The Private and Public Intellectual in the World and the Academy

By: James K. Hopkins

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The relationship of the intellectual to society has been a subject of critical reflection since the ancient Greeks. It is of particular importance to each of us in academic life today. To begin, I wish to consider the private and public roles that have historically beckoned to men and women of ideas. Private intellectuals are those who pursue their own intellectual interests without any conscious reference to the public good, and who are concerned with defending the integrity of their own subject of special competence. By contrast, public intellectuals are writers and thinkers who have a more inclusive understanding of their intellectual lives, engaging in discourse not only with members of their own discipline but with a general and educated audience.[1] The literature on each is vast,[2] and I have borrowed freely from it. In brief, however, an intellectual of either private or public disposition is one for whom truth and ideas have an inherent validity.[3]

It can be argued that those who see a special relationship between their intellectual lives and the social and political sphere in which they exist are not necessarily members of a special mandarin caste of highly trained professionals or those with some kind of special knowledge. In a larger sense, my remarks are intended for each of us who grasps the reciprocal relationship between our intellectual life and the world in which we live. In this respect, as Alan Montefiore has written, "Everyone must be considered to have *something* of the intellectual in them."[4]

Historically, the emergence of an identification between intellectuals and a conception of the common good was slow in coming. From the beginnings of western culture there was a general belief that the life of the mind was separate and distinct from everyday experience. In his widely influential work, *Golden Legend*, the thirteenth century Italian Jacobus de Voragine wrote that intellectuals are those "above all other beings and a life above all other things that live, and their intelligence and knowledge are above sense and reason, and more than any other being they desire the beautiful and good, and participate therein."[5] In many respects echoing Jacobus some 600 years later, the French philosopher Julien Benda criticized the intellectual's

abandonment of his empyrean role as observer and moralist, and his descent into the world. His book, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, which has been called "the most celebrated sermon concerning the responsibility of intellectuals,"[6] first appeared in 1927 and offers a twentieth century gloss on the old argument of Jacobus, suggesting how persistent has been the distinction between private and public intellectual work.

Benda called intellectuals "clerks," using the word in the medieval sense that theirs was a sacerdotal and separate role in society. He accused their twentieth century successors of abandoning their spiritual segregation from the world. It had become the fate of the intellectuals, through their historical development, to play a politically normative role for society. But this violated the intellectual's vocation to uphold abstract criteria, such as justice and rationalism, by which the "laity," all those who were non-clerks, should judge their conduct.

More specifically, the intellectual as "clerk" emphasized that moral behavior should always be considered in universal rather than particular terms. If the clerks were successful, the laity would prove themselves capable of realizing the fullness of their natures as moral beings. This might be accomplished if the rationality of the clerk could restrain the irrational passions of the people. Not, however, that clerks were to be overly concerned with their "success" in making society more rational because their very nature was one of disinterested idealism. Pursuit of truth, without desire for material or political benefit, was both necessary and sufficient to justify an intellectual's calling.

To choose otherwise, Benda believed, would have disastrous consequences. In his view, under the pressures of nationalism, the seductions of the marketplace, and the various philosophical proponents of irrationalism, the "clerks" of the Continent abandoned their vocation and assimilated into reality, becoming men and women dynamically engaged in the life of the world. The loss to humanity was incalculable. By their integration into the material world, historians became apologists for nationalist policies and wars, artists pursued not reason but sensation, and philosophers offered volumes of justificatory ethi-

cal consolation for the aggressions and sundry delinquencies of their political masters. In the nineteenth century, instead of nurturing a world that aspired to universal justice, love, and tolerance—representing the moral ideals of Western society from Socrates onward, and a humankind that saw its moral well-being and future as one—men and women of ideas encouraged particularism to triumph over universalism. Its bitter fruit was harvested in the irrational passions of the Great War and, in its aftermath, the spread of Fascism in the 1930s.

The consequence of the defection of the clerks from their traditional role of separateness from society was nothing short of catastrophic. As a neo-Kantian, Benda watched in horror as means were subordinated to ends, and philosophically and morally indefensible acts were countenanced by the clerks, the very ones who should have cried out their condemnation. In espousing a public role, the intellectual had degenerated into a partisan of a particular nation, whether Germany, Russia, Italy or any other authoritarian power, turning away from universal truth. Moreover, these ideologies or intellectual apologia turned on "scientific" axia that purportedly proved the claims of a particular group's superiority over others, such as the Aryans over the Jews, in its competition for the rewards of the material world.

The clerk, then, had historically stood outside the real world and exemplified the quest for spiritual rather than material goals. Benda wrote, "It may be said that, thanks to the 'clerks,' humanity did evil for two thousand years, but honored good." Now, he argued, evil flourished in *both* philosophy and politics, as the two had become one. The good, therefore, was no longer honored because of the betrayal of the intellectuals. Once distinguished from the laity by their disinterested pursuit of truth and beauty, they had come to accept the values of those to whom they had offered instruction and example. Their kingdom, at one time not of this world, had become one with it. The City of God had become the City of Man. Or, to put it another way, the "clerk" had descended from his high estate and become a citizen of the modern world. With this betrayal the future of humanity stood at risk. Benda warned:

> Civilization . . . seems to me possible only if human-
> ity consents to a division of functions, if side by side

> with those who carry out the lay passions and extol
> the virtues serviceable to them there exists a class of
> men who depreciate these passions and glorify the
> advantages which are beyond the material.[7]

Thus, the private intellectual should reclaim his sociological isolation in the world.

Benda's position was not atavistic. Similarly, and more recently, the return to a tradition of isolated intellectualism has been endorsed by Allan Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind*. In his best-selling book, Bloom attacked higher education, charging that it must reclaim the timeless pursuits of philosophy, a "solitary quest" in which there need be no concern with an audience. Contrary to such hopes, as Benda emphasized, both men and women of "ideas" had become potent social actors in modern society. Indeed, according to the English critic Paul Johnson, so widespread and insidious has been their influence that we should "beware intellectuals" for they propagate the "heartless tyranny of ideas." In addition, Johnson believes, "Not merely should they be kept well away from the levers of power, they should also be objects of particular suspicion when they seek to offer collective advice."[8]

II

One might well ask what had occurred in the Western intellectual tradition, causing intellectuals to abandon their habitation in the Ivory Tower and immerse themselves in the world, thereby horrifying Benda and Bloom and Johnson? Certainly, the rise of the intellectual as a moral and political force has been one of the most significant phenomena of modernity, although its roots are deep and enduring. In ancient Greece, Socrates played an instrumental role in the transformation of the principal concern of the life of the mind from physics to ethics. The Athenians, of course, exacted a high price to secure their safety from philosophy by forcing his death.

But perhaps more important than any other factor, the fall of the intellectual from the heights of angels was the result of the decline of the authority of the Church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which enabled secular intellectuals to explore more fully the social dimensions of their role in society. With the Scientific Revolution and the development of the nation-state, the intellectual took his place as

an adviser to kings and princes. The transition from clergyman to secular adviser generally dates from the beginning of the Enlightenment, when "for the first time in human history, and with growing confidence and audacity, men rose to assert that they could diagnose the ills of society and cure them with their own unaided intellects."[9] With the growth of literacy, and thus a new audience as well as an independent base of support, intellectuals increasingly dared to declare their independence from the satraps of the ascendant culture, by addressing broader societal issues and offering alternatives to existing political, social, and economic structures. These new visions of society proliferated in the nineteenth century, each offering some variant of socialism as the next logical and morally desirable step away from industrial capitalism, which had transformed the world's economy but had sacrificed those with outmoded skills to unemployment and vast new populations of factory workers to the profit motive.

As a result of articulating a counter-vision of society, intellectuals came to be seen as those who emphasize "their seemingly inherent tendency to criticize existing institutions from the vantage point of general conceptions of the desirable, ideal conceptions which are thought to be universally applicable."[10] Karl Popper called such men and women "holistic social engineers."[11]

III

From the nineteenth century the influence of intellectuals continued to expand remarkably. They had come to criticize their society from the standpoint of a theoretical conception of that which they believed would best serve the common good. Intellectuals believed they had found the lever that Archimedes promised would move the world.

An illustration of this can be found in the Dreyfus case in France in 1898. A number of leading academicians, politicians, and writers protested the victimization of Captain Dreyfus, an otherwise obscure Jewish army officer who had been convicted on military charges of treason to the state. Those aligned against him were the church, the army, and the Third Republic. Those who believed that a conspiracy had led to a miscarriage of justice issued a "Manifesto of the Intellectuals" in his defense. The anti-Dreyfusards then proceeded to

castigate the supporters of the unfortunate Captain as "intellectuals," the first time the word had been used as a social category. The redemption of Dreyfus was to have far-reaching political consequences, as well as demonstrate the lengths to which those, such as the novelist Emile Zola, would go to serve the cause of justice. Certainly, the appearance of Zola's "I Accuse," which indicted those who had conspired to deny Dreyfus justice, must be seen as a seminal moment in the emergence of the secular intellectual as a moral as well as political force in modern history.

This spectacular intervention followed Zola's literary condemnations of the barbarities of bourgeois capitalism in his great novel, *Germinal*, which suggested at least a tentative formulation of a socialist alternative to capitalism. When Anatole France said, as the last shovels of earth fell on Zola's grave in 1901, that the novelist had been "a moment in the history of human conscience,"[12] a fusion occurred between the intellectual as "clerk," a defender of values that had become fundamental to Western society, and the propagator of new, if vague, hopes of social improvement for the future.

But fault lines quickly appeared in modern culture. Along them one could see distinctive differences among national groups of intellectuals. If Continental and, later, American intellectuals embraced roles as social actors, their British counterparts proved stubbornly reluctant to follow suit. British intellectuals did not journey forth from the Ivory Tower with the same confidence in dispensing ideological prescriptions for society as did their European counterparts. There were three reasons for this: a general skepticism toward abstract theory, the belief that intellectuals stood apart from their times, and the distinctive manner in which the land-owning classes were able to instill their accommodationist values in the middle and lower classes.[13]

British intellectuals traditionally resisted systematic theory, instead relying on a kind of matter-of-fact empiricism that made them resolutely resistant to Continental ideas. This was an epistemological tradition that began at least with Francis Bacon and John Locke and became a characteristic of the British intellectual at the time of the French Revolution, when Edmund Burke argued that the French had destroyed their society and, in so doing, rejected their own history in

the name of abstract ideas such as "the rights of man." Consequently, British intellectuals concluded that "the best remedy against such disorders was an inculcation of the common-sense attitude which fostered a healthy respect for tradition and a strong mistrust of all theoretical debate."[14]

Second, the divorce of the British intellectual from his European and American counterparts was not solely a philosophical issue. A tradition had grown up among British intellectuals in the late nineteenth century (in part as a reaction against the poet laureate Tennyson's relentless boosterism) "that politics were harmful, . . . that they were not artistic material of the first order, that the artist could not be a politician."[15] Thus, the British political scientist Bernard Crick concluded that English intellectuals had divorced literature from politics, unlike those in the United States, France, and Germany, where "it had long been more customary for intellectuals to be viewed as public figures and to make their views known on public questions."[16]

The third reason for the general reluctance of British intellectuals to engage in a radical critique of society was that in Great Britain, unlike the Continent, the relationship between power, institutions, and the law had been largely decided by the beginning of the twentieth century. From this perspective, one must take into account the unique ability of the landed aristocracy of the nineteenth century not only to survive but to preserve its hegemonic values by forging an alliance with the emerging industrial bourgeoisie. The aristocracy made strategic political concessions to the middle classes, most notably through the Reform Bill of 1832, which gave the vote to the middle class. In exchange, the great landowners imposed their values on this dynamic new sector of society. The medium for the survival of the attitudes of this outmoded elite was the British educational system, which socialized each succeeding generation in its values. One historian has written, British intellectuals "addressed themselves to one another, to an emerging social audience, or to specific issues on which they were critical of the performance of the authorities. They never coalesced into a common body defined negatively by its critical stance towards the status quo."[17]

As a result, unlike the revolutionary movements on the Continent, which depended on the leadership of a radicalized intelligentsia, no

similar challenge to establishment values and institutions emerged in Great Britain, with the exception of the failed Chartist movement that came closest to it. Chartism's defeat meant that British workers and bourgeoisie reconciled themselves to the ruling order. Deference to existing authority, rather than rebellion against it, ensured that the forward march of labor would be a series of pragmatically calculated steps. Therefore, British socialism became politically moderate and theoretically weak.

IV

As I have suggested, the fact that public intellectuals feel they must at least recognize the reciprocal relationship between themselves and political power, between private and public life, remains a comparatively recent historical phenomenon. However, once they saw, at different times and in different countries, that the possession of specialized knowledge could have unique social and political consequences, there was a general abandonment of the detached stance of the critic in exchange for a place in the corridors of power. It was *in* the world rather than *outside* it that ideas and those who held them could have their most abundant and fully realized effect.

The rise of the public, as opposed to the private, intellectual as a figure of unique prestige occurred with dramatic rapidity. In the United States this happened after World War I for two principal reasons—one was the widespread belief that Roosevelt's "brain trust," the academicians from Harvard and other elite educational enclaves, had been responsible for the return to prosperity from the Great Depression of the 1930s. The second was the development of atomic energy. After the destruction of the Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, *Life* magazine published the picture of a previously unknown Berkeley physicist, Robert Oppenheimer, thereby announcing the arrival of the scientist as a historical actor on a global scale.

The sociologist Robert Nisbet has written that "in the period beginning with the end of World War II, the scientist-scholar became a very real hero of American society, joining a circle that had, with rarest exceptions, been limited to politicians, generals, explorers, artists, and sports luminaries." In the 1960s scholars, intellectuals, and scientists had, he observes, emerged as "the new aristocracy," one which was to become the cynosure of the world's respect and admi-

ration. Clearly, the application of science had dramatically altered the quality of life, not only for Americans and Europeans but peoples all over the globe. Disease, hardship, physical suffering, famine—each an immemorial aspect of the human condition—seemed at last amenable to the benevolent influences of the scientist. Also, humanists and social scientists had made government and governmental administration a much more rational, supple, and flexible instrument for dealing with the problems of human affairs.

But on the eve of the 1960s a warning was sounded. The British physicist, novelist, and civil servant, C.P. Snow, gave a lecture at Downing College, Cambridge that claimed the culture of the West was fragmenting, and was no longer one but two cultures, composed of scientists and humanists who were unable to communicate effectively with each other, thus impoverishing themselves and society as a whole.[18] Snow believed that the gap between the two could be bridged by education, if it would facilitate a common vernacular that would lead to more enlightened policies and decision making as well as richer individual lives, and finally to an understanding of the common good that would embrace the undeveloped as well as the developed worlds.

Snow's remarks should have fallen on fertile ground in the United States. Unshackled by the rigid curricula of institutions in Great Britain and the Continent, American colleges and universities possessed a comparative flexibility to encourage and develop an intellectual life that could bridge disciplines, and thereby address the kinds of issues that Snow had raised. But, unfortunately, we were already in the grips of our own rigidity, an inexorable drive toward professionalization, to carving up the great knowledge pie, in which the advancement of one's own discipline and career had taken precedence over a wider and more generous understanding of the responsibility of intellectual life.

The "abrupt emergence" of the modern university was inextricably related to the specialized demands of an increasingly complex technological, industrial, and consumer economy to provide knowledge as a commodity, one that would then enable its possessors to function effectively in the face of their new challenges and responsibilities. The result was that the vision of what a university *ought to be*

became lost and degenerated into a conglomeration of self-validating departments of knowledge producers, which provided a magnetic attraction to those who might previously have spoken or written independently. Consequently, the typical intellectual is today a university or college professor, if not employed as a pundit in journalism or television.

<div align="center">V</div>

The intellectual did not achieve his apotheosis, however, until the Kennedy years. Then, a young, vigorous Harvard-trained president picked "the best and the brightest," as David Halberstam has called them,[19] from his own alma mater and other institutions of similar prestige to man the watchtowers and the battlements of Camelot. With their appearance, the age of *the new aristocracy* began. How glamorous the Galbraiths and Schlesingers and MacNamaras looked in contrast to the intellectually drab figures of the eight years of Eisenhower. "The dawn of Camelot was rosy-fingered indeed for scientists, scholars, and intellectuals, . . . many of them holders of key roles in government, fulfillers of Plato's dream of the philosopher-statesman."[20]

But, as Halberstam has argued, with all their wit and grace and learning, members of the new aristocracy proved insufficient to the task of dealing with an illiterate, peasant adversary in the jungles and deltas of Vietnam. It has been said, with forgivable bitterness, I think, "that American entry as an all-out military power in Vietnam, entry that began in earnest under Kennedy, was overwhelmingly the result of counsel given by academic intellectuals who were convinced that we had the scholarly, scientific and technical knowledge to win that war and thus score a huge success for Kennedy and, not least, the House of Intellect."[21]

America's retreat from Vietnam was more than a military one. It was widely believed that the hubris of the intellectual had led to disaster abroad and disillusion at home, in the latter instance President Johnson's prescription for a brave new world which he called "the Great Society." An almost endless medley of government programs to end poverty, urban decay, and racial tensions and to reduce crime

proved spectacularly unsuccessful, further eroding confidence in those who had conceived them.

In addition, our institutions of higher education were forced to contend with a revolution from without as well as from within. Neither was addressed with success. The civil rights struggle and the movement against the war in Vietnam alerted a generation of students to the abundant hypocrisies in American society, the failure of institutions, including colleges and universities to address them, and, moreover, the dangers of hubris, the overweening complacency and immutable self-esteem of America's academic leaders. The rebellion of our country's young was directed against the role imposed upon them as knowledge consumers, as takers of tests and unthinking contributors to the Affluent Society. The most influential in the early days of campus unrest was Mario Savio, the leader of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, who brilliantly symbolized those awakening from their passivity. Recently, in *The New York Times*, Wendy Lesser eulogized Savio by saying of him, "He was the only political figure from my era for whom language truly mattered. He was the last American perhaps who believed that a civil, expressive, precisely worded, emotionally truthful exhortation could bring about significant change."[22]

Certainly the great events of this tumultuous time overwhelmed our universities and besieged our government, as well as the intellectuals who so prominently served their interests, whether in the groves of academe or Washington. So, as with Vietnam, the great social initiatives of those years made opinion increasingly obdurate in its hostility toward the intellectual. All this only underlines the dangers that Julien Benda foresaw fifty years ago. Instead of maintaining a robust intellectual independence from the loci of power, intellectuals have too often allowed themselves to be transformed into ideologists for those whom they serve in education, the government or the media.

The universities to which the "best and brightest" returned were already well-advanced in rejecting C.P. Snow's hope that higher education could make us whole again. In a recent history of the institution at which I studied, The University of Texas at Austin, the author, a holder of a distinguished chair in the Department of History, reflected on what his colleagues "did" during the "revolution" of the Sixties. He remembered that all busied themselves with their own research, or

as he put it, "The History Department largely ignored the revolution, since it had not been footnoted yet."[23] And, as I remember, there was virtually no intellectual or moral leadership provided by any tenured professor, with certain honorable exceptions, in the great events of those years, because it quite simply was not in their interests, as they conceived them, to involve themselves with issues that seemed irrelevant to their particular areas of inquiry. The pursuit of career had effectively replaced the pursuit of the common good.[24]

But where do we go, and I mean we, because each of us is in our way has accommodation in the House of Intellect. Some scientists and humanists argue that we must, in a sense, return to the laboratory, the library—both in a way, synonyms for the Ivory Tower, because we have ventured too far away. The Nobel Prize winner and author of *The Double Helix*, J. D. Watson, has said, "We may be taking the risk that by trying too often to run in front of our ideas we shall so poison the atmosphere of the first act that no one of decency will want to see the play through to the end." Robert Nisbet has said in a more compassionate vein, "Standing out with the historic intention of doing good, [the intellectual] wound up doing very well. He cannot really be blamed for yielding to the temptations of market-place or throne."[25] One cannot accept this exculpation. The English poet and critic, Matthew Arnold, once remarked that the intellectual must "see the object as in itself it really is" and have a bent for cultivating his "best" self.[26]

VI

First, to see things as they are. "Seeing" is mediated by the "word." The American critic, Edmund Wilson, once wrote that the admirers of the Russian poet, Pushkin, delighted in describing his language as "transparent." By this, Wilson explained in a lovely phrase, they mean that "the objects show through."[27] No contemporary public intellectual is more devoted to language as a way of seeing clearly than the Czech playwright and president of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel. After the Russian invasion of 1968, the Czech media was controlled by those who lied or distorted the truth. A well-known director of Havel's plays remembers how many attempted to tell the truth in camouflaged ways. He calls them "heroes of the word." In

October 1989 Havel spoke eloquently and unforgettably of the role of words in human history, and those who say and write them. He reflected "on the mysterious links between words and peace, and in general on the mysterious power of words in human history." His statement of challenge to the Soviets in 1968 which precipitated the invasion is called simply, "Two Thousand Words."

For both Pushkin and Havel, language is the divining rod that leads those who venerate and use it well to a final understanding of all that the Enlightenment promised. The word and objective reality would some day be one if true rationalism was finally achieved. But, living in the age of post-modernism, as we do, can we accept the word as a way of knowing as has traditionally been the case? The idea of something called "truth," of the object showing through, has been under heavy siege by those who reject the beliefs in unity and synthesis. This, in spite of the fact that the notion that we can know the truth has been long and tenacious, reigning triumphantly through the Platonic and Christian millennia, and, of course, destined to shape what humankind has thought of as history, Julien Benda being one of its most brilliant exponents.

The post-modernist repudiation of "rationality" is nothing less than the debasement of our civic culture. For example, there are post-modernists who allege that history, my own subject, is little more than the autobiography of the historian's encounter with the past. Therefore, truth sayers are trapped in a "hapless relativism,"[28] forced to reject the certainty that has sustained them since Plato. The result is the indistinguishability of fact from fiction, and the assertion that one person's truth is as good as anyone else's.

One of the most powerful repudiations of the less helpful aspects of this position comes from his generation's greatest public intellectual, E.P. Thompson, the British historian who left academia while continuing to write history, and subsequently led the European Nuclear Disarmament Movement. Thompson wrote in *The Poverty of Theory*:

> That facts are *there*, inscribed in the historical record, with determinate properties, does not, of course, entail some notion that these facts disclose their meanings and relationships (historical knowledge) of themselves, and independently of theoretical proce-

> dures. . . . The historical evidence is there, in its pri-
> mary form, not to disclose its own meaning, but to be
> interrogated by minds trained in a discipline of atten-
> tive disbelief.[29]

The revitalization of our civic culture, weakened both by the crisis in epistemology, which seemed to legitimate a complete incoherence in the work of knowledge producers and, in no small part, because of the professionalization of our universities which has provided academic homes to those who might have once gloried in the role of public intellectual, requires a continuous interrogation of our shared lives by minds trained in a discipline of attentive disbelief. The poet Stephen Spender once said, what we need is a Dostoevsky who submerged himself "in the spiritual blood and mire of his time," and a Voltaire who "ruthlessly satirized both sides."[30] Although he could not bring together the two, what the poet emphasized was the emptiness of theory without experience, and experience without theory.

<h2 style="text-align:center">VII</h2>

What is necessary for us to make this conjunction? Must we abandon the university because of its often irrelevance to the great issues of the day? The answer, of course, is no. But if our institutions of higher education are to fulfill the role that the twenty-first century demands, they must cultivate and nurture what Robert Coles believes essential to the development of moral intelligence, the capacity for empathy.[31] Men and women who have this capacity, and the unique freedom offered by the university to exercise it, can choose to "organically" or experientially identify themselves with the powerless, and thus live on the margins of society and play the role of its critic. Most of all, no gods will fail them,[32] as did Marxism in the Thirties, because they have come to understand that there are no gods to serve. Therefore, knowing themselves, as Matthew Arnold suggests, requires that intellectuals maintain a sense of self-interest that includes but also must transcend disciplines and institutions, and must extend toward the common good.

Edward Said remarked in the prestigious Reith Lectures that he gave two years ago in Great Britain, "the true intellectual is a secular being. . . . The intellectual has to walk around, has to have the space in which to stand and talk back to authority, since unquestioning sub-

servience to authority in today's world is one of the greatest threats to an active, and moral, intellectual life."[33] But this kind of inquiry possesses little effect unless its revolutionary implications are understood. Universities must cease to be a collection of intellectual denominations serving only the unsparing judgment of its disciplines. They must see that it is theirs to play a public as well as a private role, both cherishing and understanding the importance of intellectual diversity and holistic learning, writing, and teaching. The private and public intellectual, as well as those who interchange these roles, as must occur at times, must be validated in his or her endeavors. Equally important is that men and women of ideas see those in the communities from which they take their lives as fellow travelers and partners in the search for the common good, in the search for the good society.[34] Unless this is perceived as a joint effort, in which a genuine understanding of a common purpose thrives, even amid vocational differences, then there will be a continuing rancor over such issues as tenure and academic accountability.

At Southern Methodist University, President R. Gerald Turner has called for the university's renewed partnership with Dallas. But does Dallas even remember us? Are we merely a dream of the post-war years and remembered only for those iconic figures who bestrode with such success the football fields in our city and across our country?

For example, shortly before I came to the university in 1974, SMU's Dallas College, which educated part-time students from the city, many of them older than average, was closed and the downtown building was sold. The evening law school, which had long educated Dallas leaders such as the outstanding Hispanic attorney Adelpha Callejo, was abolished, as were our ties with the Southwest Legal Foundation, which focused on legal education and community law. The Department of Education and the Center for Urban Studies were both shut down. Several years ago the Department of Sociology became an annex of Anthropology, with a resulting loss of status and attractiveness to new faculty. These activities were the very ones in which men and women of ideas could make an impact upon our community with research, discourse, and the application of specialized knowledge.

The message to many Dallasites seemed clear. In its quest for elite status, SMU was prepared to end its historically close relationship with the city. To many, our faculty and students really had appeared to retreat into the Ivory Tower, or as many call our neighborhood, the Bubble. We had neither honored the purposes of these vanished departments and centers nor rewarded those who served them. The private intellectual had achieved ascendance in the academy.

We all have a long way to go, but I think we have begun to see our misdirection and to reconceive the university's mission, which can be renewed only if it explains itself to our community in understandable and compelling terms, and therefore plays a central role in the revitalization of our civic culture as we enter the twenty-first century. Some examples are a renewed commitment to student and faculty volunteerism, the new Center for Inter-Community Experience, evening undergraduate degree programs, which began several years ago and flourish, our off-campus programs, and the irrepressibly buoyant Master of Liberal Arts curriculum, which so many Dallas professionals celebrate. In addition, there are renewed efforts to reconceive the public dimension of our faculty's role by connecting them with civic and cultural organizations who might welcome them as speakers. For those who are willing to devote time when national and global issues demand informed comment and analysis, there are efforts to provide them with opportunities to offer clarity amidst confusion by serving as commentators to print or electronic media. A principal forum for addressing ethical and interdisciplinary issues in the academy, the professions, and our region has been the Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility. The resources and imagination of Cary Maguire and the leadership of my distinguished colleague, William May, have made the Center and its programs central to exploring many of the issues I have raised.

But allow me to step back and look again at the general issues at stake. I think of the Oxford scholar, Timothy Garton Ash, the most discerning foreign student of Poland's Solidarity Movement and the Czech democratic movement. "As the twentieth century closes," he writes, "the catalog of the *trahison of the clercs* is a thick volume; the list of those who preserved real independence is a thin one." This is because intellectuals "are among the least likely to resist the insidious

poison [of political and I would add professional corruption], precisely because they are the most able to rationalize, intellectualize, or philosophically justify their own submission or corruption by referring to higher goals or values." Instead of the intellectual engagé he asks for the *spectateur engagé*, who though intimately connected to the issues of his or her time does not seek a role as a public figure.[35] There is, of course, a danger in this.

In his new introduction to his autobiography, Stephen Spender writes, "Today [intellectuals, too often] have become spectators of reality, which has become a photograph."[36] As Spender understood, intellectuals who observe history by turning pages in an album will lose their "organic" relationship with their times. It is this connectedness that is so important to those of us who choose to speak to others of our dreams, hopes and fears. If some of those who do so are academic speakers, then they must deploy their words without fear, in a language that unifies rather than separates us, and address themselves to issues whose resolution holds the promise that will make us whole. The greatest danger for intellectuals in academia is that they will remain so acculturated to the traditions of a private intellectual life, in which they have been for years so rigorously apprenticed, they will advertently or inadvertently forego the unique freedom they have to help renew the public world, or worse, exile those of their colleagues who make this choice. Several years ago in an embattled Sarajevo, the American Susan Sontag mournfully asked, "Where are the intellectuals?"[37] Also asking are the unempowered and the disenfranchised in our communities, those over whom authority in all of its guises holds sway. So, too, do those who ask how their resources might best be used for making the good of us all an issue of common concern to us all. They deserve an answer.

Endnotes

1   On the reemergence of the public intellectual see Jane Scott, "Journeys from [the] Ivory Tower: Public Intellectual is Reborn," *New York Times* (August 9, 1994), A1. For an extended discussion of the public intellectual as a contemporary phenomenon, see Robert S. Boynton, "The New Intellectuals," *The Atlantic Monthly* (March 1995), pp. 53-70.

2   See, for example, John Carey, *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia, 1880-1939* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992); David Caute, *The Fellow Travellers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Lewis A. Coser, *Men of Ideas: A Sociologist's View* (New York: The Free Press, 1965); Richard Crossman, ed., *The God That Failed* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1983 [orig. pub. 1963]); Joseph V. Femia, *Gramscia's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process* (Oxford: Clarendon Press,'I 98 1); Leon Fink, Stephen T. Leonard, and Donald M. Reid, eds., *Intellectuals and Public Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Andrew Gella, ed., *The Intelligentsia and the Intellectuals: Theory, Method and Case Study* (London: Sage Publications, 1976); Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals* (New York; Harper and Row, 1988); Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Edith Kurzweil and William Phillips, eds. *Writers and Politics: A Partisan Review Reader* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983); Charles Lernert, ed., *Intellectuals and Politics: Social Theory in a Changing World* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1991); Ian Maclean, Alan Montefiore, and Peter Winch, eds. *The Political Responsibility of Intellectuals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Tom Naim, *The Break-Up of Britain* (London: Verso, 1981); Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994); Neil Wood, *Communism and British Intellectuals* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); An excellent examination of the literature, as well as a host of important new perceptions on the subject, can be found in Jeremy Jennings and Anthony Kemp-Welch, eds., *Intellectuals in Politics: From the Dreyfus Affair to Salman Rushdie* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) which appeared after this talk was presented.

3   See Alan Montefiore, "The Political Responsibility of Intellectuals," in *The Political Responsibility of Intellectuals*, p. 201.

4   *Ibid.*, p. 227. Of course, the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci famously said "all men are intellectuals."

5   Quoted by Stephen T. Leonard, "Introduction: a Genealogy of the Politicized Intellectual," in *Intellectuals and Public Life*, p. 1.

6   Ernest Gellner in "La trahison de la trahison des clercs," in *The Political Responsibility of Intellectuals*, p. 17.

7   *The Treason of the Intellectuals* pp. 31, 111.

8   *Intellectuals*, p. 342.

9   *Ibid.*, p. 1

10 Seymour Martin Lipset and Asoke Basu, "The Roles of the Intellectual and Political Roles," in *The Intelligentsia and the Intellectuals*, p. 112.

11 Quoted in Vaclav Havel, "The Responsibility of Intellectuals," in *The New York Review of Books* (June 22, 1995), p. 36.

12 Quoted in Frederick Brown, *Zola: A Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 1995), p. 796.

13 See Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain*, pp. 24-52; Perry Anderson, "Origins of the Present Crisis," *New Left Review* (Jan-Feb., 1964); Noel Annan, "The Intellectual Aristocracy," *Studies in Social History: A Tribute to G.M. Trevelyan* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1955), and Martin Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); T.W. Heyck offers an etymology of "the intellectual" in Victorian society, arguing that the intellectual saw himself as a member of an aesthetic elite, or as George Gissing wrote, "a separate and learned class." See "From Men of Letters to Intellectuals: The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Nineteenth-Century England," in *The Journal of British Studies* (Fall 1980), p. 183 and Jeremy Jennings and Tony Kemp-Welch, "The Century of the Intellectual," in *Intellectuals in Politics: From the Dreyfus Affair to Salman Rushdie*, pp. 1-6.

14 Christopher Norris, foreword, in Robert Sullivan, *Christopher Caudwell* (New York: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 1. Anderson's essay was titled "Components of the National Culture," *New Left Review* (May/June, 1968).

15 Cyril Connolly, *Enemies of Promise* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1939), pp. 29, 96.

16 Bernard Crick, *George Orwell: A Life*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), p. xix. Also see Neal Wood, *Communism and British Intellectuals* on this point, p. 97.

17 Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956*, p. 249.

18 *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1959).

19 *The Best and the Brightest* (News York: Random House, 1972).

20 Robert Nisbet, "Knowledge Dethroned," *The New York Times Magazine* (September 28, 1975), p. 37.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

22 *The New York Times Book Review*, December 15, 1996, p. 43.

23 Joe B. Frantz, *Forty Acre Follies* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1983), p. 231.

24 See Russell Jacoby's *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), *passim*.

25 Nisbet, "Knowledge Dethroned," p. 46.

26 R.H. Super, ed., *Lectures and Essays in Criticism* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1962), pp. 258, 283.

27 To John Dos Passos, July 22, 1936, in *Letters on Literature and Politics: 1912-1972* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), ed. Elena Wilson, p. 279.

28 Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking History* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 25.

29 Quoted in Fred Inglis, *Radical Earnestness: English Social Theory, 1880-1980* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1982), p. 201.

30 *World within World: The Autobiography of Stephen Spender* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1951), p. 204.

31 *The Moral Intelligence of Children* (New York: Random House, 1997), pp. 10-11, 98-99, 189-190, 195-196.

32 See *The God That Failed.*

33 *Representations of the Intellectual*, pp. 120-121.

34 For a compelling discussion of the need to revitalize our institutions in order to effect meaningful human connections, see Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, *et al.*, *The Good Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

35 Timothy Garton Ash, "Intellectuals & Politicians in Prague," *The New York Review of Books* (January 12, 1995), pp. 36-38.

36 Stephen Spender, "Looking Back in 1994: A New Introduction to World within World," in *World within World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p. xiii.

37 *New York Times* (August 19, 1993), A3.

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Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility
Southern Methodist University
PO Box 750316
Dallas TX 75275-0316
214-768-4255
www.smu.edu/~ethics_center