PART I

PROGRESSIVE IDEALS

1

Cultural Resources for a Progressive Alternative

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The aim of steering a path between over-reliance on the market and excessive dependence on the state has always been at the heart of progressive politics. Recent attempts by so-called 'Third Way' thinkers and politicians to renew progressivism, however, have failed to deliver an agenda worthy of the progressive cause in the new century. According to Robert B. Reich (1999), the essence of the Third Way is to liberate market forces while easing the transition for those who would otherwise fall behind. In practice, it has turned out that the economic winners have been fewer than Reich would like, while the losers or those barely advancing have proven distressingly many. The Third Way has given the winners pretty much what they want. It has been far less successful in fulfilling the other part of its implicit bargain.

In the USA and the UK, even left-of-centre governments have built on a neo-liberal (or conservative, in US parlance) legacy to advance deregulation, privatization, free trade, more flexible labour markets and reduced social supports. While recent economic growth has aided those at the bottom of the ladder, it has done little to reduce inequalities significantly. Even less has it reduced economic insecurity for the majority. To succeed, claims Reich, 'the Third Way will need to be turned into a political movement all its own'. But that will demand a moral vision, an explicit 'social contract' in which the winners, in return for getting all they need to prosper and generate wealth, would agree to 'apply a portion of their added booty to equipping the losers' so that they can 'move into the fast-moving global economy together . . . [as a] people who, because they are

linked by culture and belief, are willing to pool certain of their resources so that all of their members have a fair chance of succeeding' (1999: 46–51). By appealing to patriotism and the sense of participating in a national historical project as the Third Way's missing moral fulcrum, Reich has identified more than a massive challenge to political leadership. He is underlining the often overlooked fact that culture, publicly shared symbolic meaning, matters decisively in politics. Without a political message with strong cultural resonance, no collective public action to reshape the 'social contract' in a truly progressive direction will be forthcoming.

Third Way attempts to renew progressive politics have frequently been confused in their own self-understanding and weak in their cultural appeal. Partly as a consequence, the 'new' politics of Clinton (and, indeed, Blair) has remained fragile despite popular leadership and some impressive accomplishments. Gore's narrow defeat in the 2000 presidential election, despite eight years of economic prosperity, may be regarded as strong evidence of this situation. So far, the cultural basis for the aspirations of Third Way thinking, importantly different in its several national articulations, continental European as well as British and American, has remained mostly inchoate. It is time we turned our attention to developing the symbolic resources which can enable citizens to interpret their concerns in ways that connect to the vision of human betterment with equity and solidarity that is the moral heart of progressive politics.

We believe that there are rich cultural resources for a progressive alternative and that they can be found in a strong conception of a good form of life shared in several variations in many overlapping communities. Much of this chapter will be devoted to describing those resources, but we want to clarify what we mean by cultural resources and how they function in different national societies to enable political advance through an historical illustration. Progressive politics has a history which dates from the nineteenth century, and as a body of ideas it has a distinct lineage. Its horizon and its goals have always been universal, reflecting and at the same time developing ideas of human betterment that resonate widely in Western culture and beyond. At the same time, as a political tradition, the strength of progressive politics has lain in its variety of local manifestations, as specific individuals and groups have tried to formulate their collective aspirations in ways that made sense and excited loyalty within specific national contexts.

To illustrate what this means, consider the two figures most identified with the idea of the mixed economy and the welfare state, the twin pillars of twentieth-century progressivism. Both were British:

John Maynard Keynes and William Beveridge. Keynes has become synonymous with the economic regime of those decades of prosperity, especially in the Anglo-American world, while Beveridge's idea of a 'welfare state' to provide social cohesion through institutions of civic membership has come virtually to define the political ideals of that era. If Keynes and Beveridge exemplify a kind of leadership that for a period promised to actualize the ideals of social democracy, it is important to notice the cultural and institutional bases of their role. Culturally, Keynes and Beveridge were the heirs and beneficiaries of a militant tradition in British intellectual life, centred around thinkers known as 'New Liberals' such as T. H. Green, L. T. Hobhouse and J. Hobson (see Stears and White, ch. 2 this volume). Similar intellectual developments were taking place in the United States from around the turn of the century in the broad 'Progressive' movement, including figures such as Herbert Croly, John Dewey and Jane Addams, often directly influenced by British thinking of the New Liberal stripe. All these developments were parts of a larger, transatlantic current of debate and discussion which succeeded in establishing a new perspective on long-lamented social ills such as poverty, urban disorder and disease (see Rodgers, 1998).

What was new, and shared by these groups, was the belief that social problems were the results of failures in social organization rather than of individual incompetence or vice. As the historian Harold Perkin notes: 'Problems thus defined as institutional and societal, rather than moral and individual, cried out for collective, professional solutions rather than moral discipline or exhortation' (1989: 357). The effect on politics, and ultimately on the shape of Britain and the United States as the twentieth century unfolded, was vast and dramatic. It is striking that Keynes's recent biographer, Robert Skidelsky, characterizes Keynes as consistently speaking 'in the name of culture rather than expertise'. In claiming a right to direct affairs, Skidelsky notes, Keynes 'addressed the world as a priest, not as a technician. And though he rearranged its theology, economics spoke through him, as a church, not as a branch of the differential calculus' (1992: 407). What Keynes relied upon were 'those larger frameworks of thought which had proportioned knowledge to the purposes of human life', frameworks closely connected to the sense of larger purpose that Skidelsky terms 'religion' (ibid. 408).

'We misunderstand Keynes', Skidelsky argues, 'if we see him simply as an academic economist and fail to recognize his self-understanding as a member of the British "clerisy" – a secular priesthood setting standards of value and behavior, practicing the

arts of leadership and mutual accommodation' (ibid. 8). The same applies to William Beveridge, the author of the famous wartime reports on social insurance and full-employment policies which provided the architecture of the postwar social contract in the UK. Beveridge, like Keynes, came from a professional family, was educated at a public (that is, private boarding) school and then at Oxford. Like many idealistic Oxford undergraduates in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Beveridge was drawn into social service at Toynbee Hall in the slums of London's East End, putting his philosophical and social scientific training to work in studying unemployment. While Keynes pursued an academic career in economics at Cambridge, Beveridge worked in the high civil service, developing a widening system of social insurance which provided the practical basis for the postwar order. Along with many other, lesser known figures, Keynes and Beveridge exemplified the combination of intellectual and practical energies in the public service which the ideal of the clerisy was meant to evoke.

The term was coined in the nineteenth century by Samuel Taylor Coleridge to describe his hopes for a new kind of intellectual to help guide and improve a society reeling from the joint dislocations of industrial capitalism and revolutionary democracy. Well before Keynes and Beveridge, figures such as Thomas and Matthew Arnold, John Stuart Mill and T. H. Green created a cultural climate that allowed for important changes in the nation's educational system, shaped its first true civil service and helped inspire the social responsibility state of the mid-twentieth century. Keynes drew on this cultural heritage but also took it in a more inclusively democratic direction in his more speculative writings on economics, moral philosophy and the future of civilization. These were typically essays designed not for specialists or officials but for general public enlightenment and discussion. He insisted that economic growth was never an end in itself and that capitalism could never by itself produce a decent or humane civilization.

The point, Keynes liked to insist, was to maximize not material abundance but 'goodness' in the sense of a general ideal of cultivated humanity. It was the role of the economist, and especially the economist-statesman, to use governmental economic policy to make possible a swifter advance from an obsession with security and accumulation to what today are sometimes called 'post-materialist values'. Thus Keynes consistently looked not to business or the markets – even though he made and lost large sums on the London stock market – but to government and cultural institutions as the important agents of social progress. Since wealth was only a means

rather than an end, Keynes advocated not only state regulation of the national economy, as is well known, but also the involvement of the state in shaping and altering the 'preferences' of individuals.

As nations become more affluent, argued Keynes, the state should invest and work to lead people to expand their preferences beyond material consumption towards the 'higher pleasures'. To confront the deflationary crisis of the Great Depression of the 1930s, Keynes famously advocated deficit spending and public investment. However, quite apart from economic emergency, as early as the 1920s he advocated extensive public investments in culture, education, grand civic architecture and 'protecting the countryside', not to improve economic performance but to enhance the quality of national life. Even higher education, access to which Keynes thought should be expanded and made less class-dependent, should, he thought, be seen less as a kind of economic investment in a skilled workforce than as a way to enhance civilization by spreading enjoyment of the higher pleasures.[1] It is not clear that these ideas flow from the discipline of economics. But they are consistent with his sense of calling as member of the national clerisy: counselling and persuading his fellow-citizens to consider the ethical dimension of the collective life, how they could best use their growing national wealth to 'live wisely and agreeably and well'.

As Anthony Giddens (1998) reminds us in *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*, there is considerable evidence that we are today in a new cycle of modernity. In this current era, many of the solutions which Keynes, Beveridge and other earlier progressives developed need to be rethought and radically reformed. Yet, there is an evident continuity in moral aspiration and political purpose between their concerns and those that agitate us today. What we can learn from them, however, is not only the moral inspiration of their lives – though in today's cynical climate that is no small thing – but also the need to think reflexively about our problems within a progressive vision of politics as contributing to human betterment.

When one speaks of a progressive alternative, the question that naturally follows is: alternative to what? The obvious answer is alternative to both state domination and market domination. And what is that alternative? Again, the obvious but rather vague answer would be society. If we understand society as something close to what Jürgen Habermas calls the lifeworld – that is, the sphere of life governed by linguistic communication, which includes family, neighbourhood and the realm of public will formation – then we will begin to be a little more specific. From this point of view, state and market are parts of society and extend their capacities through the

use of the non-linguistic media of power and money. They are essentially means through which society more effectively seeks to realize its intrinsic ends. But, as we have seen nowhere more clearly than in the twentieth century, the means may become ends in themselves, may invade and colonize the lifeworld, subordinating its intrinsic ends to the means turned ends of power and money. In the middle of the twentieth century this danger was clearest in the form of state totalitarianism. At the turn of the twenty-first century the danger is clearest from what might be called market totalitarianism. State power is still abused in many parts of the world and such abuse is not absent anywhere, but today the greater danger is from the marketization and commodification of every part of the lifeworld, which globalization in its primary meaning seems to signify.

If we ask what cultural resources might be alternative to these dangers, we might begin by asking what today is the progressive alternative to these ideological polar opposites? Here, terminology becomes problematic. There is something to be said for terms such as social democracy, democratic socialism, social liberalism or the new liberalism, and communitarianism, but they are all in some way or other problematic. Communitarianism has enjoyed a vogue of late – many of the contributors to this volume have used the term – and has the virtue of insisting on the social basis of personhood, but in the eyes of many of the proponents of individualism it is easily identified with totalitarianism or fundamentalism. After all, weren't the Nazis interested in promoting community (*Gemeinschaft*)? Those of us who have been labelled communitarians have become rather tired of explaining that we do not mean *that* kind of community. So, along with others in this volume, we are ready to use the term 'progressivism',[2] though that term too is quite vague until we know what the person who uses it means by progress. We hope to make our views on that issue clear by the end of the chapter.

As foils to our argument we will use Henry Tam's *Communitarianism: A New Agenda for Politics and Citizenship* (1998), which supplies the basis for what we mean by progressivism, but which we want to extend in some respects and qualify in others, and Anthony Giddens's *The Third Way* (1998) as representative of the Third Way approach that we think needs bolstering through a more vigorous and substantive progressivism. To make our own position clear, we believe that modernity and how to deal with it is the central problem for progressives. Our task is to recover modernity's genuine achievements from the deep pathologies which it has created. There is some affinity between our view and that of Habermas when he affirms the Enlightenment but wishes to save it from what he calls its distorted forms.

In *Communitarianism* Tam offers three central principles to define what we are now calling progressivism: cooperative enquiry, shared values and participation. Cooperative enquiry is a central principle because it is the process through which society gains its guiding knowledge. Although Tam recognizes Aristotle as an important predecessor in the development of cooperative enquiry, and, as we shall see, owes him a great deal in his thinking about the three principles generally, in speaking of cooperative enquiry he draws mainly from modern thinkers, beginning with Francis Bacon. We would argue that Aristotle is not the only premodern predecessor of cooperative enquiry but that, on the contrary, all the great religions and philosophies of the first millennium BC can be seen as important predecessors. If progressivism is not to be simply the ideology of modern Western secularists, we must examine its roots in all the great traditions and the potential these roots allow for an overlapping consensus on a global basis. In premodern societies, political power and economic necessity frequently limited the scope and application of cooperative enquiry, but we cannot afford to overlook the resources with which it provides us from long before modern times.

It would also be a mistake to make the Greek example and its direct successors our only model of cooperative enquiry. The prophetic movement in ancient Israel and the rabbinic movement in Judaism were also movements of cooperative enquiry, seeking to relate received traditions to current realities. Parallels can be found in Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. In China cooperative enquiry enjoyed an efflorescence in the late first millennium BC and Confucianism and Taoism have had continuous traditions of cooperative enquiry ever since. Though the application of non-Western traditions to social reality suffered the same limitations as the Western ones in premodern times, they provide valuable sources for reflection for us today.

While cooperative enquiry covered many fields in all the premodern civilizations, it is safe to say that there was a focus on the ethical, usually, though varyingly, seen in a religious perspective. Here, it is Tam's second central principle of progressivism – shared values – that provides the context for useful dialogue with the ethical resources of the great traditions. Tam makes a surprising, though we think defensible, move when he spells out what the four shared values are and justifies his choice not with deductive argument but empirically, as being the common beliefs of mankind. We are not happy with Tam's term 'values', because in the contemporary scene it is used to describe whatever subjective and arbitrary beliefs any individual or group may have (as in 'you have your values, I have

my values, and we'll just have to leave it at that'), which is just the opposite of how Tam wants to use the term, that is, as beliefs that have objective reality. To meet this terminological difficulty, we prefer to speak of 'virtues' or 'conceptions of the good' rather than values.

Let us consider the four conceptions that Tam takes as critical to characterize a good society: love, wisdom, justice and fulfilment. There is a strong Aristotelian feeling about this list. Wisdom and justice are cardinal virtues for Aristotle (as they were for Plato). Love, as Tam uses it, seems to have some other roots, but Aristotle's term for friendship, one of his most important virtues, is *philia*, which can be translated as 'love' in some contexts. Tam's notion of fulfilment has no equivalent Aristotelian virtue, but it approximates Aristotle's idea of happiness, by which he does not mean the modern notion of subjective pleasure, but a condition in which all one's capacities, especially the capacities for virtuous action, have been actualized or realized.

Looking at the first of Tam's ethical conceptions, love, let us note that he derives it from 'experiences of loving and being loved, caring for others, passion, tenderness, friendship, sympathy, kindness, compassion and devotion' (1998: 15). Although 'friendship' is part of this picture, the ideas of 'caring for others' and 'compassion and devotion' would appear to draw on more than Aristotle and to be influenced by the New Testament idea of love (*agape* in Greek, not *philia*), which is natural in a culture long saturated with Christian teachings. There are of course biblical equivalents for Tam's other virtues, notably justice and wisdom. But it would take no great effort to discover, as Tam's idea that these are the common ethical ideals of mankind would imply, that we can find overlapping equivalents in all the great traditions. Here we may just note the Confucian parallels of *jen*, variously translated as benevolence, humanity, human-heartedness, etc., to love, and *i* or *yi*, sometimes translated as righteousness, to justice.

We would argue that the primary virtues are not only shared throughout the human species – that is, present even in tribal societies that may not have a philosophical concept of them but understand them in practice – but even incipiently among some of the higher non-human mammals. Frans de Waal (1996) has convincingly described behaviour that can only be characterized as evidence for love and justice among the chimpanzees. Thus, if these virtues are not part of the genetic code, a potentiality for them must be genetic, and they are part of the cultural code in human beings.

Before we get too cheered by the evidence for morality among

humans and higher mammals, we should remember what Aristotle and other classical thinkers did not forget: that for every virtue there is a corresponding vice – for Aristotle *two* corresponding vices, since he saw virtue as a mean between two contrasting vices (courage as the mean between cowardice and foolhardiness, for example). The vices are just as 'natural' as the virtues, indeed from some perspectives more natural, since the virtues must be learned. The capacity of the human psyche, amplified enormously by vicious institutions, to counter the life of the virtues with the most appalling behaviour is something to which any serious progressive needs to give attention. It is an issue to which we will return.

Linked to the fact that the virtues always exist in precarious relation to the vices is the fact that even when we have a sense of the right thing to do, and we must remember that virtue is more a matter of practice, even habit, than theory, we may not know how to relate our moral intuitions to new circumstances. It is here especially that we will depend on cooperative enquiry in clarifying what is required of us as individuals and communities.

Tam's third principle is participation in the process of decision-making by those affected by it. In modern times we have come increasingly to accept the idea of the inclusion of all members of a community in its decision-making process, although even where it is accepted in principle it is nowhere fully realized in practice. With respect to the third principle as well, we would argue that in premodern societies, though full participation was sharply limited, the idea was nevertheless present. When Saint Paul said that in Christ there is 'neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female', he was expressing an ideal that could be realized in the church if at all but was not then possible in political society. The Confucians argued that moral virtue knew no bounds of blood or class and that even a peasant could be a sage and thus in principle a ruler. The Buddhists had a saying that 'a monk does not bow down before a king', meaning that a serious pursuit of the religious life transcended the power relations of this world. It was the Greeks who came closest to our ideal of democratic participation – Aristotle spoke of the *polis* as a society in which citizens ruled and are ruled in turn – but there were sharp limits to their notion of citizenship, even in Athens: not only were women and slaves excluded, but so were resident aliens. Only adult males of Athenian descent were full members of the political community. Nevertheless, our modern idea of full inclusion owes much to these premodern precursors.

This might be a good point to allude to an issue that has plagued the discussion of communitarianism: that is, what kind of community

for which full inclusion is the ideal are we talking about? Part of the problem arises from the scope of a community in which we can imagine an effective consensus about conceptions of the good. Alasdair MacIntyre (1999), for example, from whom we have learned much, nonetheless believes that a genuine political community must necessarily be a small one – he gives the examples of New England fishing towns, Welsh mining villages and the ancient *polis* – because only in such small communities could a really substantive consensus exist. We believe, however, that in the modern world this would amount to a counsel of despair, because so few people can live in such small bounded communities. Rather, we conceive of the relevant communities as involving multiple overlapping memberships and as ranging from neighbourhoods to churches to work groups to nations to the entire species. The richness of the shared conceptions of the good will certainly vary according to the several groups to which one belongs, but we believe that, though it requires much work to specify them, common beliefs can be found at every level and that people can be actively included in many different kinds of community.

In a sense, the progressive movement is part of the general trend of modernity, for modernity has been in many ways a movement to generalize and actualize the moral heritage of traditional societies. Modernity has been associated with the encouragement of cooperative enquiry at many levels; it has spawned efforts to create a more just and loving society in which wisdom is used to make possible greater human fulfilment; and it has seen significant advances towards greater social inclusion, extending full citizenship to those without property, to former slaves, to women and to minorities of various kinds, including racial and sexual minorities. We can never forget that advances derived from the cooperative enquiry of science, medicine and public health have exterminated many diseases, extended longevity and improved the quality of life, at least for significant portions of the human race.

At the same time modernity has been associated with some of the greatest horrors in human history: terrible wars, unrelenting persecutions, genocide and the creation of millions of refugees – in short, organized hatred that it would be hard to equal in any previous period. It has also been accompanied by unprecedented environmental devastation with, as yet, uncalculated consequences, economic collapses and, even in periods of relative prosperity, economic inequalities and uncertainties that have left many people in poverty and many others anxious and insecure. The technological achievements have been enormous, but every one of them has had its cost. The automobile, for example, is a great convenience but profoundly

destructive both of city life and of the environment. It would be comforting to think that the good and the bad sides of modernity could be surgically separated and that we could have one without the other. But only a profound analysis of modernity will allow us to begin to see what are the deep causes of these pathologies and how our whole way of life may need to be reordered if we are not to face continuing catastrophes.

Most of the pathologies of modernity can be traced to the political and economic totalitarianisms to which it has given rise. The ultra-nationalism associated with political totalitarianism has spawned wars, persecutions, genocide and the mass expulsion of populations. Unrestrained markets have led to massive inequalities, not only within but between nations, grave instabilities associated with boom and bust, enormous population shifts as the market has rendered traditional agriculture unsustainable, forcing millions into the shanty-towns of enormous and under-serviced cities, and technological advance made subservient to corporate profit rather than human service. These aberrations have become possible when power and money have overwhelmed the operation of Tam's three central principles of progressivism: cooperative enquiry, shared values and participation.

The strength of the progressive perspective is that it understands that these aberrations have become possible in part because, in different ways, both power and money have operated to isolate the individual and weaken the communities in which individuals are embedded. Today, for example, the capitalist economy seeks to make it possible for the individual to satisfy all needs through market transactions. Its logical end is the individual alone with a computer (such an individual might not just consume but work alone with a computer) through which the purchase of everything is now available. Progressives through cooperative enquiry, the life of the virtues and political participation need to attempt to create numerous over-lapping communities that would reduce the power of the market and the state and make them the servants of the people and not their masters.

We should not forget that the influence of the bureaucratic state and the free market can be and have been, when exercised with moderation, a source of the liberation of the individual from oppressive and authoritarian group control. The modern state and market have made possible the creation of public space, particularly urban public space, within which progressive principles could be advanced. The institutionalization of rights, first civil, then political and social, became possible in societies that were increasingly differentiated and

flexible politically and economically. Communitarians are sometimes accused of rejecting these achievements of modernity, but, as progressives, we wish to make it clear that we wish to preserve and extend them.

We do, nonetheless, see that the concept of the freedom of the individual and the institutional complex that made it sociologically possible contained the seeds of pathology when they led to reifying the individual consciousness and weakening the nexus of social solidarity. Robert Putnam (2000) has demonstrated the extent to which these processes have eroded the social and cultural bases of democratic collective action in the United States. This is very much in the tradition of progressive social thought, which has, since the nineteenth century, been concerned with combating these pathologies. It was Hegel who famously saw that the moralistic absolutizing of freedom in the case of Robespierre could turn into the absolutely destructive negativity of the reign of terror in the French Revolution. For Hegel, even the sublimity of Kant's ethical universalism would be only a moment of abstract morality (*Moralität*) unless it could be institutionalized in the actual ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) of a people. Hegel worried that the increasing dominance of economic relations could undermine the very possibility of ethical life, either by atomizing society or, in reaction, by leading to an authoritarian state. These concerns with respect to major tendencies of modernity need to guide Third Way political understanding.

The job that we 'organic intellectuals' of the progressive movement inherit from Hegel, Mill, Green, Durkheim, Dewey, Beveridge and Keynes is to devise a political programme appropriate to the societies in which we live. If we are off the mark in our understanding of society, all the 'musts' and 'shoulds' in the world will not help us in the face of the reality we are up against. Our first task, if we are to combine moral seriousness with social scientific insight, is to consider how far we are from the kind of society that would embody Tam's three central principles, and how we might possibly get from here to there.

From this perspective, Anthony Giddens's *The Third Way* can provide a point of reference as well as critique. On the whole, Giddens avoids a critique of ontological individualism, its origin in the insecurities inherent in modern societies and its anti-civic consequences. His is a practical political programme, designed to meet the needs and fulfil the desires of contemporary citizens. It is to be preferred to the existing practical alternatives, but it is not clear that it can meet Robert Reich's challenge to provide an alternative to state-centred social democratic politics, on the one hand, or the

market-enthusiasm of neo-liberalism, on the other. Giddens's presentation of the Third Way often seems to come close to splitting the difference between currently attractive alternatives – neo-liberal and social democratic – without offering either a new analysis or the prospect of deep institutional reform.

What might be done here? Consider for a moment one of Giddens's best encompassing policy ideas, his notion of the 'positive welfare society'. Giddens contrasts the principles he advocates with the list of problems to which William Beveridge addressed his pivotal 1942 *Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services*. As Giddens puts it, 'positive welfare would replace each of Beveridge's negatives with a positive: in place of Want, autonomy; not Disease but active health; instead of Ignorance, education, as a continuing part of life; rather than Squalor, well-being; and in place of Idleness, initiative' (1998: 128). Autonomy, health, education, well-being and initiative: these are the goods that Giddens wishes public policy at every level to foster. He emphasizes that they cannot be realized without considerable public provision and organization, for which the modern state, even transnational institutions, are essential. Giddens sums up the institutional meaning of the Third Way in the 'social investment state' which exists to serve the 'positive welfare society' in order to realize freedom for all its citizens, within a developing, interdependent global society. All this resonates with Keynes's advocacy of a broader cultural understanding of human freedom and fulfilment as the necessary justification, but even more the real purpose, of market economies.

How, concretely, might this make a difference in the current situation? Giddens's proposals would seem to imply that Third Way politics take up the earlier progressive assertion that economic imperatives must be evaluated, balanced against and, if necessary, subordinated to, ethical and cultural ends. Yet, the Third Way, as described by Reich, and by Giddens himself, has shied away from any formulation so sweeping or decisive, lest it be portrayed by its opponents as backward-looking or less than optimistic about the future of our market-driven societies. If, however, the only cultural resources we can call upon derive from the matrix of market fundamentalism (a position that Giddens would hardly defend), then we have little leverage over today's one-sided global order.

Giddens's notion of 'positive welfare' rightly focuses on the enhancement of individual life. To effectively criticize and challenge the hegemony of the reigning neo-liberalism, however, any Third Way political vision must spell out a richer and, finally, quite different understanding of individual flourishing. Here, Henry Tam's

progressive communitarianism is a surer guide. What is crucial is to highlight, in policy as well as principle, what Tam calls 'Durkheim's "moral individualism"', according to which 'individuals are encouraged to fulfill their potential while recognizing that being able to contribute to the fulfillment of others is an integral (and *not* an instrumental) part of their own fulfillment' (1998: 224). In fact, only an understanding of freedom and human possibility considerably broader than – and therefore explicitly critical of – this reigning instrumental individualism, with its focus on the market, can provide a reasoned basis for an alternative political and social vision.

One of the focal points of such an alternative has to be the organization of the economy so that work can become more public in its focus and import. This would entail public support for the effort of citizens to contribute to the larger goals of the 'active welfare society' as well as private economic advancement. Here, the ability to draw upon a fuller understanding of freedom and the good life is crucial for imagining alternatives. Progressive thinkers have long emphasized the need for public action and institutions to uphold conditions for 'positive freedom', so that citizens have realistic options to fulfil themselves through taking part in significant collective purposes. Ulrich Beck, for example, has cited many studies across Europe which show that 'more and more people are looking both for meaningful work and opportunities for commitment outside of work. If society can upgrade and reward such commitment and put it on a level with gainful employment', he argues, 'it can create both individual identity and social cohesion' (quoted in Giddens, 1998: 127). This kind of culturally imaginative political vision, however, is exactly what the Third Way, at least in its American and British forms, has generally lacked or seemed too timid to develop.

We live in a world where persuasion, not coercion, is the only road to a progressive future. For this reason, the task of a genuinely progressive movement at the present time may be to develop, ideologically and organizationally, capacities for long-term influence. This will involve not only understanding better where we are and how we got here, but how the whole moral heritage of the human species might help us out of our present predicaments. Yet, at a time when the idea of democracy has attained perhaps its broadest appeal ever, there is special urgency in putting forward the moral nucleus of the progressive vision. This, we argue, is the idea that freedom is made secure and given content through solidarity, and that it is in the broadest civic membership possible that freedom finds significance and fulfilment.

Notes

1 The quotations are from 'Economic Possibilities For Our Grandchildren', cited in Skidelsky (1998).
2 'Progressivism' and 'progressive communitarianism' are the most frequently used terms by the contributors to this book. It is not so much a question of which specific term is being used as of the common strands that run through the different contributions, which point to a shared approach to renewing progressive politics.

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