

Professing Sociology

STUDIES IN THE LIFE CYCLE
OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Irving Louis
Horowitz

With a new introduction by Howard G. Schneiderman

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Introduction to the Transaction Edition

FUGITIVE THOUGHTS TAMED: PROFESSING SOCIOLOGY AND THE PRAGMATIST TRADITION

Howard G. Schneiderman

PROFESSING SOCIOLOGY, originally published in 1968, takes the reader into a highly oxygenated and suggestive social science atmosphere. It also reveals its author, a prolific sociologist, and a first-rate essayist, at a critical transition in his long intellectual career. For both reasons, this is an interesting and important book, well worth reconsideration some forty-five years later.

According to Aldous Huxley, who was a master of that form of writing, "the essay is a literary device for saying almost everything about almost anything." As a writer who favored the essay, Irving Louis Horowitz certainly fits Huxley's definition. In crafting this examination of the inner-life, the academic life, and the political life of sociology during the early to mid-1960s, Horowitz engages the reader in the three ways that Huxley says are crucial to the essay as a form of writing. Some of the chapters come across as being somewhat personal, some as objective and driven by facts, and some as abstract and universal. As Huxley says "the most richly satisfying essays are those which make the best not of one, not of two, but of all the three worlds in which it is possible for the essay to exist."¹ With these criteria in mind, the reader will find *Professing Sociology* to be richly satisfying.

1. Aldous Huxley, *Collected Essays* (New York: Harper, 1958) pp. v-vi.

Horowitz's bibliography has almost nine hundred entries, including over fifty books that he wrote or edited addressing a diverse set of interests, a small sample of which includes the threat and strategies of thermonuclear war, the horrors of Cuban communism, genocide, Israeli democracy, publishing as a vocation, and the decomposition of sociology from a lively academic discipline to a moribund one.² In *Professing Sociology*, Horowitz weaves together articles and essays, most written during the 1960s, into an exploration of what sociology meant at a crucial stage in its modern development.

In trying to wrap my mind around the sheer volume of Horowitz's written legacy, I've asked myself many times over the simple question: "Where to begin?" What are the essential organizing premises of his work? What threads are woven throughout the tapestry of his thinking? In other words, what is the essence of the Horowitz *oeuvre*? I am glad to have the opportunity here to begin answering these questions. To do so, I will first set *Professing Sociology* and its author into a context of time and place.

An intellectual prodigy, Irving Louis Horowitz was only 22 years old when in 1951 he published his first article, "Cultural Reaction in Plato's Thought," in the *Journal of Social Studies*. A year later, in 1952, Horowitz published his first book, *The Renaissance Philosophy of Giordano Bruno*. By 1959, when he was thirty years old, Horowitz had published two more books, *Helvetius: Philosopher of Democracy and Enlightenment* in 1954, and *The Idea of War and Peace in Contemporary Philosophy*, in 1957, and approximately thirty other articles and reviews, most of which were about philosophical subjects such as Diderot and Descartes to Marx and Marxism, and the pragmatic philosophy of Pearce and James to the pacifist philosophies of Tolstoy and Gandhi. Thus, the first part of Horowitz's career was decidedly more philosophically oriented than it was sociological.

If we fast-forward ahead to 1968, the year that *Professing Sociology* was first published, and when Horowitz was almost forty years old, Horowitz the philosopher had become Horowitz the sociologist. This emergence seems precipitous and swift. The young philosophy student graduated from the City College of New York in 1951. He took a masters degree in philosophy from Columbia in 1952, and graduated in 1957 with a PhD in sociology from the University of Buenos Aires, in Argentina, where he had relatives. After a brief period of teaching sociology in Buenos Aires, the young Horowitz returned to the United States in 1958, took a postdoctoral fellowship at Brandeis University, and taught at Bard College, and, after that, at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. In 1963 Horowitz accepted a position at Washington University, in St. Louis, one of the best and most innovative sociology departments in the country. He remained at Washington University until 1969, when he moved to Rutgers University, where he spent the rest of his career.

If Horowitz's academic career was taking off like a rocket in 1968, his equally well-known career as a journal editor and then as a publisher was about to go into orbit. In 1963 Horowitz, and his Washington University colleagues, Alvin Gouldner and Lee Rainwater, founded an academic social science journal named *Trans-action*:

2. Horowitz's complete bibliography can be found in Irving Louis Horowitz, *Once More unto the Breach, Dear Friends* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2013).

Social Science and Modern Society. In 1968, Horowitz and other academic colleagues acquired Trans-action from Washington University, and Horowitz moved to Rutgers University, along with *Trans-action*, which was renamed SOCIETY in 1970.

As was the case with Émile Durkheim's *L'Année Sociologique*, and Max Weber's *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, Horowitz's editorship of SOCIETY led to book length publications, which, in this case, brought about Transaction Publishers' book and journal publishing activities. He presided over Transaction Publishers for fifty years.

It is also in this context of intellectual eclecticism and institutional change that we need to situate *Professing Sociology* if we are to understand how the book came to be published, what it meant when first published, and what it means today. *Professing Sociology* is a selection of twenty-three articles that Horowitz wrote between 1959 and 1968. Nineteen were written in the five-year period 1963-1968 which coincided with his years at Washington University. Horowitz had emerged as the intellectual heir to C. Wright Mills when he edited and introduced the latter's posthumous collection *Power, Politics, and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills* in 1963, Mill's doctoral dissertation, *Sociology and Pragmatism*, in 1964, and a festschrift, *The New Sociology: Essays in Social Science and Social Theory in Honor of C. Wright Mills*, in 1964. Mills had become the face of an edgier, more flamboyant, and more radical sociology than had existed from the end of WWII through the 1950s. After Mills died in 1962, Horowitz seemed to have taken the lead in continuing Mills' project of changing sociology from a more formal and functionalist paradigm to a more freewheeling transactional one. At the same time, Horowitz also established his own perspective in the field, notably by emphasizing conflict theory, as in *Three Worlds of Development*, published in 1966, which established Horowitz as a leading figure in international studies and political sociology.

Indeed, *Time* magazine eventually caught up to Horowitz soon after his move from Washington University to Rutgers, and ran a long article about him and other cutting-edge sociologists titled "The New Sociology." Horowitz was quoted in *Time* as saying "I'm making a conscious, premeditated effort to radicalize sociology," and *Time*, in turn, characterized sociologists in the Horowitz mold as "highly visible, adventurous and activist new types of scholars who respect no scientific boundaries ... and who reject the traditionalist's antiseptic analyses of how society works in favor of passionate prescriptions for its betterment."³

Professing Sociology shows that Horowitz was already moving beyond the new sociology even before the world was catching up to it. While *Time* magazine was saying in 1970 that "Horowitz and the new sociologists regard the world as their laboratory, not the laboratory as their world," and that they "show little respect for either the old rules or the interdisciplinary fences that once divided the life sciences," Horowitz was already transcending the new sociology, and exhibiting a definite respect for the foundations of the discipline and its progenitors.

In the preface to *Professing Sociology*, Horowitz is very clear about his intentions in the way he organized the book: "The arrangement I finally arrived at represents an historical evolution of my thought on the nature of sociology." The first of the

3. "The New Sociology," *Time*, January 5, 1970, Volume 95, Number 1, pp. 46-47.

book's three sections, "The Inner Life of Sociology," is composed of eight essays, the first four of which were written before Horowitz established himself at Washington University. Not surprisingly, these essays are closer to Horowitz's early philosophical interests, often skirting the borders of the old and new sociologies, on the one hand, and hard-nosed philosophy, on the other. Why, he asks in "Consensus, Conflict and Cooperation," is consensus, "barely a meaningful word in the sociological lexicon of previous decades, viewed as a fully matured theory?" He goes on to show that by defining consensus against conflict in the matrix of sociological thinking it comes to become equated with social equilibrium. This is a very heady observation involving a close reading of Marx and Simmel, on one side, and Parsons and Merton, on the other.

Horowitz's philo-philosophical sociological thinking emerges again in the second essay, "Scientific Criticism and the Sociology of Knowledge," wherein he observes that "the formerly special preserve of philosophic epistemology has cleaved itself in such a way that the sociology of knowledge has largely taken possession of the analysis of the social determinant of knowledge." This essay covers an almost breathtaking range as it addresses the intertwining of psychology and psychoanalysis with epistemology and with the sociology of knowledge in the contest of science. Indeed, even the selection of thinkers brought together in this essay shows Horowitz's creativity as a theorist, and his rejection of ideological labels as proper substitutes for tough-minded thinking. This list includes social thinkers and sociologists such as Karl Marx, Eric Fromm, Harold Lasswell, C. Wright Mills, T. W. Adorno, Karl Mannheim, Karl Popper, Max Weber, and Robert Merton, among others.

As the essay winds down to its conclusion, Horowitz introduces an idea that would be woven into the fabric of his work for decades to come: "The future of social science as a whole, as well as in its parts, is intimately connected to the development of a science of ethical judgment." Here, Horowitz brings together his propensity to think philosophically as well as sociologically. Citing Diderot's idea that it is only as social beings that we create a meaningful physical world, Horowitz concludes that the true value of a sociology of knowledge is in its ability to help us reveal the gap between "consciousness and false consciousness."

It is at this point that philosophy and sociology come together for Horowitz, and that confluence provides us with a way to understand the complexities of his thought. Horowitz himself gave me a clue when he wrote in his book, *Tributes*, that "however much we fancy ourselves the inventors of our own thoughts, the best of them are often a digest and a reflection of the work of many others. We are not so much discoverers of new ideas as transmitters of old ideas retooled and refashioned to address the challenges of a contemporary age."⁴

So what are the primary sources of Irving Louis Horowitz's thinking? He was so broadly read and self-educated, and wide-ranging in his knowledge about so many varied topics, that discovering essential threads seems daunting if not nearly impossible. But as I read and re-read important essays and books that Horowitz wrote in preparation for this introduction, and as I read over the hundreds of letters in our

4. Irving Louis Horowitz, *Tributes: Personal Reflections on a Century of Social Science* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004) pp. xix.

correspondence over the past twenty-five years, I came to see that there are core values, core thinkers, and core thoughts at the heart of his work, and these visibly emerge in *Professing Sociology*. Over a fifty-year period, Irving Horowitz's work rests, by and large, on two pillars: pragmatism, on the one hand, and value-free social science, on the other.

It is often said that one's first love is the hardest to forget, and clearly Irving Louis Horowitz's first intellectual love was the pragmatic philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and Ralph Barton Perry.

As a philosophy student at the City College of New York, Horowitz studied pragmatism, and over the course of his career he continually referred to Peirce, James, Dewey, and Perry, as well as other Pragmatist philosophers and sociologists such as George Herbert Mead, and Kenneth Burke. Besides Horowitz's synthesis and incorporation of pragmatism into his own way of thinking, it is important to remember that he edited and introduced C. Wright Mills' doctoral dissertation when it was published in 1964 as *Sociology and Pragmatism: a Study in American Higher Learning*. More than anything else, fascination with and devotion to pragmatist thinking was the great thread that famously tied Horowitz and Mills—at least the early Mills—together.

The affinity to pragmatism shared by Mills and Horowitz is obvious in the latter's introduction to *Sociology and Pragmatism*, but it is even more pronounced in "Pragmatism and the Revolt against Formalism," a chapter in Horowitz's 1983 biography, *C. Wright Mills: An American Utopian*.⁵ In that chapter, Horowitz says of Mills that "His faith in intellectual activity as the basic way out of the morass of power was articulated in a manner made famous by James' words: 'Let intellectuals unite.' Mill's distrust of narrow professionalism rings a familiar note to those acquainted with James' indictment of higher academicism. The similarities between Mills and James are so patently clear that it is disconcerting to see how thoroughly the critics have missed the connection." More than a few times I brought up to Horowitz the obviously autobiographical element to this statement, because everything he said there about James and Mills seems to apply to him as well. He hemmed and hawed at this, but never denied it. I suspect that he knew it was true.

Significantly, Horowitz wrote about pragmatism, and was himself a pragmatist, from the beginning to the end of his career, and he understood that what was at stake in pragmatist philosophy was its relationship to liberalism, which he said consists of a sense of openness to possibilities, or at least to the absence of closure. Thus, Horowitz wrote an article, "On Pragmatism," published in *Science and Society* in 1955; it was followed by two others in rapid succession. Two of the best chapters in Horowitz's *The Idea of War and Peace*, first published in 1956, but reissued in 1973, and again in 2007, spotlight the pragmatists William James, John Dewey, and Ralph Barton Perry as philosophical realists of the first order. But these early writings were just the beginning of Irving Louis Horowitz's reliance on pragmatism as a topic as well as a way of thinking.

5. Irving Louis Horowitz, *C. Wright Mills: An American Utopian*, (New York: Free Press, 1983).

In "Sociology for Sale,"⁶ a chapter in *Professing Sociology*, Horowitz cites William James' reaction to "dialectical idealism" as a model for critiquing sociology. "Sociology must be practical," he wrote, "It must understand the difference between tough-minded scholarship and tender-hearted sentiment. It must offer useful consultations to useful businessmen. It must make recommendations to policy-makers and it must provide a service to industry worth the cost." In another chapter in *Professing Sociology*, "Mainliners and Marginals: the Human Shape of Sociological Theory,"⁷ Horowitz discusses and lauds the problem-solving pragmatism of the Chicago School, and of men like Mead, Dewey, Charles Morris, and Thorstein Veblen, who used tough-minded analyses to meliorate the problems of the poor, and men like Louis Wirth, Robert Park, Walter Reckless, and Everett C. Hughes who wrote about urbanization, but also about how crime could be minimized. The impressionist and practical aspects of social science were contrasted with the positivist tendencies of modern sociology.

Irving Louis Horowitz's pragmatism is woven throughout his writings. His early fascination with pragmatism can be seen again in his 1977 book, *Ideology and Utopia in the United States, 1956-1976*. Criticizing the new conservatism, Horowitz wrote that it is a "a search for meaning, an attempt to anchor the middle class to something more fundamental than the shifting sands of James' Pragmatism ... in this way, the new conservatism hopes to replace the pluralistic world of Pragmatism, with its many truths, with a monistic world that charts an absolute and theologically sanctioned truth."⁸

Tracing Horowitz's pragmatic writings in each decade is an easy task, because they are ubiquitous from start to finish. Indeed, one of Horowitz's most inventive articles, his 1982 "Winners and Losers: The Limits of Pragmatism and Moralism in Politics," is presaged in the chapters on "The Political Life of Sociology" in *Professing Sociology*. In "Winners and Losers," Horowitz shows that pragmatism and moralizing are the two basic forms of political morality, thus merging Max Weber's famous ethos of ultimate ends and ethos of responsibility with pragmatic underpinnings. This synthesis emerges again in Horowitz's controversial and combative 1993 book, *The Decomposition of Sociology*, where he says: "It is the historic duty of, and opportunity for, the social sciences to recapture at the end of the century the open-ended world of the Pragmatism of William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead with which we began it. Or put another way, social science must take into account the fact that fanatics and ideologues, following what Weber called an 'ethic of ultimate ends,' have given way to cooler-headed politicians and planners who are most likely to follow an ethic of proximate responsibilities."⁹ In this vein I should like to suggest how Horowitz's pragmatism played itself out as an organizing

6. "Sociology for Sale" first appeared in *Studies on the Left*, in 1963.

7. "Mainliners and Marginals: The Human Shape of Sociological Theory," was published in *the Philosophy of Science*, in 1964.

8. Irving Louis Horowitz, *Ideology and Utopia in the United States, 1956-1976* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) pp. 148-149.

9. Irving Louis Horowitz, *The Decomposition of Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) p. 211.

principle in his life and career. In order to do this, some background information about the state of the discipline in the post-World War II era is needed.

If the first golden age of sociology was its founding period in Europe and America from the 1890s through the 1920s, the second age of efflorescence began in America during the early post-war era. This period was marked by the publication of exciting new work by American sociologists, and by the publication of English translations of classic works by European founders.

Up to the post-war era there were plenty of books published by brilliant individual sociologists. Beyond the indispensable early work of founders of American sociology such as Charles Horton Cooley, Robert Park, and W. I. Thomas, Franklin Giddings, William F. Ogburn, among others, I think here of Pitirim Sorokin's *Sociology of Revolution* (1925), and his *Social Mobility* (1927); Robert MacIver's *Community* (1928), and his *Society* (1931); Louis Wirth's *The Ghetto* (1928); Robert and Helen Lynd's *Middletown* (1929) and their *Middletown in Transition* (1935); and Talcott Parsons' *The Structure of Social Action* (1937). These works formed essential nuclei around which the discipline was forming a new institutional and intellectual culture. But it is in the post-war era that a veritable flood of important new works was giving sociology a new empirically based, functionalist identity. Many of these works and the culture that coalesced around them would eventually be seen as the old sociology that advocates of the new sociology wanted to replace.¹⁰ In many ways, the European renaissance in America contributed to the intellectual turf wars, as both old and new sociology seemed to claim footholds in this literature.¹¹

One might reasonably argue that this post-World War II period was the most fruitful timeframe in the history of sociology, at least in America, and that it was as important to the history of sociology as the founding era. But with efflorescence came controversy. Arguments about the best course for the discipline came hot and heavy during this period, and came to a head during the late 1950s to the mid-1960s. This was the seedtime for the "new sociology," and as I have noted, it was in this period that Irving Louis Horowitz published many of the articles that became the basis for *Professing Sociology*. The brilliance of the sociologists working at the time transcended disciplinary boundaries, and spilled over into popular intellectual culture, and it is easy to see how and why generational, theoretical, and methodological fights broke out during this period.¹² Horowitz came out swinging, advocating a conflict approach to society, as well as an ethical one.

10. Along the sociological mainline we find work by Robert MacIver, Pitirim Sorokin, Kingsley Davis, Elton Mayo, Talcott Parsons, George Homans, and Edward Shils. Between the old and the new sociologies are works by Robert Merton, Paul Lazarsfeld, Leo Lowenthal, David Riesman, Seymour Martin Lipset, James Coleman, Morris Janowitz, Philip Selznick, Robert Nisbet, and Reinhard Bendix, Lewis Coser, Peter Blau, and Daniel Bell. The new sociology is represented by C. Wright Mills, Alvin Gouldner, Howard Becker, Erving Goffman, and, of course, Irving Louis Horowitz.

11. The European renaissance in American sociology can be seen in a landslide of important translations of classic works by Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Marcel Mauss, and Ferdinand Tönnies, among others.

12. Robert Merton was the subject of a famous article in *The New Yorker*, and sociologists such as Daniel Bell, David Riesman, Seymour Martin Lipset, Lewis Coser, Robert Nisbet, James Coleman, and Irving Louis Horowitz, among others, wrote regularly for a variety of intellectual journals such as *Partisan Review*, *Daedalus*, *Public Interest*, *Commentary*, *Encounter*, *Dissent*, and *The American Scholar*.

If Horowitz was a pragmatist, there is no denying that in the early part of his career he saw himself as a radical among sociologists, and that he cultivated this image, viz. his quip in *Time* about self-consciously trying to radicalize the discipline. Because of this, it is often assumed by some sociologists that while Horowitz started out as a left-leaning radical, he became a right-leaning conservative—as exemplified by his almost bellicose stand against neo-radicalism in *The Decomposition of Sociology*. This issue of personal ideological transformation was addressed by Horowitz himself almost a decade ago. “Many times in recent years,” he wrote, “I have been asked how I changed over the years. The question about ‘change’ comes to mean more than simple alteration in my point of view. It is often asked in a testy way, suggesting changes for the worse: the cardinal sin, a failure to keep pace with progressive tides, or still more awful, a turn away from first principles with which I have long been identified.”¹³ If such an ideological transformation had actually taken place, it would probably be relatively uninteresting, except on a personal and psychological level; after all, individuals sometimes do experience huge transformations of character and belief, and these are hardly unprecedented.

Horowitz’s answer to his critics, however, is that he didn’t believe he had changed ideologically, and an examination of his writings from *Professing Sociology* onward confirms his point, and clearly shows that his ideas about society and politics by and large changed very little. From the beginning of his career Horowitz was a freethinking, liberal, intellectual and so he remained. By liberal, however, I mean to emphasize liberality—liberalism as toleration rather than liberalism as centrism. Throughout his career, Horowitz has emphasized the necessity for social science to get beyond the rituals and mantras of ideology, as well as the absurdity of radical doctrine whether it be on the left or the right. After all, social science demands analysis, not adherence to political doctrine. Put another way, it is not right or left that counts in social science, but right and wrong in terms of truth.¹⁴

The period of the late 1960s in which *Professing Sociology* was published were one of upheaval in sociology as a discipline, and self-examination among sociologists. When Horowitz first sent the manuscript of *Professing Sociology* to his editor at

13. “Democratic Societies and Their Enemies, 1950-1984,” p. xiii, in *The Bibliography of Irving Louis Horowitz*. Privately printed, 1984.

14. Liberalism, democracy and social science are intimately connected for Horowitz, as can be seen in the following passage from “The Pluralistic Bases of Modern American Liberalism,” written in 1972. “Liberalism accepts the partiality of the world in a way that no other doctrine of the twentieth century does,” he wrote, and “what appears to critics as weakness is perhaps the ultimate strength of liberalism, for underneath the shibboleths and rhetoric of liberalism is something important. It is the assumption that one can live a life without knowing all the answers. The strength of liberalism is that it does not offer fanaticism, that it makes the assumption that the world is not always going to be fully known, and that men can yet act within a partial frame of reference.” As a believer in the pragmatic values needed to live in this world of partial knowledge, Horowitz has been a strong advocate of social science knowledge to help guide us through the maze of choices we face in a free and democratic society.

Aldine Publishers in 1967, it was titled *The Sociology of Sociology*,¹⁵ reflecting the very popular idiom for self-reflection in the field. Indeed, *Professing Sociology* was published at a time when seemingly fierce battles were being fought—with words, not weapons—over the meaning, and future of the discipline.

On the radical side were many of Horowitz's colleagues and friends. Thus *Professing Sociology* was published during the same period that we find his Washington University colleague, Alvin Gouldner publishing radical critiques of value-free sociology such as "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of Value Free Sociology," (1964), "The Sociologist as Partisan," (1968), and *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970). The flood of books criticizing and analyzing sociology from within might well have begun with *Sociology on Trial*, edited by Maurice Stein and Arthur Vidich in 1963. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman published their paean to the sociology of knowledge as an instrument of self-reflection in sociology, *The Social Construction of Reality*, in 1966, setting off a trend in debunking that is still popular today.

In 1970, Larry and Janice Reynolds edited a well-known reader called *The Sociology of Sociology*, which was subtitled—so that readers would know just what their position was, *vis-à-vis* their discipline—*Analysis and Criticism of the Thought, Research, and Ethical Folkways of Sociology and Its Practitioners*. The *Sociology of Sociology* reader contained, among others, articles by three of the young Turks among the sociological radicals: Howard S. Becker's "Whose Side Are We On?" Alvin Gouldner's "The Sociologist as Partisan," and Irving Louis Horowitz's "Sociology for Sale." All of these essays criticize one or another facet of sociology as a discipline up to, and during the 1960s. Horowitz's "Sociology for Sale," however, was a direct critique of marketing sociological research as an "academic commodity." This was less of a radical critique of sociology as an intellectual enterprise, than of it as a real enterprise for making money. Readers of *Professing Sociology* take note: "Sociology for Sale," is a chapter in this book, too.

It is notable that this intense self-interest among sociologists took place at just the same time that the disciplinary balkanization of sociology began. The more sociologists looked in the mirror and analyzed themselves, the more the discipline splintered into so many sub-disciplines that it became difficult to see or define sociology as a coherent intellectual enterprise.

This balkanization of sociology was part of the maelstrom pulling the discipline apart that Horowitz derided in his later critique of the field in *The Decomposition of Sociology*. It is thus ironic that Horowitz was an early participant in the battle over the heart and soul of sociology in the 1960s that eventually led to it unraveling as a coherent discipline by the 1990s. This irony not only focuses our attention on whether Horowitz was or was not transformed from a radical to a conservative, but also upon his devotion to value-free social science.

15. In a letter to a colleague in January 1968, Horowitz says that he "decided to change the title of the book to a less Germanic one, and now it will be known simply as *Professing Sociology*." Horowitz continues in this letter to say that "the more I thought about *The Sociology of Sociology* as a title, the more I felt it was the kind of amateurish fantasizing that nearly every graduate student engages in." The simple reflection upon the title of this book offers us a peek into Horowitz's thinking—albeit tentative back then—about the new sociological radicalism as having an air of youthful amateurism to it.

In his public roles, Horowitz unmistakably fit the mold of William James's category of tough-mindedness, while, in contrast to this, as a private man Horowitz had a deeply rooted Jamesian tender-mindedness that made him a warm and accessible man. The interplay of these contrasting traits made Horowitz a magnet for important social science authors who sought to have their work published by him. Since Horowitz was enamored of William James and other pragmatist philosophers, it is appropriate to see him in Jamesian terms here.

As James wrote in the remarkable first chapter of his *Pragmatism* in 1907, the tough minded individual is an empiricist, who goes by facts: he is pluralistic, skeptical, irreligious, pessimistic, fatalistic, materialistic, and sensational. In other words, he eschews ideologies, and what Max Weber called "ultimate ends." Anyone who has read Horowitz's work, corresponded with him over time, or dealt with him as a publisher knows just how tough-minded he was.

But there was also Horowitz's private side, which showed qualities right out of James's tender-minded type, who is a rationalist, who goes by principles, and is monistic, dogmatic, religious, optimistic, a believer in free will, idealistic, and intellectualistic, as James put it. Those who knew Irving Horowitz more intimately could easily sense his devotion to the principles and values of freedom, democracy, Judaism, and life. As a warm and loving private man, Horowitz was an exemplar of free will, the life of the mind, idealism, and optimism.

A liberal of the old sort, when pragmatism and liberalism walked hand-in-hand with each other, Horowitz understood liberalism to be a pragmatic philosophical position found midway between fascism on the Right, and communism on the Left. But from the late 1960s on, as Horowitz himself has said, "liberalism has become part of the polarity." While sociology drifted towards Left-leaning ideologies during the 1960s and beyond, Horowitz remained a pragmatic liberal favoring freedom over dictatorship, democracy over both fascism and communism, and rational policy-making over ideological political movements emanating from both the Left and the Right. Nothing could be more pragmatic, or more Weberian.

In his more youthful radicalism, Horowitz made the term "new sociology" a banner for the discipline. Today, his new sociology has become the old sociology, and as such is derided by its radical inheritors. Irving Louis Horowitz's voice against all forms of extremism is sorely missed.

Horowitz was a brilliant problem finder. What is freedom? How is it expanded? How does it die? What is the relationship of politics to freedom? Why are totalitarian regimes always un-free? How could the Castro brothers stay in power for so long? How do states take life, and why? How is the old conservatism different than the new? How is right-wing radicalism the flip side of left-wing radicalism? These are the sort of questions that mark Horowitz's work. But whereas some scholars are good at finding problems, he was also good at solving the riddles that make up all these problems. Horowitz saw the world in problematic, not enigmatic terms, which is to say he saw social and political problems as solvable, not as inexplicable mysteries.

It would be hard to find many sociologists today who are as committed to keeping ideologies out of the classroom, as well as out of their published work. In this Horowitz was a true adherent of Max Weber's famous ideal of value-free sociology,

an ideal that has lost its edge over time. As a publisher he emphasized the truth and significance of an author's work, no matter what values informed it. As long as the research and writing met the highest standards of scholarship without ideological red herrings blurring the truth, Horowitz would publish it. He also made sure that his own writings passed muster against these same standards. All this is to suggest that sociology which once partook of centrist pragmatic, liberal and democratic values has lost one of its most accomplished champions. In this context it is worth quoting what Horowitz said in *The Decomposition of Sociology*, his devastating analysis of how his discipline failed to live up to its value-free founding principles, published in 1993.

"The title alone, *The Decomposition of Sociology*, is a long way from the title and hopes of my work but a short quarter of a century ago. At that time, I edited a volume titled *The New Sociology* and a few years thereafter a collection of my papers presumptively called *Professing Sociology*. The reader is entitled to ask: what happened, and to whom? Is this 'sea change' a real change in the functioning of a discipline gone sour, or has the author simply lost his way, gone sour on the discipline, as it were, and in the process drowned?"¹⁶

In his well-known essay, "The Hedgehog and the Fox," Isaiah Berlin quotes the Greek poet Archilochus, who said that "the fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing." With apologies to Berlin, Irving Louis Horowitz appears to me to be a pragmatist hedgehog, on the one hand, *and* a value-neutral fox, on the other. Horowitz was both a pragmatist, who could be single-mindedly focused on results, *and* a Weberian pluralist, whose thinking was compounded of heterogeneous elements. I believe that he was one of the most unique and interesting social science hybrids: half-hedgehog, half-fox. Those qualities are clearly seen in *Professing Sociology*, as well as all the essays and books that followed it for decades after.

16. *The Decomposition of Sociology*, p. 3.

Preface

ONE CURIOUS TASK faced by anyone assembling his papers in any given field is to tease out the "design," the *telos*, as it were, linking disparate work together. Of course, in some sense, such a chore is clearly arbitrary and idiosyncratic: arbitrary in that these papers were obviously done on different occasions and for different purposes; and idiosyncratic in that the selection and arrangement process may be just as much a response to external "marketing" needs as to internal "scientific" needs.

In point of fact, the arrangement I finally arrived at represents not just a categorical division of labor, but an historical evolution in my thought on the nature of sociology.

In the main, the papers grouped in the section headed "The Inner Life of Sociology" were done earlier than the other two sections. They reflected my concern with issues in functionalism, conflict theory, problems of objectivity, relativity, and finally, the sociology of knowledge. In those virginal years, it seemed to me that the structural renovation of sociology along the lines of an increasing awareness of the big problems, the classic tradition, the relevant stance, the historically and philosophically self-aware, etc., necessarily preceded all other issues. Indeed, this view is summed up in the paper with which I introduced *The New Sociology*. I was taken with a Baconian enterprise that the need of the moment was a New Organon, if not a New Instauration.

But theory, even sociological theory, requires an institutional framework, a source from which the struggle of ideas can be nourished by ideas of struggle. Without an appreciation for the institutional setting of sociology—the place where, after all, most sociologists make their living and legitimize their careers—the analysis of theory appears a formalistic exercise in the passage of novel ideas

from great man to great man. But it would be ludicrous to reduce the history of sociological ideas to a simple transmission belt from mind to mind. It is more nearly the case that sociological history is embedded in the educational agencies and research bureaucracies from which sociologists issue forth their proclamations and projections.

But this, too, is only a portion of the pie. The institutional fiber of educational life is itself far from autonomous. The myth of academic insularity, with its notions of *noblesse oblige*, might be preferable to the Veblenesque way things academic are actually structured. But it confuses the desirable with the actual to assume that the educational fortress from which sociology ventures forth now structures the character or concerns of sociology. Clearly, the whole political life of the nation, and of the world, for that matter, has a pervasive effect, an effect that has transformed the problems of sociology from a classic struggle between analysis and advocacy into problems over choices in application. The old daemon lurking in the minds of most sociologists was: Is sociology really a science? The new daemon looming just as prominently is: Now that sociology is a science, what will be its effects on the lives of men and nations?

I do not wish to imply that these three broad reference points simply supersede one another; problems of principles, pedagogy, and politics coexist in space and time. What I am saying is that my personal priorities have shifted over time, and that I believe this personal shift has been tempered in the crucible of some hard looking at the social world.

For me at least there is no longer any doubt that the threats posed to sociological autonomy by Defense Department requirements are far more perilous than any posed by old-fashioned functionalists. And I take it to be a mark of wisdom and not just age that I can make such a distinction in my work life no less than in my private life. Sociology, whatever its variants or vagaries, or however I may express myself in criticism or defense of a particular school, is, after all, the discipline dedicated to rationalizing modern perceptions of the social world to creating a body of "languages" and measures to serve individual goals, not to bolster any number of collective madnnesses.

These papers are presented essentially as they first appeared, with only minor editorial changes. I wish to acknowledge with thanks the original publishers' permissions to reprint them here.

Professing Sociology