This article examines the role of generosity in public administration from a peculiar literary perspective, that of Wallace Shawn's play, The Designated Mourner. *In the recent past, deontologists in the discipline, such as Emette Redford, articulated rich theories of democratic responsiveness, but today these theories no longer command a scholarly consensus. This collapse, or "death," of deontology has led to a scramble for a new philosophical foundation to animate the study and practice of administration, with various candidates self-proclaiming themselves to be deontology's designated mourner. This article examines three candidates: neo-Lockean natural law, neo-Habermassean communicative competence, and neo-Nietzschean receptive generosity. Only the third contains a strong enough commitment to democratic generosity to resist the temptations of self-effacement represented by Shawn's designated mourner.*

MOURNING ADMINISTRATIVE GENEROSITY IN A POSTGENEROUS TIME *Lessons From Wallace Shawn's* The Designated Mourner

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> I went to the park, sat on a bench . . . and it suddenly hit me that everyone on earth who could read John Donne was now dead. . . . I realized that I was the only one left who would even be aware of the passing of this peculiar group, this group which was so special, at least in their own eyes. . . . The remembrers were gone, except for me, and I was forgetting.
>
> —Shawn (1996, pp. 99-101)

This article examines the question of democracy in future administrative practice from a peculiar literary perspective, that of the *designated*

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *The author is indebted to Romand Coles, Cynthia McSwain, Hugh Miller, Patricia Patterson, and Camilla Stivers for their thoughtful comments and kind encouragement on earlier drafts of this article.*

ADMINISTRATION & SOCIETY, Vol. 33 No. 6, January 2002 583-609
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mourner. The term is borrowed from a recent play of that name by Wallace Shawn (Shawn, 1996). Shawn's title is based on an old myth involving a tribal culture and what happened when an entire clan died out. In such a case, someone from outside the clan had to be designated as its official mourner. The *corpus* of the clan in my own appropriation will be the administrative ethic associated with the philosophy of deontology, here arbitrarily represented in the work of Emmette Redford (Redford, 1969; also Rawls, 1971; Sandel, 1982). Deontology sought to institute a democratic culture that would recognize everyone's right to pursue their own good while refusing to legislate any particular conception of a good life to any of the participants. Few today would enthusiastically endorse this notion in its pure form. This collapse, or death, of deontology has led to a scramble for a new philosophic foundation to animate the study of administration, with various candidates self-proclaiming themselves to be, in effect, deontology's designated mourner. Although there are many such candidates, this article will examine only three: neo-Lockean natural law, neo-Habermassean communicative competence, and neo-Nietzschean receptive generosity. Although each of these fulfills important requirements of democracy, I will argue that only the third holds open the possibility of an effectively democratic future. This is because the temptation is to respond to the loss of deontology and to postmodernity's tightening webs of economic, professional, and administrative disciplines by, first, shrinking the horizon within which one expects to be politically efficacious and, second, by thinning the hopes, desires, and emotions connected with citizenship to include only those demands that offer no threat to an increasingly fragile order.

THE DESIGNATED MOURNER

The designation *designated mourner* indicates a relation to the past. That relation is ambiguous, agonistic, and discontinuous. A mourner acknowledges a loss and must even admit that her or his joy depends crucially on something or someone that is missing. A mourner has lost her or his joy and searches for a new one. The goal of mourning is to learn to seek out, cultivate, and appreciate those qualities in the world that made the missing one so sustaining, so beloved. Thus, one possibility of mourning is that it might acknowledge loss by celebrating the world. It might en-joy

the world—make it joyful (J. Bennett, 2001). A designated mourner, however, implies a certain arbitrariness and unease about being selected. Perhaps one is not mourning in one's own right. One receives a call and the question remains, why me? Lately, when I teach public administration I find myself in this position of explaining deontologists to students who simply cannot fathom them. For instance, why do Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson include, in a work on ethics, an article about Justice Department lawyers who in 1969 refused to obey a Nixon administration order to delay implementing desegregation in Mississippi schools (Gutmann & Thompson, 1997, pp. 143-151)? Students in the master's program, including African American students, did not find these lawyers' actions to be legal, heroic, ethical, or in any other sense laudable. And, somehow I find myself at such times fondly remembering the old gang, for instance, Woodrow Wilson, Charles Merriam, E. E. Schattschneider, Frederick Mosher, or Dwight Waldo; an old gang that, to be honest, I never really liked that much. All of them sought to blend democracy with administration, but as I realize while arguing with my students, their discussions depended crucially on a predictable set of gut reactions, and those reactions have been largely devalued. That gut reaction is what I miss most. What does Wallace Shawn have to say about the dangers of mourning when such gut responses are changing?

Shawn's main character is named Jack. Jack is the designated mourner for a group of literati led by his father-in-law, Howard, whom he had hated, and by his ex-wife, Howard's devoted daughter, Judy. Howard is a quiet, though well-known, dissenter—a sort of English socialist in a society that seems too precarious to allow any challenges to its prosperous facade. The society seems to depend on aggressively exploiting a group it has a name for, "dirt eaters," but forbids itself ever to name. To even mention them is to risk death, but once, many years before, Howard had published a piece about his encounter with a woman dirt eater. She had drunk tea at his house and quietly explained why she hated him. This is apparently enough to make life precarious for Howard and all who associate with him.

Jack had never really fit in with Howard's circle, though he certainly had tried. He could not share their pleasures, especially the pleasures of their reading. "I mean, I was clever enough to know that John Donne was offering something that was awfully enjoyable—I just wasn't clever enough to actually enjoy it" (Shawn, 1996, p. 27). He always felt out of it

and, as the play progresses, finds their speech, their pleasures, their morals, and their political commitments less and less coherent. He especially cannot understand their concern for the "enemies," the dirt eaters.

> It's that thing of people whom you actually know and with whom you actually live *deciding consciously* to be the friend of your enemies that can get you really terribly upset, because your enemies after all are actually trying very hard to kill you. (Shawn, 1996, p. 46)

Jack's strategy is to shrink himself to conform to what is allowed. This strategy, he says, is the strategy of the rat, and what the rat wants most is to survive as a fat, sleek rat. One gets out of the way when something is about to hit you. "The skills rats possess don't work under water, so avoid getting wet. Don't abandon the sinking ship unless another boat's nearby" (Shawn, 1996, p. 42).

Throughout the play, Jack's horizon is shrinking and his personality is getting thinner. He becomes incapable of caring about people. At one point Judy asks him, "But what about the idea of a better world?" and he replies, "I did take a bath this morning, if that's what you mean" (Shawn, 1996, p. 56). Recalling a visit they once made to an orphanage where Jack had attended a sick little girl, Judy asks him how he understands himself now. He replies that he no longer has any meaning beyond his appearance. "I don't see myself 'as' anything at all. . . . This is me. This is me, and this is all there is to me" (Shawn, 1996, p. 27). In a sinking ship, Jack retreats to the part that is still dry.

In a time and place where it is dangerous to "be" anything, Jack survives by shedding everything that would label him as dangerous. In such a world, where bodies turn up daily in the parks, one needs to be completely focused on immediate things. "Perhaps I could somehow train my mind to focus less compulsively on terrifying images of death and disease . . . let me learn how to repose in the quiet shade of a nice square of chocolate" (Shawn, 1996, pp. 75-76). Finally, he thinks of himself as a "cheerful ghost" and is relieved that he no longer has to posture or try to be anything. "I guess I've always been a lowbrow at heart." As his horizon shrinks, he loses his ability to care about anything. He is no longer even aroused by his pornographic magazines. "One day it went. I looked at the pictures and got absolutely nothing. I felt nothing. I saw nothing. The pictures were dead. They were just paper" (Shawn, 1996, p. 94). In what follows, Emmette Redford will play the part of Howard, and the rest of us will take turns playing Jack.

EMMETTE REDFORD, CHARISMA, AND THE DEMOCRATIC MORALITY

Emmette Redford (1969) pursued a question typical of his generation, namely, can the administrative state be made compatible with the American ideal of democracy? There was a kindness and humaneness in his writing that might seem unusual today. He constantly admonished his reader to make sure the poor could participate; that workers were not merely means to an organization's ends; and even to admit that although civil disobedience and rioting might be frightening, if they energized participation among those who had been "silent subjects," namely, youth and minority races, then they could "only be welcomed by the believer in democratic morality" (p. 68). It is hard to imagine such generosity today.

Redford's was not the first attempt to somehow make the administrative state work democratically. Ever since the Pendleton Act of 1883, and especially after Franklin Roosevelt created the New Deal, students of public administration had been aware that the administrative state required a new theory of democracy (Lowi, 1985, pp. 44-66; Milkis, 1992; Tulis, 1987). Two influential attempts to articulate such a theory were the President's Committee on Administrative Management (1937), which recommended expanding the White House staff and creating the Executive Office of the President, and the American Political Science Association's Committee on Political Parties (1950), which called for a more responsible political party system. Unlike these earlier proposals, Redford thought that republican institutions were insufficient guarantors of democracy, and they could even subvert it (Redford, 1969, pp. 120-123). The president, for instance, was, like the rest of us, a prisoner of modern political-administrative structures. Overhead democracy, whether presidential or congressional, was doomed to be ineffectual because we had all become prisoners in an iron cage.

Yet, Redford remained optimistic. It turns out that what legitimated and motivated progress toward democracy was something called "democratic morality." Democratic morality was a charismatic force, really; its tenants were (a) man is for man, the belief in individual realization; (b) all men have worth, the belief in egalitarianism; and (c) universal participation, the belief that all individuals should have a say in the decisions that affect them. The administrative state was a form of collective action whose entire reason for being was that it expanded opportunities for individual realization. Yet, the available forms of collective action, namely

organizations, placed powerful constraints on individual realization. For instance, an organization that sought to open new opportunities and options for disadvantaged people could only do so by treating its own employees as mere functionaries.

Skilled and professional people could, in the name of democracy, wind up being highly dependent on the organizations that used their skills, and for millions of middle-aged people, this was "a new serfdom." Furthermore, modern organizations had the power to "engross" individuals by appealing to their need to belong and enveloping them in the group's work. Social science could be used to "engineer consent" through public relations and personnel counseling. "We have left home, spiritually as well as physically, to take the vows of organizational life" (Redford, 1969, p. 160).

We had no good antidotes for these dilemmas. Redford (1969) considered authoritarian management, unionism and collective bargaining, the human relations movement, and the answers given by administrative law. None of these, he concluded, could make administration less engrossing because the very nature of public service was service. All organizations require workers to adapt to their purposes and even to be submissive. However, Redford still insisted and expected that organizations could, should, and would achieve their employees' developmental purposes, even when the organization's requirements differed from workers' needs. Why this optimism? Because, "we" hold the "ideal of a humane society" (p. 172). "Harshness, indignities to men, engrossment of their private lives, and lack of empathy for their material and psychological needs are inconsistent with . . . democratic morality" (p. 175).

If one doubted that democratic morality could always permeate the existential constraints of modern organization, Redford insisted that modern organization is in fact porous. Bureaucratic rationale is always incompletely rational, society is never exhaustively socialized, and professionals are never totally professionalized. Apparently, the order was never so tightly drawn around us that a little magic could not happen.

Another area where institutions subverted democracy, while democratic morality saved it, was in pluralist politics itself. Pluralism organized people into shared interests, but this challenged democracy with two quandaries: conflicting interests, meaning that some people won whereas others lost or got less than they wanted; and particular applications, meaning that in a finite world opening one particular option necessarily meant foreclosing others. Hiring more women might mean hiring fewer men. Thus, pursuing equal opportunity could subvert the dream of equality of

results. Similarly, giving people equal voice in decisions might conflict with the fact that people had different stakes in the policy. For instance, even though higher wages for unionized workers might raise consumer prices for the rest of us, the interests of the workers might still prevail if everyone could acknowledge that a numerical minority, the workers, needed relief. Of course, in 1969 most Americans could acknowledge that. Today, we know such goodwill can be replaced by a more individualistic political agenda (Offe, 1996, pp. 147-182) and by goodwill toward management and prices (*Chevron v. Natural Resource Council, Inc.*, 1984; Scalia, 1989). Redford did propose a solution here: brokerage. Where all institutions fail, politicians, lobbyists, and bureaucrats can play a facilitating role to make sure that the underrepresented get a fair deal (Redford, 1969, p. 26; cf. Gawthrop, 1998, pp. 102-123). But, one looks in vain in *Democracy in the Administrative State* (Redford, 1969) for anything beyond exhortation to back up this imperative.

How does an ideal like democratic morality go from being a sort of charismatic common sense to an empty and pompous aloofness or, as my students and Shawn's Jack might say, to "blah blah blah"? Max Weber (1978) warned charismatics that they would have to "prove" themselves or risk expulsion from the community (p. 1113), and the democratic morality did lose its ability to prove itself. Looking back, we can see what went wrong. Eventually, democratic morality was undermined by the externalities it authorized. Any program put in place at one time, say, allowing the nuclear industry to freely develop its options, would limit the options available for our children's future when the problem of nuclear waste will be neither solved nor optional (Offe, 1996, pp. 8-10). Also, there were contradictory experiences for citizens. Groups with high-quantity interests tended to be better informed and better represented. Some groups were better at aggregating supporters than others, leading to "an imbalance in representation of interests" (Offe, 1996, p. 10). Equal access in the pursuit of equal opportunity does not just acquiesce in inequality of result, it fosters it (Connolly, 1981, pp. 120-150; Connolly, 1984, pp. 222-249; Habermas, 1975, pp. 33-94; Offe, 1996, pp. 147-182). To sort this out, democratic morality would have needed a conception of the common good (Connolly, 1981, pp. 90-119), but agnosticism about the common good was precisely what democratic morality was. In the absence of a conception of the common good, one could not value one set of options over another, not even on the grounds that some policies opened the space of options, whereas others constrained it. Under conditions of agnosticism, this very encouragement of private interests routinely produced external-

ities that both crowded the space of democracy itself and undermined the ethos of democratic morality (Offe, 1996, p. 16).

Although deontologists always professed to be agnostic about which demands prevailed, actually they were zealously egalitarian and cared passionately about who won, who lost, who participated, and who was shut out. Because such concerns could not be part of their official system, they had no way to persuade others that their morality was right. Instead, they purchased public consent with economic growth and affluence. Emmette Redford, for instance, routinely turned to economic growth when institutions failed him. What deontologists hoped was that continued abundance would translate into a popular belief in the spiritual force of democratic morality. At one level, what happened was simply that deontology lost its charisma. People stopped experiencing it as a duty. Once that happened, deontology's moralistic talk was unchained from earthly effects, and it simply sounded hollow, the way Howard's moralism came to sound to Jack in Shawn's play (Shawn, 1996, pp. 54-58). One can see this in virtually any neoconservative discussion of the early 1970s. The teenage Peggy Noonan (1990), on a bus to a Vietnam War protest, suddenly lost her connection to democratic morality:

> *And get me off this bus!* I looked around, and saw those mouths moving and shrank in my seat. What am I doing with these people? What am I doing with these intellectuals or whatever they are, what am I doing with this—this contemptuous elite? (p. 13; see also Federici, 1991; Frohnen, 1996, p. 43; cf. Shawn, 1996, pp. 48-50)

NEOCONSERVATISM AND THE STRATEGY OF THE RAT

William Bennett is a neoconservative intellectual who has held a number of administrative posts in conservative administrations, including head of the National Endowment for the Arts, secretary of education, and national drug czar. Bennett mourns Democratic morality by pursuing Jack's strategy of the rat. He survives and thrives by not abandoning a sinking ship, even though the space for freedom is shrinking. Like many other neoconservatives, Bennett was a lifelong Democrat who switched parties as popular faith in the New Deal vision of justice waned. Bennett mourns by devaluing his past, by hating conservatism's enemies more than conservatism would actually require. He constantly accuses liberals of being unlike "most Americans," or he often leads readers to believe that

liberals have somehow authorized marginal constituencies to use drugs, remain unemployed, commit crimes, or get divorced, always rhetorically linking liberals to constituencies that middle-class Americans fear. Liberals, it seems, are the friends of our enemies.

> I lived in that Brookline-Cambridge world for eight years. These are people who don't like the Pledge [of Allegiance]. They have disdain for the simple and basic patriotism of most Americans; they think they're smarter than everybody else, and they don't like these kinds of rituals. That bothers me. I think it should bother a lot of people. (W. J. Bennett, 1992, p. 96)

Compare this to Jack's: "It's that thing of people whom you actually know and with whom you actually live *deciding consciously* to be the friend of your enemies that can get you really terribly upset" (Shawn, 1996, p. 46). If Jack mourned by shrinking his horizon and thinning out his personality, in many ways so does William Bennett. Of course, there are limits to this analogy. After all, America can tolerate much more diversity than could Jack's society.

Like most neoconservatives, William Bennett (1994) claimed to be revaluing American values. From the perspective developed here, he might be better understood as a man disenchanted with disenchantment. This is the most interesting side of neoconservatism, and I will return to it below in Section 5. But, it is also a sort of blindness of neoconservatism, which seeks to refill the void of disbelief in the Enlightenment with a doctrine of natural law that always looks, to those of us who cannot make neoconservatism's leap of faith, like an apology for the American suburbs. John Locke, on my reading, simply trots out God whenever he needs to declare that an institution is beyond political contestation. For instance, families probably are beneficial in a modern—and even more so in a postmodern—political order, but whether the suburban nuclear family is in fact the institution that nature ordained to serve that role, one might seriously doubt. But, to say such things, according to Bennett, is to devalue America.

W. J. Bennett's (1992) book, *The De-Valuing of America*, overtly seeks to discredit liberals by showing how they devalued America. When liberals question inequalities and injustices inherent in a commercial and self-interested republic, Bennett accused them of turning their backs on ordinary Americans. When deconstructionists insist that there is no convincing argument for the naturalness of capitalism or nuclear families, Bennett accused them of abandoning our highest ideals. Thus, Bennett worked very hard to foster devaluation in America; he sought to devalue

the old and honorable American liberal tradition. Why can we no longer afford this tradition?

What the Brookline-Cambridge world believed was something like democratic morality, which it knew, deep down, most Americans did not share. For neoconservatives, Brookline-Cambridge-style hopes for social justice are not a morality at all; they are an antifamily ideology at best (Frohnen, 1997) and arrogance at worst. Deontologists such as Redford used to ask tough questions about how democracy might fare in the modern world: Is organization engrossing? Do modern organizational practices produce engineered consent? Does the practice of interest group politics produce externalities that undermine and shrink the space where free political action is possible? When neoconservatives ask such questions at all, they answer that a robust family life can ease the problem here—again, a valid, if limited, point—but most often they act as though only public organizations could even have such quandaries. In the face of such questions, Bennett is simply optimistic and confident. He has faith in the private sector. However, to the extent that Bennett mourns as Jack does, he has retreated into a stoic acceptance of the constraints imposed by the private sector's administration of society (Chaloupka, 1999, pp. 157-170; Mosher, 1982, pp. vii-xiv; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992).

Bennett has taken the vows of administrative life but denies that he has had to leave home to do so. If anyone puts pressure on this, Bennett's stoicism quickly becomes cynical as he wheels out majoritarian appeals to threaten those (liberals) vulnerable to majority moods. In an imperious pronouncement that, in my own reading, completely subverts the understandings of justice contained in, say, *The Federalist* Nos. 10, 51, 71, or 78, W. J. Bennett (1992) asserted, "Our common culture serves as a kind of immunological system, destroying the values and attitudes promulgated by an adversary culture that can infect our body politic" (p. 193; see also Diamond, 1979; McConnell, 1966, pp. 107-112).

In this image, administrators serve as antigens against cultural infection (Howe, 1994). Apparently, generosity is a virtue that the virtuous can no longer afford. Rather, by classifying people as enemies and friends of enemies, it becomes possible to rule out a whole series of questions for research and to justify a whole series of punitive interventions that would have been ruled out under democratic morality. People classed as enemies are less entitled to the rights of citizenship or goodwill of neighbors. The social and research agendas of friends of enemies can be summarily dismissed and their research grants denied on the grounds that their agendas are political (W. J. Bennett, 1992, pp. 17-19). The silencing of certain

kinds of inquiry, in turn, results in a bleak and stoic intellectual landscape where, say, the privately researched and produced economic impact statement about a particular policy cannot be countered by an equally well-researched publicly produced environmental impact statement concerning the same policy (Diver, 1981; *Industrial Union v. American Petroleum Institute*, 1980). Or, one hesitates to be critical of, say, a war on drugs for fear of being labeled a friend of our enemies. One hesitates to question careerism, or meritocracy, or consumerism, for fear of being accused of thinking one is better than most Americans. Surely this closing down of American generosity is not our only hope.

MOURNING BECOMES DISCOURSE, THE STRATEGY OF THE REMNANT

Whereas neoconservatives such as William Bennett seek to fill the vacuum left by the demise of deontology with a rhetoric of right and wrong values and a homogenizing politics of inclusion and exclusion, Charles Fox and Hugh Miller (1996) offered a future that can tolerate much more diversity. Like Bennett, Fox and Miller were aware that traditional American values were rooted in a lifeworld—patterns of living, working, thinking, and acting—that has been largely destroyed by late-20th-century mass consumer culture. But, instead of imposing natural law, Fox and Miller called for an authentic rational discourse. A discursive political world knows and acknowledges itself as a constructed reality, and a constructed reality could only justify itself by showing that it was, in the best sense, democratically constructed by people who understood what they were doing, in both the immediate and in the larger senses of that phrase. Furthermore, a discursive political world presupposes a heterogeneous citizenry that must manifest its being together in a struggle over the names and meanings of things in a world shared imperfectly (p. 51). "We seek a new framework that can withstand postmodern conditions, on the one hand, and can claim congruence with democratic ideals, on the other" (p. 7). In terms of mourning, if Howard's world is gone, Fox and Miller sought to find new ways to preserve his Enlightenment morality in a hostile world.

According to Fox and Miller (1996), postmodern society itself has lost its base in productive activity. The modern era—say, in the mid-19th century (p. 74)—was based in making commodities for the capitalist market, and most people were engaged in some form of production, either in

agriculture or in factories. In such a society, based in instrumentally using natural resources, a political discourse based in problem solving could arise. Although Fox and Miller would not endorse its utilitarian attitudes, the example does tend to show that in a world of intersubjectively shared projects, open and authentic discourse is at least a genuine possibility. However, the postmodern era is characterized by the thinning of the intersubjective, or macrocultural, world, opening up the specter of a "public policy conversation . . . eclipsed by glib, insincere, attention-grabbing imagery" (p. 6). This, according to Fox and Miller, poses many problems for a theory of public administration, of which I will mention only three and will certainly not do justice even to them: (a) Reality increasingly becomes hyperreality, that is, signs and simulacra increasingly take on a reified life as things. This means that rational discourse loses its ability to represent its objects as true objects of knowledge because what "everybody knows" is a simulation. (b) Words become self-referential, that is, like advertising messages, the communication is either too narrow or too fleeting to refer to anything beyond the immediate message. (c) Discursive communities, where they exist, become neotribal, that is, as macrocultural discourse becomes thinner, it suffers a legitimacy crisis, and its place is taken by "a plurality of thick, robust, self-contained communities" (p. 59), for instance, "Queer Nation, religious denominations, Branch Davidians, Black Nationalists, Aryan nation, Crips, and . . . other self-referencing paradigms" (p. 59).

In such a world, public administration orthodoxy simply cannot provide the grounding needed for democratic administration. Filling in a bit, all orthodox theories, from Woodrow Wilson's politics-administration dichotomy, through the President's Committee (1937) report on staffing proposals, through the Responsible Parties movement, or lately, the Blacksburg Manifesto, rely on a widespread and robust political culture to anchor the republican governmental institutions that in turn give direction to bureaucracy. Legitimacy, in these theories, requires that political parties, candidates, and opinion leaders aggregate voters into a coherent set of policy directions. First, following Hannah Arendt, for Fox and Miller, public debate arises out of a widespread perception that something is wrong and that public institutions and purposes ought to set it right. This perception gives rise to a process of deliberation followed by public action, a process that Fox and Miller, now following Jürgen Habermas, would refer to as "democratic will formation." But, in today's world, where macrocultural discourse is hyperreal and self-referential, and most

substantive discourses are neotribal, "there can be no will formation from the people" (Fox & Miller, 1996, p. 66). On one hand, macrocultural discourses are monological, that is, they are one-way insincere communications designed to silence, not foster, discourse, and on the other, neotribal discourses are incommensurable with one another and therefore cannot be the basis of a society-wide will formation.

In this situation, Fox and Miller (1996) suggested a "public energy field" theory of public discourse. There are people who still can participate in an authentic discourse, the people who for one reason or another care deeply about a given policy issue: "bureaucratic elites, journalists, ad creators, political consultants, intellectuals in think-tanks or academic institutions" (p. 66). "It is [our task] to suggest that the best democracy we can get in our postmodern mass consumer society is a discourse of the nonapathetic, of those citizens whose warrant for entry into the discourse is political intentionality" (p. 39).

One can recognize the influence of Hannah Arendt in public energy fields. Energy fields "assume a public sphere with multiple sources" (Fox & Miller, 1996, p. 101). People show up with projects that have presumably arisen in the course of their recursive practices. These projects and their bearers then "compete in authentic discourse" (Fox & Miller, 1996, p. 105). The discourse is "grounded," in the sense of an electrical circuit, because it is based in (competing) actual-world projects, but these transcend the immediate by creating a sort of discursive currency, again, in the sense of an electrical circuit. Energy from a "flame-up . . . pulsates out in waves of currency." This creates "ideas in good currency" that circulate among participants who interact. Social currency circulates among (plugged in?) people, affects their interactions, and makes them amenable to change. These energy fields cross organizational boundaries and include anyone sincerely interested in asking what we should do next.

This vision of governance by discourse has many advantages and should be a part of any viable attempt to keep the issue of democracy alive in a postindustrial era. It allows administrators to involve competing groups who usually talk past one another, it tries to locate administrative practice in both actual life and in high-minded discourse, and perhaps most important, it acknowledges the actual state of administrative affairs. It is now possible, for instance, for an agency such as Health and Human Services, finding itself unpopular with both Congress and the president, to find new functions and sources of revenue by teaming up with the Central Intelligence Agency to develop a technology that can be used both for

surveillance and for state-of-the-art mammographic imaging technology (Jordon, 1999; U.S. Public Health Service, 1997; similarly on United States Department of Agriculture, see Aman, 1998; Moon, 1999).

However, what has happened to the generosity celebrated by Emmette Redford? In its place, there is a whole host of neotribalists who can no longer be trusted to be sincere: religious fundamentalists, feminists, fussbudgets, Lee Atwater, Black Nationalists, Mr. Social Conformist, and Rebel Without a Cause. These people, even though they are just as embodied as the remnant that does participate, are said to have thickly constituted, but incommensurable, discourses. Their ideas are in bad currency. I will briefly compare them to the good currency.

It is worth noting that included in the group of people who participate in good currency are some that Claus Offe (1996) found most likely to defect from the welfare state, even though they were its largest beneficiaries: "Managers, professionals, scientists, technocrats working for large organizations," according to Offe, are those most likely to use their professional status and income to seek private alternatives to social problems (p. 176). For complicated rational choice reasons, this group prefers private colleges, private schools, private pension plans, and private health care. In fact, William Bennett would be a fairly typical representative. The point is not that this group could never be genuinely public spirited, its members often are, but that their public spirit often comes freighted with attitudes that neotribalists find infuriating. In fact, from the neotribalist perspective, warranted speakers look decidedly neotribal. This should not be understood as either a rehash of class politics or even a liberal whining about arbitrary authority. Rather, as Paul Ricoeur (1965) argued in a famous essay, every extension of public rationality involves power, and every use of public power harbors a potential for evil. But, if there is anything to this, neotribal discourses may not be as independent of rationally constructed metacultural discourses as Fox and Miller believe. I will return to this in the next section, but here I will say that this shows that authentic discourse has an irreducibly political dimension, not just within policy energy fields but also in the field's relationship to nonfield discourses (Foucault, 1977, p. 207).

These suspicions lead to some further observations about Fox and Miller's (1996) understanding of the concept of intentionality. If you ask what warrants one for participation in the discourse, the answer is finally that one makes good contributions to the problem of what we should do next. A "competent self" is one who accepts discursive limits; it acts within the expectations of other speaker/listeners, "grasping, accepting,

and performing within the limits of those expectations" (p. 88). These become "competent performances," which "reinforce and validate those limits which become structures of varying strength and duration" (p. 88). One is thus involved in a reflexive act of governance. So far so good. But, what happens to those who find these limits too confining, and why does the question have to be what should we do next? Why does public discourse have to take this form?

Jurgen Habermas has always insisted on a scientific discourse of assertion and verification because only that speech allows for a progressive search for truth (Coles, 1992; Habermas, 1975, 1979; Smith, 1997, pp. 111-121). Sincere speakers make counterfactual statements about an objective world that other speakers can then refute, verify, or modify. According to Habermas, nonempirical, noninstrumental speech is too porous and subjective to anchor authentic discourse. Fox and Miller (1996) wished to keep this distinction between authentic and inauthentic speech acts, but they rejected Habermas's justification for doing so (pp. 114-120). Fox and Miller are impressed with postmodern philosophy's critique of metanarratives; that is, as they gloss this philosophy, it is no longer possible to ground one's philosophy in an overarching story about the fundamental nature of truth, or reason, or human epistemology. Turning instead to Bonnie Honig, Merleau-Ponty, Anthony Giddens, and Mary Parker Follet, Fox and Miller would say that problem-solving discourse is warranted because humans always already have projects, that is the nature of their phenomenological intentional structure (p. 85). Humans are ontologically intentional. However, Merleau-Ponty's (1962) intentionality seems to include a broader range of involvement than is conveyed by Fox and Miller's term "projects." Merleau-Ponty's use comes closer to "projection," in the sense of orientation and involvement (pp. xviii-xx); it would certainly include a poetic experience of the world. Habermas needs to maintain a distinction between speech that discloses the world and speech that coordinates it because the latter is the only appropriate speech for authentic political discourse (White, 1991, pp. 23-25). If Merleau-Ponty's intentionality includes both world-disclosing and world-coordinating dimensions, this finally puts pressure on Fox and Miller's warrants for discourse. Warranted speakers are those who, without warrant, shrink the phenomenal horizon of intentionality and include only coordination.

A parallel shrinkage occurs in the way Fox and Miller (1997) embraced postmodern philosophy. In a footnote to a recent article, they expressed their debts to this philosophy that they understand as antifoundational,

antiuniversal, antiessentialist, linguistically nominalist and relativist, and as decentering the self and appreciating difference. "If postmodernists are united in any way, it is by doubt toward those typically modern claims to universalism or essentialism—now named 'foundationalism' or 'metanarratives' " (pp. 66-67; Fox & Miller, 1996, pp. 44-45, 87). No follower of Nietzsche or Derrida that I know of would accept this as a description of what she or he does. These characterizations are far more typical of rationalist accounts of postmodernism, and they usually lead up to a rejection of it (Jun & Rivera, 1997, pp. 145-146). These rationalist moves are so far from anything like "undistorted communication" that one scholar has written a whole book on the phenomenon of rationalist "resistance to theory" (Smith, 1997). What is odd is that Fox and Miller largely accepted the rationalist characterizations of postmodernism but then endorsed what they take to be postmodern conclusions. What is being accepted, it seems to me, is a disappointment. No metanarrative? Oh well, carry on.

Briefly, when, for instance, Derrida deconstructs Kafka's story of the law of the law, the so-called absence is not a claim that law is a sham but, if anything, an overabundance (Beardsworth, 1996, pp. 27-45; Keenan, 1997, pp. 7-42). The law, precisely in being less than is required, is more than we expected. The law is able to have force in the world because it is always deferred. The absence of the law is also the law's necessity and its fecundity. Derrida's deconstructions are very rich interpretations that seem to have little to do with skepticism or relativism. But, these are not the postmodern insights that Fox and Miller accepted. Often for them, postmodern simply means not-modern, a reimposition of the 18th-century narrative of skepticism and relativism that has finally done unto rationalism what rationalism did unto theology.

TOWARD ADMINISTRATIVE GENEROSITY

For Jürgen Habermas, public administration is a "steering function." It coordinates a social and political common life that can no longer count on a lifeworld of tradition. Romand Coles (1997) has argued that it is possible to accept Habermas's claims for discourse; to acknowledge that a free and democratic future must involve an enlightened reliance on technology that will in turn require a great deal of coordination; and that this coordination, if it is to be democratic, will certainly involve the question, what should we do next? It is possible to affirm all this and yet still declare that it is far

from enough. Despite its promised abundance, it is not enough because it relies solely on structures of agency and rationality traditionally associated in Western thought with autonomy. To cite only Immanuel Kant's (1929) formula in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, "reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan of its own" (p. Bxiii). Reason, said Kant, learns from nature, not by receptively listening to her but only as "an appointed judge who *compels* [italics added] the witnesses to answer questions which he has himself formulated" (p. Bxiii). To show how such a conception affects an ethic of generosity, Coles traced this secular attitude back to an earlier Christian view.

St. Augustine understood Christian charity to mean that one should long to give one's best gifts to one's neighbor. However, the best gift was the gift of faith. Coles pointed out that for Augustine, this gift always moved in one direction: Christians brought the gift of faith to unbelievers. Nonbelievers were never invited to reciprocate, at least not as nonbelievers. Nonbelievers only received. The risky encounter with the non-Christian other, with her or his alien desires and understandings, was never allowed to transgress the self-enclosing narrative of the charitable Christian. The other was either nothing or moving toward being incorporated in the believer's narrative. In the absence of a more reciprocal understanding of generosity, where one risks a self-transformation in the encounter with the other, generosity is destined on occasion to manifest itself in colonialist and violent encounters. One does not have to sit through very many board meetings of philanthropic organizations to know that this Kantian/Christian form of generosity is still in full force (Cruikshank, 1999). Any theory of democratic will formation that leads to democratic steering functions will likely make extensive use of the same notion of generosity.

Coles (1997) explicated his affirmative notion of receptive generosity with an extremely powerful interpretation of Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Like many mourners of deontology today, Zarathustra is seen as a man bearing gifts that the rabble is not particularly interested in receiving. Through a series of transformations, Zarathustra moves from a Kantian sense of generosity, "I cannot and must not receive," to a tragic but-not-hopeless "I must receive to give, but how can I?" (p. 16). The key is that the will is powerless against at least two things, one's past regrets and the small-mindedness of the rabble. In these two guises, "the other and otherness have come and are always already coming" (p. 20; Keenan, 1997, pp. 7-13). The question is how to receive these uncanny guests. The agonistic struggle with this question is finally what constitutes a receptive

generosity. Is it possible to actually do this? Because this is new theoretical terrain, I will be reduced to a few gestures in directions that seem promising to me: The first gesture will be in the direction of street-level bureaucracy and the second toward a wider, more postmodern, administrative context as exemplified in the environmental justice movement.

Zarathustra's resentment of the rabble might be recapitulated in a typical master of public administration seminar discussion. Suppose the assigned text is Michael Lipsky's (1973) famous article, "Street-Level Bureaucracy and the Analysis of Urban Reform" and that many of the students are themselves street-level bureaucrats. In fact, suppose the student making the seminar presentation is a working firefighter. Lipsky's article deals with situations where minority constituencies accuse service providers of racism and where the individuals accused insist they are not racist, as when a policeman seeking clues to a burglary in a White neighborhood stops a passing Black motorist. Lipsky's point is that both parties are right, that professional rules of thumb often make service delivery plausibly racist even when the individual provider is not a racist. Lipsky's is a hermeneutic attempt to promote understanding between the groups.

However, the subtleties are often lost on students, and the fireman, who thinks Lipsky is accusing him of racism, is furious. He has had insults and rocks thrown at him; he has even been shot at. It is absolutely senseless, he thinks, to throw rocks at someone trying to save lives and property in your neighborhood. All this has meant, he concludes, is that when they go into certain neighborhoods, firefighters must take special precautions. He cannot see that he is proving Lipsky right, that he is developing rules of thumb that minority people will be able to read as racist. Every attempt to explain this to him seems to simply hit a brick wall, and the instructor winds up fuming as well. So much for the hermeneutical fusion of horizons.

What would it look like to practice receptive generosity in these situations? William Connolly (1995) provided a model here (pp. 41-74). Connolly faced a situation in his own neighborhood where men like himself—White, middle-aged, professional males driving foreign cars—were carjacked at the gas pump, stuffed into the trunks of their own cars, driven some distance, shot, and abandoned. A young African American man, one Dantay Carter, was eventually convicted. "Carter's crime astonished me," wrote Connolly. "It inspired fear and a guttural will to vengeance in me" (p. 71). Connolly went on to interrogate this sense of astonishment and revenge and found it to be rather suspicious. When we purport to be astonished at someone's actions or insist that they are senseless, Connolly suspected that we are not truly lacking in the resources to

make sense of the actions in question. Rather, when people insist that something is astonishing, or horrendous, or unthinkable, or senseless, or monstrous, we ought to suspect a cover-up of a deeply rooted spirit of revenge that only contingently has anything to do with the person or action we are criticizing.

Connolly (1995) defined revenge as "a drive aimed at any constituency whose way of being calls the naturalness or superiority of your identity into question" (p. 63). To explicate this spirit of revenge, Connolly turned to the Christian theologian Rene Girard. Christians tap into a much richer notion of human desire than do most secularists or rationalists because the Bible is full of passionate volatile characters who must be confronted on their own terms. For Girard (1986), there is a structure of human desire that far surpasses competition for scarce resources. Mimetic desire is desire that mimics the desire of others: I don't want a toy like your toy; I want your toy because you want it. Most of us have experienced something like this when the waiter brings the food at a restaurant and we suddenly wish we had ordered what someone across the table ordered. This is an example of an everyday low-level mimetic desire. But, sometimes two women want the same husband, or twin brothers want the same kingdom. Sometimes a jealous ex-husband declares, "If I can't have her, no one else can either." In the Biblical command not to covet your neighbor's wife, Girard would point out that the Bible is not being sexist. The "wife" is a nameless placeholder because each man is only interested in her as the object of the other man's desire. It is their rivalry that renders her faceless. The commandment forbids this sort of desire because it leads to feuds, civil wars, and lynching. However, for Girard, most of the time societies (and families!), which are all based on multiple exclusions, divert the energy that such desires create into violence against scapegoats. John the Baptist, Jesus, and Oedipus all function as classic scapegoats for Girard. It is not, of course, that Dontay Carter was innocent but that he was also a scapegoat. All of us have experienced his sort of desire, imperious desire that takes us over in spite of ourselves, even if we are not subjects, like Carter, of violent desire. Connolly mentioned small but powerful desires, for instance, the urge to stare at someone who reflects your ideal of sensuality, or the urge to steal trinkets for the thrill of it, or the urge to fly into a rage at an authority figure of the opposite sex. I would add the urge to seethe with anger when students do not display what the professor feels to be the appropriate attitude of compassion toward the unfortunate. Everyone has her or his own list here. Some of these desires might result from wanting to emulate or thwart another's pleasures; others are the result of

painful or degrading past experiences that we were too weak or powerless to redress; none of them results from our choices as rational or responsible actors. But, if we can recognize such desires in ourselves, it is possible to make at least murky sense of Dontay Carter's more horrendously violent and resentful desire to hurt well-off White men, or someone's desire to throw rocks at firefighters, or in the case of the professor, the desire of a student to lash out at a troublesome liberal critic.

All of these examples betray a scapegoated definition of responsibility that could be stated as follows: Great pain implies great responsibility, and whoever is responsible is going to pay (Connolly, 1991, pp. 98-106)! The definition of responsibility can shift away from its affirmative use, "It's my turn to do the dishes," to the more vengeful, "My parents made me wash the dishes and now my kids are sure going to do the same." Another must pay the price—take responsibility—for one's pain by giving one the pleasure that, say, one's parents experienced in dominating one. When people accuse one another of irresponsibility, often both definitions are at work. Dantay Carter, in his courtroom statement, spoke of the degradation a White world had imposed on his mother, a debt his victims were made to pay. In the administrative context, the firefighter's astonishment that anyone could throw rocks at emergency workers fighting to protect them and the professor's astonishment at the firefighter's resistance to Lipsky's peace-making article are both cases of imperious generosity running up against resistance from recipients. In a Nietzschean world of difference and contest, this resistance would be almost a matter of course. However, the firefighter and the professor load on to it a deeper desire for revenge.

Postmodern society has many sources of resentment. The good life of consumption is based on miming the desires of others and requires unprecedented degrees of self-discipline and energetic involvement in the plans and projects of agencies one does not control. On a 1996 album, the music group KMFDM used the line, "We are addicted to the things we hate," to refer to television, malls, and magazines. The good life of consuming computers, cell phones, and the Internet, or deregulation and contracting out, is much like Rousseau's conveniences. The initial enjoyment quickly gives way to anxiety at the prospect of doing without them. Writing from his experience under communism, Vaclav Havel et al. (1985, pp. 27-29) showed how this anxiety could actually generate a sort of hollow boosterism for the regime that controls access to mimetic goods. If one had asked Havel's greengrocer why he posted Communist Party slogans in his window, he would have replied with a rhetorical question: "Well, don't you believe the workers of the world should unite?" In a neo-

Lockean vocabulary, one might similarly make elaborate use of notions such as tacit consent and free choice to cover one's docility. This tactic works best, of course, if the good life is lived unequally; if there are dirt eaters to compare oneself to. But, in this case, one ought to expect resentment toward the dirt eaters in at least two senses: first, for not being willing to make the sacrifices that regular people make, and second, for being a constant reminder that one's consent is never as wholehearted as one pretends. Resentment loads extra baggage on to the rock throwers. They are enemies in both the straightforward sense that they are hurling rocks at firefighters' bodies and the resentful sense that they are bringing into question one's sacrifices and disciplines. In this light, Michael Lipsky becomes coded as friend of our enemies.

Could we learn to see these situations as gifts, as clues from recipients about our own hidden resentments, and to acknowledge that our service contains strong elements of revenge? Are not most of us in service to correct things we believe are wrong? What might it look like to serve without revenge? The professor might notice that he, like Howard, is mirroring the firefighter and recommending that the firefighter maintain an openness to others that the professor is unwilling to extend to the firefighter. The firefighter's reaction discloses to the professor that the ungenerous world that pains him also leaves him impotent to do much about it and that the peace he had hoped to make is being rebuffed. In such a world, it is tempting to regain dignity at the expense of people below him. The firefighter might note that his resentment of liberal critics might be mirrored in the actions of rock throwers. The fireman would, of course, still require physical protection from rock throwers, but he might be better equipped to separate the issue of physical safety from the need to solve the theodicy problem.

This discussion of classroom street-level bureaucracy shows that in an administrative practice of receptive generosity, the parties would risk a self-transformation. Could an agency do this? To take generosity beyond the level of individual heroics, I will mention some recent events in the environmental justice movement. Environmental justice is a political orientation that ties concern for the environment to the American civil rights movement. Toxic waste sites and industrial pollution tend to wind up in poor and, especially, minority neighborhoods (Bullard, 1994; Di Chiro, 1998; Novotny, 1998; Szasz, 1994). According to its proponents, this connection to civil rights separates environmental justice from mainstream environmentalism in that it expands environmental concerns beyond preservation of animals, plants, and natural beauty to include issues such as

"the place you work, the place you live, the place your play" (Di Chiro, 1998, p. 105).

Participants in the environmental justice cause tend to be characterized in one of two misleading ways. Corporations and, alas, administrative agencies characterize them as either selfish free riders who want prosperity but want the toxins dumped in someone else's neighborhood or as uninformed and hysterical (Szasz, 1994, pp. 104-116). Their defenders, on the other hand, tend to characterize them as authentic little poor people: mothers offsetting complex corporate greed with simple homespun truths (Stinson, 2000, p. 19). However, in my experience, activists are often petulant; they consciously manipulate icons and play to win. This movement not only resists the docile identities that corporations would favor, it also resists, despite the hopes of true believers, various liberal and Marxist identities as well (Szasz, 1994, p. 158). Rather than thinking of them as lacking in power that liberals or Marxists or administrators might teach them to acquire, one might better think of these groups as players—disadvantaged players, certainly, but players.

According to Jessica Kulynych (1999), what seems most promising in this movement is that sometimes these people, who have been coded by everyone as nonrational, have used local knowledge and local commonsensical research to alter both their own and the experts' self-perceptions. A nonexpert might assert that she or he does not care how big the computer was or how scientific the study, if it says that her or his neighbors are not sick, the study must be false. When Emelda West was told that her daughter died of cancer from taking birth control pills, she responded that a lot of men in her community must be taking birth control pills too (Stinson, 2000, p. 19; Szasz, 1994, p. 96).

Local activists in West Virginia were especially adroit at changing what Towers (2000) referred to as the scale of conflict. In Towers's study, a small coalition of West Virginians, made up of rural Appalachians and affluent retirees, aided by a caffeine-driven local lawyer, defeated the siting of an extra-high-voltage electrical power transmission line by bringing local knowledge and citizen research to bear against well-funded corporate and academic econometric and geographic information system (GIS) mapping studies. One strategy was to simply ask obvious questions. They noted that the authors of the GIS study had rated their own university towns as environmentally sensitive, while rating beautiful gorges, rivers, and mountains as perfect places for a power line. Simply walking the ground told them that the experts had used out-of-date topographical maps to do their study. Novotny (1998, p. 145) and Di Chiro (1998, pp. 123-127)

both reported cases in which local people successfully challenged standard research protocols and policy analyses, pointing out, for instance, that when the neighborhood is peopled with children, women, and elderly people exposed around the clock to 10 or more different toxins coming from five or six different sources, it does no good to test single toxins on healthy 21-year-old male workers exposed for only 8 hours a day.

Sometimes the experts actually do listen, quit (resentfully) rolling their eyes, and realize that their studies are flawed (Di Chiro, 1998, p. 124), and sometimes the activists gain new insights about their own efficacy (Szasz, 1994, pp. 90-98). Kulynych, following Honig, attributed this to the coalitional nature of the process. No one in a coalition is at home; the residents risk their lives and health, the corporations risk their business, and it would seem the experts risk their very sense of purpose and service. Bernice Reagon (1983) wrote that within coalitions, there is often a profound discomfort; it is "trying to team up with somebody who could possibly kill you . . . because that's the only way you can figure you can stay alive" (p. 356). Coalitions are agonistic through and through. What makes them uncomfortable is that others refuse to wear the identities we offer them and thus bring our own self-images—especially as helpers—into question. "There is nowhere you can go and only be with people who are like you," wrote Reagon. "It's over. Give it up" (p. 357).

What Fox and Miller (1996) called neotribalism might better be understood as insurrections in the field of identity and difference; difference is the necessary condition for identity that also renders it impossible. Some constituencies do respond to difference by overprivileging identity and resenting the differences that disrupt it. However, a democratic postmodern life and administration will necessarily be coalitional. Receptive generosity is the agonistic struggle to affirm difference and to relax the resentments that feed the drive to impose identity. The alternative, to insist on positive identity in a fast-changing world, is to close off the affirmation of difference and to close off a promising possibility for democratic public administration.

CONCLUSION

The strategy of the designated mourner seeks both to bury deontology and to praise it. It seeks to bury what was imperious and arrogant while fostering what was generous and to question the darker side of its will to empower while celebrating its aspirations for freedom, equity, and

democracy in a complicated world. Emmette Redford's democratic morality, like Shawn's character Howard, was generous in the way that Augustine and Kant were; its gifts were too imperious. I have considered three strategies of mourning democratic morality. Two strategies, neoconservatism and discourse theory, contain important insights, but they each mourn by shrinking the horizon of thought in ways that close us off to an abundance of possible responses to our new situation. In Wallace Shawn's metaphor of the sinking ship, the rats sought only survival and so treated the last few cabins still above water as all the ship that was necessary and even declared that in doing so, they were the positive ones. However, the pain of mourning might also point to a more abundant life. For Nietzsche's Zarathustra, the great weight was the unchangeable past and its "it was." And, what Zarathustra had to learn to affirm life was that the most difficult, and often the highest, aspect of giving is receiving the other in agonistic dialogical engagements.

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