statesmanship. Observing the work of novices in the East India Company had convinced Burke that inverting Nature's hierarchy by putting the older, wiser, and more experienced in low positions and their counterparts in higher positions was the path to arbitrary power and theoretical speculation. 99

Even though Burke believed that the nature of political good was concrete, practicable, and complex, his


98Ibid., p. 284.

99Ibid., p. 286.
primary values regarding Natural Law restrained him from advocating the rule of expediency in society. As in his Tract on Popery Laws, he could think of no "error more truly subversive of all the order and beauty, of all the peace and happiness of human society, than the position that any body of men have the right to make what laws they please." Hoffmann and Levack agreed that Burke believed all law came from God and this "law did not arise from conventions and compacts; rather did they receive all their force and sanction from the law." Just as civil man and natural man are non-discrete aspects of the unit corporate man, so civil law and Natural Law are likewise inextricably bound by the functional interanimation. The constitution and civil laws had been long developing by "preserving the method of Nature in the conduct of the state." By following Nature, then, interaction of natural and civil laws gradually transpires producing a natural continuity and stability so that "in what we improve we are never wholly new, in what we retain we are never wholly absolute." To attempt to legislate civil laws against Nature or to attempt to abolish civil laws which had received the sanction of

103Ibid.
Nature were both disruptive to the orderly, continuous, stable process of society. Society was a microcosm of the universe and, thus, society was to be guided "not by the superstition of antiquarians, but by the spirit of philosophic analogy." 104

Since society was basically an analogue or microcosm of the universe, Burke could not embrace Rousseau's belief that natural society was primitive society, i.e., the antagonist of civil society. Again, because of the interanimation, natural society and civil society were one. Approximately seven years after writing his Reflections, Burke asserted, "If ever there was a time that calls on us for no vulgar conception of things, and for exertions in no vulgar strain, it is the awful hour that Providence has now appointed to this nation." 105 Civilization and Nature were not antagonistic:

Never, no never, did Nature say one thing and Wisdom say another. Nor are sentiments of elevation in themselves turgid and unnatural. Nature is never more truly herself than in her grandest forms. 106

Thus Burke argued much as did Aristotle in the first chapter of his Politics. For Burke "The State of

106Ibid.
society . . . is a state of Nature; and much more truly so than a savage and incoherent mode of life."¹⁰⁷

Burke's Conception of the Nature of Man

Burke's primary values concerning the Ultimate Good and society were incorporated and energized in the form of man. Addressing himself to this point, Parkin interpreted Burke's conception of man as:

The individual at one with himself is a microcosm of the small society, the family, and the large society, the community in time, so far as they are responsive to the moving presence of Providence in human life.¹⁰⁸

Just as Natural Law provided the apex connecting the presumptions and inductions of Burke's Ultimate Good values, so human nature provided the point of mediation between the presumptions and inductions of his values regarding the nature of man. Man was a spiritual being (a presumption) and a temporal being (an induction). A study of human nature was a study of the resultant product derived from this interaction process. And as he early wrote, "the wisdom of Nature ought to be strictly imitated; which has made all things necessary to our preservation. . . ."¹⁰⁹

Alfred Cobban explained that going to human nature

¹⁰⁷Burke, "An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs," Works, IV, pp. 175-76.
was a new discovery in the eighteenth century; one has only to read any typical work of the time dealing with individual or social psychology to appreciate the world of difference in Burke. He had lighted... on "the ocean of being"... To understand human nature he hardly dared to aspire, but hoped to be able to recognize its reactions and thus find some guidance. Rejecting Natural Rights... he accepted human nature which seemed to him a far safer criterion.

Burke had presumed that God created man and general rules of operation. These came together in the moral law which was considered "the will of Him, who gave us our nature, and in giving impressed an invariable Law upon it." This invariable Law stamped on human nature was the conscience or "sentiments of mind" as Burke called them. In the Thomistic sense, conscience was the law of the intellect. These sentiments in the conscience provided a general set of "oughts" or "ought" tendencies which provided basic directives in choosing between right and wrong. But Burke believed that man's nature was both good and bad--a nature thereby giving him real as opposed to mere perceived choice. Thus Burke's presumptions regarding man were threefold: (1) God created man and his rules of operation, (2) God endowed man with a conscience to perceive right and wrong, (3) man's nature was both good and bad due to the inherited Original Sin.

110 Cobban, Edmund Burke and the Revolt against the Eighteenth Century, p. 77.

Of these three presumptions, Burke's conservative belief in the imperfect nature of man has been the most offensive to liberal critics. An insult to the dignity of man has been perceived in Burke's early assertion that "Men are full as inclined to Vice as to Virtue." And a meanness of spirit was perceived in his claim that "less mischief arises from a restraint on our desires, than from indulging them to the prejudice of others." But that this belief should progress inevitably from distrust into disdain, disdain into contempt, and contempt into hatred, would have been denied by Burke. In fact, he believed that a realistic conception of man's imperfect nature enlarged one's sentiments toward humanity. He realized that some misconduct had to be tolerated because:

I am a man who have to deal with men, and who would not, through a violence of toleration, run into the greatest of all intolerance. I must bear with infirmities, until they fester into crimes. When nothing less than perfection is expected, disappointment can as easily lead to contempt and eventual hatred as can distrust of human nature. His phrase, "I am a man who have to deal with men . . ." capsulizes his thought. Just as he

113Burke, "Religion," A Note-Book of Edmund Burke, p. 73.
114Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 61.
recognized others' limitations and imperfections, so he recognized his own. From this perspective, one would have to hate himself if he were going to hate others on similar grounds. Burke believed that the inability to reconcile oneself to the inevitable, inherent imperfections of men often cohered with "the spirit of innovation" which he characterized as being the "result of a selfish temper and confined views."\textsuperscript{116}

This was the kind of "liberal illiberality" which inhered in the "enlightened" radical's inflated notion of himself (positiveness) and his deflated notion of God (skepticism). The radical assumed that he had the ability to do that which God could not. On this premise then, he designed his dreams for humanity. But just as Burke's presumptions could not expect perfection from imperfect man, so his inductions could not confine man's mind to reason only. Though criticized as narrow, Burke, through his observations, conceptualized man much more generously than did the radicals who insisted on conformity to their own private speculative systems of thought. In fact, in the most conservative of his stances, "Burke made a generous allowance in his political philosophy for nonlogical elements in human nature and the processes of life."\textsuperscript{117}

Man was characterized by complexity and diversity in

\textsuperscript{116}Burke, "Reflections," \textit{Works}, III, p. 274.

\textsuperscript{117}Stanlis, \textit{Edmund Burke and the Natural Law}, p. 167.
ability, manners, prejudices, opinions. The interrelationship of all these factors had to be recognized and accommodated in acts of policy making.

Because of the nature of man, Burke conceived of politics as a social, moral endeavor. The statesman was to take himself to the market-place and study human nature. "There mind must conspire with mind." By giving oneself to the study of this complex religious, corporate, political being,

We are enabled to unite into a consistent whole the various anomalies and contending principles that are found in the minds and affairs of men. From hence arises, not an excellence in simplicity, but one far superior, an excellence in composition.119

In realizing the complexity and awesomeness of such an endeavor where the great interests of mankind were concerned, Burke admitted that reform, preservation, and policy making demanded "the aid of more minds than one age can furnish."120

Conclusion

At the center of Burke's communicative behavior were his primary values regarding the nature of the Ultimate Good, society, and man. Throughout this examination of his messages, from the notes of his twenties to the Reflections

119Ibid., p. 457.
120Ibid.
of his sixties, the writer has asked the "why" of Burke's explanatory, justificatory, and obligatory statements. She has compelled Burke to give reasons and then more reasons for his surface statements, and from this question-asking-reason-giving process, the substance of his thought has accrued.

To Burke, politics was morality enlarged and statesmanship was an endeavor in spiritual flesh and blood, binding up the Constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties; adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections; keeping inseparable, and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars.121

Behind his statements of society was a powerful image of an active, personal, omnipotent God who directed man through Natural Law, as well as through the Scriptures, and who instructed man through the circumstances of the past and present. Consequently, society was conceptualized as being (1) founded on religion, morality, and manners, (2) cemented by inheritance, continuity, and stability, (3) preserved and reformed by realizing a political good which was concrete, complex, and practicable; and (4) "naturally civilized" by the harmonious interaction of civil and natural laws. In man, these principles were synthesized and animated, thereby providing the study of human nature with its Supreme rationale.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The Problem

This study was directed by the desire to discover and investigate the inventional foundations of conservatism as revealed through the rhetorical behavior of Edmund Burke, the acknowledged founder of conservatism. Assuming that the substance of rhetoric is a combination of both "what" and "why," the writer analyzed selected designative, appraisive, and prescriptive statements in order to ascertain those primary values housed within the deliberation process.

Limitations of the Study

The communication process is a complex phenomena consisting of a dynamic interaction among the communicator, his message, the immediate and universal audience, and the context within which this interaction transpires. Though respecting the other variables, the writer focused on the relationship between the communicator and his messages. The decision to concentrate on these variables was not entirely an arbitrary one. By focusing on the two variables most amenable to the eliciting of substance, the writer's
interpretation missed that shading and texture which arise only from complete disclosure of the transitory circumstances, issues, and events. But throughout this study, the writer has assumed the existence of permanence as well as transience. Though contexts, faces, names, and styles change—principles remain. Scholars have perceived a tenaciousness of spirit and word in Burke and his messages. Forcing his concept of inheritance on even unwilling skeptics, Burke has made himself live on by bequeathing his principles to twentieth-century minds, uniting his present and future with our past and present. As Donald Bryant well knew, "even today Burke is still a fertile subject and source of controversy, while his parliamentary contemporaries have passed quietly into history—or an occasional anthology."¹ Though the decision to focus on the speaker-message relationship was influenced by convenience and available data, it was primarily believed that this enduring aspect of Burke's rhetoric would accrue from such a concentration.

The Method of Investigation

To satisfy the purpose of this study, the historical-critical method of communication research was employed.

This procedure involved (1) a definitive statement of the

research question, (2) an appropriate research design, (3) a search paradigm for conservative communication, (4) the collection of data, and (5) resultant generalizations.

The Primary Conclusions

The Substance of his Message

As the search paradigm in chapter two posited, an understanding of Burke's political and cultural philosophy necessitated an understanding of the normative assumptions inhering in his "value system and underlying his judgments of events. Though changing events impelled flexibility of opinions, a solid consistency marked his primary value constructs. Burke's works revealed a deliberation process prompted by the disparate intellectual and moral forces of his day. He apparently saw the current of his era as confronting him with choices about which he would have to decide. Three themes of his works indicate that which he perceived as choices—that which constituted the "is" constructs within his system. Recurrent themes in his works were religion, reason, and society. Available choices were those between the supernatural or natural, civil society or natural society, and right reason or speculative reason. Burke's choice was not to select one and eliminate the other. Rather he established a hierarchy out of the available choices so that the supernatural was to subsume
the natural, civil society was to subsume natural society, and "right reason" was to subsume "abstract reason." The counter-balancer was at work in his perception, interpretation, modification, and selection of choices. Since the "is" constructs of a value system are indicative of motives, they became important in interpreting Burke's perception of and responses to events.

His appraiseive and prescriptive statements were presented as an inextricable unit. He seemed to reason that what one ought to do is good, and what is good, one ought to do. Virtues and duties were consubstantial. The following list summarizes that which Burke considered to be the "oughts" and "goods" of man and society. These took the form of attitudes, virtues, and priorities. He believed that: (1) attitudes should be strong, "confirmed opinions," linking man to man and man to God by being neither skeptical regarding Providence nor positive regarding self; (2) virtues were commitment to God, consistency in principles, benevolence toward others, and denial of self; and (3) priorities involved a hierarchy descending from God to one another to self.

Burke's explanatory, justificatory, and obligatory statements were derived from his primary value system. Before he entered parliament, he had already generally solidified foundational beliefs concerning the nature of the Ultimate Good, man, and society. The Ultimate Good was God,
not Utility, since to Burke God was the creator and the director of man, society, law, and principles of operation. Though he realized that God could not be proven conclusively by man's abstract reason, man knew that God existed because of the providentially endowed "sentiments of the mind," i.e. the conscience.

Burke believed man to be a religious, political, social, and corporate being who was created by God and ultimately responsible to Him. Because of Original Sin, man's nature was both good and evil; thus civil laws were necessary to restrain the detrimental whereas freedom was necessary to foster the beneficial. But at his best, man was making operative the above attitudes, virtues, and priorities via "right reason."

Though man was conceptualized as a kind of microcosm of those natural principles governing the universe and society, it was only from Burke's values regarding society that those natural principles were clarified. To Burke, society was an analogue to the universe. Society was conceived as being founded on religion, morality, and manners; cemented by inheritance, continuity, and stability; preserved and reformed by realizing a political good which was concrete, complex, practicable and imperfect; and synthesized and united with both the civil and the natural in that one was the manifestation of the other.
This study of Burke's communication was inspired by the hopes that Edmund Burke could speak to the current demise of conservative rhetoric. However, Clinton Rossiter has not been optimistic about the importation of Burke for the American "conservative cause." In fact, suggesting such an importation is especially bad and useless advice—bad because it asks the conservative to commit political suicide, useless because what it asks is in reality inconceivable. America is different, both in history and present state, and the full Conservative tradition simply will not flourish on this soil.²

Rossiter stated this objection even more strongly as he believed it would be "the greatest of follies and cruellest of delusions to shape the philosophy of American conservatism in the full image of [British] Conservatism."³ From one perspective, Rossiter's objection is well taken. Certainly, the wholesale adoption of any one man's philosophy tempered by a different time and context would be ill-fated. But the curious part of Rossiter's strong reservations about the applicability of Burkean Conservatism to American conservatism is found in the guidelines he established for the future of American conservatism. Paradoxically, these guidelines are so clearly in accord with the general tenets of Burke's philosophy, as developed

²Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 261. Rossiter distinguished British Conservatism from American conservatism by capitalizing the former.

³Ibid., p. 262.
through this dissertation, that they provide the basic conclusions of the writer's study of Burke. Whether or not Rossiter would prefer to admit it, the blueprint he provided for the future of American conservatism comes from the pages of Burke. Because of the importance of this relationship, the writer will cite at length Rossiter's guidelines for the future of conservatism. The reader can then decide whether Burke is inapplicable to American conservatism, even in Rossiter's thinking. Rossiter predicted that the future of American conservatism will assume these general lines:

It will be more candid about the nature of man than American conservatism has been for more than a century, for it will base all calculations and prescriptions on the assumption that every man is an extraordinary mixture of good and evil—of sociability and selfishness, of energy and sloth, of reason and unreason, of integrity and corruptibility, of generosity and spite, of hope and despair.

It will be less sure of either the joys or the certainty of social progress, and it will insist that reform be surefooted, discriminating, and respectful of tradition.

It will be more conscious of the dictates of universal justice, and give new life to the concept of a higher law as it was understood and proclaimed in the infancy of the Republic.

It will recognize anew man's need for community, and thus will place emphasis on the kind of individualism that leads free men to co-operate rather than to compete. It will call fresh attention to the web of groups--families, neighborhoods, churches, corporations, unions, co-operatives, fraternal orders—that we have spun between ourselves and the vast power of the state.

It will free itself from cant about the nature of power and the role of government. It will rise above the easy judgment that government is inherently arbitrary and inefficient, acknowledge that government has vital functions to perform in an industrial society, and recognize that in modern society there is as much danger in a vacuum of power as in an overdose of it. Still, it will continue to condemn the credulous
confidence of modern liberalism in the ability of the state to set all things right.

It will say things about liberty that American conservatives have been much too reluctant to say: that undisciplined liberty can become an obsession destructive of personal integrity and social order; that every right carries with it a correlative duty; and that private property lies near the center of the structure of human liberty.

It will say things about equality that conservatives have been even more reluctant to say: that men are equal only in the sense that they must be treated as ends and not means; that infinite variety exists among men in talent, taste, intelligence, and virtue; that the social order should be organized in such a way as to take advantage of this variety; that equity rather than equality is the mark of such an order; that the uncommon man, too, has a place in the American dream.

Most important of all, it will rethink and restate meaning, conditions, and limits of democracy. While the philosophers of American conservatism will remain devoted friends of democracy—or perish morally and politically—they "will be the kind of friends who insist on giving honest opinions and pointed advice. They will proceed bravely from the conservative assumption that democracy is a much more demanding form of government than Liberalism has led us to believe. The new conservatism will therefore reaffirm boldly the four great conditions that men like John Adams set upon the success of free government:

Democracy cannot exist apart from the spirit and forms of constitutionalism. If men insist on their eternal right to govern themselves, they must govern through safe, sober, predictable methods. If the majority is to rule justly, it must prove itself "persistent and undoubted" on all occasions, prove itself extraordinary on special occasions, and deny itself access to those areas where the heart dwells and the conscience pricks.

Democracy cannot exist unless three things—knowledge, virtue, and property—are widely diffused among the people; for knowledge is essential to wise decision, virtue to unforced obedience, and property to personal independence and social progress.

Democracy cannot function at a level of excellence, perhaps in these times at any level at all, unless it can summon up and support skilled and prudent leaders in every center of power in the great society.

Democracy is not and cannot be made a substitute for religion, and those who worship it invite their own destruction. To the contrary, American democracy
cannot exist for long apart from the spirit and forms of the Judaeo-Christian vision.

These are only the bare bones of a reformed theory of American conservatism, and they will not rise and walk about until the men who lead the Right call on them for help in concrete political and social situations. Even then they will provide no unmistakable directions to men who must decide whether to raise or lower taxes, expand or contract social security, deal or not deal with the Soviet Union. But they will provide, I repeat, an intellectual and spiritual context within which the conservative mission of the next generation may be pursued with vigor and confidence.4

Though Burke did not address himself specifically to American democracy, even in these points, important Burkean principles inhere. Thus though Rossiter did not intend to import Burke to aid American conservatism, he inadvertently did just that. The writer perceives this as perhaps the strongest recommendation of Burke to the twentieth century. In Rossiter's guidelines for the future of conservatism are the generalizations induced from this study of Burke.

Particularly relevant to rhetorical theory, this study has posited and applied a practical philosophical approach to rhetorical substance. Though the approach could be applied to various types of discourse, it is particularly appropriate for the analysis of messages by conservative spokesmen. A key differentiation between conservative and liberal concepts rests in the value attributed to "permanence" and "transience." Though both constructs exist in each system of thought, permanence is clearly a more highly valued concept to the conservative than to the

4Rossiter, *Conservatism in America*, pp. 266-68.
liberal. As was developed, Burke's attention to circumstances was justified by his philosophical conception that the permanent inhered in the transient. Thus circumstances were to be scrutinized for those inherent qualities of permanence. Just as the supernatural directed the natural, faith directed reason, and natural law directed civil law, so the permanent directed the transient. From this, the critic can infer that not only is the substance of rhetoric "good reasons," but the substance of conservative rhetoric should be "timeless, good reasons." As Charles Parkin recognized, Burke's ideas converged "on a core of moral certainty freed from the relative and the contingent."\(^5\) His rhetorical substance admonishes contemporary conservatives to ground their messages in timeless, good reasons because without this the conservative societal goals of continuity, inheritance, and stability could not transpire.

A second rhetorical topic authorized by Burke involved principles of association. Implicit in the goals of continuity, inheritance, and stability is a deep respect for the need to understand principles of association as operative in man, society, and the universe. Burke perceived the universe as a set of ordered paradoxes. This state was providentially ordained. It was "ordered" thereby implying relationships which could be discovered, and it was a set of paradoxes thereby forcing man to recognize his continual

\(^5\) Parkin, *Burke's Political Thought*, p. 3.
dependence on the Author. From Burke, the conservative
should recognize the importance of apprehending one's
ultimate relationship to God and the responsibility to
discover relationships and then apply prudent principles of
association to human paradoxes. This means that the
conservative cannot be a "past-tense" thinker. By the very
nature of universal relationships, he must see the past,
present, and future as an inextricably related unit. He
cannot over-simplify his moral responsibility by claiming
"what is or was" is right, nor can he relinquish his duty
for future decision-making to the past. Certainly, the past
acts as an instructor but not as a judge--this was Burke's
doctrine of prudence capsulized. Only in a more painstaking
scrutiny of interanimating relationships among the past,
present, and future, the dead, living, and posterity, will
the contemporary conservative spokesmen genuinely deserve
Burke as their mentor.

Furthermore, the contemporary conservative must cope
more adequately with the principles of association existent
in that which Burke believed to be the foundational
components of society--religion, morals, and manners.
Though he elevated the importance of the relationship
between the foundational and surface principles, he was
somewhat vague in identifying and developing these inter-
relating principles. This means that the contemporary
conservative once again will be forced to ponder the "Big
Questions." Before economic questions can be settled, for example, he will have to inquire into the "ought relationships" between man and God, man and man, man and his intangible though very real culture of values, legacies, dreams, and ideals. Thus he will need to formulate current stances on the ground of timeless reasons. Otherwise, he loses his identity as a conservative. Without a foundation of timeless reasons, he may be a traditionalist, a capitalist, or perhaps a libertarian, but not a conservative. By building on timeless reasons and inquiring into principles of association, the conservative is led to discover the various alternatives of achieving unity in the midst of diversity, respect for differences as well as similarities, balance between expectation and fulfillment, vision in a state of stability. He must focus particularly on relationships because his assumptions about the nature of knowledge cannot allow him to accept sensory data at face value. Since the facts do not "speak for themselves," principles of association operative in ordering sensory data should be especially salient to the conservative.

In addition to timeless reasons and associational principles, binding obligations should establish a third aspect of conservative topoi. Endeavoring to discover the best method for extending providentially inspired goods throughout the community, Burke's career was marked by his attempts to unite ethics and politics. As was developed,
his set of obligations took the form of attitudes, virtues, and priorities. Though these obligations may sound quaint or provincial to the modern ear, one need not think further than "Watergate" to perceive timeless reasons recommending the veracity of such obligations. If the substance of conservative messages has departed from these obligations, the rhetorical critic has Burkean ground for indictment of such an estrangement.

Most importantly, Burke's presumptive-inductive system functioned to make consubstantial his method and substance. Whereas his contemporaries were willing to reverse the hierarchy and conceive of God as being made in man's image, Burke tenaciously believed that man was made in God's image. This was the foundation of his presumptions and inductions, and this was the basis for his revolt against the eighteenth century. His thinking began with faith in God and then proceeded to observations of man. Thus Burke's inductions were rough analogues of certain presumptions. And by their order and their associations, his inductions or observations were spiritualized by his presumptions or faith. The spiritualizing function of association can be noted in the following examples: (1) morally, man found definition in God, reason in faith, evil in good, circumstances in principles; and (2) politically, civil law found definition in theistic natural law, civil rights in natural rights, the transient in the permanent.
Through this association, the natural became an analogue to the spiritual and the spiritualization of language ensued. Unlike his progressive contemporaries, Burke refused to materialize the spiritual. Just as principles of association were key elements in his rhetoric, so the association between the dualistic aspects of the hierarchy were revelatory. Through this process, Burke was communicating the transcendent nature of man and society—a nonmaterial aspect which had been denied by his reductionist contemporaries.

The Method of his Deliberation

The method Burke used in expressing his stances and values was called presumptive-induction. In an age of skepticism, Burke was unwilling to doubt; in an age of positivism, he was unwilling to trust. Those areas about which he would not doubt formed his presumptions. For example, while his "enlightened" contemporaries argued the inadequacies of a "God construct," Burke simply accepted God by faith. He has been criticized for not defending his faith more explicitly and has been defended on the grounds that he was too embroiled in the exigencies of politics to toy with philosophical problems. The writer is more inclined to believe that Burke became a bit obstinate in face of the audacity he perceived around him. His presumptions were axiomatic, not problematic, and he seemed to refuse to suggest via defense that his presumptions were
material for debate. Had he lived in another age—an age in which his presumptions were not under constant attack—he may have felt the freedom to develop more specifically those values at the center of his mind. By implication, however, it was apparent that Burke recognized that inductive logic was limited by the nature of materials viable for ordering. Strict induction necessitated the manipulation of time, space, and matter only. The content of his presumptions was not bound by these limitations. These presumptions were generous enough to accommodate that which isolated reason and sensory perception could not. This accommodation was highly salient in that ground was laid for absolutes by providing for continuity and stability.

In those areas about which his contemporaries were most positive, Burke was most skeptical. He was willing to trust Providence, but not rationalism. As Carl Becker, the late Cornell professor, argued, rationalism was merely a secularized religion based on presumptions requiring as much faith as did those of the scholastic philosophers. The kind of faith in man that rationalism demanded, Burke was unwilling to embrace. This unwillingness prompted his development of a method of inquiry especially appropriate for politics. His method united the presumptions and inductions of his thought, the spiritual and the temporal,

by appealing to the tenets of theistic Natural Law and the observation of human nature. In this way, politics could be actualized as "morality enlarged." By establishing such a method, Burke was able to follow principles yet avoid theory and follow experience while superseding crass pragmatism. It is this particular presumptive-inductive method which has lent that obdurate quality to Burke's words. Through it he has been able to bring unity to diversity, compassion to individualism, value to property, principle to circumstance, ethics to practice, the spiritual to the temporal, and the permanent to the transient. From such a method, contemporary American conservatives could learn much.

Implications of the Study

The justification for this study must rest not only in the researcher's personal interest in the subject under investigation, but also in its contribution to the advancement of knowledge. Certainly a historical figure such as Edmund Burke has commanded the attention of several serious scholars and for that reason this writer has not unearthed any new historical evidence. Nonetheless, the contribution of this study has been twofold: (1) a critical yield through a fresh interpretation of Burke has been achieved; and (2) a theoretical yield through a start toward inventional topoi for conservatives has been posited.
Regarding the critical contribution, the preceding examination indicates that those interpretations of Burke by respectable scholars such as Ivor Brown, John Morley, and Harold Laski have been seriously misleading. Most relevant to rhetoric has been Richard Weaver's interpretation of Burke—an interpretation following a different method of inquiry, yet drawing conclusions similar to those of Brown, Morley, and Laski. The search paradigm used in this present study first questions Weaver's method. His method assumed that "the reasoner reveals his philosophical position by the source of argument which appears most often in his major premise because the major premise tells us how he is thinking about the world."7 Weaver developed this position further by maintaining that, in addition to their logical function, major premises "are expressive of values, and a characteristic major premise characterizes the user."8 But Weaver did not differentiate between primary values and derived values. The premises which he used against Burke were those premises housing derived values, not primary values. And one is characterized by the latter not the former. The primary values or premises are those for which no further reason can be given. They stand alone. Weaver was misled into accepting a derived value as a primary

8Ibid., pp. 55-56.
value. Consequently, when Burke stated that policies necessitated attention to circumstances, Weaver interpreted this premise as expediency. But as chapter two of this study indicated, the critic should ask "why" of this premise. If no further support can be offered, the premise would indeed clothe a primary value. Asking the "why" of the premise leads one further back to Burke's presumptions involving his belief that circumstances are important, not because "what is is right" but because Providence through Natural Law uses circumstances to instruct men in finding the best means for the right end. Since no further justification can be given in defense of this premise, one could conclude that this is a primary value which does characterize the user.

The second critical implication of this dissertation is that the common definitions of conservatism may require re-examination. The most popular meaning for conservatism has referred basically to an adherence to status quo. In fact, James McBurney, the distinguished professor of speech from Northwestern University, called himself a conservative and then proceeded to define the term in just this way. However, committing oneself to a defense of status quo hardly seems to provide a magnetic, compelling image toward

9Weaver, The Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 55.
which one can be drawn. Intellectually the definition is
untenable; morally it is certainly less than elevating.

Another definition of conservatism finds its referent,
not in the present, but in the past. History and
tradition then become the standard bearers of a temperament
that cannot seem to cope. Rather than bringing the best of
the past into the present, a wholesale flight to the past
seems more compelling. As with the notion of status quo,
this definition can hardly recommend itself to a consci-
entious ethic when right is subject to chronological
measurement.

Whether these definitions have been mischievously
applied or unwittingly assumed is irrelevant. What is
important is that they lack substance, principle, and
realism. And these three dimensions are exactly those which
Burke brings to the venerable term "conservatism." "The man
who makes a profession of conservatism," wrote Rossiter,
"opens himself knowingly to charges that his heart is
callous, his spirit mean, his motives selfish, and his
thinking negative, that he is a friend in boast but a foe
in fact of liberty and justice."11 All of these criticisms,
Burke answered well. From his answers, contemporary
conservative communicators have much to learn.

Of special concern to the study of communication was
not only the discovery of Burke's substance and method but

11Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 239.
also the paradigm whereby these findings were obtained. The paradigm considered the communicator's derived values in terms of statements of explanation, justification, and obligation and then analyzed these statements in order to elicit those primary values ordered by the deliberation process. Through this process, Burke's core values were revealed, reconciling conflicting interpretations and surface inconsistencies. Just as politics and ethics are united, so are communication and ethics in that the communicator must discover the best means for extending the ideals or values from man to society, making them more realizable in the organization of a community. These moral terms should be defined and analyzed. This being the case, the critic should be interested in discovering the nature, number, and interrelationships of those values if he is to understand and assess the latent as well as the manifest substance of the message being communicated. To stop short of this discovery is to encounter the same problem in interpretation and generalization as did Richard Weaver in his analysis of Burke. Weaver had no method of reaching the core values of the communicator. Had he begun with the surface designative, appraising, and prescriptive statements only to penetrate them through the reason-giving process, he would have discovered the important difference between values which are derivative and those which are primary.
In addition to discovering and analyzing these values at one point in time, the critic should be interested in tracing the constancy, modification, amplification, or elevation of the primary and derived values. Contrary to the implications of studies on the psychology of conservatism such as T. W. Adorno's *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York, 1950), the search paradigm of this study assumed that tenaciously held convictions are good:

He who is at every point open-minded must be without passionate convictions. He is that completely flexible man whose placid and weak mentality marks him off as dangerous because he thinks nothing is really very important.  

If the communicator's primary values are in a constant state of flux over a long period of time, this would be an important point for the critic to consider in his general interpretation and assessment. Conversely, if a communicator, over a period of time, revealed numerable primary values which never received any further amplification and elucidation, this would also provide salient evidence for interpretation.

One aspect of the paradigm which gave solidity to the writer's inquiry was the centering of values in "objects"—physical, social, and abstract. This acted as another protection against stopping short of discovering the primary values. Several of the indictments against the "inherent teachings" of conservatism involved objections to its *spirit.*

12Green, *The Activities of Teaching,* p. 53.
of fear, caution, negativism, smugness, callousness, inertia, anti-intellectualism, etc. But the paradigm, by insisting that values inhere in objects, forced the critic to ask fear, caution, and negativism toward what object?

Having answered those questions, the critic could then ask, did a similar spirit of negativism, for example, reside in the opposite of conservatism? If so, then such a spirit could hardly act as a differentiating characteristic particularly relevant to conservatism. Thus the difference must not rest in the spirit but in the object to which the spirit is attached. For example, in the eighteenth century, both conservatives and progressives or liberals were skeptical and positive. The difference inhere in the object to which the spirit was attached. Conservatives were skeptical about man's abilities and positive about God's abilities; liberals were skeptical about God's existence and/or abilities and positive about man's abilities. Having recognized this, the critic was brought closer to the primary values and primary differences.

In view of this, the value of the paradigm posited in this study rests not in its predictive or explanatory potential. Perhaps as important to the rhetorical critic, however, it leads in asking the best questions, following the most productive directions to the innermost part of the communicator's value system and thus the corpus of his message.
In addition to the critical yield, this study has also contributed to rhetorical theory by positing an initial set of inventionial topoi for conservative communication. This set of topoi may function as a means whereby conservative rhetoric can be improved or as a criteria whereby conservative messages can be analyzed and evaluated. Though Rossiter's "blueprint" for the future of conservatism does not explicitly develop the topic of "timeless reasons," his outline encompasses strongly the notion of permanence. The goodness of change and transience is not considered axiomatic within the framework he established. Instead, conservatism "will be less sure of either the joys or the certainty of social progress, and it will insist that reform be sure-footed, discriminating, and respectful of tradition." In addition, the timelessness of a higher law, the stability of property, the responsibility of a dutiful liberty, and the solidity of "honest opinions and pointed advice" color the tenor of his framework.

As the topic of "timeless reasons" is implicit in the stances enumerated by Rossiter, this topic prevailed in the works of Burke, conservative exemplar. As related to conservatives' value system, "timeless reasons" can be developed as follows:

I. Man in the
   A. Designative mode

13Rossiter, *Conservatism in America*, p. 266.
1. Has a nature which is essentially the same from generation to generation and
2. Has the faculties of imagination and intuition which enable him to bring the past into the present and future as well as the permanent into the transient.

B. Appraisive mode
1. Believes that maintaining strong, confirmed opinions is good and
2. Believes that positiveness toward God and skepticism toward man are good.

C. Prescriptive mode
1. Is obligated to the transcendent aspect of his nature and
2. Is obligated to the directives provided by his conscience (containing "sentiments of mind").

II. Society in the

A. Designative mode
1. Is characterized by a continual transmission of the old into the new so that the whole is never entirely new and
2. Cannot accommodate a completely new form of government.

B. Appraisive mode
1. Believes that inheritance is good in that it fosters unity and coherence in society,
2. Believes that property is good in that it preserves communities in a settled state, and
3. Believes that stability is good in that it provides a peaceful atmosphere amenable to the pursuing of betterment, interests, and potential.

C. Prescriptive mode
1. Is obligated to the preservation or establishment of the above "goods" and
2. Is obligated to preserving the method of Nature in the conduct of the state.

III. Ultimate Good in the

A. Designative mode centers in
1. The eternal existence of God,
2. The emanation of God's will and reason via Natural Law,
3. The existence of some laws, standards, and principles as absolute,
4. The permanence of truth, and
5. The constancy of ends.
B. Appraisive mode embraces
1. The continual hand of Providence in the affairs of humanity as good,
2. The recognition of the permanent as wise,
3. The natural concepts of symmetry, continuity, and legacy as "goods."

C. Prescriptive mode centers in
1. Respect for theistic Natural Law as an instructor and
2. Respect for Providence as creator and director.

In addition to timeless reasons, laws of association provide another dominant topic in the rhetoric of conservatism. Illustrating this, Rossiter noted that conservatism in the future will "call fresh attention to the web of groups--families, neighborhoods, churches, corporations, unions, co-operatives, fraternal orders--that we have spun between ourselves and the vast power of the state."\(^{14}\)

Burke said much the same thing. The conservative topic of association can be developed as follows:

I. Man in the

A. Designative mode is one
1. Whose human nature provides the link binding all mankind,
2. Who is linked with others through common origin, sufferings, longings, frustrations,
3. Who is linked even by sharing the possession of individual differences, and
4. Whose complex nature of good and evil, reason and non-reason works with and against itself.

B. Appraisive mode believes
1. Friendship and social relationships are good in that they follow one's natural propensity to unite,
2. The structuring of roles is good since this accommodates individual differences,
3. Recognition of differences is good since such differences are common to humanity, and

\(^{14}\)Rossiter, Conservatism in America, p. 266.
4. Recognition of evil is good in that unrealistic, divisive demands on society can be eliminated.

C. **Prescriptive** mode is obligated
   1. To establish the bases of association on the natural pattern provided by familial relationships,
   2. To base his relations with others on benevolence,
   3. To base his relations with himself on self-denial,
   4. To base his relations with his heritage on respect, and
   5. To base his relations with God on ultimate trust.

II. **Society** in the

A. **Designative** mode is
   1. A set of manners and customs derived from commonalties realized through sympathy or empathy,
   2. A contract with the living, dead, and posterity,
   3. A macrocosm of the natural, traditional family unit and a microcosm of civilization,
   4. A continuous inheritance of manners and customs,
   5. A combination of the natural and civic as each finds definition in the other, and
   6. A set of different yet complementary roles in a natural, hierarchical structure.

B. **Appraisive** mode believes
   1. Customs and manners are good because they unite those in natural, interacting spheres and
   2. Recognition of the true nature of society and surroundings is good because it gives stability to the relationship between man and his environment, both temporal and physical.

C. **Prescriptive** mode is obligated
   1. To honor the natural contract of society and
   2. To honor the principles of Natural Law which unite the spiritual and material, the tangible and intangible, the animate and inanimate.

III. **Ultimate Good** in the

A. **Designative** mode is
   1. The spiritual as it finds its identity in association with the material,
   2. Man as he finds his identity in his association with his originator God,
   3. A nation as it finds identity in association among families and communities, and
B. Appraisive mode centers in
1. The material as elevated via association with the spiritual,
2. Humanity as elevated via association with God,
3. The collected wisdom of the ages as being more reliable than that of an individual,
4. Harmony and balance among components of a system, and
5. The harmonizing of differences while retaining unique identity.

C. Prescriptive mode centers in
1. The spiritual aspect of society which should be honored since it subsumes the material and
2. The collected wisdom of the ages which should supply directives since continuity rather than fragmentation is more likely to result.

The topic of binding obligations emerged from the thinking of both Rossiter and Burke. Rossiter noted that conservatism "will be more conscious of the dictates of universal justice, and give new life to the concept of a higher law as it was understood and proclaimed in the infancy of the Republic."\(^{15}\) Furthermore, obligations are not to be determined by mere fiat of the majority; at times majority rule must necessarily "deny itself access to those areas where the heart dwells and the conscience pricks."\(^{16}\) Burke addressed himself to the topic more extensively. On the basis of his works, binding obligations for the conservative follow these lines of development:

I. Man in the

A. Designative mode

\(^{15}\)Rossiter, *Conservatism in America*, p. 266.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 267.
1. Recognizes the limitations as well as the assets of a person,
2. Has a spiritual nature with "upward tendencies" which obligates him to supra-material purposes,
3. Has real not just perceived choice available to him, and
4. Is responsible for his own behavior.

B. Appraisal mode believes that
1. Assuming responsibility is good and
2. Subordinating self to others is good.

C. Prescriptive mode urges that
1. Duty ought to take precedence over rights,
2. Sympathy ought to enter one into the concerns of others,
3. Right reason ought to direct or supersede abstract reason, and
4. Conscience ought to provide directives in maintaining obligations.

II. Society in the

A. Designative mode
1. Is an organic contract binding its members to certain reciprocal attitudes and activities and
2. Is a contract with the laws of nature of which society is a part.

B. Appraisal mode believes
1. Preserving society is good,
2. Liberty is more important than equality,
3. Equity is more important than equality,
4. Hierarchy is desirable in that it fulfills the natural, diverse needs of society,
5. Property is good in that it provides a means of stabilization.

C. Prescriptive mode urges that
1. The further realization of justice be fostered,
2. A proper balance between work and reward be established,
3. Protection from evil be provided,
4. Opportunities for employment and instruction be arranged,
5. Individual differences be utilized, and
6. The value of "better" be retained.

III. Ultimate Good in the

A. Designative mode centers in
1. Timeless reasons and
2. Laws of association.
B. Appraisal mode centers in
   1. Valuing timeless reasons and laws of association as good because they are providential as seen through religion and Natural Law.

C. Prescriptive mode urges that
   1. Providence ought to be followed in discerning the nature of permanence and relationships so as to discover the best means whereby duties may be fulfilled.

Recommendations for Further Research

From this study of Burke's substance and method, a set of values and topics have emerged which provide a tentative model heuristically useful for the invention analysis and evaluation of conservative communication. Such a critical statement particularly appropriate for conservative addresses has been necessary, as Ernest Wrase's analysis of Barry Goldwater's speaking well indicated. Little understanding accrued from Wrase's application of a secular, pragmatic standard to a movement which grew out of a resistance to this very standard. Wrase discovered that conservatives would make poor liberals. But perhaps this should have been assumed before the analysis began. Perhaps a more productive question would be, on the basis of the substance discovered via the primary values in comparison with conservative topoi, what kind of conservative is Barry Goldwater, how well does he understand the ultimate bases of the stances he is advocating, and how well are these stances communicated? Following such a method, it may

17Wrase, "The Little World of Barry Goldwater," 111-119.
be feasible to conclude that not only does a particular conservative make a poor liberal, but more to the point, he may also make a poor conservative. By application and further refinement of the conservative topoi, it would be possible to differentiate between the "chronological conservatives," "economic conservatives," and the soundly based, "principled conservatives."

Though the use of the topoi is primarily confined to conservative communication, the search paradigm employed in this study may warrant broader use. As applied to any group or movement, it could be helpful in searching out and isolating certain kinds of primary values which tend to cluster, kinds of derived values which tend to cluster, and clusters of relationships between and among them. The subsequent discovery of certain patterns could then provide hypotheses amenable to empirical or experimental testing.

Even experimenting with the paradigm for discussion purposes could prove beneficial. In a small group setting, for example, eliciting designative, appraisive, and prescriptive statements, analyzing those statements, and inducing deeper and deeper reasons in defense of these statements could aid in the discovery of primary values at the center of those statements and the individual's system of thought.
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**Conservatism**


**History and Political Theory**


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